

Piers Plowman

by

William Langland

Prologue

In a somer seson, whan softe was the sonne,
I shoop me into shroudes as I a sheep were,
In habite as an heremite unholy of werkes,
Wente wide in this world wondres to here.
Ac on a May morwenynge on Malverne hilles
Me bifel a ferly, of Fairye me thoghte.
I was wery forwandred and wente me to reste
Under a brood bank by a bourne syde;
And as I lay and lenede and loked on the watres,
I slombred into a slepyng, it sweyed so murye.
Thanne gan I meten a merveillous swevene --
That I was in a wilderness, wiste I nevere where.
A[c] as I biheeld into the eest an heigh to the sonne,
I seigh a tour on a toft trieliche ymaked,
A deep dale bynethe, a dongeon therinne,
With depe diches and derke and dredfulle of sighte.
A fair feeld ful of folk fond I ther bitwene --
Of alle manere of men, the meene and the riche,
Werchyng and wandryng as the world asketh.
Somme putten hem to the plough, pleiden ful selde,
In settyng and sowynge swonken ful harde,
And wonnen that thise wastours with glotonye destruyeth
And somme putten hem to pride, apparailled hem thereafter,
In contenance of clothyng comen disgised-
In preieres and penaunce putten hem manye,
Al for the love of Oure Lord lyveden ful streyte
In hope to have heveneriche blisse --
As ancre and heremites that holden hem in hire selles,
Coveiten noght in contree to cairen aboute
For no likerous liflode hire likame to plese.
And somme chosen chaffare; they cheveden the bettre --
As it semeth to oure sight that swiche men thryveth;
And somme murthes to make as mynstralles konne,
And geten gold with hire glee -- [gilt]lees, I leeve-
Ac japeres and jangeleres, Judas children,
Feynen hem fantasies, and fooles hem maketh --
And han wit at wille to werken if they wolde.
That Poul precheth of hem I wol nat preve it here:
Qui loquitur turpiloquium is Luciferes hyne-
Bidderes and beggeres faste aboute yede
[Til] hire bely and hire bagge [were] bredful ycrammed,

Faiteden for hire foode, foughten at the ale.
In glotonye, God woot, go thei to bedde,
And risen with ribaudie, tho Roberdes knaves;
Sleep and sory sleuthe seweth hem evere.
Pilgrymes and palmeres plighen hem togidere
For to seken Seint Jame and seintes at Rome;
Wenten forth in hire wey with many wise tales,
And hadden leve to lyen al hire lif after.
I seigh somme that seiden thei hadde ysought seintes:
To ech a tale that thei tolde hire tonge was tempred to lye
Moore than to seye sooth, it semed bi hire speche.
Heremytes on an heep with hoked staves ,
Wenten to Walsyngham -- and hire wenches after:
Grete lobies and longe that lothe were to swynke
Clothed hem in copes to ben knowen from othere,
And shopen hem heremytes hire ese to have.
I fond there freres, alle the foure ordres,
Prechyng the peple for profit of [the wombe]:
Glosed the gospel as hem good liked;
For coveitise of copes construed it as thei wolde.
Manye of thise maistres mowe clothen hem at likyng
For hire moneie and hire marchaundise marchen togideres.
Sith charite hath ben chapman and chief to shryve lordes
Manye ferlies han fallen in a fewe yeres.
But Holy Chirche and hii holde bettre togidres
The mooste meschief on molde is mountynge up faste.
Ther preched a pardoner as he a preest were:
Broughte forth a bulle with bisshopes seles,
And seide that hymself myghte assoillen hem alle
Of falshede of fastynge, of avowes ybroken. -
Lewed men leved hym wel and liked hise wordes,
Comen up knelynge to kissen his bulle.
He bonched hem with his brevet and blered hire eighen,
And raughte with his rageman rynges and broches.
-- Thus ye gyven youre gold glotons to helpe,
And leneth it losels that leccherie haunten"
Were the bisshop yblessed and worth bothe his eris,
His seel sholde noght be sent to deceyve the peple.
Ac it is noght by the bisshop that the boy precheth --
For the parisshe preest and the pardoner parten the silver
That the povere [peple] of the parissche sholde have if they ne were.
Persons and parisshe preestes pleynd hem to the bisshop
That hire parissches weren povere sith the pestilence tyme,

To have a licence and leve at London to dwelle,
And syngen ther for symonie, for silver is swete.
Bisshopes and bachelers, bothe maistres and doctours --
That han cure under Crist, and crownynge in tokene
And signe that thei sholden shryven hire parisshens,
Prechen and praye for hem, and the povere fede --
Liggen at Londoun in Lenten and ellis.
Somme serven the King and his silver tellen,
In Cheker and in Chauncelrie chalangen his dettes
Of wardes and of wardemotes, weyves and streyves.
And somme serven as servaunts lordes and ladies,
And in stede of stywardes sitten and demen.
Hire messe and hire matyns and many of hire houres
Arn doone undevoutliche; drede is at the laste
Lest Crist in Consistorie acorse ful manye"
I parceyved of the power that Peter hadde to kepe --
To bynden and unbynden, as the Book telleth --
How he it lefte with love as Oure Lord highte
Amonges foure vertues, most vertuous of alle vertues,
That cardinals ben called and closynge yates
There Crist is in kyngdom, to close and to shette,
And to opene it to hem and hevene blisse shewe.
Ac of the Cardinals at court that kaughte of that name
And power presumed in hem a Pope to make
To han the power that Peter hadde. impugnen I nelle --
For in love and in lettrure the eleccion bilongeth;
Forthi I kan and kan naught of court speke moore.
Thanne kam ther a Kyng: Knyghthod hym ladde;
Might of the communes made hym to regne.
And thanne cam Kynde Wit and clerkes he made,
For to counseillen the Kyng and the Commune save.
The Kyng and Knyghthod and Clergie bothe
Casten that the Commune sholde hem [communes] fynde.
The Commune contrevod of Kynde Wit craftes,
And for profit of al the peple plowmen ordeyned
To tilie and to travaille as trewe lif asketh.
The Kyng and the Commune and Kynde Wit the thridde
Shopen lawe and leaute -- eeh lif to knowe his owene.
Thanne loked up a lunatik, a leene thyng withalle,
And knelynge to the Kyng clergially he seide,
"Crist kepe thee, sire Kyng, and thi kyngryche,
And lene thee lede thi lond so leaute thee lovyne,
And for thi rightful rulyng be rewarded in hevene"

And sithen in the eyr on heigh an aungel of hevene
Lowed to speke in Latyn -- for lewed men ne koude
Jangle ne jugge that justifie hem sholde,
But suffren and serven -- forthi seide the aungel:
" Sum Rex, sum Princeps",-neutrum fortasse deinceps "
O qui iura regis Christi specialia regis,
Hoc quod agas melius -- iustus es, esto pius "
Nudum ius a te vestiri vult pietate.
Qualia vis metere, talia grana sere:
Si ius nudatur, nudo de iure metatur;
Si seritur pietas, de pietate metas'.
Thanne greved hym a goliardeis, a gloton of wordes,
And to the aungel an heigh answerde after:
" Dum " rex" a " regere " dicatur nomen habere,
Nomen habet sine re nisi studet iura tenere'.
Thanne [c]an al the commune crye in vers of Latyn
To the Kynges counseil -- construe whoso wolde --
"Precepta Regis sunt nobis vincula legis"
With that ran ther a route of ratons at ones
And smale mees myd hem: mo than a thousand
Comen to a counseil for the commune profit;
For a cat of a court cam whan hym liked
And overleep hem lightliche and laughte hem at his wille,
And pleide with hem perillousli and possed aboute.
"For doute of diverse dredes we dar noght wel loke"
And if we grucche of his gamen he wol greven us alle --
Cracchen us or clawen us and in hise clouches holde.
That us lotheth the lif er he late us passe.
Mighte we with any wit his wille withstonde,
We myghte be lordes olofte and lyven at oure ese'.
A raton of renoun, moost renable of tonge,
Seide for a sovereyn [salve] to hem alle,
"I have yseyen segges', quod he, "in the Cite of Londoun
Beren beighes ful brighte abouten hire nekkes,
And somme colers of crafty work; uncoupled they wenden
Bothe in wareyne and in waast where hem leve liketh,
And outhur while thei arn elliswhere, as I here telle.
Were ther a belle on hire beighe, by Jesus, as me thynketh,
Men myghte witen wher thei wente and away renne.
And right so', quod that raton, "reson me sheweth
To bugge a belle of bras or of bright silver
And knydden it on a coler for oure commune profit
And hangen it upon the cattes hals -- thanne here we mowen

Wher he ryt or rest or rometh to pleye;
And if hym list for to laiike, thanne loke we mowen
And peeren in his presence the while hym pleye liketh,
And if hym wratheth, be war and his wey shonye'.
Al the route of ratons to this reson assented;
Ac tho the belle was ybrought and on the beighe hanged
Ther ne was raton in al the route, for al the reaume of France,
That dorste have bounden the belle aboute the cattes nekke,
Ne hangen it aboute his hals al Engeland to wynne,
[Ac] helden hem unhardy and hir counseil feble,
And leten hire laboure lost and al hire longe studie.
A mous that muche good kouthe, as me tho thoughte,
Strook forth sternely and stood bifore hem alle,
And to the route of ratons reherced thise wordes:
"Though we hadde ykilled the cat, yet sholde ther come another
To cracchen us and al oure kynde, though we copen under benches.
Forthi I counseille al the commune to late the cat worthe,
And be we nevere so bolde the belle hym to shewe.

The Vision of Piers Plowman

The while he caccheth conynges he coveiteth noght oure caroyne,
But fedeth hym al with venyson; defame we hym nevere.
For bettre is a litel los than a long sorwe:
The maze among us alle, theigh we mysse a sherewe!
For I herde my sire seyn, is seven yeer ypassed,
""Ther the cat is a kitoun, the court is ful elenge".
That witnesseth Holy Writ, whoso wole it rede --
Ve terre ubi puer rex est, &c.
For may no renk ther reste have for ratons by nyghte.
For many mennes malt we mees wolde destruye,
And also ye route of ratons rende mennes clothes,
Nere the cat of the court that kan you overlepe;
For hadde ye rattes youre [raik] ye kouthe noght rule yowselve.
"I seye for me', quod the mous, " I se so muchel after,
Shal nevere the cat ne the kiton by my counseil be greved,
Ne carpynge of this coler that costed me nevere.
And though it costned me catel, biknowen it I nolde,
But suffren as hymself wolde [s]o doon as hym liketh --
Coupled and uncoupled to cacche what thei mowe.
Forthi ech a wis wight I warne -- wite wel his owene!
(What this metels bymeneth, ye men that ben murye,
Devyne ye -- for I ne dar, by deere God in hevene)!
Yet hoved ther an hundred in howves of selk --
Sergeants, it semed, that serveden at the Barre,

Pleteden for penyes and pounded the lawe,
 And noght for love of Oure Lord unlose hire lippes ones.
 Thow myghtest bettre meete myst on Malverne Hilles
 Than get a "mom" of hire mouth til moneie be shewed!
 Barins and burgeises and bondemen als
 I seigh in this assemblee, as ye shul here after;
 Baksteres and brewesteres and bochiers manye,
 Wollen webbesters and weveres of lynnyn,
 Taillours and tynkers and tollers in markettes,
 Masons and mynours and many othere craftes:
 Of alle kynne lybbynge laborers lopen forth somme-
 As dykeres and delveres that doon hire dedes ille
 And dryveth forth the longe day with "Dieu save Dame Emme!"
 Cokes and hire knaves cryden, "Hote pies, hote!"
 Goode gees and grys! Go we dyne, go we!"
 Taverners until hem tolden the same:
 "Whit wyn of Oseye and wyn of Gascoigne,
 Of the Ryn and of the Rochel, the roost to defie!"
 -- Al this I seigh slepyng, and sevene sythes more.

Passus 1

What this mountaigne bymeneth and the merke dale
 And the feld ful of folk, I shal yow faire shewe.
 A lovely lady of leere in lynnyn yclothed
 Cam down fom [the] castel and called me faire,
 And seide, "Sone, slepestow? Sestow this peple-
 How bisie they ben aboute the maze?
 The mooste partie of this peple that passeth on this erthe,
 Have thei worship in this world, thei wilne no bettre;
 Of oother hevene than here holde thei no tale'-.
 I was afeed of hire face, theigh she faire weere,
 And seide, "Mercy, madame, what [may] this [be] to mene?"
 "The tour upon the toft", quod she, "Truthe is therinne,
 And wolde that ye wroughte as his word techeth.
 For he is fader of feith and formed yow alle
 Bothe with fel and with face and yaf yow fyve wittes
 For to worshipe hym therwith while that ye ben here.
 And therefore he highte the erthe to helpe yow echone
 Of woilene, of lynnyn, of liflode at nede
 In mesurable manere to make yow at ese;
 And comaunded of his curteisie in commune three thynges:

Are none nedfulle but tho, and nempne hem I thynke,
 And rekene hem by reson -- reherce thow hem after.
 "That oon is vesture from chele thee to save,
 And mete at meel for mysese of thiselve,
 And drynke whan thow driest -- ac do noght out of reson,
 That thow worthe the wers whan thow werche sholdest.
 For Lot in hise lifdayes, for likynge of drynke,
 Dide by hise doughtres that the devel liked:
 Delited hym in drynke as the devel wolde,
 And leccherie hym laughte, and lay by hem bothe --
 And al he witte it the wyn, that wikked dede:
 Inebriemus eum vino dormiamusque cum eo, ut
 servare possimus de patre nostro semen.
 Thorough wyn and thorough wommen ther was Loth acombred,
 And there gat in glotonie gerles that were cherles.
 Forthi dred delitable drynke and thow shalt do the bettre.
 Measure is medicine, though thow muchel yerne.
 Al is nought good to the goost that the gut asketh,
 Ne liflode to the likame that leef is to the soule.
 Leve nought thi likame, for a liere hym techeth --
 That is the wrecched world, wolde thee bitraye.
 For the fend and thi flessch folwen togidere,
 And that [shendeth] thi soule; set it in thin herte.
 And for thow sholdest ben ywar, I wisse thee the beste.'
 "A, madame, mercy,' quod I, " me liketh wel youre wordes.
 Ac the moneie of this molde that men so faste holdeth --
 Telleth me to whom that tresour appendeth.'
 Go to the Gospel,' quod she, "that God seide hymselfen,
 Tho the poeple hym apposed with a peny in the Temple
 Wheither thei sholde therwith worshipe the kyng Cesar.
 And God asked of hem, of whom spak the lettre,
 And the ymage ylike that therinne stondeth?
 Cesares, thei seiden, "we seen it wel echone.'
 ""Reddite Cesari," quod God, "" that Cesari bifalleth,
 Et que sunt Dei Deo, or ellis ye don ille.'
 -- For rightfully Reson sholde rule yow alle,
 And Kynde Wit be wardeyn youre welthe to kepe,
 And tutour of youre tresor, and take it yow at nede,
 For housbondrie and he holden togidres.'
 Thanne I frayned hire faire, for Hym that hire made,
 "That dongeon in the dale that dredful is of sighte --
 What may it bemeene, madame, I yow biseche?'
 "That is the castel of care -- whoso comth therinne

May banne that he born was to bodi or to soule!
Therinne wonyeth a wight that Wrong is yhote,
Fader of falshede -- and founded it hymselfe.
Adam and Eve he egged to ille,
Counseilled Kaym to killen his brother,
Judas he japed with Jewen silver,
And sithen on an eller hanged hym after.
He is lettere of love and lieth hem alle:
That trusten on his tresour bitrayed arn sonnest.'
Thanne hadde I wonder in my wit what womman it weere
That swiche wise wordes of Holy Writ shewed,
And halsede hire on the heighe name, er she thennes yede,
What she were witterly that wissed me so faire.
"Holi Chirche I am,' quod she, thow oughtest me to knowe.
I underfeng thee first and the feith taughte.
Thow broughtest me borwes my biddying to fulfille,
And to loven me leelly the while thi lif dureth.'
Thanne I courbed on my knees and cried hire of grace,
And preide hire pitously to preye for my synnes,
And also kenne me kyndely on Crist to bileve,
That I myghte werchen His wille that wroghte me to man:
"Teche me to no tresor, but tel me this ilke =
How I may save my soule, that seint art yholden.'
"Whan alle tresors arn tried,' quod she, '-Treuthe is the beste.
I do it on Deus caritas to deme the sothe;
It is as dereworthe a drury as deere God hymselfen.
Who is trewe of his tonge and telleth noon oother,
And dooth the werkes therwith and wilneth no man ille,
He is a god by the Gospel, agrounde and olofte,
And ylik to Oure Lord, by Seint Lukes wordes.
The clerkes that knowen this sholde kennen it aboute,
For Cristen and uncristen cleymeth it echone.
" Kynges and knyghtes sholde kepen it by reson --
Riden and rappen down in reaumes aboute,
And taken transgressores and tyen hem faste
Til treuthe hadde ytermyned hire trespas to the ende.
For David in hise dayes dubbed knyghtes,
And dide hem sweren on hir swerd to serven truthe evere.
And that is the profession apertly that apendeth to knyghtes,
And naught to Fasten o Friday in fyve score wynter,
But holden with hym and with here that wolden alle truthe,
And never leve hem for love ne for lacchyng of silver --
And whoso passe[th] that point is apostata in the ordre.

-But Crist, kyngene kyng, knyghted ten --
 Cherubyn and Seraphyn, swiche sevene and another,
 And yaf hem myght in his majestee -- the murier hem thoughte --
 And over his meene meynne made hem archangeles;
 Taughte hem by the Trinitee treuthe to knowe,
 To be buxom at his bidding -- he bad hem nought ellis.
 "Lucifer with legions lerned it in hevene,
 [And was the lovelokest to loke after Oure Lord (one)]
 Til he brak buxomnesse; his blisse gan he tyne,
 And fel fro that felawshipe in a fendes liknesse
 into a deep derk helle to dwelle there for evere.
 And mo thousandes myd hym than man kouthe nombre
 Lopen out with Lucifer in lothliche forme
 For thei leveden upon hym that lyed in this manere:
 Ponam pedem in aquilone, et similis ero Altissimo.
 And alle that hoped it myghte be so, noon hevene myghte hem holde,
 But fellen out in fendes liknesse [ful] nyne dayes togideres,
 Til God of his goodnesse [garte the hevene to stekie
 And gan stable it and stynte] and stonden in quiete.
 " Whan thise wikkede wenten out, wonderwise thei fellen --
 Somme in eyr, somme in erthe, somme in helle depe;
 Ac Lucifer lowest lith of hem alle:
 For pride that he putte out, his peyne hath noon ende.
 And alle that werchen with wrong wende thei shulle
 After hir deth day and dwelle with that sherewe;
 Ac tho that werche wel as Holy Writ telleth,
 And enden as I er seide in truthe, that is the beste,
 Mowe be siker that hire soules shul wende to hevene,
 Ther Treuthe is in Trinitee and troneth hem alle.
 Forthi I seye, as I seyde er, by sighte of thise textes --
 Whan alle tresors arn tried, Truthe is the beste.
 Lereth it th[u]s lewed men, for lettred it knoweth --
 That Treuthe is tresor the trieste on erthe.'
 "Yet have I no kynde knowynge,' quod I, "ye mote kenne me bettre
 By what craft in my cors it comseth, and where.'
 "Thow doted daffe!' quod she, dulle are thi wittes.
 To litel Latyn thow lernedest, leode, in thi youthe:
 Heu michi quia sterilem duxi vitam iuvenilem!
 It is a kynde knowynge that kenneth in thyn herte
 For to loven thi Lord levere than thiselve,
 No dedly synne to do, deye theigh thow sholdest --
 This I trowe be truthe; who kan teche thee bettre,
 Loke thow suffre hym to seye, and sithen lere it after;

For thus witnesseth his word; worche thow thereafter.
 " For Truthe telleth that love is triacle of hevene:
 May no synne be on hym seene that that spice useth.
 And alle his werkes he wroughte with love as hym liste,
 And lered it Moyses for the leveste thyng and moost lik to hevene,
 And also the plante of pees, moost precious of vertues :
 For hevene myghte nat holden it, so was it hevy of hymself,
 Til it hadde of the erthe eten his fille.
 And whan it hadde of this fold flessch and blood taken,
 Was nevere leef upon lynde lighter thereafter,
 And portatif and persaunt as the point of a nedle,
 That myghte noon armure it lette ne none heighe walles.
 " Forthi is love ledere of the Lordes folk of hevene,
 And a meene, as the mair is, [inmiddles] the kyng and the commune;
 Right so is love a ledere and the lawe shapeth:
 Upon man for hise mysdedes the mercymment he taxeth.
 And for to knowen it kyndely -- it comseth by myght,
 And in the herte, there is the heed and the heighe welle.
 For in kynde knowynge in herte ther [coms]eth a myght --
 And that falleth to the Fader that formed us alle,
 Loked on us with love and leet his sone dye
 Mekely for oure mysdedes, to amenden us alle.
 And yet wolde he hem no wo that wroughte hym that peyne,
 But mekely with mouthe mercy he bisoughte,
 To have pite of that peple that peyned hym to dethe.
 " Here myghtow sen ensample in hymself oone --
 That he was myghtful and meke, and mercy gan graunte
 To hem that hengen hym heigh and his herte thirled.
 " Forthi I rede yow riche, haveth ruthe of the povere,
 Though ye be myghty to mote, beeth meke in youre werkes,
 For the same mesure that ye mete, amys outhur ellis,
 Ye shulle ben weyen therwith whan ye wenden hennes:
Eadem mensura qua mensi fueritis remecietur vobis.
 For though ye be trewe of youre tonge and troweliche wyne,
 And as chaste as a child that in chirche wepeth,
 But if ye loven leelly and lene the povere
 Of swich good as God sent, goodliche parteth,
 Ye ne have na moore merite in Masse ne in houres
 Than Malkyn of hire maydenhede, that no man desireth.
 For James the gentile jugged in hise bokes
 That feith withouten feetis (feblere] than nought,
 And as deed as a dorenai but if the dedes folwe:
Fides sine operibus mortua est &c.

"Forthi chastite withouten charite worth cheyned in helle;
It is as lewed as a lampe that no light is inne.
Manye chapeleyns arn chaste, ac charite is aweye;
Are none hardere than hii whan [hii] ben avaunced:
Unkynde to hire kyn and to alle Cristene,
Chewen hire charite and chiden after moore --
Swich chastite withouten charite worth cheyned in helle.
Manye curatours kepen hem clene of hire bodies;
Thei ben acombred with coveitise, thei konne noght out crepe,
So harde hath avarice yhasped hem togideres.
And that is no truthe of the Trinite, but tricherie of helle,
And lernynge to lewed men the latter for to deele.
For [thise ben wordes] writen in the [Euaungelie]:
"" Date, et dabitur vobis -- for I deele yow alle.
And that is the lok of love that leteth out my grace,
To conforten the carefulle acombred with synne."
Love is leche of lif and next Oure Lord selve,
And also the graithe gate that goth into hevene.
Forthi I seye as I seide er by sighte of the textes:
Whan alle tresors ben tried, Treuthe is the beste.
"Now have I told thee what truthe is -- that no tresor is bettre --
I may no lenger lenge thee with; now loke thee Oure Lord!"

Passus 2

Yet I courbed on my knees and cried hire of grace,
And seide, " Mercy, madame, for Marie love of hevene,
That bar that blisful barn that boughte us on the Rode --
Kenne me by sorn craft to knowe the false.'
Loke upon thi let-t half, and lo where he stondeth --
Bothe Fals and Favel, and hire feeres manye!'
I loked on my left half as the Lady me taughte,
And was war of a womman wonderliche yclothed --
Purfiled with pelure, the pureste on erthe,
Ycorouned with a coroune, the Kyng hath noon bettre.
Fetisliche hire fyngres were fretted with gold wyr,
And thereon rede rubies as rede as any gleede,
And diamaundes of derrest pris and double manere saphires,
Orientals and ewages envenymes to destroye.
Hire robe was ful riche, of reed scarlet engreyned,
With ribanes of reed gold and of riche stones.
Hire array me ravysshed, swich richesse saugh I newere.

I hadde wonder what she was and whos wif she were.
"What is this womman,' quod I, so worthili atired?"
"That is Mede the mayde.' quod she, hath noyed me ful ofte,
And ylakked my lemman that Leautee is hoten,
And bilowen h[ym] to lordes that lawes han to kepe.
In the Popes paleis she is pryvee as myselve,
But soothnesse wolde noght so -- for she is a bastard,
For Fals was hire fader that hath a fikel tonge,
And nevere sooth seide sithen he com to erthe;
And Mede is manered after hym, right as [asketh kynde]:
Qualis pater, talis filius. Bona arbor bonum fructum facit.
"I oughthe ben hyere than [heo] -- I kam of a bettre.
My fader the grete God is and ground of alle graces,
Oo God withouten gynnyng, and I his goode doughter,
And hath yeven me Mercy to marie with myselve;
And what man be merciful and leelly me love
Shal be mylord and I his leef in the heighe hevene;
And what man taketh Mede. myn heed dar I legge
That he shal lese for hire love a lappe of Caritatis.
"How construeth David the King of men that [cacch]eth Mede,
And men of this moolde that maynteneth truthe,
And how ye shul save yourself? The Sauter bereth witnesse:
Domine, quis habitabit in tabernaculo tuo, &c.
"And now worth this Mede ymarried to a mansed sherewe,
To oon Fals Fikel-tonge, a fendes biyete.
Favel thorough his faire speche hath this folk enchaunted,
And al is Lieres ledynge that [lady] is thus ywedded.
Tomorwe worth ymaked the maydenes bridale;
And there myghtow witen if thow wilt whiche thei ben alle
That longen to that lordshipe, the lasse and the moore.
Knowe hem there if thow kanst, and kepe [thee from hem alle],
And lakke hem noght but lat hem worthe, til Leaute oe Justice
And have power to punyssh hem -- thanne put forth thi reson.
Now I bikenne thee Crist,' quod she, "and his clene moder,
And lat no conscience acombred thee for coveitise of Mede.'
Thus lefte me that lady liggyng aslepe,
And how Mede was ymarried in metels me thoughte --
That al the riche retenaunce that regneth with the False
Were boden to the bridale on bothe two sides,
Of alle manere of men, the meene and the riche.
To marien this mayde was many man assembled,
As of knyghtes and of clerkes and oother commune peple,
As sisours and somonours, sherreves and hire clerkes,

Bedelles and baillifs and brocours of chaffare,
Forgoers and vitailleurs and vokettes of the Arches;
I kan noght rekene the route that ran aboute Mede.
Ac Symonie and Cyvyllle and sisours of courtes
Were moost pryvee with Mede of any men, me thoughte.
Ac Favel was the firste that fette hire out of boure
And as a brocour broughte hire to be with Fals enjoined.
Whan Symonye and Cyvyllle seighe hir bother wille,
Thei assented for silver to seye as bothe wolde.
Thanne leep Liere forth and seide, "Lo! here a chartre
That Gile with his grete othes gaf hem togidere," --
And preide Cyvyllle to see and Symonye to rede it.
Thanne Symonye and Cyvyllle stonden forth bothe
And unfoldeth the feffement that Fals hath ymaked,
And thus bigynnen thise gomes to greden ful heighe:
"Sciant presentes & futuri, &c.
Witeth and witnesseth, that wonieth upon this erthe,
That Mede is ymarried moore for hire goodes
Than for any vertue or fairnesse or any free kynde.
Falsnesse is fayn of hire for he woot hire riche;
And Favel with his fikel speche feffeth by this chartre
To be Princes in Pride, and povertie to despise,
To bakbite and to bosten and bere fals witnesse,
To scorne and to scolde and sclaundre to make,
Unbuxome and bolde to breke the ten hestes.
And the erldom of Envye and Wrathe togideres,
With the chastilet of cheste and chaterynge out of reson.
The countee of Coveitise and alle the costes about --
That is usure and avarice -- al I hem graunte
In bargaynes and in brocages with al the burghe of thefte,
And al the lordshipe of Leccherie in lengthe and in brede --
As in werkes and in wordes and in waitynges with eighes,
And in wedes and in wisshynges and with ydel thoughtes
Ther as wil wolde and werkmanshippe faylith.'
Glotonye he gaf hem ek and grete othes togidere,
And al day to drynken at diverse tavernes,
And there to jangle and jape and jugge hir evencristen,
And in fastynges dayes to frete er ful tyme were.
And thanne to sitten and soupen til sleep hem assaille,
And bredden at burgh swyn, and bedden hem esily,
Til Sleuthe and sleep sliken hise sydes;
And thanne wanhope to awaken hym so with no wil to amende,
For he leveth be lost -- this is his laste ende.

"And thei to have and to holde, and hire heires after,
 A dwellynge with the devel, and dampned be for evere,
 With alle the appurtinaunces of Purgatorie into the pyne of helle-
 Yeldyng for this thyng at one yeres ende
 Hire soules to Sathan, to suffre with hym peynes,
 And with hym to wonye with wo while God is in hevene.'
 In witnesse of which thyng Wrong was the firste,
 And Piers the Pardoner of Paulynes doctrine,
 Bette the Bedel of Bokynghamshire,
 Reynald the Reve of Rutland Sokene,
 Munde the Millere -- and many mo othere.
 "In the date of the devel this dede I assele
 By sighte of Sire Symonie and Cyvyles leeve.'
 Thanne tened hym Theologie whan he this tale herde,-
 And seide to Cyvyle, "Now sorwe mote thou have --
 Swiche weddynges to werche to wrathe with Truthe!
 And er this weddyng be wrought, wo thee bitide!
 For Mede is muliere, of Amendes engendred;
 And God graunted to gyve Mede to truthe,
 And thou hast gyven hire to a gilour -- now God gyve thee sorwe!
 The text telleth thee noght so, Truthe woot the sothe,
 For Dignus est operarius his hire to have --
 And thou hast fest hire to Fals; fy on thi lawe!
 For al bi lesynges thou lyvest and lecherouse werkes.
 Symonye and thiself shenden Holi Chirche,
 The notaries and ye noyen the peple.
 Ye shul abiggen bothe, by God that me made!
 " Wel ye witen, wernardes, but if youre wit faille,
 That Fals is feithlees and fikel in hise werkes
 And as a bastarde ybore of Belsabubbes kynne.
 And Mede is muliere, a maiden of goode,
 And myghte kisse the Kyng for cosyn and she wolde.
 Forthi wercheth by wisdom and by wit also,
 And ledeth hire to Londoun, there lawe is yshewed,
 If any lawe wol loke thei ligge togideres.
 And though justices juggen hire to be joyned with Fals,
 Yet be war of the weddyng -- for witty is Truthe,
 And Conscience is of his counseil and knoweth yow echone,
 And if he fynde yow in defaute and with the false holde,
 It shal bisitte youre soules ful soure at the laste.'
 Herto assenteth Cyvyle, ac Symonye ne wolde,
 Til he hadde silver for his se[el] and [signes] of notaries.
 Thanne fette Favel forth floryns ynowe

And bad Gile, "Go gyve gold al aboute,
And namely to the notaries, that hem noon faille;
And feffe Fals-witnesse with floryns ynowe,
For he may Mede amaistrye and maken at my wille.'
Tho this gold was ygyve, gret was the thonkyng
To Fals and to Favel for hire faire yiftes,
And comen to conforten from care the-False,
And seiden, "Certes, sire, cessen shul we nevere,
Til Mede be thi wedded wif thorough wit of us alle;
For we have Mede amaistried with oure murie speche,
That she graunteth to goon with a good wille
To London, to loken if the lawe wolde
Juggen yow joyntly in joie for evere.'
Thanne was Falsnesse fayn and Favel as blithe,
And leten somone alle segges in shires aboute,
And bad hem alle be bown, beggers and othere,
To wenden with hem to Westmynstre to witnesse this dede.
Ac thanne cared thei for caples to carien hem thider;
And Favel fette forth thanne foles ynowe
And sette Mede upon a sherreve shoed al newe,
And Fals sat on a sisour that softeli trotted
And Favel on a flaterere fetisly atired.
Tho hadde notaries none; anoyed thei were
For Symonye and Cyvyll sholde on hire feet gange.
Ac thanne swoor Symonye and Cyvyll bothe
That somonours golde be sadeled and serven hem echone.
"And late apparaille thise provisours in palfreyes wise;
Sire Symonye hymself shal sitte upon hir bakkes.
Denes and southdenes, drawe yow togideres;
Erchedekenes and officials and alle youre registrers,
Lat sadle hem with silver oure synne to suffre --
As devoutrye and divorces and derne usurie --
To bere bisshopes aboute abroad in visitynge.
Paulynes pryvees for pleintes in consistorie
Shul serven myself that Cyvyle is nempned.
And cartsadle the commissarie -- oure cart shal he [drawe],
And fecchen us vitailles at fornicatores,
And maketh of Lyere a lang cart to leden alle thise othere,
As fobberes and faitours that on hire feet rennen.'
And thus Fals and Favel fareth forth togideres,
And Mede in the middes and alle thise men after.
I have no tome to telle the tail that hem folweth,
Of many maner man that on this molde libbeth,

Ac Gyle was forgoer and gyed hem alle.
Sothnesse seigh hem wel, and seide but litel,
A[c] priked his palfrey and passed hem alle,
And com to the Kynges court and Conseience it tolde,
And Conseience to the Kyng carped it after.
" Now, by Cryst!" quod the Kyng, "and I cacche myghte
Fals or Favel or any of hise feeris,
I wolde be wroken of tho wrecches that wercheth so ille,
And doon hem hange by the hals and alle that hem maynteneth.
Shal nevere man of this molde meynprise the leeste,
But right as the lawe loke[th], lat falle on hem alle!"
And comaunded a constable that com at the firste,
To attachen tho tyraunts: "For any [tresor], I hote,
Fettreth Falsnesse faste, for any kynnes yiftes,
And girdeth of Gyles heed -- lat hym go no ferther;
And bringeth Mede to me maugree hem alle!
And if ye lacche Lyere, lat hym noght ascapen
Er he be put on the pillory, for any preyere, I hote.'
Drede at the dore stood and the doom herde,
And how the Kyng comaunded constables and sergeaunts
Falsnesse and his Felawship to fettren and to bynden.
Thanne Drede wente wyghtliche and warned the False,
And bad hym fle for fere, and hise feeris alle.
Falsnesse for fere thanne fleigh to the freres
And Gyle dooth hym to go, agast for to dye.
Ac marchaunts metten with hym and made hym abyde,
And bishetten hym in hire shoppes to shewen hire ware,
Apparailed hym as a prentice the peple to serve.
Lightliche Lyere leep away thennes,
Lurkyng thorough lanes, tolugged of manye.
He was nowher welcome for his manye tales,
Over al yhonted and yhote trusse,
Til pardoners hadde pite, and pulled hym into house.
They wesshen hym and wiped hym and wunden hym in cloutes,
And senten hym [on Sondayes with seles] to chirches,
And gaf pardoun for pens poundemele aboute.
Thanne lourede leches, and lettres thei sente
That he sholde wonye with hem watres to loke.
Spycers speken with hym to spien hire ware,
For he kouthe on hir craft and knew manye gommes.
Ac mynstrales and messagers mette with hym ones,
And [with]helden hym an half yeer and ellevene dayes.
Freres with fair speche fetten hymthen,

And for knowynge of comeres coped hym as a frere;
Ac he hath leve to lepen out as ofte as hym liketh,
And is welcome whan he wile, and woneth with hem ofte.
Alle fledden for fere and flowen into hernes;
Save Mede the mayde na mo dorste abide.
Ac trewely to telle, she trembled for fere,
And ek wepte and wrong whan she was attached.

Passus 3

Now is Mede the mayde and no mo of hem alle,
With bedeles and baillies brought bifore the Kyng.
The Kyng called a clerk -- I kan noght his name --
To take Mede the maide and maken hire at ese.
I shal assayen hire myself and soothliche appose
What man of this world that hire were levest.
And if she werche bi wit and my wil folwe
I wol forgyven hire this gilt, so me God helpe!
Curteisly the clerk thanne, as the Kyng highte,
Took Mede bi the myddel and broghte hire into chambre.
Ac ther was murthe and mynstralcie Mede to plese;
That wonyeth at Westmynstre worshipeth hire alle.
Gentilliche with joye the justices somme
Busked hem to the bour ther the burde dwellede,
Conforted hyre kyndely by Clergies leve,
And seiden, "Mourne noght, Mede, ne make thow no sorwe,
For we wol wisse the Kyng and thi wey shape
To be wedded at thi wille and wher thee leef liketh
For al Conscienees cast or craft, as I trowe.'
Mildely Mede thanne merciede hem alle
Of hire grete goodnesse -- and gaf hem echone
Coupes of clene gold and coppes of silver,
Rynges with rubies and riches manye,
The leeste man of hire meynee a moton of golde.
Thanne laughte thei leve thise lordes at Mede.
With that comenclerkes to conforten hire the same,
And beden hire be blithe -- "For we beth thyne owene
For to werche thi wille the while thow myght laste.'
Hendiliche heo thanne bihighte hem the same --
To loven hem lelly and lordes to make,
And in the consistorie at the court do callen hire names.
"Shal no lewednesse lette the clerke that I lovye,

That he ne worth first avaunced for I am biknowen
Ther konnynges clerkes shul clokke bihynde.'
Thanne cam ther a confessour coped as a frere;
To Mede the mayde [mekeliche he loutede]
And seide ful softly, in shrift as it were,
"Theigh lewed men and lered men hadde leyen by thee bothe.
And Falshede hadde yfolwed thee alle thise fifty wynter,
I shal assoille thee myself for a seem of whete,
And also be thi bedeman, and bere wel thyn er[ende],
Amonges knyghtes and clerkes, Conscience to torne.
Thanne Mede for hire mysdedes to that man kneled,
And shrof hire of hire sherewednesse -- shamelees, I trowe;
Tolde hym a tale and took hym a noble
For to ben hire bedeman and hire brocour als.
Thanne he assoiled hire soone and sithen he seide,
" We have a wyndow in werchyng, wole stonden us ful hye;
Woldestow glaze that gable and grave therinne thy name,
Sykir sholde thi soule be hevene to have.'
" Wiste I that,' quod the womman,-I wolde noght spare
For to be youre frend, frere, and faile yow nevere
While ye love lordes that lecherie haunten
And lakketh noght ladies that loven wel the same.
It is a freletee of flessch -- ye fynden it in bokes --
And a cours of kynde. wherof we comen alle.
Who may scape the sclaundre, the scathe is soone amended;
It is synne of the sevene sonnest relessed.
Have mercy,' quod Mede, of men that it haunteth
And I shal covere youre kirk, youre cloistre do maken,
Woves do whiten and wyndowes glazen,
Do peynten and portraye [who paied] for the makynge,
That every segge shall see I am suster of youre house.'
Ac God to alle good folk swich gravyng defendeth --
To writen in wyndowes of hir wel dedes --
An aventure pride be peynted there, and pomp of the world;
For God knoweth thi conscience and thi kynde wille,
And thi cost and thi coveitise and who the catel oughte.
Forthi I lere yow lordes, leveth swiche w[rityng]es --
To writen in wyndowes of youre wel dedes
Or to greden after Goddes men whan ye [gyve] doles,
On aventure ye have youre hire here and youre hevene als.
Nesciat sinsitra quid faciat dextra:
Lat noght thi left half, late ne rathe,
Wite what thow werchest with thi right syde --

For thus bit the Gospel goode men doon hir almesse.
Maires and maceres, that menes ben bitwene
The kyng and the comune to kepe the lawes,
To punyssh on pillories and on pynyng stooles
Brewesters and baksters, bochiers and cokes --
For thise are men on this molde that moost harm wercheth
To the povere peple that parcelmele buggen.
For thei poison the peple pryveliche and ofte,
Thei richen thorough regratie and rentes hem biggen
With that the povere peple sholde putte in hire wombe.
For toke thei on trewely, thei tymbred nought so heighe,
Ne boughte none burgages -- be ye ful certeyne!
Ac Mede the mayde the mair h[eo] bisought[e]
Of alle swiche selleris silver to take,
Or presents withouten pens -- as pieces of silver,
Rynges or oother riches the regratiers to mayntene.
" For my love, ' quod that lady, love hem echone,
And suffre hem to selle somdel ayeins reson.'
Salamon the sage a sermon he made
For to amenden maires and men that kepen lawes,
And tolde hem this teme that I telle thynke:
Ignis devorabit tabernacula eorum qui libenter accipiunt munera, &c.
Among thise lettrede leodes this Latyn is to mene
That fir shall falle and [for]brenne al to bloo askes
The houses and the homes of hem that desireth
Yiftes or yeresyves because of hire offices.
The Kyng fro counseil cam, and called after Mede,
And of sente hire as swithe with sergeaunts manye
That broughte hire to boure with blisse and with joye.
Curteisly the Kyng thanne comsed to telle;
To Mede the mayde he melleth thise wordes:
" Unwittily, womman, wrought hastow ofte;
Ac worse wroghtest thou nevere than thou thow Fals toke.
But I forgyve thee that gilt, and graunte thee my grace;
Hennes to thi deeth day do so na moore!
I have a knyght, Conscience, cam late fro biyonde;
If he wilneth thee to wif, wiltow hym have?"
"Ye, Iord, ' quod that lady, " Lord forbede it ellis!
But I be holly at youre heste, lat hange me soone!"
Thanne was Conscience called to come and appere
Bifore the Kyng and his conseil, as clerkes and othere.
Knelynge Conscience to the Kyng louted,
To wite what his wille were and what he do sholde.

"Woltow wedde this womman,' quod the Kyng, "if I wole assente?
For she is fayn of thi felaweshipe, for to be thi make.'
Quod Conscience to the-Kyng, "Crist it me forbede!
Er I wedde swich a wif, wo me bitide!
For she is frele of hire feith, fikel of hire speche,
And maketh men mysdo many score tymes.
In trust of hire tresor she t[en]jeth ful manye:
Wyves and widewes wantounnesse she techeth,
And lereth hem lecherie that loveth hire yiftes.
Poure fader she felled thorough false biheste,
And hath apoisoned popes and peired Holy Chirche.
Is noght a better baude, by Hym that me made,
Bitwene hevene and helle, in erthe though men soghte!
For she is tikel of hire tail, talewis of tonge,
As commune as the cartwey to [knaves and to alle] --
To monkes, to mynstrales, to meseles in hegges;
Sisours and somonours, swiche men hire preiseth,
Sherreves of shires were shent if she ne were --
For she dooth men lese hire lond and hire lif bothe.
She leteth passe prisoners and paieth for hem ofte,
And gyveth the gailers gold and grotes togidres
To unfette the Fals -- fle where hym liketh;
And taketh the trewe bi the top and tieth hym faste,
And hangeth hym for hatrede that harm[e]de nevere.
"To be cursed in consistorie she counteth noght a russhe
For she copeth the commissarie and coteth hise clerkes.
She is assoiled as soone as hireself liketh;
She may neigh as muche do in a monthe ones
As youre secret seel in sixe seore dayes!
She is pryvee with the Pope -- provisours it knoweth,
For Sire Symonie and hirselve seleth hire bulles.
She blesseth thise bisshopes, theigh thei be lewed;
Provendreth persones and preestes she maynteneth
To h[old]e lemmans and lotebies alle hire lif daies
And bryngen forth barnes ayein forbode lawes.
"Ther she is wel with the kyng, wo is the reaume --
For she is favorable to Fals and defouleth truthe ofte.
By Jesus! with hire jeweles youre justice she shendeth
And lith ayein the lawe and letteth hym the gate,
That feith may noght have his forth, hire floryns go so thinke.
She ledeth the lawe as hire list and lovedaies maketh,
And doth men lese thorough hire love that lawe myghte wyne --
The maze for a mene man, though he mote evere!

Lawe is so lordlich, and looth to maken ende:
Withouten presents or pens he pleseth wel fewe.
"Barons and burgeises she bryngeth in sorwe,
And al the comune in care that coveiten lyve in truthe,
For clergie and coveitise she coupleth togidres.
This is the lif of that lady -- now Lord yyve hire sorwe,
And alle that maynteneth hire men, meschaunee hem bitide!
For povere men may have no power to pleyne though thei smerte,
Swich a maister is Mede among men of goode.'
Thanne mournede Mede and mened hire to the Kyng
To have space to speke, spede if she myghte.
The Kyng graunted hire grace with a good wille:
"Excuse thee if thou kanst; I kan namoore seggen,
For Conscience accuseth thee, to congeien thee for evere.'
"Nay, lord," quod that lady, "leveth hym the werse
Whan ye witen witterly wher the wrong liggeth.
Ther that meschief is gret, Mede may helpe.
And thou knowest, Conscience, I kam noght to chide,
Ne to deprave thi persone with a proud herte.
Wel thou woost, wernard, but if thou wolt gabbe,
Thou hast hanged on myn half ellevene tymes,
And also griped my gold, and gyve it where thee liked.
ow wratest thou now, wonder me thyng !
Yet I may, as I myghte, menske thee with yiftes
And mayntene thi manhode moore than thou knowest.
"Ac thou hast famed me foule biforn the Kyng here;
For killed I nevere no kyng, ne counseiled therafter,
Ne dide as thou demest -- I do it on the Kyng.
In Normandye was he noght noyed for my sake --
Ac thou thyself, soothly, shamedest hym ofte:
Crope into a cabane for cold of thi nayles,
Wendest that wynter wolde han ylasted evere,
And dreddest to be ded for a dym cloude,
And hyedest homward for hunger of thi wombe.
Withouten pite, pilour, povere men thou robbedest
And bere hire bras at thi bak to Caleis to selle,
Ther I lafte with my lord his lif for to save.
I made his men murye and mournynge lette;
I batred hem on the bak and boldede hire hertes,
And dide hem hoppe for hope to have me at wille.
Hadde I ben marchal of his men, by Marie of hevene!
I dorste have leyd my lif and no lasse wedde,
He sholde have be lord of that lond in lengthe and in brede,

And also kyng of that kith his kyn for to helpe --
The leeste brol of his blood a barones pierre!
Cowardly thow, Conscience, conseiledest hym thennes --
To leven his lordshipe for a litel silver,
That is the richeste reaume that reyn overhoveth.
"It bicometh to a kyng that kepeth a reaume
To yeve [men mede] that mekely hym serveth --
To aliens and to alle men, to honouren hem with yiftes;
Mede maketh hym biloved and for a man holden.
Emperours and erles and alle manere lordes
Thorough yiftes han yonge men to yerne and to ryde.
The Pope and alle prelates presents underfongen
And medeth men hemselven to mayntene hir lawes,
Servaunts for hire servyce, we seeth wel the sothe,
Taken mede of hir maistres, as thei mowe acorde.
Beggeres for hir biddynge bidden men mede.
Mynstrales for hir myrthe mede thei aske.
The Kyng hath mede of his men to make pees in londe.
Men that [kenne clerkes] craven of hem mede.
Preestes that prechen the peple to goode
Asken mede and massepens and hire mete [also].
Alle kyn crafty men craven mede for hir prentices.
Marchaundise and mede mote nede go togideres:
No wight, es I wene, withouten Mede may libbe!
Quod the Kyng to Conscience, "By Crist, as me thynketh,
Mede is worthi the maistrie to have!-
"Nay," quod Conscience to the Kyng and kneled to the erthe,
"Ther are two manere of medes, my Iord, by youre leve.
That oon God of his grace graunteth in his blisse
To tho that wel werchen while thei ben here.
The Prophete precheth therof and putte it in the Sauter:
Domine, quis habitabit in tabernaculo tuo?
Lord, who shal wonye in thi wones with thyne holy seintes
Or resten in thyne holy hilles? -- This asketh David.
And David assoileth it hymself, as the Sauter telleth:
Qui ingreditur sine macula et operatur iusticiam.
Tho that entren of o colour and of one wille,
And han ywroght werkes with right and with reson,
And he that useth noght the lyf of usurie
And enformeth povere men and pursueth truthe:
Qui pecuniam suam non dedit ad usuram, et munera super innocentem &c.
And alle that helpen the innocent and holden with the rightfulle,
Withouten mede doth hem good and the truthe helpeth --

Swiche manere men, my lord, shul have this firste mede
 Of God at a gret nede, whan thei gon hennes.
 "Ther is another mede mesurelees, that maistres desireth:
 To mayntene mysdoers mede thei take,
 And therof seith the Sauter in a salmes ende --
 In quorum manibus iniquitates sunt; dextra eorum repleta est muneribus:
 And he that gripeth hir gold, so me God helpe,
 Shal abien it bittre, or the Book lieth!
 Preestes and persons that plesynge desireth,
 That taken mede and moneie for masses that thei syngeth,
 Taken hire mede here as Mathew us techeth:
 Amen, amen, receperunt mercedem suam.
 That laborers and lewede [leodes] taken of hire maistres,
 It is no manere mede but a mesurable hire.
 In marchaundise is no mede, I may it wel avowe:
 It is a permutacion apertly -- a penyworth for another.
 "Ac reddestow nevere Regum, thow recrayed Mede,
 Whi the vengeaunce fel on Saul and on his children?
 God sente to Saul by Samuel the prophete
 That Agag of Amalec and al his peple after
 Sholden deye for a dede that doon hadde hire eldres.
 "Forthi,' seide Samuel to Saul, "God hymself hoteth thee
 To be buxom at his biddynge, his wil to fulfille.
 Weend to Amalec with thyn oost, and what thow fyndest there -- sle it:
 Burnes and beestes -- bren hem to dethe!
 Widwes and wyves, wommen and children,
 Moebles and unmoebles, and al thow myght fynde --
 Bren it, bere it noght away, be it never so riche;
 For mede ne for monee, loke thow destruye it!
 Spille it and spare it noght -- thow shalt spede the better."
 And for he coveited hir catel and the kyng spared,
 Forbar hym and his beestes bothe as the Bible witnesseth
 Otherwise than he was warned of the prophete,
 God seide to Samuel that Saul sholde deye,
 And al his seed for that synne shenfulliche ende.
 Swich a meschief Mede made the kyng to have
 That God hated hym for evere and alle his heires after.
 "The culorum of this cas kepe I noght to shewe;
 On aventure it noyed me, noon ende wol I make,
 For so is this world went with hem that han power
 That whoso seith hem sothest is sonnest yblamed!
 "I, Conseience, knowe this, for Kynde Wit it me taughte --
 That Reson shal regne and reaumes governe,

And right as Agag hadde, happe shul somme:
 Samuel shal sleen hym and Saul shal be blamed,
 And David shal be diademed and daunten hem alle,
 And oon Cristene kyng kepen [us] echone.
 Shal na moore Mede be maister as she is nouthe,
 Ac love and lowenesse and leaute togideres --
 Thise shul ben raaistres on moolde [trewe men] to save.
 And whoso trespasseth ayein truthe or taketh ayein his wille,
 Leaute shal don hym lawe, and no lif ellis.
 Shal no sergeant for his service were a sik howve,
 Ne no pelure in his [paviloun] for pledynge at the barre.
 " Mede of mysdoeres maketh manye lordes,
 And over lordes Iawes [led]eth the reaumes.
 Ac kynde love shal come yit and Conscience togideres
 And make of lawe a laborer; swich love shal arise
 And swich pees among the peple and a parfit truthe
 That Jewes shul wene in hire wit, and wexen wonder glade,
 That Moyses or Messie be come into this erthe,
 And have wonder in hire hertes that men beth so trewe.
 "Alle that beren baselard, brood swerd or launce,
 Ax outhur hachet or any wepene ellis,
 Shal be demed to the deeth but if he do it smythye
 into sikel or to sithe, to shaar or to kultour --
 Conflabunt gladios suos in vomeres, &c --
 Ech man to pleye with a plow, pykoise or spade,
 Spynne, or sprede donge, or spille hymself with sleuthe;
 Preestes and persons with Plucebo to hunte,
 And dyngen upon David eche day til eve.
 Huntyng or haukyng if any of hem use,
 His boost of his benefice worth bynomen hym after.
 "Shal neither kyng ne knyght, constable ne meire
 Over[carke] the commune ne to the court sompne,
 Ne putte hem in panel to doon hem plight hir truthe;
 But after the dede that is doon oon doom shal rewarde
 Mercy or no mercy as Truthe [moste] acorde.
 " Kynges court and commune court, consistorie and chapitle --
 Al shal be but oon court, and oon b[ur]n be justice:
 That worth Trewe-tonge, a tidy man that tened me nevere.
 Batailles shul none be, ne no man bere wepene,
 And what smyth that any smytheth be smyte therwith to dethe!
 Non levabit gens contra gentem gladium &c.
 "And er this fortune falle, fynde men shul the worste,
 By sixe sonnes and a ship and half a shef of arwes;

And the myddel of a moone shal make the Jewes torne,
 And Sarsynes for that sighte shul synge Gloria in excelsis &c --
 For Makometh and Mede myshappe shul that tyme;
 For Melius est bonum nomen quam divicie multe.'
 Also wroth as the wynd weex Mede in a while.
 " I kan no Latyn?" quod she. "Clerkes wite the sothe!
 Se what Salomon seith in Sapience bokes:
 That thei that yyven yiftes the victorie wynneth,
 And muche worshipe have therwith, as Holy Writ telleth --
 Honorem adquiret qui dat munera, &c.'
 " I leve wel, lady,' quod Conscience, "that thi Latyn be trewe.
 Ac thow art lik a lady that radde a lesson ones,
 Was omnia probate, and that plesed hire herte --
 For that lyne was no lenger at the leves ende.
 Hadde she loked that other half and the leef torned,
 She sholde have founden fele wordes folwynge therafter:
 Quod bonum est tenete -- Truthe that text made.
 And so [mys]ferde ye, madame -- ye kouthe na moore fynde
 Tho ye loked on Sapience, sittynge in youre studie.
 This text that ye han told were [tidy] for lordes,
 Ac yow failed a konnyng clerk that kouthe the leef han torned.
 And if ye seche Sapience eft, fynde shul ye that folweth.
 A ful teneful text to hem that taketh mede:
 50 And that is Animam autem aufert accipientium &c.
 And that is the tail of the text of that tale ye shewed --
 That theigh we wyne worshipe and with mede have victorie,
 The soule that the soude taketh by so muche is bounde.-

Passus 4

" Cesseth!" seide the Kyng, " I suffre yow no lenger.
 Ye shul saughtne, forsothe, and serve me bothe.
 Kis hire,' quod the Kyng, "Conscience, I hote!"
 " Nay, by Crist!" quod Conscience, " congeye me rather!
 But Reson rede me therto, rather wol I deye.'
 "And I comaunde thee,' quod the Kyng to Conseience thanne,
 "Rape thee to ryde, and Reson that thow fecche.
 Comaunde hym that he come my counseil to here,
 For he shal rule my reaume and rede me the beste
 Mede and of mo othere, what man shal hire wedde,
 And acounte with thee, Conscience, so me Crist helpe,
 How thow lernest the peple, the lered and the lewed!"

"I am fayn of that foreward,' seide the freke thanne,
 And ryt right to Reson and rouneth in his ere,
 And seide hym as the Kyng seide, and sithen took his leve.
 "I shal arraye me to ryde,' quod Reson,-reste thee a while,'
 And called Caton his knave, curteis of speche,
 And also Tomme Trewe-tonge-tel-me-no-tales
 Ne lesynge-to-laughen-of-for-I-loved-hem-nevere.
 " Set my sadel upon Suffre-til-I-se-my-tyme,
 And lat warroke hym wel with witty-wordses gerthes.
 Hange on hym the hevy brydel to holde his heed lowe,
 For he wol make ""wehee" twies er he be there.'
 Thanne Conscience on his capul caireth forth faste,
 And Reson with hym ryt, rownyng togideres
 Whiche maistries Mede maketh on this erthe.
 Oon Waryn Wisdom and Witty his fere
 Folwed hem faste, for thei hadde to doone
 In th'Eseheker and in the Chauncerye, to ben discharged of thynges,
 And riden faste for Reson sholde rede hem the beste
 For to save hem for silver from shame and from harmes.
 A[c] Conscience knew hem wel, thei loved coveitise,
 And bad Reson ryde faste and recche of hir neither:
 "Ther are wiles in hire wordes, and with Mede thei dweneth --
 Ther as wrathe and wranglyng is, ther wyne thei silver;
 Ac there is love and leaute, thei wol noght come there:
 Contricio et infelicitas in viis eorum &c.
 Thei ne gyveth noght of God one goose wyng:
 Non est timor Dei ante oculos eorum &c.
 For thei wolde do moore for a dozeyne chiknes
 Than for the love of Oure Lorde or alle hise leewe seintes!
 Forthi, Reson, lat hem ride, tho riche by hemself --
 For Conscience knoweth hem noght, ne Crist, as I trowe.'
 And thanne Reson rood faste the righte heighe gate,
 As Conscience hym kenned, til thei come to the Kynge.
 Curteisly the Kyng thanne com ayeins Reson,
 And bitwene hymself and his sone sette hym on benche,
 And wordeden wel wisely a gret while togideres.
 And thame com Pees into parliment and putte up a bill-
 How Wrong ayeins his wille hadde his wif taken,
 And how he ravysshede Rose, Reignaldes loove,
 And Margrete of hir maydenhede maugree hire chekes.
 " Bothe my gees and my grys hise gadelynges feccheth;
 I dar noght for fere of hem fighte ne chide.
 He borwed of me bayard and broughte hym hom nevere

Ne no ferthyng therfore, for nought I koude plede.
He maynteneth hise men to murthere myne hewen,
Forstalleth my feires and fighteth in my chepyng,
And breketh up my berne dores and bereth away my whete,
And taketh me but a taille for ten quarters otes.
And yet he beteth me therto and lyth by my mayde;
I am noght hardy for hym unnethe to loke!
The Kyng knew he seide sooth. for Conscience hym tolde
That Wrong was a wikked luft and wroghte muche sorwe.
Wrong was afered thanne, and Wisdom he soughte
To maken pees with hise pens, and profred hym manye,
And seide, "Hadde I love of my lord the Kyng, litel wolde I recche
Theigh Pees and his power pleyned hym evere!"
Tho wan Wisdom and Sire Waryn the Witty,
For that Wrong hadde ywroght so wikked a dede,
And warnede Wrong tho with swich a wis tale --
"Whoso wereheth by wille, writhe maketh ofte.
I seye it by myself -- thow shalt it wel fynde:
But if Mede it make, thi meschief is uppe;
For bothe thi lif and thi lond lyth in his grace.'
Thanne wowede Wrong Wisdom ful yerne
To maken his pees with his pens, handy dandy payed.
Wisdom and Wit thanne wenten togidres,
And token Mede myd hem mercy to wyne.
Pees putte forth his heed and his panne blody:
"Withouten gilt, God woot, gat I this seathe.'
Conseicnce and the commune knowen wel the sothe,
Ac Wisdom and Wit were aboute faste
To overcomen the Kyng with catel, if thei myghte.
The Kyng swor by Crist and by his crowne bothe
That Wrong for hise werkes sholde wo tholie,
And combundede a eonstable to casten hym in irens,
"And lete hym noght this seven yer seen his feet ones.
"God woot,' quod Wisdom, "that were noght the beste!
And he amendes mowe make, Iat Maynprise hym have
And be borch for his bale, and buggen hym boote,
And so amenden that is mysdo, and everemoore the bettere.'
Wit acorded therwith, and seide the same,
"Bettere is that boote bale adoun brynge
Than bale be ybet, and boote nevere the bettere!"
Thanne gan Mede to meken hire, and mercy bisoughte,
And profrede Pees a present al of pure golde.
"Have this, man, of me,' quod she, "to amenden thi scathe,

For I wol wage for Wrong, he wol do so na moore.'
Pitously Pees thanne preyde to the Kyng
To have mercy on that man that mysdide hym so ofte.
"For he hath waged me wel, as Wisdom hym taughte,
And I forgyve hym that gilt with a good wille.
So that the Kyng assente, I kan seye no better,
For Mede hath maad myne amendes -- I may na moore axe.'
"Nay", quod the Kyng tho, "so me Crist helpe!
Wrong wendeth noghtaway er I wite more.
Lope he so lightly, laughen he wolde,
And eft the boldere be to bete myne hewen.
But Reson have ruthe on hym, he shal reste in my stokkes
As longe as [I] lyve, but lowenesse hym borwe.'
Somme radde Reson tho to have ruthe on that shrewe,
And for to counseille the Kyng and Conscience after
That Mede moste be maynpernour, Reson thei bisoughte.
"Reed me noght," quod Reson, "no ruthe to have
Til lordes and ladies loven alle truthe
And haten alle harlotrie, to heren or to mouthen it;
Til Pernelles purfill be put in hire hucche
And childrene cherissynge be chastised with yerdes,
And harlottes holynesse be holden for an hyne;
Til clerkene coveitise be to clothe the povere and fede,
And religiouse romeris Recordare in hir cloistres
As Seynt Beneyt hem bad, Bernard and Fraunceis;
And til prechours prechyng be preved on hemselfe;
Til the Kynges counseil be the commune profit;
Til bisshopes bayardes ben beggeris chaumbres,
Hire haukes and hire houndes help to povere religious;
And til Seint James be sought there I shal assigne --
That no man go to Galis but if he go for evere;
And alle Rome renneres for robberes of biyonde
Bere no silver over see that signe of kyng sheweth --
Neither grave ne ungrave, gold neither silver --
Upon forfeiture of that fee, who fynt hym at Dover,
But if it be marchaunt or his man, or messenger with lettres,
Provysour or preest, or penaunt for hise synnes.
"And yet," quod Reson, "by the Rode! I shal no ruthe have
Whiff Mede hath the maistrie in this moot-halle.
Ac I may shewe ensamples as I se outhur.
I seye it by myself," quod he, "and it so were
That I were kyng with coroune to kepen a reaume,
Sholde nevere Wrong in this world that I wite myghte

Ben unpunysshed in my power, for peril of my soule,
 Ne gete my grace thorough giftes, so me God save!
 Ne for no mede have mercy, but mekenesse it made;
 For "'Nullum molum the man mette with inpunitum
 And bad Nullum bonum be irremuneratum."
 Lat thi confessour, sire Kyng, construe this [E]ngl[ys]sed,
 And if ye werchen it in werk, I wedde myne eris
 That Lawe shal ben a laborer and lede afeld donge
 And Love shal lede thi lond as the leef liketh.'
 Clerkes that were confessours coupled hem togideres
 Al to construe this clause, and for the Kynges profit,
 Ac noght for confort of the cornmune, ne for the Kynges soule,
 For I seigh Mede in the moot-halle on men of lawe wynke,
 And thei laughynge lope to hire and lefte Reson manye.
 Waryn Wisdom wynted upon Mede
 And seide, " Madame, I am youre man, what so my mouth jangle;
 I falle in floryns,' quod that freke, "and faile speche ofte.'
 Alle rightfulle recorded that Reson truthe tolde.
 [Kynde] Wit acorded therwith and comendede hise wordes,
 And the mooste peple in the halle and manye of the grete,
 And leten Mekenesse a maister and Mede a mansed sherewe.
 Love leet of hire light, and Leaute yet lasse,
 And seide it so heighc that all the halle it herde:
 "Whoso wilneth hire to wyve, For welthe of hire goodes --
 But he be knowe for a cokewold, kut of my nose!'
 Mede mornede tho, and made hevy chere,
 For the mooste commune of that court called hire an hore.
 Ac a sisour and a somonour sued hire faste,
 And a sherreves clerk bisherewed al the route:
 " For ofte have I,' quod he, 'holpen yow at the barre,
 And yet yeve ye me nevere the worth of a risshe!'
 The Kyng callede Conseience and afterward Reson,
 And recordede that Reson hadde rightfully shewed ;
 And modiliche upon Mede with myght the Kyng loked,
 And gan wexe wroth with Lawe, for Mede almoost hadde shent it,
 And seide,-Thorough youre lawe, as I leve, I lese manye chetes;
 Mede overmaistreth Lawe and muche truthe letteth.
 Ac Reson shal rekene with yow, if I regne any while, -
 And deme yow, bi this day, as ye han deserved.
 Mede shal noght maynprise yow, by the Marie of hevene!
 I wole have leaute in lawe, and lete be al youre jangling,
 And as moost folk witnesseth wel, Wrong shal be demed.'
 Quod Conscience to the Kyng, 'But the commune wole assente,-

It is ful hard, by myn heed, herto to brynge it,
 [And] alle youre lige leodes to lede thus evene.'
 "By Hym that raughte on the Rood!" quod Reson to the Kyng,
 But if I rule thus youre reaume, rende out my guttes --
 If ye bidden buxomnesse be of myn assent.'
 "And I assente," seith the Kyng, "by Seinte Marie my lady,
 Be my Counseil comen of clerkes and of erles.
 Ac redily, Reson, thow shalt noght ride hennes;
 For as longe as I lyve, lete thee I nelle.'
 'I am al redy.' quod Reson, "to reste with yow evere;
 So Conscience be of oure counceil, I kepe no bettre.'
 "And I graunte," quod the Kyng, "Goddess forbode he faile!
 Als longe as oure lyf lasteth, lyve we togideres!"

Passus 5

The Kyng and hise knyghtes to the kirke wente
 To here matyns of the day and the masse after.
 Thanne w~ked I of my wynkyng and wo was withalle
 That I ne hadde slept sadder and yseighen moore.
 Ac er I hadde faren a furlong, feyntise me hente,
 That I ne myghte ferther a foot for defaute of slepyng.
 I sat softly adoun and seide my bileve,
 And so I bablede on my bedes, thei broughte me aslepe.
 And thanne saugh I mucche moore than I bifore tolde --
 For I seigh the feld ful of folk that I before of seide,
 And how Reson gan arayen hym al the reaume to preche,
 And with a cros afore the Kyng comsede thus to techen.
 He preved that thise pestilences were For pure synne,
 And the south-westrene wynd on Saterdag at even
 Was pertliche for pride and for no point ellis.
 Pyries and plum-trees were puffed to the erthe
 In ensample, ye segges, ye sholden do the bettre.
 Beches and brode okes were blowen to the grounde
 And turned upward here tail in tokenyng of drede
 That dedly synne er domesday shal fordoon hem alle.
 Of this matere I myghte mamelen ful longe,
 Ac I shal seye as I saugh, so me God helpe,
 How pertly afore the peple prechen gan Reson.
 He bad Wastour go werche what he best kouth
 And wynnen his wastyng with som maner crafte.
 He preide Pemele hir purfil to lete,

And kepe it in hire cofre for catel at hire nede.
 Tomme Stowue he taughte to take two staves
 And fecche Felice horn fro wyve pyne.
 He warnede Watte his wif was to blame
 For hire heed was worth half marc and his hood noght worth a grote,
 And bad Bette kutte a bough outhur tweye
 And bete Beton therwith but if she wolde werche.
 And thanne he chargede chapmen to chastisen hir children:
 "Late no wynnyng forwanye hem while thei be yonge,
 Ne for no poustee of pestilence plese hem noght out of reson.
 My sire seide so to me, and so dide my dame,
 That the levere child the moore loore bihoveth;
 And Salamon seide the same, that Sapience made --
 " Qui parcit virge odit filium.
 Whoso spareth the spryng spilleth hise children."
 And sithen he preide prelates and preestes togideres,
 " That ye prechen to the peple, preve it yowselve,
 And dooth it in dede -- it shal drawe yow to goode.
 If ye leven as ye leren us, we shul leve yow the bettre.'
 And sithen he radde Religion hir rule to holde --
 " Lest the Kyng and his Conseil youre comunes apeire
 And be stywards of youre stedes til ye be [stew]ed bettre.'
 And sithen he counseiled the Kyng his commune to lovyte:
 "It is thi tresor, if treson ne were, and tryacle at thy nede.'
 And sithen he preide the Pope have pite on Holy Chirche,
 And er he gyve any grace, governe first hymselfe.
 "And ye that han lawes to kepe, lat Truthe be youre coveitise
 Moore than gold outhur giftes if ye wol God plese;
 For whoso contrarieth Truthe. He telleth in the Gospel,
 Amen dico vobis, nescio Vos.
 And ye that seke Seynt James and seyntes of Rome,
 Seketh Seynt Truthe, for he may save yow alle.
 Qui cum Patre et Filio -- that faire hem bifalle
 That seweth my sermon' -- and thus seyde Reson."
 Thanne ran Repentaunce and reherced his teme
 And gart Wille to wepe water with hise eighen.
 Pernele Proud-herte platte hire to the erthe
 And lay longe er she loked, and-Lord, mercy!' cryde,
 And bihighte to Hym that us alle made
 She sholde unsowen hir serk and sette there an heyre
 To affaiten hire flessch that fiers was to synne.
 " Shal nevere heigh herte me hente, but holde me lowe
 And suffre to be mysseyd -- and so dide I nevere.

But now wole I meke me and mercy biseche
For al that I have hated in myn herte.'
Thanne Lechour seide "Allas!" and on Oure Lady cryde,
To maken mercy for hise mysdedes bitwene God and his soule
With that he sholde the Saterdag seven yer therafter
Drynke but myd the doke and dyne but ones.
Envye with hevy herte asked after shrifte
And carefully mea culpa he comsed to shewe.
He was as pale as a pelet, in the palsy he semed,
And clothed in a kaurymaury -- I kouthe it nought discryve --
In kirtel and courtepy, and a knyf by his syde;
Of a freres frokke were the foresleves.
And as a leek that hadde yleye longe in the sonne,
So loked he with lene chekes, lourynghe foule.
His body was to-bollen for wrathe, that he boot hise lippes,
And wryngynghe he yede with the fust -- to wreke hymself he thoughte
With werkes or with wordes whan he seyge his tyme.
Ech a word that he warp was of a neddres tonge;
Of chidynghe and of chalangynghe was his chief liflode,
With bakbitynghe and bismere and berynghe of fals witnesse:
This was al his curteisie where that evere he shewed hym.
"I wolde ben yshryve," quod this sherewe, "and I for shame dorste.
I wolde be gladder, by God! that Gybbe hadde meschaunce
Than though I hadde this wouke ywonne a weye of Essex chese.
I have a neghebore neigh me, I have anoyed hym ofte,
And lowen on hym to lordes to doon hym lese his silver,
And maad his frendes be his foon thorough my false tonge.
His grace and his goode happes greven me ful soore.
Bitwene mayne and mayne I make debate ofte,
That bothe lif and lyme is lost thorough my speche.
And whan I mete hym in market that I moost hate,
I hailse hym hendely, as I his frend were;
For he is doughtier than I, I dar do noon oother;
Ac hadde I maistrie and myght -- God woot my wille!
"And whan I come to the kirk and sholde knele to the Roode
And preye for the peple as the preest techeth --
For pilgrymes and for palmeres, for al the peple after --
Thanne I crye on my knees that Crist yyve hem sorwe
That baren away my bolle and my broke shete.
Away fro the auter thanne turne I myne eighen
And biholde how [Hayne hath a newe cote;
I wisshe thanne it were myn, and al the web after.
And of his lesynghe I laughe -- that li[ght]eth myn herte;

Ac for his wynnynge I wepe and waille the tyme;
And deme men that thei doon ille, there I do wel werse:
Whoso undernymeth me herof, I hate hym dedly after.
I wolde that ech a wight were my knave,
For whoso hath moore than I, that angreth me soore.
And thus I lyve lovelees like a luther dogge
That al my body bolneth for bitter of my galle.
I myghte nought ete many yeres as a man oughte,
For envye and yvel wil is yvel to defie.
May no sugre ne swete thyng aswage my swellyng,
Ne no diapienidion dryve it fro myn herte,
Ne neither shrifte ne shame, but whoso shrape my mawe?'
"Yis, redily!" quod Repentaunce, and radde hym to the beste,
"Sorwe for synnes is savacion of soules."
"I am evere sory," quod [Envye], "I am but selde oother,
And that maketh me thus megre, for I ne may me venge.
Amonges burgeises have I be, [bigg]yng at Londoun,
And gart bakbityng be a brocour to blame mennes ware.
Whan he solde and I nought, thanne was I redy
To lye and to loure on my neghebore and to lakke his chaffare.
I wole amende this if I may, thorough myght of God Almyghty.'
Now awaketh Wrathe, with two white eighen,
And nevelynge with the nose, and his nekke hangyng.
"I am Wrathe," quod he, "I was som tyme a frere,
And the coventes gardyner for to graffen impes.
On lymytours and listres lesynges I ymped,
Til thei beere leves of lowe speche, lordes to plese,
And sithen thei blosmede abroad in boure to here shriftes.
And now is fallen therof a fruyt -- that folk han wel levere
Shewen hire shriftes to hem than shryve hem to hir persons.
And now persons han parceyved that freres parte with hem,
Thise possessioners preche and deprave freres;
And freres fyndeth hem in defaute, as folk bereth witnesse,
That whan thei preche the peple in many places aboute'
I, Wrathe, walke with hem and wisse hem o
Thus thei speken of spiritualte, that either despiseth oother,
Til thei be bothe beggers and by my spiritualte libben,
Or ellis al riche and ryden aboute; I, Wrathe, reste nevere
That I ne moste folwe this wikked folk. For swich is my grace.
"I have an aunte to nonne and an abbess:
Hir were levere swowe or swelte than suffre any peyne.
I have be cook in hir kichene and the covent served
Manye monthes with hem. and with monkes bothe.

I was the prioresse potager and other povere ladies,
And maad hem joutes of janglyng -- that Dame Johane was a bastard,
And Dame Clarice a knyghtes doughter -- ac a cokewold was hir sire,
And Dame Pernele a preestes fyle -- Prioresse worth she nevere,
For she hadde child in chirie-tyme, al oure Chapitre it wiste!
Of wikkede wordes I Wrathe hire wortes made,
Til ""Thow lixt!" and ""Thow lixt!" lopen out at ones
And either hitte oother under the cheke;
Hadde thei had knyves, by Crist! hir either hadde kild oother.
Seint Gregory was a good pope, and hadde a good forwit
That no Prioresse were preest -- for that he [purveiede]:
Thei hadde thanne ben infumis the firste day, thei kan so yvele hele counseil.
"Among monkes I myghte be, ac manye tyme I shonye,
For ther ben manye felle frekes my feeris to asprie --
Bothe Priour and Suppriour and oure Pater Abbas;
And if I telle any tales, thei taken hem togideres,
And doon me faste Frydayes to breed and to watre;
And am chalanged in the Chapitrehous as I a child were,
And baleised on the bare ers -- and no brech bitwene!
Forthi have I no likyng with tho leodes to wonye;
I ete there unthende fissh and feble ale drynke.
Ac outhere while whan wyn cometh, whan I drynke wyn at eve,
I have a flux of a foul mouth wel fyve dayes after.
Al the wikkednesse that I woot by any of oure bretheren,
I cou[gh]e it in oure cloistre, that al oure covent woot it.'
"Now repente thee,' quod Repentaunce, "and reherce thow nevere
Counseil that thow knowest, by contenaunce ne by speche;
And drynk nat over delicatly, ne to depe neither,
That thi wille by cause therof to wrathe myghte turne.
Esto sobrius!' he seide, and assoiled me after,
And bad me wilne to wepe my wikkednesse to amende.
And thanne cam Coveitise, I kan hym naght discryve --
So hungrily and holwe Sire Hervy hym loked.
He was bitelbrowed and baberlipped, with two blered eighen;
And as a letheren purs lolled hise chekes --
Wel sidder than his chyn thei chyveled for elde;
And as a bondeman of his bacon his berd was bidraveled;
With an hood on his heed, a lousy hat above,
In a [torn] tabard of twelf wynter age;
But if a lous couthe lepe the better,
She sholde noght wa[ndr]e on that Welche, so was it thredbare!
" I have ben coveitous,' quod this caytif, " I biknowe it here;
For som tyme I served Symme-atte-Style,

And was his prentice yplight his profit to wayte.
 First I lerned to lye a leef outhur tweyne:
 Wikkedly to weye was my firste lesson.
 To Wy and to Wynchestre I wente to the feyre
 With many manere marchaundise, as my maister me highte.
 Ne hadde the grace of gyle ygo amonges my ware,
 It hadde ben unsold this seven yer, so me God helpe!
 "Thanne drough I me among drapiers, my Donet to lerne,
 To drawe the liser along -- the lenger it semed;
 Among the riche rayes I rendred a lesson --
 To broche hem with a pak-nedle, and playte hem togideres,
 And putte hem in a press[our] and pyned hem therinne
 Til ten yerdes or twelve tolled out thrittene.
 "My wif was a webbe and wollen cloth made;
 She spak to spynnesteres to spynnen it oute.
 The pound that she paid by peised a quartron moore
 Than myn owene auncer wh[an I] weyed truthe.
 "I boughte hire barly -- she brew it to selle.
 Peny ale and puddyng ale she poured togideres;
 For laborers and lowe folk, that lay by hymselfe.
 The beste ale lay in my bour or in my bedchambre,
 And whoso burned therof boughte it therafter --
 A galon for a grote, God woot, no lesse,
 [Whan] it cam in cuppemele -- this craft my wif used!
 Rose the Reqrater was hir righte name;
 She hath holden hukkerie [this ellevene wynter].
 Ac I swere now (so thee Ik!) that synne wol I lete,
 And nevere wikkedly weye ne wikke chaffare use,
 But wenden to Walsyngham, and my wif als,
 And bidde the Roode of Bromholm brynge me out of dette.'
 -Repentedestow evere? ' quod Repentaunce, " or restitution madest? '
 Yis: ones I was yherbemed', quod he. with an heep of charmen:
 I roos whan thei were al-reste and riflede hire malest
 "That was no restitution,' quod Repentaunce, "but a robberis thefte;
 Thow haddest be bettre worthi ben hanged therfore
 Than for al that that thow hast here shewed! '
 -I wende riflynge were restitution.' quod he, "for I lerned nevere rede on
 And I kan no Frenssh. in feith, but of the Fertheste ende of Northfolk.'
 " Usedestow evere usurie,' quod Repentaunce.-in al thi lif tyme? '
 " Nay, sothly,' he seide, "save in my youthe;
 I lerned among Lumbardes a lesson, and of Jewes --
 To weye pens with a peis. and pare the hevyeste,
 And lene it for love of the cros, to legge a wed and lese it.

Swiche dedes I dide write if he his day breke;
 I have mo manoirs thorough rerages than thorough Miseretur et commodat.
 I have lent lordes and ladies my chaffare,
 And ben hire brocour after, and bought it myselve.
 Eschaunges and chevysaunces -- with swich chaffare I dele,
 And lene folk that lese wole a lippe at every noble.
 And with Lumbardes lettres I ladde gold to Rome,
 And took it by tale here and told hem there lasse.'
 "Lentestow evere lordes for love of hire mayntenaunce?"
 "Ye, I have lent lordes. loved me nevere after,
 And have ymaad many a knyght bothe mercer and draper
 That payed nevere For his prentishode noght a peire of gloves!"
 "Hastow pite on povere men that [purely] mote nedes borwe?"
 "I have as muche pite of povere men as pedlere hath of cattes,
 That wolde kille hem, if he cacche hem myghte, for coveitise of hir skynnes!
 "Artow manlich among thi neghebores of thi mete and drynke?"
 "I am holden,' quod he, "as hende as hounde is in kichene;
 Amonges my neghebores namely swich a name ich have.'
 "Now [but thow repente the rather,' quod Repentaunce, "God lene thee- nevere]
 The grace on this grounde thi good wel to bisette,
 Ne thyne heires after thee have joie of that thow wynnest,
 Ne thyne executours wel bisette the silver that thow hem levest:
 And that was wonne with wrong, with wikked men be despended.
 For were I a frere of that hous ther good feith and charite is,
 I nolde cope us with thi catel, ne oure kirk amende,
 Ne have a peny to my pitaunce, so God [pyne] my soule in helle,
 For the beste book in oure hous, theigh brent gold were the leves,
 And I wiste witterly thow were swich as thow tellest!
 Servus es alterius, cum fercula pinguia queris.
 Pane tuo potius vescere, liber eris.
 "Thow art an unkynde creature -- I kan thee noght assoille
 Til thow make restitution' quod Repentaunce,-and rekene with hem alle.
 And sithen that Reson rolle it in the Registre of hevene
 That thow hast maad ech man good, I may thee noght assoille.
 Non dimittitur peccatum donec restituatur ablatum.
 For alle that han of thi good, have God my trouthe,
 Ben holden at the heighe doom to helpe thee to restitue;
 And who so leveth noght this be sooth, loke in the Sauter glose,
 In Miserere mei, Deus, wher I mene truthe:
 Ecce enim veritatem dilexisti, &c.
 Shal nevere werkman in this world thryve with that thow wynnest.
 Cum sancto sanctus eris construwe me this on Englissh.'
 Thanne weex that sherewe in wanhope and wolde han hanged hymself

Ne hadde Repentaunce the rather reconforted hym in this manere:
 " Have mercy in thi mynde, and with thi mouth biseche it,
 For [his] mercy is moore than alle hise othere werkes --
 Misericordia eius super omnia opera eius, &c --
 And al the wikkednesse in this world that man myghte werche or thynke
 Nis na moore to the mercy of God than in[middes] the see a gleede:
 Omnis iniquitas quantum ad misericordiam Dei est quasi scintilla in medio
 maris
 Forthi have mercy in thy mynde -- and marchaundise, leve it!
 For thou hast no good ground to gete thee with a wastel
 But if it were with thi tonge or ellis with thi two hondes.
 For the good that thou hast geten bigan al with falshede,
 And as longe as thou lyvest therwith, thou yeldest noght but borwest.
 And if thou wite nevere to wh[om] ne wh[ere] to restitue,
 Ber it to the Bisshop, and bid hym of his grace
 Bisette it hymself as best is for thi soule.
 For he shal answeere for thee at the heighe dome,
 For thee and for many mo that man shal yeve a rekenyng:
 What he lerned yow in Lente, leve thou noon oother,
 And what he lente yow of Oure Lordes good, to lette yow fro synne'.
 Now bigynneth Gloton for to goto shrifte,
 And kaireth hym to kirkewarde his coupe to shewe.
 Ac Beton the Brewestere bad hym good morwe
 And asked of hym with that, whiderward he wolde.
 "To holy chirche," quod he, "for to here masse,
 And sithen I wole be shryven, and synne na moore.'
 " I have good ale, gossib,' quod she, " Gloton, woltow assaye?"
 " Hastow,' quod he, "any hote spices?"
 "I have pepir and pione,' quod she, "and a pound of garleek,
 A ferthyngworth of fenel seed for fastynge dayes.
 Thanne goth Gloton in, and grete othes after.
 Cesse the Souteresse sat on the benche,
 Watte the Warner and his wif bothe,
 Tymme the Tynkere and tweyne of his [knav]es,
 Hikke the Hakeneyman and Hugh the Nedlere,
 Clarice of Cokkeslane and the Clerk of the chirche,
 Sire Piers of Pridie and Pernele of Flaundres,
 Dawe the Dykere, and a dozeyne othere --
 A Ribibour, a Ratoner, a Rakiere of Chepe,
 A Ropere, a Redyngkyng, and Rose the Dysshare,
 Godefray of Garlekhithe and Griffyn the Walshe,
 And [of] upholderes an heep, erly by the morwe,
 Geve Gloton with glad chere good ale to hanselle.

Clement the Cobelere caste of his cloke,
And at the newe feire nempned it to selle.
Hikke the Hakeneyman hitte his hood after,
And bad Bette the Bocher ben on his syde.
Ther were chapmen ychose this chaffare to preise:
Whoso hadde the hood sholde han amcndes of the cloke.
Tho risen up in rape and rouned togideres,
And preised the penyworthes apart by hemselve.
[There were othes an heep, for oon sholde have the werse];
Thei kouthe noght by hir conscience acorden in truthe,
Til Robyn the Ropere arise the[i by]sou[ght]e,
And nempned hym for a nounpere, that no debat nere.
Hikke the Hostiler hadde the cloke
In covenant that Clement sholde the cuppe fille
And have Hikkes hood the Hostiler, and holden hym yserved;
And whoso repented rathest shoulde aryse after
And greten Sire Gloton with a galon ale.
There was laughynge and lourynge and " Lat go the cuppe!"
[Bargaynes and beverages bigonne to arise;]
And seten so til evensong, and songen umwhile,
Til Gloton hadde yglubbed a galon and a gille.
His guttes bigonne to gothelen as two gredy sowes;
He pissed a potel in a Paternoster-while,
And blew his rounde ruwet at his ruggebones ende,
That alle that herde that horn helde hir nose after
And wissed it hadde ben waxed with a wisp of firses!
He myghte neither steppe ne stonde er he his staf hadde,
And thanne gan he to go like a glemannes bicche
Som tyme aside and som tyme arere,
As whoso leith lynes for to lacche foweles.
And whan he drough to the dore, thanne dymmed hise eighen;
He [thr]umbled on the thressfold and threw to the erthe.
Clement the Cobelere kaughte hym by the myddel
For to liften hym olofte, and leyde hym on his knowes.
Ac Gloton was a gret cherl and a grym in the lifyng,
And koughed up a cawdel in Clementes lappe.
Is noon so hungry hound in Hertfordshire
Dorste lape of that levyng, so unlovely it smaughte!
With al the wo of this world, his wif and his wenche
Baren hym to his bed and broughte hym therinne;
And after al this excesse he had an accidie.
That he sleep Saterdag and Sondag, till sonne yede to reste.
Thanne waked he of his wynkyng and wiped hise eighen;

The first word that he spak was -- 'Where is the bolle?'
His wif [and his wit] edwyte[d] hym tho how wikkedly he lyvede.
And Repentaunce right so rebuked hym that tyme:
"As thow with wordes and werkes hast wroght yvele in thi lyve,
Shryve thee and be shamed therof, and shewe it with thi mouthe.'
'I, Gloton,' quod the gome, 'gilty me yelde --
That I have trespassed with my tonge, I kan noght telle how ofte
Sworen "'Goddess soule and his sydes!' and "So helpe me God and halidome!"
Ther no nede was nyne hyndred tymes;
And overseyen me at my soper and som tyme at Nones,
That I, Gloton, girte it up er I hadde gon a myle,
And yspilt that myghte be spared and spended on som hungry;
Over delicatly on f[ee]styng dayes dronken and eten bothe,
And sat som tyme so long there that I sleep and eet at ones.
For love of tales in tavernes [in]to drynke the moore I dy[v]ed;
And hyed to the mete er noon [on] fastyng dayes.'
" This shewynge shrift,' quod Repentaunce, " shal be meryt to the.'
And thanne gan Gloton greete, and gret dcel to make
For his Iuther lif that he lyved hadde,
And avowed to faste -- "For hunger or for thurste,
Shal never fyssh on Fryday defyen in my wombe
Til Abstinence myn aunte have yyve me leeve --
And yet have I hated hire al my lif tyme!-
Thanne cam Sleuthe al bislabeled, with two slymy eighen.
"I moste sitte,' seide the segge, "or ellis sholde I nappe.
I may noght stonde ne stoupe ne withoute a stool knele.
Were I brought abedde, but if my tailende it made,
Sholde no ryngynge do me ryse er I were ripe to dyne.'
He bigan Benedicite with a bolk, and his brest knocked,
Raxed and rored -- and rutte at the laste.
-What, awake, renk!-quod Repentaunce, 'and rape thee to shryfte!"
"If I sholde deye bi this day,' quod he, "me list nought to loke.
I kan noght parfitly my Paternoster as the preest it syngeth,
But I kan rymes of Robyn Hood and Randolf Erl of Chestre,
Ac neither of Oure Lord ne of Oure Lady the leeste that evere was maked.
I have maad avowes fourty, and foryete hem on the morwe;
I parfournede nevere penaunce as the preest me highte,
Ne right sory for my synnes, yet [seye I] was I nevere.
And if I bidde any bedes, but if it be in wrathe,
That I telle with my tonge is two myle fro myn herte.
I am ocupied eche day, halyday and oother,
With ydel tales at the ale and outhurwhile in chirches;
Goddess peyne and his passion, [pure] selde thenke I on it;

I visited nevere feble men ne fettred folk in puttes;
 I have levere here an harlotrye or a somer game of souters,
 Or lesynges to laughen of and bilye my neghebores,
 Than al that evere Marc made, Mathew, Johan and Lucas.
 And vigilies and fastyng dayes -- alle thise late I passe,
 And ligge abedde in Lenten and my lemman in myne armes
 Til matyns and masse be do, and thanne moste to the Freres;
 Come I to Ite, missa est I holde me yserved.
 I am noght shryven som tyme, but if siknesse it make,
 Noght twyes in two yer, and thanne [telle I up gesse].
 "I have be preest and person passynge thritty wynter,
 Yet kan I neyther solve ne synge ne seintes lyves rede,
 But I kan fynden in a feld or in a furlang an hare
 Bettre than in Beutus vir or in Beati omnes
 Construe clausemel[e] and kenne it to my parisshe,
 I kan holde lovedayes and here a reves rekenyng,
 Ac in Canoun nor in Decretals I kan noght rede a lyne.
 "If I bygge and borwe aught, but if it be ytailed,
 I foryete it as yerne, and yif men me it axe
 Sixe sithes or sevene, I forsake it with othes;
 And thus tene I trewe men ten hundred tymes.
 And my servaunts som tyme, hir salarie is bihynde:
 Ruthe is to here the rekenyng whan we shal rede acountes,
 So with wikked wil and wrathe my werkmen I paye!
 "If any man dooth me a bienfait or helpeth me at nede,
 I am unkynde ayeins his curteisie and kan nought understonden it;
 For I have and have had somdel haukes maneres --
 I am noght lured with love but ther ligge aught under the thombe.
 The kyndenesse that myn evenecristene kidde me fernyere
 Sixty sithes I, Sleuthe, have foryete it siththe
 In speche and insparge of speche; yspilt many a tyme
 Bothe flessch and fissh and manye othere vitailles,
 Bothe bred and ale. buttre, melk and chese
 Forsleuthed in my service til it myghte serve no man.
 I [yarn] aboute in youthe, and yaf me naught to lerne
 And evere sitthe have I be beggere [be] my foule sleuthe:
 Heu michi quia sterilem vitam duxi iuvenilem !'
 "Repentestedow the noght?" quod Repentaunce -- and right with that he
 swowned
 Til Vigilate the veille fette water at hise eighen
 And flatte it on his face and faste on hym cryde
 And seide, 'Ware thee -- for Wanhope wolde thee bitraye.
 ""I am sorry for my synnes", seye to thiselve,

And beet thiself on the brest, and bidde Hym of grace,
 For is no gilt here so gret that his goodnesse nys moore.'
 Thanne sat Sleuthe up and seyned hym swithe,
 And made avow tofore God for his foule sleuthe:
 "Shal no Sonday be this seven yer, but siknesse it [make],
 That I ne shal do me er day to the deere chirche
 And here matyns and masse as I a monk were.
 Shal noon ale after mete holde me thennes
 Til I have evensong herd -- I bihote to the Roode!
 And yet wole I yelde ayein. [y]if I so muche have,
 Al that I wikkedly wan sithen I wit hadde;
 And though my liflode lakke, leten I nelle
 That ech man shal have his er I hennes wende;
 And with the residue and the remenaunt, bi the Rode of Chestre,
 I shal seken truthe erst er I se Rome!'

Roberd the Robbere on Reddite lokod,
 And for ther was nocht wher[with], he wepte swithe soore.
 And yet the synfulle sherewe seide to hymselfe:
 "Crist, that on Calvarie upon the cros deidest,
 Tho Dysmas my brother bisoughte thee of grace,
 And haddest mercy on that man for Memento sake;
 So rewe on this Rober[d] that Reddere ne have,
 Ne nevere wene to wynne with craft that I knowe;
 But for thi muchel mercy mitigacion I biseche:
 Dampne me nocht at Domesday for that I dide so ille!
 What bifel of this feloun I kan nocht faire shewe.
 Wel I woot he wepte faste water with hise eighen,
 And knoweliched his [coupe] to Crist yet eftsoones,
 That Penitencia his pik he sholde polshe newe
 And lepe with hym over lond al his lif tyme,
 For he hadde leyen by Latro, Luciferis Aunte.
 And thanne hadde Repentaunce ruthe and redde hem alle to knele.
 " For I shal biseche for alle synfulle Oure Saveour of grace
 To amenden us of oure mysdedes and do mercy to us alle.
 Now God,' quod he, "that of Thi goodnesse gonne the world make,
 And of naught madest aught and man moost lik to thiselve,
 And sithen suffredest hym to synne, a siknesse to us alle --
 And al for the beste, as I bileve, whatever the Book telleth:
 O felix culpa ! O necessarium peccutum Ade !
 For thorough that synne thi sone sent was to this erthe
 And bicam man of a maide mankynde to save --
 And madest Thiself with Thi sone us synfulle yliche:
 Faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram; Et alibi

Qui manet in caritate, in Deo manet, et Deus in eo;
 And siththe with Thi selve sone in oure sute deidest
 On Good Fryday for mannes sake at ful tym~ of the day;
 Ther Thiself ne Thi sone no sorwe in deeth feledest,
 But in oure secte was the sorwe, and Thi sone it ladde:
 Captivum duxit captivitatem.
 The sonne for sorwe therof lees sight for a tyme
 Aboute mydday whan moost light is and meel-tyme of seintes --
 Feddest tho with Thi fresshe blood oure forefadres in derknesse:
 Populus qui ambulabat in tenebris vidit lucem magnam.
 And the light that lepe out of Thee, Lucifer it blente,
 And blewe alle Thi blessed into the blisse of Paradys!
 "The thridde day therafter Thow yedest in oure sute:
 A synful Marie The seigh er Seynte Marie Thi dame,
 And al to solace synfulle Thow suffredest it so were --
 Non veni vocare iustos set peccatores ad penitenciam.
 "And al that Marc hath ymaad, Mathew, Johan and Lucas
 Of Thyne doughtiest dedes was doon in oure armes:
 Verbum caro factum est et habitavit in nobis.
 And by so muche it semeth the sikerer we mowe
 Bidde and biseche, if it be Thi wille
 That art oure fader and oure brother -- be merciabile to us,
 And have ruth on thise ribaudes that repenten hem soore
 That evere thei wrathed Thee in this world, in word, thought or dede!"
 Thanne hente Hope an horn of Deus tu conversus vivificabis nos
 And blew it with Beati quorum remisse sunt iniquitates
 That alle Seintes in hevene songen at ones
 "Homines et iumenta salvabis, quemadmodum multiplicasti misericordiam
 tuam, Deus
 A thousand of men tho thrungen togideres,
 Cride upward to Crist and to his clene moder
 To have grace to go [seke Truthe -- God leve that they moten!]
 Ac there was wight noon so wys, the wey thider kouthe,
 But blustreden forth as beestes over ba[ch]es and hilles,
 Til late was and longe, that thei a leode mette
 Apparailled as a paynym in pilgrymes wise.
 He bar a burdoun ybounde with a brood liste
 In a withwynde wise ywounden aboute.
 A bolle and a bagge he bar by his syde.
 An hundred of ampulles on his hat seten,
 Signes of Synay and shelles of Galice,
 And many a crouch on his cloke, and keyes of Rome,
 And the vernicle bfore, for men sholde knowe

And se bi hise signes whom he sought hadde.
 This folk frayned hym first fro whennes he come.
 " Fram Synay, ' he seide, " and fram [the] Sepulcre.
 In Bethlem and in Babiloyne, I have ben in bothe,
 In Armonye, in Alisaundre, in manye othere places.
 Ye may se by my signes that sitten on myn hatte
 That I have walked ful wide in weet and in drye
 And sought goode Seintes for my soule helthe.'
 " Knowestow aught a corsaint,' [quod thei], " that men calle Truthe?
 Koudestow wissen us the wey wher that wye dwelleth?'
 "Nay, so me God helpe!" seide the gome thanne.
 "I seigh nevere palmere with pyk ne with scrippe
 Asken after hym er now in this place.'
 "Peter!" quod a Plowman, and putte forth his hed,
 "I knowe hym as kyndely as clerik doth hise bokes.
 Conscience and Kynde Wit kenned me to his place
 And diden me suren hym si[ththen] to serven hym for evere,
 Bothe to sowe and to sette the while I swynke myghte.
 I have ben his folwere al this fourty wynter --
 Bothe ysowen his seed and suwed hise beestes,
 Withinne and withouten waited his profit,
 Idyke[d] and id[o]lve, ido that he hoteth.
 Som tyme I sowe and som tyme I thresshe,
 In taillours craft and tynkeris craft, what Truthe kan devyse,
 I weve and I wynde and do what Truthe hoteth.
 For though I seye it myself, I serve hym to paye;
 I have myn hire of hym wel and outhertwyles moore.
 He is the presteste paiere that povere men knoweth:
 He withhalt noon hewe his hire that he ne hath it at even.
 He is as lowe as a lomb and lovelich of speche.
 And if ye wilneth to wite where that he dwelleth,
 I [wol] wisse yow [wel right] to his place.'
 'Ye, leve Piers!' quod thise pilgrimes, and profred hym huyre.
 'Nay, by [the peril of] my soule!' quod Piers and gan to swere,
 " I nolde fange a ferthyng, for Seint Thomas shryne!
 Truthe wolde love me the lasse a long tyme after.
 Ac if ye wilneth to wende wel, this is the wey thider:
 Ye moten go thorough Mekenesse, bothe men and wyves,
 Til ye come into Conscience, that Crist wite the sothe,
 That ye loven Oure Lord God levest of alle thynges,
 And thanne youre neghebores next in none wise apeire
 Otherwise than thow woldest h[is] wroughte to thiselve.
 "And so boweth forth by a brook, "" Beth-buxom-of-speche',

[Forto] ye fynden a ford, " Youre-fadres-honoureth' :
 Honora patrem et matrem &c.
 Wadeth in that water and wassheth yow wel there,
 And ye shul lepe the lightloker al youre lif ty
 And so shaltow se "Swere-noght-but-if-it-be-for-nede-
 And-nameliche-on-ydel-the-name-of-God-Almyghty."
 "Thanne shaltow come by a croft, but come thow noght therinne:
 The croft hatte "" Coveite-noght-mennes-catel-ne-hire-wyves-
 Ne-noon-of-hire-servaunts-that-noyen-hem-myghte."
 Loke thow breke no bowes there but if it be [thyn] owene.
 "Two stokkes ther stondeth. ac stynte th[ow] noght there:
 Thei highte ""Stele-noght" and "" Sle-noght" -- strik forth by bothe,
 And leve hem on thi lift half and loke noght therafter,
 And hold wel thyn haliday heighe til even.
 "Thanne shaltow blenche at a bergh, "Bere-no-t-ais-witnesse";
 He is frythed in with floryns and othere fees manye:
 Loke thow plukke no plaunte there, for peril of thi soule.
 " Thanne shalt thow see "" Seye-sooth-so-it-be-to-doone
 In-no-manere-ellis-noght-for-no-mannes-biddyng."
 "Thanne shaltow come to a court as cler as the sonne.
 The moot is of Mercy the rnanoir aboute,
 And alle the walles ben of Wit to holden Wil oute,
 And keneled with Cristendom that kynde to save,
 Botrased with "" Bileef-so-or-thow-beest-noght-saved."
 "And alle the houses ben hiled, halles and chambres,
 With no leed but with love and lowe speche, as bretheren [of o wombe].
 The brugge is of " Bidde-wel-the-bet-may-thow-spede;"
 Ech piler is of penaunce, of preieres to seyntes;
 Of almesdedes are the hokes that the gates hangen on.
 "Grace hatte the gateward, a good man for sothe;
 His man hatte ""Amende-yow" -- many man hym knoweth.
 Telleth hym this tokene: ""Truthe[w] the sothe --
 I parfourned the penaunce that the preest me enjoyned
 And am sory for my synnes and so I shal evere
 Whan I thynke theron, theigh I were a Pope.'
 "Biddeth Amende-yow meke hym til his maister ones
 To wayven up the wicket that the womman shette
 Tho Adam and Eve eten apples unrosted:
 Per Evam cunctis clausa est et per Mariam virginem iterum patefacta est.
 For he hath the keye and the cliket, though the kyng slepe.
 And if Grace graunte thee to go in in this wise
 Thow shalt see in thiselve Truthe sitte in thyn herte
 In a cheyne of charite, as thow a child were,

To suffren hym and segge noght ayein thi sires wille.
 "Ac be war thanne of Wrathe, that wikked sherewe:
 He hath envye to hym that in thyn herte sitteth,
 And poketh forth pride to preise thiselven.
 The boldnesse of thi bienfetes maketh thee blynd thanne
 And [so] worstow dryven out as dew, and the dore closed,
 Keyed and cliketty to kepe thee withouten
 Happily an hundred wynter er thow eft entre!
 Thus myghtestow lesen his love, to lete wel by thiselve,
 And [gete it ayein thorough] grace [ac thorough no gifte ellis].
 "Ac ther are seven sustren that serven Truthe evere
 And arn porters of the posternes that to the place longeth.
 That oon hatte Abstinence, and Humilite another;
 Charite and Chastite ben hise chief maydenes;
 Pacience and Pees, muche peple thei helpeth;
 Largenesse the lady, she let in ful manye --
 Heo hath holpe a thousand out of the develes punfolde.
 "And who is sib to thise sevene, so me God helpe,
 He is wonderly welcome and faire underfongen.
 And but if ye be sibbe to some of thise sevene --
 It is ful hard, by myn heed,' quod Piers, "for any of yow alle
 To geten ingong at any gate but grace be the moore!"
 "Now, by Crist!" quod a kuttepur, "I have no kyn there."
 "Ne I', quod an apeward, "by aught that I knowe."
 "Wite God,' quod a wafrestere, "wiste I this for sothe,
 Sholde I never ferther a foot for no freres prechyng.'
 "Yis! ' quod Piers the Plowman, and poked hem alle to goode,
 "Mercy is a maiden there, hath myght over hem alle;
 And she is sib to alle synfulle, and hire sone also,
 And thorough the help of hem two -- hope thow noon oother --
 Thow myght gete grace there -- so thow go bityme.'
 "Bi Seint Poul!' quod a pardoner, paraventure I be noght knowe there:
 I wol go fecche my box with my brevettes and a bulle with bisshopes lettres.
 "By Crist!' quod a commune womman, thi compaignie wol I folwe.
 Thow shalt seye I am thi suster.' I ne woot where thei bcome.

Passus 6

"This were a wikkede wey but whoso hadde a gyde
 That [myghte] folwen us ech a foot' -- thus this folk hem mened.
 Quod Perkyn the Plowman, " By Seint Peter of Rome!
 I have an half acre to erie by the heighe weye;

Hadde I cryed this half acre and sowed it after,
 I wolde wende with yow and the wey teche.'
 "This were a long lettyng,' quod a lady in a scleyre;
 "What sholde we wommen werche the while?'
 "Somme shul sowe the sak ' quod Piers, " for shedyng of the whete;
 And ye lovely ladies with youre longe fynngres,
 That ye have silk and sandel to sowe whan tyme is
 Chesibles for chapeleyns chirches to honoure.
 Wyves and widewes, wolle and flex spynneth:
 Maketh cloth, I counseille yow, and kenneth so youre doughtres.
 The nedy and the naked, nymeth hede how thei liggeth,
 And casteth hem clothes, for so commaundeth Truthe.
 For I shal lenen hem liflode, but if the lond faille,
 As longe as I lyve, for the Lordes love of hevene.
 And alle manere of men that by mete and drynke libbeth,
 Helpeth hym to werche wightliche that wynneth youre foode.'
 "By Crist!' quod a knyght thoo, "he kenneth us the beste;
 Ac on the teme, trewely, taught was I nevere.
 Ac kenne me,' quod the knyght, "and by Crist I wole assaye!"
 "By Seint Poul!' quod Perkyn, "Ye profre yow so faire
 That I shal swynke and swete and sowe for us bothe,
 And [ek] labour[e] for thi love al my lif tyme,
 In covenant that thou kepe Holy Kirke and myselve
 Fro wastours and fro wikked men that this world destruyeth;
 And go hunte hardiliche to hares and foxes,
 To bores and to bukkes that breken down myne hegges;
 And go affaite thi faucons wilde foweles to kille,
 For thei cometh to my croft and croppeth my whete.'
 Curteisly the knyght thanne co[nseyved] thise wordes:
 "By my power, Piers, I plighte thee my trouthe
 To fulfille this forward, though I fighte sholde;
 Als longe as I lyve I shal thee mayntene.'
 " Ye, and yet a point,' quod Piers, "I preye yow of moore:
 Loke ye tene no tenaunt but Truthe wole assente;
 And though ye mowe amercy hem, lat mercy be taxour
 And mekenesse thi maister, maugree Medes chekes.
 And though povere men profre yow presentes and yiftes,
 Nyme it noght, an aventure thou mowe it noght deserve;
 For thou shalt yelde it ayein at one yeres ende
 In a ful perilous place -- Purgatorie it hatte.
 And mysbede noght thi bondemen -- the bettre may thou spede;
 Though he be thyn underlyng here, wel may happe in hevene
 That he worth worthier set and with moore blisse:

Amice, ascende superius.

For in charnel at chirche cherles ben yvel to knowe,
Or a knyght from a knave there -- knowe this in thyn herte.
And that thou be trewe of thi tonge, and tales that thou hatie,
But if thei ben of wisdom or of wit, thi werkmen to chaste.
Hold with none harlotes ne here noght hir tales,
And namely at the mete swiche men eschuwe --
For it ben the develes disours, I do the to understonde.'
"I assente, by Seint Jame,' seide the knyght thanne,
"For to werche by thi wordes the while my lif dureth.'
"And I shal apparaille me,' quod Perkyn, "in pilgrymes wise
And wende with yow I wile til we fynde Truthe.'
[He] caste on [hise] clothes, yclouted and hole,
[Hise] cokeres and [hise] coffes for cold of [hise] nailes,
And [heng his] hopper at [his] hals in stede of a scryppe:
"A busshel of bred corn brynge me therinne,
For I wol sowe it myself, and sithenes wol I wende
To pilgrymage as palmeres doon, pardon for to have.
And whoso helpeth me to erie or sowen here er I wende,
Shal have leve, by Oure Lord, to lese here in hervest
And make hym murie thermyd, maugree whoso bigruccheth it.
And alle kynne crafty men that konne lyven in truthe,
I shal fynden hem fode that feithfulliche libbeth --
Save Jakke the Jogelour and Jonette of the Stuwes,
And Danyel the Dees-pleyere and Denote the Baude,
And Frere the Faitour, and folk of his ordre,
And Robin the Ribaudour, for hise rusty wordes.
Truthe tolde me ones and bad me telle it forth:
Deleantur de libro vivencium -- I sholde noght dele with hem,
For Holy Chirche is hote, of hem no tithe to aske,
Quia cum iustis non scribantur.
Thei ben ascaped good aventure -- now God hem amende!"
Dame Werch-whan-tyme-is Piers wif highte;
His doughter highte Do-right-so-or-thi-dame-shal-thee-bete;
His sone highte Suffre-thi-Sovereyns-to-haven-hir-wille:
Deme-hem-noght-for-if-thow-doost-thow-shalt-it-deere-abugge;
Lat-God-yworthe-with-al-for-so-His-word-techeth.
"For now I am old and hoor and have of myn owene,
To penaunce and to pilgrimage I wol passe with thise othere;
Forthi I wole er I wende do write my biqueste.
In Dei nomine, Amen, I make it myselve.
' He shal have my soule that best hath deserved it,
And [defende it fro the fend], for so I bileve,

Til I come to hise acountes as my crede me telleth,
To have a relees and a remission -- on that rental I leve.
"The kirke shal have my caroyne, and kepe my bones,
For of my corn and catel he craved the tithe.
I paide it hym prestly, for peril of my soule;
Forthi is he holden, I hope, to have me in his masse
And mengen me in his memorie amonges alle Cristene.
" My wif shal have of that I wan with truthe, and namoore,
And dele among my doughtres and my deere children;
For though I deye today, my dettes are quyte;
I bar hom that I borwed er I to bedde yede.
And with the residue and the remenaunt, by the Rode of Lukes!
I wol worshipe therwith Truthe by my lyve,
And ben His pilgrym atte plow for povere mennes sake.
My plowpote shal be my pikstaf, and picche atwo the rotes,
And helpe my cultour to kerve and clense the furwes.'
Now is Perkyn and thise pilgrimes to the plow faren.
To erie this half-acre holpen hym manye;
Dikeres and delveres digged up the balkes;
Therwith was Perkyn apayed and preised hem faste.
Othere werkmen ther were that wroghten ful yerne:
Ech man in his manere made hymself to doone,
And somme to plesse Perkyn piked up the wedes.
At heigh prime Piers leet the plough stonde,
To oversen hem hymself; whoso best wroghte,
He sholde be hired thereafter, whan hervest tyme come.
Thanne seten somme and songen atte nale,
And holpen ere this half acre with "How trolly lolly!"
"Now, by the peril of my soule!" quod Piers al in pure tene,
"But ye arise the rather and rape yow to werche,
Shal no greyn that here groweth glade yow at nede,
And though ye deye for doel, the devel have that recche!"
Tho were faitours afered, and feyned hem blynde;
Somme leide hir legges aliry, as swiche losels konneth,
And made hir [pleynt] to Piers and preide hym of grace:
"For we have no lymes to laboure with, lord, ygraced be ye!
Ac we preie for yow, Piers, and for youre plowgh bothe,
That God of his grace youre greyn multiplie
And yelde yow of youre almesse that ye yyve us here;
For we may neither swynke ne swete, swich siknesse us eyleth.'
If it be sooth.' quod Piers, "that ye seyn, I shal it soone asprie.
Ye ben wastours, I woot wel, and Truthe woot the sothe;
And I am his olde hyne and highte hym to warne

Whiche thei were in this world hise werkmen apeired.
 Ye wasten that men wynnen with travaille and with tene;
 Ac Truthe shal teche yow his teme to dryve,
 Or ye shul eten barly breed and of the broke drynke;
 But if he be blynd or brokelegged or bolted with irens,
 He shal ete whete breed and [with myselve drynke]
 Til God of his goodnesse garisoun] hym sende.
 Ac ye myghte travaille as Truthe wolde and take mete and hyre
 To kepe kyen in the feld, the corn fro the bestes,
 Diken or delven or dyngen upon sheves,
 Or helpe make mortar or bere muk afeld.
 In lecherie and losengerie ye lyven, and in sleuthe,
 And al is thorough suffraunce that vengeance yow ne taketh!
 "Ac ancre and heremites that eten but at Nones
 And na moore er morwe -- myn almesse shul thei have,
 And of my catel to cope hem with that han cloistres and chirches.
 Ac Robert Renaboute shal [right] noght have of myne,
 Ne postles, but thei preche konne and have power of the bisshop:
 Thei shul have payn and potage and [put] himself at ese --
 For it is an unresonable Religion that hath right noght of certein.'
 Thanne gan Wastour to wrathen hym and wolde have yfoughte,
 And to Piers the Plowman he profrede his glove.
 A Bretoner, a braggere, abosted Piers als
 And bad hym go pissen with his plowgh, forpynede sherewe!
 'Wiltow or neltow, we wol have oure wille
 Of thi flour and of thi flesshe -- fecche whanne us liketh,
 And maken us murye thermyde, maugree thi chekes.'
 Thanne Piers the Plowman pleyned hym to the knyghte
 To kepen hym as covenant was fro cursede sherewes
 And fro thise wastours wolveskynnes that maketh the world deere:
 " For tho wasten and wynnen noght, and that [while ilke]
 Worth nevere plentee among the peple the while my plowgh liggeth.'
 Curteisly the knyght thanne, as his kynde wolde,
 Warnede Wastour and wissed hym bettre:
 "Or thou shalt abigge by the lawe, by the ordre that I bere!"
 " I was noght wont to werche," quod Wastour, "and now wol I noght bigynne! '-
 And leet light of the lawe, and lasse of the knyghte,
 And sette Piers at a pese, and his plowgh bothe,
 And manaced Piers and his men if thei mette eftsoone.
 " Now, by the peril of my soule!" quod Piers, " I shal apeire yow alle' --
 And houped after Hunger, that herde hym at the firste.
 "Awreke me of thise wastours," quod he, "that this world shendeth!"
 Hunger in haste thoo hente Wastour by the mawe

And wrong hym so by the wombe that al watrede hise eighen.
He buffeted the Bretoner aboute the chekes
That he loked lik a lanterne al his lif after.
He bette hem so bothe, he brast ner hire guttes;
Ne hadde Piers with a pese loot-preyed [hym bileve],
They hadde be dolven bothe -- ne deme thow noon oother.
"Suffre hem lyve,' he seide-and lat hem etc with hogges,
Or ellis benes and bren ybaken togideres.'
Faitours for fere herof flowen into bernes
And flapten on with flailes fro morwe til even,
That hunger was noght hardy on hem for to loke
For a potful of peses that Piers hadde ymaked.
An heep of herernytes henten hem spades
And kitten hir copes and courtepies hem maked.
And wente as werkmen with spades and with shoveles,
And dolven and dikeden to dryve away Hunger.
Blynde and bedreden were bootned a thousand,
That seten to begge silver, soone were thei heeled ;
For that was bake for Bayard was boote for many hungry;
And many a beggere for benes buxum was to swynke,
And ech a povere man wel apaied to have pesen for his hyre,
And what Piers preide hem to do as prest as a sperhawk.
And [Piers was proud therof], and putte hem to werke
And yaf hem mete as he myghte aforthe and mesurable hyre.
Thanne hadde Piers pite, and preide Hunger to wende
Hoom into his owene erd and holden hym there [evere]:
" For I am wel awroke of wastours thorough thy myghte.
Ac I preie thee, er thow passe,' quod Piers to Hunger,
"Of beggeris and of bidderis what best be to doone?
For I woot wel, be thow went, thei wol werche ful ille;
Meschief it maketh thei be so meke nouthe,
And for defaute of hire foode this folk is at my wille.
[And] it are my bloody bretheren, for God boughte us alle.
Truthe taughte me ones to loven hem ech one
And to helpen hem of alle thyng, ay as hem nedeth.
Now wolde I wite of thee, what were the beste,
And how I myghte amaistren hem and make hem to werche.'
" Here now,' quod Hunger, "and hoold it for a wisdom:
Bolde beggeris and bigge that mowe hir breed biswynke,
With houndes breed and horse breed hoold up hir hertes --
Aba[v]e hem with benes, for bollynge of hir wombe;
And if the gomes grucche, bidde hem go swynke,
And he shal soupe swetter whan he it hath deserved.

"Ac if thow fynde any freke that Fortune hath apeired
 Or any manere false men, fonde thow swiche to knowe:
 Conforte hem with thi catel for Cristes love of hevene;
 Love hem and lene hem, for so Iawe of [kynde wolde]:
 Alter alterius onlera portate.
 And alle manere of men that thow myght asprie
 That nedye ben [or naked, and nought han to spende,
 Love hem and lakke hem noght -- lat God take the vengeance;
 Theigh thei doon yvele, lat thow God yworthe:
 Michi vindictam et ego retribuam.
 And if thow wilt be gracious to God, do as the Gospel techeth,
 And bilove thee amonges lowe men -- so shaltow lacche grace:
 Facite vobis amicos de mammona iniquitatis.'
 "I wolde noght greve God,' quod Piers,-for al the good on grounde!
 Mighte I synnelees do as thow seist?' seide Piers thanne.
 "Ye, I bihote thee,' quod Hunger, "or ellis the Bible lieth
 Go to Genesis the geaunt, the engendroun of us alle:
 ""In sudore and swynk thow shalt thi mete tilie,
 And laboure for thi liflode," and so Oure Lord highte.
 And Sapience seith the same -- I seigh it in the Bible:
 "" Piger pro frigore no feeld nolde tilie --
 And therfore he shal begge and bidde, and no man bete his hunger."
 " Mathew with mannes face moutheth thise wordes --
 That servus nequam hadde a mnam, and for he wolde noght chaffare,
 He hadde maugree of his maister everemoore after;
 And bynam hym his mnam for he ne wolde werche,
 And yaf that mnam to hym that ten mnames hadde,
 And with that he seide, that Holy Chirche it herde:
 "" He that hath shal have and helpe there it nedeth;
 And he that noght hath shal noght have, and no man hym helpe,
 And that he weneth wel to have, I wole it hym bireve."
 " Kynde Wit wolde that ech a wight wroghte,
 Or in [te]chyng or in [tell]yng or travailyng in preieres --
 Contemplatif lif or Actif lif, Crist wolde men wroghte.
 The Sauter seith in the psalme of Beati omnes,
 The freke that fedeth hymself with his feithful labour,
 He is blessed by the book in body and in soule:
 Labores manuum tuarum &c.'
 " Yet I preie yow,' quod Fiers, "pur charite, and ye konne
 Any leef of lechecraft, lere it me, my deere;
 For some of my servaunts and myself bothe
 Of al a wike werche noght, so oure wombe aketh.'
 "I woot wel,' quod Hunger, "what siknesse yow eyleth;

Ye han manged over muche -- that maketh yow grone.
Ac I hote thee,' quod Hunger, "as thow thyn hele wilnest,
That thow drynke no day er thow dyne somewhat.
Ete noght, I hote thee, er hunger thee take
And sende thee of his sauce to savore with thi lippes;
And keep som til soper tyme and sitte noght to longe;
Arys up er appetit have eten his fille.
Lat noght Sire Surfet sitten at thi borde --
Love hym noght, for he is lecherous and likerous of tonge,
And after many maner metes his mawe is afyngred.
"And if thow diete thee thus, I dar legge myn eris
That Phisik shal his furred hood for his fode selle,
And his cloke of Calabre with alle the knappes of golde,
And be fayn, by my feith, his phisik to lete,
And lerne to laboure with lond [lest] liflode [hym faille].
Ther aren mo [li]eres than leches -- Lord hem amende!
They do men deye thorough hir drynkes er destyne it wolde.'
" By Seint Poul,' quod Piers, "thise arn profitable wordes!
For this is a lovely lesson, Lord it thee foryelde!
Wend now, Hunger, whan thow wolt, that wel be thow evere.'
" I bihote God,' quod Hunger, " hennes ne wole I wende
[Er] I have dyned bi this day and ydronke bothe.'
" I have no peny,' quod Piers, "pulettes to bugge,
Neither gees ne grys, but two grene cheses,
A fewe cruddes and creme and [a cake of otes],
And two loves of benes and bran ybake for my fautes.
And yet I seye, by my soule, I have no salt bacon
Ne no cokeney, by Crist, coloppes to maken!
Ac I have percile and porettes and manye [plaunte coles],
And ek a cow and a calf, and a cart mare
To drawe afeld my donge the while the droghte lasteth.
By this liflode we mote lyve til Lammesse tyme.
And by that I hope to have hervest in my crofte;
Thanne may I dighte thi dyner as me deere liketh.'
Al the povere peple tho pescoddes fetten;
Benes and baken apples thei broghte in hir lappes,
Chibolles and chervelles and ripe chiries manye,
And profrede Piers this present to plese with Hunger.
Al Hunger eet in haste and axed after moore.
Thanne povere folk for fere fedden Hunger yerne;
With grene poret and pesen to poisone hym thei thoghte!
By that it neghed neer hervest and newe corn cam to chepyng;
Thanne was folk fayn, and fedde Hunger with the beste --

With good ale, as Gloton taghte -- and garte Hunger to slepe.
 And tho wolde Wastour noght werche, but wandren aboute,
 Ne no beggere ete breed that benes inne were,
 But of coket and clermatyn or ellis of clene whete,
 Ne noon halfpeny ale in none wise drynke,
 But of the beste and of the brunneste that [brewesteres] selle.
 Laborers that have no land to lyve on but hire handes
 Deyned nought to dyne aday nyght-olde wortes;
 May no peny ale hem paie, ne no pece of bacoun,
 But if it be fressh flessch outhur fissh fryed outhur ybake --
 And that chaud and plus chaud, for chillynge of hir mawe.
 And but if he be heighliche hyred, ellis wole he chide --
 And that he was werkman wroght wa[ri]e the tyme.
 Ayeins Catons counseil comseth he to jangle:
 Paupertatis onus pacienter ferre memento.
 He greveth hym ageyn God and gruccheth ageyn Reson.
 And thanne corseth he the Kyng and al his Counseil after
 Swiche lawes to loke, laborers to greve.
 Ac whiles Hunger was hir maister, ther wolde noon of hem chide,
 Ne stryven ayeins his statut, so sterneliche he loked!
 Ac I warne yow werkmen -- wynneth whil ye mowe,
 For Hunger hiderward hasteth hym faste!
 He shal awake [thorough] water, wastours to chaste,
 Er fyve yer be fulfilled swich famyn shal aryse:
 Thorough flodes and thorough foule wedres, fruytes shul faille --
 And so seith Saturne and sent yow to warne:
 Whan ye se the [mo]ne amys and two monkes heddes,
 And a mayde have the maistrie, and multiplie by eighte,
 Thanne shal deeth withdrawe and derthe be justice,
 And Dawe the Dykere deye for hunger --
 But if God of his goodnesse graunte us a trewe.

Passus 7

Treuthe herde telle herof, and to Piers sente
 To taken his teme and tilien the erthe,
 And purchaced hym a pardoun a pena et a culpa
 For hym and for hyse heirs for ever oore after-
 And bad hym holde hym at home and erien hise Ieyes,
 And alle that holpen hym to erylle, to sette or to sowe,
 or any [man]er mestier that myghte Piers availe --
 Pardon with Piers Plowman Truthe hath ygraunted.

Kynges and knyghtes that kepen Holy Chirche
And rightfully in remes rulen the peple,
Han pardon thorough purgatorie to passen ful lightly,
With patriarkes and prophetes in paradis to be felawe.
Bysshopes yblessed, if thei ben as thei sholde
Legistres of bothe lawes, the lewed therwith to preche,
And in as muche as thei mowe amenden alle synfulle,
Arn peres with the Apostles -- this pardon Piers sheweth --
And at the day of dome at the heighe deys to sitte.
Marchaunts in the margyne hadde manye yeres,
Ac noon A pena et a culpa the Pope nolde hem graunte.
For thei holde noght hir halidayes as Holy Chirche techeth,
And for thei swere 'by hir soule' and-so God moste hem helpe'
Ayein clene Conseience, hir catel to selle.
Ac under his secret seel Truthe sente hem a lettre,
[And bad hem] buggen boldely what hem best liked
And sithenes selle it ayein and save the wynnyng,
And amende mesondieux thermyd and myseise folk helpe;
And wikkede weyes wightly amende,
And do boote to brugges that tobroke were;
Marien maydenes or maken hem nonnes;
Povere peple and prisons fynden hem hir foode,
And sette soolers to scole or to som othere craftes;
Releve Religion and renten hem bettre.
"And I shal sende yow myselve Seynt Michel myn angel,
That no devel shal yow dere ne [in youre deying fere yow],
And witen yow fro wanhope, if ye wol thus werche,
And sende youre soules in saufte to my Seintes in joye.'
Thanne were marchaunts murie -- manye wepten for joye-
And preiseden Piers the Plowman, that purchaced this bulle.
Men of lawe leest pardon hadde that pleteden for mede,
For the Sauter saveth hem noght, swiche as take yiftes,
And nameliche of innocents that noon yvel ne konneth:
Super innocentem munera non accipies.
Pledours sholde peynen hem to plede for swiche and helpe;
Princes and prelates sholde paie for hire travaille:
A regibus et principibus erit merces eorum.
Ac many a justice and jurour wolde for Johan do moore
Than pro Deipietate -- leve thow noon oother!
Ac he that spendeth his speche and speketh for the povere
That is innocent and nedy and no man apeireth,
Conforteth hym in that caas, coveit[eth noght hise] yiftes,
And [for Oure Lordes love lawe for hym sheweth] --

Shal no devel at his deeth day deren hym a myte
 That he ne worth saaf and his soule, the Sauter bereth witnesse:
 Domine, quis habitabit in tabernaculo tuo ?
 Ac to bugge water, ne wynd, ne wit, ne fir the ferthe --
 Thise foure the Fader of Hevene made to this foold in commune:
 Thise ben Truthes tresores trewe folk to helpe,
 That nevere shul wex ne wanye withouten God hymselfe.
 Whan thei drawen on to the deth, and indulgences wolde have,
 His pardon is ful petit at his partyng hennes
 That any mede of mene men for hir motyng taketh.
 Ye legistres and lawieres, [if I lye witeth Mathew]:
 Quodcumque vultis ut faciant vobis homines, facite eis.
 Alle libbynge laborers that lyven with hir hondes,
 That troweliche taken and troweliche wynnyn,
 And lyven in love and in lawe, for hir lowe herte
 Haveth the same absolucion that sent was to Piers.
 Beggeres and bidderes beth noght in the bulle
 But if the suggestion be sooth that shapeth hem to begge:
 For he that beggeth or bit, but it he have nede,
 He is fals with the feend and defraudeth the nedy,
 And also gileth the gyvere ageynes his wille;
 For if he wiste he were noght nedy he wolde [that yyve]
 Another that were moore nedy than he -- so the nedieste sholde be holpe.
 Caton kenneth me thus, and the Clerc of the Stories:
 Cui des, videto is Catons techyng;
 And in the Stories he techeth to bistowe thyn almesse:
 Sit elemosina tua in manu tua donec studes cui des.
 Ac Gregory was a good man, and bad us gyven alle
 That asketh for His love that us al leneth:
 Non eligas cui miserearis, ne forte pretereas illum qui meretur
 accipere; quia incertum est pro quo Deo magis placeas.
 For wite ye nevere who is worthi-ac God woot who hath nede.
 In hym that taketh is the trecherie, if any treson walke-
 For he that yeveth, yeldeth, and yarketh hym to reste,
 And he that biddeth, borweth, and bryngeth hymself in dette.
 For beggeres borwen everemo, and hir borgh is God Almyghty-
 To yelden hem that yeveth hem, and yet usure moore:
 Quare non dedisti pecuniam meam ad mensam, ut
 ego ueniens cum usuris exegissem utique illam?
 Forthi biddeth noght, ye beggeres, but if ye have gret nede.
 For whoso hath to buggen hym breed-the Book bereth witnesse-
 He hath ynough that hath breed ynough, though he have noght ellis:
 Satis dives est qui non indiget pane.

Lat usage be your solas of seintes lyves redyng;
 The Book banneth beggerie, and blameth hem in this manere:
 Iunior fui etenim senui, et non vidi iustum derelictum nec
 semen eius querens panem.
 For [thei] lyve in no love, ne no lawe holde:
 [Thei] ne wedde no womman that [thei] with deele,
 But as wilde bestes with "wehee" worthen uppe and werchen,
 And bryngen forth barnes that bastardes men calleth.
 Or the bak or som soon their breketh in his youthe,
 And goon [and] faiten with hire fautes for everemoore after.
 Ther is moore mysshapen amonges thise beggeres
 Than of alle [othere] manere men that on this moolde walketh.
 Tho that lyve thus hir lif mowe lothe the tyme
 That evere he was man wrought, whan he shal hennes fare.
 Ac olde men and hore that helpees ben of strengthe,
 And wommen with childe that werche ne mowe,
 Blynde and bedreden and broken hire membres,
 That taken this myschief mekeliche, as mesels and othere,
 Han as pleyn pardon as the Plowman hymselfe.
 For Iove of hir lowe hertes Oure Lord hath hem graunted
 Hir penaunce and hir Purgatorie upon this [pure] erthe.
 " Piers,' quod a preest thoo, " thi pardon moste I rede;
 For I shal construe ech clause and kenne it thee on Englissh.'
 And Piers at his preiere the pardon unfoldeth --
 And I bihynde hem bothe biheld al the bull
 In two lynes it lay, and noght a le[tte] moore,
 And was writen right thus in witnesse of truthe:
 Et qui bona egerunt ibunt in vitam eternam.
 Qui vero mala, in ignem eternum.
 " Peter! ' quod the preest thoo, " I kan no pardon fynde
 But "-Do wel and have wel. and God shal have thi soule,'
 And " Do yvel and have yvel, and hope thow noon oother
 That after thi deeth day the devel shal have thi soule!"
 And Piers for pure tene pulled it atweyne
 And seide,-Si ambulavero in medio umbre mortis
 Non timebo mala, quoniam tu mecum es.
 "I shal cessen of my sowyng,' quod Piers, "and swynke noght so harde,
 Ne aboute my bely joye so bisy be na moore;
 Of preieres and of penaunce my plough shal ben hereafter,
 And wepen whan I sholde slepe, though whete breed me faille.
 "The prophete his payn eet in penaunce and in sorwe,
 By that the Sauter seith -- so dide othere manye.
 That loveth God lelly, his lifiode is ful esy:

Fuerunt michi lacrimae meae panes die ac nocte.
 "And but if Luc lye, he leareth us by foweles
 We sholde nought be to bisy aboute the worldes blisse:
 Ne solliciti sitis, he seith in the Gospel
 And sheweth us by ensamples us selve to wisse.
 The foweles in the feld, who fynt hem mete at wynter?
 Have thei no gerner to go to, but God fynt hem alle.'
 "What!" quod the preest to Perkyn, "Peter! as me thynketh,
 Thow art lettred a litel -- who lerned thee on boke?"
 "Abstynence the Abbesse," quod Piers, -myn a.b.c. me taughte,
 And Conscience cam afterward and kened me muche moore.'
 " Were thow a preest, Piers," quod he, " thow myghtest preche where thow sh
 As divinour in divinite, with Dixit insipiens to thi tyme.'
 " Lewed lorel!" quod Piers, "litel lokestow on the Bible;
 On Salomons sawes selden thow biholdest --
 Eice derisores et iurgia cum eis ne crescant &c.'
 The preest and Perkyn apposeden either oother --
 And I thorough hir wordes awook, and waited aboute,
 And seigh the sonne in the south sitte that tyme.
 Meteles and moneilees on Malverne hilles,
 Musynge on this metels a my[le] wey ich yede.
 Many tyme this metels hath maked me to studie
 Of that I seigh slepyng -- if it so be myghte;
 And for Piers the Plowman ful pencif in herte,
 And which a pardon Piers hadde, al the peple to conforte,
 And how the preest inpuigned it with two propre wordes.
 Ac I have no savour in songewarie, for I se it ofte faille;
 Caton and canonistres counseillen us to leve
 To sette sadnesse in songewarie -- for sompnia ne cures.
 Ac for the book Bible bereth witness
 How Daniel divined the dremes of a kyng
 That was Nabugodonosor nempned of clerkes . . .
 Daniel seide, "Sire Kyng, thi dremels bitokneth
 That unkouth knyghtes shul come thi kyngdom to cleyne;
 Amonges lower lordes thi lond shal be departed.'
 And as Daniel divined, in dede it fel after:
 The kyng lees his lordshipe, and lower men it hadde.
 And Joseph mette merveillously how the moone and the sonne
 And the ellevene sterres hailed hym alle.
 Thanne Jacob jugged Josephes swevene :
 " Beau fiz," quod his fader, " for defaute we shullen --
 I myself and my sones -- seche thee for nede.'
 It bifel as his fader seide, in Pharaoes tyme,

That Joseph was Justice Egipte to loke:
 It bifel as his fader tolde -- hise frendes there hym soughte.
 Al this maketh me on metels to thynke --
 And how the preest preved no pardon to Dowel,
 And demed that Dowel indulgences passed,
 Biennals and triennals and bisshopes lettres,
 And how Dowel at the Day of Dome is digneliche underfongen,
 And passeth al the pardon of Seint Petres cherche.
 Now hath the Pope power pardon to graunte
 The peple, withouten penaunce to ja into [joye];
 This is [a leef of] oure bileve, as lettred men us techeth:
 Quodcumque ligaveris super terram erit ligatum et in celis &c.
 And so I leve leelly (Lord forbede ellis!)
 That pardon and penaunce and preieres doon save
 Soules that have synned seven sithes dedly.
 Ac to trust on thise triennals -- trewely, me thynketh,
 It is noght so siker for the soule, certes, as is Dowel.
 Forthi I rede yow renkes that riche ben on this erthe,
 Upon trust of youre tresor triennals to have,
 Be ye never the bolder to breke the ten hestes;
 And namely ye maistres, meires and jugges,
 That have the welthe of this world and wise men ben holden,
 To purchace yow pardon and the Popes bulles.
 At the dredful dome, whan dede shulle arise
 And comen alle bifore Crist acountes to yelde --
 How thow laddest thi lif here and hise lawes keptest,
 And how thow didest day by day the doom wole reherce.
 A pokeful of pardon there, ne provincials lettres,
 Theigh ye be founde in the fraternite of alle the foure ordres
 And have indulgences doublefold -- but Dowel yow helpe,
 I sette youre patentis and youre pardon at one pies hele!
 Forthi I counseille alle Cristene to crie God mercy,
 And Marie his moder be oure meene bitwene,
 That God gyve us grace here, er we go hennes,
 Swiche werkes to werche, while we ben here,
 That after oure deth day, Dowel reherce
 At the day of dome, we dide as he highte.

Passus 8

Thus yrobed in russet I romed aboute
 Al a somer seson for to seke Dowel,

And frayned ful ofte of folk that I mette
 If any wight wiste wher Dowel was at inne,
 And what man he myghte be of many man I asked.
 Was nevere wight as I wente that me wisse kouthe
 Where this leode lenged, lasse ne moore --
 Til it bifel on a Friday two freres I mette,
 Maistres of the Menours, men of grete witte.
 I hailed hem hendely, as I hadde ylerned,
 And preide hem, pur churite, er thei passed ferther,
 If they knewe any contree or costes [aboute]
 Where that Dowel dwelieth -- "Dooth me to witene;
 For [ye] be men of this moolde that moost wide walken,
 And knowen contrees and courtes and many kynnes places --
 Bothe princes paleises and povere mennes cotes,
 And Dowel and Do-yvele, wher thei dwelle bothe.'
 "[Marie!]", quod the Menours, " [amonges us he dwelleth],
 And evere hath, as I hope, and evere shal hereafter.'
 "Contra!" quod I as a clerc, and comsed to disputen,
 And seide, "Soothly, Sepcies in die cadit iustus.
 Sevene sithes, seith the Book, synneth the rightfulle,
 And whoso synneth,' I seide, " [certes] dooth yvele, as me thynketh,
 And Dowel and Do-yvele mowe noght dwelle togideres.
 Ergo he nys noght alwey at hoom amonges yow freres:
 He is outhemhile elliswhere to wisse the peple.'
 " I shal seye thee, my sone,' seide the frere thanne,
 "How seven sithes the sadde man synneth on the day.
 By a forbisne,' quod the frere, "I shal thee faire shewe.
 "Lat brynge a man in a boot amydd a brode watre:
 The wynd and the water and the [waggyng of the boot]
 Maketh the man many tyme to falle and to stonde.
 For stonde he never so stif, he stumbleth if he meve --
 Ac yet is he saaf and sound, and so hym bihoveth;
 For if he ne arise the rather and raughte to the steere,
 The wynd wolde with the water the boot overthrowe,
 And thanne were his lif lost thorough lachesse of hymselfe.
 " Right thus it fareth,' quod the frere, " by folk here on erthe.
 The water is likned to the world, that wanyeth and wexeth;
 The goodes of this grounde arn lik the grete wawes
 That as wyndes and wedres walweth aboute;
 The boot is likned to oure body that brotel is of kynde,
 That thorough the fend and the flessch and the frele worlde
 Synneth the sadde man [seven sithes a day].
 "Ac dedly synne doth he noght, for Dowel hym kepeth,

And that is charite the champion, chief help ayein synne;
 For he strengtheth man to stonde, and steereth mannes soule
 That, though thi body bowe as boot dooth in the watre,
 Ay is thi soule saaf but thow thiselve wole
 Folwe thi flessch and the fend after-
 Do a deedly synne and drenche so thiselve.
 God wole suffre wel thi sleuthe, if thiself liketh;
 For he yaf thee to yeresyyve to yeme wel thiselve --
 And that is wit and free will, to every wight a porcion,
 To fleyng foweles, to fisshes and to beestes;
 Ac man hath moost therof, and moost is to blame
 But if he werche wel therwith, as Dowel hym techeth.'
 I have no kynde knowyng,' quod I, "to conceyve alle thi wordes,
 Ac if I may lyve and loke, I shal go lerne better.'
 "I bikenne thee Crist,' quod he, that on the cros deyde.'
 And I seide,-The same save yow fro myschaunce,
 And yyve yow grace on this grounde goode men to worthe!
 And thus I wente widewher, walkyng myn one,
 By a wilde wilderness, and by a wodes side;
 Blisse of the briddes abide me made,
 And under a lynde upon a launde lened I a stounde
 To lythe the layes tho lovely foweles made.
 Murthe of hire mouthes made me ther to slepe;
 The merveillouseste metels mette me thanne
 That ever dremed [dr]ight in [doute], as I wene.
 A muche man, as me thoughte, lik to myselve,
 Cam and called me by my kynde name.
 "What art thou?" quod I tho, "that thou my name knowest?"
 "That thou woost wel,' quod he, "and no wight better.'
 "Woot I,' [quod I, "who art thou?"] "Thought,' seide he thanne.
 "I have sued thee this seven yeer; seye thou me no rather?"
 "Art thou Thought?" quod I, "thoo thou koudest me wisse
 Where that Dowel dwelleth, and do me to knowe.'
 "Dowel,' quod he, "and Dobet and Dobest the thridde
 Arn thre faire vertues, and ben noght fer to fynde.
 Whoso is trewe of his tunge and of his two handes,
 And thorough his labour or thorough his land his liflode wynneth,
 And is trusty of his tailende, taketh but his owene,
 And is noght dronkelewe ne dedeynous -- Dowel hym folweth.
 "Dobet dooth right thus, ac he dooth muche moore;
 He is as lowe as a lomb and lovelich of speche,
 And helpeth alle men after that hem nedeth.
 The bagges and the bigirdles, he hath tobroke hem alle

That the Erl Avarous heeld, and hise heires;
 And with Mammonaes moneie he hath maad hym frendes,
 And is ronne into Religion, and hath rendred the Bible,
 And precheth to the peple Seint Poules wordes --
 Libenter suffertis insipientes cum sitis ipsi sapientes.
 [Ye wise], suffreth the unwise with yow to libbe,
 And with glad wille dooth hem good, for so God yow hoteth.
 "Dobest is above bothe and bereth a bisshopes cro[c]e,
 is hoked on that oon ende to halie men fro helle.
 A pik is on that potente, to pulte adown the wikked
 That waiten any wikkednesse Dowel to tene.
 And Dowel and Dobet amonges hem ordeyned
 To crowne oon to be kyng to [kepen] hem bothe,
 That if Dowel or Dobet dide ayein Dobest,
 Thanne shal the kyng come and casten hem in irens,
 And but if Dobest bede for hem, thei to be ther for evere.
 Thus Dowel and Dobet and Dobest the thridde
 Crowned oon to be kyng to kepen hem alle
 And rule the reme by [rede of hire] wittes,
 And ootherwise [ne ellis noght], but as thei thre assented.'
 I thonked Thoght tho that he me [so] taughte.
 "Ac yet savoreth me noght thi seying, so me Crist helpe!
 For more kynde knowynge I coveite to lerne --
 How Dowel, Dobet and Dobest doon among the peple.'
 "But Wit konne wisse thee.' quod Thoght, " where tho thre dwelle;
 Ellis [n]oot I noon that kan, that now is alyve.'
 Thoght and I thus thre daies we yeden
 Disputyng upon Dowel day after oother --
 And er we war were, with Wit gonne we mete.
 He was long and lene, lik to noon oother;
 Was no pride on his apparaille, ne povert neither;
 Sad of his semblaunt and of [a] softe [speche].
 I dorste meve no matere to maken hym to jangle
 But as I bad Thoght thoo be mene bitwene
 And pute forth som purpos to preven hise wittes,
 What was Dowel fro Dobet, and Dobest from hem bothe.
 Thanne Thoght in that tyme seide thise wordes:
 " Wher Dowel and Dobet and Dobest ben in londe
 Here is Wil wolde wite if Wit koude teche;
 And wheither he be man or no manthis man wolde as
 And werchen as thei thre wolde -- this is his entente.'

Passus 9

"Sire Dowel dwelleth,' quod Wit, "nought a day hennes
In a castel that Kynde made of foure kynnes thynges.
Of erthe and eyr is it maad, medled togideres,
With wynd and with water wittily enjoined.
Kynde hath closed therinne craftily withalle
A lemman that he loveth lik to hymselfe.
Anima she hatte; [to hir hath envye]
A proud prikere of Fraunce, Princeps huius mundi,
And wolde wynne hire away with wiles and he myghte.
"Ac Kynde knoweth this wel and kepeth hire the better,
And hath doon hire with Sire Dowel, Duc of this marches.
Dobet is hire damyselle, Sire Doweles doughter,
To serven this lady leelly bothe late and rathe.
Dobest is above bothe, a bisshopes peere;
That he bit moot be do -- he [bidd]eth hem alle.
[By his leryng] is lad [that lady Anima].
"Ac the Constable of that castel, that kepeth [hem alle],
Is a wis knyght withalle -- Sire Inwit he hatte,
And hath fyve faire sones by his firste wyve:
Sire Se-wel, and Sey-wel, and Here-wel the hende,
Sire Werch-wel-with-thyn-hand, a wight man of strengthe,
And Sire Godefray Go-wel -- grete lordes [alle].
Thise sixe ben set to save this lady Anima
Til Kynde come or sende to kepen hire hymselfe.'
"What kynnes thyng is Kynde?' quod, "kanstow me telle?"
" Kynde,' quod Wit, "is creatour of alle kynnes thynges,
Fader and formour of al that evere was maked --
And that is the grete God that gynnyng hadde nevere,
Lord of lif and of light, of lisse and of peyne.
Aungeles and alle thyng arn at his wille,
Ac man is hym moost lik of marc and of shape.
For thorough the word that he [warp] woxen forth beestes:
Dixit et facta sunt.
"A[c] he made man [moost] li[k] to hymself,
And Eve of his ryb bon withouten any mene.
For he was synguler hymself and seide Eaciamus --
As who seith, "" Moore moot herto than my word oone:
My myght moot helpe now with my speche."
Right as a lord sholde make lettres, and hym lacked [no] parchemyn,
Though he [wiste] write never so wel, if he hadde no penne,
The lettre, for al the lordshipe, I leve were nevere ymaked!

"And so it semeth [there he seide, as the Bible telleth,
 Faciamus hominem ad imaginem nostram] --
 He moste werche with his word and his wit shewe.
 And in this manere was man maad thorough myght of God almyghty,
 With his word and werkmanshipe and with lif to laste.
 And thus God gaf hym a goost, of the godhede of hevene,
 And of his grete grace graunted hym blisse --
 And that is lif that ay shal laste to al his lynage after.
 And that is the castel that Kynde made, Caro it hatte,
 And is as muche to mene as "man with a soule."
 And that he wroghte with werk and with word bothe:
 Thorgh myght of the mageste man was ymaked.
 " Inwit and alle wittes yclosed ben therinne
 For love of the lady Anima, that lif is ynempned.
 Over al in mannes body he[o] walketh and wandreth,
 Ac in the herte is hir hoom and hir mooste reste.
 Ac Inwit is in the heed, and to the herte he loketh
 What Anima is leef or looth -- he Iat hire at his wille;
 For after the grace of God, the gretteste is Inwit.
 "Muche wo worth that man that mysruleth his Inwit,
 And that ben glotons glubberes -- hir God is hire wombe:
 Quorum deus venter est.
 For thei serven Sathan, hir soules shal he have:
 That lyven synful lif here, hir soule is lich the devel.
 And alle that lyven good lif are lik to God almyghty:
 Qui manet in caritate, in Deo manet &c.
 "Allas! that drynke shal fordo that God deere boughte,
 And dooth God forsaken hem that he shoop to his liknesse:
 Amen dico vobis, nescio vos. Et alibi, Et dimisi eos
 secundum desideria eorum.
 " Fooles that fauten Inwit, I fynde that Holy Chirche
 Sholde fynden hem that hem fauteth, and faderlese children,
 And widewes that han noght wherwith to wynnen hem hir foode,
 Madde men and maydenes that helplese were --
 Alle thise lakken Inwit, and loore bihoveth.
 "Of this matere I myghte make a long tale
 And fynde fele witnesses among the foure doctours,
 And that I lye noght of that I lere thee, Luc bereth witnesse.
 "Godfader and godmoder that seen hire godchildren
 At myseise and at myschief and mowe hem amende
 Shul [pre]ve penaunce in purgatorie, but thei hem helpe.
 For moore bilongeth to the litel barn er he the lawe knowe
 Than nempnyng of a name, and he never the wiser!

Sholde no Cristene creature cryen at the yate
 Ne faille payn ne potage, and prelates dide as thei sholden.
 A Jew wolde noght se a Jew go janglyng for defaute
 For alle the mebles on this moolde, and he amende it myghte.
 "Allas that a Cristene creature shal be unkynde til another!
 Syn Jewes, that we jugge Judas felawes,
 Eyther helpeth oother of that that hym nedeth.
 Whi nel we Cristene of Cristes good [as kynde be]
 As Jewes, that ben oure loresmen? Shame to us alle!
 The commune for hir unkyndenesse, I drede me, shul abyе.
 " Bisshopes shul be blamed for beggeres sake;
 He is [jugged] wors than Judas that yyveth a japer silver
 And biddeth the beggere go, for his broke clothes:
 Proditor est prelatus cum Iuda qui patrimonium Christi
 minus distribuit. Et alibi, Perniciosus dispensator est
 qui res pauperum Christi inutiliter consumit.
 He dooth noght wel that dooth thus, ne drat noght God almyghty,
 Ne loveth noght Salomons sawes, that Sapience taughte:
 Inicium sapiencie timor Domini.
 "That dredeth God, he dooth wel; that dredeth hym for love
 And noght for drede of vengeaunce, dooth therfore the bettre.
 He dooth best that withdraweth hym by daye and by nyghte
 To spille any speche or any space of tyme:
 Qui offendit in uno, in omnibus est reus.
 " [Tyn]ynge of tyme, Truthe woot the sothe,
 Is moost yhated upon erthe of hem that ben in hevene;
 And siththe to spille speche, that spire is of grace,
 And Goddes gleman and a game of hevene.
 Wolde nevere the feithful fader his fithle were untempred,
 Ne his gleman a gedelyng, a goere to tavernes.
 "To alle trewe tidy men that travaille desiren,
 Oure Lord loveth hem and lent, loude outhur stille,
 Grace to go to hem and of gon hir liflode:
 Inquirentes autem Dominum non minuentur omni bono.
 "In this world is Dowel trewe wedded libbynge folk],
 For thei mote werche and wyne and the world sustene.
 For of hir kynde thei come that Confessours ben nempned,
 Kynges and knyghtes, kayzers and clerkes,
 Maidenes and martires -- out of o man come.
 The wif was maad the w[y]e for to helpe werche,
 And thus was wedlok ywroght with a mene persone --
 First by the fadres wille and the frendes conseil,le,
 And sithenes by assent of hemself, as thei two myghte acorde;

And thus was wedlok ywroght, and God hymself it made;
 In erthe the heven is -- hymself was the witsesse.
 "Ac fals folk feithlees, theves and lyeres,
 Wastours and wrecches out of wedlok, I trowe,
 Conceyved ben in yvel tyme, as Caym was on Eve.
 Of swiche synfulle sherewes the Sauter maketh mynde:
 Conceptit dolorem et peperit iniquitatem.
 And alle that come of that Caym come to yvel ende.
 "For God sente to Seem and seide by an aungel,
 "Thyn issue in thyn issue, I wol that thei be wedded,
 And noght thi kynde with Caymes ycoupled ne yspoused."
 " Yet some, ayein the sonde of Oure Saveour of hevene,
 Caymes kynde and his kynde coupled togideres --
 Til God wrathed with hir werkes, and swich a word seide,
 " That I makede man, now it me forthynketh:
 Penitet me fecisse hominem.'
 "And com to Noe anon and bad hym noght lette:
 "Swithe go shape a ship of shides and of bordes.
 Thyself and thi sones thre and sithen youre wyves,
 Busketh yow to that boot and bideth therinne
 Til fourty daies be fulfild, that flood have ywasshen
 Clene away the corsed blood that Caym hath ymaked.
 "Bestes that now ben shul banne the tyme
 That evere that cursed Caym coom on this erthe.
 Alle shul deye for his dedes by dales and hulles,
 And the foweles that fleen forth with othere beestes,
 Excepte oonliche of ech kynde a couple
 That in thi shyngled ship shul ben ysaved.'
 "Here aboughte the barn the belsires giltes,
 And alle for hir forefadres thei ferdn the werse..
 The Gospel is heragein in o degre, I fynde:
 Filius non portabit iniquitatem patris et pater non portabit iniquitatem filii.
 Ac I fynde, if the fader be fals and a sherewe,
 That somdel the sone shal have the sires tacches.
 Impe on an ellere, and if thyn appul be swete
 Muchel merveille me thynketh; and moore of a sherewe
 That bryngeth forth any barn, but if he be the same
 And have a savour after the sire -- selde sestow oother:
 Numquam colligunt de spinis uvas nec de tribulis ficus.
 "And thus thorough cursed Caym cam care upon erthe,
 And al for thei wroghte wedlokes ayein [the wille of God].
 Forthi have thei maugre of hir mariages, that marie so hir children.
 For some, as I se now, sooth for to telle,

For coveitise of catel unkyndely ben wedded.
As careful conception cometh of swiche mariages
As bit-el of the folk that I bifore of tolde.
For goode sholde wedde goode, though thei no good hadde;
"I am via et veritas," seith Crist, "I may avaunce alle."
"It is an uncomly couple. by Crist! as me thynketh --
To yeven a yong wenche to an [y]olde feble,
Or wedden any wodewe for welthe of hir goodes
That nevere shal barn bere but if it be in armes!
In jelousie joyelees and janglynge on bedde,
Many a peire sithen the pestilence han plight hem togideres.
The fruyt that thei brynge forth arn.[manye] foule wordes;
Have thei no children but cheeste and chopp[es] hem bitwene.
Though thei do hem to Dunmowe, but if the devel helpe
To folwen after the flicche, fecche thei it nevere;
But thei bothe be forswore, that bacon thei tyne.
" Forthi I counseille alle Cristene coveite nought be wedded
For coveitise of catel ne of kynrede riche;
Ac maidenens and maydenens macche yow togideres;
Wideweres and wodewes, wercheth the same;
For no londes, but for love, loke ye be wedded,
And thanne gete ye the grace of God, and good ynough to live with.
"And every maner secular that may nought continue,
Wisely go wedde, and ware hym fro synne;
For lecherie in likynge is lymeyerd of helle.
Whiles thow art yong, and thi wepene kene,
Wreke thee with wyvyng, if thow wolt ben excused:
Dum sis vir fortis, ne des tua robora scortis.
Scribitur in portis, meretrix est ianua mortis.
"Whan ye han wyved, beth war, and wercheth in tyme --
Nought as Adam and Eve whan Caym was engendred.
For in untyme, trewely, bitwene man and womman
Ne sholde no [bedbourde] be: but if thei bothe were clene
Of lif and in [love of] soule, and in [lawe also],
That ilke derne dede do no man ne sholde.
Ac if thei leden thus hir lif, it liketh God almyghty,
For he made wedlok first and hymself it seide:
Bonum est ut unusquisque uxorem suam habeat propter fornicacionem.
"That othergates ben geten, for gedelynges arn holden,
And fals folk, fondlynges, faitours and lieres,
Ungracious to gete good or love of the peple;
Wandren and wasten what thei cacche mowe.
Ayeins Dowel thei doon yvel and the devel serve,

And after hir deeth day shul dwelle with the same
 But God gyve hem grace here hemself to amende.
 "Dowel, my frend, is to doon as lawe techeth.
 To love thi frend and thi foo -- leve me, that is Dobet.
 To yyven and to yemen bothe yonge and olde,
 To helen and to helpen, is Dobest of alle.
 "And thus Dowel is to drede God, and Dobet to suffre,
 And so cometh Dobest of bothe, and bryngeth adoun the mody --
 And that is wikked wille that many werk shendeth,
 And dryveth away Dowel thorough dedliche synnes.'

Passus 10

Thanne hadde Wit a wif, was hote Dame Studie,
 That lene was of lere and of liche bothe.
 She was wonderly wroth that Wit me thus taughte,
 And al staiynge Dame Studie sterneliche seide.
 "Wel artow wis,' quod she to Wit, "any wisdomes to telle
 To flatereres or to fooles that frenetike ben of wittes!" --
 And blamed hym and banned hym and bad hym be stille --
 "With swiche wise wordes to wissen any sottes!"
 And seide, "Nolite mittere, man, margery perles
 Among hogges that han hawes at wille.
 Thei doon but dryvele theron -- draf were hem levere
 Than al the precious perree that in paradys wexeth.
 I seye it by swiche,' quod she, "that sheweth by hir werkes
 That hem were levere lond and lordshipe on erthe,
 Or richesse or rentes and reste at hir wille
 Than alle the sooth sawes that Salamon seide evere.
 "Wisdom and wit now is noght worth a kerse
 But if it be carded with coveitise as clotheres kemberen hir wolle.
 Whoso can contreve deceites and conspire wronges
 And lede forth a loveday to lette with truthe -- .
 That swiche craftes kan to counseil [are] cleped ;
 Thei lede lordes with lesynges and bilieth truthe.
 " Job the gentile in hise gestes witnesseth
 That wikked men, thei welden the welthe of this worlde,
 And that thei ben lordes of ech a lond, that out of lawe libbeth:
 Quare impii vivunt ? bene est omnibus qui prevaricantur et inique agunt ?
 "The Sauter seith the same by swiche that doon ille:
 Ecce ipsi peccatores habundantes in seculo obtinuerunt divicias.
 " Lo!" seith holy lettrure, " whiche lordes beth thise sherewes!"

Thilke that God moost gyveth, leest good thei deleth,
 And moost unkynde to the commune, that moost catel weldeth:
 Que perfecisti destruxerunt, iustus autem &c.
 "Harlotes for hir harlotrie may have of hir goodes,
 And japeris and jogelours and jangleris of gestes;
 Ac he that hath Holy Writ ay in his mouthe
 And kan telle of Tobye and of the twelve Apostles
 Or prechen of the penaunce that Pilat wroghte
 To Jesu the gentile, that Jewes todrowe --
 Litel is he loved that swich a lesson sheweth,
 Or daunted or drawe forth -- I do it on God hymselfe!
 "But thoo that feynen hem foolis and with faityng libbeth
 Ayein the lawe of Oure Lord, and lyen on hemselfe,
 Spitten and spuen and speke foule wordes,
 Drynken and drevelen and do men for to gape,
 Likne men and lye on hem that leneth hem no yiftes --
 Thei konne na moore mynstralcie ne musik men to glade
 Than Munde the Millere of Multa fecit Deus.
 Ne were hir vile harlotrye, have God my trouthe,
 Sholde nevere kyng ne knyght ne canon of Seint Poules
 Yyve hem to hir yeresyyve the value of a grote!
 "Ac murthe and mynstralcie amonges men is nouthe
 Lecherie, losengerye and losels tales --
 Glotonye and grete othes, this [game] they lovyeth.
 "Ac if thei carpen of Crist, thise clerkes and thise lewed,
 At mete in hir murthe whan mynstrals beth stille,
 Thanne telleth thei of the Trinite [how two slowe the thridde],
 And bryngen forth a balled reson, and taken Bernard to witnesse,
 And puten forth a presumpcion to preve the sothe.
 Thus thei dryvele at hir deys the deitee to knowe,
 And gnawen God with the gorge whanne hir guttes fullen.
 "Ac the carefulle may crie and carpen at the yate,
 Bothe afyngred and afurst, and for chele quake;
 Is non to nyme hym neer his noy to amende,
 But hun[s]en hym as an hound and hoten hym go thennes.
 Litel loveth he that Lord that lent hym al that blisse,
 That thus parteth with the povere a parcell whan hym nedeth !
 Ne were mercy in meene men moore than in riche,
 Mendinaunts meteletes myghte go to bedde.
 God is mucche in the gorge of thise grete maistres,
 Ac amonges meene men his mercy and hise werkes.
 And so seith the Sauter -- I have seighen it [in Memento]:
 * Ecce audivimus eam in Efrata; invenimus eam in campis silve.

Clerkes and othere kynnes men carpen of zgod faste,
 And have hym muche in hire mouth, ac meene men in herte.
 " Freres and faitours han founde [up] swiche questions
 To plesse with proude men syn the pestilence tyme,
 And prechen at Seint Poules, for pure envye of clerkes,
 That folk is noght fermed in the feith, ne free of hire goodes,
 Ne sory for hire synnes; so is pride woxen
 In religion and in al the reme amanges riche and povere
 That preieres have no power thise pestilences to lette.
 For God is deaf nowadays and deyneth noght his eres to opene,
 That girles for hire giltes he forgrynt hem alle.
 And yet the wrecches of this world is noon ywar by oother,
 Ne for drede of the deeth withdrawe noght hir pride,
 Ne beth plentevouse to the povere as pure charite wolde,
 But in gaynesse and glotonye forglutten hir good hemselfe,
 And breketh noght to the beggere as the Book techeth:
 Frange esurienti panem tuum &c.
 And the moore he wynneth and welt welthes and richesse
 And lordeth in ledes and londes, the lasse good he deleth.
 " Tobye techeth yow noght so! Taketh hede, ye riche,
 How the book Bible of hym bereth witnesse:
 Si tibi sit copia, habundantur tribue; si autem exiguum, illud impertiri libenter
 Whoso hath muche, spende manliche -- so meneth Tobye --
 And whoso litel weldeth, [loke] hym therafter,
 For we have no lettre of oure lif, how longe it shal dure.
 Swiche lessons lordes sholde love to here,
 And how he myghte moost meynne manliche fynde -- -
 Noght to fare as a fithelere or a frere for to seke festes,
 Homliche at othere mennes houses, and hatien hir owene.
 "Elenge is the halle, ech day in the wike,
 Ther the lord ne the lady liketh noght to sitte.
 Now hath ech riche a rule -- to eten by hymselfe
 In a pryvee parlour for povere mennes sake,
 Or in a chambre with a chymenee, and leve the chief halle
 That was maad for meles, men to eten inne,
 And al to spare to spille that spende shal another.
 "I have yherd heighe men etyng at the table
 Carpen as thei clerkes were of Crist and of hise myghtes,
 And leyden fautes upon the fader that formede us alle,
 And carpen ayein clerkes crabbede wordes:
 " Why wolde Oure Saveour suffre swich a worm in his blisse,
 That bi[w]iled the womman and the [we] after,
 Thorugh whiche wiles and wordes thei wente to helle,

And al hir seed for hir synne the same deeth suffrede?
 " Here lyeth youre lore,' thise lordes gynneth dispute,
 " Of that ye clerkes us kenneth of Crist by the Gospel:
 Filius non portabit iniquitatem patris &c.
 Why sholde we that now ben, for the werkes of Adam
 Roten and torende? Reson wolde it nevere!
 Unusquisque portabit onus suum &c.'
 "Swiche motyves they meve, thise maistres in hir glorie,
 And maken men in mysbileve that muse muche on hire wordes.
 Ymaginatif herafterward shal answeere to youre purpos.
 "Austyn to swiche argueres, he telleth hem this teme:
 Non plus sapere quam oportet.
 Wilneth nevere to wite why that God wolde
 Suffre Sathan his seed to bigile;
 Ac bileveth lelly in the loore of Holy Chirche,
 And preie hym of pardon and penaunce in thi lyve,
 And for his muche mercy to amende yow here.
 For alle that wilneth to wite the whyes of God almyghty,
 I wolde his eighe were in his ers and his fynger after
 That evere wilneth to wite why that God wolde
 Suffre Sathan his seed to bigile,
 Or Judas the Jew Jesu bitraye.
 Al was as he wolde -- Lord, yworshiped be thou --
 And al worth as thou wolt whatso we dispute.
 "And tho that useth thise havylons to [a]blende mennes wittes
 What is Dowel fro Dobet, now deaf mote he worthe,
 Siththe he wilneth to wite whiche thei ben alle.
 But if he lyve in the lif that longeth to Dowel,
 I dar ben his bolde borgh that Dobet wole he nevere,
 Theigh Dobest drawe on hym day after oother.'
 And whan that Wit was ywar what Dame Studie tolde,
 He bicom so confus he kouthe noght loke,
 And as dounb as a dore nail drough hym aside.
 And for no carpyng I kouthe after, ne knelyng to the grounde,
 I myghte gete no greyn of his grete wittes,
 But al laughynge he louted and loked upon Studie
 In signe that I sholde bisechen hire of grace.
 And whan I was war of his wille, to his wif gan I loute,
 And seide, " Mercy, madame; youre man shal I worthe
 As longe as I lyve, bothe late and rathe,
 For to werche youre wille the while my lif dureth,
 With that ye kenne me kyndely to knowe what is Dowel.'
 " For thi mekenesse, man,' quod she, "and for thi mylde speche,

I shal kenne thee to my cosyn that Clergie is hoten.
 He hath wedded a wif withinne thise sixe monthes,
 Is sib to the sevene arts -- Scripture is hir name.
 They two, as I hope, after my techyng,
 Shullen wissen thee to Dowel, I dar wel undertake.'
 Thanne was I as fayn as fowel of fair morwe,
 Gladder than the gleman that gold hath to yifte,
 And asked hire the heighe wey where that Clergie dwelte,
 "And tel me som tokene,' quod I, "for tyme is that I wende.'
 "Aske the heighe wey,' quod she,-hennes to Suffre-
 Bothe-wele-and-wo, if that thou wolt lerne;
 And ryd forth by richesse, ac rest thou noght therinne,
 For if thou couplest thee therwith to Clergie comestow nevere.
 "And also the likerouse launde that Lecherie hatte --
 Leve hym on thi left half a large myle or moore,
 Til thou come to a court, Kepe-wel-thi-tunge-
 Fro-lesynges-and-lither-speche-and-likerouse-drynkes.
 Thanne shaltow se Sobretee and Sympletee-of-speche,
 That ech wight be in wille his wit thee to shewe;
 And thus shaltow come to Clergie, that kan manye thynges.
 "Seye hym this signe: I sette hym to scole,
 And that I grete wel his wif, for I wroot hire [the bible],
 And sette hire to Sapience and to the Sauter glosed.
 Logyk I lerned hire, and [al the Lawe after],
 And alle the musons in Musik I made hire to knowe.
 "Plato the poete, I putte hym first to boke;
 Aristotle and othere mo to argue I taughte.
 Grammer for girles I garte first write,
 And bette hem with a baleys but if thei wolde lerne.
 Of alle kynne craftes I contrevd tooles --
 Of carpentrie, of kerveres, and compased masons,
 And lerned hem level and lyne, though I loke dymme.
 "Ac Theologie hath tened me ten score tymes:
 The moore I muse therinne, the myst[lok]er it semeth,
 And the depper I devyne, the derker me it thynketh.
 It is no science, forsothe, for to sotide inne.
 [If that love nere, that lith therinne, a ful lethe thyng it were];
 Ac for it let best by love, I love it the bettre,
 For there that love is ledere, ne lakked nevere grace.
 Loke thou love lelly, if thee liketh Dowel,
 For Dobet and Dobest ben of loves k[e]nn[ynge].
 "In oother seience it seith -- I seigh it in Catoun --
 Qui simulat verbis, nec corde est fidus amicus,

Tu quoque fac simile; sic ars deluditur arte:
 Whoso gloseth as gylours doon, go me to the same,
 And so shaltow fals folk and feithlees bigile --
 This is Catons kennyng to clerkes that he lereth.
 Ac Theologie techeth noght so, whoso taketh yeme;
 He kenneth us the contrarie ayein Catons wordes,
 For he biddeth us be as bretheren, and bidde for oure enemys,
 And loven hem that lyen on us, and lene hem whan hem nedeth,
 And to do good agein yvel -- God hymself hoteth:
 Dum tempus habemus, operemur bonum ad omnes,
 maxime autem ad domesticos fidei.
 "Poul preched the peple, that parfitnesse lovede,
 To do good for Goddes love and gywen den that asked,
 And [sovereyn]ly to swiche that suwen oure bileve,
 And alle that lakketh us or lyeth us, Oure Lord techeth us to lovye,
 And noght to greven hem that greveth us -- God hymself forbad it:
 Michi vindictam et ego retribuam.
 Forthi loke thow lovye as longe as thow durest,
 For is no science under sonne so sovereign for the soule.
 "Ac Astronome is hard thyng, and yvel for to knowe:
 Geometry and Geomesie is gynful of speche;
 Whoso thynketh werche with tho t[hre] thryveth ful late --
 For sorcerie is the sovereign book that to the science bilongeth.
 " Yet ar ther fibicches in forceres of fele mennes makynge,
 Experiments of Alkenamye the peple to deceyve;
 If thow thynke to dowel, deel therwith nevere!
 Alle these sciences I myself sotiled and ordeynede,
 And founded hem formest folk to deceyve.
 "Tel Clergie these tokenes, and to Scripture after,
 To counseile thee kyndely to knowe what is Dowel.'
 I seide, " Graunt mercy, madame,' and mekely hir grette,
 And wente wightly my wey withoute moore lettyng --
 And til I com to Clergie I koude nevere stynte.
 I grette the goode man as the goode wif me taughte,
 And afterwarde the wif, and worshiped hem bothe,
 And tolde hem the tokenes that me taught were.
 Was nevere come upon this ground, sith God made the worlde,
 Fairer underfongen ne frendloker at ese
 Than myself, soothly, soone so he wiste
 That I was of Wittes hous and with his wif Dame Studie.
 I seide to hem soothly that sent was I thider
 Dowel and I and Dobt to leme.
 "It is a commune lyf,' quod Mergie, "on Holy Chirche to bileve,

With alle the articles of the feith that falleth to be knowe:
 And that is to bileve lelly, bothe lered and lewed,
 On the grete God that gynnyng hadde nevere,
 And on the soothfast Sone that saved mankynde
 Fro the dedly deeth and the develes power
 Thorough the help of the Holy Goost, the which goost is of bothe --
 Thre propre persones, ac noght in plurel nombre,
 For al is but oon God and ech is God hymselfe:
 Deus Pater, Deus Filius, Deus Spiritus Sanctus --
 God the Fader, God the Sone, God Holy Goost of bothe,
 Maker of mankynde and of [animal]es bothe.
 "Austyn the olde herof made bokes,
 And hymself ordeyned to sadde us in bileve.
 Who was his auctour? Alle the foure Evaungelistes;
 And Crist cleped hymself so, the [same] bereth wnesse:
 Ego in patre et pater in me est, et qui videt me
 videt et patrem meum.
 "Alle the clerkes under Crist ne koude this assoille,
 But thus it bilongeth to bileve to lewed that willen dowel.
 For hadde nevere freke fyn wit the feith to dispute,
 Ne man hadde no merite, myghte it ben yproved:
 fides non habet meritum ubi humana ratio prebet experimentum.
 "[Siththen] is Dobet to suffre for thi soules helthe
 Al that the Book bit bi Holi Cherches techyng --
 And that is, man, bi thy myght, for mercies sake,
 Loke thow werche it in werk that thi word sheweth;
 Swich as thow semest in sighte be in assay yfounded:
 Appare quod es vel esto quod appares.
 And lat no body be by thi beryng bigiled,
 But be swich in thi soule as thow semest withoute.
 "Thanne is Dobest to be boold to blame the gilty,
 Sythenes thow seest thiself as in soule clene;
 Ac blame thow nevere body and thow be blameworthy:
 Si culpare velis culpabilis esse cavebis,
 Dogma tuum sordet cum te tua culpa remordet.
 God in the Gospel grymly repreveth
 Alle that lakketh any lif and lakkes han hemselfe:
 Quid consideras festucam in oculo fratris tui, trabem in
 oculo tuo, &c.
 Why mevestow thi mood for a mote in thi brotheres eighe,
 Sithen a beem in thyn owene ablyndeth thiself?
 Eice primo trabem de oculo tuo, &c.
 Which letteth thee to loke, lasse outhere moore?

" I rede ech a blynd bosard do boote to hymselfe --
 As persons and parisshe preestes, that preche sholde and teche
 Alle maner men to amenden, bi hire myghte.
 This text was told yow to ben war, er ye taughte,
 That ye were swiche as ye seyde to salve with othere.
 For Goddes word wolde noght be lost -- for that wercheth evere;
 If it availed noght the commune, it myghte availle yowselve.
 "Ac it semeth now soothly, to [sight] of the worlde],
 That Goddes word wercheth no [wi]ght on lered ne on lewed
 But in swich a manere as Marc meneth in the Gospel:
 Dum cecus ducit cecum, ambo in foveam cadunt.
 "Lewed men may likne yow thus -- that the beem lith in youre eighen,
 And the festu is fallen, for youre defaute,
 In alle manere men thorough mansede preestes.
 The Bible bereth witnesse that alle the [barnes] of Israel
 Bittre aboughte the giltes of two badde preestes,
 Offyn and Fynes -- for hir coveitise
 Archa Dei myshapped and Ely brak his nekke.
 " Forthi, ye correctours, claweth heron, and correcteth first yowselve,
 And thanne mowe ye manliche seye, as David made the Sauter:
 Existimasti inique quod ero tui similis: Arguam te, et statuam contra faciem t
 "And thanne shul burel clerkes ben abashed to blame yow or to greve,
 And carpen noght as thei carpe now, and calle yow doumbe hounoes --
 Canes non valentes latrare --
 And drede to wrathe yow in any word, youre werkmanshippe to lette,
 And be prester at youre preiere than for a pound of nobles.
 And al for youre holynesse -- have ye this in herte.
 "Amonges rightful religious this rule sholde be holde.
 Gregorie, the grete clerk and the goode pope,
 Of religioun the rule reherseth in his Morales
 And seith it in ensample for thei sholde do therafter:
 " Whan fisshes faillen the flood or the fresshe water,
 Thei deyen for droughte, whan thei drie ligge;
 Right so religion ro[i]leth [and] sterveth
 That out of covent and cloistre coveiten to libbe."
 For if hevne be on this erthe, and ese to any soule,
 It is in cloistre or in scole, by manye skiles I fynde.
 For in cloistre cometh no man to chide ne to fighte,
 But al is buxomnesse there and bokes, to rede and to lerne.
 "In scole there is scorn but if a clerk wol lerne,
 And gret love and likyng, for ech of hem l[er]eth oother.
 Ac now is Religion a rydere, a romere by stretes,
 A ledere of lovedayes and a lond buggere,

A prikere on a palfrey fro manere to manere,
 An heep of houndes at his ers as he a lord were;
 And but if his knave knele that shal his coppe brynge,
 He loureth on hym and asketh hym who taughte hym curteisie?
 Litel hadde lordes to doon to yyve lond from hire heires
 To religious that han no routhe though it reyne on hir auters.
 "In many places ther thei persons ben, by himself at ese,
 Of the povere have thei no pite -- and that is hir pure charite,
 Ac thei leten hem as lordes, hir lond lith so brode.
 "Ac ther shal come a kyng and confesse yow religiouses,
 And bete yow, as the Bible telleth, for brekyng of youre rule,
 And amende monyals, monkes and chanons,
 And puten hem to hir penaunce -- Ad pristinum statum ire,
 And barons with erles beten hem, thorough Beatus virres techyng,
 [Biyeten] that hir barnes clayrnen, and blame yow foule:
 Hii in curribus et hii in equis ipsi obligati sunt &c.
 "And thanne freres in hir fraytour shul fynden a keye
 Of Costantyns cofres, in which [the catel is]
 That Gregories godchildren [g]an yvele despende.
 "And thanne shal the Abbot of Abyngdoun and al his issue for evere
 Have a knok of a kyng, and incurable the wounde.
 That this worth sooth, seke ye that ofte overse the Bible:
 Quomodo cessavit exactor, quievit tributum? Contrivit Dominus
 baculum impiorum, et virgam dominancium cedencium plaga insanabili.
 "Ac er that kyng come Caym shal awake,
 Ac Dowel shal dyngen hym adoun and destruye his myghte.'
 "Thanne is Dowel and Dobet,' quod I, "dominus and knyghthode?"
 " I nel noght scorne,' quod Scripture; " but if scryveynes lye,
 Kynghod ne knyghthod, by noght I kan awayte,
 Helpeth noght to heveneward oone heeris ende,
 Ne richesse right noght, ne reautee of lordes.
 " Poul preveth it impossible -- riche men to have hevene.
 Salamon seith also that silver is worst to lovyte:
 Nichil iniquius quam amare pecuniam:
 And Caton kenneth us to coveiten it naught but as nede techeth:
 Dilige denarium set parce dilige formam.
 And patriarkes and prophetes and poetes bothe
 Writen to wissen us to wilne no richesse,
 And preiseden povertie with pacience; the Apostles bereth witnessse
 That thei han eritage in hevene -- and by trewe righte,
 Ther riche men no right may cleyme, but of ruthe and grace.'
 " Contra,' quod I, " by Crist! That kan I repreve,
 And preven it by Peter and by Poul bothe:

That is baptized beth saaf, be he riche or povere.'
 "That is in extremis,' quod Scripture, " amonges Sarsens and Jewes --
 They mowen be saved so, and [so] is oure bileve:
 That an uncristene in that caas may cristen an hethen,
 And for his lele bileve, whan he the lif tyneth,
 Have the heritage of hevene as any man Cristene.
 "Ac Cristene men withoute moore maye noght come to hevene,
 For that Crist for Cristene men deide, and confermed the lawe
 That whoso wolde and wilneth with Crist to arise --
 Si cum Christo surrexistis &c --
 He sholde lovye and lene and the lawe fulfille.
 That is, love thi Lord God levest aboven alle,
 And after, alle Cristene creatures in commune, ech man oother;
 And thus bilongeth to lovye, that leveth to be saved.
 And but we do thus in dede er the day of dome,
 It shal bisitten us ful soure, the silver that we kepen,
 And oure bakkes that mothe-eten be, and seen beggeris go naked,
 Or delit in wyn and wildefowel, and wite any in defaute.
 For every Cristene creature sholde be kynde til oother,
 And sithen hethen to helpe in hope of amendement.
 -God hoteth heighe and lowe that no man hurte oother,
 And seith, "Slee noght that semblable is to myn owene liknesse,
 But if I sende thee som tokene,' and seith " Non mecaberis --
 Is slee noght but suffre, and al[so] for the beste,
 For Michi vindictam et ego retribuam.
 ""For I shal punyssh in purgatorie or in the put of helle
 Ech man for hise mysdedes, but mercy it lette.'
 " This is a long lesson.' quod I, " and litel am I the wiser!
 Where Dowel is or Dobet derkliche ye shewen.
 Manye tales ye tellen that Theologie lerneth,
 And that I man maad was, and my name yentred
 In the legende of lif longe er I were,
 Or ellis unwriten for som wikkednesse, as Holy Writ witnesseth:
 Nemo ascendit ad celum nisi qui de celo descendit.
 "And I leve it wel, by Oure Lord and on no lettrure better.
 For Salomon the Sage that Sapienec [made]
 God gaf hym grace of wit and alle goodes after
 To rule the reume and riche to make;
 He demed wel and wisely, as Holy Writ telleth.
 Aristotle and he -- who wissed men better?
 Maistres that of Goddes mercy techen men and prechen,
 Of hir wordes thei wissen us for wisest as in hir tyme --
 And al Holy Chirche holdeth hem bothe [in helle]!

And if I sholde werche by hir werkes to wyne me hevene,
 That for hir werkes and wit now wonyeth in pyne --
 Thanne wroughte I unwisly. whatsoevere ye preche!
 "Ac of fele witty, in feith, litel ferly I have
 Though hir goost be ungracious God for to plese.
 For many men on this moolde moore setten hir herte
 In good than in God -- forthi hem grace failleth
 At hir mooste meschief, whan [men] shal lif lete,
 As Salamon dide and swiche othere, that shewed grete wittes,
 Ac hir werkes, as Holy Writ seith, was evere the contrarie.
 Forthi wise witted men and wel ylettred clerkes
 As thei seyen hemself selde doon therafter:
 Super cathedram Moysi &c.
 "Ac I wene it worth of manye as was in Noes tyme
 Tho he shoop that ship of shides and of bordes:
 Was nevere wrighte saved that wroghte theron, ne oother werkman ellis,
 But briddes and beestes and the blissed Noe
 And his wif with hise sones and also hire wyves:
 Of wrightes that it wroghte was noon of hem ysaved.
 "God lene it fare nought so bi folk that the feith techeth
 Of Holi Chirche, that herberwe is and Goddes hous to save
 And shilden us from shame therinne, as Noes ship dide beestes.
 And men that maden it amydde the flood adreynten.
 The culorum of this clause curatours is to mene,
 That ben carpenters Holy Kirk to rmake for Cristes owene beestes:
 Homines et iumenta salvabis, Domine, &c.
 At domesday the deluvye worth of deth and fir at ones;
 Forthi I counseille yow clerkes, of Holy [Kirke] the wrightes,
 Wercheth ye werkes as ye sen ywrite, lest ye worthe nought therinne!
 "On Good Friday, I fynde, a felon was ysaved
 That hadde lyved al his lif with lesynges and with thefte;
 And for he beknew on the cros and to Crist shrof hym,
 He was sonner ysaved than Seint Johan the Baptist
 And or Adam or Ysaye or any of the prophetes,
 That hadde yleyen with Lucifer many longe yeres.
 A robbere was yraunsoned rather than thei alle
 Withouten penaunce of purgatorie to perpetuel blisse.
 "Than Marie Maudeleyne wh[o myghte do] werse?
 Or who worse dide than David, that Uries deeth conspired?
 Or Poul the Apostle that no pite hadde
 Cristene kynde to kille to dethe?
 And now ben thise as sovereyns with seintes in hevene --
 Tho that wroughte wikkedlokest in world tho thei were;

And tho that wisely wordeden and writen manye bokes
 Of wit and of wisdom, with dampned soules wonye.
 -That Salomon seith I trowe be sooth and certein of us alle:
 Sunt iusti atque sapientes, et opera eorum in manu Dei sunt, &c.
 Ther are witty and wel libbynge, ac hire werkes ben yhudde
 In the hondes of almyghty God, and he woot the sothe --
 Wher for love a man worth allowed there and hise lele werkes,
 Or ellis for his yvel wille and envye of herte,
 And be allowed as he lyved so, for by luthere men knoweth the goode
 "And wherby wiste men which is whit, if alle thyng blak were,
 And who were a good man but if ther were som sherewe?
 Forthi lyve we forth with lithere men -- I leve fewe ben goode --
 For "quant OPOR TET vient en place il ny ad que PA TI,'
 And he that may al amende, have mercy on us alle!
 For sothest word that ever God seide was tho he seide Nemo bonus.
 "[And yet have I forgete ferther of fyve wittes techyng
 That] Clergie of Cristes mouth comended was it [nevere];
 For he seide to Seint Peter and to swiche as he lovede,
 " Dum steteritis ante reges et presides &c.
 Though ye come bifore kynges and clerkes of the lawe,
 Beth noght abasshed, for I shal be in youre mouthes,
 And yyve yow wit at wille [with] konnyng to conclude hem
 Alle that ayeins yow of Cristendom disputen.'
 "David maketh mencion, he spak amonges kynges,
 And myghte no kyng overcomen hym as by konnyng of speche.
 But wit ne wisdom wan nevere the maistrie
 When man was at meschief withoute the moore grace.
 "The doughtieste doctour and devinour of the Trinitee,
 Was Austyn the olde, and heighest of the foure,
 Seide thus in a sermon -- I seigh it writen ones --
 " Ecce ipsi idiote rapiunt celum ubi nos sapientes in inferno mergimur'
 And is to mene to Englissh men, moore ne lesse,
 Arn none rather yravysshed fro the righte bileve
 Than an thise konnyng clerkes that konne manye bokes,
 Ne none sonner saved, ne sadder of bileve
 Than plowmen and pastours and povere commune laborers,
 Souteres and shepherdes -- swiche lewed juttres
 Perce with a Paternoster the paleys of hevene
 And passen purgatorie penauncelees at hir hennes partyng
 Into the blisse of paradys for hir pure bileve,
 That inparfitly here knewe and ek lyvede.
 " Ye, men knowe clerkes that han corsed the tyme
 That evere thei kouthe or knewe moore than Credo in Deum patrem

And principally hir paternoster -- many a persone hath wissed.
"I se ensamples myself and so may manye othere,
That servaunts that serven lordes selde fallen in arerage
But tho that kepen the lordes catel -- clerkes and reves.
Right so lewed men and of litel knowyng,
Selden falle thei so foule and so fer in synne
As clerkes of Holy Kirke that kepen Cristes tresor --
The which is mannes soule to save, as God seith in the Gospel:
""Ite vos in vineam meam.""

Passus 11

Thanne Scriptare scorned me and a skile tolde,
And lakked me in Latyn and light by me sette,
And seide, " Multi multa sciunt et seipsos nesciunt.'
Tho wepte I for wo and wrathe of hir speche
And in a wynkyng w[or]th til I [weex] aslepe.
A merveillous metels mette me thanne.
For I was ravysshed right there -- for Fortune me fette
And into the lond of longyng and love she me broughte,
And in a mirour that highte Middelertun she made me to biholde.
Sithen she seide to me, -Here myghtow se wondres,
And knowe that thou coveitest, and come therto, peraunter.'
Thanne hadde Fortune folwyng hire two faire damyseles:
Concupiscencia Carnis men called the elder mayde,
And Coveitise of Eighes ycalled was that oother.
Pride of Parfit Lyvyng pursued hem bothe,
And bad me for my contenaunce acounten Clergie lighte.
Concupiscencia Carnis colled me aboute the nekke
And seide, "Thow art yong and yeep and hast yeres ynowe
For to lyve longe and ladies to love;
And in this mirour thou might se myrthes ful manye
That leden thee wole to likyng al thi lif tyme.'
The secounde seide the same: " I shal sewe thi wille;
Til thou be a lord and have lond, leten thee I nelle
That I ne shal folwe thi felawship, if Fortune it like.'
" He shal fynde me his frend,' quod Fortune therafter;
"The freke that folwede my wille failed nevere blisse.'
Thanne was ther oon that highte Elde, that hevy was of chere,
" Man,' quod he, "if I mete with thee, by Marie of hevene
Thow shalt fynde Fortune thee faille at thi mooste nede,
And Concupiscencia Carnis clene thee forsake.

Bittrely shaltow banne thanne, bothe dayes and nyghtes,
 Coveitise of Eighe, that evere thow hir knewe;
 And Pride of Parfit Lyvyng to mucche peril thee brynge.'
 "Ye? Recche thee nevere!" quod Rechelesnesse, stood forth in raggede clothes
 "Folwe forth that Fortune wole -- thow has wel fer til Elde.
 A man may stoupe tyme ynogh whan he shal tyne the crowne.
 "'Homo proponit," quod a poete, and Plato he highte,
 "'And Deus disponit" quod he, "lat God doon his wille."
 If Truthe wol witnesse it be wel do, Fortune to folwe,
 Concupiscencia Carnis ne Coveitise of Eighes
 Ne shal noght greve thee graithly, ne bigile thee but thow wolt.'
 "Ye, farewell Phippe! ' quod Faunteltee, and forth gan me drawe,
 Til Concupiscencia Carnis acorded til alle my werkes.
 "Allas, eighe!" quod Elde and Holynesse bothe,
 "That wit shal torne to wrecchednesse for wil to have his likyng!"
 Coveitise of Eighes confortd me anoon after
 And folwed me fourty wynter and a fifte moore,
 That of Dowel ne Dobet no deyntee me thoughte.
 I hadde no likyng, leve me, [o]f the leste of hem ought to knowe.
 Coveitise of Eighes com ofter in mynde
 Than Dowel or Dobet among my dedes alle.
 Coveitise of Eighes confortd me ofte,
 And seide, "Have no conscience how thow come to goode.
 Go confesse thee to som frere and shewe hym thi synnes.
 For whiles Fortune is thi frend freres wol thee lovyne,
 And fe[stn]e thee in hir fraternitee and for thee biseke
 To hir Priour Provincial a pardon for to have,
 And preien for thee pol by pol if thow be pecuniosus.
 Pena pecuniaria non sufficit pro spiritualibus delictis.
 By wissynge of this wenche I dide, hir wordes were so swete,
 Til I foryat youthe and yarn into elde.
 And thanne was Fortune my foo, for al hir faire biheste,
 And povertie pursued me and putte me lowe.
 And tho fond I the frere afered and flittyng bothe
 Ayeins oure firste forward, for I seide I nolde
 Be buried at hire hous but at my parisshe chirche
 (For I herde ones how Conscience it tolde
 That there a man were cristned, by kynde he sholde be buried).
 And for I seide thus to freres, a fool thei me helden,
 And loved me the lasse for my lele speche.
 Ac yet I cryde on my confessour that [so konnyng heeld hymself].
 "By my feith, frere!" quod I, "ye faren lik thise woweris
 That wedde none widwes but for to welden hir goodes.

Right so, by the roode, roughte ye nevere '
 Where my body were buried, by so ye hadde my silver!
 Ich have muche merveille of yow, and so hath many another,
 Whi youre covent coveiteth to confesse and to burye
 Rather than to baptize barnes that ben catecumelynges.
 Baptizynge and buryinge bothe beth ful nedefulle;
 Ac muche moore meritorie me thynketh it is to baptize; -
 For a baptized man may, as maistres telleth, .
 Thorough contricion come to the heighe hevene --
 Sola contricio delet peccatum --
 Ac a barn withouten bapteme may noght so be saved --
 Nisi quis renatus fuerit.
 Loke, ye lettred men, wheither I lye or do noght.'
 And Lewte tho lo[ugh] on me, for I loured after.
 "Werfore lourestow?" quod Lewtee and loked on me harde.
 "If I dorste [amonges men,' quod I], "this metels avowe!"
 " Yis, by Peter and by Poul!' quod he, " and take hem bothe to witnesse:
 Non oderis fratres secrete in corde tuo set publice argue illos.'
 "They wole aleggen also,' quod I, " and by the Gospel preven:
 Nolite iudicare quemquam.
 "And wherof serveth lawe,' quod Lewtee, if no lif undertoke it --
 Falsnesse ne faiterie? For somewhat the Apostle seide
 Non oderis fratrem.
 And in the Sauter also seith David the prophete
 95 Existimasti inique quod ero tui similis &c.
 It is licitum for lewed men to [l]egge the sothe
 If hem liketh and lest -- ech a lawe it graunteth'.
 Except persons and preestes and prelates of Holy Chirche:
 It falleth noght for that folk no tales to telle --
 Though the tale were trewe -- and it touched synne.
 "Thyng that al the world woot, wherfore sholdestow spare
 To reden it in retorik to arate dedly synne?
 Ac be neveremoore the firste the defaute to blame;
 Though thou se yvel, seye it noght first -- be sory it nere amended.
 No thyng that is pryve, publice thouw it nevere;-
 Neither for love laude it noght, ne lakke it For envye:
 Parum lauda; vitupera parcius.'
 " He seith sooth,' quod Scripture tho, and skipte an heigh and preched;
 Ac the matere that she meved, if lewed men it knewe,
 The lasse, as I leve, lovyen thei wolde
 The bileve o[f Oure] Lord that lettred men techeth.
 This was hir teme and hir text -- I took ful good hede:
 "Multi to a mangerie and to the mete were sompned;

And whan the peple was plener comen, the porter unpynned the yate
 And plukked in Pauci pryveliche and leet the remenaunt go rome.'
 Al for tene of hir text trembled myn herte,
 And in a weer gan I wexe, and with myself to dispute
 Wheither I were chose or noght chose; on Holy Chirche I thoughte,
 That underfeng me atte font for oon of Goddes chosene.
 For Crist cleped us alle, come if we wolde --
 Sarsens and scismatikes, and so he dide the Jewes:
 O vos omnes sicientes, venite &c;
 And bad hem souke for synne sa[l]ve at his breste.
 And drynke boote for bale, brouke it whoso myghte.
 "Thanne may alle Cristene come,' quod I,-and cleyme there entree
 By the blood that he boughte us with and thorough bapteme after:
 Qui crediderit et baptizatus fuerit &c.
 For though a Cristen man coveited his Cristendom to reneye,
 Rightfully to reneye no reson it wolde.
 " For may no cherl chartre make, ne his c[h]atel selle
 Withouten leve of his lord -- no lawe wol it graunte.
 Ac he may renne in arerage and rome fro home,
 And as a reneyed caytif recchelesly aboute.
 Ac Reson shal rekene with hym and rebuken hym at the laste,
 And Conscience acounte with hym and casten hym in arerage,
 And putten hym after in prison in purgatorie to brenne,
 For his arerages rewarden hym there right to the day of dome,
 But if Contricion wol come and crye by his lyve
 Mercy for hise mysdedes with mouthe or with herte.'
 " That is sooth,' seide Scripture; " may no synne lette
 Mercy al to amende, and mekenesse hir folwe;
 For thei beth, as oure bokes telleth, above Goddes werkes:-
 Misericordia eius super omnia opera eius.'
 "Ye, baw for bokes!" quod oon was broken out ofhelle.
 " I Troianus, a trewe knyght, take witnesse at a pope
 How I was ded and dampned to dwellen in pyne '
 For an uncristene creature; clerkes wite the sothe --
 That al the clergie under Crist ne myghte me cracche fro helle
 But oonliche love and leautee and my laweful domes.
 "Gregorie wiste this wel, and wilned to my soule
 Savacion for soothnesse that he seigh in my werkes.
 And after that he wepte and wilned me were graunted grace,
 Withouten any bede biddying his boone was underfongen,
 And I saved, as ye may see, withouten syngynge of masses,
 By love and by lernyng of my lyvyng in truthe,
 Broughte me fro bitter peyne ther no biddying myghte

" Lo! ye lordes, what leautee dide by an Emperour of Home
 That was an uncristene creature, as clerkes fyndeth in bokes.
 Nought thorough preiere of a pope but for his pure truthe
 Was that Sarsen saved, as Seint Gregorie bereth witnesse.
 Wel oughte ye lordes that lawes kepe this lesson to have in mynde,
 And on Troianus truthe to thenke; and do truthe to the peple.
 "This matere is merk for many of yow -- ac, men of Holy Chirche,
 The Legend[a] Sanctorum yow lereth more largere than I yow telle.
 Ac thus leel love and lyvyng in truthe
 Pulte out of pyne a paynym of Rome.
 Yblissed be truthe that so brak helle yates
 And saved the Sarsyn from Sathanas and his power,
 Ther no clergie ne kouthe, ne konnyng of lawes!
 Love and leautee is a lell science,
 For that is the book blissed of blisse and of joye:
 God wroughte it and wroot it with his owene fynger
 And took it to Moises upon the mount, alle men to lere.
 "Lawe withouten love," quod Troianus, "ley ther a bene --
 Or any science under sonne, the seven arts and alle!
 -- But thei ben lerned for Oure Lordes love, lost is al the tyme,
 For no cause to cacche silver therby, ne to be called a maister,
 But al for love of Oure Lord and the bet to love the peple.
 "For Seint Johan seide it, and sothe arn hise wordes:
 Qui non diligit manet in morte.
 Whoso loveth noght, leve me, he lyveth in deeth deyinge;
 And that alle manere men, enemyes and frendes,
 Love hir eyther oother, and lene hem as hemselfe.
 Whoso leneth noght, he loveth noght, Oure Lord woot the sothe
 And comaundeth ech creature to conformen hym to love -
 His neighebour as hymselfe and hise enemyes after.
 For hem that haten us is oure merite to love,
 And sovereynly povere peple to plesse -- hir preieres maye us helpe.
 For oure joy and oure [ju]le, Jesu Crist of hevene,
 In a povere mannes apparaille pursueth us evere,
 And loketh on us in hir liknesse and that with lovely chere,
 To knowen us by oure kynde herte and castynge of oure eighen,
 Wheither we love the lordes here bifore the Lord of blis
 And exciteth us by the Evangelie that whan we maken festes,
 We sholde noght clepe oure kyn therto, ne none kynnes riche:
 Cum facitis conviva, nolite invitare amicos.
 ""Ac calleth the carefulle therto, the croked and the povere;
 For youre frendes wol feden yow, and founde yow to quyte
 Youre festynge and youre faire yifte -- ech frend quyteth so oother.

Ac for the povere I shal paie, and pure wel quyte hir travaille
 That yyveth hem mete or moneie and loveth hem for my sake.'
 "Almighty God myghte ha[ve] maad riche alle men, if he wolde,
 Ac for the beste ben som riche and some beggeres and povere.
 For alle arc we Cristes creatures, and of his cofres riche,
 And bretheren as of oo blood, as wel beggeres as erles.
 For at Calvarie of Cristes blood Cristendom gan sprynge,
 And bloody bretheren we bicomme there, of o body ywonne,
 As quasi modo geniti gentil men echone --
 No beggere ne boye amonges us but if it synne made.
 Qui facit peccatum servus est peccati.
 In the olde lawe, as the lettre telleth, "mennes sones" men called us,
 Of Adames issue and Eve, ay til God-Man deide;
 And after his resurexcion Redemptor was his name.
 And we hise bretheren thorough hym ybought, bothe riche and povere.
 Forthi love we as leve children shal, and ech man laughe of oother,
 And of that ech man may forbere, amende there it neaeth,
 And every man helpe oother -- for hennes shul we alle:
 Alter alterius onera portate.
 And be we noght unkynde of oure catel, ne of oure konnyng neither,
 For woot no man how neigh it is to ben ynome fro bothe.
 Forthi lakke no lif oother, though he moore Latyn knowe,
 Ne undernyme noght foule, for is noon withoute defaute.
 For whatevere clerkes carpe of Cristendom or ellis,
 Crist to a commune womman seide in commune at a feste
 That Fides sua sholde saven hire and salven hire of synnes.
 "Thanne is bileve a lele help, above logyk or lawe.
 Of logyk ne of lawe in Legendo Sanctorum
 Is litel allowaunce maad, but if bileve hem helpe;
 For it is overlonge er logyk any lesson assoille,
 And lawe is looth to love but if he lacche silver.
 Bothe logyk and lawe, that loveth noght to lye,
 I conseilte alle Cristene, clyve noght theron to soore,
 For some wordes I fynde writen, were of Feithes techyng,
 That saved synful men, as Seint Johan bereth witnesse:
 Eadem mensura qua mensi fueritis remecietur vobis.
 Forthi lerne we the lawe of love as Oure Lord taughte;
 And as Seint Gregorie seide, for mannes soule helthe,
 Melius est scrutari scelera nostra quam naturas rerum.
 "Why I meve this matere is moost for the povere;
 For in hir liknesse Oure Lord ofte hath ben yknowe.
 Witnesse in the Pask wyke whan he yede to Emaus --
 Cleophas ne knew hym noght, that he Crist were,

For his povere apparaille and pilgrymes wedes,
 Til he blessed and brak the breed that thei eten.
 So bi hise werkes thei wisten that he was Jesus,
 Ac by clothyng thei knewe hym noght, ne by carpyng of tonge.
 And al was ensample, for sooth, to us synfulle here,
 That we sholde be lowe and loveliche of speche,
 And apparaille us noght over proudly -- for pilgrymes are we alle.
 And in the apparaille of a povere man and pilgrymes liknesse
 Many tyme God hath ben met among nedy peple,
 Ther nevere segge hym seigh in secte of the riche.
 "Seint Johan and othere seintes were seyen in poore clothyng,
 And as povere pilgrymes preyed mennes goodes.
 Jesu Crist on a Jewes doghter lighte: gentil womman though she were,
 Was a pure povere maide and to a povere man ywedded.
 "Martha on Marie Maudelayne an huge pleynt she made,
 And to Oure Saveour self seide thise wordes:
 Domine, non est tibi cure quod soror mea reliquit me solam ministrare ?
 And hastily God answerde, and eithers wille ful [wel lo]wed,
 Bothe Marthas and Maries, as Mathew bereth witnesse;
 Ac poverté God putte bifore, and preised it the better:
 Maria optimam partem elegit, que non auferetur ab ea.
 "And alle the wise that evere were, by aught I kan aspye,
 Preisen poverté for best lif. if Facience it folwe,
 And bothe better and blesseder by many fold than Richesse.
 Although it be sour to suffre, ther cometh swete after;
 As on a walnote -- withoute is a bitter barke,
 And after that bitter bark, be the shelle awaye,
 is a kernel of confort kynde to restore.
 So is after poverté or penaunce patiently ytake,
 Maketh a man to have mynde in God and a gret wille
 To wepe and to wel bidde, wherof wexeth mercy,
 Of which Crist is a kernell to conforte the soule.
 And wel sikker he slepeth, the segge that is povere,
 And lasse he dredeth deeth and in derke to ben yrobbed
 Than he that is right riche -- Reson bereth witnesse:
 Pauper ego ludo dum tu dives meditaris.
 "Although Salomon seide, as folk seeth in the Bible,
 Divicias nec paupertates &c,
 Wiser than Salomon was bereth witnesse and taughte
 That parfit poverté was no possession to have,
 And lif moost likynge to God, as Luc bereth witnesse:
 Si vis perfectus esse, vade et vende &c --
 And is to mene to men that on this moolde lyven,

Whoso wole he pure parfit moot possession forsake.
 Or selle it, as seith the Book. and the silver dele
 To beggeris that goon and begge and bidden good for Goddes love.
 For failed nevere man mete that myghtful God serveth,
 As David seith in the Sauter; to swiche that ben in wille
 To serve God goodliche, ne greveth hym no penaunce --
 Nichil impossibile volenti --
 Ne lakketh nevere liflode, lynnen ne wollen:
 *Iuquirentes autem Dominum non minuentur omni bono.
 "If preestes weren wise, thei wolde no silver take
 For masses ne for matyns, noght hir mete of usureres,
 Ne neither kirtel ne cote, theigh thei for cold sholde deye,
 And thei hir devoir dide, as David seith in the Sauter:
 Iudica me, Deus, et discerne causam meam.
 "Spera in Deo speketh of preestes that have no spendyng silver
 That if thei travaille truweliche and truste in God almyghty,
 Hem sholde lakke no liflode, neyther lynnen ne wollen.
 And the title that ye take ordres by telleth ye ben avaunced;
 Thanne nedeth yow noght to [nyne] silver for masses that ye syngen.
 For he that took yow youre title sholde take yow youre wages,
 Or the bisshop that blessed yow, if that ye ben worthi.
 "For made nevere kyng no knyght but he hadde catel to spende
 As bifel for a knyght, or foond hym for his strengthe.
 It is a careful knyght, and of a caytif kynges makyng,
 That hath no lond ne lynage riche ne good loos of hise handes.
 The same I segge for sothe by alle swiche preestes
 That han neither konnyng ne kyn, but a crowne one
 And a title, a tale of noght, to his liflode at meschief.
 He hath moore bileve, as I leve, to lacche thorough his croune
 Cure than for konnyng or "knownen for clene of beryngne.'
 I Have wonder for why and wherfore the bisshop
 Maketh swiche preestes, that lewed men bitrayen !
 "A chartre is chalangeable bifore a chief justice:
 If fals Latyn be in that lettre, the lawe it impugneth,
 Or peynted parentrelynarie, parcelles overskipped.
 The gome that gloseth so chartres for a goky is holden.
 "So is it a goky, by God! that in his gospel failleth
 Or in masse or in matyns maketh any defaute:
 Qui offendit in uno, in omnibus est reus.
 And also in the Sauter seith David to overskipperis,
 Psallite Deo nostro, psallite; quoniam rex terrae Deus Israel, psallite sapienter.
 "The bisshop shal be blamed bifore God, as I leve,
 That crouneth swiche Goddes knyghtes that konneth noght sapienter

Synge, ne psalmes rede, ne seye a masse of the day.
Ac never neither is blamelees, the bisshop ne the chapeleyn;
For hir either is endited, and that of "Ignorancia
Non excusat episcopos nec ydiotes preestes.'
"This lokynge on lewed preestes hath doon me lepe from poverté --
The which I preise, ther pacience is, moore parfit than richesse.'
Ac muche moore in metynge thus with me gan oon dispute --
And slepyng I seigh al this; and sithen cam Kynde
And nempned me by my name, and bad me nymen hede,
And thorough the wondres of this world wit for to take.
And en a mountaigne that Myddelerthe highte, as me tho thoughte,
I was fet forth by ensamples to knowe,
Thorough ech a creature, Kynde my creatour to lovye.
I seigh the sonne and the see and the sond after,
And where that briddes and beestes by hir make thei yeden,
Wilde wormes in wodes, and wonderful foweles
With fleckede fetheres and of fele colours.
Man and his make I myghte se bothe;
Pverte and plentee, both pees and werre,
Blisse and bale -- bothe I seigh at ones,
And how men token Mede and Mercy refused.
Reson I seigh soothly sewen all beestes
In etynge, in drynkyng and in engendryng of kynde.
And after cours of concepcion noon toke kepe of oother
As whan thei hadde ryde in rothey tyme; anoonright therafter
Males drowen hem to males amornyng by hemselfe,
And [femelles to femelles ferded and drowe].
Ther ne was cow ne cowkynde that conceyved hadde
That wolde belwe after bole, ne boor after sowe.
Both hors and houndes and alle othere beestes
Medled noght with hir makes that [mid] fole were.
Briddes I biheld that in buskes made nestes;
Hadde nevere wye wit to werche the leese.
I hadde wonder at whom and wher the pye
Lerned to legge the stikkes in which she leyeth and bredeth.
Ther nys wrighte, as I wene, sholde werche hir nest to paye;
If any mason made a molde therto, muche wonder it were.
And yet me merveilled moore: many othere briddes
Hidden and hileden hir egges ful derne
In mareys and moores for men sholde hem noght fynde,
And hidden hir egges whan thei therfro wente,
For fere of othere foweles and for wilde beestes.
And some troden hir makes and on trees bredden

And broughten forth hir briddes so al above the grounde.
 And some briddes at the bile thorough brethyng conceyved,
 And some caukede; I took kepe how pecokkes bredden.
 Muche merveilled me what maister thei hadde,
 And who taughte hem on trees to tymbre so heighe
 That neither burn ne beest may hir briddes rechen.
 And sithen I loked on the see and so forth on the sterres;
 Manye selkouthes I seigh, ben noght to seye nouthe.
 I seigh floures in the fryth and hir faire colours,
 And how among the grene gras growed so manye hewes,
 And some soure and some swete -- selkouth me thoughte.
 Of hir kynde and hir colour to carpe it were to longe.
 Ac that moost meved me and my mood chaunged --
 That Reson rewarded and ruled alle beestes
 Save man and his make: many tyme and ofte
 No Reson hem folwede, [neither riche ne povere].
 And thanne I rebukede Reson, and right til hymselfen I seyde.
 "I have wonder of thee, that witty art holden,
 Why thow ne sewest man and his make, that no mysfeet hem folwe.'
 And Reson arated me, and seide, "Recche thee nevere
 Why I suffre or noght suffre -- thiself hast noght to doone.
 Amende thow it if thow myght, for my tyme is to abide.
 Suffraunce is a soverayn vertue, and a swift vengeance.
 Who suffreth moore than God?' quod he; "no gome, as I leeve.
 He myghte amende in a minute while al that mysstandeth,
 Ac he suffreth for som mannes goode, ad so is oure bettere.
 " Holy Writ,' quod that wye, "wisseth men to suffre:
 Propter Deum subiecti estote omni creature.
 Frenche men and fre men affaiteth thus hire children:
 Bele vertue est suffraunce; mal dire est petite vengeance.
 Bien dire et bien souffrir fait lui souffrant a bien venir.
 Forthi I rede,' quod Reson, "thow rule thi tonge bettere,
 And er thow lakke my lif, loke if thow be to preise.
 For is no creature under Crist can formen hymselfen,
 And if a man myghte make hymself good,
 Ech a lif wolde be laklees -- leeve thow non other.
 Ne thow shalt fynde but fewe fayne for to here
 Of here defautes foule bifore hem reherced.
 "The wise and the witty wroot thus in the Bible:-
 De re que te non molestare noli certare.
 For be a man fair or foul. it falleth noght to lakke
 The shap ne the shaft that God shoop hymselfe;
 For al that he wrought was wel ydo, as Holy Writ witnesseth:

Et vidit Deus cuncta que fecerat, et erant valde bona.
 And bad every creature in his kynde encreesse,
 Al to murthe with man that moste wo tholie
 In fondyng of the flessch and of the fend bothe.
 For man was maad of swich a matere he may noght wel asterte
 That som tyme hym bitit to folwen his kynde.
 Caton acordeth therwith -- Nemo sine crimine vivit!
 Tho caughte I colour anoon and comsed to ben ashamed,
 And awaked therwith. Wo was me thanne
 That I in metels ne myghte moore have yknowen.
 And thanne seide I to myself, and [sherewe]de that tyme,
 "Now I woot what Dowel is,' quod I, " by deere God, as me thynketh!"
 And as I caste up myne eighen, oon loked on me and asked
 Of me, what thyng it were? " Ywis, sire,' I seyde,
 "To se mucche and suffre moore, certes,' quod I, "is Dowel.'
 "Haddestow suffred,' he seide, "slepyng tho thou were.
 Thou sholdest have knowen that Clergie kan and conceyved moore thorough
 Reson-
 For Reson wolde have reherced thee right as Clergie seide.
 Ac for thyn entremetyng here artow forsake:
 Philosophus esses, si tacuisses.
 "Adam, whiles he spak noght, hadde paradis at wille;
 Ac whan he mamelede aboute mete and entremeted to knowe
 The wisdom and the wit of God, he was put fram blisse.
 And right so ferde Reson bi thee -- thou with thi rude spec
 Lakkedest and losedest thyng that longed noght to doone.
 Thou hadde he no likyng for to lere the moore.
 " Pryde now and presumpcion paraventure wol thee appele,
 That Clergie thi compaignye ne kepeth noght to suwe.
 For shal nevere chalangyng ne chidyng chaste a man so soone
 As shal shame, and shenden hym, and shape hym to amende.
 For lat a dronken daffe in a dyk falle,
 Lat hym ligge, loke noght on hym til hym liste aryse.
 For though Reson rebuked hym thanne, reccheth he nevere;
 Of Clergie ne of his counseil he counteth noght a risshe.
 [To blame] or for to bete hym thanne, it were but pure synne.
 Ac whan nede nymeth hym up, for doute leste he [ne] sterve,
 And shame shrapeth hise clothes and hise shynes wassheth,
 Thanne woot the dronken daffe wherfore he is to blame.'
 "Ye siggen sooth, by my soule,' quod I, "Ich have yseyen it ofte.
 Ther smyt no thyng so smerte, ne smelleth so foule
 As shame, there he sheweth hym -- for ech man shonyeth his felaweshipe.
 Why ye wisse me thus,' quod I, "was for I rebuked Reson.'

"Certes,' quod he, "that is sooth,' and shoop hym for to wal n.
And I aroos up right with that and [raughte] hym after,
And preyde hym [if his wille were, he wolde] telle me his name.

Passus 12

" I am Ymaginatif,' quod he, "ydel was I nevere,
Though I sitte by myself, in siknesse nor in helthe.
I have folwed thee, in feith, thise fyve and fo
And manye tymes have meved thee to [mlyn[n]e on thyn ende,
And how fele fernyeres are faren, and so fewe to come:
And of thi wilde wantownesse [whan] thou yong were,
To amende it in thi myddel age, lest myght the faille
In thyn olde elde, that yvele kan suffre
Poverté or penaunce, or preyerés bidde:
Si non in prima vigilia nec in secunda &c.
"Amende thee while thou myght; thou hast ben warned ofte
With poustees of pestilences, with poverté and with angrés --
And with thise bittre baleises God beteth his deere children:
Quem diligo, castigo.
And David in the Sauter seith, of swiche that loveth Jesus,
"" Virga tua et baculus tuus, ipsa me consolata sunt.
Although thou strike me with thi staf, with stikke or with yerde,
It is but murthe as for me to amende my soule."
And thou medlest thee with makynge -- and myghtest go seye thi Sauter,
And bidde for hem that yyveth thee breed; for ther are bokes ynowe
To telle men what Dowel is, Dobet and Dobest bothe,
And prechours to preve what it is, of many a peire freres.'
I seigh wel he seide me sooth and, somewhat me to excuse,
Seide, "Caton confortéd his sone that, clerk though he were,
To solacen hym som tyme -- a[lso] I do whan I make:
Interpone tuis interdum gaudia curis.
"And of holy men I herde,' quod I, "how thei outhertwhile
Pleyden, the parfiter to ben, in [places manye].
Ac if ther were any wight that wolde me telle
What were Dowel and Dobet and Dobest at the laste,
Wolde I nevere do werk, but wende to holi chirche
And there bidde my bedes but whan ich ete or slepe.'
"Poul in his pistle,' quod he, "preveth what is Dowel:
Fides, spes, caritas, et maior horum &c --
Feith, hope and charitee, and alle ben goode,
And saven men sondry tymes, ac noon so soone as charite.

For he dooth wel, withouten doute, that dooth as lewte techeth;
 That is, if thou be man maryed, thi make thou lovyē,
 And lyve forth as lawe wole while ye lyven bothe.
 " Right so, if thou be religious, ren thou nevere ferther
 To Rome ne to Rochemador, but as thi rule techeth,
 And holde thee under obedience, that heigh wey is to hevene.
 "And if thou be maiden to marye, and myght wel continue,
 Seke thou nevere seint ferther for no soule helthe!
 For what made Lucifer to lese the heighe hevene,
 Or Salomon his sapience, or Sampson his strengthe?
 job the Jew his joye deere he it aboute;
 Aristotle and othere mo, Ypocras and Virgile,
 Alisaundre that al wan, elengliche ended.
 Catel and kynde wit was combraunce to hem alle.
 " Felice hir fairnesse fel hire al to sclaundre,
 And Rosamonde right so reufulliche bisette
 The beaute of hir body; in baddenesse she despended.
 Of manye swiche I may rede -- of men and or wommen --
 That wise wordes wolde shewe and werche the contrarie:
 Sunt homines nequam bene de virtute loquentes.
 "And riche renkes right so gaderen and sparen,
 And tho men that thei moost haten mynistren it at the laste;
 And for thei suffren and see so manye nedy folkes
 And love hem noght as Oure Lord bit, lesen hir soules:
 Date et dabitur vobis.
 So catel and kynde wit acombred ful manye;
 Wo is hym that hem weldeth but he hem wel despende:
 Scient [es] et nan facient [es] variis flagellis vapulab[un]t.
 Sapience, seith the Bok, swelleth a mannes soule:
 Sapiencia inflat &c.
 And richesse right so, but if the roote be trewe.
 "Ac grace is a gras therfore, tho grevaunces to abate.
 Ac grace ne groweth noght but amonges [gomes] lowe:
 Paciwnce and povertē the place is ther groweth,
 And in lele lyvyngē men and in lif holy,
 And thorough the gifte of the Holy Goost, as the Gospel telleth:
 Spiritus ubi vult spirat.
 "Clergie and kynde wit cometh of sighte and techyng,
 As the Book bereth witnesse to burnes that kan rede:
 Quod scimus loquimur, quod vidimus testamur.
 Of quod scimus cometh clergie, a konnyngē of hevene,
 And of quad vidimus cometh kynde wit, of sighte of diverse peple.
 Ac grace is a gifte of God, and of greet love spryngeth;

Knew nevere clerk how it cometh forth, ne kynde wit the weyes:
Nescit aliquis unde venit aut quo vadit &c.
"Ac yet is clergie to comende, and kynde wit bothe,
And namely clergie for Cristes love, that of clergie is roote.
For Moyses witnesseth that God wroot for to wisse the peple
In the Olde Lawe, as the lettre telleth, that was the lawe of Jewes,
That what womman were in avoutrye taken, were she riche or poore,
With stones men sholde hir strike. and stone hire to dethe.
A womman, as we fynden, was guilty of that dede;
Ac Crist of his curteisie thorough clergie hir saved.
For thorough caractes that Crist wroot, the Jewes knewe hemselve
Giltier as afore God and gretter in synne
Than the womman that there was, and wenten away for shame.
The clergie that there was confortd the womman.
Holy Kirke knoweth this -- that Cristes writyng saved;
So clergie is confort to creatures that repenten,
And to mansede men meschief at hire ende.
"For Goddes body myghte noght ben of breed withouten clergie,
The which body is bothe boote to the rightfulle,
And deeth and dampnacion to hem that deyeth yvele;
As Cristes caracte confortde and bothe coupable shewed
The womman that the Jewes broughte, that Jesus thoughte to save:
Nolite iudicare et non iudicabimini.
Right so Goddes body, bretheren, but it be worthili taken,
Dampneth us at the day of dome as dide the caractes the Jewes.
"Forthi I counseille thee for Cristes sake. clergie that thow lovyte,
For kynde wit is of his kyn and neighe cosynes bothe
To Oure Lord, leve me -- forthi love hem, I rede.
For bothe ben as mirours to amenden oure det-autes,
And lederes for lewed men and for lettred bothe.
"Forthi lakke thow nevere logik, lawe ne hise costumes,
Ne countreplede clerkes -- I counseille thee for evere!
For as a man may noght see that mysseth hise eighen.
Na moore kan no clerk but if he caughte it first thorough bokes.
Although men made bokes, God was the maister,
And Seint Spirit the samplarie, and seide what men sholde write.
And right as sight serveth a man to se the heighe strete,
Right so lereth lettrure lewed men to reson.
And as a blynd man in bataille bereth wepne to fighte,
And hath noon hap with his ax his enemy to hitte,
Na moore kan a kynde witted man, but clerkes hym teche,
Come, for al his kynde wit, to Cristendom and be saved --
Which is the cofre of Cristes tresor, and clerkes kepe the keyes,

To unloken it at hir likyng, and to the lewed peple
 Yyve mercy for hire mysdedes, if men it wole aske
 Buxomliche and benigneche, and bidden it of grace.
 "Archa Dei in the Olde Lawe, Levites it kepten;
 Hadde nevere lewed man leve to leggen hond on that cheste
 But he were preest or preestes sone, patriark or prophete.
 "Saul, for he sacrificed, sorwe hym bitidde,
 And his sones also for that synne mischeved,
 And manye mo other men that were no Levites,
 That with archa Dei yeden, in reverence and in worship,
 And leiden hond theron to liften it up -- and loren hir lif after.
 "Forthi I conseille alle creatures no clergie to dispise,
 Ne sette short by hir science, whatso thei don hemselfe.
 Take we hir wordes at worth, for hire witnesses be trewe,
 And medle we noght muche with hem to meven any wrathe,
 Lest cheste cha[f]en us to choppe ech man other:
 Nolite tangere christos meos &c.
 " For clergie is keper under Crist of hevene;
 [Com] ther nevere no knyght but clergie hym made.
 Ac kynde wit cometh of alle kynnes sightes --
 Of briddes and of beestes, [of blisse and of sorwe],
 Of tastes of truthe and [oft] of deceites.
 "[Olde] lyveris toforn us useden to marke
 The selkouthes that thei seighen, hir sones for to teche,
 And helden it an heigh science hir wittes to knowe.
 Ac thorough hir science soothly was nevere no soule ysaved,
 Ne broght by hir bokes to blisse ne to joye;
 For alle hir kynde knowyng com but of diverse sightes.
 " Patriarkes and prophetes repreveden hir science,
 And seiden hir wordes ne hir wisdomes was but a folye;
 As to the clergie of Crist, counted it but a truffle:
 Sapiencia huius mundi stultitia est apud Deum.
 "For the heighe Holy Goost hevene shal tocleve,
 And love shal lepe out after into this lowe erthe,
 And clennesses shal cacchen it and clerkes shullen it fynde:
 Pastores loquebantur ad invicem.
 " He speket there of riche men right noght, ne of right witty,
 Ne of lordes that were lewed men, but of the hyeste lettred oute:
 Ibant magi ab oriente.
 (If any frere were founde there, I yyve thee fyve shillynges!)
 Ne in none beggers cote was that barn born,
 But in a burgeises place, of Bethlem the beste:
 Sed non erat ei locus in diversorio -- et pauper non habet diversorium.

"To pastours and to poetes appered the aungel,
 And bad hem go to Bethlem Goddes burthe to honoure,
 And songe a song of solas, Gloria in excelsis Deo.!
 Riche men rutte tho and in hir reste were,
 Tho it shon to shepherdes, a shewer of blisse.
 Clerkes knewen it wel and comen with hir presents,
 And diden hir homage nurably to hym that was almyghty.
 "Why I have told thee I this -- I took ful good hede
 How thow contrariedest lergie with crabbede wordes,
 How that lewed men lightloker than lettrede were saved,
 Than clerkes or kynde witted men, of Cristene peple.
 And thow seidest sooth of somme -- ac se in what manere.
 "Tak two stronge men and in Themese cast hem,
 And bothe naked as a nedle, hir noon sikerer than other;
 That oon hath konnyng and kan swymmen and dyven,
 That oother is lewed of that labour, lerned nevere swymme.
 Which trowestow of tho two in Themese is in moost drede --
 He that nevere ne dyved ne noght kan of symmyng
 Or the swymmere that is saff by so hymself like,
 Ther his felawe fleteth forthas the flood liketh,
 And is in drede to drenche, that nevere dide swymme?'
 "That swymme kan noght,' I seide, "it semeth to my wittes.'
 " Right so,' quod the renk, " reson it sheweth,
 That he that knoweth clergie kan sonner arise
 Out of synne and be saaf, though he synne ofte,
 If hym liketh and lest, than any lewed, leelly.
 For if the clerk be konnyng, he knoweth what is synne,
 And how contricion withoute confession conforteth the soule,
 As thow seest in the Sauter in salmes oon or tweyne,
 How contricion is comended for it cacheth away synne:
 Beati quorum remisse sunt iniquitates et quorum tecta sunt peccata.
 And this conforteth ech a clerk and kevereth hym fro wanhope,
 In which flood the fend fondeth a man hardest;
 Ther the lewed lith stille and loketh after Lente,
 And hath no contricion er he come to shrifte -- and thanne kan he litel telle,
 But as his loresman lereth hyrn bileveth and troweth,
 And that is after person or parissch preest, and paraventure bothe unkonnyng
 To lere lewed men, as Luc bereth witnesse:
 Dum cecus ducit cecum &c.
 "Wo was hym marked that wade moot with the lewed!
 Wel may the barn blesse that hym to book sette,
 That lyvyng after lettrure saved hym lif and soule.
 Dominus pars hereditatis mee is a murye verset

That hath take fro Tybourne twenty stronge theves,
 Ther lewed theves ben lolled up -- loke how thei be saved!
 "The thef that hadde grace of God on Good Fryday as thow speke,
 Was for he yald hym creaunt to Crist on the cros and knewliched hym gilty,
 And grace asked of God, that to graunten is evere redy
 To hem that buxomliche biddeth it, and ben in wille to amenden hem.
 Ac though that theef hadde hevene, he hadde noon heigh blisse,
 As Seint Johan and othere seintes that deserved hadde better.
 Right as som man yeve me mete and sette me amydde the floor:
 I hadde mete moore than ynough. ac noght so muche worshiþe
 As tho that seten at the syde table or with the sovereynes of the halle,
 But sete as a beggere bordlees by myself on the grounde.
 So it fareth by that felon that a Good Friday was saved:
 He sit neither with Seint Johan, Symond ne Jude,
 Ne with maydenes ne with martires ne confessours ne wydewes,
 But by hymself as a soleyn, and served on the erthe.
 For he that is ones a thef is everemoore in daunger,
 And as lawe liketh to lyve or to deye:
 De peccato propiciato noli esse sine metu.
 And for to serven a seint and swich a thef togideres --
 It were neither reson ne right to rewarde both yliche.
 "And right as Troianus the trewe knyght tilde noght depe in helle
 That Oure Lord ne hadde hym lightly out, so leve I [by] the thef in hevene:
 For he is in the loweste of hevene, if oure bileve be trewe,
 And wel losely he lolleth there, by the lawe of Holy Chirche,
 Quia reddit unicuique iuxta opera sua.
 "Ac why that oon theef on the cros creaunt hym yald
 Rather than that oother theef, though thow woldest appose,
 Alle the clerkes under Crist ne kouthe the skile assoille:
 Quare placuit ? Quia voluit.
 And so I seye by thee, that sekest after the whyes, -
 And aresonedest Reson, a rebukynge as it were,
 And willest of briddes and of beestes and of hir bredyng knowe,
 Why some be alough and some aloft, thi likyng it were;
 And of the floures in the fryth and of hire faire hewes --
 Wherof thei cacche hir colours so clere and so brighte,
 And of the stones and of the sterres -- thow studieth, as I leve,
 How evere beest outhir brid hath so breme wittes . . .
 "Clergie ne Kynde Wit ne knew nevere the cause,
 Ac Kynde knoweth the cause hymself and no creature ellis.
 He is the pies patron and putteth it in hir ere
 That there the thorn is thikkeste to buylden and brede.
 And Kynde kenned the pecok to cauken in swich a kynde,

And Kynde kenned Adam to knowe his pryve membres,
 And taughte hym and Eve to helien hem with leves.
 " Lewed men many tymes maistres thei apposen, .
 Whi Adam ne hiled noght first his mouth that eet the appul,
 Rather than his likame alogh? -- lewed asken thus clerkes.
 Kynde knoweth whi he dide so, ac no clerk ellis!
 "Ac of briddes and of beestes men by olde tyme
 Ensamples token and termes, as telleth thise poetes,
 And that the faireste fowel foulest engendreth,
 And feblest fowel of flight is that fleeth or swymmeth.
 And that is the pecok and the pehen -- proude riche men thei bitokneth
 For the pecok and men pursue hym may noght flee heighe:
 For the trailynge of his tail overtaken is he soone.
 And his flessch is foul flessch, and his feet bothe,
 And unlovelich of ledene and looth for to here.
 "Right so the riche, if he his richesse kepe
 And deleth it noght til his deeth day, the tail of alle is sorwe.
 Right as the pennes of the pecok peyneth hym in his flight,
 So is possession peyne of pens and of nobles
 To alle hem that it holdeth til hir tail be plucked.
 And though the riche repente thanne and birewe the tyme
 That evere he gadered so grete and gaf therof so litel,
 Though he crye to Crist thanne with kene wil, I leve
 His ledene be in Oure Lordes ere lik a pies chiteryng;
 And whan his caroyne shal come in cave to be buried,
 I leve it flawme ful foule the fold al aboute,
 And alle the othere ther it lith envenymeth thorough his attre.
 By the po feet is understande, as I have lerned in Avynet,
 Executours -- false frendes that fulfille noght his wille
 That was writen, and thei witnesse to werche right as it wolde.
 Thus the poete preveth that the pecok for his fetheres is revered;
 Right so is the riche by reson of hise goodes.
 "The larke, that is a lasse fowel, is moore lovelich of ledene,
 And wel away of wynges swifter than the pecok,
 And of flessch by felefold fatter and swetter;
 To lowe libbynge men the larke is resembled.
 ["Swiche tales he telleth, Aristotle the grete clerk];
 Thus he likneth in his logik the leeste fowel oute.
 And wheither he be saaf or noght saaf, the sothe woot no clergie,
 Ne of Sortes ne of Salamon no scripture kan telle.
 Ac God is so good, I hope that siththe he gaf hem wittes
 To wissen us wytes therwith, that wisshen to be saved,
 (And the bettre for hir bokes to bidden we ben holden)

That God for his grace gyve hir soules reste --
 For lettred men were lewed yet, ne were loore of hir bokes.'
 "Alle thise clerkes,' quod I tho, "that on Crist leven.
 Seyen in hir sermons that neither Sarsens ne Jewes
 Ne no creature of Cristes liknesse withouten Cristendom worth saved.'
 " Contra.! quod Ymaginatif thoo, and comsed for to loure,
 And seide, " Salvabitur vix iustus in die iudicii,
 Ergo -- salvabitur!' quod he, and seide no moore Latyn.
 "Troianus was a trewe knyght and took nevere Cristendom,
 And he is saaf, so seith the book, and his soule in hevene.
 Ac ther is fullynge of font and fullynge in blood shedyng,
 And thorough fir is fullyng, and that is ferme bileve:
 Advenit ignis divinus, non comburens set illuminans &c.
 "Ac truthe that trespassed nevere ne traversed ayeins his lawe,
 But lyveth as his lawe techeth and leveth ther be no bettere,
 (And if ther were, he wolde amende) and in swich wille deieth --
 Ne wolde nevere trewe God but trewe truthe were allowed.
 And wheither it worth or noght worth, the bileve is gret of truthe,
 And an hope hangyng therinne to have a mede for his truthe;
 For Deus dicitur quasi dans vitam eternam suis, hoc est fidelibus.
 Et alibi, Si ambulavero in medio umbre mortis &c.
 The glose graunteth upon that vers a greet mede to truthe.
 And wit and wisdom,' quod that wye, " was som tyme tresor
 To kepe with a commune -- no catel was holde bettere --
 And muche murthe and manhod' -- and right with that he vanysshed.

Passus 13

And I awaked therwith, witlees nerhande,
 And as a freke that fey were, forth gan I walke
 In manere of a mendynaunt many yer after,
 And of this metyng many tyme muche thought I hadde:
 First how Fortune me failed at my mooste nede,
 And how that Elde manaced me, myghte we evere mete;
 And how that freres folwede folk that was riche,
 And [peple] that was povere at litel pris thei sette,
 And no corps in hir kirkyerd ne in hir kirk was buried
 But quik he biquethe hem aught or sholde helpe quyte hir dettes;
 And how this coveitise overcom clerkes and preestes;
 And how that lewed men ben lad, but Oure Lord hem helpe,
 Thorough unkonnyng curatours to incurable peynes;
 And how that Ymaginatif in dremels me tolde

Of Kynde and of his konnyng, and how curteis he is to bestes,
 And how lovyng he is to bestes on londe and on watre:
 Leneth he no lif lasse ne moore;
 The creatures that crepen of Kynde ben engendred;
 And sithen how Ymaginatif seide, " Vix iustus salvabitur,'
 And whan he hadde seid so, how sodeynliche he passed.
 I lay down longe in this thoght, and at the laste I slepte;
 And as Crist wolde ther com Conscience to conforte me that tyme,
 And bad me come to his court -- with Clergie sholde I dyne.
 And for Conscience of Clergie spak, I com wel the rather;
 And there I [merkede] a maister -- what man he was I nyste --
 That lowe louted and loveliche to Scripture.
 Conscience knew hym wel and welcomed hym faire;
 Thei wesshen and wipeden and wenten to the dyner.
 Ac Pacience in the paleis stood in pilgrymes clothes,
 And preyde mete par charite for a povere heremyte.
 Conscience called hym in, and curteisliche seide,
 " Welcome, wye, go and wassh; thow shalt sitte soone.'
 This maister was maad sitte as for the mooste worthi,
 And thanne Clergie and Conscience and Pacience cam after.
 Pacience and I were put to be mettes,
 And seten bi oureselve at a side borde.
 Conscience called after mete, and thanne cam Scripture
 And served hem thus soone of sondry metes manye --
 Of Austyn, of Ambrose, of alle the foure Evaungelistes:
 Edentes et bibentes que apud eos sunt.
 Ac this maister ne his man no maner flessch eten,
 Ac thei eten mete of moore cost -- mortrews and potages:
 Of that men myswonne thei made hem wel at ese.
 Ac hir sauce was over sour and unsavourly grounde
 In a mortar, Post mortem, of many bitter peyne --
 But if thei synge for tho soules and wepe salte teris:
 Vos qui peccata hominum comeditis, nisi pro eis lacrimas et
 oraciones effuderitis, ea que in deliciis comeditis, in tormentis evometis.
 Conscience ful curteisly tho commaunded Scripture
 Bifore Pacience breed to brynge and me that was his mette.
 He sette a sour loof toforn us and seide, "Agite penitenciam,'
 And siththe he drough us drynke: "Dia perseverans --
 As longe,' quod he,-"as lif and lycame may dure.'
 " Here is propre service,' quod Pacience, "ther fareth no prince bettre!"
 And he broughte us of Beati quorum of Beatus virres makyng,
 And thanne he broughte us forth a mees of oother mete, of Miserere mei, Deus
 Et quorum tecta sunt peccata

In a dissh of derne shrifte, Dixi et confitebor tibi.
 "Bryng Pacience som pitaunce,' pryveliche quod Conseience;
 And thanne hadde Pacience a pitaunce, Pro hac orabit ad te
 omnis sanctus in tempore oportuno.
 And Conseience confortd us, and carped us murye tales:
 Cor contritum et humiliatum, Deus, non despicias.
 Pacience was proude of that propre service,
 And made hym murthe with his mete; ac I mornede evere,
 For this doctour on the heighe dees drank wyn so faste:
 Ve vobis qui potentes estis ad bibendum vinum !
 He eet manye sondry metes, mortrews and puddynges,
 Wombe cloutes and wilde brawen and egges yfryed with grece.
 Thanne seide I to myself so Pacience it herde,
 " It is noght foure dayes that this freke, bifore the deen of Poules,
 Preched of penaunces that Paul the Apostle suffrede --
 In fame et frigore and flappes of scourges:
 Ter cesus sum et a Iudeis quinquies quadragenas &c;
 Ac o word thei overhuppen at ech a tyme that thei preche
 That Poul in his Pistle to al the peple tolde --
 Periculum est in falsis fratribus!
 (Holi Writ bit men be war -- I wol noght write it here
 In Englissh, on aventure it sholde be reherced to ofte
 And greve therwith that goode men ben -- ac gramariens shul rede:
 Unusquisque a fratre se custodiat, quia, ut dicitur,
 periculum est in falsis fratribus.
 Ac I wiste nevere freke that as a frere yede bifore men on Englissh
 Taken it for his teme, and telle it withouten glosyng!
 They prechen that penaunce is profitable to the soule,
 And what meschief and maleese Crist for man tholede).
 "Ac this Goddes gloton,' quod I, "with hise grete chekes,
 Hath no pite on us povere; he parfourneth yvele.
 That he precheth, he preveth noght,' to Pacience I tolde,
 And wissched witterly, with wille ful egre,
 That disshes and doublers bifore this doctour
 Were molten leed in his mawe, and Mahoun amyddes!
 "I shal jangle to this jurdan with his juste wombe
 To telle me what penaunce is, of which he preched rather!"
 Pacience parceyved what I thoughte, and [preynte] on me to be stille,
 And seide, "Thow shalt see thus soone, whan he may na moore,
 He shal have a penaunce in his paunche and puffe at ech a worde,
 And thanne shullen his guttes gothele, and he shal galpen after;
 For now he hath dronken so depe he wole devyne soone
 And preven it by hir Pocalips and passion of Seint Avereys

That neither bacon ne braun ne blancmanger ne mortrews
 Is neither fissh ne flessch but fode for a penaunt.
 And thanne shal he testifie of a trinite, and take his felawe to witnesse
 What he fond in a f[or]el after a freres lyvyng;
 And but the first leef be lesyng, leve me nevere after!
 And thanne is tyme to take and to appose this doctour
 Of Dowel and Dobet and if Dobest be any penaunce.'
 And I sat stille as Pacience seide, and thus soone this doctour,
 As rody as a rose ruddede hise chekes,
 Coughed and carped; and Conscience hym herde,
 And tolde hym of a trinite, and toward us he loked.
 "What is Dowel, sire doctour?" quod I; "is Dobest any penaunce?"
 "Dowel?" quod this doctour -- and drank after --
 "Do noon yvel to thyn evencristen -- nought by thi power.'
 "By this day, sire doctour," quod I, "thanne [in Dowel be ye noght]!
 For ye han harmed us two in that ye eten the puddyng,
 Mortrews and oother mete -- and we no morsel hadde.
 And if ye fare so in youre fermerye, ferly me thynketh
 But cheeste be ther charite sholde be, and yonge children dorste pleyne!
 I wolde permute my penaunce with youre -- for I am in point to dowel.'
 Thanne Conscience ful curteisly a contenaunce he made,
 And preynthe upon Pacience to preie me to be stille,
 And seide hymself, "Sire doctour, and it be youre wille,
 What is Dowel and Dobet? Ye dyvynours knoweth.'
 "Dowel?" quod this doctour; "do as clerkes techeth;
 And Dobet is he that techeth and travailleth to teche othere;
 And Dobest doth hymself so as he seith and precheth:
 Qui facit et docuerit magnus vocabitur in regno celorum.'
 "Now thow, Clergie," quod Conscience. "carpe us what is Dowel.'
 "I have sevene sones," he seide, "serven in a castel
 Ther the lord of lif wonyeth, to leren hem what is Dowel.
 Til I se tho sevene and myself acorde
 I am unhardy," quod he, "to any wight to preven it.
 For oon Piers the Plowman hath impugned us alle,
 And set alle sciences at a sop save love one;
 And no text ne taketh to mayntene his cause
 But Dilige Deum and Domine quis habitabit;
 And seith that Dowel and Dobet arn two infinites,
 Whiche infinites with a feith fynden out Dobest,
 Which shal save mannes soule -- thus seith Piers the Plowman.'
 "I kan noght heron," quod Conscience, "ac I knowe wel Piers.
 He wol noght ayein Holy Writ speken, I dar x el undertake.
 Thanne passe we over til Piers come and preve this in dede.

Pacience hath be in many place, and paraunter knoweth
 That no clerk ne kan, as Crist bereth witnesse:
 Pacientes vincunt &c.'
 "At youre preiere,' quod Pacience tho, "so no man displese hym:
 Disce,' quod he, " doce; dilige inimicos.
 Disce, and Dowel; doce, and Dobet;
 Dilige, and Dobest -- [do] thus taughte me ones
 A lemman that I lovede -- Love was hir name.
 ""With wordes and with werkes," quod she, "and wil of thyn herte
 Thow love leelly thi soule al thi lif tyme.
 And so thow lere the to lovye, for the Lordes love of hevene,
 Thyn enemy in alle wise eveneforth with thiselve.
 Cast coles on his heed of alle kynde speche;
 Bothe with werkes and with wordes fonde his love to wynne,
 And leye on him thus with love til he laughe on the;
 And but he bowe for this betyng, blynd mote he worthe!"
 "Ac for to fare thus with thi frend -- folie it were;
 For he that loveth thee leelly, litel of thyne coveiteth.
 Kynde love coveiteth noght no catel but speche.
 With half a laumpe lyne in Latyn, Ex vi transicionis,
 I bere ther, in a bou[s]te, faste ybounde Dowel,
 In a signe of the Saterdag that sette first the kalender,
 And al the wit of the Wodnesday of the nexte wike after;
 The myddel of the rnoone is the myght of bothe.
 And herwith am I welceme ther I have it with me.
 " Undo it -- lat this doctour deme if Dowel be therinne;
 For, by hym that me made, myghte nevere poverté,
 Misese ne mischief ne man with his tonge,
 Coold, ne care, ne compaignye of theves.
 Ne neither hete, ne hayl, ne noon helle pouke,
 Ne neither fuyr, ne flood, ne feere of thyn enemy.
 Tene thee any tyme, and thow take it with the:
 Caritas nichil timet.
 "And ek, have God my soule! and thow wilt it crave,
 Ther nys neither emperour ne emperesse, erl ne baroun,
 Pope ne patriark, that pure reson ne shal make thee
 Maister of alle tho men thorough myght of this redels --
 Nought thorough wicchecraft but thorough wit; and thow wilt thiselve
 Do kyng and quene and alle the comune after
 Yyve thee al that thei may yyve, as thee for best yemere,
 And as thow demest wil thei do alle hir dayes after:
 Pacientes vincunt.'
 " It is but a dido,' quod this doctour, "a disours tale!

Al the wit of this world and wight mennes strengthe
 Kan nocht [par]formen a pees bitwene the Pope and hise enemys,
 Ne bitwene two Cristene kynges kan no wight pees make
 Profitable to either peple -- and putte the table fro hym,
 And took Clergie and Conscience to conseil, as it were,
 That Pacience tho most passe -- for pilgrymes konne wel lye.'
 Ac Conscience carped loude and curteisliche seide,
 " Frenedes, fareth wel,' and faire spak to Clergie,
 " For I wol go with this gome, if God wol yeve me grace,
 And be nilgrym with Pacience til I have preved moore.'
 "What! ' quod Clergie to Conscience, "are ye coveitous nouth
 After yeresyeves or yiftes. or yernen to rede redels?
 I shal brynge yow a Bible, a book of the olde lawe,
 And lere yow, if yow like, the leeste point to knowe,
 That Pacience the pilgrym parfitly knew nevere.'
 " Nay, by Crist!" quod Conscience to Clergie, " God thee foryelde.
 For al that Pacience me profreth, proud am I litel;
 Ac the wil of the wye and the wil of folk here
 Hath meved my mood to moorne for my synnes.
 The goode wil of a wight was nevere bought to the fulle:
 For ther nys no tresour therto to a trewe wille.
 "Hadde nocht Marie Maudeleyne moore for a box of salve
 Than Zacheus for he seide, " Dimiaium bonorum meorum do pauperibus,'
 And the poore widewe for a peire of mytes
 Than alle tho that offrede into gazophilacium ?'
 Thus curteisliche Conscience congeyed first the frere,
 And sithen softeliche he seide in Clergies ere,
 "Me were levere, by Oure Lord, and I lyve sholde,
 Have pacience parfitliche than half thi pak of bokes! '
 Clergie of Conscience no congie wolde take,
 But seide ful sobreliche, "Thow shalt se the tyme
 Whan thow art wery forwalked, wilne me to counseille.'
 "That is sooth,' seide Conscience, "so me God helpe!
 If Pacience be oure partyng felawe and pryve with us bothe,
 Ther nys wo in this world that we ne sholde amende,
 And conformen kynges to pees, and alle kynnes londes --
 Sarsens and Surre, and so forth alle the Jewes --
 Turne into the trewe feith and intil oon bileve.'
 "That is sooth,' quod Clergie, "I se what thow menest.
 I shall dwelle as I do, my devoir to shewe,
 And confermen fauntekyns oother folk ylered
 Til Pacience have preved thee and parfit thee maked.'
 Conscience tho with Pacience passed, pilgrymes as it were.

Thanne hadde Pacience, as pilgrymes han, in his poke vitailles:
 Sobretee and symple speche and soothfast bileve,
 To conforte hym and Conscience if thei come in place
 There unkyndenesse and coveitise is, hungry contrees bothe.
 And as thei wente by the weye, of Dowel thei carped;
 Thei mette with a mynstral, as me tho thoughte.
 Pacience apposed hym first and preyde he sholde telle
 fo Conscience what craft he kouthe, and to what contree he wolde.
 "I am a mynstral," quod that man, "my name is Activa Vita.
 Al ydel ich hatie, for of Actif is my name,
 A wafrer, wol ye wite, and serve manye lordes --
 And fewe robes I fonge or furrede gownes.
 Couthe I lye and do men laughe, thanne lacchen I sholde
 Outher mantel or moneie amanges lordes mynstrals.
 Ac for I kan neither taboure ne trompe ne telle no gestes,
 Farten ne fithelen at festes, ne harpen,
 Jape ne joglele ne gentilliche pipe,
 Ne neither saille ne sautrie ne synge with the gyterne,
 I have no goode giftes of thise grete lordes
 For no breed that I brynge forth -- save a benyson on the Sondag,
 Whan the preest preieth the peple hir Paternoster to bidde
 For Piers the Plowman and that hym profit waiten --
 And that am I, Actif, that ydelnesse hatie;
 For alle trewe travaillours and tiliers of the erthe,
 Fro Mighelmesse to Mighelmesse I fynde hem with wafres.
 "Beggeris and bidderis of my breed craven,
 Faitours and freres and folk with brode crounes.
 I fynde payn for the Pope and provendre for his palfrey,
 And I hadde nevere of hym, have God my trouthe,
 Neither provendre ne personage yet of the Popes yifte,
 Save a pardon with a peis of leed and two polles amyddes!
 Hadde ich a clerc that couthe write I wolde caste hym a bille
 That he sente me under his seel a salve for the pestilence,
 And that his blessynge and hise bulles bocches myghte destruye:
 In nomine meo demonia eicient et super egros manus imponent et bene
 habebunt.
 And thanne wolde I be prest to the peple, paast for to make,
 And buxom and busy aboute breed and drynke
 For hyrn and for alle hise, founde I that his pardoun
 Mighte lechen a man -- as I bileve it sholde.
 For sith he hath the power that Peter hadde, he hath the pot with the salve:
 Argentum et aurum non est michi: quod autem habeo,
 tibi do: In nomine Domini surge et ambula.

"Ac if myght of myracle hym faille, it is for men ben noght worthi
To have the grace of God, and no gilt of the Pope.
For may no blessyng doon us boote but if we wile amende,
Ne mannes masse make pees among Cristene peple,
Til pride be pureliche fordo, and that thorough payn defaute.
For er I have breed of mele, ofte moot I swete,
And er the commune have corn ynough many a cold morwenyng;
So, er my wafres be ywroght, muche wo I tholye.
"Al Londoun, I leve, liketh wel my wafres,
And louren whan thei lakken hem; it is noght longe ypassed
There was a careful commune whan no cart com to towne
With bake breed fro Stratford; tho gonnen beggeris wepe,
And werkmen were agast a lite -- this wole be thought longe;
In the date of Oure Drighte, in a drye Aprill,
A thousand and thre hundred, twies thritty and ten,
My wafres there were gesene, whan Chichestre was maire.'
I took greet kepe, by Crist, and Conscience bothe,
Of Haukyn the Actif Man, and how he was yclothed.
He hadde a cote of Cristendom as Holy Kirke bileveth;
Ac it was moled in many places with manye sondry plottes --
Of pride here a plot, and there a plot of unbuxom speche,
Of scornynge and of seoffyng and of unskilful berynge;
As in apparail and in porte proud amonges the peple;
Ootherwise than he hath with herte or sighte shewynge;
Hym wilnyng that alle men wende he were that he is noght,
Forwhy he bosteth and braggeth with manye bolde othes;
And inobedient to ben undernome of any lif lyvyng;
And so singuler by hymself as to sighte of the peple
Was noon swich as hymself, ne noon so pope holy;
Yhabited as an heremyte, an ordre by hymself --
Religion saunz rule and resonable obedience;
Lakkyng lettrede men and lewed men bothe;
In likyng of lele lif and a liere in soule;
With inwit and with outwit ymagynen and studie
As best for his body be to have a bold name;
And entremetten hym over al ther he hath noght to doone;
Wilnyge that men wende his wit were the beste,
Or for his crafty konnyng or of clerkes the wisest,
Or strengest on stede, or styvest under girdel,
And lovelokest to loken on and lelest of werkes,
And noon so holy as he ne of lif clennere,
Or feirest of feitures, of forme and of shafte,
And most soutil of song other sleyest of hondes,

And large to lene lo[o]s therby to cacche;
 And if he gyveth ought to povere gomes, [go] telle what he deleth;
 Povere of possession in purs and in cofre,"
 And as a lyoun on to loke and lordlich of speche;
 Boldest of beggeris, a bostere that noght hath,
 In towne and in tavernes tales to telle
 And segge thyng that he nevere seigh and for sothe sweren it,
 Of dedes that he nevere dide demen and bosten,
 And of werkes that he wel dide witnesse and siggen,
 "Lo! if ye leve me noght, or that I lye wenen,
 Asketh at hym or at hym, and he yow kan telle
 What I suffrede and seigh and somtymes hadde,
 And what I kouthe and knew, and what kyn I com of.'
 Al he wolde that men wiste of werkes and of wordes -
 Which myghte plesse the peple and preisen hymselfe:
 Si hominibus placerem, Christi servus non essem. Et alibi:
 Nemo potest duobus dominis servire.
 "By Crist!' quod Conscience tho, "thi beste cote, Haukyn,
 Hath manye moles and spottes -- it moste ben ywasshe!"
 "Ye, whoso toke hede,' quod Haukyn, "bihynde and bifore,
 What on bak and what on body half and by the two sides --
 Men sholde fynde manye frounces and manye foule plottes.'
 And he torned hym as tyd, and thanne took I hede;
 It was fouler bi fele fold than it first semed.
 It was bidropped with wrathe and wikkede wille,
 With envye and yvel speche entisyng to fighte,
 Lying and lakkyng and leve tonge to chide;
 Al that he wiste wikked by any wight, tellen it,
 And blame men bihynde hir bak and bidden hem meschaunce;
 And that he wiste by Wille, [to Watte tellen it],
 And that Watte wiste, Wille wiste it after,
 And made of frendes foes thorough a fals tonge:
 "Or with myght of mouth or thorough mannes strengthe
 Avenged me fele tymes, other frete myselve withinne
 As a shepsteres shere, ysherewed men and cursed hem.'
 Cuius malediccionis os plenum est et amaritudine; sub lingua
 eius labor et dolor. Et alibi: Filii hominum dentes eorum
 arma et sagitte et lingua eorum gladius acutus.
 "Ther is no lif that I lovye lastyng any while;
 For tales that I telle no man trusteth to me.
 And whan I may noght have the maistrie, swich malencolie I take
 That I cacche the crampe, the cardiacle som tyme,
 Or an ague in swich an angre, and som tyme a fevere

That taketh me al a twelvemonth, til that I despise
Lechecraft of Oure Lord and leve on a wicche,
And seye that no clerc ne kan -- ne Crist, as I leve --
To the Soutere of Southwerk, or of Shordych Dame Emme,
And seye that [God ne] Goddes word gaf me nevere bout,
But thorough a charme hadde I chaunce and my chief heele.'
I waitede wisloker, and thanne was it soiled
With likynge of lecherie as by lokynge of his eighe.
For ech a maide that he mette, he made hire a signe
Semyng to synneward, and somtyme he gan taste
About the mouth or bynethe bigynneth to grope,
Til eitheres wille wexeth kene, and to the werke yeden,
As wel fastyng dayes as Fridaies and forboden nyghtes,
And as lef in Lente as out of Lente, alle tymes yliche:
Swiche werkes with hem were nevere out of seson,
Til thei myghte na moore -- and thanne hadde murie tales,
And how that lecchours lovye laughen and jopen,
And of hir harlotrye and horedom in hir elde tellen.
Thanne Pacience parceyved, of pointes his cote
Was colomy thorough coveitise and unkynde desirynge.
Moore to good than to God the gome his love caste,
And ymagynede how he it myghte have
With false mesures and met, and [mid] fals witness
Lened for love of the wed and looth to do truthe,
And awaited thorough w[itte]s wyys to bigile,
And menged his marchaundise and made a good moustre:
"The worst withinne was -- a greet wit I let it!
And if my neghebore hadde an hyne, or any beest ellis,
Moore profitable than myn, manye sleighes I made
How I myghte have it -- al my wit I caste;
And but I it hadde by oother wey, at the laste I stale it,
Or pryveliche his purs shook, unpikede hise lokes;
Or by nyghte or by daye, aboute was ich evere
Thorough gile to gaderen the good that ich have.
"If I yede to the plowgh, I pynched so narwe
That a foot lond or a forow fecchen I wolde
Of my nexte neghebore, nymen of his erthe;
And if I rope, overreche, or yaf hem reed that ropen
To seise to me with hir sikel that I ne sew nevere.
"And whoso borwed of me aboughte the tyme
With presentes pryvely, or paide som certeyn --
So wolde he or noght wolde he, wynnen I wolde;
And bothe to kith and to kyn unkynde of that ich hadde.

"And whoso cheped my chaffare, chiden I wolde
But he profrede to paie a peny or tweyne
Moore than it was worth, and yet wolde I swere
That it coste me muche moore -- swoor manye othes.
"In haly daies at holy chirche, whan ich herde masse
Hadde I nevere wille, woot God, witterly to biseche
Mercy for my mysdedes, that I ne moorned moore
For losse of good, leve me, than for likames giltes;
As, if I hadde dedly synne doon, I dredde noght that so soore
As whan I lened and leved it lost or longe er it were paied.
So if I kidde any kyndenesse myn evencristen to helpe,
Upon a cruwel coveitise my conscience gan hange.
"And if I sente over see my servaunts to Brugges,
Or into Prucelond my Prentis my profit to waiten,
To marchaunden with moneie and maken here eschaunges,
Mighte nevere me conforte in the mene tyme
Neither masse ne matynes, ne none maner sightes;
Ne nevere penaunce parfournede ne Paternoster seide
That my mynde ne was moore on my good in a doute
Than in the grace of God and hise grete helps.'
Ubi thesaurus tuus, ibi et cor tuum.
Yet that glotoun with grete othes his garnement hadde soiled
And foule beflobered it, as with fals speche,
As, there no nede ne was, Goddes name an idel --
Swoor therby swithe ofte and al biswatte his cote;
And moore mete eet and dronk than kynde myghte defie --
"And kaughte siknesse somtyme for my surfetes ofte;
And thanne I dradde to deye in dedlich synne' --
That into wanhope he w[orth] and wende nought to be saved,
The whiche is sleuthe, so slow that may no sleighes helpe it,
Ne no mercy amenden the man that so deieth.
Ac whiche ben the braunches that bryngen a man to sleuthe?
Is whan a man moorneth noght for hise mysdedes, ne maketh no sorwe,
Ac penaunce that the preest enjoyneth parfourneth yvele,
Dooth non almesdede, dred hym of no synne,
Lyveth ayein the bileve and no lawe holdeth.
Ech day is halyday with hym or an heigh ferye, "
And if he aught wol here, it is an harlotes tonge.
Whan men carpen of Crist, or of clenness of soule,
He wexeth wroth and wol noght here but wordes of murthe.
Penaunce and povere men and the passion of seintes --
He hateth to here therof and alle that it telleth.
Thise been the braunches, beth war! that bryngen a man to wanhope.

Ye lordes and ladies and legates of Holy Chirche
That fedeth fooles sages, flatereris and lieris,
And han likyng to lithen hem [in hope] to do yow laughe --
Ve vobis qui ridetis &c --
And yyveth hem mete and mede, and povere men refuse,
In youre deeth deyinge, I drede me soore
Lest tho thre maner men to muche sorwe yow brynge:
Consencientes et agentes pari pena punientur.
Patriarkes and prophetes, prechours of Goddes wordes,
Saven thorough hir sermon mannes soule fro helle;
Right so flatereris and fooles arn the fendes disciples
To entice men thorough hir tales to synne and harlotrie.
Ac clerkes, that knowen Holy Writ, sholde kenne lordes
What David seith of swiche men, as the Sauter telleth:
Non habitabit in medio domus mee qui facit superbiam; qui loquitur iniqua . . .
Sholde noon harlot have audience in halle ne in chambre
Ther wise men were -- witnesseth Goddes wordes --
Ne no mysproud min amonges lordes ben allowed.
Clerkes and knyghtes welcometh kynges minstrales,
And for love of hir lord litheth hem at festes;
Muche moore, me thynketh, riche men sholde
Have beggeres bifore hem, the whiche ben Goddes minstrales,
As he seith hymself -- Seynt Johan bereth witnesse:
Qui vos spernit me spernit.
Forthi I rede yow riche, reveles whan ye maketh,
For to solace youre soules, swiche minstrales to have --
The povere for a fool sage sittynge at th[i] table,
And a lered man to lere thee what Oure Lord suffred
For to save thi soule fram Sathan thyn enemy,
And fithle thee, withoute flaterynge, of Good Friday the storye,
And a blynd man for a bourdeour, or a bedrede womman
To crie a largesse bifore Oure Lord, your good loos to shewe.
Thise thre maner minstrales maketh a man to laughe,
And in his deeth deyinge thei don hym gret confort
That bi his lyve lithed hem and loved hem to here.
Thise solaceth the soule til hymself be falle
In a welhope, [for he wroghte so], amonges worthi seyntes,
There flatereres and fooles thorough hir foule wordes
Leden tho that loved hem to Luciferis feste
With turpiloquio, a lay of sorwe, and Luciferis fithle.
Thus Haukyn the actif man hadde ysoiled his cote,
Til Conscience acouped hym therof in a curteis manere,
Why he ne hadde wasshen it or wiped it with a brusshe.

Passus 14

"I have but oon hool hater,' quod Haukyn, "I am the lasse to blame
Though it be soiled and selde clene -- I slepe therinne o nyghtes;
And also I have an houswif, hewen and children --
Uxorem duxi, et ideo non possum venire --
That wollen bymolen it many tyme, maugree my chekes.
It hath be laved in Lente and out of Lente bothe
With the sope of siknesse, that seketh wonder depe,
And with the losse of catel, that looth me w[ere]
For to agulte God or any good man, by aught that I wiste;
And was shryven of the preest, that [for my synnes gaf me]
To penaunce, pacience, and povere men to fede,
Al for coveitise of my Cristendom in clenness to kepen it.
And kouthe I nevere, by Crist! kepen it clene an houre,
That I ne soiled it with sighte or som ydel speche,
Or thorough werk or thorough word, or wille of myn herte,
That I ne flobre it foule fro morwe til even.'
"And I shal kenne thee,' quod Conscience, "of Contricion to make
That shal clawe thi cote of alle kynnes filthe --
Cordis contricio &c;
Dowel shal wasshen it and wryngen it thorough a wis confessour --
Oris confessio &c;
Dobet shal beten it and bouken it as bright as any scarlet,
And engreynen it with good wille and Goddes grace to amende the,
And sithen sende thee to Satisfaccion for to sonnen it after:
Satisfaccio.
"And Dobest kepe[th] clene from unkynde werkes.
Shal nevere my[te] bymolen it, ne mothe after biten it,
Ne fend ne fals man defoulen it in thi lyve.
Shal noon heraud ne harpoure have a fairer garnement
Than Haukyn the Actif man, and thou do by my techyng,
Ne no mynstrall be moore worth amonges povere and riche
Than Haukyn wi[l] the wafrer, which is Activa Vita.'
"And I shal purveie thee paast,' quod Pacience, "though no plough eryl,
And flour to fede folk with as best be for the soule;
Though nevere greyn growed, ne grape upon vyne,
Alle that lyveth and loketh liflode wolde I fynde,
And that ynogh -- shal noon faille of thyng that hem nedeth.
We sholde nought be to bisy abouten oure liflode:
Ne solliciti sitis &c; Volucres celi Deus pascit &c; Pacientes vincunt &c;

Thanne laughed Haukyn a litel, and lightly gan swerye,
 "Whoso levethe yow, by Oure Lord, I leve nocht he be blessed!"
 "No?" quod Pacience patiently, and out of his poke hente
 Vitailles of grete vertues for alle manere beestes,
 And seide, " Lo! here liflode ynogh, if oure bileve be trewe.
 For lent nevere was lif but liflode were shapen,
 Wherof or wherfore or wherby to libbe.
 " First the wilde worm under weete erthe,
 Fissh to lyve in the flood, and in the fir the criket,
 The corlew by kynde of the eyr, moost clenest flessch of briddes,
 And bestes by gras and by greyn and by grene rootes,
 In menyng that alle men myghte the same
 Lyve thorough leel bileve and love, as God witnesseth:
 Quodcumque pecieritis a patre in nomine meo &c; Et alibi, Non
 in solo pane vivit homo, set in omni verbo, quod procedit de ore Dei;
 But I lokede what liflode it was that Pacience so preisede;
 And thanne was it a pece of the Paternoster -- Fiat voluntas tua.
 "Have, Haukyn," quod Pacience, "and et this whan the hungreth,
 Or whan thou clomest for cold or clyngest for droughe;
 And shul nevere gyves thee greve ne gret lordes wrathe,
 Aison ne peyne -- for pacientes vincunt.
 By so that thou be sobre of sighte and of tonge,
 In [ond]ynge and in handlynge and in alle thi fyve wittes,
 Darstow nevere care for corn ne linnen cloth ne wollen,
 Ne for drynke, ne deeth drede, but deye as God liketh,
 Or thorough hunger or thorough hete -- at his wille be it.
 For if thou lyvest after his loore, the shorter lif the better:
 Si quis amat Christum mundum non diligit istum.
 "For thorough his breeth beestes woxen and abroad yeden:
 Dixit et facta sunt, &c.
 Ergo thorough his breeth mowen [bothe] men and beestes lyven,
 As Holy Writ witnesseth whan men seye hir graces:
 *Aperis tu manum tuam, et imple omne animal benediccione.
 "It is founden that fourty wynter folk lyvede withouten tulyng,
 And out of the flynt sprong the flood that folk and beestes dronken;
 And in Elyes tyme hevene was yclosed,
 That no reyn ne roon -- thus rede men in bokes,
 That manye wyntres men lyveden and no mete ne tulieden.
 "Sevene slepe, as seith the book, sevene hundred wynter,
 And lyveden withouten liflode -- and at the laste thei woken.
 And if men lyvede as mesure wolde, sholde nevere moore be defaute
 Amonges Cristene creatures, if Cristes wordes ben trewe.
 Ac unkyndenesse caristiam maketh amonges Cristen peple,

And over-plentee maketh pryde amonges poore and riche;
 Ac mesure is so muche worth it may noght be to deere;
 For the meschief and the meschaunce amonges men of Sodome
 Weex thorough plentee of payn and of pure sleuthe:
 Ociositas et habundancia panis peccatum turpissimum nutrit.
 For thei mesured noght hemself of that thei ete and dronke,
 Diden dedly synne that the devel liked,
 Vengeance fil upon hem for hir vile synnes;
 [So] thei sonken into helle, the citees echone.
 "Forthi mesure we us wel and make oure feith oure sheltrom;
 And thorough feith cometh contricion, conscience woot wel,
 Which dryveth away dedly synne and dooth it to be venial.
 And though a man myghte noght speke, contricion myghte hym save,
 And brynge his soule to blisse, by so that feith bere witnesse
 That whiles he lyvede he bilevede in the loore of Holy Chirche.
 Ergo contricion, feith and conscience is kyndeliche Dowel,
 And surgiens for dedly synnes whan shrift of mouthe failleth.
 Ac shrift of mouth moore worthi is, if man be ynliche contrit,
 For shrift of mouthe sleeth synne be it never so dedly --
 Per confessionem to a preest peccata occiduntur --
 Ther contricion dooth but dryveth it down into a venial synne,
 As David seith in the Sauter, et quorum tecta sunt peccata.
 Ac satisfaccion seketh out the roote, and bothe sleeth and voideth,
 And as it nevere [n]adde ybe, to noghte bryngeth dedly synne,
 That it nevere eft is sene ne soor, but semeth a wounde yheeled.'
 "Where wonyeth Charite?" quod Haukyn. "I wiste nevere in my lyve
 Man that with hym spak, as wide as I have passed.'
 "Ther parfit truthe and poore herte is, and pacience of tonge --
 There is Chante the chief, chaumbrere for God hymselfe.'
 "Wheither paciente poverté," quod Haukyn, "be moore plesaunt to Oure Drigh
 Than richesse rightfulliche wonne and resonably despended?"
 "Ye -- quis est ille?" quod Pacience, "quik -- laudabimus eum !
 Though men rede of richesse right to the worldes ende,
 I wiste nevere renk that riche was, that whan he rekene sholde,
 Whan he drogh to his deeth day, that he ne dredde hym soore,
 And that at the rekenyng in arrerage fel, rather than out of dette.
 Ther the poore dar plede, and preve by pure reson
 To have allowaunce of his lord; by the lawe he it cleymeth:
 Joye, that nevere joye hadde, of rightful jugge he asketh,
 And seith, "'Lo! briddes and beestes, that no blisse ne knoweth,
 And wilde wormes in wodes, thorough wyntres thow hem grevest,
 And makest hem wel neigh meke and mylde fer defaute,
 And after thew sedet hem somer, that is hir soveyn joye,

And blisse to alle that ben, bothe wilde and tame.'
 "Thanne may boggeris, as beestes, after boote waiten,
 That al hir lif han lyved in langour and in defaute.
 But God sente hem som tyme som manere joye
 Outher here or elliswhere, kynde wolde it nevere;
 For to wrotherhele was he wroght that nevere was joye shapen!
 "Aungeles that in helle now ben hadden joye som tyme,
 And Dives in deyntees lyvede and in douce vie;
 Right so reson sheweth that tho men that [riche were]
 And hir makes also lyvede hir lif in murthe.
 "Ac God is of a wonder wille, by that kynde wit sheweth,
 To yyve many men his mercymonye er he it have deserved.
 Right so fareth God by some riche: ruthe me it thynketh --
 For thei han hir hire heer, and hevene, as it were,
 And greet likyng to lyve withouten labour of bodye,
 And whan he dyeth, ben disalowed, as David seith in the Sauter:
 Dormierunt et nichil invenerunt; et alibi, Velud sompnium surgencium,
 Domine, in civitate tua, et ad nichilum rediges &c.
 Allas, that richeshe shal reve and robbe mannes soule
 From the love of Oure Lord at his laste ende!
 "Hewen that han hir hire afore arn everemoore nedy;
 And selden deyeth he out of dette that dyneth er he deserve it
 And til he have doon his devoir and his dayes journee.
 For whan a werkman hath wroght, than may men se the sothe --
 What he were worthi for his werk, and what he hath deserved,
 And noght to fonge bifore, for drede of disallowyng.
 "So I seye by yow riche -- it semeth noght that ye shulle
 Have hevene in youre here-beyng and hevene therafter,
 Right as a servaunt taketh his salarie bifore, and siththe wolde clayme moore,
 As he that noon hadde, and hath hire at the laste.
 It may noght be, ye riche men, or Mathew on God lyeth:
 De deliciis ad delicias difficile est transire !
 "Ac if ye riche have ruthe, and rewarde wel the poore,
 And lyven as lawe techeth, doon leaute to hem alle,
 Crist of his curteisie shal conforte yow at the laste
 And rewarden alle double richeshe that rewful hertes habbeth.
 And as an hyne that hadde his hire er he bigonne,
 And whan he hath doon his devoir wel, men dooth hym oother bountee --
 Yyveth hym a cote above his covenaut -- right so Crist yyveth hevene
 Bothe to riche and to noght riche that rewfulliche libbeth;
 And alle that doon hir devoir wel han double hire for hir travaille --
 Here forgifnesse of hir synnes, and hevene blisse after.
 "Ac it is but selde yseien, as by holy seintes bokes,

That God rewarded double reste to any riche wye.
 For muche murthe is amonges riche, as in mete and clothyng,
 And muche murthe in May is amonges wilde beestes,
 And so forth while somer lasteth hir solace dureth.
 Ac beggeris aboute Midsomer bredlees thei soupe,
 And yet is wynter for hem worse, for weetschoed thei gauge,
 Afurst soore and afyngred, and foule yrebuked
 And arated of riche men, that ruthe is to here . . .
 Now, Lord, sende hem somer, and som maner joye,
 Hevene after hir hennes goyng, that here han swich defaute!
 For alle myghtestow have maad noon mener than oother,
 And yliche witty and wise, if thee wel hadde liked.
 And have ruthe on thise riche men that rewarde noght thi prisoners;
 Of the good that thou hem gyvest ingrati ben manye;
 Ac God, of thi goodnesse, gyve hem grace to amende.
 For may no derthe be hem deere, droghte ne weet,
 Ne neither hete ne hayll, have thei hir heele;
 Of that thei wilne and wolde wanteth hem noght here.
 "Ac poore peple, thi prisoners, Lord, in the put of meschief --
 Conforte tho creatures that muche care suffren
 Thorough derthe, thorough droghte, alle hir dayes here,
 Wo in wynter tymes for wantynge of clothes,
 And in somer tyme selde soupem to the fulle;
 Conforte thi carefule, Crist, in thi riche --
 For how thou confortest alle creatures clerkes bereth witness:
 Convertimini ad me et salvi eritis.
 "Thus in genere of gentries Jesu Crist seide
 To robberis and to reveris, to riche and to poore,
 To hores, to harlotes, to alle maner peple,
 Thou taughtest hem in the Trinite to taken bapteme
 And be clene thorough that cristnyng of alle kynnes synne,
 And if us fille thorough folie to falle in synne after,
 Confession and knowlichynge and cravyng thei mercy
 Shulde amenden us as manye sithes as man wolde desire.
 Ac if the pouke wolde plede herayein, and punyssh us in conscience,
 We sholde take the acquitaunce as quyk and to the queed shewen it --
 Pateat &c: Per passionem Domini --
 And putten of so the pouke, and preven us under borwe.
 Ac the parchemyn of this patente of poverté be moste,
 And of pure pacience and parfit bileve.
 Of pompe and of pride the parchemyn decourreth,
 And principalliche of alle peple; but thei be poore of herte.
 Ellis is al on ydel, al that evere we wr[ogh]ten --

Paternostres and penaunce and pilgrimage to Rome,
 But oure spences and spendynge sprynge of a trewe welle;
 Ellis is al oure labour lost -- lo, how men writeth
 In fenestres at the freres! -- if fals be the foundement.
 Forthi Cristene sholde be in commune riche, noon coveitous for hymselfe.
 " For sevene synnes ther ben, that assaillen us evere;
 The fend folweth hem alle and fondeth hem to helpe,
 Ac with richesse tho ribaudes rathest men bigileth.
 For ther that richesse regneth, reverences folweth,
 And that is plesaunt to pride, in poore and in riche.
 And the riche is reverenced by reson of his richesse
 Ther the poore is put bihynde, and paraventure kan moore
 Of wit and of wisdom, that fer away is better
 Than richesse or reautee, and rather yherd in hevene.
 For the riche hath muche to rekene, and right softe walketh;
 The heighe way to heaveneward ofte richesse letteth --
 Ita impossibile diviti &c --
 Ther the poore preesseth bifore, with a pak at his rugge --
 Opera enim illorum sequuntur illos --
 Batauntliche, as beggeris doon, and boldeliche he craveth
 For his poverté and his pacience a perpetuel blisse:
 Beati pauperes: quoniam ipsorum est regnum celorum.
 "And pride in richesse regneth rather than in poverté:
 Or in the maister or in the man som mansion he haveth.
 Ac in poverté ther pacience is, Pride hath no mygte,
 Ne none of the sevene synnes sitten ne mowe ther longe,
 Ne have power in poverté, if pacience it folwe.
 For the poore is ay prest to plesse the riche,
 And buxom at his bidding for his broke loves;
 And buxomnesse and boost ben everemoore at werre,
 And either hateth oother in alle maner werkes.
 If Wrathe wrastle with the poore he hath the worse ende,
 For if thei bothe pleyne, the poore is but feble,
 And if he chide or chate, hym cheveth the worse,
 For lowliche he loketh and lovelich is his speche
 That mete or money of othere men moot asken.
 "And if Glotonie greve poverté, he gadereth the lasse.
 For his rentes wol naught reche no riche metes to bigge;
 And though his glotonie be to good ale, he goth to cold beddyng,
 And his heved unheled, unesiliche ywrye --
 For whan he streyneth hym to strecche, the strawe is his shetes.
 So for his Glotome and his greet Sleuthe he hath a grevous penaunce,
 That is welawo whan he waketh and wepeth for colde --

And som tyme for his synnes -- so he is nevere murie
 Withoute mournynge amonge and meschief to bote.
 "And though Coveitise wolde cacche the poore, thei may noght come togideres
 And by the nekke, namely, hir noon may hente oother.
 For men knowen wel that Coveitise is of a kene wille,
 And hath hondes and armes of a long lengthe,
 And Poverté nys but a petit thyng, apereth noght to his navelle --
 And lovely layk was it nevere bitwene the longe and the shorte.
 And though Avarice wolde angre the poore, he hath but litel myghte,
 Fer Poverté hath but pokes to putten in hise goodes,
 Ther Avarice hath almaries and yren-bounden cofres.
 And wheither be lighter to breke? Lasse boost it maketh --
 A beggeris baggethan an yren-bounde cofre !
 " Lecherie loveth hym noght, for he yyveth but litel silver,
 Ne dooth hym noght dyne delicatly ne drynke wyn ofte.
 A straw for the stuwes! It stode noght, I trowe,
 Hadde thei noon [haunt] but of poore men -- hir houses stode untyled!
 "And though Sleuthe suwe Poverté, and serve noght God to paie,
 Meschief is his maister, and maketh hym to thynke
 That God is his grettest help and no gorne ellis,
 And he his servaunt, as he seith, and of his sute bothe.
 And wheither he be or be noght, he bereth the signe of poverté,
 And in that secte Oure Saveour saved al mankynde.
 Forthi al poore that pacient is, may [asken and cleyment],
 After hir endynge here, heveneriche blisse.
 "Muche hardier may he asken, that here myghte have his wille
 In lond and in lordshipe and likynge of bodie,
 And for Goddes love leveth al and lyveth as a beggere.
 And as a mayde for mannes love hire moder forsaketh,
 Hir fader and alle hire frendes, and folweth hir make --
 Muche is that maide to love of [a man] that swich oon taketh,
 Moore than a maiden is that is married thorough brocage,
 As by assent of sondry parties and silver to boote,
 Moore for coveitise of good than kynde love of bothe --
 So it fareth by ech a persone that possession forsaketh
 And put hym to be pacient, and poverté weddeth,
 The which is sib to God hymself, and so neigh is poverté.'
 "Have God-my trouthe,' quod Haukyn, "I here ye preise faste poverté.
 What is poverté, Pacience,' quod he, "propely to mene?"
 " Paupertas.' quod Pacience, " est odibile bonum --
 Remocio curarum, possessio sine calumpnia, donum Dei,
 sanitatis mater, absque sollicitudine semita, sapiencie
 temperatrix, negocium sine dampno, incerta fortuna,

absque sollicitudine felicitas.'

"I kan noght construe al this,' quod Haukyn, "ye moste kenne me this on Englis

" In Englissh,' quod Pacience, "it is wel hard, wel to expounen,

Ac somdeel I shal seyen it, by so thow understonde.

Povert is the firste point that Pride moost hateth;

Thanne is it good by good skile -- al that agasteth pride.

Right as contricion is comfortable thyng, conseience woot wel,

And a sorwe of hymself, and a solace to the soule,

So povert propreliche penaunce [is to the body

And joye also to the soule], pure spiritual helthe,

And contricion confort, and cura animarum:

Ergo paupertas est odibile bonum.

"Selde sit povert the sothe to declare,

Or as justice to jugge men enjoyned is no poore,

Ne to be mair above men, ne mynystre under kynges;

Selde is any poore yput to punysshyn any peple;

Remocio curarum.

Ergo povert and poore men parfournen the comaundement --

Nolite iudicare quemquam.

"Selde is poore right riche but of rightful heritage:

Wynneth he noght with wightes false ne with unseled mesures,

Ne borweth of hise neighebores but that he may wel paie:

Possessio sine calumpnia.

"The ferthe is afor-tune that florissbeth the soule

With sobrette fram alle synne and also yit moore;

It afaiteth the flessch fram folies ful manye --

A collateral confort, Cristes owene yifte:

Donum Dei.

"The fifte is moder of [myght and of mannes] hele,

A frend in alle fondynges, [of foule yveles leche],

And for the lewde evere yliche a lemman of alle clenness:

Sanitatis mater.

"The sixte is a path of pees -- ye, thorough the paas of Aulton

Povert myghte passe withouten peril of robbyng!

For ther that Povert passeth pees folweth after,

And ever the lasse that he [led]eth, the [light]er he is of herte --

Cantabit paupertas coram latrone viator --

And an hardy man of herte among an heep of theves;

Forthi seith Seneca Paupertas est absque sollicitudine semita.

"The seventh is welle of wisdom and fewe wordes sheweth,

For lordes alloweth hym litel or listneth to his reson.

He tempreth the tonge to trutheward, that no tresor coveiteth:

Sapiencie temperatrix.

"The eightethe is a lele labour and looth to take moore
Than he may [sothly] deserve, in somer or in wynter,
And if he chaffareth, he chargeth no losse mowe he charite wyne:
Negocium sine dampno.

"The nynthe is swete to the soule, no sugre is swetter;
For pacience is payn for poverte hymselfe,
And sobretee swete drynke and good leche in siknesse.
Thus lered me a lered man for Oure Lordes love, Seint Austyn --
A blessed lif withouten bisynesse for body and for soule:
Absque sollicitudine felicitas.

Now God, that alle good gyveth, graunte his soule reste
That thus first wroot to wissen men what Poverte was to mene!
"Allas,' quod Haukyn the Actif Man tho, "that after my cristendom
I ne hadde be deed and dolven for Dowelis sake!
So hard it is,' quod Haukyn, "to lyve and to do synne.
Synne seweth us evere,' quod he, and sory gan wexe,
And wepte water with hise eighen and weyled the tyme
That evere he dide dede that deere God displesed --
Swouned and sobbed and siked ful ofte
That evere he hadde lond or lordshipe, lasse other moore,
Or maistrie over any man mo than of hymselfe..
" I were noght worthi, woot God,' quod Haukyn, " to werien any clothes,
Ne neither sherte ne shoon, save for shame one
To covere my careyne', quod he, and cride mercy faste,
And wepte and wailed -- and therwith I awakede.

Passus 15

Ac after my wakyng it was wonder longe
Er I koude kyndely knowe what was Dowel.
And so my wit weex and wanyed til I a fool weere;
And some lakked my lif -- allowed it fewe --
And leten me for a lorel and looth to reverencen
Lordes or ladies or any lif ellis --
As persons in pelure with pendaunts of silver;
To sergeaunts ne to swiche seide noght ones,
" God loke yow, lordes!' -- ne loutede faire,
That folk helden me a fool; and in that folie I raved,
Til reson hadde ruthe on me and rokked me aslepe,
Til I seigh, as it sorcerie were, a soutil thyng withalle --
Oon withouten tonge and teeth, tolde me whider I sholde
And wherof I cam and of what kynde. I conjured hym at the laste,

If he were Cristes creature for Cristes love me to tellen.
 "I am Cristes creature," quod he, "and Cristene in many a place,
 In Cristes court yknowe wel, and of his kyn a party.
 Is neither Peter the Porter, ne Poul with the fauchon,
 That wole defende me the dore, dyngge I never so late.
 At mydnyght, at mydday, my vois is so yknowe
 That ech a creature of his court welcometh me faire."
 "What are ye called?" quod I, "in that court among Cristes peple?"
 "The whiles I quykne the cors," quod he, "called am I Anima;
 And whan I wilne and wolde, Animus ich hatte;
 And for that I kan and knowe, called am I Mens;
 And whan I make mone to God, Memoria is my name;
 And whan I deme domes and do as truthe techeth,
 Thanne is Racio my righte name -- ""reson"" on Englissh;
 And whan I feele that folk telleth, my firste name is Sensus --
 And that is wit and wisdom, the welle of alle craftes;
 And whan I chalange or chalange noght, chepe or refuse,
 Thanne am I Conscience ycalled, Goddes clerk and his notarie;
 And whan I love leelly Oure Lord and alle othere,
 Thanne is ""lele Love"" my name, and in Latyn Amor;
 And whan I flee fro the flessch and forsake the careyne,
 Thanne am I spirit spechelees -- and Spiritus thanne ich hatte.
 Austyn and Ysodorus, either of hem bothe
 Nempnede me thus to name -- now thow myght chese
 How thow coveitest to calle me, now thow knowest alle my names.
 Anima pro diversis accionibus diversa nomina sortitur: dum
 vivificat corpus, anima est; dum vult, animus est; dum scit,
 mens est; dum recolit, memoria est; dum iudicat, racio est;
 dum sentit, sensus est; dum amat, Amor est ; dum negat vel
 consentit, consciencia est; dum spirat, spiritus est."
 "Ye ben as a bisshop," quod I, al bourdyngge that tyme,
 "For bisshopes yblessed, thei bereth manye names --
 Presul and Pontifex and Metropolitanus,
 And othere names an heep, Episcopus and Pastor."
 "That is sooth," seide he, "now I se thi wille!
 Thow woldest knowe and konne the cause of alle hire names,
 And of myne, if thow myghtest, me thynketh by thi speche!"
 "Ye, sire," I seide, "by so no man were greved,
 Alle the sciences under sonne and alle the sotide craftes
 I wolde I knewe and kouthe kyndely in myn herte!"
 "Thanne artow inparfit," quod he, "and oon of Prides knyghtes!
 For swich a lust and likyng Lucifer fel from hevne:
 Ponam pedem meum in aquilone et similis ero Altissimo.

"It were ayeins kynde,' quod he, "and alle kynnes reson
 That any creature sholde konne al, except Crist oone.
 Ayein swiche Salomon speketh, and despiseth hir wittes,
 And seith, Sicut qui mel comedit multum non est ei bonum,
 Sic qui scrutator est maiestatis opprimitur a gloria.
 "To Englysshe men this is to mene, that mowen speke and here,
 The man that muche hony eteth his mawe it engleymeth,
 And the moore that a man of good matere hereth,
 But he do therafter it dooth hym doubie scathe.
 "" Beatus est,' seith Seint Bernard, "" qui scripturas iegit
 Et verba vertit in opera fulliche to his power."
 Coveitise to konne and to knowe science
 Putte out of Paridis Adam and Eve:
 Sciencie appetitus hominem immortalitatis gloriam spoliavit.
 "And right as hony is yvel to defie and engleymeth the mawe,
 Right so that thorough reson wolde the roote knowe
 Of God and of hise grete myghtes -- hise graces it letteth.
 For in the likynge lith a pride and licames coveitise
 Ayein Cristes counseil and alle clerkes techynge --
 That is Non plus sapere quam oportet sapere.
 " Freres and fele othere maistres that to the lewed men prechen,
 Ye moeven materes unmesurable to tellen of the Trinite,
 That oftetyms the lewed peple of hir bileve doute.
 Bettre it were by many doctours to bileven swich techyng
 And tellen men of the ten comaundements, and touchen the sevene synnes,
 And of the braunches that burjoneth of hem and bryngen men to helle,
 And how that folk in folies mysspenden hir fyve wittes --
 As wel freres as oother folk, foliliche spenden
 In housynge, in haterynge, in to heigh clergie shewynge
 Moore for pompe than for pure charite -- the peple woot the sothe!
 That I lye noght, loo! -- for lordes ye plesen,
 And reverencen the riche the rather for hir silver:
 Confundantur omnes qui adorant sculptilia. Et alibi,
 Ut quid diligitis vanitatem, et queritis mendacium?
 "Goeth to the glose of the vers, ye grete clerkes;
 If I lye on yow to my lewed wit, ledeth me to brennyng!
 For as it semeth ye forsaketh no mannes almesse --
 Of usurers, of hoors, of varouse chapmen --
 And louten to thise lordes that mowen lene yow nobles
 Aye in youre rule and religion -- I take record at Jesus,
 That seide to hise disciples, "" Ne sitis acceptores personarum."
 Of this matere I myghte make a long bible;
 Ac of curatours of Cristen peple, as clerkes bereth witnesse,

I shal tellen it for trouthes sake -- take hede whoso liketh!
 "As holynesse and honeste out of Holy Chirche spreadeth
 Thorugh lele libbynge men that Goddes lawe techen,
 Right so out of Holy Chirche alle yveles spreadeth
 There inparfit preesthode is, prechours and techeris.
 And se it by ensauple in somer tyme on trowes:
 Ther some bowes ben leved and some bereth none,
 Ther is a meschief in the more of swiche manere bowes.
 Right so persons and preestes and prechours of Holy Chirche
 Is the roote of the right feith to rule the peple;
 Ac ther the roote is rotten, reson woot the sothe,
 Shal nevere flour ne fruyt, ne fair leef be grene.
 "Forthi wolde ye lettrede leve the lecherie of clothyng,
 And be kynde as bifel for clerkes and curteise of Cristes goodes,
 Trewe of youre tonge and of youre tail bothe,
 And hatien to here harlotrie, and aught to underfonge
 Tithes of untrewes thyng ytilied or chaffared --
 Lothe were lewed men but thei youre loore folwede
 And amenden hem that thei mysdoon, moore for youre ensaumples
 Than for to prechen and to preven it nought -- ypocrisie it semeth!
 For ypocrisie in Latyn is likned to a dongehill
 That were bisnewed with snow, and snakes withinne,
 Or to a wal that were whitlymed and were foul withinne.
 Right so manye preestes, prechours and prelates --
 Ye [b]en enblanched with bele paroles and with clothes,
 Ac youre werkes and wordes therunder aren ful w[o]lveliche.
 Johannes Crisostomus of clerkes speketh and preestes:
 Sicut de templo omne bonum progreditur, sic de templo omne
 malum procedit. Si sacerdocium integrum fuerit, tota floret
 ecclesia; si autem corruptum fuerit, omnium fides marcida est.
 Si sacerdocium fuerit in peccatis, totus populus convertitur
 ad peccandum. Sicut cum videris arborem pallidam et marcidam
 intelligis quod viciu[m] habet in radice, ita cum videris
 populum indisciplinatum et irreligiosum, sine dubio
 sacerdocium eius non est sanum.
 "If lewed men wiste what this Latyn meneth,
 And who was myn auctour, muche wonder me thinketh
 But if many preest beere, for hir baselardes and hir broches,
 A peire of bedes in hir hand and a book under hir arme.
 Sire Johan and Sire Geffrey hath a girdel of silver,
 A baselard or a ballok-knyf with botons overgilte.
 Ac a porthors that sholde be his plow, Placebo to sigge,
 Hadde he nevere, [his] service to [h]ave,

[And save he have] silver therto, seith it with ydel wille.
 "Allas, ye lewed men, muche lese ye on preestes!
 Ac thing that wikkedly is wonne, and with false sleighes,
 Wolde nevere the wit of witty God but wikkede men it hadde --
 The whiche arn preestes inparfite and prechours after silver,
 Executours and sodenes, somonours and hir lemmannes.
 This that with gile was geten, ungraciousliche is spended.
 So harlotes and hores arn holpe with swiche goodes,
 Ac Goddes folk for defaute therof forfaren and spillen.
 "Curatours of Holy Kirke, and clerkes that ben avarouse,
 Lightliche that thei leven, losels it habbeth,
 Or deieth intestate, and thanne [entreth the bisshop]
 And maketh murthe therwith, and hise meyne both,
 And seyen, ""He was a nygard, that no good myghte aspare
 To frend ne to fremmed -- the fend have his soule!
 For a wrecehede hous he held al his lif tyme,
 And that he spared and bispered, spende we in murthe!"
 "By lered, by lewed, that looth is to spende --
 Thus goon hire goodes, be the goost faren.
 Ac for goode men, God woot, greet doel men maken,
 And bymeneth goode meteyyveres, and in mynde haveth
 In preieres and in penaunces and in parfit charite.'
 "What is charite?' quod I tho. "A childissh thyng,' he seide --
 "Nisi efficiamini sicut parvuli, non intrabitis in regnum celorum --
 Withouten fauntele or folie a fre liberal wille.'
 "Where sholde men fynde swich a frend with so fre an herte?
 I have lyved in londe,' quod I, "my name is Longe Wille --
 And fond I nevere ful charite, bifore ne bihynde.
 Men beth merciabile to mendinaunts and to poore,
 And wollen lenc ther thei leve lelly to ben paied.
 Ac charite that Poul preiseth best and moost plesaunt to Oure Saveour --
 As Non inflatur, non est ambiciosa, non querit que sua sunt --
 I seigh nevere swich a man, so me God helpe,
 That he ne wolde aske after his, and outhewhile coveite
 Thyng that neded hym noght -- and nyme it, if he myghte!
 "Clerkes kenne me that Crist is in alle places;
 Ac I seigh hym nevere soothly but as myself in a mirour:
 Hic in enigmat, tunc facie ad faciem.
 And so I trowe trewely, by that men telleth of charite,
 It is noght chaumpions fight, ne chaffare, as I trowe.'
 "Charite,' quod he, "ne chaffareth noght, ne chalangeth, ne craveth;
 As proud of a peny as of a pound of golde,
 And is as glad of a gowne of a gray russet

As of a tunycle of Tarse of of trie scarlet.
 He is glad with alle glade and good til alle wikkede,
 And leneth and loveth alle that Oure Lord made.
 Corseth he no creature, ne he kan bere no wrathe,
 Ne no likyng hath to lye ne laughe men to scorne.
 Al that men seyn, he leet it sooth, and in solace taketh,
 And alle manere meschiefs in myldenesse he suffreth.
 Coveiteth he noon erthely good but heveneriche blisse.'
 "Hath he any rentes or riches, or any riche frendes?"
 "Of rentes ne of riches rekketh he nevere,
 For a frend that fyndeth hym, failed hym nevere at nede:
 Fiat voluntas tua fynt hym everemoore,
 And if he soupeth, eteth but a sop of Spera in Deo.
 He kan portreye wel the Paternoster and peynte it with Aves,
 And outhertwhile he is woned to wenden on pilgrimages
 Ther poore men and prisons liggeth, hir pardon to have;
 Though he bere hem no breed, he bereth hem swetter liflode,
 Loveth hem as Oure Lord biddeth and loketh how thei fare.
 "And whan he is wery of that werk than wole he som tyme
 Labouren in a lavendrye wel the lengthe of a mile,
 And yerne into youthe, and yepeliche seche
 Pride, with al the appurtenaunces, and pakken hem togideres,
 And bouken hem at his brest and beten hern clene,
 And leggen on longe with Laboravi in gemitu meo,
 And with warm water at hise eighen wasshen hem after.
 Thanne he syngeth whan he doth so, and som tyme seith wepyng,
 Cor contritum et humiliatum, Deus, non despicias.'
 "By Crist! I wolde that I knewe hym,' quod I, "no creature levere!"
 "Withouten help of Piers Plowman,' quod he, "his persone sestow nevere."
 "Wheither clerkes knowen hym,' quod I, "that kepen Holi Kirke?"
 "Clerkes have no knowyng,' quod he, "but by werkes and by wordes.
 Ac Piers the Plowman parceyveth moore depper
 What is the wille, and wherfore that many wight suffreth:
 Et vidit Deus cogitaciones eorum.
 For ther are ful proude herted men, pacient of tonge
 And buxome as of berynge to burgeises and to lordes,
 And to poore peple han pepir in the nose,
 And as a lyoun he loketh ther men lakken hise werkes.
 " For ther are beggeris and bidderis, bedemen as it were,
 Loken as lambren and semen lif-holy --
 Ac it is moore to have hir mete on swich an esy manere
 Than for penaunce and parfitnesse, the poverté that swiche taketh.
 "Therefore by colour ne by clergie knowe shaltow hym nevere,

Neither thorough wordes ne werkes, but thorough wil oone,
And that knoweth no clerk ne creature on erthe
But Piers the Plowman -- Petrus, id est, Christus.
For he nys noght in lolleris ne in londleperis heremytes,
Ne at ancre there a box hangeth -- alle swiche thei fainen.
Fy on faitours and infautores suos!
For Charite is Goddes champion, and as a good child hende,
And the murieste of mouth at mete where he sitteth.
The love that lith in his herte maketh hym light of speche,
And is compaignable and confortatif, as Crist bit hymselfe:
Nolite fieri sicut ypocrite tristes &c.
For I have seyen hym in silk and som tyme in russet,
Bothe in grey, and in grys, and in gilt harneis --
And as gladliche he it gaf to gomes that it neded.
"Edmund and Edward, either were kynges
And seintes yset -- [s]til[le] charite hem folwede.
"I have yseyen charite also syngen and reden,
Riden, and rennen in raggede wedes;
Ac biddynge as beggeris biheld I hym nevere.
Ac in riche robes rathest he walketh,
Ycalled and ycrymyled and his crowne yshave.
And in a freres frokke he was yfounden ones --
Ac it is fern ago, in Seint Fraunceis tyme;
In that secte siththe to selde hath he ben knowen.
"Riche men he recomendeth, and of hir robes taketh
That withouten wiles ledeth hir lyves:
Beatus est dives qui, &c.
"In kynges court he cometh ofte, ther the counseil is trewe;
Ac if coveitise be of the counseil he wol noght come therinne.
In court amonges japeris he cometh but selde,
For braulynge and bakbitynge and berynge of fals witness.
"In the consistorie bfore the commissarie he corneth noght ful ofte,
For hir lawe dureth overlonge but if thei lacchen silver,
And matrimoyne for moneie maken and unmake,
And that conseience and Crist hath yknyt faste,
Thei undoon it un[digne]ly, tho doctours of lawe.
"Amonges erchebisshopes and other bisshopes and prelates of Holy Chirche,
For to wonye with hem his wone was som tyme,
And Cristes patrimoyne to the poore parcelmele dele.
Ac avarice hath the keyes now and kepeth for his kynnesmen
And for his seketoures and his servaunts, and som for hir children.
"Ac I ne lakke no lif, but, Lord, amende us alle.
And gyve us grace, goode God, charite to folwe!

For whoso myghte meete with hym, swiche maneres hym eileth --
Neither he blameth ne banneth, bosteth ne preiseth,
Lakketh, ne loseth, ne loketh up sterne,
Craveth, ne coveiteth, ne crieth after moore:
In pace in idipsum dormiam &c.
The mooste liflode that he lyveth by is love in Goddes passion;
Neither he biddeth, ne beggeth, ne borweth to yelde;
Misdooth he no man, ne with his mouth greveth.
"Amonges Cristene men this myldenesse sholde laste,
In alle manere angres have this at herte --
That theigh thei suffrede al this, God suffrede for us moore
In ensample we sholde do so, and take no vengeaunce
Of oure foes that dooth us falsnesse -- that is oure fadres wille.
For wel may every man wite, if God hadde wold hymselfe,
Sholde nevere Judas ne Jew have Jesu doon on roode,
Ne han martired Peter ne Poul, ne in prison holden.
Ac he suffre in ensample that we sholde suffren also,
And seide to swiche that suffre wolde that Pacientes vincunt.
" Verbi gratia,' quod he -- and verred ensamples manye.
"In Legenda Sanctorum, the lif of holy seintes,
What penaunce and poverte and passion thei suffrede --
In hunger, in hete, in alle manere angres.
"Antony and Egidie and othere holy fadres
Woneden in wildernesse among wilde beestes;
Monkes and mendinaunts. men by hemselfe
In spekes and in spelonkes, selde speken togideres.
Ac neither Antony ne Egidie ne heremyte that tyme
Of leons ne of leopardes no liflode ne toke,
But of foweles that fleeth -- thus fyndeth men in bokes --
Except that Egidie after an hynde cride,
And thorough the mylk of that mylde beest the man was sustened;
And day bi day hadde he hire noght his hunger for to slake,
But selden and sondry tymes, as seith the book and techeth.
Antony adayes aboute noon tyme
Hadde a brid that broughte hym breed that he by lyvede;
And though the gome hadde a gest, God fond hem bothe.
"Poul primus heremita hadde parroked hymselfe,
That no man myghte hym se for mosse and for leves.
Foweles hym fedde fele wyntres with alle
Til he foundede freres of Austynes ordre.
Poul, after his prechyng, paniers he made,
And wan with hise hondes that his wornbe neded.
Peter fisshed for his foode, and his felawe Andrew:

Som thei solde and som thei soden, and so thei lyved bothe.
 And also Marie Maudeleyne by mores lyvede and dewes,
 Ac moost thorough devocion and mynde of God Almyghty.
 I sholde noght thise seven daies siggen hem alle
 That lyveden thus for Oure Lordes love many longe yeres.
 "Ac ther ne was leoun ne leopard that on laundes wenten,
 Neither bere, ne boor, ne oother beest wilde
 That ne fil to hir feet and fawned with the tailles;
 And if thei kouthe han ycarped, by Crist, as I trowe,
 Thei wolde have yfed that folk bifore wilde foweles.
 For al the curteisie that beestes konne, thei kidde that folk ofte,
 In likkyng and in lowyng, there thei on laundes yede.
 Ac God sente hem foode by foweles, and by no fierse beestes,
 In menyng that meke thyng mylde thyng sholde fede.
 As who seith religious rightfulle men sholde fynde,
 And lawefulle men to lif-holy rnen liflode brynge;
 And thanne wolde lordes and ladies be looth to agulte,
 And to taken of hir tenaunts more than trouthe wolde,
 Founde thei that freres wolde forsake hir almesses,
 And bidden hem bere it there it was yborwed.
 For we ben Goddes foles and abiden alwey,
 Til briddes brynge us that we sholde [by lyve].
 For hadde ye potage and payn ynogh, and peny ale to drynke,
 And a mees thermyd of o maner kynde,
 Ye hadde right ynogh ye religieuse -- and so youre rule me tolde.
 Numquid, dicit Job rugiet onager cum habuerit herbam ?
 Aut mugiet bos cum ante plenum presepe steterit ? Brutorum
 animalium natura te condempnat, quia cum eis pabulum commune
 sufficiat; ex adipe prodiit iniquitas tua.
 "If lewed men knewe this Latyn, thei wolde loke whom thei yeve,
 And avisen hem bifore a fyve dayes or sixe
 Er thei amortisede [moore] to monkes or chanons hir rentes.
 Allas! lordes and ladies, lewed counseil have ye
 To yyve from youre heires that youre aiels you lefted,
 And yyveth to bidde for yow to swiche that ben riche,
 And ben founded and feffed ek to bidde for othere!
 "Who parfourneth this prophecie, of the peple that now libbeth --
 Dispersit, dedit pauperibus ?
 If any peple parfourne that tent, it are thise poore freres:
 For that thei beggen aboute, in buyldyng thei spende,
 And on hemself som, and swiche as ben hir laborers;
 And of hem that habbeth thei taken, and yyveth hem that ne habbeth!
 "Ac clerkes and knyghtes, and comuners that ben riche,

Fele of yow fareth as if I a forest hadde
 That were ful of faire trees, and I fondede and caste
 How I myghte mo therinne amonges hem sette.
 Right so ye riche -- ye robeth that ben riche,
 And helpeth hem that helpeth yow, and yyveth ther no nede is;
 As whoso filled a tonne ful of a fressh ryver,
 And wente forth with that water to woke with Themese.
 Right so ye riche, ye robeth and fedeth
 Hem that han as ye han -- hem ye make at ese.
 "Ac religieuse that riche ben sholde rather feeste beggeris
 Than burgeises that riche ben, as the book techeth:
 Quia sacrilegium est res pauperum non pauperibus dare.
 Item: peccatoribus dare est demonibus immolare.
 Item: monache, si indiges et accipis, pocius das quam accipis;
 Si autem non eges et accipis, rapis.
 Porro non indiget monachus, si habeat quod nature sufficit.
 " Forthi I counseille alle Cristene to conformen hem to charite --
 For charite withouten chalangynge unchargeth the soule,
 And many a prison fram purgatorie thorough hise preieres he delivereth.
 Ac ther is a defaute in the folk that the feith kepeth,
 Wherefore folk is the febler, and noght ferm of bileve.
 As in lussheburwes is a luther alay, and yet loketh he lik a sterlyng:
 The merk of that monee is good, ac the metal is feble.
 And so it fareth by som folk now: thci han a fair speche,
 Crowne and Cristendom, the kynges mark of hevene,
 Ac the metal, that is mannes soule, with [many] synne is foule[d].
 Bothe lettred and lewed beth alayed now with synne,
 That no lif loveth oother, ne Oure Lord, as it semeth.
 For what thorough werre and wikkede werkes and wederes unresonable,
 Wederwise shipmen and witty clerkes also
 Have no bileve to the lifte, ne to the loore of philosophres.
 "Astronomiens alday in hir art faillen
 That whilom warned bfore what sholde falle after;
 Shipmen and shepherdes, that with ship and sheep wenten,
 Wisten by the walkne what sholde bitide,
 Tilieris that tiled the erthe tolden hir maistres
 By the seed that thei sewe whit thei selle myghte,
 And what to leve and to lyve by, the lond was so trewe;
 Now failleth the folk of the flood and of the lond bothe --
 Shepherdes and shipmen, and so do thise tilieris:
 Neither thei konneth ne knoweth oon cours bfore another.
 "Astronomyens also aren at hir wittes ende:
 Of that was calculded of the clem[a]t, the contrarie thei fynde.

Grammer, the ground of al, bigileth now children:
For is noon of thise newe clerkes -- whoso nymeth hede --
That kan versifye faire ne formaliche enditen,
Ne naught oon among an hundred that an auctour kan construwe,
Ne rede a lettre in any langage but in Latyn or in Englissh.
"Go now to any degree, and but if gile be maister,
And flaterere his felawe [to fourmen under hym],
Muche wonder me thynketh amonges us alle!
Doctours of decrees and of divinite maistres,
That sholde konne and knowe alle kynnes clergie,
And answeere to arguments and also to a quodlibet --
I dar noght siggen it for shame -- if swiche were apposed,
Thei sholde failen of hir Philosophie, and in Phisik bothe.
"Wherefore I am afered of folk of Holy Kirke,
Lest thei overhuppen, as oothere doon, in Office and in Houres.
Ac if thei overhuppe -- as I hope noght -- oure bileve suffiseth;
As clerkes in Corpus Christi feeste syngen and reden
That sola fides sufficit to save with lewed peple --
And so may Sarsens be saved, scribes and Jewes.
"Allas thanne! but oure looresmen lyve as thei leren us,
And for hir lyvyng that lewed men be the lother God agulten.
For Sarsens han somewhat semyng to oure bileve,
For thei love and bileve in o [Lede] almyghty,
And we, lered and lewed, [bileveth in oon God] --
Cristene and uncristene on oon [creatour] bileveth.
Ac oon Makometh, a man, in mysbileve
Broughte Sarsens of Surree -- and see in what manere.
"This Makometh was a Cristene man and for he moste noght ben a pope,
Into Surrie he soughte. and thorough hise sotle wittes
Daunted a dowve, and day and nyght hire fedde.
The corn that she croppede, he caste it in his ere;
And if he among the peple preched, or in places come,
Thanne wolde the colvere come to the clerkes ere
Menynge as after mete -- thus Makometh hire enchauntedede,
And dide folk thanne falle on knees, for he swoor in his prechyng
That the colvere that com so com from God of hevene
As messenger to Makometh, men for to teche.
And thus thorough wiles of his wit and a whit dowve
Makometh in mysbileve men and wommen broughte,
That lered there and lewed yit leeven on hise lawes.
"And siththe Oure Saveour suffred the Sarsens so bigiled
Thorough a Cristene clerk acorsed in his soule --
Ac for drede of the deeth I dar noght telle truthe,

How Englysshe clerkes a colvere fede that Coveitise highte,
 And ben manered after Makometh, that no man useth trouthe.
 "Ancres and heremytes, and monkes and freres
 Peeren to Apostles thorough hire parfit lyvyng.
 Wolde nevere the feithful Fader that hise ministres sholde
 Of tiraunts that teneth trewe men taken any almesse,
 But doon as Antony dide, Dominyk and Fraunceys,
 Beneit and Bernard [bo]the, whiche hem first taughte
 To lyve by litel and in lowe houses by lele mennes almesse.
 Grace sholde growe and be grene thorough hir goode lyvyng,
 And folkes sholden fynde, that ben in diverse siknesse,
 The better for hir biddynge in body and in soule.
 Hir preieres and hir penaunces to pees sholde brynge
 Alle that ben at debaat, and bedemen were trewe:
 Petite et accipietis &c.
 " Salt saveth catel,' siggen thise wyves ;
 Vos estis sal terre &c.
 The hevedes of Holy Chirche -- and thei holy were --
 Crist calleth hem salt for Cristene soules,
 Et si sal evanuerit, in quo salietur ?
 Ac fressh flessch outhur fissh, whan it salt failleth,
 It is unsavory, for sothe, ysoden or ybake;
 So is mannes soule, soothly, that seeth no good ensample
 Of hem of Holi Chirche that the heighe wey sholde teche
 And be gide, and go bifore as a good banyer,
 And hardie hem that bihynde ben, and yyve hem good evidence.
 " Ellevene holy men al the world tornede
 Into lele bileve; the lightloker, me thynketh.
 Sholde alle maner men, we han so manye maistres-
 Preestes and prechours, and a pope above,
 That Goddes salt sholde be, to save mannes soule.
 "Al was hethynesse som tyme Engeland and Walis,
 Til Gregory garte clerkes to go here and preche.
 Austyn [cristnede the kyng at Caunterbury],
 And thorough miracles, as men mow rede, al that marche he tornede
 To Crist and to Cristendom, and cros to honoure,
 And follede folk faste, and the feith taughte
 Moore thorough miracles than thorough mucche prechyng,
 As wel thorough hise werkes as with hise holy wordes,
 And [fourmed] what fullyng and feith was to mene.
 "Clooth that cometh fro the wevyng is noght comly to were
 Til it be fulled under foot or in fullyng stokkes,
 Wasshen wel with water and with taseles cracched,

Ytoked and yteynted and under taillours hande;
 And so it fareth by a barn that born is of wombe:
 Til it be cristned in Cristes name and confermed of the bisshop,
 It is hethene as to heveneward, and helplees to the soule.
 " Hethen' is to mene after heeth and untiled erthe --
 As In wilde wilderness wexeth wilde beess,
 Rude and unresonable, rennyng withouten keperes.
 "Ye mynnen wel how Mathew seith, how a man made a feste:
 He fedde hem with no venyson, ne fesaunts ybake,
 But with foweles that fram hym nolde, but folwede his whistlyng:
 Ecce altilia mea et omnia parata sunt --
 And with calves flesshe he fedde the folk that he lovede.
 "The calf bitokneth clenness in hem that kepeth lawes;
 For as the cow thorough kynde mylk the calf norisseth til an oxe,
 So love and leaute lele men susteneth;
 And maidenenes and mylde men mercy desiren
 Right as the cow-calf coveiteth swete melk --
 So [much] don rightfulle men mercy and truthe.
 And by the hond-fedde foweles his folk understonde
 That looth ben to lovye withouten lernynge of ensaumples.
 Right as capons in a court cometh to mennes whistlyng --
 In menyng after mete folweth men that whistlen --
 Right so rude men that litel reson konneth
 Loven and bileven by lettred mennes doynges,
 And by hire wordes and werkes wenen and trowen:
 And as tho foweles to fynde foode after whistlyng,
 So hope thei to have hevene thorough hir [wiss]yng.
 And the man that made the feste the mageste bymeneth --
 That is God, of his grace gyveth alle men blisse.
 With wederes and with wondres he warneth us with a whistlere
 Where that his wil is, to worshipen us alle,
 And feden us and festen us for everemoore at oones.
 "Ac who beth that excuseth hem that arn persons and preestes
 (That hevedes of Holy Chirche ben) that han hir wil here
 Withouten travaille the tithe deel that trewe men biswynken --
 Thei wol be wrooth for I write thus-ac to witnesse I take
 Bothe Mathew and Mark and Memento Domine David:
 Ecce audivimus e[um] in Effrata &c.
 What pope or prelate now parfourneth that Crist highte-
 It in universum mundum et predicate &c?
 "Allas, that men so longe on Makometh sholde bileve!
 So manye prelates to preche as the Pope maketh --
 Of Nazareth, of Nynyve, of Neptalym and Damaske.

That thei ne wente as Crist wisseth -- sithen thei wilne a name --
 To be pastours and preche the passion of Jesus,
 And as hymself seide, so to lyve and dye:
 Bonus pastor animam suam ponit &c,
 And seide it in salvacion of Sarsens and othere --
 For Cristene and uncristene, Crist seide to prechours,
 Ite vos in vineam meam &c.
 "And sith that thise Sarsens, scribes and Jewes
 Han a lippe of oure bileve, the lightloker, me thynketh, .
 Thei sholde turne, whoso travaile wolde to teche hem of the Trinite:
 Querite et invenietis &c.
 For alle paynymes preieth and parfitly bileweth
 In the [grete holy] God, and his grace asken,
 And make hir mone to Makometh, hir message to shewe.
 Thus in a feith leveth that folk, and in a fals mene,
 And that is routhe for rightful men that in the reawme wonyen,
 And a peril to the Pope and prelates that he maketh,
 That bere bisshopes names of Bethleem and Babiloigne.
 "Whan the hye kyng of hevene sente his sone to erthe,
 Many miracles he wroughte man for to turne,
 In ensauple that men sholde se by sadde reson
 Men myghte nocht be saved but thorough mercy and grace,
 And thorough penaunce, and passion, and parfit byleve;
 And bicam man of a mayde, and metropolitanus,
 And baptised and bishined with the blode of his herte
 Alle that wilned and wolde with inwit bileve it.
 Many a seynt siththen hath suffred to deye,
 Al for to enforme the feith in fele contrees deyeden --
 In Inde, and in Alisaundre, in Ermonye and in Spayne,
 In doelful deth deyeden for hir feith sake.
 In savacion of the feith Seint Thomas was ymartired:
 Amonges unkynde Cristene for Cristes love he deyede,
 And for the right of al this reume and alle reumes Cristene.
 Holy Chirche is honoured heighliche thorough his deying;
 He is a forbisene to alle bisshopes and a bright myrour,
 And sovereynliche to swiche that of Surrye bereth the name,
 And naught to huppe aboute in Engeland to halwe mennes auteres,
 And crepe in amonges curatours and confessen ageyn the lawe:
 Nolite mittere falsam in messem alienam &c.
 Many man for Cristes love was martired amonges Romaines
 Er Cristendom were knowe ther or any cros honoured.
 "It is ruthe to rede how rihtwise men lyved --
 How thei defouled hir flessch, forsoke hir owene wille,

Fer fro kyth and fro kyn yvele yclothed yeden,
Baddely ybedded, no book but conscience,
Ne no richesse but the roode to rejoisse hem inne:
Absit nobis gloriari nisi in cruce Domini nostri &c.
"And tho was plentee and pees amonges poore and riche;
And now is routhe to rede how the rede noble
Is reverenced er the roode, receyved for the worthier
Than Cristes cros that overcam deeth and dedly synne.
And now is werre and wo, and whoso why asketh --
For coveitise after cros; the croune stant in golde.
Bothe richc and religious, that roode thei honoure
That in grotes is ygrave and in gold nobles.
For coveitise of that cros [clerkes] of Holy Kirke
Shul torne as Templers dide -- the tyme approacheth faste.
" [Mynne] ye noght, wise men, how tho men honoured
Moore tresor than trouthe? I dar noght telle the sothe;
Reson and rightful doom tho religious demede.
Right so, ye clerkes, for youre coveitise, er [come aught] longe,
Shal thei demen dos ecclesie, and [depose youre pride]:
Deposuit potentes de sede &c.
"If knyghthod and kynde wit, and the commune and conscience
Togideres love leelly, leveth it wel, ye bisshopes --
The lordshipe of londes [lese ye shul for evere],
And lyven as Levitici, as Oure Lord yow techeth:
Per primicias et decimas &c.
"Whan Costantyn of curteisie Holy Kirke dowed
With londes and ledes, lordshipes and rentes,
An aungel men herden an heigh at Rome crye,
" Dos ecclesie this day hath ydronke venym,
And tho that han Petres power arn apoisoned alle!"
A medicine moot therto that may amende prelates,
That sholden preie for the pees; possession hem letteth.
Taketh hire landes, ye lordes, and leteth hem lyve by dymes;
If possession be poison, and inparfite hem make,
Good were to deschargen hem for Holy Chirehes sake,
And purgen hem of poison, er moore peril falle.
If preesthode were parfit, the peple sholde amende,
That contrarien Cristes lawe, and Cristendom dispise.
"Every bisshop that bereth cros, by that he is holden
Thorough his province to passe, and to his peple to shewe hym,
Tellen hem and techen hem on the Trinite to bileve,
And feden hem with goostly foode, and nedy folk to fynden.
Ac Ysaie of yow speketh and Osias bothe,

That no man sholde be bisshop but if he hadde bothe
Bodily foode and goostly foode to gyve there it nedeth:
In domo mea non est panis neque vestimentum, et ideo nolite constituere me regem

Oσίας seith for swiche that sike ben and feble,
Inferte omnes decimas in orreum meum, ut sit cibus in domo mea.

"Ac we Cristene creatures, that on the cros bileven,
Arn ferme as in the feith-Goddes forbode ellis! --
And han clerkes to kepen us therinne, and hem that shul come after us.
And Jewes lyven in lele lawe-Oure Lord wroot it hymselfe
In stoon, for it stedefast was, and stonde sholde evere --
Dilige Deum et proximum, is parfit Jewen lawe --
And teok it Moyses to teche men, til Messie coom
And on that lawe thei leve, and leten it for the beste.
And yit knewe thei Crist, that Cristendom taughte,
And for a parfit prophete that muche peple savede
Of selkouthes sores; thei seighen it ofte --

Bothe of miracles and merveilles, and how he men festede,
With two fisshes and fyve loves fyve thousand peple --
And by that mangerie thei myghte wel se that Messie he semede;
And whan he lifte up Lazar, that leid was in grave,
And under stoon deed and stank, with stif vois hym callede,
Lazare, veni foras,
Dide hym rise and rome right biforn the Jewes.
Ac thei seiden and sworn, with sorcerie he wroughte,
And studieden to struyen hym -- and struyden hemselfe,
And thorough his pacience hir power to pure nocht he broughte:
Pacientes vincunt.

"Daniel of hire undoyng devyned and seide,
Cum sanctus sanctorum veniat cessabit unxio vestra.
And yit wenen tho wrecches that he were pseudo-propheta
And that his loore be lesynges, and lakken it alle,
And hopen that he be to come that shal hem releve --
Moyes eft or Messie hir maistres devyneth.

"Ac pharisees and sarsens, scribes and Jewes
Arn folk of oon feith -- the fader God thei honouren.
And sithen that the Sarsens and also the Jewes
Konne the firste clause of oure bileve, *Credo in Deum patrem omnipotentem,*
Prelates of Cristene provinces sholde preve, if thei myghte,
Lere hem litlum and litlum *Et in Jesum Chrisium filium,*
Til thei kouthe speke and spelle *Et in Spiritum sanctum,*
And rendren it and recorden it with *remissionem peccatorum,*
Carnis resurreccionem et vitam eternam. Amen.'

Passus 16

"Now faire falle yow,' quod I tho, "for youre faire shewyng!
For Haukyns love the Actif Man evere I shal yow lovyne.
Ac yit am I in a weer what charite is to mene.'
"It is a ful trie tree,' quod he, "trewely to telle.
Mercy is the more therof; the myddul stok is ruthe;
The leves ben lele wordes, the lawe of Holy Chirche;
The blosmes beth buxom speche and benigne lokynge;
Pacience hatte the pure tree, and pore symple of herte,
And so thorough God and thorough goode men groweth the fruyt Charite.'
"I wolde travaille,' quod I, "this tree to se, twenty hundred myle,
And to have my fulle of that fruyt forsake al other saulee.
Lord !' quod I, " if any wight wite whiderout it groweth?"
"It groweth in a gardyn,' quod he, "that God made hymselfe;
Amyddes mannes body the more is of that stokke.
Herte highte the herber that it inne groweth,
And Liberum Arbitrium hath the lond to ferme,
Under Piers the Plowman to piken it and to weden it.'
" Piers the Plowman!' quod I tho, and al for pure joye
That I herde nempne his name anon I swowned after,
And lay longe in a lone dreem; and at the laste me thoughte
That Piers the Plowman al the place me shewed,
And bad me toten on the tree, on top and on roote.
With thre piles was it underpight -- I parceyved it soone.
" Piers,' quod I, " I preie thee -- whi stonde thise piles here?"
" For wynde, wiltew wite,' quod he, "to witen it fro fallyng --
Cum ceciderit iustus non collidetur quia Dominus supponit manum suam --
And in blowyng tyme abite the flowres, but-if thise piles helpe.
The world is a wikked wynd to hem that willen truthe:
Coveitise comth of that wynd and crepeth among the leves
And forfreteth neigh the fruyt thorough manye faire sightes.
Thanne with the firste pil I palle hym down -- that is Potencia Dei Patris.
"The flessh is a fel wynd, and in flouryng tyme,
Thorough likynge and lustes so loude he gynneth blowe
That it norisseth nyce sightes and som tyme wordes,
And wikkede werkes therof, wormes of synne,
And forbiteth the blosmes right to the bare leves.
"Thanne sette I to the secounde pil, Sapiencia Dei Patris --
That is the passion and the power of oure prince Jesu.
Thorough preieres and thorough penaunces and Goddes passion in mynde,

I save it til I se it ripen and somdel yfruyted.
 "And thanne fondeth the fend my fruyt to destruye
 With alle the wiles that he kan, and waggeth the roote,
 And casteth up to the crop unkynde neighebores,
 Bakbiteris brewecheste, brawleris and chideris,
 And leith a laddre therto -- of lesynges are the ronges --
 And feccheth away my floures somtyme bifore bothe myne eighen.
 Ac Liberum Arbitrium letteth hym som tyme,
 That is lieutenaunt to loken it wel, bi leve of myselve:
 Videatis qui peccat in Spiritum Sanctum numquam remittetur
 &c,-hoc est idem, qui peccat per liberum arbitrium non repugnat.
 "Ac whan the fend and the flessch forth with the world
 Manacen bihynde me, my fruyt for to fecche,
 Thanne Liberum Arbitrium laccheth the thridde planke
 And palleth adoun the pouke pureliche thorough grace
 And help of the Holy Goost -- and thus have I the maistrie.'
 "Now faire falle yow, Piers!' quod I, "so faire ye discryven
 The power of thisse postes and hire propre myghte.
 Ac I have thoughtes a threve af thisse thre piles --
 In what wode thei woxen, and where that thei growed,
 For alle are thei aliche longe, noon lasse than oother,
 And to my mynde, as me thynketh, on o more thei growed;
 And of o greetnesse and grene of greyn thei semen.'
 "That is sooth,' seide Piers, "so it may bifalle.
 I shal telle thee as tid what this tree highte.
 The ground there it groweth, goodnesse it hatte;
 And I have told thee what highte the tree: the Trinite it meneth' --
 And egrelliche he loked on me, and therfore I spared
 To asken hym any moore therof, and bad hym ful faire
 To di[ff]yne the fruyt that so faire hangeth.
 "Heer now bynethe,' quod he tho, "if I nede hadde,
 Matrimoyne I may nyme, a moiste fruyt withalle.
 Thanne Contynence is neer the crop as kaylewey bastard.
 Thanne bereth the crop kynde fruyt and clenest of alle --
 Maidenhode, aungeles peeris, and [ar]est wole be ripe,
 And swete withouten swellyng -- sour worth it nevere.'
 I preide Piers to pulle adoun an appul, and he wolde,
 And suffre me to assaien what savour it hadde.
 And Piers caste to the crop, and thanne comsed it to crye;
 And waggede widwehede, and it wepte after;
 And whan he meved matrimoyne, it made a foul noise,
 That I hadde ruthe whan Piers rogged, it gradde so rufulliche.
 For evere as thei dropped adoun the devel was redy,

And gadrede hem alle togideres, bothe grete and smale --
Adam and Abraham and Ysaye the prophete,
Sampson and Samuel, and Seint Johan the Baptist;
Bar hem forth boldely -- no body hym letted --
And made of holy men his hoord in Limbo Inferni,
There is derknesse and drede and the devel maister.
And Piers, for pure tene, that a pil he laughte,
And hitte after hym, happe how it myghte,
Eilius by the Fader wille and frenesse of Spiritus Sancti,
To go robbe that rageman and reve the fruyt fro hym.
And thanne spak Spiritus Sanctus in Gabrielis mouthe
To a maide that highte Marie, a meke thyng withalle,
That oon Jesus, a justices some, mostejouke in hir chambre
Til plenitudo temporis tyme comen were
That Piers fruyt floured and felle to be rype.
And thanne sholde Jesus juste therfore, bi juggement of armes,
Wheither sholde fonge the fruyt -- the fend or hymselfe.
The maide mydeliche tho the messenger graunted,
And seide hendeliche to hym, "Lo me his handmaiden
For to werchen his wille withouten any synne:
Ecce ancilla Domini, fiat michi &c.'
And in the wombe of that wenche was he fourty woukes,
Til he weex a faunt thorough hir flessch, and of fightyng kouthe,
To have yfoughte with the fend er ful tyme come.
And Piers the Plowman parceyved plener tyme,
And lered hym lechecraft. his lif for to save,
That though he were wounded with his enemy, to warisshen hymselfe;
And dide hym assaie his surgenrie on hem that sike were,
Til he was parfit praktisour, if any peril fille;
And soughte out the sike and synfulle bothe,
And salvede sike and synfulle, bothe blynde and crokede,
And commune wommen convertede [to goode]:
Non est sanis opus medicus, set male habentibus.
Bothe meseles and mute, and in the menyson blody --
Ofte he heeled swiche, he ne held it for no maistrie,
Save tho he leched Lazar, that hadde yleye in grave
Quatriduanus quelt -- quyk dide hym walke.
Ac a[r] he made the maistrie, mestus cepit esse,
And wepte water with hise eighen -- ther seighen it manye.
Some that the sighte seighen seiden that tyme
That he was leche of lif, and lord of heigh hevene.
Jewes jangled therayein that juggede lawes,
And seide he wroghte thorough wichecraft and with the develes myghte:

Demonium habes &c.

"Thanne are ye cherles,' quod Jesus, "and youre children bothe,
And Sathan youre Saveour -- yowself now ye witnessen:
For I have saved yowself, and youre sones after,
Youre bodies. youre beestes, and blynde men holpen,
And fed yow with fisshes and with fyve loves,
And lefte baskettes ful of broke mete -- bere away whoso wolde -- '
And mysseide the Jewes manliche, and manaced hem to bete,
And knocked on hem with a corde, and caste adoun hir stalles
That in chirche chaffareden or chaungeden any moneie,
And seide it in sighte of hem alle, so that alle herden,
" I shal overturne this temple and adoun throwe,
And in thre daies after edifie it newe,
And maken it as muche outhur moore in alle manere poyntes
As evere it was, and as wid-wherfore I hote yow,
Of preieres and of parfitnesse this place that ye callen:
Domus mea domus oracionis vocabitur.'
Envye and yvel wil ar[ne] in the Jewes:
Thei casten and contreveden to kulle hym whan thei myghte;
Eche day after oother hir tyme thei awaiteden,
Til it bifel on a Friday, a litel bfore Pasqe.
The Thursday bfore, there he made his cene,
Sittyng at the soper he seide thise wordes:
"I am sold thorough so[m] of yow -- he shal the tyme rewe
That evere he his Saveour solde for silver or ellis.'
Judas jangled therayein, ac Jesus hym tolde
It was hymself soothly, and seide, " Tu dicis.'
Thanne wente forth that wikked man and with the Jewes mette,
And tolde hem a tokne how to knowe with Jesus,
The which tokne to this day to muche is yused --
That is, kissynge and fair countenaunce and unkynde wille.
And so was with Judas tho, that Jesus bitrayed:
" Ave, raby,' quod that ribaud, and right to hym he yede,
And kiste hym, to be caught therby and kulled of the Jewes.
Thanne Jesus to Judas and to the Jewes seide,
" Falsnesse I fynde in thi faire speche,
And gile in thi glad chere, and galle is in thi laughyng.
Thow shalt be myrour to many, men to deceyve,
Ac the worse, and thi wikkednesse shal worthe upon thiselve:
Necesse est ut veniant scandala: ve homini illi, per quem scandalum venit.
Though I bi treson be take, and [to] youre owene wille,
Suffreth myne apostles in pays, and in pees gange.'
On a Thursday in thesternes thus was he taken .

Thorough Judas and Jewes -- Jesus was his name
That on the Friday folwyng for mankyndes sake
Justed in Jerusalem, a joye to us alle.
On cros upon Calvarie Crist took the bataille
Ayeins deeth and the devel, destroyed hir botheres myghtes --
Deide, and deeth fordide, and day of nyght made.
And I awaked therwith, and wiped myne eighen,
And after Piers the Plowman pried and stared,
Estward and westward I waited after faste,
And yede forth as an ydiot, in contree to asprie
After Piers the Plowman -- many a place I soughte.
And thanne mette I with a man, a myd-Lenten Sondag,
As hoor as an hawethorn, and Abraham he highte.
I frayned hym first fram whennes he come,
And of whennes he were, and whider that he thoughte.
"I am Feith," quod that freke, "it falleth noght me to lye,
And of Abrahames hous an heraud of armes.
I seke after a segge that I seigh ones,
A ful bold bacheler -- I knew hym by his blasen.'
" What berth that buyrn," quod I tho, " so blisse thee bitide?"
" Thre leodes in oon lyth, noon lenger than oother,
Of oon muchel and myght in mesure and in lengthe.
That oon dooth, alle dooth, and ech dooth bi his one.
The firste hath myght and majestee, makere of alle thynges:
Pater is his propre name, a persone by hymselfe.
The secounde of that sire is Sothfastnesse Filius,
Wardeyn of that wit hath, was evere withouten gynnyng.
The thridde highte the Holi Goost, a persone by hymselfe,
The light of al that lif hath a londe and a watre,
Confortour of creatures -- of hym cometh alle blisse.
"So thre bilongeth for a lord that lordshipe cleymeth:
Might, and a mene [his owene myghte to knowe],
Of hymself and of his servaunt, and what suffreth hem bothe.
So God, that gynnyng hadde nevere, but tho hym good thoughte,
Sente forth his sone as for servaunt that tyme,
To ocupien hym here til issue were spronge --
That is, children of charite, and Holi Chirche the moder.
Patriarkes and prophetes and apostles were the children,
And Crist and Cristendom and alle Cristene Holy Chirche
In menyng that man moste on o God bileve,
And there hym likede and lovede, in thre [leodes] hym shewed.
And that it may be so and sooth [sheweth it manhode]:
Wedlok and widwehode with virginite ynempned,

In tokenynge of the Trinite was taken out of o man --
 Adam, oure alle fader; Eve was of hymselfe,
 And the issue that thei hadde it was of hem bothe,
 And either is otheres joye in thre sondry persones,
 And in hevene and here oon singuler name.
 And thus is mankynde and manhede of matrimoyne yspronge,
 And bitokneth the Trinite and trewe bileve.
 "Might is it in matrimoyne, that multiplieth the erthe,
 And bitokneth trewely, telle if I dorste,
 Hym that first formed al, the Fader of hevene.
 The Sone, if I it dorste seye, resembleth wel the widewe:
 Deus meus, Deus meus, ut quid dereliquisti me ?
 That is, creatour weex creature to knowe what was bothe.
 As widewe withouten wedlok was nevere yit yseyghe,
 Na moore myghte God be man but if he moder hadde.
 So widewe withouten wedlok may noght wel stande,
 Ne matrimoyne withouten muliere is noght mucche to preise:
 Maledictus homo qui non reliquit semen in Israel.
 "Thus in thre persones is parfitliche pure manhede --
 That is, man and his make and muliere hir children.
 And is noght but gendre of a generacion, bfore Jesu Crist in hevene;
 So is the fader forth with the Sone and Fre Wille of bothe --
 Spiritus procedens a Patre et Filio &c --
 Which is the Holy Goost of alle, and alle is but o God.
 "Thus in a somer I hym seigh as I sat in my porche.
 I roos up and reverenced hym, and right faire hym grette.
 Thre men, to my sighte, I made wel at ese,
 Wessh hir feet and wiped hem, and afterward thei eten
 Calves flessch and cakebreed, and knewe what I thoughte.
 Ful trewe toknes betwene us is, to telle whan me liketh.
 " First he fonded me, if I lovede bettere
 Hym or Ysaak myn heir, the which he highte me kulle.
 He wiste my wille bi hym; he wol me it allowe;
 I am ful siker in my soule therof, and my sone bothe.
 "I circumcised my sone sithen for his sake --
 Myself and my meynne and alle that male weere
 Bleden blood for that Lordes love, and hope to blisse the tyme.
 affiaunce and my feith is ferme in this bileve,
 For hymself bihighte to me and to myn issue bothe
 Lond and lordshipe and lif withouten ende.
 To me and to myn issue moore yet he me grauntede --
 Mercy for oure mysdedes as many tyme as we asken:
 Quam olim Abrahe promisisti et semini eius.

"And siththe he sente me, to seye I sholde do sacrifise,
 And doon hym worship with breed and with wyn bothe,
 And called me the foot of his feith, his folk for to save,
 And defende hem fro the fend, folk that on me leveden.
 "Thus have I ben his heraud here and in helle,
 And confortd many a careful that after his comynge waiten;
 And thus I seke hym,' he seide, "for I herde seyn late
 Of a buyrn that baptised hym -- Johan Baptist was his name --
 That to patriarkes and to prophetes and to oother peple in derknesse
 Seide, that he seigh here that sholde save us alle:
 Ecce Agnus Dei &c.'
 I hadde wonder of hise wordes, and of hise wide clothes;
 For in his bosom he bar a thyng, and that he blissed evere.
 And I loked in his lappe: a lazar lay therinne
 Amonges patriarkes and prophetes pleyinge togideres.
 "What awaitestow?' quod he, "and what woldestow have?"
 "I wolde wite,' quod I tho, "what is in youre lappe.'
 " Lo!" quod he -- and leet me se. " Lord, mercy!" I seide.
 "This is a present of muche pris; what prynce shal it have?"
 "It is a precious present,' quod he, "ac the pouke it hath attached,
 And me thenvith,' quod that wye, "may no wed us quyte,
 Ne no buyrn be oure borgh, ne brynge us fram his daunger;
 Out of the poukes pondfold no maynprise may us fecche
 Til he come that I carpe of: Crist is his name
 That shal deliver us som day out of the develes power,
 And bettre wed for us [wa]ge than we ben alle worthi --
 That is, lif for lif -- or ligge thus evere
 Lollynge in my lappe, til swich a lrd us fecche.'
 "Allas!" I seide, "that synne so longe shall lette
 The myght of Goddes mercy, that myghte us alle amende!"
 I wepte for hise wordes. With that saugh I another
 Rapeliche renne forth the righte wey he wente.
 I affrayned hym first fram whennes he come,
 What he highte and whider he wolde -- and wightly he tolde.

Passus 17

"I am Spes, a spie,' quod he, "and spire after a knyght
 That took me a maundement upon the mount of Synay
 To rule alle reames therewith -- I bere the writ here.'
 "Is it asseled?" I seide. "May men see thi lettres?"
 "Nay.' he seide. "I seke hym that hath the seel to kepe --

And that is cros and Cristendom, and Crist theron to honge.
And whan it is asseled so, I woot wel the sothe --
That Luciferis lordshipe laste shal no lenger!
" Lat se thi lettres,' quod I, "we myghte the lawe knowe.'
He plukkede forth a patente, a pece of an hard roche,
Whereon was writen two wordes on this wise yglosed;
Dilige Deum et proximum tuum --
This was the tixte trewely -- I took ful good yeme.
The glose was gloriously writen with a gilt penne:
In hiis duobus mandatis tota lex penhet et prophete.
" Is here alle thi lordes lawes?' quod I. " Ye, leve me,' he seide.
"And whoso wet cheth after this writ, I wol undertaken,
Shal nevere devel hym dere, ne deeth in soule greve.
For though I seye it myself, I have saved with this charme
Of men and of wommen many score thousand.'
" He seith sooth,' seide this heraud, " I have yfounde it ofte.
Lo! here in my lappe that leaved on that charme --
Josue and Judith and Judas Macabeus,
Ye, and sixti thousand biside forth that ben noght seyen here!
" Youre wordes arn wonderfulle,' quod I tho. " Which of yow is trewest,
And lelest to leve on for lif and for soule?
Abraham seith that he seigh hoolly the Trinite,
Thre persones in parcelles departable fro oother,
And alle thre but o God -- thus Abraham me taughte --
And hath saved that bileved so and sory for hir synnes,
He kan noght siggen the somme, and some arn in his lappe.
What neded it thanne a newe lawe to brynge,
Sith the firste suffiseth to savacion and to blisse?
And now cometh Spes and speketh, that hath aspied the lawe,
And telleth noght of the Trinite that took hym hise lettres --
To bileeve and lovye in o Lord almyghty,
And siththe right as myself so lovye alle peple.
"The gorne thit gooth with o staf -- he semeth in gretter heele
Than he that gooth with two staves, to sighte of us alle.
And right so, bi the roode, reson me sheweth
It is lighter to lewed men o lesson to knowe
Than for to techen hem two, and to hard to lerne the leeste!
It is ful hard for any man on Abraham bileve,
And wel away worse yit for to love a sherewe.
In pace in is lighter to leeve in thre lovely persones
Than for to lovye and lene as wel lorels as lele.
Go thi gate, 'quod I to Spes; "so me God helpe,
Tho that lernen thi lawe wol litel while usen it!"

And as we wenten thus in the wey, wordyngge togideres,
Thanne seighe we a Samaritan sittynge on a mule,
Ridyngge ful rapely the righte wey we yeden,
Comyngge from a contree that men called Jerico --
To a justes in Jerusalem he [j]aced away faste.
Bothe the heraud and Hope and he mette atones
Where a man was, wounded, and with theves taken.
He myghte neither steppe ne stande, ne stere foot ne handes,
Ne helpe hymself soothly, for semyvif he semed,
And as naked as a nedle, and noon help abouten.
Feith hadde first sighte of hym, ac he fleigh aside,
And nolde noght neghen hym by nyne londes lengthe.
Hope cam hippynge after, that hadde so ybosted
How he with Moyses maundement hadde many men yholpe;
Ac whan he hadde sighte of that segge, aside he gan hym drawe
Dredfully, bi this day, as doke dooth fram the faucon!
Ac so soone so the Samaritan hadde sighte of this leode,
He lighte adown of lyard and ladde hym in his handes,
And to the wye he wente hise woundes to biholde,
And parceyved by his pous he was in peril to dye,
And but he hadde recoverer the rather, that rise sholde he nevere;
And breide to hise boteles, and bothe he atamede.
With wyn and with oille hise woundes he wasshed,
Enbawmed hym and bond his heed, and in his lappe hym leide,
And ladde hym so forth on lyard to Lex Christi, a graunge
Wel sixe mile or sevene biside the newe market;
Herberwed hym at an hostrie and to the hostiler called,
And [quod], " Have, kepe this man, til I come fro the justes,
And lo here silver,' he seide, "for salve to hise woundes.'
And he took hym two pens to liflode as it weere,
And seide, "What he [moore spendeth] I make thee good herafter,
For I may noght lette,' quod that leode -- and lyard he bistrideth,
And raped hym to Jerusalemward the righte wey to ryde.
Feith folwede after faste, and fondede to mete hym,
And Spes spakliche hym spedde, spede if he myghte
To overtaken hym and talke to hym er thei to towne coome.
And whan I seigh this, I sojourned noght. but shoop me to renne,
And suwed that Samaritan that was so ful of pite,
And graunted hym to ben his groom. "Graunt mercy,' he seide,
"Ac thi frend and thi felawe,' quod he, "thow fyndest me at nede.'
And I thanked hym tho and siththe I hym tolde
How that Feith fleigh away and Spes his felawe bothe
For sighte of the sorweful [segge] that robbed was with theves.

" Have hem excused,' quod he, "hir help may litel availle:
 May no medycyne under molde the man to heele brynge --
 Neither Feith ne fyn Hope, so festred be hise woundes,
 Withouten the blood of a barn born of a mayde.
 And be he bathed in that blood, baptised as it were,
 And thanne plastred with penaunce and passion of that baby,
 He sholde stonde and steppe -- ac stalworthe worth he nevere
 Til he have eten al the barn and his blood ydronke.
 For wente nevere wye in this world thorough that wildernessse
 That he ne was robbed or rifled, rood he there or yede,
 Save Feith and [myselfe and] Spes [his felawe],
 And thiself now and swiche as suwen oure werkes.
 " For Outlawe is in the wode and under bank lotieth,
 And may ech man see and good mark take
 Who is bihynde and who bifore and who ben on horse --
 For he halt hym hardier on horse than he that is a foote.
 For he seigh me that am Samaritan suwen Feith and his felawe
 On my capul that highte Caro -- of mankynde I took it --
 He was unhardy, that harlot, and hidde hym in Inferno.
 Ac er this day thre daies, I dar undertaken
 That he worth fettred, that feloun, faste with cheynes,
 And nevere eft greve come that gooth this ilke gate:
 O Mors ero mors tua &c.
 "And thanne shal Feith be forster here and in this fryth walke,
 And kennen out comune men that knowen noght the contree,
 Which is the wey I wente, and wher forth to Jerusalem;
 And Hope the hostilers man shal be ther [an helyng the man lith],
 And alle that feble and feynte be, that Feith may noght teche,
 Hope shal lede hem forth with love, as his lettre telleth,
 And hostele hem and heele thorough Holy Chirche bileve
 Til I have salve for alle sike -- and thanne shal I returne,
 And come ayein bi this contree and conforten alle sike
 That craveth it or coveiteth it and crieth thereafter.
 For the barn was born in Bethleem that with his blood shal save
 Alle that lyven in Feith and folwen his felawes techynge.'
 "A, swete sire!" I seide tho, "wher I shal bileve --
 As Feith and his felawe enformed me bothe --
 In thre persones departable that perpetuele were evere,
 And alle thre but o God? Thus Abraham me taughte;
 And Hope afterward he bad me to lovyne
 O God with al my good, and alle gomes after,
 Lovye hem lik myselfe -- ac Oure Lord aboven alle.'
 "After Abraham,' quod he, "tat heraud of armes,

Sette faste thi feith and ferme bileve;
 And as Hope highte thee, I hote that thou lovy
 Thyn evenecristene everemoore eveneforth with thiselve.
 And if conscience carpe therayein, or kynde wit eyther,
 Or eretikes with arguments -- thyn hond thou hem shewe:
 For God is after an hand -- yheer now and knowe it.
 "The Fader was first as a fust with o fynger foldynge,
 Til hym lovede and liste to unlosen his fynger
 And profrede it forth as with a pawme to what place it sholde.
 The pawme is purely the hand, and profreth forth the fynGRES,
 To ministren and to make that myght of hand knoweth;
 And bitokneth trewely, telle whoso liketh,
 The Holy Goost of hevene -- he is as the pawme.
 The fynGRES that fre ben to folde and to serve
 Bitoknen soothly the Sone, that sent was til erthe,
 That touched and tastede at techynge of the pawme
 Seinte Marie, a mayde, and mankynde laughte:
 Qui conceptus est de spiritu sancto &c.
 "The Fader is thanne as a fust with fynger to touche --
 Quia ""Omnia traham ad me ipsum &c"" --
 Al that the pawme parceyveth profitable to feele.
 Thus are thei alle but oon, as it an hand weere,
 And thre sondry sightes in oon shewynge.
 The pawme for he put forth fynGRES and the fust bothe,
 Right so, redily, reson it shewith,
 How he that is Holy Goost Sire and Sone preveth.
 And as the hand halt harde and alle thyng faste
 Thorugh foure fynGRES and a thombe forth with the pawme,
 Right so the Fader and the Sone and Seint Spirit the thridde
 Halt al the wide world withinne hem thre --
 Bothe wolkne and the wynd, water and erthe,
 Hevene and helle and al that ther is inne.
 Thus it is -- nedeth no man to trowe noon oother --
 That thre thynges bilongeth in Oure Lord of hevene,
 And aren serelepes by himself, asondry were thei nevere,
 Namooore than may an hande meve withoute fynGRES.
 "And as my fust is ful hand yfolden togideres,
 So is the Fader a ful God, formour and shappere -- -
 Tu fabricator omnium &c --
 And al the myght myd hym is in makynge of thynges.
 "The fynGRES formen a ful hand to portreye or peynten;
 Kervynge and compasyng is craft of the fynGRES.
 Right so is the Sone the science of the Fader

And ful God as is the Fader, no febler ne no better.
 "The pawme is pureliche the hand, hath power by hymselfe
 Otherwise than the writen fust, or werkmans ipe of fynGRES;
 For the pawme hath power to putte out the j ntes
 And to unfolde the fust, for hym it bilongeth,
 And receyve that the fynGRES recheth and refuse bothe
 Whan he feleth the fust and the fynGRES wille.
 "So is the Holy Goost God, neither gretter ne lasse
 Than is the Sire or the Sone, and in the same myghte,
 And alle are thei but o God, as is myn hand and my fynGRES,
 Unfolden or folden, my fust and my pawme --
 Al is but an hand, howso I turne it.
 "Ac who is hurte in the hand, evene in the myddes,
 He may receyve right noght -- reson it sheweth;
 For the fynGRES that folde sholde and the fust make,
 For peyne of the pawme, power hem failleth
 To clucche or to clawe, to clippe or to holde.
 "Were the myddel of myn hand ymaymed or ypersshed,
 I sholde receyve right noght of that I reche myghte;
 Ac though rny thombe and my fynGRES bothe were toshullen
 And the myddel of myn hand withoute male ese,
 In many kynnes maneres I myghte myself helpe
 Bothe meve and amende, though alle my fynGRES oke.
 "By this skile,' he seide, I se an evidence
 That whoso synneth in the Seint Spirit, assoilled worth he nevere,
 Neither here ne elliswhere, as I herde telle --
 Qui peccat in Spiritum Sanctum &c --
 For he priketh God as in the pawme, that peccat in Spiritu[m] Sanctu[m].
 For God the Fader is as a fust; the Sone is as a fynger;
 The Holy Goost of hevene is as it were the pawme.
 So whoso synneth ayeyns the Seint Spirit, it semeth that he greveth
 God that he grypeth with, and wolde his grace quenche.
 "For to a torche or a tapur the Trinite is likned --
 As wax and a weke were twyned togideres,
 And thanne a fir flawmynge forth out of bothe.
 And as wax and weke and warm fir togideres
 Fostren forth a flawmbe and a fair leye
 [That serveth thise swynkeres to se by anightes],
 So dooth the Sire and the Sone and also Spiritus Sanctus
 Fostren forth amonges folk love and bileve,
 That alle kynne Cristene clenseth of synnes.
 And as thou seest som tyme sodeynliche a torche --
 The blase therof yblowe out, yet brenneth the weke --

Withouten leye or light, that [lowe] the macche brenneth;
So is the Holy Goost God, and grace withoute mercy
To alle unkynde creatures that coveite to destruye
Lele love or lif that Oure Lord shapte.

"And as glowynge gledes gladeth noght thise werkmen
That werchen and waken in wyntres nyghtes,
As dooth a kex or a candle that caught hath fir and blaseth,
Namooore dooth Sire ne Sone ne Seint Spirit togideres
Graunte no grace ne forgifnesse of synnes
Til the Holy Goost gynne to glowe and to blase;
So that the Holy Goost gloweth but as a glede
Til that lele love ligge on hym and blowe.
And thanne flawmeth he as fir on Fader and on Filius
And melteth hire myght into mercy -- as men may se in wyntre
Ysekeles in evesynges thorough hete of the sonne
Melte in a mynut while to myst and to watre.

"So grace of the Holy Goost the greet myght of the Trinite
Melteth to mercy -- to merciabile and to noon othere.
And as wex withouten moore on a warm glede
Wol brennen and blasen, be thei togideres,
And solacen hem that mowe [noght] se, that sitten in derknesse,
So wol the Fader foryyve folk of mylde hertes
That rufully repenten and restitution make,
In as muche as thei mowen arnenden and paien;
And if it suffise noght for assetz, that in swich a wille deyeth,
Mercy for his mekenesse wol maken good the remenaunt.
And as the weke and fir wol maken a warm flaumbe
For to murthen men with that in merke sitten,
So wole Crist of his curteisie, and men crye hym mercy,
Bothe foryyve and foryete, and yit bidde for us
To the Fader of hevene foryifnesse to have.

"Ac hewe fir at a flynt foure hundred wynter --
But thow have tache to take it with, tonder or broches,
Al thi labour is lost and al thi long travaille;
For may no fir flaumbe make, faille it his kynde.
So is the Holy Goost God and grace withouten mercy
To alle unkynde creatures -- Crist hymself witnesseth:
Amen dico vobis, nescio vos &c.

"Be unkynde to thyn evenecristene, and al that thow kanst bidde --
Delen and do penaunce day and nyght evere,
And purchase al the pardon of Pampilon and Rome,
And indulgences ynowe, and be ingratus to thi kynde,
The Holy Goest hereth thee neght, ne help may thee by reson;

For unkyndenesse quencheth hym, that he kan noght shyne,
 Ne brenne ne blase clere, for blowynge of unkyndenesse.
 Poul the Apostel preveth wheither I lye:
 Si linguis hominum loquar &c.
 " Forthi beth war, ye wise men that with the world deleth,
 That riche ben and reson knoweth -- ruleth wel youre soule;
 Beth noght unkynde, I conseilte yow, to youre evenecristene;
 For manye of yow riche men, by my soule, men telleth,
 Ye brenne, but ye blase noght, and that is a blynd bekene! --
 Non omnis qui dicit Domine, Domine, intrabit &c.
 " Dives deyde dampned for his unkyndenesse
 Of his mete and his moneie to men that it nedede.
 Ech a riche, I rede, reward at hym take,
 And gyveth youre good to that God that grace of ariseth.
 For that ben unkynde to hise. hope I noon oother
 But thei dwelle ther Dives is dayes withouten ende.
 "Thus is unkyndenesse the contrarie that quencheth, as it were,
 The grace of the Holy Goost, Goddes owene kynde.
 For that kynde dooth, unkynde fordooth -- as thise corsede theves,
 Unkynde Cristene men, for coveitise and envye
 Sleeth a man for hise moebles, with mouth or with handes.
 For that the Holy Goost hath to kepe, tho harlotes destruyeth --
 The which is lif and love, the leye of mannes body.
 For every manere good man may be likned to a torche,
 Or ellis to a tapur, to reverence the Trinite;
 And whoso morthereh a good man, me thynketh, by myn inwit,
 He fordooth the levest light that Oure Lord lovyeth.
 "Ac yet in manye mo maneres men offenden the Holy Geost;
 Ac this is the worste wise that any wight myghte
 Synnen ayein the Seint Spirit -- assenten to destruye
 For coveitise of any kynnes thyng that Crist deere boughte.
 How myghte he aske mercy, or any mercy hym hel
 That wikkedliche and wilfulliche wolde mercy aniente?
 "Innocence is next God, and nyght and day it crieth
 ""Vengeaunce ! Vengeaunce! Foryyve be it nevere
 That shente us and shedde oure blood -- forshapte us, as it semed:
 Vindica sanguinem iustorum ."
 Thus "" Vengeaunce, vengeaunce!" verrey charite asketh;
 And sith Holy Chirche and charite chargeth this so soore,
 Leve I nevere that Oure Lord wol love that charite lakketh,
 Ne have pite for any preiere [that he pleyneth ther].'
 "I pose I hadde synned so, and sholde now deye,
 And now am sory that I so the Seint Spirit agulte,

Confesse me and crye his grace, God that al made,
And myldeliche his mercy aske -- myghte I noght be saved?'
"Yis," seide the Samaritan, "so thow myghte repente
That rightwisnesse thorough repentaunce to ruthe myghte turne.
Ac it is but selden yseighe, ther soothnesse bereth witnesse,
Any creature be coupable afore a kynges justice,
Be raunsoned for his repentaunce ther alle reson hym dampneth.
For ther that partie pursueth the peel is so huge
That the kyng may do no mercy til bothe men acorde
And eyther have equite, as holy writ telleth:
Numquam dimittitur peccatum &c.
Thus it fareth by swich folk that falsly al hire lyves
Yvele lyven and leten noght til lif hem forsake.
Drede of desperacion thanne dryveth away grace,
That mercy in hir mynde may noght thanne falle;
Good hope, that helpe sholde, to wanhope torneth --
Noght of the nounpower of God, that he ne is myghtful
To amende al that amys is, and his mercy gretter
Thanne alle our wikkede werkes, as Holy Writ telleth --
Misericordia eius super omnia opera eius --
Ac er his rightwisnesse to ruthe torne, som restitution bihoveth:
His sorwe is satisfaccion for [swich] that may noght paie.
"Thre thynges ther ben that doon a man by strengthe
For to fleen his owene hous, as Holy Writ sheweth.
That oon is a wikkede wif that wol noght be chastised:
Hir feere fleeth hire for feere of hir tonge.
And if his hous be unhiled, and reyne on his bedde,
He seketh and seketh til he slepe drye.
And whan smoke and smolder smyt in his sighte,
It dooth hym worse than his wif or wete to slepe.
For smoke and smolder smerteth hise eighen
Til he be bler eighed or blynde and [the borre] in the throte,
Cogheth and curseth that Crist gyve hym sorwe
That sholde brynge in bettere wode, or blowe it til it brende!
"Thise thre that I telle of thus ben to understonde:
The wif is oure wikked flessch that wol noght be chastised,
For kynde clyveth on hym evere to contrarie the soule.
And though it falle, it fynt skiles, that "" Frelete it made,"
And ""That is lightly foryyven and foryeten bothe
To man that mercy asketh and amende thenketh."
"The reyn that reyneth ther we reste sholde
Ben siknesses and sorwes that we suffren oughte,
As Poul the Apostle to the peple taughte:

Virtus in infirmitate perficitur.

And though that men make much doel in hir angre,
And ben impacient in hir penaunce, pure reson knoweth
That thei han cause to contrarie, by kynde of hir siknesse;
And lightliche Oure Lord at hir lyves ende
Hath mercy on swiche men, that so yuele may suffre.
"Ac the smoke and the smolder that smyt in oure eighen,
That is coveitise and unkyndenesse, that quencheth Goddes mercy.
For unkyndenesse is the contrarie of alle kynnes reson;
For ther nys sik ne sory, ne noon so muche wrecche
That he ne may lovye, and hym like, and lene of his herte
Good wille, good word -- bothe wisshen and wilnen
Alle manere men mercy and foryifnesse,
And lovye hem lik hymself, and his lif amende.
"I may no lenger lette!" quod he, and lyard he prikede,
And wente away as wynd -- and therwith I awakede.

Passus 18

Wolleward and weetshoed wente I forth after
As a reccheles renk that [reccheth of no wo],
And yede forth lik a lorel al my lif tyme,
Til I weex wery of the world and wilned eft to slepe,
And lened me to a Lenten -- and longe tyme I slepte;
Reste me there and rutte faste til ramis palmarum.
Of gerlis and of Gloria, laus gretly me dremed
And how osanna by organye olde folk songen,
And of Cristes passion and penaunce, the peple that ofraughte.
Oon semblable to the Samaritan, and somdeel to Piers the Plowman,
Barefoot on an asse bak bootles cam prikye,
Withouten spores other spere; spakliche he loked,
As is the kynde of a knyght that cometh to be dubbed,
To geten hym gilte spores on galoches ycouped.
Thanne was Feith in a fenestre, and cryde "At Fili David!"
As dooth an heraud of armes whan aventrous cometh to iustes.
Olde Jewes of Jerusalem for joye thei songen,
Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.
Thanne I frayned at Feith what al that fare bymente,
And who sholde juste in Jerusalem. "jesus," he seide,
"And fecche that the fend claymeth -- Piers fruyt the Plowman."
"Is Piers in this place?" quod I, and he preynte on me.
"This Jesus of his gentries wol juste in Piers armes,

In his helm and in his haubergeon -- humana natura.
 That Crist be noght biknowe here for consummatus Deus,
 In Piers paltok the Plowman this prikiere shal ryde;
 For no dynt shal hym dere as in deitate Patris.'
 "Who shal juste with Jesus?' quod I, "Jewes or scribes?"
 "Nay,' quod Feith, "but the fend and fals doom to deye.
 Deeth seith he shal fordo and adoun brynge
 Al that lyveth or loketh in londe or in watre.
 Lif seith that he lieth, and leieth his lif to wedde
 That, for al that Deeth kan do, withinne thre daies to walke
 And fecche fro the fend Piers fruyt the Plowman,
 And legge it ther hym liketh, and Lucifer bynde,
 And forbete and adoun brynge bale-deeth for evere:
 O Mors ero mors tua!
 Thanne cam Pilatus with mucche peple, sedens pro tribunali,
 To se how doghtiliche Deeth sholde do, and deme hir botheres right.
 The Jewes and the justieeayeins Jesu thei weere,
 And al the court on hym cryde "Crucifige!" sharpe.
 Tho putte hym forth a p[e]lour bifore Pilat and seide,
 "This Jesus of oure Jewes temple japed and despised,
 To fordoon it on o day, and in thre dayes after
 Edifie it eft newe -- here he stant that seide it --
 And yit maken it as mucche in alle manere poyntes
 Bothe as long and as large a lofte and by grounde.'
 "Crucifige!" quod a cachepol, "I warante hym a wicche!"
 "Tolle, tolle!" quod another, and took of kene thornes,
 And bigan of [gr]ene thorn a garland to make,
 And sette it sore on his heed and seide in envye,
 "A ve, rabyt' quod that ribaud -- and threw reedes at hym,
 Nailed hym with thre nailes naked on the roode,
 And poison on a poole thei putte up to hise lippes,
 And beden hym drynken his deeth-yvel -- hise dayes were ydone --
 And [seiden], "If that thou sotil be, help now thiselve;
 If thou be Crist and kynges sone, com down of the roode;
 Thanne shul we leve that lif thee loveth and wol noght lete thee deye!"
 "Consummatum est,' quod Crist, and comsede for to swoune,
 Pitousliche and pale as a prison that deieth;
 The lord of lif and of light tho leide hise eighen togideres.
 The day for drede withdrough and derk bicam the sonne.
 The wal waggede and cleef, and al the world quaved.
 Dede men for that dene come out of depe graves,
 And tolde why that tempeste so longe tyme durede.
 "For a bitter bataille,' the dede body seide;

"Lif and Deeth in this derknesse, hir oon fordeoth hir oother.
Shal no wight wite witterly who shal have the maistrie
Er Sonday aboute sonne risyng' -- and sank with that til erthe.
Some seide that he was Goddes sone, that so faire deyde:
Vere filius Dei erat iste.
And some seide he was a wicche -- "Good is that we assaye
Wher he be deed or noght deed, doun er he be taken.'
Two theves also tholed deeth that tyme
Upon a croos bisides Crist -- so was the comune lawe.
A cachepol cam forth and craked bothe hir legges,
And hir armes after of either of tho theves.
Ac was no boy so boold Goddes body to touche;
For he was knyght and kynges sone, Kynde foryaf that throwe
That noon harlot were so hardy to leyen hond upon hym.
Ac ther cam forth a knyght with a kene spere ygrounde,
Highte Longeus, as the lettre telleth, and longe hadde lore his sight.
Bifore Pilat and oother peple in the place he hoved.
Maugree his manye teeth he was maad that tyme
To [justen with Jesus, this blynde Jew Longeus].
For alle thei were unhardy, that hoved on horse or stode,
To touchen hym or to tasten hym or taken hym doun of roode,
But this blynde bacheler, that baar hym thorough the herte.
The blood sprong doun by the spere and unspered the knyghtes eighen.
Thanne fil the knyght upon knees and cryde Jesu mercy:
"Ayein my wille it was, Lord, to wownde yow so soore!"
He sighed and seide, " Soore it me athynketh!
For the dede that I have doon I do me in youre grace.
Have on me ruthe, rightful Jesu!" -- and right with that he wepte.
Thanne gan Feith felly the false Jewes despise --
Callede hem caytyves acorsed for evere:
" For this foule vileynye vengeance to yow falle!
To do the blynde bete hym ybounde, it was a boyes counseille.
Cursede caytyves! Knyghthood was it nevere
To mysdo a deed body by daye or by nyghte.
The gree yit hath he geten, for al his grete wounde.
" For youre champion chivaler, chief knyght of yow alle,
Yilt hym recreaunt rennyng, right at Jesus wilk.
For be this derknesse ydo, Deeth worth yvenquissed;
And ye, lurdaynes, han ylost -- for Lif shal have the maistrie.
And youre fraunchyse, that fre was, fallen is in thraldom,
And ye, cherles, and youre children, cheve shulle ye nevere,
Ne have lordshipe in londe, ne no lond tilye,
But al barayne be and usurie usen,

Which is lif that Oure Lord in alle lawes acurseth.
Now youre goode dayes arn doon, as Daniel prophecied:
Whan Crist cam hir kyngdom the crowne sholde lese --
Cum veniat sanctus sanctorum cessabit unxio vestra.'
What for feere of this ferly and of the false Jewes,
I drow me in that derknesse to descendit ad inferna,
And there I saugh soothly, secundum scripturas,
Out of the west coste, a wenche, as me thoughte,
Cam walkyng in the wey; to helleward she loked.
Mercy highte that mayde, a meke thyng with alle,
A ful benigne burde, and buxom of speche.
Hir suster, as it semed, cam softly walkyng
Evene out of the est, and westward she lokede --
A ful comely creature [and a clene], Truthe she highte;
For the vertue that hire folwede, afered was she nevere.
Whan this maydenes mette, Mercy and Truthe,
Either asked oother of this grete wonder --
Of the dyn and of the derknesse, and how the day rowed,
And which a light and a leme lay bifore helle.
"Ich have ferly of this fare, in feith," seide Truthe,
"And am wendyng to wite what this wonder meneth.'
"Have no mervelle', quod Mercy, "murhte it bitokneth.
A maiden that highte Marie, and moder withouten felyng
Of any kynde creature, conceyved thorough speche
And grace of the Holy Goost; weex greet with childe;
Withouten wem into this world she broghte hym;
And that my tale be trewe, I take God to witnesse.
"Sith this barn was ybore ben thritti wynter passed,
Which deide and deeth tholed this day aboute mydday --
And that is cause of this clips that closeth now the sonne,
In menyng that man shal fro merknesse be drawe
The while this light and this leme shal Lucifer ablende.
For patriarkes and prophetes han preched herof often --
That man shal man save thorough a maydenes helpe,
And that was tynt thorough tree, tree shal it wyne,
And that Deeth down broghte, deeth shal releve.'
"That thou tellest; quod Truthe, "is but a tale of waltrot!
For Adam and Eve and Abraham with othere
Patriarkes and prophetes that in peyne liggen,
Leve thou nevere that yon light hem alofte brynge,
Ne have hem out of helle -- hold thi tonge, Mercy!
It is but trufle that thou tellest -- I, Truthe, woot the sothe.
For that is ones in helle, out cometh it nevere;

Job the prophete patriark repreveth thi sawes:
 Quia in inferno nulla est redempcio.'
 Thanne Mercy ful myldely mouthed thise wordes:
 "Thorough experience,' quod he[o], " I hope thei shul be saved.
 For venym fordooth venym -- and that I preve by reson.
 For of alle venymes foulest is the scorpion;
 May no medicine [am]e[nd]e the place ther he styngeth,
 Til he be deed and do therto -- the yvel he destruyeth,
 The firste venymouste, thorough vertu of hymselfe.
 So shal this deeth fordo -- I dar my lif legge --
 Al that deeth dide first thorough the develes entisyng;
 And right as thorough [gilours] gil;e [bigiled was man],
 So shal grace that al bigan make a good ende
 [And bigile the gilour -- and that is good] sleighte:
 Ars ut artem falleret.'
 "Now suffre we!" seide Truthe, " I se, as me thynketh,
 Out of the nyppes of the north, noght ful fer hennys,
 Rightwisnesse comen rennyng; reste we the while,
 For he[o] woot moore than we -- he[o] was er we bothe.'
 "That is sooth," seide Mercy, "and I se here by sowthe
 Where cometh Pees pleyng, in pacience yclothed.
 Love hath coveited hire longe -- leve I noon oother
 But [Love] sente hire som lettre, what this light bymeneth
 That overhoveth helle thus; she us shal telle.'
 Whan Pees in pacience yclothed approched ner hem tweyne,
 Rightwisnesse hire reverenced for hir riche clothynge,
 And preide Pees to telle hire to what place she wolde
 And in hire gaye garnements whom she grete thoughte?
 "My wil is to wende," quod she, "and welcome hem alle
 That many day myghte I noght se for merknesse of synne --
 Adam and Eve and othere mo in helle,
 Moyses and many mo; Mercy shul [synge],
 And I shal daunce therto -- do thou so, suster!
 For Jesus justede wel, joye bigynneth dawe:
 Ad vesperum demorabitur fletus, et ad matutinum leticia.
 " Love, that is my lemman, swiche lettres me sente
 That Mercy, my suster, and I mankynde sholde save,
 And that God hath forgyven and graunted me, Pees, and Mercy
 To be mannes meynpernour for everemoore after.
 Lo, here the patente!' quod Pees, "In pace in idipsum,
 And that this dede shal dure, dormiam et requiescam.'
 "What, ravestow?" quod Rightwisnesse; "or thou art righty dronke!
 Levestow that yond light unlouke myghte helle

And save mannes soule? Suster, wene it nevere!
 At the bigynnyng God gaf the doom hymselfe --
 That Adam and Eve and alle that hem suwede
 Sholden deye downrighte, and dwelle in peyne after
 If that thei touchede a tree and of the fruyt eten.
 Adam afterward, ayeins his defence,
 Freet of that fruyt, and forsook, as it were,
 The love of Oure Lord and his loore bothe
 And folwede that the fend taughte and his felawes wille
 Ayeins reson -- I, Rightwisnesse, recorde thus with Truthe
 That hir peyne be perpetuel and no preiere hem helpe.
 Forthi lat hem chewe as thei chosen, and chide we noght, sustres,
 For it is botelees bale, the byte that thei eten.'
 "And I shal preie,' quod Pees, "hir peyne moot have ende,
 And wo into wele mowe wenden at the laste.
 For hadde thei wist of no wo, wele hadde thei noght knowen;
 For no wight woot what wele is, that nevere wo suffrede,
 Ne what is hoot hunger, that hadde nevere defaute.
 If no nyght ne weere, no man, as I leve,
 Sholde wite witterly what day is to meene.
 Sholde nevere right riche man that lyveth in reste and ese
 Wite what wo is, ne were the deeth of kynde.
 So God that bigan al of his goode wille
 Bicam man of a mayde mankynde to save,
 And suffrede to be sold, to se the sorwe of deying,
 The which unknytteth alle care, and comsynge is of reste.
 For til modicum mete with us, I may it wel avowe,
 Woot no wight, as I wene, what is ynogh to mene.
 "Forthi God, of his goodnesse, the firste gome Adam,
 Sette hym in solace and in sovereyn murthe;
 And siththe he suffred hym synne, sorwe to feelee --
 To wite what wele was, kyndeliche to knowe it.
 And after, God auntrede hymself and took Adames kynde
 To wite what he hath suffred in thre sondry places,
 Bothe in hevene and in erthe -- and now til helle he thenketh,
 To wite what alle wo is, that woot of alle joye.
 "So it shal fare by this folk: hir folie and hir synne
 Shal lere hem what langour is, and lisse withouten ende.
 Woot no wight what werre is ther that pees regneth,
 Ne what is witterly wele til ""weylawey" hym teche.'
 Thanne was ther a wight with two brode eighen;
 Book highte that beaupeere, a bold man of speche.
 "By Goddes body!' quod this Book, "I wol bere witnessse

That tho this barn was ybore, ther blased a sterre
 That alle the wise of this world in o wit acorden --
 That swich a barn was ybore in Bethleem the citee
 That mannes soule sholde save and synne destroye.
 "And alle the elements,' quod the Book, "herof beren witness.
 That he was God that al wroghte the wolkne first shewed:
 Tho that weren in hevene token stella comata
 And tendeden hire as a torche to reverencen his burthe;
 The light folwede the Lord into the lowe erthe.
 The water witnesseth that he was God, for he wente on it;
 Peter the Apostel parceyved his gate,
 And as he wente on the water wel hym knew, and seide,
 ""tube me venire ad te super aquas."
 And lo! how the sonne gan louke hire light in herselfe
 Whan she seigh hym suffre, that sonne and see made.
 The erthe for hevynesse that he wolde suffre
 Quaked as quyk thyng and al biquasshed the roche.
 "Lo! helle myghte nat holde, but opned the God tholede,
 And leet out Symondes sonnes to seen hym hange on roode.
 And now shal Lucifer leve it, though hyrn looth thynke.
 For Gigas the geaunt with a gyn engyned
 To breke and to bete adoun that ben ayeins Jesus.
 And I, Book, wole be brent, but Jesus rise to lyve
 In alle myghtes of man, and his moder gladie,
 And conforte al his kyn and out of care brynge,
 And al the Jewene joye unjoynen and unlouken;
 And but thei reverencen his roode and his resurexion,
 And bileve on a newe lawe, be lost, lif and soule!"
 "Suffre we!" seide Truthe, "I here and see bothe
 A spirit speketh to helle and biddeth unsper the yates:
 ""Attolite portas."
 A vois loude in that light to Lucifer crieth,
 ""Prynees of this place, unpynneth and unlouketh!
 For here cometh with crowne that kyng is of glorie."
 Thanne sikede Sathan, and seide to helle,
 "Swich a light, ayeins oure leve, Lazar it fette;
 Care and combraunce is comen to us alle!
 If this kyng come in, mankynde wole he fecche,
 And lede it ther Lazar is, and lightliche me bynde.
 Patriarkes and prophetes han parled herof longe --
 That swich a lord and a light shal lede hem alle hennes.'
 "Listneth!" quod Lucifer, "for I this lord knowe;
 Bothe this lord and this light, is longe ago I knew hym.

May no deeth this lord dere, ne no develes queyntise,
 And where he wole, is his wey -- ac ware hym of the perils!
 If he reve me of my right, he robbeth me by maistrie;
 For by right and by reson the renkes that ben here
 Body and soule beth myne, bothe goode and ille.
 For hymself seide, that sire is of hevene,
 That if Adam ete the appul, alle sholde deye,
 And dwelle [in deol] with us develes -- this thretynge he made.
 And [sithen] he that Soothnesse is seide thise wordes,
 And I sithen iseised sevene [thousand] wynter,
 I leeve that lawe nyl noght lete hym the leeste.'
 "That is sooth," seide Satan, "but I me soore drede;
 For thou gete hem with gile, and his gardyn breke,
 And in semblaunce of a serpent sete on the appultre,
 And eggedest hem to ete, Eve by herselfe,
 And toldest hire a tale -- of treson were the wordes;
 And so thou haddest hem out and hider at the laste.
 It is noght graithly geten, ther gile is the roote!"
 "For God wol noght be bigiled," quod Gobelyn, "ne byjaped.
 We have no trewe title to hem, for thorough treson were thei dampned."
 "Certes, I drede me," quod the Devel, "lest Truthe wol hem fecche.
 Thise thritty wynter, as I wene, he wente aboute and preched.
 I have assailed hym with synne, and som tyme I asked
 Wheither he were God or Goddes sone -- he gaf me short answer;
 And thus hath he trolled forth thise two and thritty wynter.
 And whan I seigh it was so, slepynge I wente
 To warne Pilates wif what done man was Jesus;
 For Jewes hateden hym and han doon hym to dethe.
 I wolde have lengthed his lif -- for I leved, if he deide,
 That his soule wolde suffre no synne in his sighte;
 For the body, while it on bones yede, aboute was evere
 To save men from synne if hemself wolde.
 And now I se wher a soule cometh [silynge hiderward]
 With glorie and with gret light -- God it is, I woot wel!
 I rede we fle," quod he, "faste alle hennes --
 For us were bettre noght be than biden his sighte.
 For thi lesynges, Lucifer, lost is al oure praye.
 First thorough the we fellen fro hevene so heighe;
 For we leved thi lesynges, we lopen out alle with thee;
 And now for thi laste lesynge, ylorn we have Adam,
 And al oure lordshipe, I leve, a londe and a watre:
 Nunc Princeps huius mundi eicietur foras.'
 Eft the light bad unlouke, and Lucifer answerde,

" Quis est iste ?
 What lord artow?' quod Lucifer. The light soone seide,
 Rex glorie,
 The lord of myght and of mayn and alle manere vertues --
 Dominus virtutum.
 Dukes of this dymme place, anoon undo thise yates,
 That Crist may come in, the Kynges sone of Hevene!"
 And with that breeth helle brak, with Belialles barres --
 For any wye or warde, wide open the yates.
 Patriarkes and prophetes, populus in tenebris,
 Songen Seint Johanes song, " Ecce Agnus Dei.'
 Lucifer loke ne myghte, so light hym ablente.
 And tho that Oure Lord lovede, into his light he laughte,
 And seide to Sathan, "Lo! here my soule to amendes
 For alle synfulle soules, to save tho that ben worthi.
 Myne thei ben and of me -- I may the bet hem cleyme.
 Although reson recorde, and right of myselve,
 That if thei ete the appul, alle sholde deye,
 I bihighte hem noght here helle for evere.
 For the dede that thei dide, thi deceite it made;
 With gile thow hem gete, ageyn alle reson.
 For in my paleis, Paradis, in persone of an addre,
 Falsliche thow fettest there thyng that I lovede.
 "Thus ylik a lusard with a lady visage,
 Thefliche thow me robbedest; the Olde Lawe graunteth
 That gilours be bigiled -- and that is good reson:
 Dentem pro dente et oculum pro oculo.
 Ergo soule shal soule quyte and synne to synne wende,
 And al that man hath mysdo, I, man, wole amende it.
 Membre for membre [was amendes by the Olde Lawe],
 And lif for lif also -- and by that lawe I clayme
 Adam and al his issue at my wille herafter.
 And that deeth in hem fordide, my deeth shal releve,
 And bothe quyke and quyte that queynt was thorough synne;
 And that grace gile destruye, good feith it asketh.
 So leve it noght, Lucifer, ayein the lawe I fecche hem,
 But by right and by reson raunsone here my liges:
 Non veni solvere legem set adimplere.
 "Thow fettest myne in my place ayeins alle reson --
 Falsliche and felonliche; good feith me it taughte,
 To recovere hem thorough raunsoun, and by no reson ellis,
 So that with gile thow gete, thorough grace it is ywonne.
 Thow, Lucifer, in liknesse of a luther addere

Getest bi gile tho that God loveded;
 And I, in liknesse of a leode, that Lord am of hevene,
 Graciousliche thi gile have quyt -- go gile ayein gile!
 And as Adam and alle thorough a tree deyden,
 Adam and alle thorough a tree shal turne to lyve;
 And gile is bigiled, and in his gile fallen:
 Et cecidit in foveam quam fecit.
 Now bigynneth thi gile ageyn thee to turne
 And my grace to growe ay gretter and widder.
 The bitternesse that thou hast browe, now brouke it thiselve;
 That art doctour of deeth, drynk that thou madest!
 "For I that am lord of lif, love is my drynke,
 And for that drynke today, I deide upon erthe.
 I faught so, me thursteth yet, for mannes soule sake;
 May no drynke me moiste, ne my thirst stake,
 Til the vendage falle in the vale of Josaphat,
 That I drynke right ripe must, resureccio mortuorum.
 And thanne shal I come as a kyng, crouned, with aungeles,
 And have out of helle alle mennes soules.
 " Fendes and fendekynes bifore me shul stande
 And be at my biddynge wheresoever [be] me liketh.
 Ac to be merciable to man thanne, my kynde it asketh,
 For we beth bretheren of blood, but noght in baptisme alle.
 Ac alle that beth myne hole bretheren, in blood and in baptisme,
 Shul noght be dampned to the deeth that is withouten ende:
 Tibi soli peccavi &c.
 "It is noght used on erthe to hangen a feloun
 Ofter than ones, though he were a tretour.
 And if the kyng of that kyngdom corne in that tyme
 There the feloun thole sholde deeth oother juwise,
 Lawe wolde he yeve hym lif, and he loked on hym.
 And I that am kyng of kynges shal come swich a tyme
 There doom to the deeth dampneth alle wikked;
 And if lawe wole I loke on hem, it lith in my grace
 Wheither thei deye or deye noght for that thei diden ille.
 Be it any thyng abought, the boldnesse of hir synnes,
 I may do mercy thorough rightwisnesse, and alle my wordes trewe.
 And though Holy Writ wole that I be wroke of hem that diden ille --
 Nullum malum impunitum &c --
 Thei shul be clensed clerliche and [clene] wasshen of hir synnes
 In my prisone Purgatorie, til parce it hote.
 And my mercy shal be shewed to manye of my bretheren;
 For blood may suffre blood bothe hungry and acale,

Ac blood may noght se blood blede, but hym rewe.'
 Audivi archana verba que non licet homini loqui.
 "Ac my rightwisnesse and right shal rulen al helle,
 And mercy al mankynde bifore me in hevene.
 For I were an unkynde kyng but I my kyn helpe -- -
 And nameliche at swich a nede ther nedes help bihoveth:
 Non intres in iudicium cum servo tuo.
 "Thus by lawe,' quod Oure Lord, "lede I wole fro hennes
 Tho [leodes] that I lov[e] and leved in my comynge.
 And for thi lesynge, Lucifer, that thow leighe til Eve,
 Thow shalt abyen it bittre!" -- and bond hym with cheynes.
 As troth and al the route hidden hem in hernes;
 They dorste noght loke on Oure Lord, the [lothli]este of hem alle,
 But leten hym lede forth what hym liked and lete what hym liste.
 Manye hundred of aungeles harpeden and songen,
 " Culpat caro, purgat caro, regnat Deus Dei caro.'
 Thanne pipede Pees of poesie a note:
 " Clarior est solito post maxima nebula phebus;
 Post inimicicias clarior est et amor.
 " After sharpest shoures,' quod Pees, " moost shene is the sonne;
 Is no weder warmer than after watry cloudes;
 Ne no love levere; ne lever frendes
 Than after werre and wo, whan love and pees ben maistres.
 Was nevere werre in this world, ne wikkednesse so kene,
 "That Love, and hym liste, to laughyng ne broughte,
 And Pees, thorough pacience, alle perils stoppede.'
 " Trewes!' quod Truthe; " thow tellest us sooth, by Jesus!
 Clippe we in covenaut, and ech of us kisse oother.'
 "And lete no peple,' quod Pees, "parceyve that we chidde;
 For impossible is no thyng to Hym that is almyghty.'
 "Thow seist sooth,' seide Rightwisnesse, and reverentliche hire kiste,
 Pees, and Pees h[i]re, per secula seculorum.
 Misericordia et Veritas obviaverunt sibi, justicia et Pax osculate sunt.
 Truthe trumpede tho and song Te Deum laudamus,
 And thanne lutede Love in a loud note,
 " Ecce quam bonum et quam iocundum &c.'
 Til the day dawed thise damyseles carolden,
 That men rongen to the resurexion -- and right with that I wakede,
 And called Kytte my wif and Calote my doghter:
 "Ariseth and reverenceth Goddes resurexion,
 And crepeth to the cros on knees, and kisseth it for a juwel!
 For Goddes blik body it bar for eure body,
 And it afereth the fend -- for swich is the myghte,

May no grisly goost glide there it shadweth!

Passus 19

Thus I awaked and wroot what I hadde ydremed,
And dighte me derely, and dide me to chirche,
To here holly the masse and to be housled after.
In myddes of the masse, tho men yede to offfryng,
I fel eftsoones aslepe -- and sodeynly me mette
That Piers the Plowman was peynted al bloody,
And com in with a cros bifore the comune peple,
And right lik in alle lymes to Oure Lord Jesu.
And thanne called I Conscience to kenne me the sothe:
"Is this Jesus the justere," quod I, "that Jewes dide to dethe?
Or it is Piers the Plowman! Who peynted hym so rede?"
Quod Conscience, and kneled tho, " Thise arn Piers armes --
Hise colours and his cote armure; ac he that cometh so bloody
Is Crist with his cros, conquerour of Cristene.'
"Why calle ye hym Crist?" quod I, "sithen Jewes called hym Jesus?
Patriarkes and prophetes prophecied bifore
That alle kynne creatures sholden knelen and bowen
Anoon as men nempned the name of God Jesu.
Ergo is no name to the name of Jesus,
Ne noon so nedeful to nempne by nyghte ne by daye.
For alle derke develes arn adrad to heren it,
And synfulle aren solaced and saved by that name;
And ye callen hym Crist; for what cause, telleth me?
Is Crist moore of myght and moore worthi name
Than Jesu or Jesus, that al oure joye com of?"
"Thow knowest wel," quod Conscience, "and thow konne reson,
That knyght, kyng, conquerour may be o persone.
To be called a knyght is fair, for men shul knele to hym;
To be called a kyng is fairer, for he may knyghtes make;
Ac to be conquerour called, that cometh of special grace,
And of hardynesse of herte and of hendemesse --
To make lordes of laddes, of lond that he wynneth,
And fre men foule thralles, that folwen noght hise lawes.
'The Jewes, that were gentil men, Jesu thei despised --
Bothe his loore and his lawe; now are thei lowe cherles.
As wide as the world is, wonyeth ther noon
But under tribut and taillage as tikes and cherles;
And tho that bicom Cristene bi counseil of the Baptiste

Aren frankeleyns, free men thorough fullynge that thei toke
And gentil men with Jesu -- for Jesus was yfulled
And upon Calvarie on cros ycrouned kyng of Jewes.
" It bicometh to a kyng to kepe and to defende,
And conqueror of his conquest hise lawes and his large.
And so dide Jesus the Jewes -- he justified and taughte hem
The lawe of lif that laste shal evere,
And fended from foule yveles, feveres and fiuxes,
And from fendes that in hem was, and false bileve.
Tho was he Jesus of Jewes called, gentile prophete,
And kyng of hir kyngdom, and croune bar of thornes.
"And tho conquered he on cros as conquerour noble;
Mighte no deeth hym fordo, ne adoun brynge,
That he n'aroos and regnede and ravysshed helle.
And tho was he conquerour called of quyke and of dede.
For he yaf Adam and Eve and othere mo blisse
That longe hadde yleyen bifore as Luciferis cherles.
And took [Lucifer the lothly], that lord was of helle,
And bond [hym] as [he is bounde], with bondes of yrene.
Who was hardiere than he? His herte blood he shadde
To maken alle folk free that folwen his lawe.
And sith he yeveth largely al his lele liges
Places in Paradis at hir partynge hennes,
He my wel be called conquerour -- and that is " Crist ' to mene.
"Ac the cause that he cometh thus with cros of his passion
Is to wissen us therwith, that whan we ben tempted,
Therwith to fighte and fenden us fro fallynge into synne,
And se bi his sorve that whoso loveth joye,
To penaunce and to poverte he moste puten hymselfen,
And muche wo in this world wilnen and suffren.
"Ac to carpe moore of Crist, and how he com to that name,
Faithly for to speke, his firste name was jesus.
Tho he was born in Bethleem, as the Book telleth,
And cam to take mankynde, kynges and aungeles
Reverenced hym right faire with riches of erthe.
Aungeles out of hevene come knelynge and songe,
Gloria in excelsis Deo &c.
"Kynges come after, knelede and offrede sense,
Mirre and muche gold withouten mercy askyng
Or any kynnes catel, but knoweliched[en] hym sovereyn
Both of sond, sonne and see, and sithenes thei wente
Into hir kyngene kith by counseil of aungeles.
And there was that word fulfilled the which thow of speke --

Omnia celestia, terrestria, flectantur in hoc nomine Iesu.
" For alle the aungeles of hevene at his burthe knelede,
And al the wit of the world was in tho thre kynges.
Reson and Rightwisnesse and Ruthe thei offrede,
Wherfore and why wise men that tyme
Maistres and lettred men, Magi hem callede.
" That o kyng cam with Reson, covered under sense.
The seconde kyng siththe soothliche offrede
Rightwisnesse under reed gold, Resones felawe.
Gold is likned to Leautee that laste shal evere,
And Reson to riche[ls] -- to right and to truthe.
"The thridde kyng tho kam, and knelede to Jesu,
And presented hym with Pitee, apperynge by mirre;
For mirre is mercy to mene, and mylde speche of tonge.
Ertheliche honeste thynges was offred thus at ones
Thorough thre kynne kynges knelynge to Jesu.
"Ac for alle thise preciose presents Oure Lord Prynce Jesus
Was neither kyng ne conquerour til he [comsede] wexe
In the manere of a man, and that by muchel sleighte --
As it bicometh a conquerour to konne manye sleighes,
And manye wiles and wit, that wole ben a ledere;
And so dide Jesu in hise dayes, whoso hadde tyme to telle it.
"Som tyme he suffrede, and som tyme he hidde hym,
And som tyme he faught faste, and fleigh outhewhere,
And som tyme he gaf good and grauntedee heele bothe,
Lif and lyme -- as hym liste he wroghte.
As kynde is of a conquerour, so comsede Jesu
Til he hadde alle hem that he for bledde.
" In his juventee this Jesus at Jewene feeste
Water into wyn turnede, as Holy Writ telleth,
And there bigan God of his grace to do wel.
For wyn is likned to lawe and lifholynesse;
And lawe lakkede tho, for men lovede noght hir enemys;
And Crist counseileth thus -- and comaundeth bothe --
Bothe to lered and to lewede, to lovyen oure enemys.
So at that feeste first, as I bifore tolde,
Bigan God of his grace and goodnesse to dowl:
And tho was he cleped and called noght oonly Crist but Jesu --
A fauntekyn ful of wit, filius Marie.
For bifore his moder Marie made he that wonder,
That she first and formest sholde ferme bileve
That he thorough Grace was gete, and of no gome ellis.
He wroghte that by no wit but thorough word one,

After the kynde that he cam of; there comsede he Dowel.
"And whan he was woxen moore, in his moder absence,
He made lame to lepe and yaf light to blynde,
And fedde with two fisshes and with fyve lowes
Sore afyngred folk, mo than fyve thousand.
Thus he confortede carefulle and caughte a gretter name,
The which was Dobet, where that he wente.
For deve thorough hise doynge and dombe speke and herde,
And alle he heeled and halp that hym of grace askede.
And tho was he called in contre of the comune peple,
For the dedes that he dide, Fili David, lhesus.
For David was doghtiest of dedes in his tyme,
The burdes tho songe, Saul interfecit mille et David decem milia.
Forthi the contree ther Jesu cam called hym fili David,
And nempned hym of Nazareth -- and no man so worthi
To be kaiser or kyng of the kyngdom of Juda,
Ne over Jewes justice, as Jesus was, hem thoughte.
"Wherof hadde Cayphas envye, and othere of the Jewes,
And for to doon hym to dethe day and nyght thei casten;
And killeden hym on cros wise at Calvarie on Friday,
And sithen buriede his body, and beden that men sholde
Kepen it fro nyghtcomeris with knyghtes yarmed,
For no frend sholde it fecche; for prophetes hem tolde
That that blissede body of burieles sholde risen,
And goon into Galilee and gladen hise Apostles
And his moder Marie -- thus men bfore demede.
"The knyghtes that kepten it biknewe hemselven
That aungeles and archaungeles er the day spronge
Come knelynge to that corps and songen
Christus resurgens -- and it aroos after,
Verray man bfore hem alle, and forth with hem he yede.
"The Jewes preide hem of pees, and [pre-ide] the knyghtes
Telle the comune that ther cam a compaignie of hise Apostles
And biwicched hem as thei woke, and away stolen it.
"Ac Marie Maudeleyne mette hym by the weye
Goynge toward Galilee in godhede and manhede,
And lyves and lokynge -- and she aloud cride
In ech a compaignie ther she cam, "" Christus resurgens!"
Thus cam it out that Crist overcoom, recoveredde and lyvede:
Sic oportet Christum pati et intrare &c.
For that wommen witeth may noght wel be counseille!
"Peter parceyved al this and pursued after,
Bothe James and Johan, Jesu for to seke.

Thaddee and ten mo. with Thomas of Inde.
 And as alle thise wise wyes weren togideres
 In an hous al bishet and hir dore ybarred,
 Crist cam in -- and al closed both dore and yates --
 To Peter and to hise Apostles, and seide, "' Pax vobis;'
 And took Thomas by the hind and taughte hym to grope.
 And feele with hise fynngres his flesschliche herte.
 "Thomas touched it, and with his tonge seide,
 " Dominus meus et Deus meus.
 Thow art my lord, I bileve, God Lord Jesu!
 Thow deidest and deeth tholedest and deme shalt us alle,
 And now art lyvyng and lokyng, and laste shalt evere!
 "Crist carpede thanne, and curteisliche seide,
 "'Thomas, for thow trowest this and treweliche bilevest it,
 Blessed mote thow be, and be shalt for evere.
 And blessed mote thei be, in body and in soule,
 That nevere shul se me in sighte as thow seest nowthe,
 And lelliche bileve al this I love hem and blesse hem:
 Beati qui non viderunt et crediderunt."
 "And whan this dede was doon, Dobest he [thou]ghte,
 And yaf Piers power, and pardon he grauntede:
 To alle maner men, mercy and foryifnesse;
 [To] hym, myghte men to assoille of alle manere synnes.
 In covenant that thei come and kneweliche to paye
 To Piers pardon the Plowman -- Redde quod debes.
 "Thus hath Piers power, be his pardon paied,
 To bynde and unbynde bothe here and ellis,
 And assoille men of alle synnes save of dette one.
 "Anoon after an heigh up into hevene
 He wente, and wonyeth there, and wol come at the laste,
 And rewarde hym right wel that reddit quod debet --
 Paieth parfitly, as pure truthe wolde.
 And what persone paieth it nought, punysshyn he thenketh,
 And demen hem at domesday, bothe quyke and dede --
 The goode to the Godhede and to greet joye,
 And wikkede to wonye in wo withouten ende.'
 Thus Conscience of Crist and of the cros carpede,
 And counseiled me to knele therto; and thanne cam, me thoughte,
 Oon Spiritus Paraclitus to Piers and to hise felawes.
 In liknesse of a lightnyng he lighte on hem alle
 And made hem konne and knowe alle kynne langages.
 I wondred what that was, and waggede Conscience,
 And was afered of the light, for in fires liknesse

Spiritus Paraclitus overspradde hem alle.
 Quod Conscience, and knelede, "This is Cristes messenger,
 And cometh fro the grete God -- Grace is his name.
 Knele now,' quod Conscience, "and if thow kanst synge,
 Welcome hym and worshiþe hym with Veni Creator Spiritus !'
 Thanne song I that song, and so dide manye hundred,
 And cride with Conscience, " Help us, God of grace!"
 And thanne bigan Grace to go with Piers Plowman,
 And counseilled hym and Conscience the comune to sompne:
 "For I wole dele today and dyvyde grace
 To alle kynne creatures that kan hise fyve wittes --
 Tresour to lyve by to hir lyves ende.
 And wepne to fighte with that wole nevere faille.
 For Antecrist and hise al the world shul greve,
 And acombte thee, Conscience, but if Crist thee helpe.
 "And false prophetes fele, flatereris and gloseris,
 Shullen come and be curatours over kynges and erles.
 And thanne shal Pride be Pope and prynce of Holy Chirche,
 Coveitise and Unkyndenesse Cardinals hym to lede.
 Forthi,' quod Grace, "er I go, I wol gyve yow tresor,
 And wepne to fighte with whan Antecrist yow assailleth.'
 And gaf ech man a grace to gye with hymselfen,
 That Ydelnesse encombre hym noght, ne Envyne ne Pride:
 Divisiones graciary sunt.
 Some [wyes] he yaf wit, with wordes to shewe --
 Wit to wyne hir liflode with, as the world asketh,
 As prechours and preestes, and prentices of lawe --
 They lelly to lyve by labour of tonge,
 And by wit to wissen othere is grace hem wolde teche.
 And some he kennede craft and konnyng of sighte.
 With sellynge and [by] buggynge hir bilyve to wyne.
 And some he lered to labour on lond and on watre,
 And lyve by that labour -- a lele lif and a trewe.
 And some he taughte to tilie, to dyche and to thecche,
 To wyne with hir liflode bi loore of his techynge.
 And some to devyne and divide, [diverse] noumbres to kenne:
 And some to compase craftily, and colours to make;
 And some to se and to seye whit sholde bifalle,
 Bothe of wele and of wo, telle it [wel] er it felle --
 As astronomyens thorough astronomye, and filosofres wise.
 And some to ryde and to recovere that unrightfully was wonne:
 He wissed hem wyne it ayein thorough wightnesse of handes,
 And fecchen it fro false men with Folvyles lawes.

And some he lered to lyve in longynge to ben hennes,
In poverte and in pacience to preie for alle Cristene.
And alle he lered to be lele, and ech a craft love oother,
And forbad hem alle debat -- that noon [be] among hem.
"Though some be clenner than some, ye se wel," quod Grace,
"That he that useth the faireste craft, to the fouleste I kouthe have put hym.
Thynketh [that alle craftes, quod Grace]. "cometh of my yifte;
Loketh that noon lakke oother, but loveth alle as bretheren.
"And who that moost maistries kan, be myldest of berynge;
And crouneth Conscience kyng, and maketh Craft youre stiward,
And after Craftes conseil clotheth yow and fede.
For I make Piers the Plowman my procuratour and my reve,
And registrer to receyve redde quod debes.
My prowor and my plowman Piers shal ben on erthe,
And for to tilie truthe a teeme shal he have.'
Grace gaf Piers a teeme -- foure grete oxen.
That oon was Luk, a large beest and a lowe chered,
And Mark, and Mathew the thridde -- myghty beestes bothe;
And joyned to hem oon Johan, moost gentil of alle,
The pris neet of Piers plow, passynge alle othere.
And yit Grace of his goodnesse gaf Piers foure stottes --
Al that hise oxen eriede, thei to harewen after.
Oon highte Austyn, and Ambrose another,
Gregori the grete clerk, and [the goode Jerom].
Thise foure, the feith to teche, folweth Piers teme,
And harewede in an handwhile al Holy Scripture
With two [aithes] that thei hadde, an oold and a newe,
Id est, Vetus Testamentum et Novum.
And Grace gaf Piers greynes -- cardynales vertues,
And sew it in mannes soule, and sithen he tolde hir names.
Spiritus Prudencie the firste seed highte;
And whoso ete that, ymagynen he sholde,
Er he dide any dede, devyse wel the ende;
And lerned men a ladel bugge with a long stele
That caste for to kepe a crokke, and save the fatte above.
The seconde seed highte Spiritus Temperancie.
He that etc of that seed hadde swich a kynde,
Sholde nevere mete ne meschief make hym to swelle;
Ne sholde no scornere out of skile hym brynge;
Ne wynnynge ne wele of worldliche richesse,
Waste word of ydelnesse ne wikked speche moeve;
Sholde no curious clooth comen on his rugge,
Ne no mete in his mouth that Maister Johan spicede.

The thridde seed that Piers sew was Spiritus Fortitudinis;
 And whoso ete of that seed hardy was evere
 To suffren al that God sente, siknesse and angres.
 Mighte no lesynges, ne lyere, ne los of worldly catel.
 Maken hym, for any mournynge, that he nas murie in soule,
 And bold and abidyng bismares to suffre,
 And pletede al with pacience and Parce michi, Domine,
 And covered hym under conseil of Caton the wise:
 Esto forti animo cum sis dampnatus inique.
 The ferthe seed that Piers sew was Spiritus Iusticie,
 And he that ete of that seed sholde be evere trewe
 With God, and naught agast but of gile one.
 For gile gooth so pryvely that geod feith outhur while
 May nought ben espied [thorough] Spiritus Iusticie.
 Spiritus Iusticie spareth noght to spille hem that ben gilty,
 And for to correcte the kyng if he falle in [any kynnes] gilt.
 For counteth he no kynges wrahte whan he in court sitteth
 To demen as a domesman -- adrad was he nevere
 Neither of duc ne of deeth, that he ne dide the lawe;
 For present or for preiere or any prynces lettres,
 He dide equyte to alle eveneforth his power.
 Thise foure sedes Piers sex, and siththe he dide hem harewe
 With Olde Lawe and Newe Lawe, that love myghte wexe
 Among thise foure vertues, and vices destruye.
 " For comunliche in contrees cammokes and wedes
 Foulen the fruyt in the feld ther thei growen togideres;
 And so doon vices vertues -- [f]orthi,' quod Piers,
 "Hareweth alle that konneth kynde wit by conseil of thise doctours,
 And tilieth after hir techynge the cardynale vertues.'
 "Ayeins thi greynes,' quod Grace, " bigynneth for to ripe,
 Ordeigne thee an hous, Piers, to herberwe inne thi cornes.
 "By God! Grace,' quod Piers, 'ye moten gyve tymber,
 And ordeigne that hous er ye hennes wende.'
 And Grace gaf hym the cros, with the croune of thornes,
 That Crist upon Calvarie for mankynde on pyned;
 And of his baptisme and blood that he bledde on roode
 He made a manere mortar, and mercy it highte.
 And therwith Grace bigan to make a good foundement,
 And watlede it and walled it with hise peynes and his passion,
 And of al Holy Writ he made a roof after,
 And called that hous Unite -- Holy Chirche on Englissh.
 And whan this dede was doon, Grace devysede
 A cart highte Cristendom, to carie home Piers sheves,

And gaf hym caples to his carte, Contricion and Confession;
And made Preesthod hayward, the while hymself wente
As wide as the world is, with Piers to tilie truthe
And the lo[nd] of bileve, the lawe of Holy Chirche.
Now is Piers to the plow. Pride it aspide
And gadered hym a greet oost: greven he thynketh
Conscience and alle Cristene and Cardinale Vertues --
Blowe hem down and breke hem and bite atwo the mores;
And sente forth Surquidous, his sergeaunt of armes,
And his spye Spille-Love, oon Spek-yvel-bihynde.
Thise two coome to Conscience and to Cristen peple,
And tolde hem tidynges -- that tyne thei sholde
The sedes that [Sire] Piers sew, the Cardynale Vertues:
"And Piers bern worth ybroke, and thei that ben in Unitee
Shulle come out, and Conscience; and youre [caples two],
Confession and Contricion, and youre carte the Bileeve
Shal be coloured so queyntely and covered under oure sophistrie,
That Conscience shal noght knowe by Contricion
Ne by Confession who is Cristene or hethene;
Ne no manere marchaunt that with moneye deleth
Wheither he wynne with right, with wrong or with usure.'
With swiche colours and queyntise cometh Pride y-armed,
With the lord that lyveth after the lust of his body --
"To wasten on welfare and on wikked kepynge
Al the world in a while thorough oure wit!" quod Pryde.
Quod Conseience to alle Cristene tho, " My counseil is to wende
Hastiliche into Unitee and holde we us there,
And praye we that a pees weere in Piers berne the Plowman.
For witterly, I woot wel, we beth noght of strengthe
To goon agayn Pride, but Grace weere with us.'
And thanne kam Kynde Wit Conscience to teche,
And cryde, and comaundede alle Cristene peple
For to delven and dyche depe aboute Unitee
That Holy Chirche stode in [holynesse], as it a pyl weere.
Conscience comaundede tho alle Cristene to delve,
And make a mucche moot that myghte ben a strengthe
To helpe Holy Chirche and hem that it kepeth.
Thanne alle kynne Cristene -- save comune wommen --
Repenteden and refusede synne, [right] save thei one,
And [a sisour and a somonour] that were forsworen ofte;
Witynge and wilfully with the false [thei] helden,
And for silver were forswore -- soothly thei wiste it!
Ther nas no Cristene creature that kynde wit hadde --

Save sherewes one swiche as I spak of --
 That he ne halp a quantite holynesse to wexe:
 Some by bedes biddynge and some by pilgrymage
 And other pryve penaunce, and somme thorough penyes delynge.
 And thanne welledde water for wikkede werkes,
 Egrelliche ernynge out of mennes eighen.
 Clennesse of the comune and clerkes clene lyvyng
 Made Unitee Holy Chirche in holynesse stonde.
 " I care noght," quod Conscience, " though Pride come nouthe;
 The lord of lust shal be letted al this Lente, I hope.
 Cometh," quod Conscience, "ye Cristene, and dyneth,
 That han laboured lelly al this Lenten tyme.
 Here is breed yblessed, and Goddes body therunder.
 Grace, thorough Goddes word, gaf Piers power,
 Myght to maken it, and men to ete it after
 In helpe of hir heele ones in a monthe,
 Or as ofte as thei hadde nede, tho that hadde ypaied
 To Piers pardon the Plowman, redde quod debes.'
 " How?" quod al the comune. "Thow conseillest us to yelde
 Al that we owen any wight er we go to housel?"
 "That is my conseil," quod Conscience, "and Cardinale Vertues;
 That ech man foryyve oother, and that wole the Paternoster --
 Et dimitte nobis debita nostra &c --
 And so to ben assoilled, and siththen ben houseled.'
 " Ye? Baw!" quod a brewere, " I wol noght be ruled,
 By Jesu! for al youre janglyng, with Spiritus Iusticie,
 Ne after Conscience, by Crist! while I kan selle
 Bothe dregges and draf, and drawe at oon hole
 Thikke ale and thynne ale; that is my kynde,
 And noght hakke after holynesse -- hold thi tonge, Conscience!
 Of Spiritus Iusticie thou spekest muche on ydel.'
 " Caytif! " quod Conscience, "cursedde wrecche!
 Unblessed artow, brewere, but if thee God helpe.
 But thou lyve by loore of Spiritus Iusticie,
 The chief seed that Piers sew, ysaved worstow nevere.
 But Conscience be the comune fode, and Cardinale Vertues,
 Leve it wel, thei ben lost, bothe lif and soule.'
 "Thanne is many [leode] lost!" quod a lewed vicory.
 "I am a curatour of Holy Kirke, and cam nevere in my tyme
 Man to me that me kouthe telle of Cardinale Vertues,
 Or that acountede Conscience at a cokkes fethere!
 I knew nevere Cardynal that he ne cam fro the Pope:
 And we clerkes, whan thei come, for hir comunes paieth,

For hir pelure and hir palfreyes mete and pilours that hem folweth.
 The comune clamat cotidie, ech a man til oother,
 ""The contree is the corseder that cardinals come inne,
 And ther thei ligge and lenge moost lecherie there regneth!""
 " Forthi,' quod this vicory, " by verray God! I wolde
 That no cardynal coome among the comune peple,
 But in hir holynesse helden hem stille
 At Avynoun among Jewes -- Cum sancto sanctus eris &c --
 Or in Rome, as hir rule wole, the relikes to kepe;
 And thow Conscience in kynges court, and sholdest nevere come thennes;
 And Grace, that thow gredest so of, gyour of alle clerkes ;
 And Piers with his newe plough and ek with his olde
 Emperour of al the world -- that alle men were Cristene.
 "Inparfit is that Pope, that al peple sholde helpe,
 And s[ou]deth hem that sleeth swiche as he sholde save.
 A[c] wel worthe Piers the Plowman, that pursueth God in doynge,
 Qui pluit super iustos et iniustos at ones,
 And sent the sonne to save a cursed mannes tilthe
 As brighte as to the beste man or to the beste womman.
 Right so Piers the Plowman peyneth hym to tilye
 As wel for a wastour and wenches of the stewes
 As for hymself and hise servaunts, save he is first yservyd.
 [So blessed be Piers Plowman, that peyneth hym to tilye],
 And travaileth and tilieth for a tretour also soore
 As for a trewe tidy man, alle tymes ylike.
 And worshiped be He that wroghte al, bothe good and wikke,
 And suffreth that synfulle be til som tyme that thei repente.
 And God [the Pope amende], that pileth Holy Kirke,
 And cleymeth bifore the kyng to be kepere over Cristene,
 And counteth noght though Cristene ben killed and robbed,
 And fynt folk to fighte and Cristen blood to spille
 Ayein the Olde Lawe and Newe Lawe, as Luc bereth witnesse:
 Non occides : mihi vindictam &c.
 It semeth, bi so hymself hadde his wille,
 That he ne reccheth right noght of al the remenaunt.
 "And Crist of his curtesie the cardinals save,
 And torne hir wit to wisdom and to welthe of soule!
 For the comune,' quod this curatour, "counten ful litel
 The counseil of Conscience or Cardinale Vertues
 But if thei sowne, as by sighte, somewhat to wynnyng.
 Of gile ne of gabbyng gyve thei nevere tale,
 For Spiritus Prudencie among the peple is gyle,
 And alle tho faire vertues, as vices thei semeth.

Ech man subtileth a sleighte synne to hide,
 And coloureth it for a konnyng and a clene lyvyng.
 Thanne lough ther a lord, and "By this light! seide,
 I holde it right and reson of my reve to take
 Al that myn auditour or ellis my styward
 Counseilleth me bi hir acounte and my clerkes writyng.
 With Spiritus Intellectus thei toke the reves rolles,
 And with Spiritus Fortitudinis fecche it -- wole [he, nel he]."
 And thanne cam ther a kyng and by his croune seide,
 "I am kyng with croune the comune to rule,
 And Holy Kirke and clergie fro cursed men to defende.
 And if me lakketh to lyve by, the lawe wole I take it
 Ther I may hastilokest it have -- for I am heed of lawe:
 For ye ben but membres and I above alle.
 And sith I am youre aller heed, I am youre aller heele,
 And Holy Chirches chief help and chieftayn of the comune.
 And what I take of yow two, I take it at the techyng
 Of Spiritus Iusticie -- for I jugge yow alle.
 So I may boldely be housled, for I borwe nevere,
 Ne crave of my comune but as my kynde asketh.'
 "In condicion," quod Conscience, "that thou [the comune] defende,
 And rule thi reaume in reson, right wol and truthe
 That thou [have thyn askyng], as the lawe asketh:
 Omnia sunt tua ad defendendum set non ad deprehendendum.'
 The viker hadde fer hoom, and faire took his leeve --
 And I awakned therwith, and wroot as me mette.

Passus 20

Thanne as I wente by the way, whan I was thus awaked,
 Hevy chered I yede, and elenge in herte;
 For I ne wiste wher to ete ne at what place,
 And it neghed neigh the noon, and with Nede I mette,
 That afrounted me foule and faitour me called.
 "Coudestow noght excuse thee, as dide the kyng and othere --
 That thou toke to thy bilyve, to clothes and to sustenaunce,
 Was by techyng and by tellyng of Spiritus Temperancie,
 And that thou nome na moore than nede thee taughte,
 And nede ne hath no lawe, ne nevere shal falle in dette
 For thre thynges he taketh his lif for to save? --
 That is, mete whan men hym werneth, and he no moneye weldeth,
 Ne wight noon wol ben his borugh, ne wed hath noon to legge;

And he ca[cch]e in that caas and come therto by sleighte,
 He synneth noght, soothliche, that so wynneth his foode.
 And though he come so to a clooth, and kan no bettre chevysaunce,
 Nede anoon righte nymeth hym under maynprise.
 And if hym list for to lape, the lawe of kynde wolde
 That he dronke at ech dych, er he [deide for thirst].
 So Nede, at gret nede, may nymen as for his owene,
 Withouten conseil of Conscience or Cardynale Vertues --
 So that he sewe and save Spiritus Temperancie.
 "For is no vertue bi fer to Spiritus Temperancie --
 Neither Spiritus Iusticie ne Spiritus Fortitudinis.
 For Spiritus Fortitudinis forfegeth ful ofte:
 He shal do moore than mesure many tyme and ofte,
 And bete men over bittre, and som body to litel,
 And greve men gretter than good feith it wolde.
 "And Spiritus Iusticie shal juggen, wole he, nel he,
 After the kynges counseil and the comune like.
 And Spiritus Prudencie in many a point shal faille
 Of that he weneth wolde falle if his wit ne weere.
 Wenyng is no wysdom, ne wys ymaginacion:
 Homo proponit et Deus disponit --
 [God] governeth alle goode vertues;
 And Nede is next hym, for anoon he meketh
 And as lowe as a lomb, for lakkyng that hym nedeth;
 For nede maketh nede fele nedes lowe-herted.
 Philosophres forsoke welthe for thei wolde be nedy,
 And woneden wel elengely and wolde noght be riche.
 "And God al his grete joye goostliche he lefte,
 And cam and took mankynde and bicam nedy."
 So he was nedy, as seith the Book, in manye sondry places,
 That he seide in his some on the selve roode,
 "'the Fox and fowel may fle to hole and crepe,
 And the fissh hath fyn to flete with to reste,
 Ther nede hath ynome me, that I moot nede abide
 And suffre sorwes ful soure, that shal to joye torne."
 Forthi be noght abasshed to bide and to be nedy,
 Sith he that wroghte al the world was wilfulliche nedy,
 Ne nevere noon so nedy ne poverer deide.'
 Whan Nede hadde undernome rne thus, anoon I fil aslepe,
 And mette ful merveillously that in mannes forme
 Antecrist cam thanne, and al the crop of truthe
 Torned it [tid] up-so-down, and overtilte the roote,
 And made fals spryng and sprede and spede mennes nedes.

In ech a contree ther he cam he kutte away truthe.
And gerte gile growe there as he a god weere.
Freres folwede that fend, for he gaf hem copes,
And religiouse revered hym and rongen hir belles,
And al the covent cam to welcome that tyraunt,
And alle hise as wel as hym -- save oonly fooles;
Whiche fooles were wel gladdere to deye
Than to lyve lenger sith Leute was so rebuked,
And a fals fend Antecrist over alle folk regnede.
And that were rnylde men and holye, that no meschief dradden,
Defyed alle falsnesse and folk that it usede;
And what kyng that hem confortyd, knowynge h[ir] gile,
They cursed, and hir conseil -- were it clerk or lewed.
Antecrist hadde thus soone hundredes at his baner,
And Pride bar it bare boldely aboute,
With a lord that lyveth after likyng of body,
That cam ayein Conscience, that kepere was and gyour
Over kynde Cristene and Cardynale Vertues.
"I conseilte," quod Conscience tho, "cometh with me, ye fooles,
Into Unite Holy Chirche, and holde we us there.
And crye we to Kynde that he come and defende us
Fooles fro thise fendes lymes, for Piers love the Plowman.
And crye we on al the comune that thei come to Unitee,
And there abide and bikere ayeins Beliales children.'
Kynde Conscience tho herde, and cam out of the planetes,
And sente forth his forreyours -- feveres and fluxes,
Coughes and cardiacles, crampes and toothaches,
Rewmes and radegundes and roynouse scalles,
Biles and bocches and brennyng agues,
Frenesies and foule yveles -- forageres of Kynde
Hadde ypriked and prayed polles of peple;
Largeliche a legion lees hir lif soone.
There was " Harrow!" and " Help! Here cometh Kynde,
With Deeth that is dredful, to undo us alle!"
The lord that lyved after lust tho aloud cryde
After Confort, a knyght, to come and bere his baner.
"Alarme! Alarme!" quod that lord, "ech lif kepe his owene!"
Thanne mette thise men, er mynstrals myghte pipe,
And er heraudes of armes hadden discryved lordes,
Elde the hoore; he was in the vauntwarde,
And bar the baner bifore Deeth -- bi right he it cleymede.
Kynde cam after hym, with many kene soores,
As pokkes and pestilences -- and mucche peple shente;

So Kynde thorough corrupcions kilde ful manye,
Deeth cam dryvyng after and al to duste passhed
Kynges and knyghtes, kaysers and popes.
Lered ne lewed, he lefte no man stonde
That he hitte evene, that evere stired after.
Manye a lovely lady and [hir] lemmans knyghtes
Swowned and swelte for sorwe of Dethes dyntes.
Conscience of his curteisie to Kynde he bisoughte
To cesse and suffre, and see wher thei wolde
Leve Pride pryvely and be parfite Cristene.
And Kynde cessede tho, to se the peple amende.
Fortune gan flatere thanne tho fewe that were alyve,
And bihighte hem long lif -- and lecherie h
Amonges alle manere men, wedded and unwedded,
And gaderede a greet hoost al agayn Conscience.
"This Lecherie leide on with laughynge chiere
And with pryvee speche and peyntede wordes,
And armede hym in ydelnesse and in heigh berynge.
He bar a bowe in his hand and manye brode arewes,
Weren fethered with fair biheste and many a fals truthe.
With untidy tales he tened ful ofte
Conscience and his compaignye, of Holy Kirke the techeris.
Thanne cam Coveitise and caste how he myghte
Overcome Conscience and Cardinale Vertues,
And armed hym in avarice and hungriliche lyvede.
His wepne was al wiles, to wynnen and to hiden;
With glosynges and with gabbynges he giled the peple.
Symonye hym s[ue]de to assaille Conscience,
And preched to the peple, and prelates thei hem maden
To holden with Antecrist, hir temporaltees to save;
And cam to the kynges counseille as a kene baroun,
And kneled to Conscience in Court afore hem alle,
And garte Good Feith flee and Fals to abide;
And boldeliche bar adoun with many a bright noble
Muche of the wit and wisdom of Westmynstre Halle.
He jogged til a justice and justed in his eere,
And overtilte al his truthe with "Tak this up amendement.'
And to the Arches in haste he yede anoon after,
And tornede Cyvylye into Symonye, and siththe he took the Official:
For a menever mantel he made lele matrymoyne
Departen er deeth cam, and a devors shapte.
"Allas!" quod Conscience, and cryde tho, "wolde Crist of his grace
That Coveitise were Cristene, that is so kene to fighte,

And boold and bidynge the while his bagge lasteth!
And thanne lough Lyf, and leet daggen hise clothes,
And armed hym in haste in harlotes wordes,
And heeld Holynesse a jape and Hendenesse a wastour,
And leet Leautee a cherl and Lyere a fre man;
Conscience and counseil, he counted it folye.
Thus relyede Lif for a litel fortune,
And priked forth with Pride -- preiseth he no vertue,
Ne careth noght how Kynde slow, and shal come at the laste
And kille alle erthely creature save Conscience oone.
Lyf lepte aside and laughte hym a lemman.
"Heele and I," quod he, "and heighnesse of herte
Shal do thee noght drede neither deeth ne elde.
And to foryyte sorwe and yyve noght of synne."
This likede Lif and his lemman Fortune,
And geten in hir glorie a gadelyng at the laste,
Oon that muche wo wroughte, Sleuthe was his name.
Sleuthe wax wonder yerne and soone was of age,
And wedded oon Wanhope, a wenche of the stuwes.
Hir sire was a sysour that nevere swoor truthe -- -
Oon Tomme Two-tonge, atteynt at ech a queste.
This Sleuthe was war of werre, and a slyng made.
And threw drede of dispair a dozeyne myle aboute.
For care Conscience tho cryde upon Elde,
And bad hym fonde to fighte and afere Wanhope.
And Elde hente good hope, and hastiliche he shifte hym,
And wayved away Wanhope and with Lif he fighteth.
And Lif fleigh for feere to Phisik after helpe,
And bisoughte hym of socour, and of his salve hadde,
And gaf hym gold good woon that gladede his herte --
And thei gyven hym ageyn a glazene howve.
Lyf leaved that lechecraft lette sholde Elde,
And dryven away deeth with dyas and drogges.
And Elde auntred hym on Lyf -- and at the laste he hitte
A phisicien with a furred hood, that he fel in a palsie,
And there dyed that doctour er thre dayes after.
"Now I se," seide Lif, "thaturgerie ne phisik
May noght a myte availle to medle ayein Elde."
And in hope of his heele good herte he hente
And rood so to Revel, a riche place and a murye --
The compaignye of confort men cleped it som tyme --
And Elde anoon after hym, and over myn heed yede,
And made me balled bifore and bare on the croune:

So harde he yede over myn heed it wol be sene evere.
"Sire yvele ytaught Elde!" quod I, "unhende go with the!
Sith whanne was the wey over menne heddes?
Haddestow be hende,' quod I, "thow woldest have asked leeve!"
"Ye -- leve, lurdeyn?" quod he, and leyde on me with age,
And hitte me under the ere -- unnethe may ich here.
Helbuffetted me aboute the mouth and bette out my wangteeth,
And gyved me in goutes -- I may nocht goon at large.
And of the wo that I was inne my wif hadde ruthe,
And wisshed wel witterly that I were in hevene.
For the lyme that she loved me fore, and leef was to feele --
On nyghtes, namely, whan we naked weere --
I ne myghte in no manere maken it at hir wille,
So Elde and he[o] hadden it forbeten.
And as I seet in this sorwe, I saugh how Kynde passede,
And deeth drogh neigh me -- for drede gan I quake,
And cryde to Kynde, "Out of care me brynge!"
Lo! how Elde the hoore hath me biseye:
Awreke me if youre wille be, for I wolde ben hennes!
"If thow wolt be wroken, wend into Unitee,
And hold thee there evere, til I sende for thee;
And loke thow konne som craft er thow come thennes.'
"Counseile me, Kynde,' quod I, "what craft be best to lerne?"
"Lerne to love,' quod Kynde, "and leef alle othere.'
"How shal I come to catel so, toclothe me and to feede?"
"And thow love lelly, lakke shal thee nevere
Weede ne worldly mete, while thi lif lasteth.'
And there by conseil of Kynde I comsed to rome
Thorough Contricion and Confession til I cam to Unitee.
And there was Conscience conestable Cristene to save,
And bisegede soo[r]ly with sevene grete geaunts
That with Antecrist helden harde ayein Conscience.
Sleuthe with his slynge an hard saut he made.
Proude preestes coome with hym -- pange an hundred
In paltokes and pyked shoes and pisseris longe knyves
Coomen ayein Conscience -- with Coveitise thei helden.
"By the Marie!" quod a mansed preest, was of the march of Irlonde,
"I counte na moore Conscience, by so I cacche silver,
Than I do to drynke a draughte of good ale!"
And so seiden sixty of the same contree,
And shotten ayein with shot, many a sheef of othes,
And brode hoked arwes -- Goddes herte and hise nayles --
And hadden almoost Unitee and holynesse adown.

Conscience cryede, " Help, Clergie. or ellis I falle
Thorugh inparfite preestes and prelates of Holy Chirche!
Freres herden hym crye, and comen hym to helpe --
Ac for thei kouthe noght wel hir craft, Conscience forsook hem.
Nede neghede tho neer, and Conscience he tolde
That thei come for coveitise to have cure of soules.
"And for thei are povere, paraventure, for patrymoyne hem failleth,
Thei wol flatere, to fare wel, folk that ben riche.
And sithen thei chosen chele and cheitiftee, poverté --
Lat hem chewe as thei chose, and charge hem with no cure!
For lomere he lyeth, that liflode moot begge,
Than he that laboureth for liflode and leneth it beggeres.
And sithen freres forsoke the felicite of erthe,
Lat hem be as beggeris, or lyve by aungeles foode!"
Conscience of this counseil tho comsede for to laughe,
And curteisliche confortd hem and called in alle freres,
And seide, Sires, soothly welcome be ye alle
To Unitee and Holy Chirche -- ac o thyng I yow preye:
Holdeth yow in unitee, and haveth noon envye
To lered ne to lewed, but lyveth after youre reule.
And I wol be youre borugh, ye shal have breed and clothes
And othere necessities ynowe -- yow shal no thyng lakke,
With that ye leve logik and lerneth for to lovye.
For love lafte thei lordshipe, bothe lond and scole --
Frere Fraunceys and Domynyk -- for love to be holye.
"And if ye coveite cure, Kynde wol yow telle
That in mesure God made alle manere thynges,
And sette it at a certein and at a siker nombre,
And nempnede hem names newe, and noumbrede the sterres:
Qui numerat multitudinem stellarum et omnibus eis &c.
"Kynges and knyghtes, that kepen and defenden,
Han officers under hem, and ech of hem a certein.
And if thei wage men to werre, thei write hem in noumbre;
Wol no tresorere taken hem wages, travaille thei never so soore,
[But thei ben nempned in the noumbre of hem that ben ywaged].
Alle othere in bataille ben yholde brybours --
Pylours and pykeharneys, in ech a parisshe ycursed.
" Monkes and moniales and alle men of religion --
Hir ordre and hir reule wole to han a certein noumbre;
Of lewed and of lered the lawe wole and asketh
A certein for a certein -- save oonliche of freres!
Forthi,' quod Conscience, "by Crist! kynde wit me telleth
It is wikked to wage yow -- ye wexen out of noumbre!

Hevene hath evene noumbre, and helle is withoute noumbre;
Forthi I wolde witterly that ye were in the registre
And youre noumbre under notarie sygne, and neither mo ne lasse!
Envye herde this and heet freres go to scole
And lerne logyk and lawe -- and ek contemplacion --
And preche men of Plato, and preve it by Seneca
That alle thynges under hevene oughte to ben in cornune.
He lyeth, as I leve, that to the lewed so precheth:
For God made to men a lawe and Moyses it taughte --
Non concupisces rem proximi tui.
And yvele is this yholde in parissches of Engelonde;
For persons and parissch preestes, that sholde the peple shryve,
Ben curatours called to knowe and to hele.
Alle that ben hir parissches penaunces enjoigne,
And ben ashamed in hir shrift; ac shame maketh hem wende
And fleen to the freres -- -as fals folk to Westmynstre,
That borweth, and bereth it thider, and thanne biddeth frendes
Yerne of foryifnesse or lenger yeres leve.
Ac while he is in Westmynstre he wol be bfore
And maken hym murie with oother menne goodes.
And so it fareth with mucche folk that to freres shryveth;
As sisours and executours -- thei shul yyve the freres
A parcel to preye for hem, and [purchase] hem mur[th]e
With the remenaunt that othere [renkes] biswonke,
And suffre the dede in dette to the day of doome.
Envye herfore hatede Conscience,
And freres to philosophie he fond hem to scole,
The while Coveitise and Unkyndenesse Conscience assailed.
In Unitee Holy Chirche Conscience held hym,
And made Pees porter to pynne the yates
Of alle taletelleris and titeleris in ydel.
Ypocrisie and h[ii] an hard saut thei made.
Ypocrisie at the yate harde gan fighte,
And woundede wel wikkedly many a wise techere
That with Conscience acordede and Cardynale Vertues.
Conscience called a leche, that coude wel shryve,
To go salve tho that sike were and thorough synne ywounded.
Shrift shoop sharp salve, and made men do penaunce
For hire mysdedes that thei wrought hadde,
And that Piers [pardon] were ypayed, redde quod debes.
Some liked noght this leche, and lettres thei sente,
If any surgien were in the sege that softer koude plastre.
Sire Leef-to-lyve-in-lecherie lay there and groned;

For fastynge of a Fryday he ferde as he wolde deye:
 "Ther is a surgien in this sege that softe kan handle,
 And moore of phisik bi fer, and fairer he plastreth --
 Oon Frere Flaterere, is phisicien and surgien.'
 Quod Contricion to Conscience, "Do hym come to Unitee;
 For here is many a man hurt thorough Ypocrisye.'
 "We han no nede,' quod Conscience, "I woot no better leche
 Than person or parisshe preest, penitauncer or bisshop --
 Save Piers the Plowman, that hath power over alle,
 And indulgence may do, but if dette lette it.
 I may wel suffre,' seide Conscience, "syn ye desiren,
 That Frere Flaterere be fet and phisike yow sike.'
 The frere herof herde and hiede faste
 To a lord for a lettre, leve to have to curen
 As a curatour he were, and cam with his lettre
 Boldely to the bisshop, and his brief hadde,
 In contrees ther he coome, confessions to here --
 And cam there Conscience was, and knocked at the yate.
 Pees unpynned it, was porter of Unitee,
 And in haste askede what his wille were.
 "In faith,' quod this frere, "for profit and for helthe
 Carpe I wolde with Contricion, and therefore cam I hider,'
 "He is sik,' seide Pees, "and so are manye othere;
 Ypocrisie hath hurt hem -- ful hard is if thei kevere.'
 "I am a surgien,' seide the frere, "and salves can make.
 Conscience knoweth me wel and what I kan do bothe.'
 "I praye thee,' quod Pees tho, "er thou passe ferther,
 What hattestow? I praye thee, hele noght thi name.'
 "Certes,' seide his felawe, "Sire Penetrans-domos.'
 "Ye? Go thi gate!' quod Pees, "by God, for al thi phisik,
 But thou konne any craft, thou comest nought herinne!
 I knew swich oon ones, noght eighte wynter passed,
 Coom in thus ycoped at a court there I dwelde,
 And was my lordes leche -- and my ladies bothe.
 And at the laste this lymytour, tho my lord was oute,
 He salvede so oure wommen til some were with childe.'
 Hende-Speche heet Pees tho, "Opene the yates.
 Lat in the frere and his felawe, and make hem fair cheere.
 He may se and here here, so may bifalle,
 That Lif thorough his loore shal leve coveitise,
 And be adrad of deeth and withdrawe hym fram pryde,
 And acorde with Conscience and kisse hir either oother.'
 Thus thorough Hende-Speche entred the frere,

And cam in to Conseience and curteisly hym grette.
 " Thow art welcome,' quod Conscience, "kanstow heele sike?
 Here is Contricion,' quod Conscience, "my cosyn, ywounded.
 Conforte hym,' quod Conscience, "and take kepe to hise soores.
 The plastres of the person and poudres ben to soore,
 And lat hem ligge overlonge and looth is to chaunge hem;
 Fro Lenten to Lenten he lat his plastres bite.'
 "That is overlonge!' quod this lymytour, " I leve -- I shal amende it' --
 And gooth, gropeth Contricion, and gaf hym a plastre
 Of "A pryvee paiement, and I shal praye for yow,
 And for al [hem] that ye ben holden to, al my lif tyme,
 And make yow [and] my Lady in masse and in matyns
 As freres of oure fraternytee for a litel silver.'
 Thus he gooth and gadereth, and gloseth there he shryveth --
 Til Contricion hadde clene foryeten to crye and to wepe,
 And wake for hise wikked werkes as he was wont to doone.
 For confort of his confessour contricion he lafte,
 That is the soverayneste salve for alle[s]kynnes synnes.
 Sleuth seigh that, and so dide Pryde,
 And comen with a kene wille Conscience to assaille.
 Conseience cryed eft [Clergie come] helpe hym,
 And [bad] Contricion [come] to kepe the yate.
 " He lith adreynt,' seide Pees, "and so do manye othere;
 The frere with his phisyk this folk hath enchaunted,
 And plastred hem so esily [that hii] drede no synne!
 "By Crist!' quod Conscience tho, " I wole bicomme a pilgrym,
 And walken as wide as the world lasteth,
 To seken Piers the Plowman, that Pryde myghte destruye,
 And that freres hadde a fyndyng, that for nede flateren
 And countreplede me, Conscience. Now Kynde me avenge,
 And sende me hap and heele, til I have Piers the Plowman!
 And siththe he gradde after Grace, til I gan awake.

The End.