

# *Six Ecclesiastical Satires*

*Edited by  
James M. Dean*

Published for TEAMS  
(The Consortium for the Teaching of the Middle Ages)

by

Medieval Institute Publications

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Kalamazoo, Michigan—1991

## *Piers the Plowman's Crede*

### *Introduction*

*PPC*, also known as *Pierce the Ploughman's Creed*, is an anonymous alliterative verse satire of 850 lines written between 1393 and 1401. The poem exists complete in two sixteenth-century paper manuscripts, Trinity College Cambridge MS R. 3. 15 and British Library MS Bibl. Reg. 18. B. XVII; in a fragment, British Library MS Harley 78 (fol. 3r); and in a black-letter edition (London, Reyner Wolfe, 1553). There are two modern editions, those of Thomas Wright (1856) and Walter W. Skeat (1867 for the Early English Text Society). Skeat's edition, based on the Trinity MS, remains standard, although it needs revising and updating.

The author, who probably came from the Southwest Midland region but who had connections in London, was influenced by Langland's *Piers Plowman* and by Wycliffite writings. *PPC* is especially significant as a witness to antifraternal literature of the late fourteenth century. The poem has both literary and cultural value — indeed, it is difficult to separate the literary from the cultural.

*PPC*, like *Piers Plowman*, concerns a poor man's quest for spiritual truth. He wants to learn the Apostles' Creed — the simple pre-Nicene statement of faith — but at the beginning of the story he does not know where to find someone to instruct him. He consults friars — a Franciscan, a Dominican, an Austin, and a Carmelite, respectively — hoping to learn what he calls the "graith," the plain truth, but is dismayed that the friars instead denounce the rival fraternal orders or try to dun him for money. The implication is that the friars do not know the Creed, which was a charge often leveled against the fraternal orders. In despair the narrator encounters a plowman, Piers, who condemns the friars as hypocrites and who teaches him the Creed in simple, unglossed language.

The poem is often vivid in its portrayals, for example, of the venal friars, who, like Jean de Meun's Faussemblant, indict themselves through their words. The Carmelite calls the narrator a "fool" for not giving him money, since the Carmelites do not bestow their pardons and prayers gratis but always receive a donation: "Oure power lasteth nought so feer, but we some peny fongen" (407). The friar hastens away to a housewife who has agreed to favor the Carmelite order in her will. The Dominican friar, whom the narrator locates in the refectory, is de-

### *Piers the Plowman's Crede*

scribed as being fat as a barrel, “With a face as fat as a full bledder / Blowne bretfull of breth” (222–23). His chin frames a jowl that “ollede / As greet as a gos eye [egg] growen all of grece, / That all wagged his fleche as a quyk myre” (224–26). This passage bears comparison with Langland’s “doctour” of divinity at the feast (*Piers Plowman* B passus 13).

The narrator also describes Piers and his family with a keen eye for detail. As in the C version of *Piers Plowman*, which includes Will’s domestic circumstances in Corn Hill with his wife Kit (passus 6), Piers in *PPC* is characterized as a ragged plowman who toils with his wife, while nearby sit a “litell childe lapped in cloutes” (438) and a pair of two-year-olds. The wife carries a long goad with which she prods the feeble oxen; and she, like her husband, is meanly dressed, wearing only “a cutted cote, cutted full heyghe,” and “Wrapped in a wynwe schete to weren hire fro weders, / Barfote on the bare ijs [ice], that the blode folwede” (434–36). To a certain extent these passages of description exist for the satire, but they also help convey a memorable *idea* of the character — Piers — who speaks authoritatively about spiritual issues in the poem. His very poverty, and his marked difference from the pampered friars, give him considerable power as a spokesman and norm for spiritual values.

As a cultural document, almost a treatise, *PPC* provides a gauge of antifraternal and Lollard sentiment in late Ricardian England. Antifraternal attacks originated in disputes between the secular clergy and friars in thirteenth-century Paris, and the themes were taken up by later writers, including Jean de Meun and Chaucer. In the mid-fourteenth century, Richard FitzRalph, Archbishop of Ireland, wrote influential tracts and delivered sermons attacking the friars for usurping privileges traditionally associated with the secular clergy, especially rights to preaching, hearing confession, and burial. In *De pauperie Salvatoris* (On the Savior’s Poverty, 1356), FitzRalph carefully defined Christ’s poverty as a natural state of lordship, “the renunciation of civil dominion and a reliance on the original dominion by which all the just share in common the goods of this world” (Szittya); and in his most important work, *Defensio curatorum*, an address delivered at the Avignon consistory before the Pope (8 November 1357), FitzRalph demanded that the friars be stripped of their privileges. John Wyclif formulated similar concepts for clerical disendowment.

The author of *PPC* articulates significant aspects of the Lollard agenda, including the usual attacks on friars but also specific allegations against the fraternal orders. He not only tries to document the claim that the friars fulfill Christ’s warnings about hypocrites in Matthew 23, but he also charges that they premeditate their readings of Scripture rather than relying on divine inspiration (586–90); that they are ruthless in extracting money from housewives (408–14);

## *Introduction*

that the Dominicans in their sumptuous convents include spying-holes and postern gates for coming and going (164–68); that they formulate intricate plots to visit their mistresses — “Grey grete-hedede quenes with gold by the eighen” — “in townes” (82–85); and even that they murder their brethren when the latter cannot produce sufficient cash through begging (626–28). That the friars themselves level many of these accusations only heightens the satire. Such attacks mirror similar charges in the Wycliffite sermon *Vae octuplex* (not before 1411) and in Middle English lyrics. In a poem (“On the Minorites [1382]”), for example, an anonymous poet declares:

Pai preche all of pouert, bot þat loue þai noght,  
For gode mete to þair mouþe þe toun is þurgh soght;  
Wyde are þair wonnynges & wonderfully wroght,  
Murdre and horedome ful dere has it boght.

Details of this attack — the hypocritical preaching, love of good food, spacious dwellings, and vicious practices — all find their way into *PPC*. Similarly, in an antifratalyric entitled by Robbins “The Friar’s Answer,” a friar bitterly complains about his loss of revenue since lay people now have access to Scripture:

Allas! what schul we freris do,  
Now lewed men kun holy writ?  
Alle abowte wherre I go  
Þei aposen me of it.  
Pen wondriþ me þat it is so  
How lewed men kun alle writ.  
Sertenly we be vn-do  
But if we mo anende it.

The author of *PPC* develops stereotypes for each of the four orders; and these stereotypes owe much to Lollard views. The Franciscans are the most hypocritical because they try to appear the most humble; the Dominicans are the most arrogant as well as the richest, most avaricious order; the Austins are the most vicious in attacking the other orders; and the Carmelites are the most straightforward, and outrageous, in begging for money. Piers, however, speaks approvingly of the founders of the fraternal orders, Francis and Dominic, but he censures their followers as evil. At one point Piers invokes Wyclif as a truthteller who cautioned the friars against their iniquitous behavior. He also speaks approvingly of Walter Brut, a Lollard and Welsh pacifist, who described himself as “a sinner, a layman, a farmer and a Christian” but whom the friars characterized as a

### *Piers the Plowman's Crede*

heretic. Bishop Trefnant of Hereford put Brut on trial for his views; the trial ended in 1393, which may be considered a *terminus a quo* for the composition of *PPC*.

*PPC* was written in the long line typical of the so-called Alliterative Revival, an English literary movement (perhaps self-conscious, perhaps not) of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Long-line poems of the Alliterative Revival, which include *Wynnere and Wastoure*, *Patience*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *St. Erkenwald*, and *Parlement of the Thre Ages*, usually contain four primary stresses per line and a varying number of unaccented syllables. Typically, but not invariably, alliteration (or assonance) occurs in three of the stressed syllables while the fourth stressed syllable remains unalliterated: a a / a x. In the first three lines of *PPC*, for example, alliteration (and stress) occurs on the letter c (line 1), f (line 2), and s (line 3).

Cros, and curteis Crist, this begynnyng spedē,  
For the Faderes frendchipe, that formede hevene,  
And thorough the speciaill Spirit that sprong of hem tweyne. . . .

Although *PPC* resembles other poems of the Revival, it does not exploit the special diction characteristic of late fourteenth-century alliterative verse (except for *Piers Plowman*). As Turville-Petre says: “Langland had shown that alliterative poetry could appeal to a wider audience by avoiding the ornateness and verbal complexity that characterised the works of the northern poets. The lead was followed by the Wycliffite author of *Pierce the Ploughman's Crede*, who rigorously excluded all traces of the characteristic alliterative diction.” This accessibility helped *PPC* survive as a living poem into the sixteenth century.

The text of this edition is based on a microfilm copy of Trinity College Cambridge, MS R. 3. 15, and is corrected by a microfilm version of British Library MS Reg. 18. B. XVII; by the black-letter edition of 1553, which has manuscript status; by Wright's 2nd ed. of 1856 in *The Vision and Creed of Piers Plowman*; and by Skeat's edition of 1867 for the Early English Text Society. I use Trinity because, as has been recognized since Skeat's edition, the text is superior to the 1553 edition even though it postdates the edition by as much as fifty years. I rely on Skeat and Wright for many reasonable corrections and emendations, but I often revert to manuscript readings, especially when Skeat's corrections involve spelling variants or normalizations (e.g., MS *hathe* for Skeat's *hath* at line 294; MS *beyn* rather than Skeat's *ben* at 364; MS *covetun* and *covetyne* rather than Skeat's *coueten* at 468 and 638). In these respects the present text is more conservative than Skeat's edition, but it contains the following normalizations: *th* for þ (thorn);

## *Introduction*

*y, g, or gh*, as the context demands, for *ȝ* (yogh); *and* for & (ampersand); and *I* for *y* or *i* as the first person pronoun. For the sake of emphasis and clarity, I sometimes introduce capitals, e.g., *Chirche* for MS *chirche*, *Hym* for MS *hym* [= Christ], etc.; and italics (e.g., *A-B-C* for MS *A.b.c*); and boldface to introduce the four fraternal orders (e.g., *A Menoure* at line 33).

Skeat believed that lines 817–21, witnessed only by the 1553 edition (printed by Wright as lines 1629–38), were sixteenth-century interpolations — he calls them “spurious” — so he printed the lines in brackets and italics. He conjectured that the editor of the 1553 edition inserted the lines to cover up for his deleting lines 822–23 and 828–30, which concern transubstantiation. I have not followed Skeat in questioning the lines, since they help “complete the Creed” in ways that harmonize with late fourteenth-century Lollard thought (Lawton).

Scriptural citations are from the Douai-Rheims version. Quotations from *Piers Plowman* B-text are from the edition of George Kane and E. Talbot Donaldson (London: Athlone, 1975); quotations from the C-text are from the edition of Derek Pearsall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978). Quotations from the antifraternal lyrics in the Introduction and Notes are from *Historical Poems of the XIVth & XVth Centuries*, ed. Rossell Hope Robbins (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), abbreviated HP XIV & XV. Quotations from Chaucer are from *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson, 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987). Citations from Middle English lyrics refer to *English Lyrics of the XIIIth Century*, ed. Carleton Brown (Oxford: Clarendon, 1932), and *Religious Lyrics of the XIVth Century*, ed. Carleton Brown and rev. G. V. Smithers, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1957), abbreviated, respectively, EL XIII and RL.

## *Manuscripts and Black-Letter Edition*

MS Trinity College Cambridge R. 3. 15 [abbrev. A].

British Library MS Bibl. Reg. 18. B. XVII [abbrev. B].

British Library MS Harley 78 fol. 3r.

*Pierce the Ploughmans Crede*. London, 1553. 2nd ed. 1561 [abbrev. C].

## *Piers the Plowman's Crede*

### ***Modern Editions of PPC***

Wright, Thomas, ed. *The Vision of Piers Plowman* [includes edition of PPC]. London, 1832. Reprinted London: J. R. Smith, 1856.

Skeat, Walter W., ed. *Pierce the Ploughmans Crede*. Early English Text Society. Original Series 30. London: Trubner, 1867.

### ***General Studies***

Coleman, Janet. *Medieval Readers and Writers, 1350-1400*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1981.

Kendall, Ritchie D. *The Drama of Dissent: The Radical Poetry of Nonconformity, 1380-1590*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986.

Oakden, J. P. *Alliterative Poetry in Middle English*. Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1930.

Peck, Russell A. "Social Conscience and the Poets." *Social Unrest in the Late Middle Ages*. Ed. Francis X. Newman. Binghamton, New York: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1986. Pp. 113-48.

Szittya, Penn. *The Antifraternal Tradition in Medieval Literature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987.

### ***Studies***

Doyle, A. I. "An Unrecognized Piece of *Piers the Ploughman's Creed* and Other Work by Its Scribe." *Speculum*, 34 (1959), 428-36.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Manuscripts." In *Middle English Alliterative Poetry and Its Literary Background: Seven Essays*. Ed. David Lawton. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1982. Pp. 88-100.

### *Introduction*

Kane, George. "Some Fourteenth-Century 'Political' Poems." In *Medieval English Religious and Ethical Literature: Essays in Honour of G. H. Russell*. Ed. Gregory Kratzmann and James Simpson. Cambridge, Eng.: D.S. Brewer, 1986. Pp. 82–91.

Lampe, David. "The Satiric Strategy of *Peres the Ploughmans Crede*." In *The Alliterative Tradition in the Fourteenth Century*. Ed. Bernard S. Levy and Paul E. Szarmach. Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1981. Pp. 69–80.

Lawton, David. "Lollardy and the *Piers Plowman* Tradition." *Modern Language Review*, 76 (1981), 780–93.

Turville-Petre, Thorlac. *The Alliterative Revival*. Totowa, New Jersey: D. S. Brewer, 1977.

von Nolcken, Christina. "Piers Plowman, the Wycliffites, and Pierce the Plowman's Creed." *The Yearbook of Langland Studies*, 2 (1988), 71–102.

### *Bibliographies*

Robbins, Rossell Hope. "XIII. Poems Dealing with Contemporary Conditions" in *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English 1050–1500*, Volume 5. New Haven: The Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1975. Pp. 1447, 1676–77.

*Piers the Plowman's Crede*

Cros, and curteis Crist, this begynnynge spede,	aid
For the Faderes frendchipe, that fourmede hevene,	
And thorugh the speciall Spirit that sprong of hem tweyne, <sup>1</sup>	
And alle in on godhed endles dwelleth.	<i>a single</i>
5 <i>A</i> and all myn <i>A-B-C</i> after have I lerned,	
And patred in my <i>Pater Noster</i> iche poynt after other,	<i>repeated; each</i>
And after all myn <i>Ave Marie</i> almost to the ende.	
But al my kare is to comen, for I can nohght my Crede. <sup>2</sup>	<i>know</i>
Whan I schal schewen myn schrift, schent mote I worthen: <sup>3</sup>	
10     The prest wil me punyche, and penaunce enjoyne.	<i>punish</i>
The lengthe of a Lenten, flech moot I leve	<i>meat must; abstain from</i>
After that Estur ys ycomen, and that is hard fare;	
And Wedenesday iche wyke withouten flech-mete.	<i>each week</i>
And also Jesu hymself to the Jewes he seyde:	
15     "He that leeveheth nougħt on me, he leseth the blisse."	<i>believes; loses</i>
Therfor lerne the byleve levest me were, <sup>4</sup>	
And if any werldly wight wille me couthe,	<i>tell</i>
Other lewed or lerid, that lyveth therafter, <sup>5</sup>	
And fulliche folweth the feyth, and feyneth non other,	<i>professes</i>
20     That no worldliche wele wilneth no tyme,	<i>weal desires</i>
But lyveth in lovyngē of God, and His lawe holdeth,	
And for no getynge of good never his God greveth,	<i>material goods; offends</i>
But followth Him the full wey, as He the folke taughte.	
But to many maner of men this matter is asked,	

---

<sup>1</sup> *And through the special Spirit that sprang from the two of Them*

<sup>2</sup> *But all my sorrow is coming for I don't know my Creed (see note)*

<sup>3</sup> *When I shall make known my confession, I must be ruined*

<sup>4</sup> *Therefore, I would be gladdest to learn the faith ("belief")*

<sup>5</sup> *Either unlettered or lettered, who lives in this way*

*Piers the Plowman's Crede*

25	Bothe to lered and to lewed, that seyn that they leveden <sup>1</sup> Hollich on the grete God, and holden alle His hestes.	<i>Wholly; commandments an inquiry thus many fail</i>
	But by a fraynyng forthan faileth ther manye. For first I fraynede the freres, and they me fulle tolden,	<i>questioned their</i>
30	That alle the frute of the fayth was in here foure ordres, And cofres of Cristendam, and the keye bothen, And the lok of beleve lyeth in her hondes.	<i>lock know; man</i>
	Thenne wende I to wyten, and with a whight I mette, A Menoure in a morow-tide, and to this man I saide:	<i>Minorite (Franciscan friar) plain truth</i>
35	"Sire, for grete God's love, the graith thou me telle — Of what myddelerde man myghte I best lerne	<i>earthly know; sorrow</i>
	My Crede? For I can it nought, my kare is the more; And therfore, for Cristes love, thi councell I pracie.	
	A Carm me hath ycovenaunt the Crede me to teche. <sup>2</sup> But for thou knowest Carmes well, thi counsaile I aske."	
40	This Menour loked on me, and lawghyng he seyde, "Leve Cristen man, I leve that thou madde!	<i>Dear; believe; rave</i>
	Whough schulde thei techen the God, that con not hemselfe? <sup>3</sup>	
	Thei ben but jugulers and japers, of kynde, Lorels and lechures, and lemmans holden.	<i>tricksters; jesters, by nature Villains; keep mistresses</i>
45	Neyther in order ne out, but unnethe lybbeth, And byjapeth the folke with gestes of Rome. It is but a faynt folk, ifounded upon japes,	<i>live unconstrained dupe; tales only; weak</i>
	Thei maken hem Maries men — so thei men tellen — And lieth on our Ladie many a longe tale.	<i>them</i>
50	And that wicked folke wymmen bitraith, And bigileth hem of her good with glaverynge wordes, And therwith holden her hous in harlotes werkes.	<i>possessions; flattering their; scoundrels'</i>
	And, so save me God, I hold it grete synne To gyven hem any good, swiche glotones to fynde,	<i>support</i>
55	To maynteyne swiche maner men that mychel good destruyeth.	<i>such; much</i>
	Yet seyn they in here sutilte to sottes in townes, They comen out of Carmeli Crist for to followen,	<i>their craftiness; fools</i>
	And feyneth hem with holynes, that yvele hem bisemeth.	<i>ill suits them</i>

<sup>1</sup> Both to the learned and the ignorant, who say they believe

<sup>2</sup> A Carmelite friar has agreed to teach me the Creed

<sup>3</sup> How should they teach you about God, who don't know themselves?

*Piers the Plowman's Crede*

	Thei lyven more in lecherie and lieth in her tales	
60	Than suen any god liife — but lyrken in her selles,	<i>follow; honest; lurk; cells</i>
	And wynnen worldliche god, and wasten it in synne.	<i>worldly goods</i>
	And yif thei couthen her Crede other on Crist leveden,	<i>knew; or; believed</i>
	Thei weren nought so hardie swich harlotri usen. <sup>1</sup>	
	Sikerli I can nought fynden who hem first founded,	<i>Truly</i>
65	But the foles foundeden hemself, Freres of the Pye,	
	And maken hem mendynauns, and marre the puple.	<i>mendicants; harm people</i>
	But what glut of the gomes may any good kachen, <sup>2</sup>	
	He will kepen it hymself, and cofren it faste,	<i>stash it securely</i>
	And theigh his felawes fayle good, for him he may sterven. <sup>3</sup>	
70	Her money may biquest and testament maken,	
	And no obedience bere, but don as hym luste.	<i>acts just as he pleases</i>
	And ryght as Robertes men raken aboute	<i>like robbers [they] roam</i>
	At feires and at ful ales, and fyllen the cuppe,	<i>crowded ale-fests</i>
	And precheth all of pardon to plesen the puple.	<i>people</i>
75	Her pacience is all pased and put out to ferme, <sup>4</sup>	
	And pride is in her poverte, that litell is to preisen. <sup>5</sup>	
	And at the lulling of oure Ladye, the wymmen to lyken, <sup>6</sup>	
	And miracles of mydwyves, and maken wymmen to wenem	<i>suppose</i>
	That the lace of oure Ladie smok lightheth hem of children. <sup>7</sup>	
80	Thei ne prechen nought of Powel, ne penaunce for synne,	<i>St. Paul's doctrine</i>
	But all of mercy and mensk that Marie may helpen.	<i>grace</i>
	With sterne staves and stronge they over lond straketh	<i>wander</i>
	Thider as her lemmans liggeth, and lurketh in townes,	<i>There where their</i>
	Grey grete-hedede quenes with gold by the eighen,	<i>crones; eyes</i>
85	And seyn that her sustren thei ben that sojourneth aboute;	
	And thus about they gon and Godes folke bytraieth.	
	It is the puple that Powell preached of in his tyme.	<i>people; Paul</i>

<sup>1</sup> *They were not so bold [to] practice such wickedness*

<sup>2</sup> *But whatever glutton of the men (mendicants) may seize any goods*

<sup>3</sup> *Though his brothers lack goods, as far as he is concerned they can die*

<sup>4</sup> *Their patience has vanished and [been] put out to pasture*

<sup>5</sup> *And pride is in their poverty, [in which] there is little to praise*

<sup>6</sup> *When lullabies for the Virgin are sung, to please the women*

<sup>7</sup> *That the lace from Our Lady's shift delivers their children (by easing childbirth)*

*Piers the Plowman's Crede*

	He seyde of swich folk that so aboute wente, ‘Wepyng, I warne yow of walkers aboute.	such
90	It beth enemyes of the Cros, that Crist upon tholede. Swich slomerers in slepe slauthe is her ende, And glotony is her god, with gloppynge of drynk, And gladnes in glee, and gret joye ymaked; In the schendyng of swiche schall mychel folk lawghe.'	suffered slumberers; sloth gulping songs downfall; many; laugh
95	Therfore, frend, for thi feyth, fond to don betere, Leve nouȝt on tho losels, but let hem forth pasen, For thei ben fals in her feith, and fele mo oþere." “Alas! frere,” quath I tho, “my purpos is i-failed,	strive louts many more said; lost
100	Now is my counfort a-cast; canstou no bote, Where I myghte meten with a man that myghte me wissen For to conne my Crede, Cryst for to folwen?" “Certeyne, felawe,” quath the frere, “withouten any faille.	cast away; know you no remedy teach learn said
105	Of all men opon mold we Menures most scheweth The pure Apostells life, with penance on erthe, And suen hem in saunctite, and suffren well harde. We haunten none tavernes ne hobelen aboute;	earth; Friars Minor emulate them frequent; stumble
110	At marketts and myracles we medleth us nevere. We hondlen no money but menelich faren, And haven hunger at the meate, at ich a mel ones; And haven forsaken the worlde and in wo lybbeth	miracle plays; concern ourselves shabbily every meal live
115	In penaunce and poverte, and precheth the puple, By ensample of oure life, soules to helpen; And in povertie praien for all oure parteners That gyveth us any good, God to honouren,	lay brethren (see note)
120	Other bell other booke, or breed to our fode, Other catell other cloth to coveren with our bones, Money or money-worthe — here mede is in heven. For we buldeth a burwgh, a brod and a large, A chirche and a chapaile with chambers alofte, With wide windowes ywrought and walles well heye That mote bene portreid and paynt and pulched ful clene <sup>1</sup> With gaie glittering glas, glowing as the sonne.	either bell or Either possessions their reward convent high

---

<sup>1</sup> That must be drawn and painted and completely polished

*Piers the Plowman's Crede*

	And myghtestou amenden us with money of thyn owne, <sup>1</sup>	
	Thou chuldest cnely bifore Crist, in compas of gold,	should kneel
125	In the wide windowe westwarde, wel nighe in the myddell,	
	And Seynt Fraunces himself schall folden the in his cope,	thee
	And presente the to the Trynitie, and prae for thy synnes.	
	Thy name schall noblich ben wryten and wrought for the nones;	occasion
	And, in remembraunce of the, yrade the forever.	read there
130	And, brother, be thou nought aferd. Bythenk in thyn herte,	
	Though thou conne nought thi Crede, kare thou no more.	know not
	I schal asoilen the, syre, and setten it on my soule,	absolve you
	And thou maie maken this good, thenk thou non other."	If
	"Sire," I saide, "in certayne I schal gon and asaye" —	try
135	And he sette on me his honde, and asoilede me clene,	absolved me entirely
	And their I parted him fro, withouten any peine;	thereafter
	In covenant that I come agen, Crist he me betaughte. <sup>2</sup>	
	Thanne saide I to myself: "Here semeth litel trewthe.	
	First to blamen his brother, and bacbyten him foule,	backbite; foully
140	Theire-as curteis Crist clereliche saide,	
	'Whow myght-tou in thine brother eigh a bare mote loken, <sup>3</sup>	
	And in thyn owen eigh a nem toten?	eye; perceive
	See fyrist on thiself, and sithen on another,	Look; only then
	And clese clene thi syght, and kepe well thyn eigh,	utterly
145	And for another mannes eigh ordeyne after." <sup>4</sup>	
	And also I sey Coveitise catel to fongen,	saw Greed seize property
	That Crist hath clerliche forboden and clenliche destruede,	forbidden; completely
	And saide to his sueres forsothe on this wise:	followers
	'Nought thi neighbours good covet yn no tyme.'	
150	But Charite and Chastete ben chased out clene,	
	But Crist seide, 'by her fruyt men shall hem ful knownen.'	
	Thanne saide I, "Certeyn, sire, thou demest full trewe."	judge truly
	Thanne thought I to frayne the first of this fourre ordirs,	question
	And presede to the Prechoures to proven here wille.	pressed on; probe
155	Ich highede to her house to herken of more;	hied

<sup>1</sup> And if you could enhance (i.e., enrich) us with your own money

<sup>2</sup> With the understanding that I return, he commended me to Christ

<sup>3</sup> How might you espy in your brother's eye a mere speck

<sup>4</sup> And only afterwards regulate another man's eye

*Piers the Plowman's Crede*

	And whan I cam to that court I gaped aboute. Swich a bild bold, ybuld opon erthe heighth Say I nought in certeine siththe a longe tyme.	building; built saw; for inspected; eagerly
160	I yemed upon that house and yerne theron loked Whough the pileres weren ypeynt and pulched ful clene, And queynteli icorven with curiouse knottes, With wyndowes well ywrought wide up o-lofte.	How; entirely polished elaborately carved
165	And thanne I entrid in, and even-forth went, And all was walled that wone, though it wide were, With posternes in pryytie, to pasen when hem liste; <sup>1</sup> Orcheyardes and erberes evesed well clene,	straight ahead dwelling
170	And a curious cros craftly entayled, With tabernacles ytight to toten all abouten. <sup>2</sup> The pris of a plough-lond, of penyes so rounde, To aparaille that pyler were pure lytel. <sup>3</sup>	arbors edged all around carved
	Thanne I munte me forth the mynstre to knownen, And awaytede a woon, wonderlie well ybeld, <sup>4</sup> With arches on everiche half and belliche ycorven, With crochettes on corners, with knottes of golde,	went
175	Wyde wyndowes ywrought, ywritten full thikke, Schynen with schapen scheldes to schewen aboute, With merkes of marchautes ymedled bytwene, Mo than twenty and two twyes ynoumbred.	handsomely carved croquets
180	Ther is none heraud that hath half swich a rolle, Right as a rageman hath reckned hem newe. Tombes opon tabernacles tyld opon lofte, Housed in hirnes harde set abouten,	coats of arms badges; intermingled More no herald catalogue (list)
185	Of armede alabaustre, clad for the nones, <sup>5</sup> Made upon marbel in many maner wyse, Knygthes in her conisantes, clad for the nones, All it semed seyntes ysacred opon erthe;	raised nooks
	And lovely ladies ywrought leyen by her sydes	of marble identifying emblems sanctified

<sup>1</sup> With secret postern gates, to come and go when it pleased them

<sup>2</sup> Furnished with lookout cells to spy all around

<sup>3</sup> The cost of a year's plow-land, of pennies so round, / could not adorn that pillar

<sup>4</sup> And saw a dwelling, wonderfully well constructed

<sup>5</sup> Of alabaster with coats of arms, decorated appropriately

*Piers the Plowman's Crede*

	In many gay garmentes that were gold-beten. Though the tax of ten yer were trewly ygadered,	[of] beaten gold years; gathered
190	Nolde it nought maken that hous half, as I trowe. <sup>1</sup> Thanne kam I to that cloister and gaped abouten Whough it was pilered and peynt and portred well clene, All yhyled with leed, lowe to the stones, And ypaved with peynt til, iche poynte after other;	looked How; fully adorned covered painted tiles conduits
195	With kundites of clene tyn closed all aboute, With lavoures of latun lovelyche ygreithed. <sup>2</sup> I trowe the gaynage of the ground in a gret schire      believe; income; large shire Nolde aparaile that place, oo poynt til other ende. <sup>3</sup>	curiously engraved decorated ceiling
200	Thanne was the chaptire hous wrought as a greet chirche, Corven and covered and queyntliche entayled, With semliche selure yset on lofte, As a Parlement hous ypeynted aboute.	refectory
205	Thanne ferd I into fraytour, and fond ther an other, An halle for an heygh kinge, an housholde to holden, With brode bordes aboute, ybenched wel clene, <sup>4</sup> With windowes of glas, wrought as a chirche.	further saw
210	Thanne walkede I ferrer and went all abouten, And seigh halles full hyghe and houses full noble, Chambers with chymneyes, and chapells gaie; And kychens for an hyghe kinge in castells to holden;	dormitory furnished
215	And her dortour ydighte with dores ful stronge; Fermery and fraitur, with fele mo houses,      Infirmary; refectory; many more And all strong ston wall sterne opon heithe, With gaie garites and grete, and iche hole yglased;	walls sturdy in their height garrets; wholly polished
220	And othere houses ynowe to herberwe the quene. And yet thise bilderes wilne beggen a bagg-ful of wheate Of a pure pore man, that maie onethe paie Half his rente in a yer, and half ben behynde. Thanne turned I agen, whan I hadde all ytoted, And fond in a freitour a frere on a benche,	enough; lodge want [to] From a wholly poor; scarcely again; observed refectory

<sup>1</sup> It would not [be enough] to build half that house, I believe

<sup>2</sup> With washbasins of brass beautifully fashioned

<sup>3</sup> Wouldn't furnish that place, one part to the end

<sup>4</sup> With wide tables [all] around, fully furnished with benches

*Piers the Plowman's Crede*

	A greet cherl and a grym, growen as a tonne, <sup>1</sup>	
	With a face as fat as a full bledder	<i>bladder</i> <i>very full</i>
	Blowen bretfull of breth, and as a bagge honged	<i>jowl</i>
	On bothen his chekes, and his chyn with a chol lollede	<i>goose egg; fat</i>
225	As greet as a gos eye growen all of grece,	<i>[Such] that; quagmire</i>
	That all wagged his fleche as a quyk myre.	
	His cope that biclypped him wel clene was it folden, <sup>2</sup>	<i>made; heel</i>
	Of double worstede ydyght doun to the hele.	<i>surcoat; pure white</i>
	His kyrtel of clene whijt clenlyche ysewed;	
230	Hyt was good ynow of ground greyn for to beren. <sup>3</sup>	
	I haylsede that herdeman, and hendliche I saide:	<i>greeted; graciously</i>
	“Gode syre, for Godes love, canstou me graith tellen	<i>plain truth</i>
	To any worthely wight that wissen me couthe	<i>person; could teach me</i>
	Whou I schulde conne me Crede, Crist for to folowe,	
235	That levede lelliche himself, and lyvede therafter,	<i>truly; accordingly</i>
	That feynede non falshede, but fully Crist suwede?	<i>followed</i>
	For sich a certeyn man syker wold I trosten,	<i>more surely</i>
	That he wolde telle me the trewthe and turne to none other.	
	And an Austyn this ender daie egged me faste; <sup>4</sup>	
240	That he wolde techen me wel he plyght me his treuthe,	<i>pledged</i>
	And seyde me, ‘serteyne, sythen Crist died,	<i>since</i>
	Oure ordir was yvelles and erst yfounde.”	<i>guiltless; first established</i>
	“Fyrst, felawe,” quath he, “fy on his pilche!	<i>said; furred clothes</i>
	He is but abortif, eked with cloutes.	<i>monstrous; dressed meanly in rags</i>
245	He holdeth his ordynaunce withe hores and theves,	<i>whores</i>
	And purchaseth hem prvyileges with penyes so rounde.	
	It is a pur pardoner’s craft — prove and asaye!	<i>quintessential</i>
	For have thei thi money a moneth therafter,	<i>[if] they acquire; month</i>
	Certes, theigh thou come agen, he nyl the nought knownen.	<i>though; won’t know you</i>
250	But, felawe, our foundement was first of the othere,	<i>founding; prior to</i>
	And we ben founded fulliche, withouten fayntise;	<i>deceit</i>
	And we ben clerkes ycnownen, cunnyng in scole,	<i>famous; clever</i>
	Proved by procession, by processe of lawe.	<i>Tested in due course</i>

<sup>1</sup> A large and fierce peasant, grown [as large] as a barrel

<sup>2</sup> His outer garment that covered him very neatly was folded

<sup>3</sup> It had good enough soil (i.e., was dirty enough) to grow grain

<sup>4</sup> For an Austin friar has recently egged me on urgently

*Piers the Plowman's Crede*

	Of oure ordre ther bichopes wel manye, Seyntes on sundry stedes that suffreden harde;	places
255	And we ben proved the prijs of popes at Rome, And of gretest degré, as godspelles telleth."	most excellent the Gospels
	"A, syre," quath I thanne, "thou seyst a gret wonder, Sithen Crist seyd Hymself to all His disciples:	
260	'Which of you that is most, most schal he werche, And who is goer byforne, first schal he serven,' And seyde, 'He sawe Satan sytten full heyghe, And ful lowe ben yleyd.' In lyknes He tolde That in povernesse of sprit is spedfullest hele,	greatest health
265	And hertes of heynesse harmeth the soule. And therfore, frere, fare well. Here fynde I but pride. I preise nouȝt thi preaching but as a pure myte." And angerliche I wandlede, the Austyns to prove,	arrogance only mere sound out
270	And mette with a maister of tho men, and meklich I seyde: "Maister, for the moder love that Marie men kalleth, Knowest thou ought, ther thou comest, a creature on erthe, That coude me my Crede teche and trewliche enfourme, Withouten flaterynge fare, and nothing feyne? That folweth fulliche the feith and none other fables,	master; humbly mother's; call at all inform [about] whole-heartedly
275	Withouten gabbynge of glose, as the godspelles telleth? A Menour hath me holly byhyght to helen my soule, For he seith that her sekete is sykerest on erthe, And ben keperes of the keye that Cristendome helpeth, And purliche in poverte the apostells they suweth."	elaborate commentaries Franciscan friar; promised their sect; best
280	"Alas!" quath the frier, "almost I madde in mynde, To sen hough this Minoures many men begyleth! Sothli, somme of tho gomes hath more good himselfe <sup>1</sup> Than ten knyghtes that I knowe of catell in cofers. In fraytour thei faren best of all the foure orders,	rave see how possessions refectory
285	And usen ypocricie in all that they werchen, And prechen all of parfites; — but loke now, I the praye, Nought but profre hem in pryvite a peny for a masse, And, but his cnave be prest, put out myne eighē, <sup>2</sup>	do perfection Just offer them secretly

<sup>1</sup> Truly, some of those men have more goods themselves

<sup>2</sup> If his servant is not ready [to take the penny], put out my eye

*Piers the Plowman's Crede*

	Though he hadde more money hid than marchauntes of wolle!	wool
290	Loke hough this loresmen lordes bytrayen, Seyn that they folwen fully Fraunceses rewle, That in cotyng of his cope is more cloth yfolden Than was in Fraunces froc, whan he hem first made.	how these teachers [St.] Francis's rule
	And yet, under that cope, a cote hathe he furred With foyns, or with fitchewes, other fyn bever, <sup>1</sup> And that is cutted to the kne, and queyntly ybotend, Lest any spirituall man aspie that gile.	cutting Francis's cloak
295	Fraunces bad his bretheren barfote to wenden. Nou han thei buckled schon for bleynynge of her heles, <sup>2</sup> And hosen in harde weder, yhamled by the ancle, And spicerie sprad in her purse to parten where hem lust.	expertly buttoned up observe that ruse go
300	Lordes loveth hem well, for thei so lowe crouchen; But knewen men her cautel and her queynt wordes, <sup>3</sup> Thei wolden worchypen hem nought but a litel, The image of ypocricie, ymped upon fendas.	cut short at give away bow
305	But, sone, yif thou wilte ben syker, seche thou no ferther. We friers be the first, and founded upon treuthe. Paul, <i>primus heremite</i> , put us himselfe Awey into wildernes, the werlde to dispisen;	honor them only grafted; fiends secure; seek
310	And there we lengden full longe, and lyveden full harde, Fortho all this freren folke weren founded in townes And taughthen untrulie — and that we well aspiede. And for chefe charitie, we chargeden us selven;	dwelled Until; mendicant
315	In amending of this men we maden oure celles To ben in cyties yset, to styghtle the people, Preching and praying, as profetes schulden. And so we holden us the heved of all Holy Chirche.	took it upon ourselves these supervise
320	We have power of the pope purliche assoilen All that helpen our hous, in helpe of her soules, To dispensen hem with in dedes of her synne — All that amendeth oure hous, in money other elles, With corne, other catell, or clothes of beddes,	head totally to absolve for their something else foodstuff; goods

<sup>1</sup> With martin's fur, or with fitchet's fur, or [with] fine beaver

<sup>2</sup> Now they have buckled shoes for sores on their heels

<sup>3</sup> But if men knew their trickery and their cunning words

*Piers the Plowman's Crede*

	Other bedys or broche, or breed for our fode.	<i>beads or brooches</i>
	And yif thou hast any good, and wilt thiself helpen,	
325	Helpe us herteliche therwith; and here I undertake	
	Thou schalt ben brother of our hous, and a boke habben,	
	At the next chaptire, clereliche ensealed;	<i>duly sealed</i>
	And thanne oure Provinciall hath power to assoilen	<i>absolve</i>
	Alle sustren and bretheren that beth of our order.	
330	And though thou conne nought thi Crede, knele downe here.	<i>know not</i>
	My soule I sette for thyn to asoile the clene,	
	In covenauant that thou come againe and katell us bringe."	<i>With understanding</i>
	And thanne loutede I adoun, and he me leve grauntede,	<i>knelt</i>
	And so I partid him fro and the frere left.	
335	Thanne seid I to myself, "Here is no bote!"	<i>remedy</i>
	Heere pride is the <i>Pater Noster</i> , in preyng of synne;	
	Here Crede is coveytise, now can I no ferther.	
	Yet will I fondon forth and fraynen the Karmes."	<i>venture; ask</i>
	Thanne totede I into a taverne, and ther I aspyede	<i>looked; espied</i>
340	Two frere Karmes with a full coppe.	<i>Carmelites</i>
	There I auntrede me in, and aisliche I seide:	<i>made bold to go; timidly</i>
	"Leve syre, for the Lordes love that thou on levest,	<i>Dear; believe in</i>
	Lere me to som man, my Crede for to lerne,	<i>Guide</i>
	That lyveth in leel lijf and loveth no synne,	<i>honorable</i>
345	And gloseth nought the godspell, but halt Godes hestys,	<i>commandments</i>
	And nether money ne mede ne may him naught letten,	<i>reward; deter</i>
	But werchen after Godes worde, withouten any faile.	
	A Prechour yprofessed hath plight me his trewthe <sup>1</sup>	
	To techen me trewlie; but woldest thou me tellen	<i>if you would</i>
350	For thei ben certayne men and syker on to trosten, <sup>2</sup>	
	I wolde quyten the thi mede, as my mighte were." <sup>3</sup>	
	"A trefle!" quath he, "trewlie, his treuth is full litell.	<i>trifle</i>
	He dyned nought with Domynike sithe Crist deide!	<i>since; died</i>
	For with the princes of pride the Prechours dwellen.	
355	Thei bene as digne as the devel that droppeth fro hevene.	<i>haughty; fell</i>

<sup>1</sup> A professed Dominican has pledged me his word

<sup>2</sup> For they are confident men and more trustworthy

<sup>3</sup> I would pay you as great a reward as I can

*Piers the Plowman's Crede*

	With hertes of heynesse wough halwen thei chirches <sup>1</sup> And deleth in devynitie, as dogges doth bones.	
	Thei medleth with messages and mariages of grete; <sup>2</sup> They leeven with lordes, with lesynges ynowe;	<i>live; falsehoods</i>
360	They biggeth hem bichopryches with bagges of golde; Thei wilneth worshipes; but waite on her dedes. <sup>3</sup>	<i>buy for themselves</i>
	Herken at Herdforthe hou that they werchen, And loke whou that thei lyven and leeve as thou fyndest. <sup>4</sup>	<i>Observe what happens</i>
	They beyn counseilours of kinges, Crist wot the sothe,	<i>knows the truth</i>
365	Whou they curry kinges and her back claweth. God leve hem leden well in lyvinge of heven, And glose hem nought for her good to greven her soules.	<i>How; stroke</i>
	I pray the, where ben thei pryve with any pore wightes, That maie not amenden her hous ne amenden hemselfen?	<i>permit them to teach</i>
370	Thei prechen in proude harte and preiseth her order, And werdliche worchype wilneth in erthe. Leeve it well, lef man, and men ryght lokede, <sup>5</sup>	<i>deceive (gloze)</i>
	Ther is more pryve pride in Prechours' hertes Than ther lefte in Lucyfer er he were lowe fallen.	<i>close</i>
375	They ben digne as dich water that dogges in bayteth. <sup>6</sup> Loke a ribaut of hem that can nought wel reden	<i>financially improve</i>
	His Rewle and his Respondes but be pure rote, Als as he were a connynge clerke he casteth the lawes,	<i>worldly respect desire</i>
	Nought lowli but lordly, and leesinges lyeth.	<i>secret</i>
380	For ryght as Menoures most ypocricie useth, Ryght so ben Prechers proude purlyche in herte. But, Cristen creatour, we Karmes first comen	<i>remained</i>
	Even in Elyes tyme, first of hem all, And lyven by our Lady and lelly hir serven	<i>Choose a rascal</i>
385	In clene comun life; kepen us out of synne,	<i>except by</i>
		<i>As if; formulates</i>
		<i>lies their lies</i>
		<i>just</i>
		<i>completely</i>
		<i>Elijah's (see note)</i>
		<i>faithfully</i>
		<i>virtuous; ourselves</i>

<sup>1</sup> With arrogant hearts, how they hallow churches

<sup>2</sup> They concern themselves with messages and weddings of magnates

<sup>3</sup> They desire respect; but look to their deeds

<sup>4</sup> And note how they live and believe what you see

<sup>5</sup> Believe it well, dear man, if men observed properly

<sup>6</sup> They are [as] proud as ditch water in which dogs feed

*Piers the Plowman's Crede*

	Nowt proude as Prechours beth, but prayen full still For all the soules and the lyves that we by lybbeth. We connen on no queyntyse — Crist wot the sothe — But bysith us in oure bedes, as us best holdeth.	live by know; subtlety prayers, as we think best dear true; believe; say humble; worth surpasses If
390	And therfore, leve leel man, levee that ich sygge, A masse of us mene men is of more mede And passeth all priers of thies proude freers. And thou wilt gyven us any good, I would the here graunten To taken all thy penance in peril of my soule;	absolve thee grain then bag (poke)
395	And though thou conne nought thy Crede, clene the assoile, So that thou mowe amenden our hous with money other elles, <sup>1</sup> With some katell, other corne, or cuppes of silver." "Trewely, frere," quath I tho, "to tellen the the sothe,	work; earn become prosperous fool catch fish given away far; unless; get must go away hurry; promised will She
400	Ther is no peny in my palke to payen for my mete. I have no good ne no gold, but go thus abouten, And travaile full trewly to wynnen withe my fode. But woldest thou, for Godes love, lerne me my Crede, I schulde don for thy will whan I wele hadde."	bag (poke) work; earn become prosperous fool catch fish given away far; unless; get must go away hurry; promised will She
405	"Trewlie," quath the frere, "a fol I the holde! Thou woldest not weten thy fote and woldest fich kacchen! Our pardon and oure preiers so beth they nought parted; Oure power lasteth nought so feer, but we some peny fongen. Fare well," quath the frere, "for I mot hethen fondon,	she revoke; hasten get; obtain (see note)
410	And hyen to an houswife that hath us bequethen Ten pounde in hir testament, to tellen the sothe. Ho draweth to the dethewarde, but yet I am in drede Lest ho turne her testament; and therfore I hyghe To haven hir to our hous and henten, yif I mighte,	will hurry; promised will She
415	An anuell for myn owen use, to helpen to clothe." "Godys forbode," quath his fellawe, "but ho forth passe <sup>2</sup> Wil ho is in purpose with us to departen. <sup>3</sup> God let her no lenger lyven, for letteres ben manye." <sup>4</sup> Thanne turned I me forthe and talked to myselfe	she revoke; hasten get; obtain (see note)

<sup>1</sup> Providing you enhance our house with money or [something] else

<sup>2</sup> "God forbid," said his companion, "except that she should die"

<sup>3</sup> While she intends to leave her money to us

<sup>4</sup> God let her live no longer [than my visit], for [there are] many such letters

*Piers the Plowman's Crede*

	Of the falshede of this folk, whou feithles they werne.	were
420	And as I wente be the waie, wepynge for sorowe,	
	And seigh a sely man me by, opon the plow hongen. <sup>1</sup>	
	His cote was of a cloute that cary was ycalled,	rag
	His hod was full of holes, and his heer oute,	hood; hair gone
	With his knopped schon clouted full thykke. <sup>2</sup>	
425	His ton toteden out as he the londe treddede,	toes poked out
	His hosen overhongan his hokschynes on everiche a side,	Achilles tendon
	Al beslombred in fen as he the plow folwede. <sup>3</sup>	
	Twey myteynes, as mete, maad all of cloutes; <sup>4</sup>	
	The fyngers weren forwerd and ful of fen honged.	were frazzled; muck
430	This whit waselede in the fen almost to the ancle,	man wallowed
	Foure rotheren hym byforn that feble were worthen.	heifers; had become
	Men myghte reken ich a ryb, so reufull they weren.	count each rib; pitiful
	His wijf walked him with, with a longe gode,	goad (whip)
	In a cutted cote, cutted full heyghe,	short; coat
435	Wrapped in a wynwe schete to weren hire fro weders, <sup>5</sup>	ice
	Barfote on the bare ijs, that the blode folwede.	field's edge; scrap-bowl
	And at the londes ende laye a litell crom-bolle,	wrapped in rags
	And theron lay a litell childe lapped in cloutes,	two of two years
	And tweyne of tweie yeris olde opon another syde,	a single song
440	And alle they songen o songe, that sorwe was to heren;	sorrowful
	They crieden alle o cry, a carefull note.	simple
	The sely man sighede sore and seide, "Children, beth stille!"	
	This man loked opon me, and leet the plow stonden,	
	And seyde, "Sely man, why syghest thou so harde?	Poor
445	Yif the lakke lijflode, lene the ich will	livelihood; loan
	Swich good as God hath sent. Go we, leve brother."	Come along, dear
	I saide thanne, "Naye, sire, my sorwe is wel more,	
	For I can nought my Crede, I kare well harde.	don't know
	For I can fynden no man that fully byleveth	
450	To techen me the heyghe weie, and therfore I wepe.	high

<sup>1</sup> And saw a poor man near me, [who] bent over the plow

<sup>2</sup> With his lumpy shoes stuffed with rags

<sup>3</sup> All covered with mud as he followed the plow

<sup>4</sup> Two mittens, as poor [as the shoes], made all of rags

<sup>5</sup> Wrapped in a winnowing-sheet to protect her from foul weather

*Piers the Plowman's Crede*

	For I have fondaſt the freres of the foure orders, For there I wende have wist, but now my wit lakketh; <sup>1</sup> And all my hope was on hem, and myn herte also. But thei ben fully feithles, and the fend sueth."	gone to <i>follow the fiend</i>
455	"A, brother," quath he tho, "beware of tho foles! For Crist seyde Hymſelfe 'of swich I you warne,' And false profetes in the feith He fulliche hem calde, 'In vestimentis ovium, but onlie withinne	<i>fools</i> <i>called</i> <i>In sheep's clothing; except within</i>
	Thei ben wilde wer-wolves that wiln the folk robbēn.'	<i>wish to rob</i>
460	The fend founded hem first the feith to destroie, And by his craft thei comen in to combren the Chirche, By the coveitise of his craft the curates to helpen. But now they haven an hold, they harmen full many.	<i>devil</i> <i>burden</i>
	Thei don nouȝt after Domynick, but dreccheth the puple,	<i>oppress</i>
465	Ne folwen nouȝt Fraunces, but falslyche lybben, And Austynes rewle thei rekneth but a fable, But purchaseth hem pryylege of popes at Rome. Thei covetun confessions to kachen some hire, <sup>2</sup>	<i>live</i>
	And sepultures also, some wayten to cacchen. <sup>3</sup>	
470	But other cures of Cristen thei coveten nouȝt to have, But there as wynnyng liȝt — he loketh none other." <sup>4</sup>	
	"Whough schal I nemne thy name that neighebours the kalleth?" <sup>5</sup>	
	"Peres," quath he, "the pore man, the plowe-man I hadde." <i>am called</i>	
	"A, Peres," quath I tho, "I pray the, thou me telle	
475	More of thise tryflers, hou trecherously thei libbeth? For ichon of hem hath told me a tale of that other, Of her wicked liȝt, in werlde that hy lybbeth. I trowe that some wikked wyght wroughte this orders	<i>treacherously; live</i>
	Thorughe that gleym of that gest that Golias is ycalde, <sup>6</sup>	<i>each one of them</i>
480	Other ells Satan himself sente hem fro hell	<i>their; where they</i>  <i>(see note)</i> <i>Or else</i>

<sup>1</sup> From them I thought I would learn, but now I am at my wits' end

<sup>2</sup> They covet [the right to hear] confessions to acquire some wages

<sup>3</sup> And burials also, to get paid for singing masses

<sup>4</sup> But where profit lies — they look for nothing else

<sup>5</sup> How shall I call you by the name your neighbors call you?

<sup>6</sup> Through that trick of that story that is called *The Apocalypse of Bishop Golias*

*Piers the Plowman's Crede*

	To cumbren men with her craft, Cristendome to schenden?"	burden; destroy
	"Dere brother," quath Peres, "the devell is ful queynte.	sly
	To encombren Holy Churche he casteth ful harde,	oppress; schemes
	And fluricheth his falsnes opon fele wise,	flaunts; many ways
485	And fer he casteth to-forn, the folke to destroye. <sup>1</sup>	
	Of the kynrede of Caym he caste the freres,	kindred; fashioned
	And founded hem on Farysens, feyned for gode.	Pharisees (hypocrites)
	But thei with her fals faith michel folk schendeth;	ruin
	Crist calde hem Himself 'kynde ypcrites.'	called; 'hypocrites by nature'
490	How often He cursed heme, well can I tellen.	them
	He seide ones Himself to that sory puple:	unhappy people
	'Wo worthe you, wyghtes, wel lerned of the lawe!'	unto
	Eft he seyde to hemselfe, 'Wo mote you worthen,	Again; them
	That the toumbes of profeteis tildeth up heighe!	raise
495	Youre faderes fordeden hem and to the deth hem broughte.'	slew
	Here I touche this two, twynnen hem I thenke, <sup>2</sup>	
	Who wilneth ben wisere of lawe than lewde freres,	wish to be
	And in multitude of men ben 'Maysters' ycalld,	to be
	And wilneth worchips of the werlde, and sitten with heye,	powerful people
500	And leveth lovynghe of God and lowness behinde.	humility
	And in beldinge of tombes thei travailth grete	building tombs
	To chargen her chirche-flore, and chaungen it ofte.	commission
	And the fader of the freers defouled hir soules —	
	That was the dygginge devel that dreccheth men ofte.	scheming; troubles
505	The divill by his dotage dissaveth the Chirche,	devil; flattery deceives
	And put in the Prechours, ypaynted withouten.	dwells in
	And by his queyntise they comen in, the curates to helpen,	deceitfulness
	But that harmede hem harde, and halp hem full litell!	helped
	But Austines ordynaunce was on a good trewthe,	
510	And also Domynikes dedes weren dervelich y-used,	diligently
	And Frauncis founded his folke fulliche on trewthe,	
	Pure parfit prestes, in penaunce to lybben,	
	In love and in lownesse, and lettinge of pride,	hindering
	Grounded on the godspell, as God bad Himselfe.	Gospel
515	But now the glose is so greit in gladding tales	deceit; arrayed in comforting

<sup>1</sup> And he contrives well beforehand, to destroy people

<sup>2</sup> Concerning these two (the Pharisee and the friar), I consider them the same

*Piers the Plowman's Crede*

	That turneth up two-folde, unteyned opon trewthe,	<i>unfastened</i>
	That thei bene cursed of Crist, I can hem well prove;	
	Withouten His blissinge, bare beth they in her werkes.	<i>barren</i>
	For Crist seyde Himselfe to swiche as Him folwede:	
520	'Yblessed mote thei ben that mene ben in soule.'	<i>poor</i>
	And alle povere in gost God Himself blisseth.	<i>poor in spirit</i>
	Whou fele freers fareth so, fayn wolde I knowe.	<i>How many; gladly</i>
	Prove hem in proces, and pynch at her ordre, <sup>1</sup>	
	And deme hem after that they don; and dredles, I leve	<i>judge; believe</i>
525	Thei willn wexon pure wroth wonderliche sone,	<i>will become incensed</i>
	And schewen the a scharp will in a schort tyme,	<i>thee</i>
	To wilne wilfully wraththe, and werk therafter.	
	Wytnesse on Wycliff, that warned hem with trewthe:	
	For he in goodnesse of gost graythliche hem warned	<i>spirit readily</i>
530	To wayven her wikednesse and werkes of synne.	<i>abandon</i>
	Whou sone this sory men seweden his soule,	<i>pursued</i>
	And overal lollede him with heretykes werkes!	<i>charged him</i>
	And so of the blessinge of God thei bereth litel mede.	<i>reward</i>
	Afterward another onliche He blissede,	<i>only</i>
535	The meke of the myddel herth thorugh myght of His Fader.	<i>middle earth</i>
	Fynd foure freres in a flok that folweth that rewle,	
	Thanne have I tynt al my tast, touche, and assaie! <sup>2</sup>	
	Lakke hem a lilit wight, and here lijf blame, <sup>3</sup>	
	But he lepe up on heigh, in hardynesse of herte,	<i>Unless</i>
540	And nemne the anon <i>nought</i> , and thi name lakke <sup>4</sup>	
	With proude wordes apert that passeth his rule,	<i>plain</i>
	Bothe with 'thou leyest,' and 'thou lext,' in heynesse of sowle, <sup>5</sup>	
	And turne as a tyrant that turmenteth himselfe.	
	A lord were lothere for to leyne a knave <sup>6</sup>	
545	Thanne swiche a beggere, the beste in a toun.	

<sup>1</sup> Test them according to procedures, and pry into their order

<sup>2</sup> Then have I lost all my power of taste, touch, and judgment

<sup>3</sup> Criticize them a little bit, and condemn their way of living

<sup>4</sup> And straightway call you "nothing" and your name disparage

<sup>5</sup> Both with "you lie" and "you lie," in arrogance of soul

<sup>6</sup> A lord would be more reluctant to give to a servant

*Piers the Plowman's Crede*

	Loke now, leve man: beth nought thise i-lyke Fully to be Farisens in fele of thise poyntes. Al her brod beldyng ben belded withe synne, And in worchipe of the werlde her wynnynge thei holden.	dear; like these [ffriars] Pharisees (hypocrites); many wide buildings; constructed
550	Thei schapen her chapolories, and streccheth hem brode, And launceth heighe her hemmes, with babelyng in stretes; Thei ben ysewed with whight silk, and semes full queynte, <sup>1</sup> Ystongen with stiches that stareth as silver.	scapulars
555	And but freres ben first yset at sopers and at festes, Thei wiln ben wonderly wroth, ywis, as I trowe. But they ben at the lordes borde, louren they willeth, He mot bygynne that borde a beggere (with sorwe!)	Interlaced; shine unless; seated first indeed
560	And first sitten in se in her synagoges — That beth here heyghe helle-hous, of Kaymes kynde! For though a man in her mynster a masse wolde heren, His sight schal so be set on sundry werkes,	Unless; table; glower seat from Cain's kindred church
565	The penounes and the pomels and poyntes of scheldes Withdrawen his devucion, and dusken his herte. I likne it to a lym-yerde to drawen men to hell And to worchipe of the fend, to wraththen the soules.	ornamentation Distract; darken compare; (see note) torment
570	And also Crist Himselfe seide to swiche ypcrites: 'He loveth in markettes ben met with gretynge of povere, <sup>2</sup> And lowynge of lewed men in Lentnes tyme.' For thei han of Bichopes ybought with her propre silver, And purchased of penaunce the puple to assoile.	subservience; ignorant their own
575	But money may maken mesur of the peyne, After that his power is to payen, his penance schal faille. God lene it be a good help for hele of the soules! <sup>3</sup> And also this myster men ben 'Maysters' i-called, That the gentill Jesus generallyche blamed, And that poynt to his Apostells purly defended. But freres haven forgotten this — and the fend suweth, He that maystri lovede, Lucifer the olde — Wher Fraunceis or Domynik other Austen ordeynide	Unless; moderate According to grant prohibited tyranny Whether

<sup>1</sup> They are sewn with white silk, and [with] intricate seams

<sup>2</sup> He loves to be met in markets with greetings from poor people

<sup>3</sup> God grant that it be a healthy sum of money, for health of the souls

*Piers the Plowman's Crede*

580	Any of this dotardes doctur to worthe, Masters of Dyvinitie, her matens to leve, And chereliche as a cheveteyne his chambre to holden <sup>1</sup> With chymene and chapell, and chesen whan him liste, And served as a sovereine, and as a lorde sitten.	fools; become to forego  chooses his schedule
585	Swiche a gome Godes wordes grysliche gloseth. I trowe he toucheth nought the text, but taketh it for a tale. God forbad to His folke and fullyche defended They schulden nought stodyen biforn, ne sturen her wittes, But sodenlie the same word with her mowth schewe	man; wickedly glosses fable prohibited (see note) study; bestir
590	That weren yeven hem of God thorugh Gost of Himselfe. Now mot a frere studyen and stumblen in tales, And leven his matynes and no masse singen, And loken hem lesynges that liketh the puple, <sup>2</sup> To purchasen him his pursfull to paye for the drynke.	given them fables matins
595	And, brother, when bernes ben full and holly tyme passed, Thanne comen cursed freres, and croucheth full lowe; A losel, a lymitour, over all the lond lepeth, And loke that he leve non house that somwhat he ne lacche; <sup>3</sup> And ther thei gilen hemself and Godes worde turneth.	barns; i.e. Christmas bow lout; leaps beguile; corrupt
600	Bagges and beggyng He bad His folk leven, And only serven Himself and Hijs rewle sechen, And all that nedly nedeth, that schuld hem nought lakken. Whereto beggen thise men and ben nought so feble — Hem faileth no furrynge, ne clothes at full — <sup>4</sup>	
605	But for a lustfull lijf, in lustes to dwellen? Withouten any travaile, untrewliche lybbeth: Hy beth nought maymed men, ne no mete lakketh, Yclothed in curious cloth, and clenliche arayed. It is a laweles lijf, as lordynges usen,	[they] live in bad faith impaired; food fine lords
610	Neyther ordeyned in ordir but onlie libbeth. <sup>5</sup> Crist bad blissen bodies on erthe	

<sup>1</sup> And sumptuously as a chieftain stay in his apartment

<sup>2</sup> And find for themselves lying stories (fables) which please the people

<sup>3</sup> And makes sure that he leaves no house without getting something

<sup>4</sup> They don't lack furred garments or a full wardrobe

<sup>5</sup> Nor ordained in [an] order but live individually

*Piers the Plowman's Crede*

	That wepen for wykkednes that he byforne wroughte.	repents of nearly dead
615	That ben fewe of tho freres, for thei ben ner dede And put all in pur clay, with pottes on her hedes; Thanne he waryeth and wepeth and wicheþ after heven, And fyeth on her falshedes that thei before deden. And therfore of that blissinge, trewlie, as I trowe, Thei may trussen her part in a terre powghe! <sup>1</sup> All tho blissed beth that bodyliche hungreþ —	curses; wishes say "fie"
620	That ben the pore penyles, that han overpassed The poynt of her pris lijf in penaunce of werkes, <sup>2</sup> And mown nought swynken ne sweten, but ben swythe feble, Other maymed at myschef, or meseles syke, <sup>3</sup> And here good is a-gon, and greveth hem to beggen. <sup>4</sup>	passed beyond work; very
625	Ther is no frer in feith that fareth in this wise; But he maie beggen his bred, his bed is ygreithed. Under a pot he schal be put, in a prystie chambre, That he schal lyven ne last but litell while after. Almighty God and man the merciable blessed	way Unless; prepared secret room
630	That han mercy on men that misdon hem here. But whoso forgabbed a frere yfounden at the stues And broughte blod of his bodi on bak or on side, Hym were as god greven a greit lorde of rentes. <sup>5</sup> He schulde sonner bene schryven, schortlie to tellen,	went astray scorned; prostitutes
635	Though he kilde a comlye knyght and compased his morther, <sup>6</sup> Thanne a buffet to beden a beggere frere. The clene hertes of Crist He curteysliche blissed, That covetyne no kated but Cristes full blisse, That leeveth fulliche on God and leillyche thenketh	sooner; confessed blow to deliver to
640	On His lore and His lawe, and lyveth opon trewthe. Freres han forgeten this and folweth an other:	Who covet faithfully think according to

<sup>1</sup> *They can pack up their gear in a tar bag (pouch)*

<sup>2</sup> *Their prime of life in penance through works*

<sup>3</sup> *"Or maimed by accident, or sick lepers" (Sk)*

<sup>4</sup> *And their goods are gone, and they are sorry to have to beg*

<sup>5</sup> *He might as well offend a powerful landlord*

<sup>6</sup> *Even though he killed a handsome knight and premeditated his murder*

*Piers the Plowman's Crede*

	That thei may henten, they holden, byhirneth it sone.	What; seize; conceal
	Heir hertes ben clene yhid in her highe cloistre, <sup>1</sup>	
	As kurres from kareyne that is cast in dyches.	dogs; carrion
645	And parfite Crist the pesible blissed,	blessed the peaceable
	That bene suffrant and sobre, and susteyne anger.	endure
	Asay of her sobernesse and thou might yknownen	Test; discover
	Ther is no waspe in this werlde that will wilfullokr styngen	more willingly sting
	For stappyng on a too of a stynkande frere!	stepping toe than a stinking
650	For nether sovereyn ne soget thei ne suffreth never.	subject
	All the blissing of God beouten thei walken,	without (see note)
	For of her suffraunce, for sothe, men seth but litell!	see
	Alle that persecution in pure lijf suffren,	
	Thei han the benison of God blissed in erthe.	blessing
655	I pracie, parceyve now the pursut of a frere,	
	In what measure of meknesse thise men deleth.	
	Byhold opon Wat Brut, whou bisiliche thei pursueden	(see note)
	For he seyde hem the sothe, and yet, syre, ferthere,	told them
	Hy may no more marren hym; but men telleth	harm
660	That he is an heretike, and yvele byleveth,	
	And prechith it in pulpit to blenden the puple.	deceive
	Thei wolden awryien that wight for his well dedes;	curse; good deeds
	And so thei chewen charitie as chewen schaf houndes.	eschew; devour chaff
665	And thei pursued the povere, and passeth pursutes,	surpass in persecutions
	Bothe thei wiln and thei wolden yworthen so grete	become
	To passen any mans might to mortheren the soules.	murder
	First to brenne the bodye in a bale of fijr,	
	And sythen the sely soule slen, and senden hyre to helle.	then; slay
	And Crist clerlie forbade his Cristene, and defended,	disallowed
670	Thei schulden nought after the face never the folke demen." <sup>2</sup>	Sir; at fault
	"Sur," I seide myself, "thou semest to blamen.	
	Why dispisest thou thus thise sely pore freres,	
	None other men so mychel, monkes ne preistes,	as much
	Chanons ne Charthous, that in Chirche serveth?	Canons; Carthusian monks
675	It semeth that thise sely men han somwhat the greved	somehow wronged you
	Other with word or with werke, and therfore thou wilnest	Either with

<sup>1</sup> Their hearts are as far removed from lofty meditation

<sup>2</sup> [That] they should not judge on appearance (by the face) nor judge folk

*Piers the Plowman's Crede*

	To schenden other schamen hem with thi sharpe speche, And harmen holliche, and her hous greven."	destroy or completely; persecute
680	"I pрайe the," quath Peres, "put that out of thy mynde. Certen for sowle hele I saie the this wordes. I preise nouȝt possessioners but pur lytel; For falshed of freres hath fulliche encombred	[your] soul's health very little
685	Many of this maner men, and maid hem to leven Here charite and chastete, and schosen hem to lustes, And waxen to werldly, and wayven the trewthe, And leven the love of her God, and the werlde serven.	caused them to forsake choose too worldly; abandon
690	But for falshed of freres I fele in my soule (Seynge the synfull lijf) that sorweth myn herte How thei ben clothed in cloth that clennest scheweth; For aungells and arcangells all thei whijt useth,	Seeing appears white
695	And alle aldermen that bene <i>ante tronum</i> . Thise tokens haven freres taken; but I trowe that a fewe Folwen fully that cloth, but falsliche that useth. For whijt in trowthe bytokneth clennes in soule;	elders; before the throne outward signs purity
700	Yif he have undernethen whijt, thanne he above wereth Blak, that bytokneth bale for oure synne, And mournyng for misdede of hem that this useth, And serwe for synfull lijf — so that cloth asketh.	woe sorrow; requires
705	I trowe ther ben nouȝt ten freres that for synne wepen, For that lijf is here lust, and theryn thei libben In fraitour and in fermori; her fostringe is synne. It is her mete at iche a mel her most sustenaunce.	refectory; infirmary food; every meal
710	Herkne opon Hyldegare, hou homliche he telleth How her sustenaunce is synne; and syker, as I trowe, Weren her confessiones clenli destrued, Hy schulde nouȝt beren hem so bragg, ne helden so heyghe,	Hildegard (see note); plainly certainly ignored arrogantly
715	For the fallynge of synne socoureth tho foles, And bigileth the grete with glaverynge wordes. With glosinge of godspells thei God's worde turneth, And pasen all the pryylege that Petur after used.	sustains those fools flattering alter surpass; followed
	The power of the Apostells thei pasen in speche, For to sellen the synnes for silver other mede, And purlyche <i>a pena</i> the purple assoileth, And <i>a culpa</i> also, that they may kachen	supersede sell [pardons] for; reward from punishment (see note) from blame (guilt); obtain
	Money other money-worthe, and mede to fonge,	its equivalent; snare

*Piers the Plowman's Crede*

	And bene at lone and at bode, as burgeses usithe. <sup>1</sup>	
	Thus they serven Satanas, and soules bigileth,	
	Marchantes of malisons, mansede wreches!	curses; sinful
	Thei usen russet also, somme of this freres,	wear brown [habits] (see note)
720	That bitokneth travaile and trewthe opon erthe.	
	Bote loke whou this lorels labouren the erthe,	these ne'er-do-wells
	But freten the frute that the folk full lellich biswynketh.	devour; toil for
	With travail of trewe men thei tymbren her houses,	
	And of the curious clothe her copes thei biggen;	dainty; buy
725	And als his getynge is greet, he schal ben good holden,	To the extent that
	And ryght as dranes doth nought but drynketh up the huny,	drones; honey
	Whan been withe her bysynesse han brought it to the hepe,	bees; hive
	Right so fareth freres with folke opon erthe:	
	They freten up the furste-froyt and falsliche lybbeth.	gobble; first-fruits
730	But alle freres eten nought ylich good mete,	alike
	But after that his wynnyng is, is his well-fare;	
	And after that he bringeth home, his bed schal ben graythed,	prepared
	And after that his rychesse is raught he schal ben redy served.	obtained
	But see thiself in thi sight, whou somme of hem walketh	
735	With cloutede schon and clothes ful feble,	rag shoes
	Wel neigh forwerd, and the wlon offe;	worn out; hems gone
	And his felawe in a froke worth swiche fiftene,	worth fifteen such gowns
	Arayd in rede scon — and elles were reuthe! —	red shoes; a pity
	And sexe copes or seven in his celle hongeth.	
740	Though for fayling of good his fellowe schulde sterfe,	die
	He wolde nought lenen him a peny, his lijf for to holden.	
	I might tymen tho troiflardes to toilen with the erthe,	compel; malingeringers
	Tylen and tewliche lyven, and her flech tempren.	To till; chastise
	Now mot ich soutere his sone setten to schole, <sup>2</sup>	
745	And ich a begger's brol on the booke lerne, <sup>3</sup>	become
	And worth to a writere, and with a lorde dwell,	
	Other falsly to a frere the fend for to serven!	
	So of that begger's brol a bychop to worthen,	offspring; is made
	Among the peres of the lond prese to sitten,	press forward

<sup>1</sup> To deal with loans and biddings, like townspeople

<sup>2</sup> Now each cobbler's son may go to school

<sup>3</sup> And each beggar's brat (child) learn from book(s)

*Piers the Plowman's Crede*

750	And lordes sones lowly to tho losells aloute,	<i>bow down</i>
	Knyghtes crouketh hem to, and crucheth full lowe —	<i>bow to them; kneel</i>
	And his syre a soutere ysuled in grees,	<i>father a cobbler filthy with grease</i>
	His teeth with toylinge of lether tatered as a sawe!	<i>leather [as] jagged</i>
	Alaas, that lordes of the londe leveth swiche wrenchen,	
755	And leneth swiche lorels for her lowe wordes!	<i>give to</i>
	They schulden maken bichopes her owen brethren childre,	
	Other of some gentil blod, and so it best semed,	<i>noble</i>
	And foster none faytoures, ne swiche false freres	<i>tricksters</i>
	To maken fatt and full, and her fleche combren.	
760	For her kynde were more to yclense ditches	<i>were better suited; ditches</i>
	Than ben to sopers yset first and served with silver!	
	A great bolle-full of benen were betere in his wombe,	<i>beans</i>
	And with the randes of bakun his baly for to fillen,	<i>bacon rinds; belly</i>
	Than partriches or plovers or pekokes yrosted,	
765	And comeren her stomakes with curious drynkes	<i>cram; dainty</i>
	That maketh swich harlottes hordome usen,	
	And with her wicked worde wymmen bitraith.	
	God wold her wonyng were in wildernesse,	<i>dwelling</i>
	And fals freres forboden the fayre ladis chaumbres!	
770	For knewe lordes her craft, trewlie, I trowe,	<i>If</i>
	They schulden nougnt haunten her hous so homly on nightes,	<i>familiarly</i>
	Ne bedden swiche brothels in so brode schetes,	<i>scoundrels; sheets</i>
	But scheten her heved in the stre, to sharpen her wittes;	<i>shut their head; straw</i>
	Ne ben kynges confessours of custom, ne the counsell of the rewme knowe.	
775	For Fraunces founded hem nougnt to faren on that wise,	
	Ne Domynik dued hem never swiche drynkers to worthe,	<i>endowed; became</i>
	Ne Helye ne Austen swiche lijf never used,	<i>Elijah; Augustine</i>
	But in poverte of spirit spended her tyme.	
	We have sene ourself, in a schort tyme,	
780	Whou freres wolden no flech among the folke usen;	
	But now the harlottes han hid thilke rewle,	<i>that</i>
	And, for the love of oure Lorde, have leyd hire in water.	<i>have sunk it</i>
	Wenest thou ther wold so fele swiche warlawes worthen, <sup>1</sup>	
	Ne were wordlyche wele and her welfare?	<i>Were it not for</i>
785	Thei schulden delven and diggen and dongen the erthe,	

---

<sup>1</sup> Would you believe there could be so many liars?

*Piers the Plowman's Crede*

And mene-mong corn bred to her mete fongen, And wortes flechles wroughte, and water to drinken, <sup>1</sup> And werchen and wolward gon, as we wrecches usen. <sup>2</sup> An aunter yif ther wolde on amoneg an hol hundred <sup>3</sup> Lyven so for Godes love in tyme of a wynter!"  "Leve Peres," quath I tho, "I pracie that thou me tell Whou I maie conne my Crede in Cristen beleve."  "Leve brother," quath he, "hold that I segge, I will techen the trewthe, and tellen the sothe."	<i>ordinary; accept</i> <i>(see note)</i> <i>Dear</i> <i>remember; say</i> <i>thee</i>
--	--

\* \* \* \* \*

*Credo*

795      Leve thou on oure Louerd God, that all the werlde wroughte, Holy heven opoun hey hollyche He fourmede, And is almighty Himself over all His werkes, And wrought, as His will was, the werlde and the heven; And on gentyl Jesu Crist, engendred of Himselven,  800      His own onlyche Sonne, Lord over all yknownen, That was clely conseved clerly, in trewthe, Of the hey Holy Gost; this is the holy beleve; And of the mayden Marye man was He born, Withouten synfull sede — this is fully the beleve;	<i>Lord; created</i> <i>upon high wholly</i>  <i>only</i> <i>conceived in purity</i> <i>faith</i>  <i>seed</i>
 805      With thorn ycrouned, crucified, and on the Crois dyede, And sythen His blessed body was in a ston byried, And descended adoune to the derk Helle, And fet oute our formfaderes, and hy full feyn weren; <sup>4</sup> The thridde daye rediliche Himself ros fram deeth,	 <i>buried</i>  <i>(see note)</i> <i>speedily; arose</i> <i>ascended</i>
 810      And on a ston there He stod He steigh up to hevene, And on His Fader right hand redeliche He sitteth, That almighty God over all other whyghtes; And is hereafter to komen Crist, all Himselven,	 <i>Father's</i> <i>creatures</i>

---

<sup>1</sup> *And vegetables cooked without meat, and water to drink*

<sup>2</sup> *And work and wear clothing with the wool toward the body, as we poor ones do*

<sup>3</sup> *It is unlikely that even one in a hundred*

<sup>4</sup> *And brought out our forefathers, and they were very glad*

*Piers the Plowman's Crede*

	To demen the quyke and the dede withouten any doute;	judge the living
815	And in the heighe Holly Gost holly I beleve,	Holy; wholly
	And generall Holy Chirche also, hold this in thy minde;	
	The communion of sayntes, for soth I to the sayn;	say to you
	And for our great sinnes forgivenes for to getten,	
	And only by Christ clenlich to be cleansed;	
820	Our bodies again to risen, right as we been here,	
	And the lijf everlasting leve ich to habben. Amen.	I believe I shall have
	And in the sacrament also that sothfast God on is —	in
	Fulliche His fleche and His blod — that for us dethe tholed.	suffered
	And though this flaterynge freres wyln, for her pride,	
825	Disputen of this Deyte, as dotardes schulden,	Argue about the Deity; fools
	The more the matere is moved, the masedere hy worthen. <sup>1</sup>	
	Lat the losels alone, and leve thou the trewthe,	
	For Crist seyde it is so, so mot it nede worthe;	it needs must be
	Therfore studye thou nought theron, ne stere thi wittes:	
830	It is His blissed body, so bad He us beleven.	bade
	Thise Maystres of Dyvinitie many, als I trowe,	
	Folwen nought fully the feith, as fele of the lewede.	
	Whough may mannes wijt, thorugh werk of himselfe,	How; wits
	Knownen Cristes pryytie, that all kynde passeth? <sup>2</sup>	
835	It mot ben a man of also mek an herte	as meek
	That myghte with his good lijf that Holly Gost fongen;	receive
	And thanne nedeth him nought never for to studyen.	
	He mighte no Maistre ben kald — for Crist that defended —	forbade
	Ne puten no pylion on his pild pate;	priest's cap; bald head
840	But prechen in parfite lijf, and no pride usen.	
	But all that ever I have seyd, so it me semeth,	
	And all that ever I have writen is soth, as I trowe,	
	And for amending of thise men is most that I write;	reforming
	God wold hy wolden ben war and werchen the better!	
845	But, for I am a lewed man, paraunter I mighte	since; perhaps
	Passen par aventure, and in som poyn特 erren;	Go too far
	I will nought this matere maistrely avowen.	forcefully proclaim
	But yif ich have myssaid, mercy ich aske,	misspoken; I

<sup>1</sup> *The more the matter is broached, the more rattled they become*

<sup>2</sup> *Know Christ's hidden wisdom, who transcends the natural world?*

*Piers the Plowman's Crede*

And praie all maner men this matere amende,  
Iche a word by himself, and all, yif it nedeth.  
God of His grete myghte and His good grace  
Save all freres that faithfully lybben,  
And alle tho that ben fals, fayre hem amende,  
And gyve hem wijt and good will swiche dedes to werche  
That thei maie wynnen the lif that ever schal lesten.

*Each word by itself*

850

855

Amen.

## *Notes*

- 5      *A and all myn A-B-C.* The narrator explains that he knows his alphabet; he is not illiterate (“lewed”). In lines 6–7 he also says he knows his *Pater Noster* or Lord’s Prayer (Matt. 6.9–13) and his *Ave Maria* or “Hail Mary” (Luke 1.28–33). These elementary texts are the foundation for his Christian beliefs, but he now wants to learn the Creed (see note to line 8 below).
- 8      *Crede.* The simple declaration of faith known as the Apostles’ Creed. This begins, in English translation: “I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.” The Apostles’ Creed, whose exact origins are unknown, preceded and formed the basis for the Nicene Creed (A.D. 325), which in turn furnished the standard definition of the Trinity (three Persons, two Natures, one Will). For Piers’s version of the Creed — the *Credo* — see lines 795–821.
- 11     *The lengthe of a Lenten.* The period from Ash Wednesday to Easter Eve, a traditional time of fasting, penitence, and austerity in the Christian Church. The forty week days commemorate Christ’s forty days and nights in the wilderness and His resistance to the devil’s three temptations. See Matt. 4. In lines 11–13 the narrator portrays himself as distraught about facing several meatless weeks and not knowing his Creed.
- 15     *He that leeveth nought.* See John 3.15, 18.
- 31     *lok of beleve.* The “lock of belief” or “faith” is ironic, since Christ explicitly entrusted Peter (the Church) with the keys of heaven (Matt. 16.19). See also the narrator’s citing of this incident when he speaks with the Dominican: lines 276–79. Similarly, the “cofres of Cristendam” (line 30) reflect more on the friars’ alleged wealth than their claims to be guardians of the Christian faith.
- 33     *A Menoure.* A Minorite or Friar Minor, so-called because the Franciscans — the Friars Minor — claimed to be the humble order. St. Francis of Assisi founded the Franciscan order in 1209. For the fraternal orders, see the note to line 153 below.

*Piers the Plowman's Crede*

- 34      *the graith.* Wycliffites often testified that the truth was plain and simple, embedded in the Creed and yet sometimes hidden (hence that they and “trewe” Christians generally had the key to discovering it). The author of *Vae octuplex* says this about the simplicity of Christian belief: “Byleue is an hyd trewþe þat God tellþ in his lawe, and it is declared ynow [sufficiently] in comun crede of cristien men. And ȝif þow wole examyne feip, where hit be trowþe of Cristus chirche, loke where þat it ys growndyt in ony article of þe crede; ȝif it be not growndet þere, take it not as byleue” (ed. Gradon, p. 377).
- 38      *A Carm me hath ycovenaunt.* The narrator may be disingenuous here, since he represents himself as speaking with Carmelites later on, beginning line 340. He seems to bait all the friars he meets by mentioning a rival fraternal order and its claims to priority or pretensions to learning.
- 57–58    *They comen out of Carmeli.* “The Carmelites, or White Friars, pretended to be of great antiquity, and were originally established at Mount Carmel, from whence they were driven by the Saracens about the year 1238” (Wright). They came to England in 1244.
- 62–63    *And yif thei couthen her Crede.* A poem “On the Minorites” alleges that the Franciscans do not know the Creed: “With an O & an I, Men wenen þat þai wede [go mad], / To carpe so of clergy þat can not þair crede” (HP XIV & XV, p. 163).
- 65      *Freres of the Pye.* Pied Friars or Fratres de Pica, with habits of black and white like a magpie.
- 72      “*Robartes men*, or Roberds-men, were a set of lawless vagabonds, notorious for their outrages when Pierce Plowman was written. The statute of Edward the Third (an. reg. 5, c. xiv) specifies ‘divers manslaughters, felonies, and robberies, done by people that be called *Roberdesmen*, Wastours, and draw-latches’” (Skeat). See also *Piers Plowman* B Prologue 44: “And risen vp wip ribaudie as Roberdes knaues”; and 5.461: “Roberd þe Robbere on *Reddite* loked.”
- 77–79    *And at the lulling.* The syntax seems defective or elliptical in these lines, with an understood “they” before “maken wymmen to wenen” (line 78). These

### *Notes*

lines might be translated: “And during lullabies of Our Lady, to please the women, and [at] miracle-plays [involving] midwives, they give women to believe that the lace of Our Lady’s shift helps deliver their children.” For a similar construction, see lines 108–17 (with “we” understood beginning line 110). In the N-Town cycle (*Ludus Coventriæ*), midwives who doubt the Virgin Birth eventually come to be believers, although one receives a withered hand for her original disbelief.

- 84      *quenes*. The word *quenes* here can have the sense of “queans,” or harlots, which certainly accords with the general sense of this passage (see line 83). But the *MED* cites this word in *PPC* as bearing the signification “crones” or old women.
- 89–94    *Wepyng, I warne yow of walkers aboute*. The allusion is to Philippians 3.18–19: “For many walk, of whom I have told you often (and now tell you weeping), that they are enemies of the cross of Christ; Whose end is destruction; whose God is their belly; and whose glory is in their shame; who mind earthly things.”
- 91       *Swich slomerers in slepe*. See Ephesians 5.14: “Rise thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead: and Christ shall enlighten thee.” See also Romans 13.11: “it is now the hour for us to rise from sleep.”
- 92–94    *gloppynge of drynk*. The emphasis of these lines — a free translation of Philippians 3.19 (see above note to lines 89–94) — resembles that of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century penitential lyrics on the relationship between drinking and death. See, for example, “Man may longe liwes [lives] wenēn,” lines 7–10 (EL XIII, p. 17), and “Whon Men beōp muriest at heor Mele [are merriest at their meal],” lines 1–12 (from the Vernon MS: RL XIV, p. 143). See also Chaucer’s *Pardoner’s Tale* in which three tavern rioters go out to slay Death (the Black Plague) and end up killing one another instead. Chaucer likewise alludes to Philippians 3.18–19.
- 104      *The pure Apostells life*. The issue of the “apostolic life” was of paramount importance in antifratal and anticlerical literature. The friars based their claims to distinctiveness and purity on their form of life, which they believed was modelled on that of Christ and the apostles (see, for example, Acts 2.45–47 and 4.32–35). Antifratal writers responded that nowhere does Scripture witness that Christ or the apostles begged for their sustenance.

*Piers the Plowman's Crede*

- 113     *oure parteners.* Fraternal orders sometimes invited lay brethren to participate in their activities on a limited basis. Often they charged a fee for services and issued letters of confraternity. For a prominent literary example, see the friar in Chaucer's *Summoner's Tale*, III 2126–28. See also line 327 and note, and line 417.
- 146–50    *Coveitise . . . Chastete.* Personified allegories of Covetousness, Charity (Christian love, as in Faith, Hope, Charity), and Chastity. Such personifications are common in *PP* but rare in *PPC*.
- 153     *this foure ordirs.* The fraternal orders were the Franciscans ("Menoures"), the Dominicans ("Prechoures" or Friars Preachers, here said to be the "first" order), the Augustinians ("Austens"), and the Carmelites ("Carmes" or "Karmes").
- 155     *Ich.* Trinity reads *With*, the Royal MS *ytche*; but the 1553 edition, Wright, and Skeat have *Ich*.
- 157–218    *Swich a bild bold.* It has been suggested that the architectural details for this long description of the Dominican convent derive from the London house of Blackfriars. St. Francis, on the other hand, advised Minorites to live in humble buildings of mud and wood.
- 165     *With posternes in pryytie.* "These private posterns are frequently alluded to in the reports of the Commissioners for the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the reign of Henry VIII" (Wright).
- 184–85    These lines are not in the Trinity MS; they are supplied from the Royal MS.
- 215     *And othere.* The Trinity MS reads *to opere*, but the Royal MS, the 1553 edition, Wright, and Skeat have *And opere* or *And other*.
- 227–28    Compare Chaucer's friar in GP: "Of double worstede was his semycope, / That rounded as a belle out of the presse" (I[A] 262–3).
- 232     *graith.* See *Piers Plowman* C 10. 240: "Ac þe gospel is a glose ther and huydeth þe grayth treuthe."

### *Notes*

- 233 Trinity MS reads *willen*, but the Royal MS, the 1553 edition, Wright, and Skeat have *wissen*, which is superior to *willen*.
- 261 *And who is goer byforne, first schal he serven.* An allusion to the vineyard parable (Matt. 20.1–16): “So shall the last be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen” (v. 16).
- 262–63 *And seyde, ‘He sawe Satan . . . ben yleyd.’* See Luke 10.18: “And he said to them: I saw Satan like lightning falling from heaven.” See also Isaiah 14.12. The Trinity and Royal MSS read *fullowe*, the 1553 edition *fullow*. Wright and Skeat have *ful low* and *ful lowe* respectively.
- 274 *fables.* The Franciscans were noted storytellers who could illustrate their sermons and lectures with *exempla*, sometimes with fables. In an antifraternal lyric from the Vernon MS, “Pe Mon pat luste to liuen in ese,” the anonymous author writes: “Whon Gabriel schal blowe his horn, / His feble fables schul hym rewe” (RL XIV, lines 67–68, p. 154). By contrast, Chaucer’s Parson replies to Harry Bailly, “Thou getest fable noon ytoold for me” (X 31) and, citing Paul, denounces “fables and swich wrecchednesse” (X 34).
- 295 *With foyns, or with fitchewes.* An antifraternal lyric of 1382 attacks the friars for their rich furs: “For somme vaire, & somme gryse, / For somme bugee, & for somme byse.” (HP XIV & XV, p. 159)
- 308 *Paul, primus heremite.* St. Paul the Hermit, or St. Paul of Thebes (d. 342), wove baskets to guard against idleness. The Austin friars claimed him as their founder. See *Piers Plowman* B 15. 286–89.
- 327 *clereliche ensealed.* These lines refer to the practice of granting conventional letters of fraternization, kept at the convent to entitle the purchasers all the benefits of prayers, masses, and good works of the order. In Chaucer’s *Summoner’s Tale*, Thomas and his wife were lay confraternity members, who held such a letter (CT III [D] 2126–28). See also line 417.
- 328 *oure Provinciall.* The Provincial was the director of convents within a province.
- 338 *Karmes.* Carmelites or white friars. See above, note to lines 57–58.

*Piers the Plowman's Crede*

- 340     *Two frere Karmes.* Friars usually traveled in pairs, according to Christ's instructions to disciples to go forth "two and two" (Luke 10.1). See also the note to line 415 below.
- 345     *hestys.* The Trinity MS, 1553 edition, and Wright read *hetes*, promises; but the Royal MS (= *hestys*) and Skeat (= *hestes*) is superior.
- 354     *princes of pride.* The popular late-medieval image of the Dominicans was of arrogant friars who wished to associate with fine lords, to own wealth, and to remove themselves from common humanity. See, for example, lines 370–75, and 380–81: "For ryght as Menoures most ypocricie useth, / Ryght so ben Prechers proude purlyche in herte." The image of the Orders Preacher contrasts with the popular idea of the Franciscans, who were generally considered to be more humble and democratic (but hence more susceptible to hypocrisy).
- 362     *Herdforthe*, an allusion to the priory of King's Langley in Hertfordshire, a wealthy convent that received lucrative grants from Richard II, Edmund de Langley, and Langley's wife, who were all buried there.
- 365     *curry.* This is Skeat's reading, a version of the Royal MS's *currey*. The Trinity MS reads *carry*; the 1553 edition and Wright have *curreth*. The sense of the passage is the Dominicans curry favor with the king and scratch (or "claw") his back, not that they carry the king on their backs.
- 372     *and men ryght lokede.* Skeat reads "& men ryȝt-lokede" and glosses "righteous, just"; "Apparently corrupted from A.S. *rihtlic*." But see Williams, *Modern Language Review*, 4 (1909), 235.
- 375     *digne as dich water.* See Chaucer's *Reeve's Tale* I (A) 3964.
- 383     *in Elyes tyme.* The Carmelites claimed that their founders were Elijah and Elisha. See Chaucer's *Summoner's Tale* III (D) 2116.
- 411     It was a commonplace of antifraternal literature that friars tried to convince people to be buried by friars rather than at their parish church. FitzRalph says: "þei schul nouȝt [shall not] counsel no man to swere neper [nor] to make avowe [oath]; noþer to pliȝt his truþe [nor to pledge his troth], noþer to behote [require] in oþer manere wise [wise people] to chese [choose]

### Notes

buriyng place at her chirche; so þat ȝif þei counseileþ perto eny maner wise, her chirche is entredited [interdicted], & her chirche heye. Oþer ȝif þei counseileþ hym, þat haf y-chose his buriels among hem, nouȝt to chaunge his wille; & comynliche it is seide þat freres counseilip so men; þanne a parischon may verreilich haue suspecioun þat her place is entredited" (*Defensio curatorum*, trans. John Trevisa, ed. A. J. Perry, EETS, OS 167 [London: Kegan Paul, 1925], p. 42).

- 414     *anuell*. An *anuell* was money for saying a yearly mass (an “annual”). An antifraternal lyric contains the following lines: “Suche annuels has made þes frers / so wely & so gay, / þat per may no possessiners / mayntene þair array” (“Preste, ne monke, ne ȝit chanoun,” in HP XIV & XV, lines 141–44; p. 161). In that same poem see also lines 153–56, p. 162.
- 415     *his*. The Trinity MS alone reads *this fellawe*, which would mean that the same speaker continues his harangue. But the better reading, *his*, occurs in the Royal MS, the 1553 edition, Wright, and Skeat, thus including the otherwise mute second Carmelite friar mentioned in line 340.
- 417     *letteres*. See above, note to line 327.
- 422     *cary* was a coarse material. The *MED* cites *Piers Plowman* B 5.79, said of Envye: “And clothed in a kaurymaury.”
- 428     *Twey mytenes, as mete*. Skeat glosses “as middling (or poor) as the shoes were. It is the A.S. *mæte*, middling, mean. It being a hard word, the scribe of MS. B [Royal MS] erased it, and the old printer misprinted it.” But contrast Jones, *Modern Language Notes*, 67 (1952), 512–16.
- 430     *fen*. The Trinity MS reads *fern*, but the Royal MS and Skeat have *fen*. *Fern* and *feen* (1553 edition, Wright) seem slips for *fen*.
- 431     *worthen*. The Trinity MS reads *worþi*, worthy, while the 1553 edition and Wright have *worthi*. The Royal MS reads *worþe*, but Skeat emends, properly, to *worþen*, become.
- 446     *Go we*. Skeat notes that the exclamation was a common colloquial invitation.

*Piers the Plowman's Crede*

- 451     *fonded*. Trinity, Royal, and the 1553 edition read *fondes*, which makes no sense syntactically. Wright and Skeat emend to *fonded*.
- 456     *of swich I you warne*. See the references to false prophets and false Christs in Matt. 24.11, 23–25, etc.
- 458     *In vestimentis ovium*. See Matt. 7.15: “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”
- 459     *wilde wer-wolves*. Lit. “man-wolves” but with the additional sense that the rapacious friars resemble those humans who were said to be able to transform themselves literally into wolves.
- 462     *curates*. Skeat: “parish-priests with a cure of souls. The friars were continually interfering with and opposing them. ‘—unnethe may prestes seculers / Ge te any service, for thes frers,’ &c. (*Pol. Poems*, i.267).” FitzRalph depicted the plight of the secular clergy in *Defensio curatorum*.
- 469     *sepultures*. The secular clergy violently objected to what they regarded as fraternal incursions into their privileges to hear confessions and bury the dead. John Gower, in *Vox clamantis* 4.17, writes of this problem: “For a friar demands that he himself bury the dead bodies of those to whom he attached himself as confessor, if they were dignitaries. But if it should be a poor [man’s] body, he makes no claim at all, since his piety takes no cognizance of anything unless there is money in it.” (Trans. Eric W. Stockton, *The Major Latin Works of John Gower* [Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1962]. See also JU lines 151–56).
- 471     *there as wynnyngelijth*. Compare Chaucer’s pilgrim Friar: “And over al, ther as profit sholde arise, / Curteis he was and lowely of servyse” (*CT* I [A] 249–50).
- 479     *Thorughe that gleym of that gest that Golias is ycalde*. “Gleym = bird-lime, and hence subtletly, craft, guile” (Skeat); see line 564 and note. The story called *Golias* refers to the *Apocalypsis Goliae*, a twelfth-century satire on the monastic orders. Trinity reads *Trowe ye* for *Thorughe*; the 1553 edition and Wright have *Trow ye*. Royal has *Thouge* which is corrected to *Thorughe*; and this is Skeat’s reading (= *Poruz*).

### *Notes*

- 486     *Of the kynrede of Caym.* The friars were often said to be from Cain's (Caym's) kin, i.e., from Augustine's city of man, founded by Cain. (See *FDR* 105.) Wyclif pointed out that the first letters of the friars' orders spelled the name of Cain: Carmelites, Austins, Iacobites (Dominicans), Minorites (Franciscans). A lyric poem of 1382 ("Preste, ne monke, ne ȝit chanoun" [HP XIV & XV 65]) alludes to the same letters: "Pat frer carmes come of a k, / Pe frer austynes come of a, / frer Iacobynes of i, / Of M comen þe frer menours" (lines 110–13).
- 487     *Farysens.* The friars were often compared with the Pharisees whom Christ denounced as hypocrites in Matthew 15 and 23.
- 489     *kynde ypocrites.* See Matt. 23.28: "So you also outwardly indeed appear to men just; but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."
- 492     *Wo worthe you.* See Matt. 23.23: "Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites: because you tithe mint, and anise, and cummin, and have left the weightier things of the law, judgment, and mercy, and faith." See also Luke 11.46.
- 495     *Youre faderes fordeden hem.* Luke 11.47: "Woe to you who build the monuments of the prophets: and your fathers killed them."
- 498     *ben 'Maysters' ycalle.* Matt. 23.7, on the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees: "... and [they love] to be called by men, Rabbi." See also line 574.
- 515–16     *But now . . . opon trewthe.* The sense of these lines is that the friars have created (unleashed) unauthorized interpretations of Scripture, overloading the text with self-serving commentaries.
- 520     *Yblessed mote thei ben.* Matt. 5.3: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Piers often contrasts the friars with those whom Christ blessed in the Beatitudes (Matt. 5.3–11; Luke 6.20–22).
- 528     *Wytnesse on Wycliff.* The author shows himself to be in general sympathy with John Wyclif's views on clerical corruption. Wyclif, who died in 1384, was for most of his career regarded as an important Oxford theologian; but toward the end of his career he denounced the Pope and attacked the doctrine of Transubstantiation in so far as the Eucharist was understood to be

*Piers the Plowman's Crede*

“accident without substance” (having the appearance of bread but being something else in reality). The author of *PPC* does not deny the doctrine of Transubstantiation (“*Fulliche His fleche and His blod,*” line 823). See also Jack Upland’s accusation about the friars in *JU* line 280.

- 532 *And overal lollede him.* Friars and other clerics accused Wyclif of professing heretical doctrines, or chaff (compare Latin *lolia*: chaff). The term *Lollard* was applied both to the followers of Wyclif and to friars, whom Wyclif and the Wycliffites attacked.
- 542 *Both with 'thou leyest,' and 'thou lext'.* See *Piers Plowman* B 5.162–63: “Of wikkede wordes I, wraþe, hire wortes made / Til ‘þow lixt!’ and ‘þow lixt!’ lopen out at ones.” In Langland, these liars speak as if personified. See also C 6.137–38.
- 545 *a beggere, the beste.* Compare *CT* I.252: “He [the Friar] was the beste beggere in his hous.”
- 546 *beth.* Trinity alone reads *heþ*. Royal and the 1553 edition have *beth*; Wright *Beth*, Skeat *beþ*.
- 551 *And launceth heighe her hemmes.* See Matt. 23.5: “For they make their phylacteries broad, and enlarge their fringes.”
- 561 *be.* So Royal and Skeat; Trinity, the 1553 edition, and Wright have *by*.
- 564 *tym-yerde.* “Lime-yards” were used to lure and capture birds; they became proverbial for the devil’s tricks for attracting humans to damnation.
- 567 *He loveth in markettes ben met.* “And [they love] salutations in the market place” (Matt. 23.7).
- 581 *Masters of Dyvinitie.* In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries a remarkable number of masters of divinity were friars, including the Franciscan Roger Bacon, who taught at Oxford; the Franciscan general St. Bonaventure, who taught at Paris; the Dominican Thomas Aquinas, who taught at Paris; the Franciscan John Duns Scotus; and the Franciscan William of Ockham, who taught at Oxford.

### *Notes*

- 587–90 *God forbad . . . Gost of Himself.* The argument here concerns divine inspiration rather than human ingenuity and elaborate commentary (glosses) in the interpretation of Scripture. See Mark 13.11: “And when they shall lead you and deliver you up, be not thoughtful beforehand what you shall speak; but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye. For it is not you that speak, but the Holy Ghost.” In line 589 Trinity alone reads *some* for *same*.
- 597 *a lymitour.* A limiter was a friar or monk who had a specific (“limited”) territory in which to beg alms. Chaucer’s pilgrim Friar was a “lymytour” (*CT* I [A] 209).
- 600 *Bagges and beggyng.* Christ never explicitly prohibited begging; but see His advice from the Sermon on the Mount, quoted in the note to line 602 below. Archbishop FitzRalph distinguished between civil dominion (established by humans) and natural dominion (Christ’s lordship, which regained the lordship that the first Adam lost). Because civil dominion (and hence private property) arose through Adam’s Fall, property should not be sought after and acquired through “bags and begging.” Mendicancy was thought to be all the more sinful when able-bodied men and women engaged in it, as detailed in lines 603–10 or in *PP* B-passus 6 and 7. See also *JU* lines 224–25: “for if a man suffice to hym silf bi goodis or bi strengthe, he synneth for to begge.”
- 602 *And all that nedly nedeth.* See Matt. 6.25: “Therefore I say to you, be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than the meat: and the body more than the raiment?”
- 612 *That wepen for wykkednes.* See Luke 6.21: “Blessed are ye that hunger now, for you shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now, for you shall laugh.” See also line 619.
- 614 *And put all in pur clay, with pottes on her hedes.* The meaning of this line is unclear, but the general sense seems to be that the friars, through their conduct, are virtual dead men, almost buried in clay. Skeat emends the Trinity MS’s reading *clay* to *clath*, cloth, based on the 1553 edition.

*Piers the Plowman's Crede*

- 618     *terre powghe*. The Glossary to the 1553 edition glosses “terre powghe” as “tar box.”
- 626     *his bed is ygreithed*. The friar who fails to beg successfully will be slain.
- 629–30 *blessed / That han mercy*. See Matt. 5.7: “Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.”
- 637     *The clene hertes of Crist*. See Matt. 5.8: “Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God.”
- 645     *the pesible blissed*. See Matt. 5.9: “Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.”
- 648–49 On the friar’s volatile anger one is reminded of the outraged friar in Chaucer’s *Summoner’s Tale*, whose waspish wrath is, apart from his lechery, his dominant trait.
- 651     *All the blissing*. “They walk (i.e., live) without any of God’s blessings.” *Beouten* = OE *butan*, without, outside [of].
- 654     *Thei han the benison of God*. See Matt. 5.10: “Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”
- 657     *Wat Brut*. Walter Brute, a Welsh esquire, who questioned Church doctrines and who defended certain people charged with heresy until 1393.
- 659     *hym*. Skeat’s emendation of *hem* (Trinity, Royal, 1553 edition, Wright). The antecedent is “Wat Brut” (line 657), hence *hym* is correct.
- 663     *thei chewen charitie*. The pun (eschew; chew; show) occurs likewise in *Piers Plowman* B 1.193: “Chewen hire charite and chiden after moore.”
- 669     *forbade*. Trinity reads *forladde*, all others *forbad* or *forbadde*.
- 670     *never the folke demen*. See Matt. 7 for the issue of judgment.
- 677     *schenden*. Trinity reads *schenden oper schenden* (= dittography); all others have *shamen* or *schamen*.

### *Notes*

- 681      *possessioñers* were beneficed or endowed clergymen who were allowed to have possessions. Fraternal rules prohibited the owning of property.
- 691      *ante tronum*. See Apoc. 4.10: “the twenty-four elders will fall down before him who sits upon the throne.”
- 695–96    *undernethen whijt . . . Blak*. This is the habit of the Dominicans, black over white.
- 703      *Hyldegare*. Hildegarde of Bingen (1098–1180), who predicted the corruptions of monastic orders. The pronoun in line 703 would more correctly be “ho” rather than “he,” but there is no manuscript support for this emendation.
- 713–14    *a pena . . . a culpa*. “And completely absolved people both from punishment and blame.” See *Piers Plowman* B 7.3: “And purchaced hym a pardoun *a pena & a culpa*.”
- 719      *Thei usen russet also*. Franciscan friars, best known as the Greyfriars, also wore reddish-brown habits. See *Piers Plowman* B 15.167–68: “[Charite] . . . is as glad of a gowne of gray russet / As of a tunycle of tarse or of trie scarlet.”
- 725      *als*. Trinity alone reads *all* for *als*.
- 726–28    *And ryght as dranes*. See the *Summoner’s Prologue*, *CT* III (D) 1692–99, which compares friars to bees in a derogatory context.
- 729      *furste-froyt*. Chaucer’s Summoner alludes to “firste fruyt” in an antifraternal context when the lord’s squire explains that the friar, because of his preeminence, should first partake of the fart divided upon twelve. See *CT* III (D) 1271–86. Both here and in Chaucer the Pauline notion of “firstfruit” for God is perverted.
- 748–49    *So of that begger’s brol . . . prese to sitten*. The issue of newly-advanced sons arises in *Piers Plowman* B, and in similar language. Lady Mede denounces Conscience by alluding to the hardships of the French wars: “I dorste haue leyd my lif and no lasse wedde / He sholde haue be lord of pat lond in lengþe and in brede, / And ek kynge of þat kip his kyn for to helpe, / The

*Piers the Plowman's Crede*

leeste brol of his blood a Barones pierc" (B 3.202–05; cf. C 3.258–61). In his edition to *Piers Plowman*, Skeat directs to *Promptorium parvulorum*, s.v. "Breyel [for breþel?], *Brollus, brolla, miserculus*," i.e., little wretch, brat.

- 758 The word *faytoires*, meaning "deceivers" or "(false) beggars," appears several times coupled with *freres* in *Piers Plowman* B-text. See passus 10. 72: "Freres and faitours han founden vp swiche questions." See also John A. Alford, *Piers Plowman: A Glossary of Legal Diction* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1988), s.v. *Faitour*.
- 773 *But scheten*. The idea here is that women should give careful consideration before inviting friars into their homes. See also Harry Bailly's admonition against bringing monks into your home: *CT VII* (B<sup>2</sup>) 442.
- 788 *wolward gon*. Wear wool clothing without benefit of linen to mitigate the rough fabric. See *Piers Plowman* B 18.1.
- 801 *That*. Trinity alone reads *It*.
- 808 *And fet oute our formfaderes*. A reference to Christ's Harrowing of Hell to save the virtuous pagans. The issue of the virtuous pagans was important in the late fourteenth century. See *Piers Plowman* B 11.140–66, 12.210–17, 18.261–423.
- 816 *generall Holy Chirche*. The Catholic, universal Church, as opposed to those aspects of the Church that require reform.
- 817–21 These lines are recorded only in the 1553 edition. Wright prints them (his lines 1629–38); and Skeat prints them in brackets and in italics, since he believed they were spurious.
- 822–23 *sothfast God on is*. The author here affirms the doctrine of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist: that Christ is truly present, "fully" His flesh and blood.
- 827–28 *Lat the losels alone . . . nede worthe*. Lines 827 and 828 do not occur in the 1553 edition, which prints five lines that Skeat regarded as spurious. Skeat surmises that the editor of the 1553 edition deleted the reference to Christ's

### *Notes*

presence in the communion for doctrinal reasons, and inserted a penitential passage to cover up for the omission.

828–30 These lines are lacking in the 1553 edition and in Wright's edition.

833 *of.* Trinity alone reads *or.*

838 *ben.* Trinity reads *pen*, which makes no sense. The 1553 edition, Wright, and Skeat have *ben*, Royal *bene*.

839 *no.* Trinity alone reads *on*, which seems to be anticipation of *on his pild pate*.



## ***The Plowman's Tale***

### ***Introduction***

The *PIT*, also known as *The Complaint of the Ploughman*, is a pseudepigraphic Lollard poem of 1380 lines, which established Chaucer's reputation as a pre-Reformation protestant author. Most of the poem dates from about the year 1400. It exists in one manuscript version and in two important black-letter editions. The manuscript, located in the Humanities Research Center Library of the University of Texas at Austin, was prepared by hand apparently for insertion into the Thomas Godfray edition of Chaucer's *Works* (black-letter 1532); but the manuscript, which derives from an early original, may have been executed very late, possibly well after the sixteenth century. The poem also appeared in a separate edition (Thomas Godfray c. 1535–36), which contains printed marginal glosses in Latin. The only known copy of this edition is now located in the Huntington Library, lacking a leaf at the beginning. (Hereafter this edition will be referred to as HT for Huntington text.) The *PIT* was also published in William Thynne's second edition of Chaucer's *Works* (1542; hereafter Thynne<sup>2</sup>). The Texas MS, HT, and Thynne<sup>2</sup> are very similar, especially HT and Thynne<sup>2</sup>. Thynne<sup>2</sup> provided the base text for W. W. Skeat's edition (=Sk; 1897), for Skeat did not know about the MS or HT. Thomas Wright (Wr) based his 1859 edition for the Rolls Series on the inferior Thomas Speght edition of 1687. Skeat's edition is standard, but it needs updating and revising.

The *PIT*, as received (with the Prologue), purports to be a Canterbury tale, and some Reformation editors, Godfray, Thynne, and especially John Stow (1561), may have accepted it as authentically Chaucerian. Although the Lollard author — or an interpolator — clearly meant to link the poem with the *CT*, there are indications that the Middle English author did not compose it as a pseudo-Chaucerian tale. It is likely that the poem as originally written (without the Prologue) had no connection with either Chaucer or *Piers Plowman*. If the author or editor tried to adapt the *PIT* to the *CT* framework, he did not everywhere succeed. The evidence suggests rather that he wanted to write a tale in the debate tradition and that a sixteenth-century editor adapted the debate poem loosely to the *CT* mold through the Prologue (lines 1–52). The poem begins during the “midsummer moon,” closer to the summer solstice than to April; and the Plowman is at home, plowing, rather

### *The Plowman's Tale*

than on pilgrimage, as with Chaucer's storytellers. Moreover, the ending of the *PIT* offers its own retraction. So it seems that the author or the interpolator meant the *PIT* to stand apart from the *CT* rather than to be included within the latter's fictional boundaries. In Thynne<sup>2</sup>, the *PIT* follows *The Parson's Tale* and precedes *The Romaunt of the Rose*, but in subsequent editions it precedes *The Parson's Tale*.

The poem was composed in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century, perhaps about the same time as *PPC*, c. 1394–1401, since the latter work is mentioned in line 1066. Common authorship has sometimes been claimed for the two poems, but their respective prosody (and some would say their literary quality) is quite different. *PPC* was written in the alliterative long line, whereas the *PIT* is, for the most part, in the eight-line stanza of Chaucer's *Monk's Tale*, rhyming *ababbcbc*. The Prologue (lines 1–52) rhymes *abababab*; lines 1149–1268 rhyme *ababcdcd*. These several rhyme schemes suggest interpolation, as Bradley and Skeat have observed. The *PIT*, unlike Chaucer's *CT*, features four stresses and eight syllables, and the four-beat lines contain alliteration on the *a a / a x* pattern. The opening line of Part I reads: "A sterne stryfe is stered newe" (53), while line 55 has: "Of sondry sedes that bene sewe." Most stanzas end with a refrain, which varies slightly from stanza to stanza. Of Chaucer's *CT*, *The Monk's Tale*, in its sombre tone and heavy moralizations, may be closest in spirit to the *PIT*; but none of the *CT* is so topical or satirical as the *PIT*.

The story of the *PIT* is easily summarized. In the Prologue, the Plowman leaves his plowing at midsummer and joins the pilgrimage to Canterbury. The Host, Harry Bailly, calls on the Plowman to tell "some holy thynge," and he obliges with what he calls "a good preachynge" that he heard from a priest. He then relates the "story" of conflict between two types of people: the established, endowed clergy versus the poor and oppressed "lollers." The narrator says he has wandered far and wide trying to learn which type of person is the "falser," until he came upon a Griffin, which advanced the Pope's arguments, and a Pelican, which sided with the poor priests and the Lollers. This is, however, not a debate poem in the tradition of *The Owl and the Nightingale* or *Parlement of the Thre Ages*, because the author gives few lines to the Griffin while allowing the Pelican to expatiate on the evils of the clergy. At lines 717–18 the Griffin interrupts the Pelican to ask, "What canst thou preche ayenst chanons / That men clepen seculere?" This question simply licenses the Pelican to attack secular canons (see also 989–90, which launches an attack on monks). The Griffin's best arguments occur at lines 1073–1108, when he points out that the Church should have a leader, the Pope, and a disciplined hierarchy. The Pelican counters the Griffin with: "Christ is our heed, that sitteth on hye; / Heddes ne ought we have no mo" (1111–12). Toward the end of the poem the Pelican interprets the two parts of the Griffin, bird and lion, as pride and

### *Introduction*

robbery; then, the author himself depicts an eschatological battle between the Griffin, with its fellow attack birds, and the Pelican and Phoenix (traditional symbols of Christ), with the latter triumphing. Finally, in a Chaucerian gesture that combines a disclaimer with something like a formal retraction, the author (or perhaps the Plowman narrator) says he merely reports the Pelican's words. Blame the Pelican; it is all a fable.

The *PIT* gained special prominence in the sixteenth century, when Chaucer's writings were thought to anticipate English Reformation attitudes concerning the church of Rome and its bureaucracies. Editors of Chaucer regularly included the poem until 1775, when Thomas Tyrwhitt omitted it from his new edition. The *PIT* is not only antifraternal, like *PPC*; it is more broadly anticlerical, attacking the Pope, bishops, and cardinals but sparing poor priests — a strategy which corresponds with later fourteenth- and fifteenth-century attitudes. The author reserves his most withering scorn for prelates who would live like fine lords.

The *PIT* bears witness not only to an interest in Chaucer's *CT* and in Chaucer as a pre-Reformation protestant thinker; it also belongs in a tradition of "plowman" writings. Indeed, it is sometimes confused with other works with similar (modern) titles. We may infer that interest in the Plowman was keen because of the success of Langland's *Piers Plowman* and because one of Chaucer's ideal pilgrims, the Plowman, never tells a story. A later author, probably an editor or scribe interested in creating a more complete text of the *CT*, wrote a "Prologue of the Ploughman" for Thomas Hoccleve's poem on the sleeves of the Virgin, thereby creating a *Ploughman's Tale* for the Northumberland manuscript of the *CT* (Northumberland MS 455). Other writings, all sixteenth-century, include *A Lytell Geste howe the Plowman lerned his Pater Noster* (STC 20034); *God sped the Plough*, a refrain poem with twelve *Monk's Tale* stanzas; *I playne Piers which cannot flatter* (STC 19903a), a prose work with rhyming tags; *A godly dyalogue and dysputacyon betwene Pyers plowman and a popysh preest* (STC 19903); *The prayer and complainyt of the Ploweman unto Christ* (STC 20036), a polemical piece; and *Pyers plowmans exhortation unto the lordes, knighthes and burgoyses of the parlyamenthouse* (STC 19905). In this group should be mentioned *The Song of the Husbandman*, an alliterative complaint poem from MS Harley 2253 (about 1340, hence before *Piers Plowman*), which depicts the harsh life of the farmer. These writings, and others which appropriate the name of Piers the Plowman, testify to the continuing influence of Langland and the "Piers Plowman" tradition."

Because no fourteenth- or fifteenth-century versions of the *PIT* exist, it is difficult — if not impossible — to reconstruct the (hypothetical) Middle English original, as Skeat tried to do in his edition of 1897. The manuscript version and the earliest editions, HT and Thynne<sup>2</sup>, may include Reformation interpolations (especially the

### *The Plowman's Tale*

Prologue linking the tale of Griffin and Pelican to the *CT*); and the spellings in all three early versions often owe more to sixteenth- than to fifteenth-century conventions. But those who claim that the poem is essentially a Reformation poem overstate the case. The vocabulary and issues raised in the poem mark it as late Ricardian or early Henrician, as Wawn has shown.

The text of this edition is based on a facsimile of William Thynne's edition of Chaucer's *Works* (ed. D. S. Brewer; London: Scolar, 1969; reprinted 1976), first published in 1532 and reprinted, with the *PIT*, in 1542 [= Thynne<sup>2</sup>]. There were two identical versions of Thynne<sup>2</sup>, one with the imprint of W. Bonham (Short Title Catalogue 5069), the other with the imprint of John Reynes (STC 5070), which is the version printed in the 1969 facsimile. I have checked the facsimile against a microfilm version of the Texas MS; against an excellent photocopied version of the Thomas Godfray edition (HT) supplied by the Huntington Library; and against the editions of Wright and Skeat. I select the Thynne<sup>2</sup> over the Texas MS because of the latter's unusual orthography, particularly the scribe's use of *tt* for *t* ("att," "butt"). But I adopt 23 substantive readings of the Texas MS, even when HT and Thynne<sup>2</sup> agree against the MS (at lines 57, 58, 73, 176, 183, 221, 289, 332, 533, 547, 621, 652, 695, 740, 876, 921, 927, 929, 967, 972, 1084, 1200, 1322); nine readings of the Texas MS and HT against Thynne<sup>2</sup> (at lines 105, 148, 251, 260, 437, 450, 765, 911, and 924); one reading of HT against the Texas MS and Thynne<sup>2</sup> (at line 895); and eight of Skeat's emendations (at lines 37, 130, 189, 361, 432, 451, 618, and 1135). In the Notes I include some of HT's marginal Latin glosses, which are mostly scriptural parallels to the English text.

Skeat in his edition, perhaps following Wright's practices, normalized the orthography to bring the *PIT* text into conformity with early fifteenth-century scribal conventions. Skeat substituted *i* for *y* when the vowel sound is short, and he retained *y* for long vowels. He regularly doubled both open and close long *o* and *e* and deleted final *-e*. Most notably, Skeat regularly normalized the anachronistic *ea* grapheme to fifteenth-century conventions for representing long open *e*. Finally, Skeat emended his edition frequently for prosodic or lexical reasons. He clearly held theories about the poem's original language and its regular prosody; and he did not hesitate to improve his copy text based on those theories.

Unlike Skeat I rely on the facsimile edition of Thynne<sup>2</sup>, the Texas MS, and HT and their spellings in most cases. The chief exception to this rule occurs in the rhymes. I change the spelling of subsequent rhyme-words to conform to the initial spelling or on some occasions the initial spelling to conform to subsequent rhyme-words. Hence, I alter the edition's *chynne* in line 4 and *skynne* in line 6 to *chyn* and *skyn* to correspond with the rhyme-word *in* of line 2. Similarly, in the second stanza, I alter the edition's *platte* of line 12 and *forswatte* of line 14 to correspond with the

### *Introduction*

rhyme-word *hat* of line 10. Often I alter the spellings of Thynne's edition in favor of the Huntington text spellings (*robbery*, *tyranny*, and *prophesy* at lines 190, 192, and 193 rather than Thynne's *robberye*, *tyrannye*, and *prophecye*). In addition, I change, without note, the edition's consonantal *u* to *v* (*auowe* becomes *avowe* or *avow*), *i* to *j* (*ioynt* becomes *joynt*), and ampersand (&) to *and*.

### *Manuscript*

Library of the University of Texas at Austin MS 8. In Chaucer's *Works*, 1532.

### *Previous Editions*

*The Workes of Geffray Chaucer*. London: Thomas Godfray, 1532.

*The Plowman's Tale*. London: Godfray, c. 1536. [Unique copy in the Huntington Library.]

Geoffrey Chaucer. *The Works*, 1532. With Supplementary Material from the Editions of 1542, 1561, 1598 and 1602. Menton: Scolar Press, 1969.

Wright, Thomas, ed. *The Complaint of the Ploughman*. In *Political Poems and Songs Relating to English History, Composed during the Period from the Accession of Edw. III. to that of Ric. III.* Rolls Series 14, Vol. 1. London: Longman, Green, 1859. Pp. 304–46.

Skeat, Walter W., ed. *The Plowman's Tale*. In *Chaucerian and Other Pieces*, vol. 7 of *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1897. Pp. 147–90.

Wawn, Andrew, ed. *The Ploughman's Tale*. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Birmingham, 1969.

### *General Studies*

Coleman, Janet. *Medieval Readers and Writers 1350–1400*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1981.

### *The Plowman's Tale*

Kendall, Ritchie D. *The Drama of Dissent: The Radical Poetry of Non Conformity, 1380–1590*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986.

Peck, Russell A. "Social Conscience and the Poets." *Social Unrest in the Late Middle Ages*. Ed. Francis X. Newman. Binghamton, New York: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1986. Pp. 113–48.

Szittya, Penn. *The Antifraternal Tradition in Medieval Literature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987.

Yunck, John. *The Lineage of Lady Meed: The Development of Medieval Venality Satires*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963.

### **Criticism**

Bradley, Henry. "The *Plowman's Tale*." *Athenaeum*, 12 July 1902, 62.

Heffernan, Thomas J. "Aspects of the Chaucerian Apocrypha: Animadversions in William Thynne's Edition of the *Plowman's Tale*." In *Chaucer Traditions: Studies in Honour of Derek Brewer*, ed. Ruth Morse and Barry Windeatt. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990. Pp. 155–67.

Hudson, Anne. "Epilogue: The Legacy of *Piers Plowman*." In *A Companion to Piers Plowman*. Ed. John A. Alford. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988. Pp. 251–66.

Irvine, Annie S. "A Manuscript Copy of *The Plowman's Tale*." *University of Texas Studies in English*, 12 (1932), 27–56.

Lawton, David. "Lollardy and the *Piers Plowman* Tradition." *Modern Language Review*, 76 (1981), 780–93.

Wawn, Andrew W. "The Genesis of *The Plowman's Tale*." *Yearbook of English Studies*, 2 (1972), 21–40.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Chaucer, *The Plowman's Tale* and Reformation Propaganda: The Testimony of Thomas Godfray and *I Playne Piers*." *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, Manchester*, 56 (1973–74), 174–92.

## *Introduction*

### ***Bibliographies***

Peck, Russell A. *Chaucer's Romaunt of the Rose and Boece, Treatise on the Astrolabe, Equatorie of the Planetis, Lost Works and Chaucerian Apocrypha*. Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1988.

Robbins, Rossell Hope. "XIII. Poems Dealing with Contemporary Conditions" in *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English*, vol. 5. New Haven: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1975. Pp. 1447–48; 1677.

### *The Plowman's Tale*

#### **Here begynneth the Plowman's Prologue**

- The Plowman plucked up his plowe  
Whan mydsommer mone was comen in,  
And sayd, "His beestes shuld eate ynowe,  
And lye in the grasse, up to the chyn.  
They ben feble, both oxe and cowe,  
Of hem nis left but bone and skyn."<sup>1</sup>  
He shoke of share, and cultre of-drowe,  
And honge his harneys on a pin.
- He toke his tabarde and his staffe eke,  
And on his heed he set his hat,  
And sayde he wolde Saynt Thomas seke.  
On pylgremage he goth forth plat.  
In scrippe he bar both breed and lekes,  
He was forswonke and all forswat.  
Men might have sene through both his chekes,  
And every wang-toth and where it sat.
- Our Hoste behelde wele all about,  
And sawe this man was sun ybrent.  
He knewe well by his senged snout,  
And by his clothes that were to-rent,  
He was a man wont to walke about,  
He nas nat alway in cloystre ypent;  
He coulde not religiounliche lout,  
And therfore was he fully shent.
- Our Host him axed, "What man art thou?"  
"Sir," quod he, "I am an hyne,
- moon  
beasts should eat enough  
lie  
*Only bone and skin is left of them*  
*hung; plow-harness*  
*outer garment*  
*head*  
*wished to seek*  
*straightway*  
*pilgrim's satchel; leeks*  
*exhausted and very sweaty*  
*seen; cheeks*  
*molar*  
*sunburned*  
*sun-blackened nose*  
*torn*  
*enclosed in a cloister*  
*bow*  
*shamed*  
*asked*  
*a farm-workman*

---

<sup>1</sup> *He cleaned the plowshare, and drew off the coulter*

*The Plowman's Tale*

	For I am wont to go to the plow And erne my mete yer that I dyne. To swete and swinke I make avow, My wyfe and children therwith to fynde, And serve God, and I wist how; But we leude men bene fully blynde.	<i>accustomed earn my food before; eat sweat; toil support if I knew ignorant</i>
30		
35	For clerkes say we shullen be fayne For hir lyvelod to swet and swinke, And they right nought us give agayne, <sup>1</sup> Neyther to eate ne yet to drinke. They mowe by lawe, as they sayne, Us curse and dampne to hell brinke. Thus they putten us to payne, With candles queynt and belles clinkie.	<i>glad livelihood; work nor must snuffed out; clinking</i>
40		
45	They make us thralles at her lust, And sayne, we mowe nat els be saved; They have the corne and we the dust, Who speaketh ther-agayn, they say he raved."	<i>slaves to their desire may not otherwise against them</i>
50	"What, man!" quod our Host, "canst thou preche? Come nere, and tell us some holy thynge." "Sir," quod he, "I herde ons teche A prest in pulpit a good preachynge." "Saye on," quod our Host, "I the beseche." "Sir, I am redy at your byddynge. I praye you that no man me reproche Whyle that I am my tale tellynge."	<i>can you preach once</i>

Thus endeth the Prologue, and here foloweth the fyrst parte of the tale.

PART I

A sterne stryfe is stered newe In many stedes in a stounde,	<i>serious contention is roused anew In many places at once</i>
--	---

---

<sup>1</sup> *And they give us nothing at all in return*

*The Plowman's Tale*

55	Of sondry sedes that bene sewe, It semeth that som ben unsounde; For some be great growen on grounde, Some ben souple, simple and small. Whether of hem is falser founde, The falser, foule mote him befall! <sup>1</sup>	<i>Of diverse seeds that are planted unhealthy adaptable Which</i>
60	That one syde is, that I of tell, Popes, cardynals, and prelates, Parsons, monkes, and freres fell, Priours, abbottes of great estates.	<i>sinister friars</i>
65	Of hevyn and hell they kepe the yates, And Peters successours they ben all. This is demed by olde dates, But falshed, foule mought it befall!	<i>heaven; gates determined from of old</i>
70	The other syde ben poore and pale, And people put out of prease; And seme caytyffes sore a-cale, And ever in one without encrease, <sup>2</sup> I-cleped lollers and londlese. Who toteth on hem, they bene untall;	<i>put people out of favor seem to be wretches bitterly frozen</i>
75	They ben arayed all for the peace; But falshed, foule mote it befall!	<i>called idlers; landless looks; weak (not tall)</i>
80	Many a countrey have I sought To knowe the falser of these two; But ever my travayle was for nought, All so ferre as I have go. But as I wandred in a wro, In a wodde besyde a wall, Two foules sawe I sytte tho; The falser, foul mote hym befall!	<i>labor; in vain As widely as I have traveled nook wood birds; then</i>
85	That one dyd plede on the Popes syde,	<i>plead</i>

---

<sup>1</sup> *The falser (worse seed), may evil befall it!*

<sup>2</sup> *And always without improvement (of their condition)*

*The Plowman's Tale*

- A Gryffon of a grymme stature.  
 A Pellycane withouten pryd  
 To these lollers layde his lure;  
 He mused his matter in measure,  
 To counsayle Christ ever gan he call.  
 The Gryffon shewed as sharpe as fyre,  
 But falshed, foule mote it befall!
- The PELLYCANE began to preche  
 Both of mercy and of mekenesse,  
 And sayd that Christ so gan us teche,  
 And meke and mercyable gan blesse.  
 The Evangely beareth wytnesse  
 A Lamb, he lykneth Christ over-all,  
 In tokenyng that He mekest was,  
 Sith pryd was out of heven fall.
- And so shulde every Christned be.  
 Preestes, Peters successors,  
 Beth lowlyche and of lowe degré,  
 And usen none erthly honours,  
 Neyther crowne, ne curious covertours,  
 Ne pylloure, ne other proude pall;  
 Ne nougat to cofren up greet tresours;  
 For falshed, foule mote it befall!
- Preestes shulde for no cattel plede,  
 But chasten hem in charite;  
 Ne to no bateyle shulde men lede  
 For inhaunsing of her owne degree;  
 Nat wilne syttinges in hye see,<sup>1</sup>  
 Ne soverayntie in hous ne hall;  
 All worldly worshippe defye and flee;  
 For whoso willeth highnes, foule shall fall!
- Alas, who may suche sayntes call

---

<sup>1</sup> [They] should not desire to sit in the high seat

*The Plowman's Tale*

	That wylneth welde erthlye honour? As lowe as Lucifer euche shall fall, In baleful blacknesse ybulden her bour; <sup>1</sup> That eggeth the people to error, And maketh them to hem thrall. To Christ I holde euche one traytour, <sup>2</sup> As lowe as Lucifer euche one shall fall.	<i>desire to wield spurs on slaves to them</i>
125	That willeth to be kinges peeres, And hygher than the Emperour; Some that were but poore freres Nowe wollen waxe a warryour. God is nat her governour, That holdeth no man his peragall;	<i>That [person] desires; king's peers friars become their equal greed; their counselor must needs</i>
130	Whyle covetyse is her counsaylour, All euche falshed mote nede fall.	
135	That hye on horse wylleth ryde In glytterande golde of great araye, I-paynted and portred all in prude — No commen knyght maye go so gaye. Chaunge of clothyng every daye, With golden girdles great and small,	<i>That [person] high glittering Painted; portrayed common belts</i>
140	As boystous as is bere at bay: All euche falshed mote nede fall.	<i>As loud as a bear at bay must needs</i>
145	With prude punysheth they the poore, And some they sustayne with sale; Of Holy Churche maketh an hore, And fylleth her wombe with wyne and ale; With money fylleth many a male, And chaffren churches when they fall, And telleth the people a leude tale — Suche false faytours, foule them fall. <sup>3</sup>	<i>through commerce whore fill their bellies bag haggle over ignorant</i>

<sup>1</sup> *In malignant darkness construct their bower*

<sup>2</sup> *I maintain such a one is traitor to Christ*

<sup>3</sup> *Such false deceivers, may evil befall them*

*The Plowman's Tale*

	With chaunge of many maner metes, With songe and solace sytynge longe, And filleth her wombe, and fast fretes, And from the mete to the gonge; And after mete, with harpe and songe, And eche man mote hem lordes call, And hote spycs ever amone: Suche false faytours, foul hem fall.	<i>kinds of food entertainment their bellies; quickly devour meal; toilet</i>
155		<i>each; must everywhere deceivers</i>
	And myters mo than one or two, I-perled as the quenes heed; <i>Furnished with pearls like the queen's head</i> A staffe of golde, and pyrrey, lo! As hevy as it were made of leed; With cloth of golde both newe and reed, With glitterand golde as grene as gall, By dome will dampne men to deed. All suche faytours, foul hem fall!	<i>more jewelry lead red glittering; wormwood With Judgment; condemn; death</i>
160		
165	And Christes people proudly curse With brode bokes, and braying bell; To putte pennyes in her purse They wol sell both heven and hel. And in her sentence, and thou wilt dwell, <sup>1</sup>	<i>hefty books heaven</i>
170	They willen gesse in her gaye hall; And though the soth thou of hem tell, In great cursinge shalt thou fall.	<i>guess truth</i>
175	That is blessed, that they blesse, And cursed, that they curse woll; And thus the people they oppresse, And have theyr lordshyppes at the full; And many be marchantes of woll, And to purse penyes woll come thrall. <sup>2</sup> The poore people they all to-pull,	<i>That [which] is lordships fully wool merchants pull apart</i>

---

<sup>1</sup> *And in their meaning, if you will pay attention*

<sup>2</sup> *And pennies will become servants of [these merchant-priests'] purse*

*The Plowman's Tale*

- 180     Suche false faytours, foule hem fall!
- Lordes mote to hem loute,  
Obeysaunt to her brode blesyng.  
They ryden with a royll route  
On a courser, as it were a king;  
With saddle of golde glytteryng  
With curious harneys quayntly crallyt,  
Styropes gaye of golde-mastlyng.  
All suche falshed, foule befall it!
- must bow to them  
Obedient; expansive  
retinue  
*swift horse, as if they were kings*
- 185     *finely-wrought; curled*  
*Finely-wrought stirrups of latten*
- 190     Christes minysters cleped they bene,  
And rulen all in robbery;  
But Antichriste they serven clene,  
Attyred all in tyranny.  
Witnesse of Johns prophesy,  
That Antichriste is her admirall,  
Tyffelers attyred in trechery.  
All suche faytours, foule hem fall!
- they are called*  
*wholly*  
*prince*  
*Triflers*
- 195     Who sayth that some of hem may synne,  
He shal be dome to be deed;  
Some of hem woll gladly wynne  
All ayenst that whiche God forbed.  
“All-holyest” they clepen her heed,  
That of her rule is regall;  
Alas, that ever they eten breed!  
For all suche, falshed woll foule fall.
- judged; dead  
profit from  
*All those things that God forbade*  
“The most holy”; call their leader  
*should eat bread*
- 200     Her heed loveth all honour,  
And to be worshypped in worde and dede.  
Kyngez mote to hem knele and coure:  
To the Apostles, that Chryst forbede.<sup>1</sup>  
To Popes hestes suche taketh more hede  
Than to kepe Chrystes commaundement.  
Of gold and sylver mote ben her wede,
- Their leader*  
*must; cower*  
*commandments; heed*  
*clothing*

---

<sup>1</sup> *Christ forbade the Apostles especially that*

## *The Plowman's Tale*

	They holdeth him hole omnipotent.	him ( <i>the Pope</i> ) wholly
215	He ordayneth by his ordynaunce To parysh preestes a powere; To another, a greater avaunce, A greater poynt to his mystere. But for he is hyghest in erth here, To hym reserveth he many a poynt; But to Christ, that hath no pere, Reserveth he neyther opyn ne joynt. <sup>1</sup>	command parish priests advancement ministry here on earth has no equal
220	So semeth he above hem all, And Christ aboven hym nothyng; Whan he sytteth in his stall, Dampneth, and saveth, as him thynk. Suche pryme to-fore God doth stynk. An angell bad John to hym nat knele, But only to God do his bowyng; Suche wyllers of worship must nede evyll fele.	seems; them not at all above him
225	[He] condemns; he sees fit before; stinks commanded John not to kneel to him	
230	They ne clepen Christ but <i>Sanctus Deus</i> , And clepen her heed <i>Sanctissimus</i> ; They that suche a sect sewys, I trowe, they taken hem amysse. In erth here they have her blysse, Her hye master is Belyal; Chrystes people from hem wysse! <sup>2</sup> For all suche false wyll foule fall!	call; Holy God call their head the Most Holy emulate believe; misinterpret them Here on earth the devil
235	They mowe both bynde and lose, And all is for her holy lyfe; To save or dampne they mowe chose, Betwene hem now is great stryfe. Many a man is kylled with a knyfe, To wete which of hem have lordship shall;	may both bind and loose their may choose
240		To learn which of them

<sup>1</sup> He grants neither a free nor contingent point

<sup>2</sup> May Christ's people be guided away from them

*The Plowman's Tale*

For suche, Chryst suffred woundes fyve;  
For all suche falshed will foule fall.

- |     |   |   |
|-----|---|---|
| 245 | Christ sayd: <i>Qui gladio percutit,</i><br>With swerde sothely he shall dye.<br>He bad his preestes peace and grith,<br>And bade hem not drede for to dye;<br>And bad them be both symple and slye,<br>And carke not for no cattall; | <i>"He who smites with the sword"</i><br><i>truly; die</i><br><i>protection</i><br><i>fear to die</i><br><i>ingenious</i><br><i>not be anxious about worldly goods</i><br><i>high</i> |
| 250 | But trusteth on God that sytteth on hye,<br>For all false shull foule fall.   |   |
| 255 | These wollen make men to swere<br>Ayenst Christes commaundement;<br>And Christes membres all to-tere<br>On Roode, as He wer newe yrent.<br>Suche lawes they make by commen assent,<br>Echone it choweth as a ball;                    | <i>swear</i><br><i>Against</i><br><i>tear apart</i><br><i>Cross; torn apart again</i><br><i>common</i><br><i>Each one shuns it; blow</i><br><i>ruined (smitten)</i>                   |
| 260 | Thus the poore be fully shent,<br>But ever falshed foule it fall!   |   |
| 265 | They usen no symony,<br>But sellen churches and priorities;<br>Ne they usen no envy,<br>But cursen all hem contraries;  | <i>simony</i><br><i>all who oppose them</i>   |
|     | And hyreth men by dayes and yeres<br>With strength to holde hem in her stall;<br>And culleth all her adversaries: —<br>Therfore, falshed, foule thou fall!  | <i>kill</i>   |
| 270 | With purse they purchase personage,<br>With purse they paynen hem to plede;<br>And men of warre they woll wage,<br>To brynghe her enemyes to the dede.<br>And lordes lyves they woll lede,<br>And moche take, and give but small;     | <i>title</i><br><i>they will engage men of war</i><br><i>death</i><br><i>they wish to lead a lord's life</i><br><i>take much</i>  |

*The Plowman's Tale*

275	But he it so get, from it shall shede, <sup>1</sup> And make suche false ryght foule fal!	
	They halowe nothyng but for hyre, Churche, font, ne vestement; And make orders in every shyre, But preestes paye for the parchment.	<i>consecrate; except for money shire priests; i.e. deed</i>
280	Of ryatours they taken rent, Therwith they smere the shepes skall; For many churches ben ofte suspent. All suche falshed, yet foule it fall!	<i>From wastrels they make income bedaub the sheep's sore suspended</i>
285	Some lyveth nat in lechery, But haunten wenches, widdowes, and wyves, And punysheth the poore for putry. Themselfe it useth all theyr lyves; <sup>2</sup>	<i>frequent; widows whoredom</i>
290	And but a man to them hym shryves, To heven come never he shall. He shal be cursed as be caytyves, To hell they sayne that he shall fall.	<i>unless; confesses wretches</i>
295	There was more mercy in Maximyen, And in Nero, that never was good, Than is nowe in some of them Whan he hath on his furred hood.	
300	They folowe Christ that shedde His blood To heven, as buckette in to the wall; <sup>3</sup> Suche wretches ben worse than wood; And all suche faytours, foule hem fall!	<i>pursue mad</i>
	They gyve her almesse to the ryche, To maynteynours, and to men of lawe; For to lordes they woll be liche, An harlottes sonne nat worthe an haw!	<i>alms abettors they wish to be like lords hawthorn fruit (inedible)</i>

<sup>1</sup> *But he who acquires money in this way will lose it*

<sup>2</sup> *They practice it (whoredom) all their lives*

<sup>3</sup> *(They follow Christ) To heaven, just as the bucket into the well*

*The Plowman's Tale*

- 305 Sothfastnesse suche han slawe.  
They kembe her crokettes with christall;  
And drede of God they have downe drawe:  
All suche faytours, foule hem fall!
- 310 They maken parsons for the penny  
And canons of her cardynals.  
Unnethes amongst hem all any  
That he ne hath glosed the gospell fals.  
For Christ made never no cathedrals,  
Ne wthy Hym was no cardynall
- 315 Wyth a redde hatte as usyn mynstrals;  
But falsshed, foule mote it befall!
- 320 Theyr tythyng, and her offryng both,  
They clemeth it by possessyon;  
Therof nyll they none forgo,  
But robbren men as by raunson.  
The tythyng of *Turpe lucrum*  
With these maisters is meynall.  
Tythyng of briby, and larson  
Wyll make falshed full foule to fall!
- 325 They taken to ferme her sompnours  
To harme the people what they may;  
To pardoners and false faytours  
Sell her seales, I dare well say;  
And all to holden great array,
- 330 To multiply hem more metall.  
They drede full litell Domes day,  
Whan all suche falsehode shall foul fall.
- 335 Suche harlottes shull men disclaundar,  
For they shullen make her gree,  
And ben as proude as Alexaundar,  
And sayne to the poore, "Wo be ye!"  
By yere eche preeste shall paye hys fee
- Truth; such (men) have slain  
comb their curled hair with crystal  
fear; called down*
- There is scarcely any among them  
falsely*
- such as minstrels wear*
- tithing  
lay claim to  
They won't give up any of it  
ransom  
"filthy lucre"  
a daily occurrence  
larceny*
- hire out their summoners  
however  
cheats*
- To increase their money  
fear very little; Doomsday*
- villains; slander  
favor*
- Every year each priest*

*The Plowman's Tale*

- To encrease hys lemmans call;<sup>1</sup>  
 Suche heerdes shull well yvell the,  
 And all suche false shull foule fall!
- 340
- And yf a man be falsely famed,  
 And wolde make purgacioun,  
 Than woll the offycers be agramed,  
 And assigne hym fro towne to town;  
 So nede he must paye raunsoun  
 Though he be clene as is christall,  
 And than have an absolutiou.  
 But all suche false shull foule fall!
- 345
- Though he be gyltie of the dede,  
 And that he maye money pay,  
 All the whyle his purse woll blede  
 He maye use it fro day to day!  
 These byshoppes offycers gone full gay,  
 And thys game they usen over-all;  
 The poore to pyll is all theyr pray;<sup>2</sup>  
 All suche false shull foule fall!
- 350
- Alas, God ordayne never suche lawe,  
 Ne no suche crafte of covetyse!  
 He forbade it, by His sawe,  
 Suche governours mowen of God agryse;  
 For all His rules ben rightwyse.  
 These newe poyntes ben pure papall,  
 And Goddes lawe they displice;  
 And all suche faytours shul foule fall!
- 355
- 360
- They sayne that Peter had the key  
 Of hevyn and hell, to have and holde.  
 I trowe Peter toke no money  
 For no synnes that he solde!
- 365
- shepherds will evil prosper*
- defamed*  
*wished to clear himself of false charges*  
*angry*  
*i.e. reassign*  
*he must needs; ransom*  
*crystal*
- guilty; deed*  
*bleed*  
*bishop's*  
*everywhere*
- avarice*  
*saying*  
*Such rulers may fear God*  
*righteous*  
*statutes are pure popery*  
*despise*
- heaven*  
*believe; took*

---

<sup>1</sup> *To enhance his sweetheart's caul (rich headdress)*

<sup>2</sup> *Their victims for plundering are wholly the poor*

### *The Plowman's Tale*

- |     |   |   |
|-----|---|---|
|     | Suche successours ben to bolde:<br>In wynnyng all theyr wytte they wrall;<br>Her conscience is waxen colde;<br>And all suche faytours, foule hem fall!  | are too<br><i>To make money; pervert</i><br><i>has grown</i>  |
| 370 | Peter was never so great a fole<br>To leave hys key with such a lorell,<br>Or to take suche cursed suche a tole<br>He was advySED nothyng well.<br>I trowe they have the key of hell.<br>Theyr maister is of that place marshall;<br>For there they dressen hem to dwell,<br>And with false Lucifere there to fall. | fool<br>scoundrel<br><i>instrument (heaven's key)</i><br><i>not at all well advised</i><br><i>believe</i><br><i>direct themselves</i> |
| 375 | They ben as proude as Lucifer,<br>As angry, and as envious.<br>From good faythe they ben full farre,<br>In covetyse they ben curyous.<br>To catche catell as covyous<br>As hounde, that for hungre woll yall —<br>Ungoodly, and ungratiouse;<br>And nedely, suche falshed shall foule fall.                         | <i>Lucifer</i><br><br>are very far away<br>zealous<br><i>To seize worldly goods; greedy</i><br><i>yowl</i><br><i>Of necessity</i>     |
| 380 | The Pope, and he were Peters heyre,<br>Me thynke he erreth in this case,<br>Whan choyse of byshoppes is in disp eyre,<br>To chosen hem in dyvers place.<br>A lorde shall write to hym for grace,<br>For hys clerke anone pray he shall;<br>So shall he spedhe hys purchase:<br>And all suche false, foule hem fall! | <i>if; heir</i><br><i>I believe he errs</i><br><i>When the choice; despair</i><br><i>choose</i><br><br><i>further his bargain</i>     |
| 390 | Though he can no more good, <sup>1</sup><br>A lordes prayer shal be spedde;<br>Though he be wylde of wyll, or wood,<br>Nat understandyng what men han redde,  | <i>expedited</i><br><i>mad</i><br><i>have advised</i>   |
| 395 |   |   |
| 400 |   |   |

<sup>1</sup> Although he knows nothing better [to do]

*The Plowman's Tale*

A leude boster — and that God forbede! — *ignorant braggart*  
 As good a byshoppe is my horse Ball!  
 Suche a Pope is foule be-stedde,  
 And at laste woll foule fall. *is in an evil position*

405 He maketh byshoppes for erthly thanke,  
*for the sake of earthly reward*  
 And nothyng for Christes sake.  
*not at all*

Suche that ben full fatte and ranke,

To soule heale non hede they take.<sup>1</sup>

Al is well done what ever they make,

For they shal answere at ones for all.

For worldes thanke, suche worch and wake,<sup>2</sup>

And all suche false shall foule fall!

*overgrown*

*at one moment for all*

410 Suche that canne nat her Crede  
*who don't know their*

With prayer shull be made prelates;

415 Nother canne the gospell rede,  
*Neither; read*

Suche shull nowe welde hye estates.

The hye goodes frendshyp hem makes,

They toteth on her somme totall.

Suche bere the keyes of hell yates,

420 And all suche false shall foule fall.

*govern prosperous*

*grand property*

*They keep an eye on the bottom line*

*bear; gates*

425 They forsake, for Christes love,  
*Work*

Traveyle, hungre, thurst, and colde;

For they ben ordred ever all above

Out of youthe tyl they ben olde.

*until they are*

By the dore they go, nat into the folde,

*don't exert themselves*

To helpe theyr shepe they nought travall;

*Hirelings*

Hyred men all suche I holde,

And all suche false, foule hem fall!

430 For Chryst her kyng they woll forsake,  
*keep watch*

And knowe Hym nought for His poverte.

For Christes love they woll wake

<sup>1</sup> *They pay no attention to [their] souls' health*

<sup>2</sup> *Such [people] work and stay awake for worldly reward*

*The Plowman's Tale*

	And drynke pyement and ale aparte. Of God they seme nothyng aferde, As lusty lyveth, as dyd Lamuall, And dryven her shepe in to deserte: — All suche faytours shull foule fall!	<i>spiced honey wine; in public seem not at all fearful</i> <i>They live as robustly as Lemuel did sheep</i>
435	Christ had xij Apostels here. Nowe, say they, there may be but one, That may nat erre in no manere.	<i>twelve i.e., the Pope</i>
440	Who leveth nat thys, ben lost echone. <sup>1</sup> Peter erred, so dyde nat John; Why is he cleped the principlall? Christ cleped hym Peter, but Himself the Stone. All false faytours, foule hem fall!	<i>did not called</i>
445	Why cursen they the croyserie, Christes Christen creatures? For bytwene hem is nowe envy To be enhaunsed in honours. And Christen lyvers, with her labours, <sup>2</sup>	<i>bishop's crozier between them enhanced</i>
450	For they levyn on no man mortall, Ben do to deth, with dishonours: — And all suche false, foule hem fall!	<i>do not believe in any mortal man Are put to death</i>
455	What knoweth a tylour at the plowe The Popes name, and what he hate? His Crede suffyseth to hym ynowe, And knoweth a cardynall by hys hatte. Rough is the poore, unryghtly latte, <sup>3</sup>	<i>plowman (tiller) is called enough hat</i>
460	That knoweth Christ hys God royll. Suche maters be nat worth a gnatte. But suche false faytours, foule hem fall!	
	A kyng shall knele and kysse hys show;	<i>shoe</i>

<sup>1</sup> *Whoever does not believe this is lost, each one*

<sup>2</sup> *And those who live the Christian life, with their work*

<sup>3</sup> *The poor man is simple, unjustly hindered*

*The Plowman's Tale*

- Chryst suffred a synfull to kysse His fete.  
Me thynketh, he holdeth hym hye ynow,  
So Lucifer dyd, that hye sette.  
Suche one, me thynketh, hym selfe foryete,  
Eyther to the trouth he was nat call;  
Christ, that suffred woundes wete,  
Shall make suche falshed foule fall.
- 465
- They layeth out her large nettes  
For to take sylver and golde,  
Fyllen coffers, and sackes fettes,  
There as they soules catche sholde.  
Her servantes be to them unholde  
But they can doublyn theyr rental  
To bygge hem castels, and bygge hem holde;<sup>1</sup>  
And all suche false, foule hem fall!
- 470
- 475

*sinner, feet  
high enough  
who sat high (proudly)  
forgets himself  
Or he was not called to the truth  
wet (bloody)*

*i.e. cast*

*fetch*

*unbeholden  
Unless*

**Here endeth the fyrst parte of thys tale, and herafter foloweth the seconde parte.**

PART II

- To accorde with this worde fal  
No more English can I fynde;  
Shewe another now I shall,  
For I have moche to saye behynde  
Howe preestes han the people pynde,  
As curteys Christ hath me kende,  
And putte thys matter in my mynde  
To make thys maner men amende.
- 480
- 485

*To rhyme (see note)*

*Include  
much; below  
have; afflicted  
taught me*

*destroy  
work*

<sup>1</sup> To build castles and a fortress for themselves

<sup>2</sup> They tell nothing about God, nor [explain] how

*The Plowman's Tale*

	But in Goddes worde, telleth many a balke. In hernes holde hem and in halke, And prechyn of tythes and offrende, And untruely of the Gospell talke. For Hys mercy, God it amende!	<i>point out many an error corners [they] situate themselves; nooks preach; offering</i>
490		
495	What is Antichrist to saye But evyn Chrystes adversary? Suche hathe nowe ben many a day To Christes byddyg full contrary, That from the trouthe clene varry. Out of the waye they ben wende, And Christes people untruely cary: God, for Hys pytie, it amende!	<i>Except precisely as wholly diverge [true] path they have journeyed</i>
500		
505	That lyven contrary to Christes lyfe, In hye pride agaynst mekenesse; Agaynst sufferaunce they usen stryfe, And angre ayenst sobrenesse: Agaynst wysdome, wylfulness; To Christes tales lytell tende; Agaynst measure, outragousnesse; But whan God woll, it maye amende!	<i>patience forbearance pay little heed excessive behavior</i>
510	Lordly lyfe ayenst lowlynesse, And demyn all without mercy; And covetyse ayenst largesse, Agaynst trewth, trechery; And agaynst almesse, envy; Agaynst Christ they comprehendre.	<i>judge magnanimity benevolence plot (?)</i>
515	For chastyte, they maynteyne lechery; God, for Hys grace, thys amende!	<i>Instead of</i>
520	Ayenst penaunce they use delyghtes, Ayenst suffraunce, stronge defence; Ayenst God they usen yvel rightes, Agaynste pytie, punishmentes. Open yvell ayenst contynence; Her wycked wynnyng worse dispende;	<i>concupiscence patience wicked rights gains</i>

*The Plowman's Tale*

Sobrenesse they sette in to dispence;  
But God, for Hys goodnesse, it amende!

525	Why cleymen they holy Hys powere, And wranglen ayenst all Hys hestes? Hys lyvyn folowen they nothyng here, <sup>1</sup> But lyven worse than wytlesse beestes. Of fysh and fleshe they loven feestes, As lordes they ben brode ykende;	<i>wholly commandments</i>
530	Of Goddes poore they haten gestes. <sup>2</sup> God, for Hys mercy, thys amende!	<i>witless beasts meat; feasts widely known</i>
535	With Dyses suche shall have her dome That sayne that they be Christes frendes, And do nothyng as they shulde done. All suche ben falser than ben fendes. On the people they ley suche bendes, As God is in erthe, they han offendes.	<i>Dives; their judgment Christ's friends should do fiends lay; bonds offended Succor</i>
540	Sucour for suche Christ nowe sende us — And, for Hys mercy, thys amende!	
545	A token of Antichrist they be: His careckes ben nowe wyde yknowe. Receyved to preche shall no man be Wythout token of hym, I trowe. Eche Christen preest, to prechyn owe From God above; they ben sende Goddes worde, to all folke to showe, Synfull man for to amende.	<i>symbol badges; widely known Admitted</i>
550	Christ sente the poore for to preche; The royall ryche He dyd nat so. Nowe dare no poore the people teche, <sup>3</sup> For Antichrist is over-all her foe.	<i>preach everywhere their</i>

<sup>1</sup> Here [on earth] they don't follow His form of living at all

<sup>2</sup> They hate guests [who are] the poor of God

<sup>3</sup> Now no poor dare to teach the people

*The Plowman's Tale*

	Amonge the people he mote go. He hath bydden, all suche suspende:	<i>may walk</i>
555	Some hath he hente, and thynketh yet mo. But all thys God may well amende!	<i>seized; thinks [to take] more yet But all thys God may well amende!</i>
	All tho that han the worlde forsake, And lyven loly, as God badde, In to her prison shullen be take, Betyn and bounden, and forthe ladde.	<i>those who have humbly; ordered led forth</i>
560	Herof I rede no man be dradde: Christ sayd, Hys shulde be shende; Eche man ought herof be gladde, For God full well it woll amende!	<i>advise; fearful His [people] should be destroyed to be glad of this</i>
	They take on hem royll powere, And saye they have swerdes two: One curse to hell, one slee men here, <sup>1</sup> For at Hys takyng Christ had no mo.	<i>capture; more those</i>
565	Yet Peter had one of tho; But Christ, to Peter smyte gan defende, And in to the sheth badde putte it tho; And all suche myscheves God amende!	<i>forbade fighting scabbard; then crimes</i>
	Christ badde Peter kepe His shepe, And with his swerde forbade hym smyte.	<i>guard His sheep sword; to strike</i>
570	Swerde is no tole with shepe to kepe, But to sheperdes that shepe woll byte. <sup>2</sup> Me thynketh suche sheperdes ben to wytte Ayen her shepe with swerde that contende.	<i>implement with which are to blame Against contempt</i>
575	They drive her shepe with great dispyle, But all thys God may well amende.	
	So successours to Peter be they nought, Whom Christ made chefe pastoure: A swerde no sheperde usen ought,	<i>chief pastor ought to wield</i>

---

<sup>1</sup> One sword to curse to hell, one to slay men here [on earth]

<sup>2</sup> Except for shepherds who will eat ("bite") their sheep

*The Plowman's Tale*

	But he wold flee, as a bochoure.	<i>butcher</i>
585	For who so were Peters successour Shulde bere hys shepe till hys backe bende, And shadowe hem from every shoure, And all thys God may wel amende.	<i>support</i> <i>protect them; rainfall</i>
590	Successours to Peter ben these In that that Peter Christ forsoke, That had lever the love of God lese Than a sheperde had to lese his hoke. <sup>1</sup> He culleth the shepe as dothe the coke: Of hem taken the woll untrende, And falsely glose the Gospell boke. God for His mercy them amende.	<i>To the extent that Peter forsook Christ</i> <i>Who would rather; lose</i>  <i>gathers; cook</i> <i>From them; wool unrolled</i> <i>gloss (comment on)/ gloze (deceive)</i>
595	After Christ had take Peter the kay, Christ sayd, "He muste dye for man." That Peter to Christ gan withsay — Christ badde hym "go behynde Sathan." Suche counsaylours many of these men han For worldes wele, God to offende. Peters successors they ben for-than, But all suche God may well amende.	<i>key [of heaven]</i>  <i>deny</i> <i>commanded</i> <i>have</i> <i>wealth</i> <i>therefore</i>
600	For Sathan is to say no more But he that contrary to Christ is: In thys they lerne Peters lore: They sewen hym whan he dyd myss. They folowe Peter forsothe in thys,	<i>follow; went awry</i>
605	In al that Christ wolde Peter reprehende, But nat in that that longeth to hevyn blysse. God for Hys mercy hem amende!	<i>pertains</i>
610	Some of the Apostels they sewen in case, Of ought that I can understande, Hym that betrayed Christ, Judas,	<i>For anything</i>
615		

---

<sup>1</sup> *Than allow a shepherd (= cleric) to lose his crook*

*The Plowman's Tale*

	That bare the purse in every londe. And al that he myght sette on honde, He hydde and stale, and gan myspende. His rule these traytours han in honde; Almighty God hem amende!	get his hands on stole; misspent i.e. control
620		
	And at the last hys lorde gan tray Cursedly through hys false covetyse: So wolde these, trayen hym for money And they wisten in what wyse. They be, seker, of the selfe ensyse; <sup>1</sup> From all sothnesse they ben frende, And covetyse chaungen with queyntyse. Almighty God all suche amende!	betrayed betray <i>If they knew how</i> truth; estranged exchange with finery
625		
	Were Christ on erthe here eftre sone, These wolde dampne Hym to dye; All Hys hestes they han fordone, And sayne His sawes ben heresy. And ayenst His commaundementes they crye, And dampne all Hys to be brende;	again commandments; broken sayings <i>damn all His [followers] to be burned</i>
630		
	For it lyketh nat hem suche losengery. God almighty hem amende!	<i>such flattery does not please them</i>
635		
	These han more myght in Englande here Than hath the kynge and all hys lawe. They han purchased hem suche powere To taken hem whom lyste nat knawe, <sup>2</sup> And say that heresy is her sawe; And so to prysone woll hem sende. It was nat so by elder dawe. God for Hys mercy it amende!	greater power for themselves teaching <i>in earlier days</i>
640		
	645 The kynges lawe wol no man deme Angerlyche, withouten answere;	<i>In anger, without [opportunity of] answer</i>

---

<sup>1</sup> *They are, indeed, of the same kind*

<sup>2</sup> *To seize whomever they wish not to know*

*The Plowman's Tale*

- But yf any man these mysqueme,  
He shalbe bayghted as a bere;  
And yet wel worse they woll hym tere,  
And in prysone woll hem pende  
In gyves, and in other gere.  
Whan God woll, it maye amende.
- The kyng taxeth nat hys men  
But by assente of the commynalte.  
But these eche yere woll raunsom hem  
Maysterfully, more than doth he;  
Her seales, by yere, better be  
Than is the kynges in extende.<sup>1</sup>  
Her offycers han gretter fee —  
But thys mischefe God amende!
- For who so woll prove a testament  
That is natt all worthe tenne pounde,  
He shall paye for the parchment  
The thyrde parte of the money all rounde.  
Thus the people is raunsounde.  
They saye suche parte to hem shulde apende:  
There as they grypen it gothe to grounde.  
God for Hys mercy it amende!
- A symple fornycatioun?  
Twenty shyllinges he shall paye,  
And than have an absolutioun,  
And all the yere usen it forthe he maye.  
Thus they letten hem go a-stray;  
They recke nat though the soule be brende.  
These kepyn yvell Peters key,  
And all suche sheperdes God amende!
- Wonder is, that the Parlyament

---

<sup>1</sup> *Their seals are more dear on an annual basis / Than are the king's on an extended basis*

*The Plowman's Tale*

- And all the lordes of thys londe  
Here-to taken so lytell entent  
To helpe the people out of her honde;  
For they ben harder in theyr bonde,  
Worse beate, and bytter brende,  
Than to the kyng is understande:  
God Hym helpe thys to amende!
- What bysshoppes, what relygious,  
Han in thys lande as moche laye fee,  
Lordshyppes, and possessyonnes  
More than the lordes? It semeth me  
That maketh hem lese charyte;
- They mowe nat to God attende,  
In erthe they have so hyghe degree.  
God for Hys mercy it amende!
- The Emperour yaf the Pope somtyme  
So hyghe lordshyp hym aboute,  
That at the laste the sely kyme  
The proude Pope putte hym out!  
So of thys realme is in doute,
- But lordes be ware and them defende;  
For nowe these folke be wonder stoute:  
The kynge and lordes nowe thys amende!

Thus endeth the seconde parte of this tale, and herafter foloweth the thyrde.

PART III

- Moyses lawe forbode it tho  
That preestes shulde no lordshyppes welde.  
Christes Gospel byddeth also  
That they shulde no lordshyppe helde;
- Ne Christes Apostels were never so bolde  
No suche lordeshyppes to them embrace,  
But smeren her shepe and kepe her folde:
- God amende hem for Hys grace!

*The Plowman's Tale*

- For they ne ben but countrefete:  
 710 Men may knowe hem by her fruite.  
 Her gretnesse maketh hem God foryte,  
 And take Hys mekenesse in dispyte.  
 And they were poore and had but lyte,  
 They nolde nat demen after the face,  
 715 But noryshe her shepe, and hem nat bye.  
 God amende hem for Hys grace!
- If; little [goods]  
wouldn't judge by appearances  
devour*
- Gryfon. "What canst thou preche ayenst chanons  
 That men clepen seculere?"  
 720 Pelycan. "They ben curates of many towns;  
 On erthe they have great powere.  
 They han great prebendes and dere,  
 Some two or thre, and some mo,  
 A personage to ben a playeng fere;      *person of rank as a playing-companion*  
 And yet they serve the kynge also.
- rich*
- 725 "And lette to ferme all that fare      *"let out to farm all that business" (Sk)*  
 To whom that woll most gyve therfore:  
 Some woll spende, and some woll spare,  
 And some woll laye it up in store.  
 A cure of soule they care nat fore,  
 730 So they mowe money take,  
 Whether her soules be wonne or llore,  
 Her profytes they woll nat forsake.
- save*  
  
*lost*
- 735 "They have a gederyng procuratour  
 That can the poore people enplede,  
 And robbem hem as a ravynour,  
 And to hys lorde the money lede,  
 And catche of quicke and eke of dede,  
 And richen hym and hys lorde eke;  
 And to robbe the poore can gyve good rede,  
 Of olde and yonge, of hole and seke.
- collecting agent  
plead against  
rob them as a rapacious destroyer  
bring  
living (quick); dead  
enrich himself  
advice  
From; healthy and sick*
- 740 "Therwith they purchase hem lay fee  
 In londe, there hem lyketh best;
- where it pleases them most*

*The Plowman's Tale*

	And buylde also brode as a cyte, Bothe in the Est, and eke in the West.	<i>build as expansively as a city</i>
745	To purchase thus they ben full prest; But on the poore they woll nought spende, Ne no good gyve to Goddes gest, Ne sende Hym some that all hath sende. <sup>1</sup>	<i>eager</i> <i>gift; guest</i>
	"By her servyce suche woll lyve And trusse that other in to treasour, Though all her paryshe dye unshrive, They woll nat gyve a rose floure. Her lyfe shulde be as a myrrour, Both to lered and to leude also,	<i>pack up</i> <i>unshiven</i>
755	And teche the people her lele labour; Suche myster men ben all mysgo.	<i>the learned; the ignorant</i> <i>true</i> <i>ministry; gone astray</i>
	"Some of hem ben harde nygges, And some of hem ben proude and gay; Some spende her good upon gygges, And fynden hem of great aray. Alas, what thynke these men to say, That thus dispenden Goddis good, At the dredefull Domes Daye? Suche wretches shulbe worse than wood.	<i>niggards</i> <i>whores</i> <i>"provide them with fine clothes" (Sk)</i> <i>mad</i>
760	"Some her churches never ne sye, Ne never o peny thyder ne sende. Though the poore parishens for hungre dye, O peny on hem wyl they nat spende. Have they receyvyng of the rente, They recke never of the remenant. Alas, the devyll hath clene hem blent: Suche one is Sathanas sojournant.	<i>visit</i> <i>a single</i> <i>When they have</i> <i>don't care about anything else</i> <i>blinded</i> <i>Satan's guest</i>
765	"And usen horedome and harlotry, Covetyse, pompe, and pride,	

---

<sup>1</sup> *Nor send some to Him who has sent all [to them]*

*The Plowman's Tale*

- 775 Slouthe, wrathe, and eke envy,  
And sewen synne by every syde.  
Alas, where thynke suche t'abyde?  
Howe woll they accomptes yelde?  
From hye God they mowe hem nat hyde.  
Suche wyllers wytte is nat worth a nelde!<sup>1</sup>
- 780 "They ben so roted in richesse  
That Christes povert is foryet,  
Served with so many messe,  
Hem thynketh that Manna is no mete.  
All is good that they mowe get.  
They wene to lyve evermore,  
But whan God at Dome is sette,  
Suche treasour is a feble store.
- 785 "Unneth mote they matyns saye,  
For countyng and for court holdynge;  
And yet he jangleth as a jaye,  
And understandt hym-selfe nothynge.  
He woll serve bothe erle and kyng  
For hys fyndyng and hys fee,  
And hyde hys tythynge and hys offrynge.  
This is a feble charite.
- 790 "Other they ben proude, or coveytous,  
Or they ben harde, or hungry,  
Or they ben lyberall, or lecherous,  
Or els medlers wyth marchandry,  
Or maynteyners of men wyth maistry,  
Or stewardes, countours, or pledours,  
And serve God in hypocrisy,  
Such prestes ben Christes false traytors.
- 795 "They ben false, they ben vengeable,  
And begylen men in Christes name.
- pursue sin in every way  
render accounts  
anchored poverty; forgotten meals foodstuff  
suppose  
Scarcely can; the monastic hour  
chatters like a jaybird understands  
food  
Either  
dealers in commodities abettors of [evil] men with power accountants, or pleaders (lawyers)  
vindictive deceive

---

<sup>1</sup> "The wisdom of such willers is not worth a needle" (Sk)

*The Plowman's Tale*

- They ben unstedfast and unstable;  
 To tray her Lorde, hem thynketh no shame,  
 To serve God they ben full lame —  
 Goddes theves, and falsly stele,  
 And falsely Goddes worde defame;  
 In wynnyng is her worldes wele.
- “Antichryst these serven all.  
 I pray the, who may say nay?  
 Wyth Antichryst suche shull fall:  
 They folowen hym in dede and fay.  
 They servyn hym in ryche array.  
 To serve Chryst suche falsely fayne.  
 Why, at the dredeful Domes Day,  
 Shull they not folowe hym to Payne?
- “That knownen hem selfe that they done yll<sup>1</sup>  
 Ayenst Christes commaundement;  
 And amende hem never ne wyll,  
 But serve Sathan by one assent.  
 Who sayth sothe he shalbe shent,  
 Or speketh ayenst her false lyvynge,  
 Who-so well lyveth shalbe brent —  
 For suche ben gretter than the kyng.
- “Pope, Byshoppes, and Cardynals,  
 Chanons, Persons, and Vycaire,  
 In Goddes servyce, I trowe, ben fals,  
 That sacramentes sellen here,  
 And ben as proude as Lucifer.  
 Eche man loke whether that I lye;  
 Who-so speketh ayenst her powere,  
 It shall be holden heresy.
- “Loke howe many others take  
 Onely of Christe, for Hys servyce,

*betray*

*material gain; worldly welfare*

*thee*

*deed; loyalty*

*dress*

*pretend*

*by common agreement*

*Whoever says the truth; destroyed*

*Whoever lives virtuously shall be burned*

*more powerful*

*Parsons; Vicars*

*judge*

*Observe  
Only from*

---

<sup>1</sup> *They themselves know they have acted wickedly*

*The Plowman's Tale*

- That the worldes goodes forsake.<sup>1</sup>  
 840 Who-so taketh orders, or other wyse,<sup>2</sup>  
 I trowe that they shall sore agryse  
 For all the glose that they conne.  
 All sewen not thys assyse;  
 In yvell tyme they thus begonne.
- “Loke howe many amonge hem all  
 Holden not thys hye waye:  
 Wyth Antichrist they shullen fall,  
 For they wolden God betraye.  
 God amende hem that best maye,  
 850 For many men they maken shende.  
 They weten well the sothe, I saye,  
 But the dyvell hath foule hem blonde.
- “Some on her churches dwell,  
 Apparayled poorely, proude of porte;  
 855 The seven sacramentes they done sell;  
 In cattel-catchynge is her comforte.  
 Of eche matter they wolen mell,  
 And done hem wronge is her dysport.  
 To afrye the people they ben fell,  
 860 And holde hem lower then doth the lorde.
- “For the tythyng of a ducke,  
 Or of an apple, or an ay,  
 They make men sweare upon a boke —  
 Thus they foulen Christes fay.  
 Suche bearen yvell heaven kay;  
 865 They mowen assoyle, they mowe shryve,  
 Wyth mennes wyves strongly play,  
 With true tyllers sturte and strye.      *Against true plowmen make trouble and strife*
- “At the wrestlynge, and at the wake,

*be sore afraid*

*Despite all the glosses that they know  
Not all pursue this course*

*ruin*

*know; truth  
fouly blinded them*

*carriage*

*acquiring material goods  
interfere with each matter  
to do wrong; amusement*

*In frightening; cruel  
oppress them more than*

*duck*

*egg*

*faith*

*poorly heaven's key  
absolve; confess*

*revel*

<sup>1</sup> [Christ] Who gave up the world's goods

<sup>2</sup> Whoever takes [holy] orders, or otherwise enters Church service

*The Plowman's Tale*

870	And chefe chantours at the nale: Markette-beaters, and medlynge make, Hoppen and houten, with 'heve-and-hale!' At fayre freshe, and at wyne stale — Dyne and drynke, and make debate;	<i>principal singers at the ale-house bullies; interference Jump; shout; "heave ho"</i>
875	The seven sacramentes set at sayle: — Nowe kepe suche the key of heven-gate.	<i>put up for sale such men</i>
880	"Mennes wyves they wollen holde; And though that they ben ryght sory, To speke they shull not be so bolde, For sompnyng to the consystory; <sup>1</sup> And make hem saye wyth mouth, 'I lye,'	<i>possess truly offended</i>
	Though they it sawe wyth her eye; Hys leman holden openly, No man so hardy to axe why.	<i>sweetheart ask</i>
885	"He woll have tythyng and offryng, Maugre who-so-ever it gruche; And twyse on the daye he woll syng; Goddes prestes nere none suche. He mote on huntyng wyth dogge and byche,	<i>Despite whoever might resent it were not like these men bitch</i>
890	And blowen hys horne, and cryen 'hey!' And sorcery usen as a wytche: — Suche kepen yvell Peters key!	<i>maintain poorly</i>
895	"Yet they mote have some stocke or stome Gayly paynted, and proudly dyght, To maken men levyn upon, And saye that it is full of myght. Aboute suche, men sette up great lyght;	<i>must; image of a saint ornamented believe in</i>
	Other suche stockes shull stande therby As darke as it were mydnyght: For it maye make no mastry.	
900	"That it leude people se mowe,	<i>ignorant; might see</i>

<sup>1</sup> *For fear of being summoned to the consistory court*

*The Plowman's Tale*

- Thou, Mary, thou worchest wonder thynges:<sup>1</sup>  
 Aboute that, that men offren to nowe      *[the effigy] to which men offer now*  
 Hongen broches, ouches, and rynges.      *jewelry-settings*
- 905      The preest purchaseth the offrynges,  
 But he nyll offre to none ymage.      *won't*  
 Wo is the soule that he for synges,  
 That precheth for suche a pylgrimage!      *he sings (prays) for*
- 910      "To men and women that ben poore,  
 That ben Christes owne lykenesse,  
 Men shulden offre at her dore,  
 That suffren honger and dystresse;  
 And to suche ymages offre lesse,  
 That mowe not fele thurst ne colde.
- 915      The poore in sprete gan Christe blesse;      *spirit*  
 Therfore offreth to feble and olde.
- 920      "Buckelers brode, and sweardes longe;  
 Baudryke, with baselardes kene,  
 Suche toles about her necke they honge.  
 Wyth Antichrist suche preestes bene:  
 Upon her hedes it is well sene;  
 Whome they serven, whome they honoren.
- 925      Antichristes they bene clene,  
 And Goddes goodes falsly devouren.
- 930      "Of scarlet and grene gay gownes,  
 That mote be shape for the newe,  
 To clyppen and kyssen, to counte in townes  
 The damoseles that to the daunce sewe:  
 Cutted clothes to shewe her hewe,  
 Wyth longe pykes on her shone.  
 Our Goddes gospel is not trewe:  
 Eyther they serven the dyvell or none.
- Shields; swords*  
*Belts, with sharp short-swords*
- They belong wholly to Antichrist*
- created in the newest fashion*  
*To hug; well considered*  
*go to the dance*  
*show off their complexion*  
*peaks on their shoes*
- devil or they don't*

---

<sup>1</sup> So that ignorant people might see it (the dark effigy), / Thou, Mary, work wonderful things

*The Plowman's Tale*

- “Now ben prestes pokes so wyde  
That men must enlarge the vesturement.” *pockets  
clothing*
- 935      The holy Gospell they done hyde,  
For they contraryen in rayment.  
Suche preestes of Lucifer ben sent:  
Lyke conquerours they ben arayde,  
The proude pendauntes at her ars ypent.  
940      Falsely the truthe they han betrayde!” *are self-contradictory in dress  
buttocks fastened*
- “Shryfte-sylver suche wollen aske is<sup>1</sup>  
And woll men crepe to the Crouche;  
None of the sacramentes, save askes,  
Wythout mede shall no man touche.  
945      On her byshoppe theyr warant vouche,  
That is the lawe of the decre:  
Wyth mede and money thus they mouche,  
And thus, they sayne, is Charite.” *desire [that] men creep to the Cross  
ashes (for penance)  
bribery*
- “In the myddes of her masse,  
They nyll have no man but for hyre,  
And full shortly let forth passe.  
Suche shull men fynde in eche shyre,  
That personages for profyte desyre  
To lyve in lykyng and in lestes;  
955      I dare not sayne, *Sans ose ieo dyre*,  
That suche ben Antichristes preestes.” *sneak around  
live lives of pleasure and desire  
“Without (saying), ‘if I may say so’” (Sk)*
- “Or they yef the byshoppes why,<sup>2</sup>  
Or they mote ben in hys servyce,  
And holden forth her harlotry.” *wickedness*
- 960      Suche prelates ben of feble emprysse:  
Of Goddes grame suche men agryse!  
For suche matters that taken mede,  
Nowe they excuse hem, and in what wyse,  
Me thynketh, they ought greatly drede.” *weak governance  
Let such men dread God’s wrath  
bribery (reward)  
in such a fashion [that]*

---

<sup>1</sup> *Such men will ask them for silver [shrift-silver] for confessing them*

<sup>2</sup> *“Either they give the bishops [some reason] why” (Sk)*

*The Plowman's Tale*

- |     |   |  |
|-----|---|--|
| 965 | <p>"They sayne that it to no man longeth<br/>         To reprove them though they erre;<br/>         But falsely Goddes goodes they fongeth,<br/>         And therwyth maynteyne wo and werre.<br/>         Her dedes shulde be as bryght as sterre;<br/>         Her lyvynge, leude mannes lyght.<sup>1</sup><br/>         They saye the Pope maye not erre:<br/>         Nede mote that passe mannes myght.<sup>2</sup></p> | <i>it is no man's responsibility</i><br><i>take</i><br><i>war</i><br><i>as a star</i>  |
| 970 |   |  |
| 975 | <p>"Though a prest lye wyth his leman al nyght,<br/>         And tellen hys felowe, and he hym,<br/>         He goth to masse anone ryght,<br/>         And sayeth he syngeth out of synne.<br/>         Hys byrde abydeth hym at hys ynne,<br/>         And dyghteth hys dyner the meane whyle;<br/>         He syngeth hys masse, for he wolde wynne,<br/>         And so he weneth God begyle!"</p>                        | <i>immediately</i><br><i>without sin</i><br><i>mistress</i><br><i>prepares</i><br><i>wishes to gain [something]</i><br><i>supposes</i>     |
| 980 |   |  |
| 985 | <p>"Hem thynketh longe till they be mette,<br/>         And that they usen forth all the yere.<br/>         Amonge the folke when he is sette,<br/>         He holdeth no man halfe hys pere.<br/>         Of the byshoppe he hath powere<br/>         To soyle men, or els they ben lore;<br/>         Hys absolution may make them skere,<br/>         And wo is the soule that he syngeth fore!"</p>                       | <i>thus; pass the whole year</i><br><i>maintains no man is half his equal</i><br><i>absolve them, or else they are lost</i><br><i>pure</i> |
| 990 | <p>The GRYFFON began for to threte,<br/>         And sayd, "Of monkes canst thou ought?"<sup>3</sup><br/>         The PELLYCAN sayd, "They ben full grete,<br/>         And in thy world moch wo hath wrought.<br/>         Saynt Benet, that her order brought<br/>         Ne made hem never on suche manere.</p>   | <i>menace</i><br><i>Saint Benedict; established</i><br><i>the way they are now</i>   |

---

<sup>1</sup> *Their [form of] living, a light to ignorant men*

<sup>2</sup> *That [claim] must needs surpass human power*

<sup>3</sup> *Do you know anything about monks?*

*The Plowman's Tale*

- 995 I trowe it came never in hys thought,  
That they shulde use so great powere;
- "That a man shulde a monke 'lorde' cal,  
Ne serve on knees, as a kynge.  
He is as proude as prynce in pall  
In meate, and drynke, and all thynges. *purple*
- 1000 Some wearen myter and rynges,  
Wyth double worsted well ydyght,  
Wyth royall meate and ryche drynke,  
And rydeth on a courser as a knyght. *embellished*  
*war horse*
- 1005 "Wyth hauke and wyth houndes eke,  
Wyth broches or ouches on hys hode,  
Some saye no masse in all a weke.  
Of deynties is her moste foode,  
Wyth lordshyppes and wyth bondmen. *also*  
*jewelry-settings; hood*  
*week*
- 1010 Thys is a royll religion:  
Saynt Benet made never none of hem  
To have lordshyppe of man ne towne.
- 1015 "Nowe they ben queynte and curious,  
Wyth fyne clothe cladde and served clene —  
Proude, angry, and envyous.  
Malyce is moche that they meane;  
In catchynge, crafty and covetous,  
Lordly lyven in great lykyng. *fastidious*  
*getting money*  
*pleasure*
- 1020 Thys lyvynge is not religious,  
Accordynge to Benette in hys lyvynge.
- "They ben clerkes — her courtes they over-se;  
Her poore tenaunce fully they flyte. *tenants; reprimand*  
The hyre that a man amerced be,  
The gladlyer they woll it wryte. *higher; is fined*
- 1025 Thys is farre from Christes poverte:  
For all wyth covetyse they endyte;  
On the poore they have no pyte,  
Ne never hem cheryshe but ever hem byte. *devour*

*The Plowman's Tale*

- “And comenly suche ben comen  
 1030 Of poore people, and of hem begete,  
 That thys perfection han ynomen:  
 Her fathers ryden not but on her fete,  
 And travaylen fore for that they ete.  
 In povert lyveth yonge and olde;  
 1035 Her fathers suffreth drought and wete,  
 Many hongry meles, thurst, and colde.
- sired*  
*Who have called this “perfection”*  
*only on their [own] feet*  
*work hard for what they eat*  
*poverty*
- “And all thys the monkes han forsake  
 For Christes love and saynt Benette.  
 To pryde and ease have hem take;  
 1040 Thys religion is yvell besette.  
 Had they ben out of religiou,  
 They must have honged at the plowe,<sup>1</sup>  
 Threshynge and dykynge fro towne to towne,  
 Wyth sory mete, and not halfe ynowe.
- given themselves*  
*wickedly appointed*  
*ditching*  
*barely edible food; enough*
- “Therfore they han thys all forsake,  
 And taken to ryches, pryde, and ease.  
 Full fewe for God woll monkes hem make;  
 Lytell is suche order for to prayse.  
 Saynt Benet ordayneit not so,
- 1045 But badde hem be not cherelyche:      *commanded them to be not prodigal*  
 In churlyche maner lyve and go,      *destitute*  
 Boystous in earth, and not lordlyche.      *rude*
- “They dysclaunder saynt Benette;      *slander*  
 Therfore they have hys holy curse.  
 Saynt Benet wyth hem never mette  
 But yf they thought to robbe hys purse.      *Unless*  
 I can no more herof tell:  
 But they ben lyke tho before,      *those*  
 And clene serve the dyvell of hell,      *wholly*  
 1055 And ben hys treasoure and hys store.

---

<sup>1</sup> *They would have to have followed bent over the plow*

## *The Plowman's Tale*

- |      |   |   |
|------|---|---|
|      | "And all suche other counterfaytours —<br>Chanons, Canons, and suche dysgysed —<br>Ben Goddes enemyes, and traytours;<br>Hys true religion han foule dyspysed.<br>Of freres I have tolde before,<br>In a makynge of a Crede.<br>And yet I coulde tell worse and more,<br>But men wolde weryen it to rede.                                 | <i>tire of reading about it</i>   |
| 1065 |   |   |
| 1070 | "As Goddes goodnesse no man tell myght,<br>Wryte ne speake, ne thynke in thought,<br>So her falshed, and her unryght,<br>May no man tell that ever God wrought."<br>The GRYFFON sayd: "Thou canst no good;<br>Thou came never of no gentyll kynde:<br>Other I trowe thou waxest wood,<br>Or els thou hast loste thy mynde.                | <i>their falsehood; their wrongs</i><br><i>don't know anything</i>  |
| 1075 |   | <i>Either I think you are going crazy</i>   |
| 1080 | "Shulde Holy Churche have no heed?<br>Who shulde be her governayle?<br>Who shulde her rule? Who shulde her reed?<br>Who shulde her forthren? Who shulde avayle?<br>Eche man shall lyve by hys travayle;<br>Who best doth, shall have moste mede.<br>Wyth strength yf men the Churche assayle,<br>Wyth strength men must defende her nede. | <i>head</i><br><i>its leader</i><br><i>advise</i><br><i>advance; be of use</i><br><i>reward</i>                             |
| 1085 | "And the Pope were purely poore,<br>Nedy, and nothyng ne hadde,<br>He shulde be dryven from dore to dore,<br>The wycked of hym nolde not be dradde.<br>Of suche an heed men wolde be sadde,<br>And synfully lyven as hem lust;<br>Wyth strength, amendes suche be made;<br>Wyth wepen, wolves from shepe be wust.                         | <i>wouldn't be afraid</i><br><i>weary</i>   |
| 1090 |   | <i>[would] live sinfully as they pleased</i><br><i>could be made for such conduct</i><br><i>can be kept away from sheep</i> |
| 1095 | "Yf the Pope and prelates wolde<br>So begge, and bydde, bowe, and borowe,<br>Holy Churche shulde stande full colde,   | <i>pray</i>   |

*The Plowman's Tale*

- Her seruaentes sytte and soupe sorowe.  
And they were nougthy, foule, and horowe,  
To worshyppe God men wolde wlate.  
Bothe on even and on morowe  
Suche harlotry men wolde hate.
- taste the bitter cup  
indigent, foul, and filthy  
loathe
- 1100
- “Therfore, men of Holy Churche  
Shulde ben honest in all thynges:  
Worshypfully Goddes workes werche,  
So semeth it to serve Christ her kynge.  
In honest and in clene clothynge,  
Wyth vessels of golde and clothes ryche,  
To God honestly to make offrynges:  
To Hys Lordshyppe none is lyche.”
- perform  
respectable
- 1105
- No Lordship is like His
- The PELLICAN caste an houge crye,  
And sayd, “Alas! why sayest thou so?  
Christ is our heed, that sytteth on hye;  
Heddes ne ought we have no mo.<sup>1</sup>  
We ben Hys membres both also,  
And ‘Father’ He taught us to cal Hym als.  
‘Maysters’ to be called defended He tho;  
All other maysters ben wycked and fals,
- raised
- 1110
- ‘Maysters’ to be called defended He tho;  
All other maysters ben wycked and fals,
- prohibited; then
- 1115
- “That taketh maystry in Hys name,  
Goostly, and for earthly good;  
Kynges and lordes shulde lordshyp hane,  
And rule the people wyth mylde mode.  
Christ for us that shedde Hys blode  
Badde Hys preestes no maystershyp have,  
Ne carke nat for cloth ne fode;  
From every myschefe He wyll hem save.
- Spiritually  
maintain  
benevolent attitude
- 1120
- Nor concern themselves with
- “Her ryche clothynge shalbe ryghtwysnesse,  
Her treasoure, trewe lyfe shalbe;  
Charite shalbe her rychesse,
- shall be righteousness
- 1125

---

<sup>1</sup> We should have no more heads [than Christ]

*The Plowman's Tale*

- Her lordshyppe shalbe unite;  
Hope in God, her honeste;  
1130 Her vessell, clene conscience;  
Poore in spirite, and humilite  
Shalbe Holy Churches defence."
- "What," sayd the GRYFFON, "may the greve,  
That other folkes faren wele?  
1135 What haste thou to done wyth her leve?  
Thy falsheed eche man may fele,  
For thou canst no catell gete,  
But lyvest in londe as a lorell;  
Wyth glosynge gettest thou thy mete;  
1140 So fareth the devell that wonneth in hell.
- "He wolde that eche man there shulde dwell,  
For he lyveth in clene envy.  
So wyth the tales that thou doest tell,  
Thou woldest other people dystroy  
1145 Wyth your glose, and your heresy;  
For ye ne can lyve no better lyfe,  
But clene in hypocrisy,  
And bryngeth the in wo and stryfe.
- "And therwyth have not to done,  
For ye ne have here no cure.  
Ye serve the dyvell, neyther God ne man,  
And he shall paye you your hyre.  
For ye woll fare well at feestes,  
1150 And warme clothed for the colde.  
Therfore ye glose Goddes hestes,  
And begyle the people yonge and olde.
- "And all the seven sacramentes  
Ye speake ayenst, as ye were slye:  
Ayenst tythynges, offringes, wyth your ententes,  
1160 And on our Lordes body falsly lye;  
And all thys ye done to lyve in ease,  
As who sayeth, there ben none suche;
- How does it concern you  
other people prosper  
their permission  
falsehood  
don't know how to acquire money  
good-for-nothing  
explaining; food  
lives*
- complete  
destroy  
biblical commentary  
utterly  
don't concern yourself  
interest  
commandments  
As if to say (by such living)*

*The Plowman's Tale*

And sayne the Pope is not worth a pease  
To make the people ayen hym gruche.

*pea  
grumble*

- 1165 "And thys commeth in by fendes,  
To bryng the Christen in dystaunce;  
For they wolde that no man were frendes.  
Leave thy chattrynge, wyth myschaunce!  
Yf thou lyve well, what wylt thou more?  
1170 Let other men lyve as hem lyst,  
Spende in good, or kepe in store;  
Other mennes conscience never thou nyst.

*discord*

*as they please  
you never know*

"Ye han no cure to answeare fore.  
What meddell ye, that han not to done?

*who have nothing to do with it  
of old*

- 1175 Let men lyve as they han done yore,  
For thou shalt answeare for no man.  
The PELLICAN sayd: "Syr, nay!  
I dispysed not the Pope,  
Ne no sacramente, soth to say,  
1180 But speake in charite and good hope.

"But I dyspyse her hye pryd,  
Her rychesse, that shulde be poore in spirite —  
Her wyckednesse is knowe so wyde.

*their (the Pope and priesthood's)*

- 1185 They serve God in false habyte,  
And turnen mekenesse in to pryd,  
And lowlynesse in to hye degré,  
And Goddes wordes turne and hyde;  
And that am I moved by charite

- 1190 "To lette men to lyve so,  
Wyth all my connynge and al my myght,  
And to warne men of her wo,  
And to tell hem trouth and ryght.  
The sacramentes be soule hele,

*health for the soul*

Yf they ben used in good use;  
1195 Ayenst *that* speake I never a dele,  
For then were I nothyng wyse.

*deter  
knowledge  
not at all  
not at all wise*

*The Plowman's Tale*

- “But they that usen hem in mysse manere,  
Or sette hem up to any sale,  
I trowe they shall abyne hem dere!  
1200 Thys is my reason, thys my tale:  
Who so taketh hem unryghtfullyche  
Ayenst the Ten Commaundementes,  
Or by glose wretchedlyche  
Selleth any of the sacramentes,
- 1205 “I trowe they do the devell homage  
In that they weten they do wronge;  
And therto I dare well wage,  
They serve Satan for al her songe.  
To tythen and offren is holsome lyfe,  
1210 So it be done in dewe manere;  
A man to houselyn and to shryve,  
Weddynge, and all the other in fere,
- “So it be nother solde ne bought,  
Ne take ne gyve for covetyse.  
And it be so taken, it is nought;  
Who selleth hem so, maye sore agryse!  
On our Lordes body I do not lye;  
I saye soth thorowe trewe rede:  
Hys fleshe and blode through Hys mystrye  
1220 Is there, in the forme of brede.
- “Nowe it is there, it nedeth not stryve  
Whether it be subgette or accydent;  
But as Christ was, when He was on lyve,  
So is He there verament.  
1225 Yf Pope or cardynall lyve good lyve,  
As Christ commaunded in Hys Gospell,  
Ayenst that woll I not stryve,  
But me thynketh they lyve not well.
- “For yf the Pope lyved as God bede,  
1230 Pryde and hyghnesse he shulde dyspyse —  
Rychesse, covetyse, and crowne on hede.

*The Plowman's Tale*

- Mekenesse and poverte he shulde use."  
 The GRYFFON sayd he shulde aby: —  
 "Thou shalbe brent in balefull fyre!  
 1235 And all thy secte I shall dystrye;  
 Ye shalbe hanged by the swyre!
- pay for it  
burned  
destroy  
neck*
- "Ye shullen be hanged and to-drawe!  
 Who gyveth you leave for to preache,  
 Or speake agaynst Goddes lawe,  
 1240 And the people thus falsely teache?  
 Thou shalt be cursed wyth boke and bell,  
 And dessevered from Holy Churche,  
 And clene ydampned into hell,  
 Otherwyse but ye woll worche."
- drawn apart  
Unless you behave otherwise*
- 1245 The PELLYCAN sayd, "That I ne drede;  
 Your cursynge is of lytell value.  
 Of God I hope to have my mede,  
 For it is falshede that ye shewe.  
 For ye ben out of charite,
- I don't fear that  
reward*
- 1250 And wylneth vengeaunce, as dyd Nero;  
 To suffren I woll redy be;  
 I drede not that thou canst do.
- desire  
don't fear what*
- 1255 "Christ badde ones suffre for Hys love,  
 And so He taught all Hys seruautes;  
 And but thou amende for Hys sake above,  
 I drede not all thy mayntenaunce.  
 For yf I drede the worldes hate,
- abetting*
- 1260 Me thynketh I were lytell to prayse;  
 I drede nothyng your hye estate,  
 Ne I drede not your dysease.
- anger*
- 1265 "Wolde ye turne and leave your pryd,  
 Your hye porte, and your rychesse,  
 Your cursynge shulde not go so wyde.  
 God brynge you into ryghtwysnesse!  
 For I drede not your tyranny
- haughty bearing*
- For nothyng that ye can done.

## *The Plowman's Tale*

To suffre I am all redy;  
Syker, I recke never howe soone!"<sup>1</sup>

- |      |  |   |
|------|--|---|
|      | The GRYFFON gynnéd as he were wode,<br>And loked lovely as an owle;<br>And swore, "by cockes herte blode,"<br>He wolde hym tere every doule: —                         |   |
| 1270 | "Holy Churche thou dysclaundrest foule!<br>For thy reasons I woll the all to-race,<br>And make thy fleshe to rote and moule!<br>Losell, thou shalte have harde grace!" | <i>down-feather</i><br><i>tear to pieces</i><br><i>rot; fester</i><br><i>wretch</i>             |
|      | The Gryffon flewe forth on hys waye.<br>The PELLYCANE dyd sytte and wepe,<br>And to hym selfe he gan saye:<br>"God wolde that any of Christes shepe                    |   |
| 1275 | Had herde, and ytake kepe<br>Eche a worde that here sayd was,<br>And wolde it wrytte and well it kepe!<br>God wolde it were all for Hys grace!"                        |   |
| 1280 | PLOWMAN. I answerde, and sayd I wolde,<br>Yf for my travayle any man wolde pay.  | <i>Would to God</i><br><i>paid attention</i><br><i>To every word</i><br><i>preserve it well</i> |
|      | PELYCAN. He sayd, "Yes, these that God han solde,<br>For they han store of money."   |   |
| 1285 | PLOWMAN. I sayd, "Tell me, and thou may,<br>Why tellest thou mennes trespace?"   |   |
| 1290 | PELYCAN. He said, "To amende hem in good fay,<br>Yf God woll gyve me any grace;  | <i>work</i><br><i>faith</i>   |
|      | "For Christ Hym selfe is lykened to me,<br>That for Hys people dyed on Rode.   |   |
| 1295 | As fare I, ryght so fareth He:<br>He fedeth Hys byrdes wyth Hys blode.<br>But these done yvell ayenst Gode,<br>And ben Hys fone under frendes face.                    | <i>Cross</i><br><i>birds; blood</i><br><i>foes</i>  |

<sup>1</sup> Secure, I don't care how soon [suffering comes]

*The Plowman's Tale*

- I tolde hem howe her lyvynge stode.  
 1300 God amende hem for Hys grace!"
- PLOWMAN. "What ayleth the Gryffon? Tell why  
 That he holdeth on that other syde?  
 PELLICAN. "For they two ben lykely,  
 And wyt kyndes robbens wyde."  
 1305 The foule betokeneth prude,  
 As Lucifer, that hygh-flew was,  
 And syth he dyd hym in evelly hyde,  
 For he agylted Goddes grace.
- "As byrde flyeth up in the ayre,  
 1310 And lyveth by byrdes that ben meke,  
 So these be flowe up into dyspayre,  
 And shenden sely soules eke.  
 The soules that ben in synnes seke,  
 He culleth hem — knele therfore, alas!  
 1315 For brybry Goddes forbode breke —  
 God amende it for Hys grace!
- "The hynder parte is a lyoun,  
 A robber and a ravynere,  
 That robbeth the people in earth a-downe,  
 1320 And in erth holdeth none hys pere.  
 So fareth thys foule both ferre and nere,  
 And wyt temporel strength they people chase,  
 As a lyon proude in earth here.  
 God amende hem for Hys grace!"
- He flewe forth wyt hys wynges twayne  
 1325 All droupynge, dased, and dull,  
 But soone the Gryffon came agayne.  
 Of hys foules the earth was full;  
 The Pelican he had cast to pull.  
 1330 So great a nombre never sene ther was!

---

<sup>1</sup> "Because bribery may break God's prohibition" (Sk)

*The Plowman's Tale*

What maner of foules tell I woll,  
Yf God woll gyve me of Hys grace.

- |      |   |  |
|------|---|--|
| 1335 | Wyth the Gryffon comen foules fele<br>Ravyns, rokes, crowes, and pye,<br>Grayfoules, agadred wele;<br>I-gurde, above they wolde hye.<br>Gledes and bosardes weren hem by;<br>Whyte molles and puttockes token her place,<br>And lapwynges, that well conneth lye:<br>Thys felowshyp han for-gerde her grace.    | <i>many<br/>magpies</i><br><i>Hooded crows, well gathered</i><br><i>Ready, they wished to hasten above</i><br><i>Kites; buzzards; next to them</i><br><i>White buzzards; poultry-kites</i><br><i>know well how to deceive</i><br><i>has ruined their grace</i> |
| 1345 | Longe the Pellican was out,<br>But at laste he cometh agayne,<br>And brought wyth hym the Phenix stout.<br>The Gryffon wolde have flowe ful fayne;<br>Hys foules that flewen as thycke as rayne.<br>The Phenix tho began hem chace;<br>To flye from hym it was in vayne,<br>For he dyd vengeaunce and no grace. | <i>gladly taken flight</i>   |
| 1350 | He slewe hem downe wythout mercy.<br>There astarte neyther free ne thrall.<br>On hym they cast a rufull cry<br>When the Gryffon downe was fall.<br>He bete hem not, but slewe hem all,<br>Whyther he hem drove no man may trace.  | <i>escaped</i><br><i>released them not</i>   |
| 1355 | Under the erthe me thought they yall;<br>Alas, they had a feble grace!  | <i>yelled</i>  |
| 1360 | The PELLICAN then axed ryght:<br>"For my wrytynge, yf I have blame,<br>Who woll for me fyght of flyght?<br>Who shall shelde me from shame?<br>He that hade a Mayde to dame;<br>And the Lambe that slayne was,<br>Shall shelde me from gostly blame,<br>For erthely harme is Goddes grace.                       | <i>asked immediately</i><br><i>fight for me in my cause</i><br><i>for a mother</i><br><i>spiritual<br/>injury</i>  |

*The Plowman's Tale*

- 1365 Therfore I praye every man  
Of my wrytynge have me excused."  
Thys wrytynge wryteth the Pellican,  
That thus these people hath dyspysed.  
For I am freshe, fully advysed;
- 1370 I nyll not maynteyne hys manace; *I won't sustain his threat*  
For the devell is often dysguysed  
To bryng a man to yvell grace.
- Wyteth the Pellican, and not me,  
For herof I nyl not avowe,  
In hye ne in lowe, ne in no degré,  
But as a fable take it ye mowe;  
To Holy Churche I wyll me bowe.  
Eche man to amende hym Christ sende space,  
And for my wrytynge me alowe,  
He that is almyghty for Hys grace. *Blame witness*
- 1375 *may He approve*

FINIS

### **Notes**

- 1–52 The Prologue seems to follow the format of the *CT*, but Chaucer's pilgrims are all on the pilgrimage, not in their places of occupation, as is the Plowman of the *PIT*. Moreover, the fictional time of the Canterbury pilgrimage is April and not, as here, “midsummer.” With the exception of the Canon, who (with his Yeoman) briefly joins the pilgrimage, Chaucer's pilgrims have set out from the Tabard Inn, in Southwerk, toward Canterbury to worship at the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket (see line 11). Chaucer describes the pilgrim Plowman, who does not tell a story, as wearing a “tabard,” or a sleeveless outer garment (*General Prologue* 541). Chaucer also mentions that he rides on a “mere,” but the author of the *PIT* says nothing about his horse. Wawn has argued that the Prologue was written by a sixteenth-century propagandist for Henry VIII, which helps explain the prosodic as well as thematic differences between the Prologue and the rest of the poem. The Prologue does not appear in the Texas MS; in HT lines 1–36 are written in a later hand (seventeenth century?), while lines 37–52 are printed.
- 7 The plowshare was the large blade for making furrows, and the coulter was the vertical blade in front of the plowshare.
- 17 *Our Hoste*. Chaucer's Harry Bailly, Host of the Canterbury pilgrimage. See the *CT*, *General Prologue* I 751–57.
- 44 Sk observes that four lines seem to have dropped out after line 44. Lines 45–52, however, rhyme abababab, as do the other stanza units of the Prologue. Lines 41–48 are printed as a stanza in HT, the Texas MS, and Thynne<sup>2</sup>, which suggests close affiliation between and among the three earliest versions of the *PIT*. Further evidence of affiliation occurs at line 1325, where all three early versions contain the designation “Pellican,” although there is no speech at that line.
- 53 HT's endnote to the Prologue reads: “Thus endeth the prologue / and here foloweth the fyrt parte of this present worke.” A printed marginal note in HT (beside line 1) reads *Narratio*, indicating that the story proper begins here.

### *Notes*

- 57      *on grounde*. So the Texas MS and Sk. HT and Thynne<sup>2</sup> read *vngrounde*.
- 58      *souple*. So the Texas MS and Sk. HT and Thynne<sup>2</sup> have *souble*, Wr *soukle*.
- 60      The seed metaphor alludes to Christ's parable of the sower (Matthew 13).
- 73      *I-cleped*. So the Texas MS, Wr, and Sk; HT and Thynne<sup>2</sup> = *I-clebeth*. *Lollers* here may refer specifically to the Lollards, who were often accused of mumbling and general laziness.
- 86–87    Griffin and Pelican. The griffin (or gryphon) in medieval bestiaries was a fabulous monster, symbol of the devil and of usury as well as of Christ, with the lower parts of a lion but the head and wings of an eagle. Because the pelican mother was reputed to tear open her side to feed her young, it was often a symbol of Christ in medieval bestiaries.
- 97      See John 1.29: "Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who taketh away the sin of the world." Christ blessed the meek and merciful in Matthew 5.5 and 5.7 (the Beatitudes).
- 105     *covertours*, skilfully made bed linens, were symbols of worldly extravagance in the Middle Ages. See Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*, lines 249–56, and the *Parson's Tale*, citing Isaiah: "under hem shul been strawed motthes, and hire covertures shulle been of wormes of helle" (X 198).
- 112     Henry Despenser, warrior-bishop of Norwich, led a "crusade" on behalf of Pope Urban against territories controlled by the French antipope Clement VII in 1383. This campaign — the so-called Norwich Crusade — was widely regarded in retrospect as a cynical play for power. Despenser also helped quell the peasants' rebellion of 1381.
- 130     *peragall*. Sk's emendation; Thynne<sup>2</sup>, HT, and Wr: *permagall*.
- 157     *myters*: bishop's or abbot's tall cap.
- 176     *at the full*. So Texas MS; HT, Thynne<sup>2</sup>, Sk *at full*.

*The Plowman's Tale*

- 183      *with a royall.* So Texas MS; HT, Thynne<sup>2</sup>, Sk *with her royall. Her* may have come about from the previous line: *to her brode.*
- 193–94    *Witnessse of Johns prophesy.* See 1 John 4.3: “And every spirit that dissolveth Jesus, is not of God: and this is Antichrist, of whom you have heard that he cometh, and he is now already in the world.”
- 198      *dome.* This is the reading in Thynne’s 3rd ed. and in Wr’s edition. The Texas MS, Thynne<sup>2</sup>, and HT read *done;* Sk *demed.*
- 201      *All-holyest.* See also line 230. The point here is that the Pope arrogates a Latin title appropriate for Christ rather than for a human spiritual ruler.
- 205–28    These lines have been challenged as sixteenth-century interpolations by a Henrician propagandist. See esp. Wawn, “The Genesis of *The Plowman’s Tale*,” 36–37. Both Wr and Sk retain the lines.
- 220      *Reserveth he.* “He reserves nothing at all” (Sk); apparently a proverb. The churchman concedes neither an open or free (*opyn*) nor a contingent (*joynt*) point to Christ.
- 221      *above hem all.* This is the reading of the Texas MS. Thynne<sup>2</sup>, HT, and Sk read *aboven all.* Line 222 = “And Christ aboven hym nothyng”; it is possible that the scribe of the Texas MS anticipated this construction in line 221.
- 226      *An angell bad John.* See Apocalypse 22.8–9: “I fell down to adore before the feet of the angel, who shewed me these things. And he said to me: See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy bretheren the prophets, and of them that keep the words of the prophecy of this book. Adore God.”
- 230      *Sanctissimus.* See line 201 and note.
- 237      *bynde and lose.* See Matthew 16.19: “And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon the earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.”

### *Notes*

- 240     *Betwene hem now.* At this line HT contains the marginal gloss, “Omne regnum in se deuisum desolabitur.” (“Every kingdom divided against itself shall be made desolate” [Matt. 12.25].)
- 242     *which of hem.* The allusion is to the rival popes, Boniface IX (Rome) and Benedict XIII (Avignon).
- 245     *Qui gladio percutit.* See Matt. 26.52b: *omnes enim qui acceperint gladium, gladio peribunt* (*Vulgate*); “for all that take the sword shall perish with the sword” (Douai).
- 246     *swerde sothely he shall.* This is the unique reading of the Texas MS. Thynne<sup>2</sup> reads “swerde shall”; HT has “swerde he shall”; and Sk emends to “swerde shall [he surely].”
- 248     *not drede for to dye.* HT contains the marginal gloss: “Nolite timere eos / qui occidunt corpus; estote prudentes.” See Matt. 10.28: “And fear ye not them that kill the body.”
- 250     *carke not.* See Matthew 6.25: “Therefore I say to you, be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than meat: and the body more than the raiment?” See also *PPC* line 602.
- 258     Sk glosses *choweth* as chews; but that makes no sense. More likely *choweth* is from OF *escheuen* [to avoid, shun], while *ball* means a blow, as in Lydgate’s *Troy Book* 6791–92: “Schelene gaff him suche a balle, / That of his stede he made him falle.” (MED) It refers to the unjust ecclesiastical *lawes*.
- 289     *to them hym shryves.* Another reading from the Texas MS, although Sk emended his text to include the same reading. Thynne<sup>2</sup> reads “to them shryues”; HT “to them shriues.”
- 293     *Maximyen.* Galerius Valerius Maximianus, emperor of Rome 305–11. Maximian was the subject of a Latin moral elegy, translated into Middle English in the thirteenth century and sometimes identified as “Le regret de Maximian” (MS Digby 86; MS Harleian 2253).

### *The Plowman's Tale*

- 297–98 “They follow Christ (who went upward) to heaven, just as a bucket (that goes downward) into a well” (Sk).
- 302 *maynteynours*. Magnates sometimes maintained private armies, paid men who took their livery and who furthered their causes, with inevitable distortions of justice. Parliament enacted statutes of Livery and Maintenance to try to check the abuses, but these laws were not effective.
- 306 *crokettes*: a rolled hair fashion introduced c. 1270 into the court of Henry III, which flourished in the late fourteenth century. See Gower's *Confessio Amantis* II.370. The style became sufficiently popular for the term to be transferred to curved architectural ornamentation on pinnacles, pediments, and canopies. See PPC 174. Because of its popular usage in a restricted period of time the term has been used to date the original composition of both *P/T* and *PPC* c. 1390s.
- 320 *as by raunson*. Sk's emendation. Texas MS, Thynne<sup>2</sup>, HT: “as raunsom[e].” I retain Sk's spelling of “raunson” for the rhyme with “possessyon” and “larson.”
- 321 *Turpe lucrum*. On “filthy lucre” see Titus 1.7, 11 and 1 Peter 5.2.
- 322 *meynall*: having to do with the *meynee* or the household. Sk paraphrases the sentence: “the exaction of tithes is, with these masters, a household business, a part of their usual domestic arrangements.”
- 325 *sompnours*. Summoners served alleged malefactors with writs to appear in court. Here, wicked churchmen allow summoners to abuse suspects.
- 334 *make her gree*. They will slander in order to win favor.
- 335 *Alexaunder*, one of the so-called “Nine Worthy,” was proverbial for worldly success in medieval literature. He was the subject of a number of legends but symbolic as well of human limitation, as in Chaucer's *Monk's Tale*: “Who shal me yeven teiris to compleyne / The deeth of gentillesse and of franchise, / That al the world weeldeid in his demeyne, / And yet hym thoughte it myghte nat suffise?” (VII 2663–66). Marginal gloss in the Huntington text: “Ve homini illi per quem scandalum venit.” (Woe to the man by whom comes scandal.)

### *Notes*

- 361     *ben.* Sk's emendation. Thynne<sup>2</sup> and HT read *is*, Texas MS *ys*; but *ben* is superior.
- 395     *spede hys purchase.* The point of this line is that a lord can bribe the Pope.
- 426     *shepe.* The "folde" of line 425 refers to the sheepfold, symbolically the Church (or the vineyard).
- 429     *forsake* and *wake* (line 431) are ironic.
- 434     *Lamuall.* Lemuel, king of Massa (Proverbs 31); an example of a drunkard in Chaucer's *Pardonner's Tale* (VI 934–35).
- 443     *Peter, but Himself the Stone.* Matthew 16.18; 1 Corinthians 10.4.
- 445     *croysery.* "No serious crusade was intended at this time; however, the author affirms that the rival popes discouraged the idea; for each wanted men to fight for him" (Sk).
- 455     *Crede* = Apostles' Creed. For the Creed and its issues, see *PPC*, which may be alluded to here.
- 469     See Matt. 4.19; Mark 1.17; Luke 5.10; John 21.6ff. Here, instead of fishers of men, the corrupt priesthood fishes for gold and silver.
- 476     HT's endnote to Part I reads: "boke" for Thynne's "tale." The same reading occurs at line 700.
- 477     *this worde fal.* The narrator proposes to substitute the word "amende" (lines 484 and following) for the word "fall" since he has run out of rhyme-words.
- 488     *balke.* Perhaps an allusion to Matt. 7:3–5, where the sinful accusers condemn small faults without observing the enormity of their own errors. A *balke* is a beam in the framework of a ship or building.
- 507     *Agaynst measure, outragousnesse.* Many of the terms in this section, including "sufferaunce," "sobrenesse," "wylfulness," "Agaynst measure," and "outragousnesse" may derive from Chaucer's short poems *The Former Age, Gentilesse,*

### *The Plowman's Tale*

and *Lak of Stedfastnesse*, but they are terms familiar in late medieval complaint literature.

- 533     *Dyves*. Dives is the wealthy man of Luke 16 and a symbol of wealth.
- 545–48     *Eche Christen preest*. The syntax and meaning of lines 545–48 appear to be: “Each Christian priest ought to preach from God above; they have been sent to show God’s word to all folk, to amend sinful man.” The edition places a period stop after line 546.
- 562     *Hys shulde*. Sk supplies *servaunts* before *shulde*.
- 567     *One curse to hell, one slee men here*. Sk directs to Luke 22.38. The two swords were commonly identified as the temporal and spiritual powers. Pope Boniface VIII argued in *Unam Sanctam* (1302) that both swords are at the Church’s disposal.
- 570     *smyte gan defende*. “Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it, and struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear. And the name of the servant was Malchus. Jesus therfore said to Peter: Put up thy sword into the scabbard” (John 18.10–11). *Smyte* = hitting, cutting with a sword.
- 590     *Peter Christ forsoke*. Peter’s successors (in the modern church) follow Peter in this if not in other ways.
- 592     *Than a sheperde had to lese his hoke*. Modern-day popes, that is, pay more attention to ecclesiastical entitlements than to God’s love.
- 600     *go behynde Sathan*. See Matthew 16.23: “Go behind me, Satan, thou art a scandal unto me: because thou savourest not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men.”
- 606     *contrary to Christ is. Satan*, lit. “adversary.”
- 618     *He hydde and stale*. “And right as Judas hadde purses smale, / And was a theef, right swich a theef was he [summoner]; / His maister hadde but half his duetee” (*The Friar’s Tale* 1350–52). *Gan* in this line = Sk’s emendation.
- 625     *ensyse* = kind, sort (a variant of *assyse*).

### *Notes*

- 640      *whom lyste nat knawe.* Sk inserts *they* before *lyste*.
- 642      *to prysone.* Sk regards this line as evidence that the poem was written prior to 1401, when Lollards were frequently burned at the stake.
- 655–56    *woll raunsom hem / Maysterfully, more than doth he.* The complaint here is that the clergy has more money than the king and people, so they can behave like “masters” (*maysterfully*). The section here generally refers to the *Significavit*, a writ that mandated civil officers to imprison those who had not paid their fines within forty days after excommunication. The sins listed in *The Friar’s Tale* are fornication, witchcraft, pandering, slander, adultery, robbing churches, violations of wills and marriage contracts, usury, simony, lechery, and under-tithing, the most common offense (III 1304–12).
- 687      *Lordshyppes, and possessyons.* Clerical property yielded an income more than three times that of the king, but the clergy generally was poor in relation to those few churchmen, wealthy “possessors,” who lived like lords and who were loath to be taxed.
- 696      *The proude Pope putte hym out!* According to a Lollard legend, when Constantine endowed Pope Sylvester and the Church “with greet plente of londis,” an “angel” or “fiend” cried out “In this dai venom is hilded [poured] into the chirche of God.” See *Piers Plowman* B 15.519–31.
- 707      *smeren* connotes ministering, nursing with ointments, and pastoral care in general.
- 717      Bradley and then Sk have challenged these lines, the so-called “long interpolation,” as of Lollard or sixteenth-century provenance. Wawn, however, refutes the claim. See also the notes to 205 and 1149.
- 717–18    *chanons.* Canons, both secular canons and canons regular, were a frequent object of attack in anticlerical satire. The canon of Chaucer’s *Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale* is portrayed as a thief, who dupes clients interested in turning lead into silver.
- 721      *prebendes.* Prebends are estate revenues, drawn from lands or tithes, granted to canons as stipends, or the lands or tithes themselves.

*The Plowman's Tale*

- 727     *spare*. Thynne<sup>2</sup> = “spar.” The Texas MS, HT, and Sk read “spare,” rhyming with “fare.”
- 733     *procuratour*. Proctor for collecting money. An ecclesiastical proctor could administer canon law (as in line 734).
- 755     *her lele labour*. Chaucer’s Plowman is said to be “A trewe swynkere and a good” (*Gen Prol* I 531), and he “wolde thresshe, and therto dyke and delve / For Christes sake” (536–37).
- 773–75     *And usen horedome . . . eke envy*. The seven deadly sins, except gluttony, are mentioned here: lust, avarice, pride, sloth, wrath, and envy.
- 780     *wyllers* here means those who choose sin.
- 788     *Suche treasour*. These lines allude to Christ’s Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 6.19–20): “Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth: where the rust, and moth consume, and where thieves break through, and steal. But lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven: where neither the rust nor moth doth consume, and where thieves do not break through, nor steal.”
- 801     *Maintenance* legally was the offence of aiding a party without lawful cause; *mastery* meant domination.
- 814     *who may say nay?* Sk inserts “me” after “say.”
- 839     *That the worldes goodes forsake*. The point is that while Christ abandoned material goods, modern day clerics enter the Church for gain.
- 842     *glose*. As in lines 312 and 595, there is a pun on *gloss* (explain with commentary) and *glose* (= deceive, cheat).
- 871     *Markette-beaters*. Compare Chaucer’s *The Reeve’s Tale*, of “deynous Symkyn”: “He was a market-betere atte fulle” (I 3936). Sk glosses *Markette-beaters* as “haunters of the market.”
- 872     *hale* = haul; the phrase resembles “heave-ho!”

*Notes*

- 880      *consistory*. The consistory adjudicated ecclesiastical offenses.
- 897      *men sette up great lyght*. Candles were placed around the effigies of saints deemed especially beneficial. Those judged less helpful were not so honored (lines 898–900).
- 918      Sk emends *Baudryke* of the edition to *Baudriks*.
- 921      *hedes*. So the Texas MS. Thynne<sup>2</sup>, HT, and Sk = “dedes.”
- 925–28    The syntax of these lines is tortured and seems defective. Sk translates: “they think much (*counten*) of scarlet and green gowns, that must be made in the latest fashion, in order to embrace and kiss the damsels.”
- 929      *shewe*. So the Texas MS. HT, Thynne<sup>2</sup>, and Sk have “sewe” — a plausible word (hence the “cutted clothes” would “match” rather than “show off” their complexions). But this reading may result from the proximity of “sewe” in the previous line and “hewe” at the end of line 929.
- 941      The form *is* = *es* is a rare variant for “them.” Creeping to the Cross was a popular form of penance. See *Piers Plowman* B 18.428.
- 955      *I dare not sayne*. The author is very coy about calling such men “Antichrist’s priests.”
- 957–58    *Or they yef . . . hys servyce*. That is, they either have an excuse for not being in service or they are in service.
- 993      *Saynt Benet*. Saint Benedict of Nursia (480–c. 550), regarded as the founder of western monasticism.
- 995      *hys thought*. So Thynne<sup>2</sup>; Texas MS, Sk “his.” HT reads “this.”
- 997–98    *That a man*. The syntax depends on the verse sentence begun in the previous stanza: “that they should use . . . ; that a man should call. . . . ”
- 1020     *in hys lyvynge*. Saint Benedict’s rule for monastic living. In chap. 33 the Rule cites Acts 4.32: “. . . neither did any one say that aught of the things which he possessed, was his own; but all things were common unto them.”

*The Plowman's Tale*

- 1028    *byte*. A triple pun: devour, criticize, impoverish.
- 1035    *Her fathers suffreth drought and wete*. Sk directs to *PPC*, line 752: “And his syre a soutere ysuled in grees.” See also line 1042.
- 1050    *be not cherelyche*. Sk reads *ful cherelich* but comments: “The line is imperfect. I have supplied *but* [“(ful)”), but the right word is *not*. For *cherelich* means ‘expensive’ or ‘prodigal,’ from O.F. *cher*, dear.”
- 1066    *a Crede*. A reference to *PPC*. For verbal correspondences between the *PIT* and the *PPC*, see Sk’s notes to the *PIT* at lines 743, 871, 893, 915, 1002, 1035, 1042, 1115.
- 1113    *We ben Hys membres both also*. See Romans 12.4–5: “For as in one body we have many members, but all the members have not the same office: So we being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.”
- 1114    *And ‘Father’ He taught us to cal Hym als*. See Matthew 6.9: “Thus therefore shall you pray: Our Father who art in heaven.” See also Matthew 23.9: “And call none your father upon earth; for one is your father, who is in heaven.”
- 1115    *'Maysters' to be called defended He tho*. See Matthew 23.10: “Neither be ye called masters; for one is your master, Christ.”
- 1123    *Ne carke nat for cloth ne fode*. See Matthew 6.25–26 and the Explanatory Note to *PPC*, line 602.
- 1135    *What haste thou to done wyth her leve?* Sk translates the phrase “with what is permitted to them.”
- 1149    Beginning with this line and ending with line 1268, the rhyme scheme shifts from *ababbcbc* to *ababcdcd*, which is the rhyme pattern of the Prologue. These lines, which concern doctrine and the powers of the pope and Church, may be later interpolations.
- 1157    *the seven sacramentes*. The seven rites of baptism, confirmation, the Eucharist, marriage, ordination, penance, and extreme unction.

### *Notes*

- 1163     *not worth a pease.* An expression, as in *Piers Plowman* B 6.169, said of Wastour: “And sette Piers at a pese and his plow3 bope.”
- 1211     *A man to houselyn and to shryve.* The construction “is holsome lyfe” (1209) governs lines 1211–14.
- 1219     *Hys mystrye.* The mystery of Transubstantiation, whereby bread and water are changed into Christ’s flesh and blood. Wyclif denied Transubstantiation in *De eucharistia* (1381). Thynne<sup>2</sup> reads “mystrye” (Sk “mystery”) — clearly the word intended — but the Texas MS has “maystrye,” HT, “mastrye.”
- 1222     *subgettē or accydent.* The terms are from the debate on Transubstantiation concerning the “real presence” of Christ: whether He was there, in the bread, in reality (“subject”) or whether the bread (the “accident”) merely represented Him. The MS reads: “Whether itt be substans or accident.” Irvine notes that “accident wipouten subgettē” is a very common phrase in the Lollard tracts” (“A Manuscript Copy,” p. 51).
- 1235     *And.* The reading of Thynne<sup>2</sup> and Sk. The Texas MS reads “Off,” while HT omits.
- 1243–44 *And clene ydampned . . . but ye woll worche.* The Griffin threatens the Pelican with excommunication.
- 1270     *And lokēd lovely as an owle.* Owls, birds of evil omen, were symbols of ignorance because of their association with the night. “Lovely as an owl” here is ironic.
- 1271     “cockes” is an (ironic) error for “God’s.”
- 1293–96 The pelican is a common figure of Christ in medieval literature. See Malory, *The Quest for the Holy Grail*, Book XVI.13.8–14 (ed. Vinaver), where Bors sees the pelican in a dead tree, piercing its breast to feed its young: “Than oure Lorde shewed Hym unto you in the lyknesse of a fowle, that suffirde grete anguysshe for us whan He was putte uppon the Crosse, and bledde Hys herte blood for mankynde; there was the tokyn and the lyknesse of the Sankgreall that appered afore you, for the blood that the grete fowle bledde reysyd the chykyns frome dethe to lyff. And by the bare tre betokenyth the

### *The Plowman's Tale*

worlde, whych ys naked and nedy, withoute fruyte, but if hit com of oure Lorde."

- 1303     PELICAN. HT and Thynne<sup>2</sup> place this designation at line 1305. I follow the Texas MS and Sk in placing it at line 1303. *Ben lykely*. The idea is that the Griffin and the wicked ecclesiastics are “birds of a feather.”
- 1305     *The foule* = the bird-like part of the Griffin.
- 1325     The designation “Pellican” appears before this line (or in the margin) in HT, the Texas MS, and Thynne<sup>2</sup>.
- 1343     *Phenix*: a mythical bird of Arabia, which was said to build for itself a funeral pyre every thousand years and then, dying and being reborn in the flames, to become renewed. The phoenix, originally associated with pagan sun-worship, became a well-known symbol for the resurrected Christ. The imagery surrounding the phoenix seems to derive from Job 29.18, Psalm 103, 1 Corinthians 15.35–38, and the Book of Revelation. A fourth-century Latin poet, Lactantius, wrote *De ave phoenice*, which was translated into Old English verse as part of The Exeter Book.
- 1359     *flyght*. Literally “who will fight in my flight,” with a pun on flying, or debate. The rhetorical term is doubly witty, given the avian participants in the debate.
- 1362     *And the Lambe*. “He that” (line 1361) also governs line 1362: “and he that was slain as a Lamb.”
- 1370     *I nyll not maynteyne his manace*. The author here and in the final stanza apologizes for the work and disavows responsibility for its most radical claims. Such disclaimers were conventional in medieval literature. See, for example, the Retraction to Chaucer’s *CT*.

## ***Jack Upland***

### ***Introduction***

*JU* is a Wycliffite prose treatise against friars written in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century. It survives in two manuscripts, British Library MS Harley 6641 (fifteenth century), and Cambridge University Library MS Ff. vi. 2 (sixteenth century), and in a black-letter edition of about 1536 (the John Gough edition, of which two copies are extant: at Caius College, Cambridge, and at the Huntington Library, San Marino, California). There are also modern editions by Thomas Wright (1861) and Walter W. Skeat (1897), although neither edition is based on the manuscripts. Wright based his text on Thomas Speght's second edition of Chaucer (1602), and he printed his text in half-lines; Skeat based his text on the Gough edition collated with Speght. The standard edition, based on the Harley MS, is edited by P. L. Heyworth (1968). Heyworth's version differs considerably from Skeat's, which lacks material in Heyworth's edition but which also contains text that Heyworth omits.

The prose treatise has inevitably been closely linked with two other works: *FDR*, an alliterative poem of 932 lines which answers *JU*; and *UR*, an antifraternal alliterative poem of 392 lines. Heyworth dates *JU* to about 1390, *FDR* to about 1419–20 based on internal allusions, and *UR* to about 1450 when, according to Heyworth, the holograph manuscript was executed. Skeat, on the other hand, dated all three works to 1402. *JU* was answered twice: by the anonymous author of *FDR* and by William Woodford, OFM, in his *Responsiones ad quaestiones LXV* (Bodley MS 703, fols. 41–57) — a work that dates perhaps from the end of the fourteenth century. If Woodford counted sixty-five points raised by Upland, Skeat in his edition counted sixty-four. *JU* was also translated into Latin; and it influenced the Wycliffite sermon known as *Vae octuplex* (the eight-fold woes from Matthew 23), which has been dated to not before 1411.

*JU* has affinities with *PPC* in that both works construct a portrait of friars as devious, hypocritical, greedy, simoniacal, unchristian, undisciplined, and clannish; both expose them as disobedient and disloyal to legal authorities, and lovers of luxury. Most of these charges have their origins in the bitter struggles between the secular masters and mendicant faculties at the University of Paris in the thirteenth

### *Jack Upland*

century, and especially in William of St. Amour's *De periculis novissimorum temporum* ("On the dangers of the latemost times"). This work, which influenced Jean de Meun, charged that friars were none other than the false prophets and pseudoapostles of Matthew 23 and the "many antichrists" of 1 John 2.

*JU* differs from *PPC* in that it tells no actual story; it represents no drama. "Jack Upland," a voice or persona for a rustic type who must decry the times, merely quarrels with an unnamed friar, whom he denounces through a sequence of rhetorical questions, such as, "Frere, if Cristis rule is moost perfight [perfect], whi rulist thou thee not theraftir?" The obvious implication is that this friar, and by extension the fraternal genre, neglects Christ's rules together with the Gospel. Despite the inherent drama of Upland's denunciations, the friar never responds. At the end of the treatise, the author, in Upland's voice, invites the friar to "Go now forth," question his fellow clerks, study Christ's law, and "geve Jacke an awnser." This challenge was accepted by Woodford and the anonymous author of *FDR*.

Upland's point of departure for his antifraternal inquisitions is the idea of Antichrist, the antagonist of Christ and the Gospel. For Upland, as for many other antifraternal authors, the mendicant orders offered *prima facie* evidence that the forces of Antichrist had arrived. John Wyclif and especially his Lollard followers attacked the established clergy, including friars, as the army of Antichrist. Sometimes anticlerical writers identified the Pope, or the antipope, as Antichrist; sometimes they regarded the hordes of simoniac clerics, and particularly avaricious friars, as a collective Antichrist or the "many antichrists" of 1 John. Sometimes "Antichrist" as a term could designate Satan, the one who would war with God after being released from bondage (Revelations 20.7); more generally, it signified the "devil's work" in the world's latter days. Wycliffites preferred the term's traditional ambiguity.

*JU* is written in a prose that alliterates often enough to have caused Wright to print the treatise as verse. Heyworth, who correctly prints the work as prose, says that *JU* "has suffered from Wright's conviction that it is in alliterative verse" (p. 28), but he overstates the case when he says that only three passages "can lay any claim to verse form . . . ; the rest is prose and unequivocally prosaic" (p. 28). It would be more useful to say that the author regularly alliterates, but not according to recognized principles of late medieval English verse. In the following sentence alliteration occurs on *m* and *s*: "Thei marren many matins and massis without devossioun, and herto sacramentis schulen be soolde or els gete no man noon; and lest thei schulden studie in Goddis lawe he hath ordeyned hem to studie in othere dyvers lawis for the more wynnynge." One could, I suppose, break up this prose into long lines; but it is better to regard it as interesting prose which imi-

### *Introduction*

tates some techniques of traditional alliterative verse. The latter was often seen as a fit vehicle for satire and complaint, as in *PPC* and *PIT*. Nor is it surprising that the respective authors of *FDR* and *UR* chose alliterative poetry as their genre of response to *JU* (which in any case they might have interpreted as alliterative poetry rather than as alliterating prose).

This edition is based on P. L. Heyworth's standard edition (abbreviated PLH) and checked against the manuscript versions: Harley 6641 (abbreviated H) and Ff. vi. 2 (abbreviated C). Of the two MSS I give preference to H's readings over C's in most instances; and I have sometimes restored readings of H which PLH rejected. I have also consulted Skeat's edition (abbreviated Sk), especially his notes, but his (Gough) text is unreliable as a witness to the medieval author's original. I rely on PLH for most readings and even for paragraphing; but my line numbers differ from PLH's.

### *Manuscripts and Black-Letter Edition*

British Library MS Harley 6641 [abbrev. H].

Cambridge University Library MS Ff. vi. 2 [abbrev. C].

*Jack vp Lande*. Ihon Gough, c. 1536.

### *Modern Printed Editions*

Wright, Thomas, ed. *Jacke Upland*. In *Political Poems and Songs Relating to English History*. Rolls Series 14. Vol. 1. London: Longmans, Green, 1861.

Skeat, Walter W., ed. *Jack Upland*. In *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*. Vol. 7: *Chaucerian and Other Pieces*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1897.

Heyworth, P. L., ed. *Jack Upland*. In *Jack Upland, Friar Daw's Reply, and Upland's Rejoinder*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968. See also Review by Rossell Hope Robbins, *Notes and Queries* 215 (1970), 266–67, on the dating of *JU*, *FDR*, and *UR*.

### *Jack Upland*

#### **General Studies**

Coleman, Janet. *Medieval Readers and Writers 1350-1400*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1981.

Hudson, Anne. *The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1988.

Kendall, Ritchie D. *The Drama of Dissent: The Radical Poetry of Non Conformity, 1380-1590*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986.

Peck, Russell A. "Social Conscience and the Poets." *Social Unrest in the Late Middle Ages*. Ed. Francis X. Newman. Binghamton, New York: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1986. Pp. 113-48.

Szittya, Penn. *The Antifraternal Tradition in Medieval Literature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986.

#### **Studies**

Heyworth, P. L. "The Earliest Black-Letter Editions of *Jack Upland*." *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 30 (1967), 307-14.

Utley, F. L. "How Judicare Came into the Creed." *Mediaeval Studies*, 8 (1946), 303-09.

#### **Bibliographies**

Peck, Russell A. *Chaucer's Romaunt of the Rose and Boece, Treatise on the Astrolabe, Equatorie of the Planetis, Lost Works and Chaucerian Apocrypha*. Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1988. Pp. 245 ff. See index.

Robbins, Rossell Hope. "XIII. Poems Dealing with Contemporary Conditions" in *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English*, vol. 5. New Haven: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1975. Pp. 1449-50; 1678.

### ***Jack Upland***

To veri God and to alle trewe in Crist, I, Jacke Uplond, make my moone, that Anticrist and hise disciplis, bi coloure of holynes, wasten and disceiven Cristis Chirche bi many fals signes.

For God that is almyghti, alwitti, algoodli, and alwilful, as He hath made man in soule to His ymage, as in mynde, resoun, and wille, and to His liknesse bi werkis of bileyte, tristi hope, and lastinge charite, so He sette mannes state: in lordis to represente the power of the Fadir; preestis to represente the wisdom of the Sone; and the comouns to presente the good lastinge wille of the Holi Goost.

Preestis office to preche the Gospel truli and to preye in herte devoutli, to mynistre the sacramentis freli, to studie in Goddis lawe oonli, and to be trewe ensaumpleris of holi mennes lijf continuli, in doyng and in suffringe. Lordis office to justifie mysdoers in ward and to defende Goddis servauntis from letters of her office. Comouns office to truli laboure for the sustinaunce of hem-silf, and for prestis and for lordis doyng wel her office.

And thus hath Crist taught bothe bi dede and bi word, as Holi Writ berith witnes in many placis, and thus was Cristis Chirche governed a thousand yeer and more. But Anticrist hath govun leve to leve al this and to do another maner. For he geveth leve to preestis of parischis bothe highe and lowe to leve prechinge and to do lewid mennes office; and yit thei takun hire of her parischis never the lasse —

1 To . . . moone, To the true God and to all true men in Christ, I, Jack Upland, make my complaint. 2 bi coloure . . . wasten, under the guise of holiness, ruin. 4 almyghti . . . alwilful, all-powerful, all-knowing, all-goodly, and all-ordinating. 5 to His ymage in His image. 5–6 werkis . . . charite, works of faith, trusting hope, and lasting charity. 6 sette mannes state, ordained man's estates (see note). 7 Fadir, Father (first Person of the Trinity). 8 comouns, commoners (third estate). 9 Preestis . . . devoutli, [It is a] priest's function to preach the Gospel truly and to pray in heart devoutly. 10 mynistre, administer; oonli, only. 11 ensaumpleris . . . lijf, exemplars of holy men's life. 11–12 Lordis office . . . ward, [It is a] lord's function to correct wrongdoers through guardianship (supervision). 12 her, their. 13 sustinaunce of hem-silf, their sustenance. 15 dede, deed. 17 govun . . . maner, given permission to abandon all this and to act in a different fashion. 18 geveth leve, gives permission. 19 lewid mennes office, ignorant men's duties; takun hire of her, take their living from their.

*Jack Upland*

20 as offringis and tithis and othere possessiouns dowid for almes, and as for world-  
li bisines. Thei marren many matins and massis with-out devossiouun, and herto  
sacramentis schulen be soolde or els gete no man noon; and lest thei schulden  
studie in Goddis lawe, he hath ordeyned hem to studie in othere dyvers lawis for  
the more wynnynge. And as anentis ensaumple of prestis lijf in doyng, who doith  
25 more worldli werkis thanne thei, or more covytous, and suffre mai thei no wronge  
but if thei plete anoon, and of alle men thei mai worst suffre to be repreved of  
her defautis, be thei never so many.

To lordis hath Anticrist govun leve to fighte for rewmes and othere lordschips,  
and sle her britheren and brenne her housis, and therwith wynne perdoun; and he  
30 that is unable of vertues to governe o lordschip schal have leve to fighte for  
tweyne. And this power ordeined bi God to meyntene and defende men in charite  
is ordeined bi Anticrist to distrye charite.

To the comoun peple hath Anticrist govun leve to leve her trewe laboure and  
35 bicome idil men ful of disceitis to bigile eche othere, as summe bicome men of  
crafte and marchauntis professid to falsnes, and summe men of lawe to distroye  
Goddis lawe and love amonge neighboris, and summe crepen into feyned ordris  
and clepen hem religious, to lyve idilli bi ipocrisie and disceive alle the statis  
ordeyned bi God. And thus bi Anticrist and hise clerkis ben vertues transposid to  
40 viciis — as mekenes to cowardise, fernes and pride to wisdom and talnes, wraththe  
to manhode, envye to justificacioun of wrong, slouthe to lordlynes, coveytis to  
wisdom and wise puruyaunce, glotonye to largynes, leccherie to kindeli solace,

20 as offringis, such as offerings. 20-21 dowid . . . bisines, given as aims to take care of secular affairs. 21 marren many matins, ruin many matins (canonical hours); devossiouun, devotion. 22 or . . . noon, or else [if they are not sold] no man should receive them. 23-24 he hath ordeyned . . . wynnynge, he (Antichrist) has ordained [that they] study sundry other laws for greater profit. 24 as anentis . . . doyng, as regards the example of the priest's life in action. 25-26 suffre . . . anoon, and [they] may endure no wrong unless they immediately plead (sue). 26-27 of alle men . . . defautis, of all men they can bear the least to be criticized for their shortcomings. 28 govun . . . rewmes, given permission to fight for kingdoms. 29 sle . . . perdoun, slay their brethren and burn their houses, and in this way secure pardon. 30-31 unable . . . tweyne, cannot, through his powers, rule one lordship shall be permitted to fight for two. 32 distrye, destroy. 33 govun . . . to leve, given permission to abandon. 34-35 men of crafte . . . falsnes, craftsmen and merchants dedicated to falseness. 36-37 crepen . . . hem, infiltrate bogus orders and call themselves. 37 statis, estates. 39 fernes, cruelty; talnes, strength. 40-41 coveytis . . . puruyaunce, covetousness into wisdom and wise foresight. 41 largynes, magnanimity; kindeli solace, benevolent comforting.

### *Jack Upland*

mildenes to schepisshenesse, holines to ipocrisie, heryse to pleyne sadnes of feyth  
and oolde usage, and Holy Chirche to synagoge of Satanas. And lest that this  
45 greeete abhomynacioun of Antecrist were aspied and lettid, he hath suspendid  
prestis fro her office and govun hem greeete wagis of possessiouns and dignytees  
agens Cristis lawe, and chosun suche therto that kunnen not ne moun not grucche  
agens his lordschip, and thes lordis ben in the rerewarde of Antecristis bateile.

And herto hath he made another oost agens Cristis ordinaunce, and closid hem  
as fro the world in wallis of stoon, cloistris, and sellis; and thereas thei schulden  
50 have labourid in the world in help of alle thre partis of Cristis Chirche, with meke  
love and leve lijfplode, now thei schulen lyve in idil lijf and sikir fro al povert, and  
al men schulen help hem and thei never no man aftir, but lyve in mamelynge of  
mete and many wast clothis, and though thei weren the heire and the hood over  
the iyen, ever envy is her cauce at everi melis mete. And thes hidde Ipocritis ben  
55 in the myddilward of Antecristis bateil.

But the fellist folk that ever Antecrist foond ben last broughte into the Chirche  
and in a wondir wise, and for thei ben of divers settis of Antecristis sowinge, of  
dyvers cuntreis and kynredis, and alle men thei knowun. Thei ben not obediente  
60 to bisshopis ne lege men to kyngis, nether thei tilien ne sowen, weden ne repen,  
nether wede, corn, ne gras, ne good that men schal help but oonli hem-silf. And  
thes men han al maner power of God, as thei seien, in heven and in erthe, a  
mannes lijf to save — yhe, to sille hevne or helle to whom that hem likith — and  
yit thes wrecchis witen not where to be hem-silf saved or damped.

42–43 **heryse . . . usage**, heresy into high seriousness of faith and observance of old customs.  
44 **aspied and lettid**, observed and forestalled. 46–47 **chosun . . . agens**, chosen such men  
for it who do not know how and may not complain about. 47 **rerewarde . . . bateile**, rear  
guard of Antichrist's battle. 48 **made another oost**, raised another army. 48–49 **closid hem . . . sellis**,  
shut them off from the world in walls of stone, cloisters, and cells. 49 **thereas**,  
whereas. 51 **leve lijfplode**, cherished livelihood; **sikir . . . povert**, safe from all poverty. 52  
**thei . . . aftir**, they [will not] ever help any man in return. 52–53 **mamelynge of mete**,  
muttering about food. 53 **wast clothis**, superfluous clothes. 53–54 **weren . . . iyen**, wear the  
hair shirt and the friar's hood over their eyes. 54 **cauce . . . mete**, sauce at every meal's  
course; **hidde Ipocritis**, covert hypocrites. 55 **myddilward**, middle-guard. 56 **fellist**, cruelest.  
57 **wondir wise**, wondrous fashion. 57–58 **for . . . kynredis**, because they are from various  
seeds of Antichrist's sowing, [drawn from] diverse countries and nationalities (kinships).  
58–59 **Thei . . . repen**, They are not obedient to bishops nor [are they] loyal (liege) men to  
kings, nor do they plow or sow, weed or reap. 60 **wede**, wheat (see note); **ne good . . . hem-silf**,  
nor goods that shall help [other] men but only themselves. 61–62 **a mannes . . . save**,  
to save a man's life. 62 **sille**, sell. 63 **wrecchis . . . damped**, scoundrels don't know  
whether they themselves should be saved or damned.

### *Jack Upland*

65      Thei ben confessouris and confundouris of lordis and ladies, of prelatis and persounis, and pilers of the Chirche; and also thei ben parteneris of alle sacramentis that schulen be soold as Simonundis eiris, for thei preien for no mo than paien wele therfore.

70      Thes ben the flateringe freris of al the fyve ordris, falsist founden in oure feith, and first schulen be distried. Thes ben cockers in coventis and coveitous in markettis, marrers of matrymonye, and Caymes castel-makers, Pharesies fagynge the folk and profetis fals, unsikir soudiouris sette al bifore, vayne men and voide in Antecristis vowarde. God scheeld us from this capteyne and his oost!

75      Wel I woot bi my biley that Crist wole that everi Cristen man love his God moost and sith his neighbore as hym-silf, and herynne, as Crist seith, al the lawe hangith and the profetis. But hou loveth he his neighbore that loveth his good more than his soule hele or bodeli heele, and Cristis ordre, as Seynte Jame seith, is to refreische nedis helples men with thi gifte. But what ordre is that that wole have of alle men and geve hem not at her nede? This moost Antecristis ordre nede be. And therfor, frere, if thin ordre and thi rulis ben groundid in Goddis lawe, telle thou now Jacke Uponlond that I axe thee, and if thou be or thenkist to be on Cristis side, kepe thi pacience.

Frere, hou many ordris ben in erthe, and which is moost perfight ordre?

Frere, of what ordre art thou and who made thin ordre? What ben thi rulis, and who made thi cloutid rulis, sith Crist made hem not ne noon other a thou-sende yeere aftir that Crist stighe into hevene?

Frere, is ther ony ordre more perfighte than Crist Hym-silf made?

Frere, if Cristis rule is moost perfight, whi rulist thee not theraftir?

**64-65** persounis, parsons; pilers, despilers; parteneris, dispensers. **66-67** Simonundis eiris . . . therfore, the heritage of Simon Magus (i.e., simony), since they pray for only those people who pay well for the service (see note). **69** distried, destroyed; **cockers in coventis**, cooks in convents. **70-71** Caymes . . . soudiouris, Cain's castle-builders, Pharisees flattering people and false prophets, unsound soldiers. **71-72** vayne . . . vowarde, proud and empty men in Antichrist's vanguard. **72** scheeld, protect; **oost**, army. **73-74** Wel . . . hym-silf, I know well by my faith that Christ desires that every Christian man love his God most of all and then his neighbor as much as himself. **76** soule . . . heele, soul's health or bodily health. **77-78** that wole have . . . nede, which will take from all men and give them nothing [in return] in their [time of] need? **79** groundid, anchored. **80** that I axe thee, what I ask of you. **82** moost perfight, [the] most perfect. **84** cloutid, raggedy, patched; **sith**, since. **85** stighe, ascended. **87** whi . . . theraftir? why don't you govern yourself according to it?

### *Jack Upland*

Whi schal a frere be more punyschid if he breke the rulis that his patroun made,  
than if he breke the heestis that God Hym-silf made? For brekyng of youre rulis  
90 ye ben prisonyd ofte.

Approveth Crist ony mo religiouns than oon that Synt Jame techith us? If thou  
seist *yhe*, tel thou now in Cristis lawe where it is; and sith thou canst not finde  
where, whi hast thou left His rule and take thee another contrarie thereto? For  
Cristis rule biddith thee geve to pore feble men and pore blyd and pore lame,  
95 upon peyne of dampnacioun; and thi rule biddith thee pike fro pore and riche al  
that thou mayst, and geve hem no thing agen, have thei never so myche nede.

Whi is a frere apostata that leveth his ordre and takith the clothis and rulis of  
another ordre, sith Crist hath made but oo religioun good and esie and comun  
for alle men and wymmen? Whi be ye faster weddid to youre abite bi mannes  
100 mariage thanne a man is weddid to his wif bi Goddis mariage? A man may leve  
his wif a moneth ether a yeer as many men doen, and if ye leven youre abite a  
wike ether a quartere of a yeer, ye ben holden apostataas.

Frere, makith youre abite you men of religioun or no? If it doith, ever as it  
wereth youre relegioun wereth, and aftir that it is better youre relegioun is bettir.  
105 And whanne ye leyen youre abite bisidis you, ye leyn youre religioun bisidis you,  
and thanne ye ben apostaa. And yif ye seie, "Jacke, nay, oure relegioun is not in  
oure abite": — frere, whi art thou prisoned and clepid apostata for levyng thin  
ordre, and weringe a blewe gowne and a reede hood?

Seye frere, whi bie ye so preciouuse clothis and so fyne to were, sith no man  
usith suche but for veyne glorie, as Seynt Gregori seyth, and yit ye seien ye ben  
pore begers?

Frere, what bitokeneth youre greet hood, youre scapalarie, and youre knottid  
girdel, and youre side and wide copis that ye maken you of so dere clothe, sith  
lesse clothis and of lesse prijs is more token of povert?

**88** patroun, founder. **89** heestis, Commandments. **90** prisonyd ofte, often imprisoned. **91** ony  
mo . . . oon, any more religions than [the] one. **92** seist *yhe*, say yes; sith, since. **93** thereto,  
to it. **95-96** pike fro . . . nede, rob from the poor and rich everything you can, and give  
them nothing in return, despite their great need. **97** apostata, apostate. **99** faster . . . abite,  
more firmly "wedded" to your friar's habit. **100-01** leve . . . doen, leave his wife a month or  
a year as many men do. **101-02** a wike . . . apostataas, a week or a quarter of a year, you  
are held to be apostates. **103** makith . . . no? does your habit (gown) make you men of  
religion or not? **104** aftir that, according as. **106** thanne, then; yif ye seie, if you say. **107**  
prisoned and clepid, imprisoned and called. **109** whi . . . so, why do you buy such. **110-11**  
yit . . . begers? yet you say you are poor beggars? **112** what bitokeneth . . . hood, what  
does your large hood signify; scapalarie, scapular (see note). **113** side, large. **113-14** so  
dere . . . povert? such expensive cloth, since fewer and less costly clothes are more a sign of  
poverty?

*Jack Upland*

115 Whi use ye al o coloure more thanne other Cristen men doen? Whi holde ye silens more in oon hous thanne in another, sith man owith over-al to speke the good and leve the yvel? And whi ete ye fleische more in oon hous thanne in another?

120 Frere, if youre order and rulis ben perfighte and youre patrun that made hem, whi gete ye you dispensacioun of court to have hem more esi? Certis, ether it semeth that youre patrun was unperfighte ether a fool to make an ordre so hard that ye may not holde it, or ellis ye ben unperfighte to take suche an ordre and bynde you therto, and sith leve it and gett yow another bi dispensacioun, and thanne ye lien on youre patrun first and on you silf, to clepe you his freres and forsake his ordre, for than ye schulde be clepid the Popis freris, for he is patrun of youre ordre; and yit ye seien youre first fundacioun was bi revelacioun of the Holy Goost, whom ye han forsaken in levynge of that ordynance bi dispensacioun.

125 130 Frere, whi make ye you as deed men whanne ye ben professid in youre ordre, and aftirward ye ben more quicke to begge worldli goodis and to pursue men that displesen you than ony othere men ben? And yit it is unsemeli to se deed men to go so fast on beggyng.

Frere, whi wole ye not suffre youre novycis to here youre counseile in youre chapitre hous or thanne thei ben professid, if youre conseilis ben trewe and aftir Goddis lawe?

135 140 Whi make ye so costli housis to dwelle ynne, sith Crist dide not so, ne His apostles, ne noon holi men that ye reden of? And alle is pilage of pore men and lordis almes, for more almes it were to help men at her nede thanne to leve that and make gay housis. Also men fro the world schuld have but gravis or housis of mornynge and not to flatere the world; for ye maken you courtis passinge lordis, so that ye mai wel nygh pas thorugh the rewme and ech nyght ligge in a court of youre owne, and so may not lordis.

116 owith over-al, ought generally. 117 fleische, meat. 120-21 Certis . . . ether, Indeed, it seems either that your founder was not perfect or. 124 ye lien . . . clepe you, you betray first your founder and then yourself, to call yourself. 125 patrun, sponsor. 128 deed, dead. 129 pursue, persecute. 130 unsemeli . . . men, unseemly to see dead men. 132-33 whi . . . professid, why won't you allow your novices to hear your counsel in your chapter house before they have been professed (see note). 133 aftir, according to. 138-39 but . . . flatere, only graves or houses of mourning and not [great houses] to entertain. 139 ye maken . . . lordis, you make for yourselves courts surpassing those of lords. 140-41 wel nygh . . . owne, almost pass through the realm and each night lie in a court of your own.

### *Jack Upland*

Whi do ye lett al the kyngis londe to ferme to youre lymytouris as ye weren lordis of alle mennes goodis, and ye wole not suffre o frere to begge in anotheres lymytacioun unpunyschid?

145      Frere, whi be ye not lege men to kyngis ne obediente to bischopis ne undir her visitacioun?

Frere, sith ye ben so ryche that ye peynten youre wallis with golde and fyne clothis, and han many jewilis and myche tresoure, whi pay ye not taliagis to oure kyng in help of the rewme and supportynge of pore men that ye pilen, sith Crist paied tribute to the hethen emperour?

150      Frere, whi axe ye not lettris of brithered of other pore mennes preieris, good and Cristen levers, ne of preestis, ne of monkis, ne of bischopis, as ye desire that other riche men axen you letteris for a certeyne summe bi yeer?

155      Frere, if ye presume that ye have most holinesse above al other lyvers, and that ye most stonde in most perfight love, whi graunte ye not to alle men youre lettris and preiers for charite, and nameli to pore Cristen puple?

Frere, may ye make ony man more perfighte bi youre feyned lettris ether youre soold preiers thanne God hath bi bileyve of baptem and His owne grante? If ye seie *yhe*, thanne be ye goddis above oure God.

160      Whi make ye men bileyve that youre golden trentale, soold for a certeyne summe of money — as fyve schylingis or more — may bryng a soule out of helle or of purgatorie? If this be sooth, what schal bifalle of you that may save so lightli al soulis and suffren hem to be dampned or peyned in youre defaute?

165      Whi make ye men bileyve that he that is biriede in youre abite schal never come in helle? This vertu was not in clothis of Crist ne of apostlis, and yit witen ye not where to be you-silf. And if it were sooth, as it is a blasfemy, ye schulden selle youre high housis and make cotis for many men to save many soulis.

142 *to ferme*, to lease (on hire); *lymytouris*, limiters (men who beg within a certain jurisdiction). 144 *lymytacioun*, territory for begging. 145 *lege men*, liege men (loyal). 146 *visitacioun*, jurisdiction. 148 *myche*, much; *taliagis*, taxes. 149 *pilen*, rob. 150 *hethen*, heathen. 151 *whi . . . brithered*, why do you not require letters of confraternity (brotherhood; see note). 152 *levers*, believers. 152–53 *as ye desire . . . yeer*, since you desire that other rich men ask letters of you for a certain sum each year. 154 *lyvers*, people. 156 *nameli . . . puple*, especially to poor Christian people. 157 *ether*, or. 158 *bi . . . baptem*, by faith through baptism. 159 *seie yhe*, say yes. 160 *golden trentale*, mass repeated for thirty days (sung for money). 162 *sooth*, [the] truth. 163 *in youre defaute*, through your fault. 164 *biriede*, buried. 165 *vertu*, power.

### *Jack Upland*

Frere, whi stele ye mennes children to make hem of youre settis, sith thefte is  
agens Goddis heestis, and for lesse prise men ben hangid on galowis? And youre  
ordre is unperfighte, and ye wite not where that maner of lyvynge is worst for that  
child and may be cause of his dampnacioun.

Frere, where fynde ye bi Goddis lawe that preestis schulden prisoun her britheren  
and so distroie hem, sith the Gospel techith to undirnyme hem in charite and  
so to wynne hem? And if he wole not be wonne bi you, ne bi the Chirche, Goddis  
lawe and Seint Austins rule techith us to putte hym from thee as an hethen man.  
This is not to prison hem.

Frere, whi coveite ye schrift and biriyng of other mennes parischens, and not  
to do othere sacramentis that fallen to Cristen folkis? And whi coveite ye not  
schrift of pore men, sith lordis and riche men mai have prestis more plente thanne  
pore men? And sithen pore men, as ye seien, ben moost holi, whi coveite ye not  
to birie hem at youre housis as ye doen riche men?

Whi wole ye not seie the Gospels at pore bedrede mennes housis that may not  
go to chirche, as ye doen at riche mennes housis and schoppis that mai go to  
chirche and here the Gospel there?

Whi wolen ye not go on a longe route to diriges of pore deed men that sumtime  
visitiden you with almes as ye don to riche men, sith God preisith the pore more  
than the riche?

Frere, whi preche ye fals fablis of freris and feined myraclys, and leven the  
Gospel that Crist bade preche and is moost holsum lore to bodi and to soule, and  
so also oure bileve bi whiche oonli we moste be saved?

Frere, whi hate ye that the Gospel schulde be prechid to the trewe undir-  
stondinge of holi doctouris, and ye clepen it the newe doctrine in sclaudringe of  
Crist? And ye ben more holden therto than to alle the rulis that ever youre pa-

**168** stele, steal; settis, sects. **169** agens Goddis heestis, against God's commandments; for  
lesse . . . galowis, for lesser offenses men are hanged on gallows; **And, if.** **170** ye wite . . .  
lyvynge, you don't know whether that form of life. **172-73** prisoun her britheren, imprison  
their brethren. **173-74** techith . . . hem, says to instruct them in charity and thus win them.  
**175** Seint Austins, Saint Augustine's. **177** whi coveite . . . parischens, why do you covet  
confession and burying of other men's parishioners. **178** fallen, pertain. **179** more plente, in  
greater supply. **181** birie hem, bury them. **182** bedrede, bedridden. **183** schoppis, shops.  
**184** here, hear. **185-86** diriges . . . visitiden, dirges for poor dead men who sometimes  
visited. **188** feined myraclys, trumped-up miracles; leven, abandon. **190** oure bileve . . .  
saved, our faith by which alone we must be saved. **191-92** to . . . holi doctouris, according  
to the true interpretation of the holy Doctors [of the Church]. **192-93** ye clepen . . . Crist,  
you call it the "new doctrine" which slanders Christ. **193** more holden therto, more  
beholden to it.

*Jack Upland*

195 trouun made, and ye winnen more with *In principio* than Crist and Hise apostlis and alle the seintis of hevene; and in this mynistrallis ben bettre thanne ye, for thei contrarien not her myrthis as ye don.

Frere, sith Crist and Hise apostlis ordeyneden preestis to preche, and preie, and sacramentis to mynstre to the puple — yhe, a thousande yeris bifore youre capteyns and prestis han suffrid you as foolis to come in among the puple — whi ben ye so unkynde as bastard braunchis to pursue prestis to prisonyng and to fire for prechinge of Cristis lawe freli, with-outen sillinge of the Gospel?

Frere, sith ye wolen opinli preche agen the defautis of prelatis, of prestis, lordis, lawyers, and marchauntis and comouns, whi be ye so wode that prestis prechen of youre defautis in amendement of youre lijf in charite, and ye falsli sclaudren hem of erise? And the more part of you woot not what an eresie is for to seye; but ye knowun the dede bi experiens.

Frere, sith God takith a mannes preier aftir that the persones ben worthi of her good lyvynge that preien and ben preied fore, and thou wost not hou thou art worthi bifore God, whi wolt thou take hire for thi preier and sillist thou wost never what? Of alle chaffaris, this is moste perelous, and next to Balams boast and Gizzlies lepre.

Frere, sith thou proferist to so manye men a masse for a penye, what sillist thou for that penye, whether thi preier or Cristis bodi or thi traveil? If thou woldiste not seie a masse but for a penye, thanne thou lovest coveitousli more a penye thanne thin owen soule, and alle Holi Chirche quicke and dede. And if thou sillist Cristis bodi for a penye, thanne art thou worse thanne Judas that soolde it for thrittis pens. Where is a falser symonyent if thou wolt not preie for a man but for

194 *In Principio*, “In the beginning” (see note). 195 mynistrallis, minstrels. 196 contrarien . . . myrthis, don’t contradict their entertainments. 197–98 ordeyneden . . . yeris, ordained priests to preach, and (to) pray, and to administer sacraments to the people – yea, [for] a thousand years. 200 unkynde . . . braunchis, unnatural, like grafted branches. 201 sillinge, selling. 202 sith . . . defautis, since you wish overtly to preach against the faults. 203 wode, mad. 204–05 in amendment . . . charite, to amend your life, through charity. 204–05 falsli . . . erise, falsely slander them for heresy. 205–6 And the more part . . . experiens, and most of you don’t know what heresy is; but you know the [heretical] deed through experience. 207 takith . . . worthi, receives a man’s prayer according to [whether] the persons are worthy. 208–09 thou wost . . . worthi, you don’t know in what way you are worthy. 209–10 whi wolt thou . . . what, why will you receive money for your prayers and sell you don’t even know what. 210–11 Of alle chaffaris . . . lepre, Of all merchandise, this is the most perilous, and close to Balaam’s boast and Gehazi’s leprosy (see note.) 213 Cristis bodi . . . traveil, Christ’s body (Eucharist) or your labor. 215 quicke and dede, living and dead. 217 thrittis pens, thirty pence; symonyent, simoniac; but, except.

### *Jack Upland*

a penye? Hou hast thou lerned Cristis Gospel that biddith thee preie freli for frende and fo?

220 Frere, whi sclaundre ye falsli Crist, Lord of alle creaturis, that he beggid His owne good as ye don other mennes good, sith He had no nede therto on that wise?

Frere, sith in Goddis lawe suche clamorous beggeynge is uttirli forfendid, on what lawe groundist thou thee thus for to begge, and nameli of porer than thou art thi-silf? For soth, it is that no man schulde thus begge; for if a man suffice to hym-silf bi goodis or bi strengthe, he synneth for to begge. And so if he be pore and unmyghty, thanne the peple synneth but thei visite hym or that he begge.

Frere, whi wracist thou mennes names in thi tablis? Wenest thou that God is such a fool that He wot not of mennes dedis but if thou telle Hym bi thi tablis?

230 Frere, if thou thinkist it a good dede to begge for thin idil britheren at hoom, there eche oon of you hath an annuel salarye ether two, whi wolt thou not begge for pore bedrede men — porer than ye, febler than ye, that moun not go aboute? Knowe ye no men for youre britheren but if thei have on moornynge clothis and be of youre sett? Here you lackith charite.

235 Frere, sith ye seie that it is so medeful a thing to geve almes, whi wolen ye never gete you that mede on pore sike men and pore prisoned men in her myscheef, ne visite the pore laborers in dere somers that ye han pilid in wynteris?

Frere, whi make ye so many maistris among you agens Cristis biddynge in the Gospel, seiynge that oon is maister, oon is Lord, and this ye contrarien bi many waste and costli meenes?

240 Frere, whos ben alle youre riche coortis and youre riche jewels that ye han, sith ye seien ye han no thyng in propre, ne in comoun, bi vertu of youre ordre? If ye seien thei ben the Popis, youre holiest fadir, whi gadere ye so many goodis of pore

218-19 How . . . fo? How have you learned Christ's Gospel, which commands you to pray generously for friend and foe? 221 good . . . wise, goods, since He had no need of them in that way. 222 uttirli forfendid, wholly forbidden. 223 nameli, especially. 224 For soth, indeed. 224-25 suffice . . . strengthe, has enough in his own right of material goods or of strength. 226 unmyghty, weak; 226 but, unless; or that he begge, before he [needs to] beg. 227 tablis, tablets (which record misdeeds); Wenest thou, Do you suppose. 228 wot not . . . if, doesn't know about men's deeds unless. 229 if thou . . . hoom, if you think it is a good deed to beg on behalf of your idle brethren at home. 230 annuel . . . two, annual salary or two. 231 bedrede, bedridden; that moun . . . aboute, who may not walk about. 232 moornynge clothis, mourning clothes. 233 sett, sect. 234 medeful, rewarding. 234-35 never gete . . . sike men, never bestow that reward on poor, sick men. 236 ne visite . . . wynteris, nor visit the poor laborers in joyous summers whom you have pillaged in winters. 238-39 contrarien . . . meenes, contradict in many wasteful and costly ways. 240 coortis, courts. 241 in propre, of your own. 242 gadere, gather.

*Jack Upland*

men and lordis of the rewme to make the Pope so riche? And ye han chosun for  
moost perfeccioun to have no suche in propre ne in comoun bi vertu of youre  
ordre, and the Pope schulde be moost perfighte. Ye ben cursid children to  
sclaundre so youre fadir and putte on hym so moche unperfeccioun.

Frere, whi make ye not youre feestis to pore men and geve hem yiftis, as ye  
doen to riche men?

Frere, sith Crist sente Hise apostlis whanne thei weren perfight oon to o cuntry,  
another to another, whi go ye two to-gedere and ye seien ye ben perfighte as the  
apostlis weren?

Frere, sith ye taken salaries — yhe, sum double and treble — whi begge ye therto  
more thanne other prestis don? Wite ye not wel that the more that ye han the  
more is youre charge?

Frere, sith youre patrouns han seide that thei hadden the makyng of youre rulis  
bi schewynge of God and His ordynaunce, whi holde ye not the ordynaunce of  
Goddis makyng? Forsothe, if God hath ordeyned it, the Pope mai not fordo it  
levefuli; and if it were not of Goddis ordynaunce, than bi youre seiynge, youre  
patrouns weren liers on God, and ye be her sclaunderers as cursid children.

Frere, whi wole not summe of youre ordre touche silver with the Crosse and the  
kyngis heed, as ye wolen touche a silveren spone and othere silver? Certis, if ye  
dispisen the Cros and the kyngis heed, ye ben worthi to be dispisid of God and of  
the kynge, and so of alle her trewe servauntis; and sithen ye wolen resceyve the  
money in youre hertis and not in youre hondis, it semeth ye holden more holines  
in youre hondis thanne in youre hertis. Thanne ben ye false to God, that knowith  
youre coveitous hertis.

Frere, whi paien summe of youre ordris eche yeere a certeyne to the Provinciale  
or to summe othere sovereyne, til that he hath stoole a certeine summe of children  
to make hem freres? And thus ye ben constryned bi youre ordre to breke Goddis  
comaunderementis in doyng of theefte passynge theefte of hors and maris.

243 rewme, realm. 244 in propre, of your own. 249 oon . . . cuntry, one [apostle] to one  
country. 250 and, since. 252 yhe . . . treble, yea, some double and triple [salaries]. 253-54  
Wite ye . . . charge? Don't you know very well that the more you have, the greater is your  
responsibility? 255-56 patrouns . . . ordynaunce, founders have said that they made your rules  
through [a] revelation from God and His decrees. 256 ordynaunce . . . makyng, i.e., God's  
Commandments. 257-58 mai not . . . levefuli, may not legally nullify. 259 liers, liars; sclaun-  
derers, slanderers. 260-61 Crosse . . . heed, i.e., a silver coin. 261 silveren spone, silver  
spoon; Certis, indeed. 263 her trewe servauntis, their true servants. 267 a certeyne, a certain  
[amount]. 268 stoole, stolen. 269 constryned, obliged. 270 theefte passynge, theft surpassing;  
hors and maris, horses and mares.

### *Jack Upland*

Frere, whi ben ye so foole-hardi to graunte to eche man that wole paie you therfore, bi lettis of fraternyte, part and meryt of alle youre massis and othere good dedis? And ye witen not where youre dedis displesen God for youre synnes, and also whether that man be worthi to resceyve merit for his owne lyvynge. For  
275 if he schal be dampned, hise owne dedis, ne youris, schulen never availe hym to blisse.

Frere, what charite is it to overe-charge the puple bi beggyng of so many myghti men undir coloure of prechynge and preiyng and massis syngeynge, sithen Holi Writ biddith not this but the contrarie? For alle suche goostli dedis schulden  
280 be freeli don as God gyveth freeli, and ellis it were cursid symony.

Frere, what charite is it to bigile ynnocent children or thei kunne discrescioun, and bynde hem to youre ordris that ben not groundid in Goddis lawe, agens her frendis wille and from helpyng of fadris and modris, whereas Goddis lawe biddith the contrarie? For bi this foli ben many apostataas in herte and wille al her lijf,  
285 that wolden go out in dede but for drede of deeth if thei weren taken agen.

Frere, what charite is it to charge the puple with so many freris, sithen persouns, vikers, and prestis were inowgh to serve the puple of preestis office with bischopis — yhe, monkis, chanouns, with-out mo. And thus for to encresse with so many freris is greet cumbraunce to the puple and agens Goddis wille that made al thingis in  
290 mesoure, noumbre, and weight; and Crist ordeyned twelve apostlis with fewe othere prestis to do servyce to alle the world, and thanne was it best don. And right as foure fingris and a thombe on a man helpit hym to worche, and double so many on oon hond schuld lette hym, and treble schuld lette hym more; and so to many  
295 freris and othere ordris passyng the ordinaunce of God lettith Cristis Chirche to growe to hevene.

**272 lettis of fraternyte**, letters of confraternity. **273 dedis**, deeds; **where**, whether. **275-76 dampned . . . blisse**, damned, [neither] his own deeds nor yours shall ever help him to [achieve heaven's] bliss. **278 massis syngeynge**, singing masses. **279 goostli dedis**, spiritual deeds. **280 and ellis it were**, or else it would be. **281 to bigile . . . discrescioun**, to beguile innocent children before they have discretion. **284 lijf**, life. **285 but for drede . . . agen**, except for dread of death if they were again seized. **286 charge**, burden. **286-87 persouns, vikers**, parsons, vicars. **287 inowgh**, enough. **288 yhe . . . mo**, yea, monks, canons, without [any] more. **289 cumbraunce**, burden. **289-90 al thingis . . . noumbre**, all things in measure, number (see note). **292-93 worche . . . hym**, work, and twice as many on one hand should hinder him. **294 passyng**, surpassing. **294-95 lettith . . . hevene**, hinders Christ's Church from growing to heaven.

### *Jack Upland*

Frere, whi may ye for schame lye to the puple, and seye that ye folowe the apostlis in poverte more thanne othere men don; and yit in curios and costlew housis, and fyne and precious clothinge, delicious and lusti fedynge, in tresorie and jewels and riche ournementis, freris passen lordis and othere riche worldli men.  
300 And sunnest ye bringen aboute youre causis, be thei never so costlew or agens Goddis lawe.

Frere, what charite is it to gadere up the bokis of Goddis lawe, many mo thanne nedith you, and putte hem in tresorie, and do prisone hem fro seculer preestis and curatis, wher-bi thei ben lettid of kunnynge of Goddis lawe to preche the Gospel freli? And over that, ye defamen trewe preestis of erisie and letten the sowyng of Goddis word.

What power have ye to asoile lordis and ladies that ye ben confessouris to of synnes that thei leven not, as pilinge of her tenauntis and lyvinge in lechcherie and glotonye and othere heed synnes, of whiche thei cecen not but ben counfortid bi  
310 youre suffraunce?

Frere, sith youre ordris ben moost perfight, as ye seien, for youre povert, chastite, and obediens, whi bisien ye you fast, and nameli youre grettist clerkis, to be bischopis and prelatis and Popis chapleins, and to be asoilid fro povert and fro  
315 obediencie, and ever to lyve in lustus of fleisch and of the world, that is goostli lechcherie? Ye ben verri Fariseis that don oon and seien another contrarie thereto.

Frere, whi sclaudre ye trewe preestis and othere trewe meke men of the sacrament of Goddis bodi, for thei seien that the holi breed duli sacrid is Goddis bodi in foorme of breed, and ye seien that it is an accident with-outen subject, and not Goddis bodi.

Frere, who ben eritikis here and fer fro Cristis wordis, that took the breed and blissid it and brak it and seide, "This is my bodi." And Seint Poul seith, the breed

297-98 yit . . . housis, yet in ornate and costly houses. 298 lusti fedynge, greedy eating. 299 ournementis, ornaments; passen, outdo. 300 sunnest, soonest. 302 gadere . . . bokis, gather up the books. 302-03 many mo . . . you, many more than you need. 304 wher-bi . . . kunnynge, by which they are prevented from knowing. 305 over that, moreover; erisie, heresy; sowyng, dissemination. 307 asoile, confess. 308 leven . . . tenauntis, do not give up, such as stealing from their tenants. 309-10 heed synnes . . . suffraunce, chief sins, from which they don't cease but are comforted through your forbearance. 312 whi . . . fast, why do you eagerly apply yourselves; nameli, especially. 313 asoilid, exempt. 314 goostli, spiritual. 315 verri . . . therto, true Pharisees who do one thing and say something else contrary to it. 316-17 trewe . . . bodi, true, meek men of the sacrament of God's body (i.e., the Eucharist). 317 breed . . . sacrid, bread properly sanctified. 318 accident . . . subject, see note. 320 who ben . . . wordis, who are [the] heretics here and far from Christ's words. 321 brak, broke (i.e., partook of).

*Jack Upland*

that we breken is Goddis bodi; and Seynt Austin seith that not eche breed is  
Goddis bodi but that breed that reseyveth blissynge is Goddis bodi. And to this  
325 acordith the oold doctouris and comoun bileve bifor that freris camen in over the  
walle a thousande yeer and more.

Frere, take hede to my tale and to myn entent also, for charite chasith me  
thereto to chalenge youre defautis, that ye moun amende to God and to man this  
mys or ye die, bi open knowlechynge of youre gilt, and go therfro bityme. For hou  
330 schulde ye endure undampned to helle to leve Crist and His lawe for youre rotun  
ritis, and seie that Goddis lawe is fals to fourme or to lerne, til ye hadden founden  
a glos feynd of youre wittis.

Go now forth, frere, and fraiste youre clerkis, and grounde you in Goddis lawe,  
and geve Jacke an awnser, and whanne yeasoilen that I have seide sadli in truthe,  
I schal asoile thee of thin ordre and save thee to hevene.

322 **breken**, break; **Seynt Austin**, Saint Augustine of Hippo. 322-23 **not eche . . . bodi**, not  
each bread is God's body but [only] that bread which receives blessing is God's body. 324  
oold doctouris, early Church Fathers. 326 **take hede**, take heed; **entent**, meaning; **chasith**,  
urges. 327-28 **defautis . . . die**, shortcomings, so that you may make amends [for] this lack  
to God and to man before you die. 328 **knowlechynge . . . bityme**, acknowledgment of your  
sin, and quickly leave it. 329-30 **rotun ritis**, corrupt practices. 330 **fourme**, form, shape.  
330-31 **til . . . wittis**, until you had established a gloss fabricated by your wits. 332 **fraiste**,  
sound out. 333 **asoilen . . . truthe**, resolve what I have said, seriously [and] in truth. 334  
asoile thee of, release you from.

### *Notes*

- 1      *Jacke Uplond*, persona of a simple countryman. John Foxe, who printed *JU* in 1570, says: “a Dialogue or questions moued in the person of a certaine vplandish and simple ploughman of the countrey” (PLH). The Lollards stressed “trewe” men, that is, men of the true Church as opposed to the corrupt established clergy (“prelates”). John Ball’s letter addressed conspirators under various aliases including “Jon (or Jakke) Treweman,” a pseudonym not unlike “Jack Upland.” Jack Upland opposes himself, often in scriptural language, to the Pope and the Church, which licensed the fraternal orders. The name “Jak” or “Jakke” could also be a name of contempt, as in Chaucer’s *Miller’s Tale* I [A] 3708 (Alison to Absolon): “Go fro the wyndow, Iakke fool.” See *MED* s.v. *jak(ke)* 1 (a).
- 6      *He sette mannes state*. The three estates of nobles, clerics, and commoners. Upland portrays these estates as divinely ordained yet opposed and undermined by Antichrist. Chaucer represents these three human conditions, or social classes, in his pilgrim Knight, Parson, and Plowman. Estates theory was an integral part of late medieval political ideology. For a good introduction to this subject, see Jill Mann, *Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973).
- 10     *Goddis lawe*, or Scripture generally. Elsewhere Upland will use the phrase *Cristis lawe* to refer to the Gospels.
- 13     *Comouns office*. The same point is made, but as complaint, in *PIT*: “For clerkes say we shullen be fayne / For hir lyvelod to swet and swinke” (33–34).
- 17–27    *For he geveth leve to preestis of parischis*. It was common for clerics to draw income from more than one parish. This point is broadly anticlerical rather than antifraternal, although Upland’s argument will be that friars are worse than parish priests in holding prebends.
- 20–21    *and as for worldli bisines*. Unique to H.

### *Jack Upland*

- 26–27 *of alle men . . . so many.* See *PPC* 538–42, and *PIT*: “And though the soth thou of hem tell, / In great cursinge shalt thou fall” (171–72).
- 33–38 *to leve her trewe laboure.* PLH sees this “possibly” as a reference to the demand for labor (and resulting increase in wages) after the Black Plague years. In *Vox clamantis* John Gower complains about the scarcity of labor and workers’ attitudes: “For they are sluggish, they are scarce, and they are grasping. For the very little they do they demand the highest pay. . . . They desire the leisures of great men, but they have nothing to feed themselves with, nor will they be servants” (5.9, trans. Stockton, pp. 208–09).
- 38–43 *And thus . . . synagoge of Satanas.* As PLH notes in his Introduction, these words appear in much the same form in *Vae octuplex*, a Wycliffite sermon that has been dated no earlier than 1411. PLH prints the two versions on his pages 35–36; I here quote from Gradon’s edition of *English Wycliffite Sermons*, Vol. 2 (1988): “. . . herto vertewys ben transposude to vyces, as mekenesse is cowardyse and fernessee of prude is clepud riȝtwynesse for to maynteine Godis riȝte, wrappē is clepud manhede and myldenesse is schepnesse, and enuye is condicion of Godis child to vengen hym, and slowþe is lordlinesse, as God restup euermore, couetise is prudence to be riche and myghty, glotorie [gluttony] is largesse and lechery is merye pley, Godis seruaunt is an ypocryte and heretyke is sad in feyþ; and þus alle vertewis ben transposude to vyces, and so hooly chirche to synagoge of Sathanas” (p. 376). PLH also directs to *PIT* 501–24. For the phrase “synagoge of Satanas,” see Rev. 2.9 and 3.9.
- 50 *thre partis.* The three estates; see above, note to line 6.
- 52 *mamelynge.* H *murbringe*; C *murmuryng & grudgyng.* I adopt PLH’s excellent emendation. H’s reading is a corruption of *mamelynge*, “‘mumbling, muttering,’ and ‘musing, chewing’; cf. *PP*, A. viii. 130 (and Kane’s note), B. v. 21, xi. 408” (PLH).
- 53–54 *the heire and the hood.* PLH cites the proverb “Cucullus non facit monachum”: the hood doesn’t make the monk. The phrase *over the iyen* is unique to H.

### Notes

- 56      *ben last broughte into the Chirche.* The secular clergy along with the Wycliffites regarded the mendicant orders as interlopers and parvenus. The Wycliffite *Vae octuplex* begins: “Crist byddup us be war wiþ þese false prophetis þat comen in cloping of schep and ben wolues of rauayne. And þese ben specially men of þese newe ordres, and moste þese frerys þat laste comen in, for þe feend sutileþ euere aȝenes holy chirche” (ed. Gradon, p. 366).
- 57      *settis of Antecristis sowinge.* The reference is to the parable of the sower, Matthew 13.4–23. See also *PIT* 55–76.
- 59      *nether thei tilien ne sownen.* The charges against friars are familiar: that they roam about without proper supervision, that they produce no goods but only consume (“waste”), and that they enrich themselves at the expense of others’ labors. See Matthew 6.26: “they neither sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns.”
- 60      *wede, corn, ne gras.* H reads *wode corn ne gras*; C *corne wode nor grasse*. PLH emends to *whete corn ne gras* because of *FDR* 34 and 55 (*Wede corn ne gras*). I adopt PLH’s reading but retain the spelling *wede* (= wheat) based on *FDR*. The correct reading may be *wede-corn* rather than *wede, corn*, since *corn* = wheat.
- 62      *to sille hevene or helle.* See *PIT*: “To putte pennyes in her purse / They wol sell both heven and hel” (167–68).
- 63      *saved or dampned.* So H. C omits, as do Wr and PLH, who comments: “H completes the sense, but its explicitness argues against originality” (p. 118).
- 66      *Simonundis eiris.* The heirs of Simon Magus (Acts 8.18–19), whence *simony*, selling or purchasing of ecclesiastical preferments.
- 68      *fype ordris.* C reads *v*; H, *foure*. *FDR* replies: “thou feynest *fife* ordres” (84). There were traditionally four orders, as in *PPC*: the Franciscans, Dominicans, Austins, and Carmelites. PLH conjectures that the fifth order was the “Crutched Friars,” who had five houses in England in the fifteenth century.

*Jack Upland*

- 68      *falsist founden in oure feith.* So H; C *last founden*. PLH emends to *falsli founden* and comments: “C would give the attractive antithesis *last / first* and, in this ‘verse’ extract, reduce the weight of the first half-line with its hypermetrical three alliterating stresses.” PLH goes on to note that *Pharesies* etc. (70) has the same variation (p. 119).
- 69      *cockers in coventis.* Upland may refer either to cooks or to hay-cockers in this phrase; but whatever occupation he intends, he does not mean to flatter the friars.
- 70      *Caymes castel-makers.* The friars were often designated as Cain’s offspring, as in *PPC* 486 and note.
- 74–75    *al the lawe hangith.* Matthew 22.37–40.
- 76      *as Seynte Jame seith.* James 1, esp. 17, 22, 27.
- 79      *groundid in Goddis lawe.* Upland and the Lollards were concerned with clerical doctrine that could not be substantiated in the Bible. *Groundid* here and elsewhere means firmly established, or anchored, in “God’s law” (the Bible) or “Christ’s law” (the Gospels). Upland maintains that Scripture makes no provisions for the mendicant orders — except insofar as the friars constitute the pseudoapostles and false prophets of Matthew 23 and 1 John 2. Proper “grounding” is also an important issue in *UR*. At the outset “Upland” observes that Daw “grounds” his argument on seven points (3–5); and he defends priests by saying, “Yit the grounde that they have is playnly Cristis religion” (40). See also *UR* 131.
- 81      Skeat, whose base text was the 1536 Gough edition, includes the following text after the words “kepe thi pacience”: “Saynt Paul techeth, that al our dedes shuld be don in charite, and els it is noughe worth, but displesing to god and harm to oure owne soules. And for because freres chalengen to be gretest clerkes of the church, and next folowinge Christ in livinge, men shulde, for charite, axe hem some questions, and pray hem to grounde their answers in reson and holy writ; for els their answere wolde noughe be worth, be it florished never so faire; and, as me think, men might skilfully [= reasonably] axe thus of a frere.”

### *Notes*

- 83–85 *What ben thi rulis . . .* In *PPC* the fraternal orders all claim priority. The Carmelites, for example, allege their order started with Elijah and Elisha (see *PPC* 383 and note). Upland attacks mendicancy as being a new arrival within the Christian Church. See also *Vae octuplex*, which assails “*pese newe ordres*” and says that the hypocrisy Christ details in Matthew 23 pertains to “*owre newe religiowse*,” the friars. (Gradon’s ed., pp. 374, 373 respectively).
- 88–90 *Whi schal a frere . . .* PLH cites *Fifty Heresies* to the effect that friars are more often punished for breaking fraternal rules than for transgressing God’s commandments.
- 91 *Synt Jame.* See James 2, on faith and works.
- 92 *Cristis lawe.* The Gospel.
- 99–100 *Whi be ye faster weddid.* The contrast is between fraternal vows, on the one hand, and the sacrament of marriage, on the other. Jack Upland continually points up the differences between fraternal institutions, which he regards as artificial and man-made, versus the simplicity of Christ’s life and teachings. See also the language of this Wycliffite treatise: “Freris also ben stronglier weddid wip hor roten habite, ageyns þo fredome of þo gospel, pen þo housbande is wip his wif by ordynaunce of God. Ffor þo housbande may lawefully be absente fro his wif by a moneth, an half zeer, and sumtyme seven zeer . . . Bot if a frere be oute of his roten habite, ȝhe, an hour, he is apostata” (quoted by PLH in the note to his lines 122–29). The penalty for putting aside the regular habit was excommunication.
- 103 *makith youre abite . . . or no?* Compare the statement of the hypocritical Fals-Semblant from the C version of the Middle English *Romaunt of the Rose*: “I have a robe of religioun, / Thanne am I all religious.’ / . . . Abit ne makith neithir monk ne frere, / But clene lyf and devocioun / Makith gode men of religioun” (6188–89; 6192–94).
- 112 *what bitokeneth youre greet hood.* Among the most frequent charges against friars in antifraternal literature was their love of fine clothing, a charge that derives from Matthew 23.5. See also *PPC* 550–51: “Thei schapen her chapolories, and streccheth hem brode, / And launceth heighe her hemmes.” The *scapalarie* or scapular was the piece of cloth (which hangs from the

### *Jack Upland*

shoulders and reaches almost to the ground in front and back) worn over the habit.,

- 113     *copis* were semicircular pieces of cloth that fastened to the breast.
- 115     *o colore.* Upland asks about the identifying color of the fraternal habits: Carmelites (white), Dominicans (black), Augustinians (brown?), Franciscans (grey). He observes that this division into different orders suggests division in Christianity itself.
- 126     *youre first fundacioun.* “Presumably a reference to the claim of the Carmelites to be direct descendants of Elijah (taken up into heaven by the ‘spirit of the Lord’ in a whirlwind) and the ‘sons of the prophets’” (PLH). Since Upland appears to be non-denominational in his antifraternal attacks, he seems to challenge any mendicant claims to antiquity, including those of the Carmelites.
- 128     *as deed men.* Droll paronomasia (word-play). Upland puns on “quick (= alive) and dead.” The friars make themselves “dead” to the world when they take their vows, but they are very “quick” (and alive and lively) to beg and acquire worldly goods.
- 129     *to pursue.* So H; C and PLH read *do pursue*. PLH comments: “C seems here to preserve an original causal *do*; cf. 374–5 *do prisone hem* for the same construction.” Since H’s reading is more than possible, I retain *to*.
- 132     *suffre youre novycis.* The fraternal orders, especially the Franciscans, could be very secretive about their business activities. They closed chapter sessions to outsiders and even their to their own novitiates.
- 133     *or . . . professid.* The usual period for the novice was one year, after which time he was said to be “professed” and hence could not leave the order or the rule.
- 135     *so costli housis.* Another frequent charge against friars. The author of *PPC* describes a Dominican convent at great length (see 157–202).
- 136     *alle is pilage of pore men.* See *PIT* 355: “The poore to pyll is all theyr pray.”

*Notes*

- 138     *gravis or.* Unique to H.
- 140     *ye mai wel nygh.* *Mai* supplied by corrector of C in the margin and adopted by PLH. It is necessary for the sense.
- 142     *Whi do ye lett.* So C; H and PLH read *sette*. Wr: *Why hyre ye to ferme*. PLH observes that either *sette* or *lett* is possible (p. 125). *FDR*, however, responds: “*We leten*,” thou seist, ‘to lymytours, al this rewme to ferme” (478). See also the following lines (which exist only in Hg and a few other MSS of the *CT*) concerning Chaucer’s pilgrim Friar: “And gaf a certeyne ferme for the graunt; / Noon of his bretheren cam ther in his haunt” (I 252a–b).
- 149     *that ye pilen.* Unique to H. On Christ’s tribute to heathen emperors see Matthew 22.21; Mark 12.17; Luke 20.25.
- 151     *lettris of brithered.* Fraternal orders would often allow lay people to participate in their services and would issue letters of confraternity to them, usually for a fee. See note to line 243 below, and *PPC* 327 and note and 417.
- 154–55     *that ye most stonde.* So C and PLH [= *ze*]; *ye* om. in H.
- 160     *golden trentale.* Thirty masses for the dead in purgatory, sung for a fee. See the friar’s cynical statements about trentals at the beginning of Chaucer’s *Summoner’s Tale* (III 1713–32).
- 164     *he that is biriede in youre abite.* Friars received criticism for encouraging wealthy lay people to be buried in fraternal habits in order, as they claimed, to circumvent or lessen the pains of hell and purgatory.
- 168     *whi stele ye mennes children.* This was a frequent charge against friars and derives, in part, from Christ’s denunciations of hypocrites “who go round about the sea and the land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, you make him the child of hell twofold more than yourselves” (Matthew 23.15). The Wycliffite *Vae octuplex* translates “one proselyte” as “a child of ȝowre ordre,” and the anonymous author comments: “Pese wordis tellon oponly of makynge of freerys, how þei comen þeefly, boþe by watur and bi

*Jack Upland*

londe, to robbe men of þer children þat ben betture þan oxon" (ed. Gradon, p. 368).

- 168      *thefte*. PLH's emendation of H's *peste*; C *it*. Sk has *sith that theft*. H seems to anticipate *heestis*, line 147.
- 172–75    *Frere, where fynde ye . . . as an hethen man*. See Matthew 18.17: "And if he [= brother] will not hear them [witnesses to God's word]: tell the church. And if he will not hear the church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican."
- 175      *us*. Unique to H.
- 177–81    *Frere, whi coveite ye schrift and biriynge*. See PPC 468–71 and the note to 469; see also 181–88: the rich sepulchres in the Dominican priory.
- 188      *fals fablis of freris*. As early as Richard de Bury's *Philobiblon* the friars were criticized for embellishing their sermons with apocryphal stories and curious legends rather than with Scripture. See also PPC 274 and note and PLH's note to lines 233–36 of his edition.
- 194      *In principio*. John 1.1. Friars intoned this formula before entering houses; antifraternal writers satirized this custom, regarding it as a pompous formula for making themselves appear more learned than they were and for trying to extract money from dupes. The friar of Chaucer's *Summoner's Tale* announced his entrance to a house with "*Deus hic*" (III 1770), variant of a Franciscan formula.
- 195      *mynistrallis*, i.e., minstrels. St. Francis conceived of his Minorites as *joculatores Dei* who would win converts to Christ through preaching and singing. See David L. Jeffrey, "*Joculatores Dei* in England," in *The Early English Lyric and Franciscan Spirituality* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975), chap. 5. Here, of course, Upland attacks the friars for their hypocrisy.
- 199      *foolis*. "Scoundrels' applied to the mendicants, see 241 *n*. Cf. PPC 455–6: 'A! broþer,' quap he þo 'beware of þo foles! / For Crist seyde him-selfe of swiche y þou warne'" (PLH).

### *Notes*

- 201      *frelī*. See Matthew 10.8: “freely have you received, freely give.”
- 216–17    *Judas . . . thritti pens*. Matthew 26.15.
- 224–25    *if a man suffice . . . synneth for to begge*. The issue of the healthy beggar is important in the B text of *PP*, as in this passage from *passus 7*:
- For he þat beggeþ or bit, but he haue nede,  
He is fals wiþ þe feend and defraudeþ þe nedy,  
And ek gileþ þe gyuere ageynes his wille.  
For if he wiste he were noȝt nedy he wolde it ȝyue  
Anoþer that were moore nedy; so þe nedieste sholde be holpe.
- (67–71)
- A statute of Edward III (1349) concerning laborers after the Black Plague, reads (in part): “And because many strong beggars, as long as they may live by begging, do refuse to labor, giving themselves to idleness and vice, and sometimes to theft and other abominations; none upon the said pain of imprisonment, shall, under the color of pity or alms, give anything to such, who are able to labor, or presume to favor them in their idleness, so that they may be compelled to labor for their necessary living.” From *Medieval Culture and Society*, ed. David Herlihy (New York: Harper, 1968), p. 361. See also *FDR* 728–39, *UR* 344–45.
- 227      *whi wr̄ist thou mennes names in thi tablis*. Refers to lists of wealthy patrons and benefactors. Upland implicitly contrasts the friars’ tablets with the book of life (Rev. 3.5, etc.). The companion to the friar of Chaucer’s *Summoner’s Tale* carries “A peyre of tables al of yvory . . . And wroot the names alwey, as he stood, / Of alle folk that gaf hym any good” (III 1741–44).
- 232      *thei*. PLH’s good emendation for H’s *he* and C’s *ye*.
- 232      *moornynge clothis*. Perhaps a reference to the Dominicans (Blackfriars). See *PPC* 696–97: “Blak, that bytokneth bale for oure synne, / And mournynge for misedede of hem that this useth.”
- 234–36    *Frere, sith ye seie . . . pilid in wynteris*. See Matthew 25.43: “I was a stranger, and you took me not in; naked, and you covered me not; sick and in prison, and you did not visit me.”

### *Jack Upland*

- 235     *pore sike men and pore prisoned men.* Chaucer's Parson includes visiting the sick and imprisoned — “visitynge in prisone and in maladie” (X 1031) — as deeds of charitable mercy under the third part of penitence: “satisfaccioun.” “Thise been general almesses or werkes of charitee of hem that han temporeel richesses or discreciooun in conseilynge. Of thise werkes shaltow heren at the day of doom” (X 1033).
- 237     *so many maistris.* See Matthew 23.10, and *PPC* 581 and note.
- 238     *contrarien.* “A favorite Lollard word, especially in the phrase to ‘contrary’ Christ. It probably derives from the lawyers’ use of *contrarietas*, the term invented by the twelfth-century commentators on the *Digest* and the *Code*: commenting on all this material they often had to deal with an apparent *contrarietas*, which they sought to resolve” (PLH).
- 240–46     This paragraph concerns the so-called *usus pauper* or the proper application and spirit of mendicant poverty. Both monks and friars took vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience; but the quarrel was over the meaning of poverty. Monks believed that manual labor constituted poverty, but friars originally wished to fulfill the vow through begging. The friars split among themselves, with the Spirituals favoring mendicancy and the other friars arguing that they did not actually *own* property, they merely *used* it.
- 247     *Frere, whi make ye not youre feestis to pore men.* Luke 14.13: “But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind.”
- 249     *Frere, sith Crist sente Hise apostlis.* Friars regularly traveled in pairs according to their interpretation of Luke 10.1.
- 259     *sclaunderers.* MSS and PLH *claunderers*; but see lines 174, 185, 198, 222, 285.
- 260     *whi wole not summe of youre ordre touche silver.* The friars would sometimes go to great lengths to avoid handling money. They hired small boys, or *bursarii*, to collect money for them.
- 260–61     *the Crosse and the kyngis heed.* The two sides of a coin, with the Cross on one side and the king's head on the other.

### *Notes*

- 263–66 *sithen ye wolen resceyve . . . youre coveitous hertis.* Luke 16.15: “And he said to them [covetous Pharisees]: You are they who justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts; for that which is high to men, is an abomination before God.”
- 272 *lettris of fraternyte.* “Letters granted (by both monks and friars) under the conventional seal to lay benefactors of a house which admitted them to brotherhood (of the third order, in the practice of the Dominicans) and imparted to the persons admitted the benefit of all the masses, feasts, prayers, and other good works done or to be done throughout the order. Such lay brethren were usually buried in the precincts of the house and were usually dressed for burial in a friar’s habit” (PLH).
- 281 *to bigile ynnocent children or thei kunne discrecioun.* Friars could admit infants and children into their orders without parental consent. In 1402 Parliament passed a decree, signed by the four orders, which stated that children could not be admitted into orders before their fourteenth year.
- 288–90 *thus for to encrese with so many freris.* A frequent charge against friars, although in fact their numbers were in the decline in the late fourteenth century. See PP B 20.269: “ye wexen out of noumbr”; and Szittya, *The Antifraternal Tradition in Medieval Literature*, pp. 221–30. In a note to UR 374, PLH quotes the following interpolation:  
& þou god god made al þinge in mesure & in wyȝte as þe  
scripture seyþe it folowþ not he made ȝou for ȝe ben oute of  
mesure & so þe devyl & caym with judas ben ȝoure fadirs.
- 289–90 *in mesoure, noumbr, and weight.* Wisdom 11.12b: “But thou hast ordered all things in measure, and number, and weight.”
- 290 *Crist ordeyned twelve apostlis.* Mark 3.14: “And he made that twelve should be with him, and that he might send them to preach.”
- 302 *to gadere up the bokis of Goddis lawe.* “The friars laid much emphasis on scholarship and teaching, yet they did not produce their own books, since it would have involved them in manual rather than intellectual work. Hence they bought books and would be in competition with the poorer seculars as Upland complains” (PLH).

*Jack Upland*

- 307–08 *of synnes that thei leven not.* So PLH. After *synnes* H reads *of whiche thei cesen not but ben counfortid*, anticipating 274.
- 315 *Ye ben verri Fariseis.* Matthew 23.2–3: “The scribes and the Pharisees have sitten on the chair of Moses. All things therefore whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do: but according to their works do ye not; for they say, and do not.”
- 318 *accident with-outen subject.* The charge of denying the real presence in the Eucharist was usually brought against Wycliffites rather than friars. But the anonymous author of *Vae octuplex* lodges a similar accusation against friars: “But þe feend, sif he was lowsud, hap mouyd frerus to reuerse þis, and as þei seyn, þer newe seyntus and newe doctoures þat þei han, techen þat þis sacrament is an accident wipowte suget, or ellis noȝt [nothing]; for hit is quantite and qualite” (ed. Grdon, p. 375).
- 324–25 *freris camen in over the walle.* See John 10.1: “He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up another way, the same is a thief and a robber.”
- 329 *ritis.* PLH’s emendation for H’s *rutis* and C’s *roottys*. See *FDR* 896; *UR* 123.
- 334 H continues with an interpolated passage (which I punctuate and normalize): “Jacke, in thi janglinge charite the wantis, for thou pinchist at oure pouce as a parid schrewe. This is the letherist lessoun that ever yit I herde of lerid or of lewid, daies of my lijf. Seynt Ffraunces curs and al foure ordris come upon that fals theef that thus thee hath enformed; for the pointis of oure privytees he hath prickid to th . . . or thou art apostata and proved al this thi-silf.” C adds: “Jack upon lond lookith for an answer.”

## *Friar Daw's Reply*

### *Introduction*

*FDR*, an alliterative poem in 932 lines, answers *JU* in a point-for-point rebuttal. It exists in a unique manuscript, Bodleian MS Digby 41 (mid-fifteenth century book hand), which was extensively altered by correctors; and in two modern editions, those of Thomas Wright for the Rolls Series (1861) and of P. L. Heyworth (1968 with *JU* and *UR*), the standard edition. Although W. W. Skeat did not edit *FDR*, he provided copious references to its arguments in the Explanatory Notes to *JU*, thereby helping to document the connections between the two works. *FDR* has traditionally been dated in the early fifteenth century (Wright and Skeat thought about 1402), but Heyworth has offered a later date, about 1419–20. Wright, Skeat, and Heyworth base their datings on internal allusions, specifically to the hanging of friars in 1402 (Wright, Skeat) and to reference to taxation and sorcery (Heyworth).

The *explicit* to *FDR* identifies the author as “Iohannes Walssingham” (after line 933); and the narrator, also known as Friar Daw Topias, mentions that he was once a manciple at Merton Hall, Oxford (726), where he “lernede Latyn bi roote of clerkes” (727). Scholars have not been able to confirm that there was a John Walssingham, author, at Oxford during the relevant time, let alone a John Walsingham, friar and manciple, at Merton College. However, Thomas Walsingham, monk and noted historian of the Peasants’ Revolt of 1381 (and of other historical events, in *Historia Anglicana* and the *Chronicles* of St. Albans), was associated with Oxford, was anti-Lollard, and was still alive in 1422. The best answer to the authorship question is that Daw/Walsingham cannot be identified with any confidence.

Because of its close relationship with *JU* and *UR*, *FDR* has usually been taken seriously as a fraternal answer to a Lollard work, with *UR* in turn as a Lollard retort to the mendicant poem. But it is possible that the trio of works, although by different authors, should be considered together as generally anticlerical — that they undermine one another much as each fraternal order discredits the others in *PPC*. The name “Daw” is an obvious pseudonym, like “Jack Upland” or “Piers Plowman.” Taken together with “Jack,” however, “Daw” suggests the chattering or jangling of a noisy bird, the jackdaw. Friar Daw wages a tit for tat verbal skirmish with his antagonist,

### *Friar Daw's Reply*

"Jack," but is sometimes reduced to defending himself by saying, for example, "Ther we piken but seely pans [from the poor and rich], thi secte pikith poundis" (327). Daw damns his fraternal order with faint praise when he claims that they do not wear the very finest of clothing (353–57): Jack must blame the wearer rather than the institution. He does not deny that he wears a "grete hood," a "wide cope," or a "knottide girdil"; instead, he attacks Upland for his tippet, "as longe as a stremer" (360). Daw is a master of the ineffective *tu quoque*, as when he says that there may be a multitude of friars but there are even more priests (824–28). Moreover, Daw's characterization of himself as being "lewid as a leke" (45) or as not knowing an "a" from a windmill or a "b" from a bull's foot (212–13) seems to go beyond the conventional modesty *topos* of other writers; he does "Upland's" work for him in those lines. As a result, both Upland and Daw are undercut. The model for the sequences *JU* and *FDR*, or *FDR* and *UR* would be Chaucer's tales of the Friar and Summoner, neither of them normative. In any event, "Friar Daw Topias" should probably be regarded as a fictional literary character and not, as Skeat says, "a Dominican" or, as Heyworth would have it, a member of the London Blackfriars. There was precedent for this kind of persona-narrator, since the author of *The Friar's Answer* (St. John's Coll. Cambridge MS 195; HP XIV & XV, pp. 166–68) to *The Layman's Complaint* is no more a friar than is the author of *The Friar's Tale*. Penn Szittyá has suggested "the possibility of pairing in the poetry of the fraternal controversies" (*The Antifraternal Tradition*, p. 197), which seems entirely likely in the case of *JU* and *FDR*.

On the other hand, if *FDR* was indeed written by a friar in response to *JU* there is certainly precedent for mendicant embroilment in similar controversy. In 1356–57 Richard FitzRalph, Bishop of Armagh and Primate of Ireland, delivered a series of antifraternal sermons in London, and the four principal fraternal orders — Franciscans, Dominicans, Carmelites, and Austins — responded with an *Appellacio* delivered to FitzRalph's London home by Friar John of Arderne, prior of the London Austins. Although FitzRalph was conveniently not at home, or not responding to the friar's knock, he condemned friars in another sermon two days later at St. Paul's Cross while at the same time refuting the charges lodged against him by Friar John and the London mendicants. At the Papal Court in Avignon, 1357, FitzRalph defended himself against fraternal accusations by reading aloud his *Defensio curatorum* and by demanding that friars be stripped of their privileges, a demand summarized in a formal *Libellus* (little book of charges). The friars replied with their own *Libellus*, which contained their countercharges against FitzRalph; and each party responded to the other's *Libellus* with *Allegaciones* and *Exceptiones*. This climate of acrimonious debate, with charge and countercharge, resembles the literary atmosphere of *JU*, *FDR*, followed by *UR*.

## *Introduction*

A significant feature of *FDR* and *UR* (but not *JU*) is their reliance on Latin scriptural quotations to bolster the arguments in alliterative verse. The technique derives from *Piers Plowman* in which the biblical quotations are fundamental to the poem's fabric and idea. Langland presupposes a scripturally-literate audience for his poem, whereas Daw/Walsingham adduces biblical texts as if his antagonist, "Jakke Uplond," were only slightly acquainted with them. Indeed, he constantly accuses "Jakke" of not being properly "grounded" in God's law (the Ten Commandments) or in Christ's law (the Gospels), by which he means that Upland's doctrine and form of living cannot be endorsed in Scripture. At the same time he tries hard to document that the fraternal form of living conforms to Christian models as articulated in the New and Old Testaments.

Daw/Walsingham also has a gift for figurative, colorful language and for proverbial expressions. Attempting to explain the mystery of the Eucharist, he accuses Upland and the Wycliffites of misunderstanding the host as a mere sign or symbol, "As we clepen Crist a stoon, a lomb, and a lioun, / And noon of these is Crist, but oonli in figure" (849–50). He also meditates on the number *two* when he replies to Upland's attack on how friars travel in pairs. He explains the number mystically, "more for the mysterie includid in the noumbre" (784), citing the two Mosaic tablets, the two cherubims in the Temple, and the two in the tabernacle (786–87). Glossing the pit that opens when the fifth angel blows his trumpet (Revelations 9), Daw applies figurative exegesis:

This pitte is the depnes, Jak, of your malice,  
The smorthering smoke is your dymme doctrine,  
That flieth out from the flawmes of the develis malice,  
That troublith and blindith the iyen of mannis resoun. (175–78)

He speaks of how Christ and Lollards are far apart with recourse to proverbs found in Chaucer: "On old Englis it is seid 'unkissid is unknowun,' / And many men speken of Robyn Hood and shotte nevere in his bowe" (232–33); and he invites Upland to keep on telling falsehoods with the adage, "For who is oonis suspect, he is half honged" (600).

*FDR* has seldom been praised as literature. J. P. Oakden has characterized the poem's alliteration as "so corrupt and crude that the usual investigation is quite impossible." The author does not write in the "classical" alliterative long line, it is true; and some lines appear to have little or no alliteration while others seem to contain heavy alliteration, as in these two lines: "How ech man shal be knowun oonli bi his werkes" (115), and "Shending the sacramentis, salve to oure soris" (120). But

### *Friar Daw's Reply*

on occasions the author manages lively semi-alliterating verse, as in these lines where Daw accuses the Lollards of being the hypocrites of Matthew 23:

Who tythith bot ye the anet and the mente,  
Sterching your faces to be holden holi,  
Blaunchid graves ful of dede bones,  
Wandrynge wedercokkes with every wynd waginge? (121-24)

If *JU* is prose with considerable alliteration for rhetorical effect, *FDR* is alliterative verse with a number of prosaic passages — or passages in which the alliteration is realized only imperfectly.

The text is based on the edition of P. L. Heyworth and is checked against a microfilm copy of Bodleian MS Digby 41 (abbreviated D) and against Wright's text (abbreviated Wr). My debt to Heyworth's excellent edition will be evident both in the text and the notes, for I have adopted many of his emendations and glosses. I often credit Heyworth in my notes (= PLH), but on other occasions — especially when the corrector is involved — I silently include PLH's emendation or reading. In the footnotes I indicate how the author responds to specific passages in *JU* (identified by line numbers). For a detailed comparison of the parallel passages (statement and reply) in *JU*, *FDR*, and *UR*, see PLH's edition page 173: Appendix. Scriptural quotations are from the Douai-Rheims version.

### *Manuscript*

Oxford University Bodleian MS Digby 41, fol. 2.

### *Modern Editions*

Wright, Thomas, ed. *The Reply of Friar Daw Topias, with Jack Upland's Rejoinder*. In *Political Poems and Songs Relating to English History*. Rolls Series 14. Vol. 2. London: Longman, Green, 1861.

Heyworth, P. L., ed. *Friar Daw's Reply*. In *Jack Upland, Friar Daw's Reply, and Upland's Rejoinder*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1968.

### *Introduction*

#### *Studies*

Aston, Margaret. *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion*. London: Hambledon Press, 1984.

Hudson, Anne. “‘No newe thyng’: The Printing of Medieval Texts in the Early Reformation Period.” In *Middle English Studies Presented to Norman Davis in Honour of his Seventieth Birthday*. Ed. Douglas Gray and E. G. Stanley. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983. Pp. 153–74.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1988.

Oakden, J. P. *Alliterative Poetry in Middle English*. Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1980.

Szittya, Penn. *The Antifraternal Tradition in Medieval Literature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986.

Utley, F. L. “How Judicare Came in the Creed.” *Mediaeval Studies*, 8 (1946), 303–09.

#### *Bibliography*

Robbins, Rossell Hope. “XIII. Poems Dealing with Contemporary Conditions” in *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English 1050-1500*, vol. 5. New Haven: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1975. Pp. 1450, 1678–79.

### *Friar Daw's Reply*

	Who shal graunten to myn eyen a strong streme of teres To wailen and to wepyn the sorwyng of synne? For charite is chasid and flemed out of londe, And every state stakerth, unstable in him-silfe.	allow for my eyes weep banished estate staggers; itself
5	Now apperith the prophecie that Seint Joon seide To joyne therto Johel in his soth sawis: The moone is al blodi and dymme on to lokyn, That signefieth lordship forslokend in synne;	Joel; true maxims to look upon stifled
	The sterres ben on erthe throwun and fallen to the erthe, 10 And so is the comounte treuli oppressid. The sunne is eclipsid with al his twelve pointes By erroure and heresie that rengnith in the Chirche.	meteors commonalty truly reigns
	Now is oure bileve laft, and Lollardi growth, Envie is enhaunsid and aproched to preestes 15 That shulden enforce her flok in ground of Goddis lawe, To love her God sovereynli and sithen her brothir. Bot not for thanne now is taught hindring of states, <sup>1</sup>	abandoned strengthened; associated with persecuting
	And pursuyng of poverte that Crist hath approved. Now is that seed of cisme sownen in the Chirche; 20 The whete fadith with the floure, our fode is forto feche, <sup>2</sup> Foxes frettid in fere wasten the cornes,	schism joined together destroy right to the root off
	And Cristes vine is vanishid to the verray rote. Now Achan spoilith Jerico and lyveth of the thefte, And so lyven this Lollardis in her fals fablis.	these; their
25	Datan and Abiron and Chorees children With newe senceres ensencen the auters of synne. Baal preestes ben bolde sacrifice to make, And mortel maladi crepit in as a canker; And thus is Jak Uplond fodid with folie,	chers; altars Priests of Baal are deadly sickness fostered

<sup>1</sup> But the oppression of estates is not taught on account of that

<sup>2</sup> "The wheat withers together with the nourishment it affords, and we have no food" (PLH)

### *Friar Daw's Reply*

- 30 And thourgh formyng of his formerer thus freyneth a frere.<sup>1</sup>  
 "On wounder wise," seith Jak, "freres ye ben growun,  
 Sowen in youre sectes of Anticristis hondes;  
 Unboxom to bishopis not lege men to kynges;  
 Wede, corn, ne gras wil ye not hewen,  
 Ne lyven with Jakke in labour, but al to your ese."  
 Jak, thi former is a fole that thus thee hath yfourmed  
 To make so lewid an argument ayens so many freres,  
 That better knownen lightles her Doctours and her Bible<sup>2</sup>  
 Than he can rede his troper bi a long torche.<sup>3</sup>  
 But, Jak, though thi questions semen to thee wyse,  
 Yit lightly a lewid man maye leyen hem a water.  
 For summe ben lewid, summe ben shrewid, summe falsly supposid,<sup>4</sup>  
 And therfore shal no maistir ne no man of scole  
 Be vexid with thy maters but a lewid frere  
 That men callen Frere Daw Topias, as lewid as a leke.  
 The sotil witt of wyse men shulde tempte us wel soone  
 To medelin with thi malice as longe as thou wolt,  
 And fleme us from fellowship and done us of dawe.  
 That we ben not lege men, Jak, lowde thou lyest,  
 For lenger than we lyven so, abide we not in londe.  
 We obeien to bishopes as boxomnesse askith,  
 Althowgh not so fer forth as seculer preestes;  
 For Holy Chirche hath us hent and happid with grace,  
 To were us from wederes of wynteres stormes.  
 Wede, corn, ne gras have we not to hewen,  
 Ne with Jakke Uplond ferme the dikes.  
 Although Poul in his pistele laborers preise,  
 Displesith him not the preestes that syngen her masses.  
 For right as in thi bodi, Jake, ben ordeyned thin hondis,  
 For thin heed, and for thi feet, and for thin eyen to wirken:  
 Right so the comoun peple God hath disposid  
 To laboren for Holi Chirche and lordshipis also.

---

<sup>1</sup> *And through instruction of his teacher thus questions a friar*

<sup>2</sup> *Who are better acquainted with their Fathers and their Bible in the dark*

<sup>3</sup> *Than he who can read his gloss (troparius) by a long torch*

<sup>4</sup> *For some are ignorant, some are cunning, and some are falsely thought [to be cunning]*

*Friar Daw's Reply*

A, forwrithen serpent, thi wyles ben aspied!	twisting; are seen
With a thousand wrynkels thou vexest many soules.	wrinkles; vex
65    Thi malice is so michel thou maist not forhele,	great; may not conceal [it]
But thi venym with vehemens thou spittist al at ones.	poison
Thou seist we ben confounders of prelates and of lordes.	
But, Jakke, bi my lewte, lowde thou lyest, <sup>1</sup>	
For telle me bi oure conseile: what lord hath ben confoundid,	
70    70 Or what prelat of ony pepil put in ony peril?	any people
But sith that wickide worme — Wiclyf be his name —	since
Began to sowe the seed of cisme in the erthe,	schism
Sorowe and shendship hath awaked wyde,	ruination; everywhere
In lordship and prelacie hath growe the lasse grace. <sup>2</sup>	
75    75 Jak, thou seist with symonye the seven sacramentes we sellen,	
And preien for no men but yif thei wil paien.	unless; pay
God wote, Jakke, thou sparist here the sothe,	withhold the truth
And er we departen us a-soundre, it shal wel be shewid.	before; demonstrated
But oon is the sacrament that we han to dispensem	
80    80 Off penaunce to the peple whan nede askith.	when there is need
I trowe it be thi paroche preest, Jacke, that thou meenest,	parish; mean
That nyl not hosel his parischens til the peny be paied, <sup>3</sup>	
Ne assoilen hem of her synne withouten schrift silver. <sup>4</sup>	
Jakke, of thi foli thou feynest fife ordres,	falsely allege five
85    85 And yit ben ther but fourounfoundid in the lawe,	
Falsly as thou seist, and soone shal be distroied.	
Jakke, thi lewid prophecie I preise not at a peese;	a pea
Somme fantasie of Fiton hath marrid thi mynde.	Pythoness; addled
Thou prophete of Baal, thi god is a-slepe,	
90    90 The goodnesse of the Goost may not lighten upon thee.	Holy Spirit
Whi presumyst thou so proudli to prophecie these thingis,	
And wost no more what thou blaberest than Balames asse?	
Thou mayntenist in thi mater that matrimony thus we marren,	argument
But this arowe shal turne ayen to him that it sent;	barb; revert
95    95 For thou and thi secte sothli ye schenden,	truly you destroy

<sup>1</sup> *But, Jack, by my truth (loyalty), you ignorantly lie*

<sup>2</sup> *Less grace has grown among lords and prelates*

<sup>3</sup> *Who won't give communion to his parishioners unless the penny is paid*

<sup>4</sup> *Nor absolve them of their sin without confession money*

*Friar Daw's Reply*

- In as moche as ye may, the sacramentis seven;  
 And reles of synne, and grauntyng of grace, remission  
 And Cristis bitter passioun, ye sette not at an hawe.<sup>1</sup>
- Who marrith more matrimonie, ye or the freris? harms matrimony more tricks
- 100 With wrenchis and wiles wynnen mennes wyves,  
 And maken hem scolers of the newe scole,  
 And reden hem her forme in the lowe chaier; their studies; chair  
 To maken hem perfit in your lawe thei rede your rounde rollis,  
 And callen hem forth her lessouns with "Sister, me redith!" read to me
- 105 Jak, thou seist that we bilden the castels of Caym. build the castles of Cain  
 It is Goddis hous, oold schrewe, that we ben aboute!  
 To mayntenen his servauntis to singe and to reden,  
 And bidden for the peple, as we ben beholden. are constructing  
pray; are obliged  
 Clerkes sein that Salomon made a solempne temple, say
- 110 And yit was it bot figure of oure neue chirche, a type  
 That ech holi hous that Crist Him-silf indwellith. [And of] each; dwells in  
 Jak, thou seist ful serpentli, and sowdiours us thou callist,<sup>2</sup> subtlety; vanguard  
 Sette for our sutilte in Anticristis vaunwarde.
- Crist in the Gospel rehersith a rewle,  
 How ech man shal be knowun oonli bi his werkes; persecute our faith  
 And if we were founden on Anticristis side  
 Oure werkes shulden shewen, Jakke, ful soone.
- The werkes of Anticrist persuen oure bileyve,  
 So do the disciplis of your sory secte,
- 115 120 Shending the sacramentis, salve to oure soris; Ruining; injuries  
 Who tythith bot ye the anet and the mente, anise; mint  
 Sterching your faces to be holden holi, considered  
 Blaunchid graves ful of dede bones,  
 Wandrynge wedercokkes with every wynd waginge? weathervanes; wagging
- 125 The spiritis of the devel makyn youre tokenys! signs  
 Thourgh quenching of torches in your taylende ye resseyve your wisdom.<sup>3</sup>  
 Youre preaching is perilouse; it poisoneth sone;  
 As honyed venym it crepithe in swot. sweetly  
 Jak, in the Apocalypse ful pertli ye be peintid, openly; depicted

---

<sup>1</sup> *And you value Christ's bitter Passion not [even] as much as a hawthorn berry*

<sup>2</sup> *Jack, you speak in very serpentine terms, and call us soldiers*

<sup>3</sup> *You receive your wisdom through torches quenched in your arse*

### *Friar Daw's Reply*

- |     |  |  |
|-----|--|--|
| 130 | Whan the seven angels blowun there seven trompes,<br>To warne Anticristis meyne of oure Lordes comyng:<br>With her sterne stormes astonye al the erthe,<br>Reve men of her rest, and ferli hem afese.  | <i>their; trumpets<br/>troop of followers<br/>their fierce; confound</i> |
|     | The first angel, with his blast, he noith ful sore,  | <i>Deprive; wondrously scatter them<br/>causes grievous vexation</i>     |
| 135 | Hayl and fier myngid with blood he sendith to the erthe.<br>By the tokenyng that your preaching, Jak, makith obstinat hertis, <sup>1</sup><br>Your daliaunce inducith ir and envie.  | <i>mingled<br/>idle talk; wrath</i>                                      |
|     | Who ben more Fariseis than sunderers of soulis, <sup>2</sup><br>The which in her interpretacion "divisioun" ben callid?  |  |
| 140 | And your teching in an hour wil breke mo love-daiies<br>Than ye mowe brynge to-gidere vii yere aftir!<br>The secounde aungel with his blast smythith with drede,<br>And an huge hill is sent adoun in to the salt water.                       | <i>after seven years<br/>strikes with fear<br/>down</i>                  |
|     | The thridde party of creaturis ben bitter therof, <sup>3</sup>   |  |
| 145 | For Sathanas by your sawes is sent in to soulis<br>That ben ful unsavery and saltid by synne:<br>The bitternesse of your bacbiting brewith many bales.<br>The thridde angel sent doun a sterre from heven,                                     | <i>teachings<br/>causes many evils<br/>third; star</i>                   |
|     | Bremli brennyng as a bround — Wermode it was callid. <sup>4</sup>  |  |
| 150 | Wermode, Jak, moost verreli was Wiclis your maistir.<br>With men in his begynnyng litht lemed he by cunnyng, <sup>5</sup><br>But aftir, with wrong wrytyng, he wroughte mykil care,<br>And, presumpynge perilously, foul fel from the chirche, | <i>assuredly<br/>incorrect; much<br/>loathsome fell</i>                  |
|     | Missaveryng of the sacrament, infectyng many other.  | <i>Misunderstanding</i>  |
| 155 | Thus brenneth he yit as a bronde, consumyng many soulis,<br>That in her hard obstinacy growen schides of helle.<br>Maximine ne Maniche nevere wroughten more wrake; <sup>6</sup><br>Therfore from wele is he went, and woo mote him wryng.     | <i>burns<br/>planks<br/>(see note)</i>                                   |
|     | The fourthe aungel with his blast smythith right smerte.   |  |
| 160 | The thridde party of the sonne with dymmenes is dirked,  | <i>has he gone; must<br/>very hard<br/>darkened</i>                      |

<sup>1</sup> By the same token your preaching, Jack, makes obstinate hearts

<sup>2</sup> Who are greater Pharisees than [those] who divide souls

<sup>3</sup> A third of the creatures have turned bitter from this

<sup>4</sup> Fiercely burning as a firebrand, it was called Wormwood

<sup>5</sup> He shed light for men through cunning at the beginning of his career

<sup>6</sup> Maximinus or [the] Manichaeans never wreaked more havoc

*Friar Daw's Reply*

- Off the moone and of the sterres and of the day also;  
And the egle in the eyre thries 'Ve!' westheth.  
The sonne is Holy Chirche and lordship the moone,  
The sterres ben the comuns, as I seid bifore,
- 165 And alle these ben alured to youre sory secte.  
And summe of ech of these astates ben privyly apoisond,  
Therfore thries 'Ve!' is manassid upon you,  
For three manere of synnes that comunly ye usen:  
*Ve* for envye, *ve* for ypcrisie, and *ve* for your leccherie.
- 170 Whan the fift angel blew, ther was a pit opend,  
Ther rose smotheryng smoke and breses therinne.  
Alle thei weren lich horsis arayed in to bataile,  
Thei stongen as scorpions, and hadden mannis face,  
Tothed as a lioun with haburjouns of iren.
- 175 This pitte is the depnes, Jak, of your malice,  
The smorthering smoke is your dymme doctrine,  
That flieth out from the flawmes of the develis malice,  
That troublith and blindith the iyen of mannis resoun.  
The breses ben not ellis but Anticristis menye,
- 180 With short legges bifore and longe bihind,  
The which pretenden first mekenesse of herte,  
And aftir rysyng to arrogaunce disdeynynge al other<sup>1</sup>  
That ye ben lyke scorpions signefieth not ellis  
But that ye flateren aforn and venom casten bihind.
- 185 Ye ben also lich horses redy in to bateil,  
By woodnesse and foolhardinesse for heresie to dien.<sup>2</sup>  
Ye ben tothed as lioun by stynkyng detraccion.  
Your haburjons that ye han upon ben cauteles and sleigtes,<sup>3</sup>  
Ech intrikid in other to snarre symple soules;
- 190 But that thei ben of iren, obstinacie is schewid,  
For the which with Farao in helle ye wil be damped.  
At the sixt aungels blast, foure aungels there were lousid,  
The whiche were redye, bothe day and nyghte, men forto noien,  
To sleen the thridde part of men with fiyr, smoke, and brymstone.

*[A third off] the moon  
air thrice screams 'Woe'*

*attracted*

*secretly poisoned  
thrice 'Woe'; menaced*

*gadflies  
arrayed*

*Toothed; breastplates*

*smothering: feeble  
flames  
eyes*

*gadflies; followers*

*Which*

*means nothing else  
flatter first  
like*

*reproach*

*implicated in the other*

*Pharoah*

*loosed*

*harass*

<sup>1</sup> *And afterwards, rising to arrogance, disdaining all others*

<sup>2</sup> *[Ready] to die for heresy through madness and foolhardiness*

<sup>3</sup> *The breastplates that you wear are strategems and tricks*

### *Friar Daw's Reply*

- |     |   |  |
|-----|---|--|
| 195 | Foure angels singnefien foure general synnes,<br>Sett up bi Sir Adam, Jakke, among your maistris:<br>Cediciouns, supersticions, the glotouns, and the proude,<br>Poverte preamblis to presse aforne Anticristis comyng <sup>1</sup><br>To sleen the thridde party of men with thre deedly dartis                    | signify<br>masters<br>Seditions<br>arrows                                      |
| 200 | Off envie, pride, and leschry stynkyng.<br>For sum ben perfit, sum ben yvel, sum ben unstable,<br>The perfit wole not ben hirt, the yvel ben alredy, <sup>2</sup><br>But thei that ben unstable resseyven the strokes,<br>And thei ben clepid the thridde part of hem that ben dede.                                | Of; foul lechery<br>receive<br>called  |
| 205 | The seventhe angel blew his trumpe and noise in heven was made,<br>That the kyngdom of this world shulde falle to Cristis hondis,<br>Betokenyng that though Anticrist with his myghti meyne<br>Shulde for a short tyme bi tirantrie intrusyve,<br>Yit shal God gader his flok to-gider and rengne without eende.    | army<br>oppressive tyranny<br>reign  |
| 210 | Jak, thus to dubby with Scripture me thinkith grete folie,<br>For as lewid am I as thou, God wote the sothe.<br>I know not an <i>a</i> from the wynd mylne<br>Ne a <i>b</i> from a bole foot — I trowe ne thi-silf nothir.<br>And yit, for al my lewidhed, I can wel undirstonde                                    | tamper<br>knows; truth<br>windmill<br>bull's foot; neither do you<br>ignorance |
| 215 | That this privy processe perteneth to your secte,<br>And we as giltles therof as ye of Crisitis blesyng.<br>It ar ye that stonden bifore in Anticristis vanwarde,<br>And in the myddil, and in the rerewarde, ful bigly enbatailid.<br>The devel is your duke, and pride berith the baner,                          | these hidden meanings<br>innocent<br>vanguard<br>heavily embattled             |
| 220 | Wraththe is youre gunner, envie is your archer,<br>Your coveitise castith fer, your leccherie brennith;<br>Glotony giderith stickes thereto, and sleuthe myneth the wallis. <sup>3</sup><br>Malice is your men of armes, and trecherie is your aspie;<br>Thus semith that ye, more than we, be Anticristis frendis. | schemes widely; burns<br>spy<br>It seems that you                              |
| 225 | Jak, of perfit paciens holilich thou me prechist,<br>To kep it if I will sitte on Cristis owne side.<br>But good Jak, herdist thou evere how <i>Judicare</i> cam in to Crede?   |  |

<sup>1</sup> *Poverty goes into the fray before Antichrist's coming*

<sup>2</sup> The perfect will not be hurt, the evil [have] been [hurt] already

<sup>3</sup> Gluttony gathers sticks for the fire, and sloth undermines the walls

### *Friar Daw's Reply*

- |     |   |   |
|-----|---|---|
|     | No more skil thou canst of paciens, Jak, so God me spede; <sup>1</sup><br>For thi schreude herte and He ben as afere a-sundir   | cursed; far apart   |
| 230 | As Lucifer is from heven and Gabriel from helle —<br>The which, as many man suposis, shal nevere mete to-gider.<br>On old Englis it is seid “unkissid is unknowun,”<br>And many men speken of Robyn Hood and shotte nevere in his bowe.   | meet together<br>who  |
| 235 | Now, Jak, to thi questions nedis me moste answer,<br>Althowgh thei wanten sentence and god thrift bothe.<br>“Which is the moost perfit ordre,” Jakke, thou askist,<br>And “how many ordres ther ben in erthe?”<br>“Off what ordre art thou, frere, and who made thin ordre?”<br>Iff thou wolt have the highest ordre, seke it in heven, | lack meaning; good sense<br>are there on earth?<br>Of<br>wish to have<br>created<br>Son |
| 240 | In the blessid Trinite that fourmed us alle,<br>Where flowith the Sunne from the Fadir, the Holigost from hem bothe,<br>Noon gretter in degré, no more perfite than other. <sup>2</sup><br>But the ordre that there is, is in her proceeding,<br>And if we comen lower, there finde we holy angels,                                     |   |
| 245 | Stablid in thre ierarchies, dividid in ordres nyne.<br>Seraphim he is the sovereynest, in charite he brennith,<br>And of al ordris in erthe I holde preesthood the highest,<br>That han the principal partis of men, and kingis han the bodies,<br>And this is the Popes decre in comoun lawe.  | Established; hierarchies<br>chiefest; burns   |
| 250 | But paraunter, Jak, thou menest of religious ordre,<br>Of templeres, hospitalers, chanouns, monkes and freres.<br>Jak, in this mater, loke Seint Thomas bokes,<br>And thei shal thee techen and enfourme at the fulle.<br>How many ordris ther ben can I not telle,   | perhaps<br>knights templars<br>examine<br>fully inform                                  |
| 255 | But if I cowde calkyn al manniskynde  | Unless; calculate all mankind   |
|     | Forto loken how many kyndes oure Lord hath yfourmed,<br>But evermore betwene two and two, Jak, thou shalt fynden ordre.<br>Off what ordre I am, and who made myn ordre,<br>Jakke, fast thou fraynest, and fayn woldist wite. <sup>3</sup>   |   |
| 260 | I am of Cristis ordre, Jak, and Crist made myn ordre —<br>Ensaumple in the Gospel in many sondry place.   | Witness; different places   |

<sup>1</sup> You don't know any more about patience, Jack, so help me God

<sup>2</sup> None (of the three) greater in degree, no (one) more perfect than the others

<sup>3</sup> Jack, you hastily enquire, and gladly would know

*Friar Daw's Reply*

- For who taughte obedience, chastite, and poverte?  
 Hopist thou not it was Crist, and fulfillid in Him-silf,  
 In which ech religion perfity is groundid,
- 265 Reversyng the soorie synnes notid of the postle:<sup>1</sup>  
 Lust of flesh, and lust of iye, and pride in oure lyvynge?  
 On this three, Jak, bi my lewte, is groundid al your colage.<sup>2</sup>
- Iff I breke myn ordre, I breke Goddis lawe,  
 And if I be punishid for that oon, I am ponishid for that other,
- 270 Bot the contrarie of this, Jak, thou falsly afermest.  
 Jacke boy, if ony religioun be more perfit than techith Seint Jame —  
 Either more appreveed of God — fayne thou woldist witen.
- Iff I seie yee, thou askist where it is foundid,  
 And if I nayt that thou seist, thus thou procedist.
- 275 Thou seist that I contrarie Cristis owne rewlis,  
 Bidinge yeve to the pore in peyne of dampnacion,  
 And we piken from the pore and riche al that we may geten.
- Jak, thou shewist sikirli what scole thou hast ben inne:  
 Of sutiltee of arguyng me thinkith thi brayn ful thinne.
- 280 Go grees a sheep undir the taile — that semeth the beter  
 Than with sotil sillogismes to perbrake thi witt.  
 Jak, in James pistles al religioun is groundid,  
 For there is maad mencion of two perfit lyves
- That actif and contemplatif comounli ben callid,
- 285 Fulli figurid bi Marie and Martha hir sistir,  
 By Peter and bi Joon, bi Rachel and bi Lya.  
 These lyves ben groundid in charite bi diverse degrees,  
 By men of professiouns makyng sundri religiouns
- And evident ensaumple moun techen us the waye.
- 290 For sum fleen from the world and closen hem-silf in wallis<sup>3</sup>  
 And steken hem in stones, and litil wole thei speken,  
 To flee nich occasiouns as foli wole fynden,  
 And these we clepen “ancres” in the comoun speche.
- Also in contemplacion there ben many other
- 295 That drawen hem to disert and drye myche peyne,
- Don't you suppose*  
*eye*  
*abandon*  
*the one*  
*maintain*  
*any*  
*approved; gladly*  
*And if I deny what you say*  
*contradict*  
*upon pain of*  
*steal*  
*clearly; school*  
*weak*  
*better befits you*  
*addle your wit*  
*epistle*  
*represented*  
*John; Leah*  
*estates (of people)*  
*must*  
*shut themselves away*  
*flee from such*  
*“anchorites”*  
*desert; endure much*

<sup>1</sup> Overturning the woeful sins noted by the Apostle [John]

<sup>2</sup> On these three, Jack, by my truth, is anchored all your establishment (college, teachings)

<sup>3</sup> For some flee from the world and cloister themselves

### Friar Daw's Reply

	By eerbis, rootis, and fruyte lyven for her Goddis love;	herbs
	And this manere of folk men callen "heremytes."	
	The thridde degree there is — not forto be dispisid —	third; not to be
	Off sich as ben gaderid in coventis to-gidere, <sup>1</sup>	
300	Off the which men spekith David in his Psalmis.	Of whom David speaks
	"Se," he seith, "how merie it is to dwelle to-gider";	See; together
	The which for worldly combraunce kepen in cloistris, <sup>2</sup>	
	On hert and oon soule havyng with the apostlis,	One heart
	And this clepe we "monasticale" that kendly is knowun.	"monasticism"
305	Mo, Jak, in contemplacion there ben diverse degrees,	
	And aftir that charite growth in hem, the more is her mede. <sup>3</sup>	
	Off actif lyf I shulde thee tellen, yf that I hadde tyme,	active life
	And shewen how men bi charite ben holden to helpe her bretheren —	are obliged
	Somm with paynymes forto fighte, oure feith to defende,	pagans
310	Somm forto make purvyaunce for seke and for pore,	to provide for
	Somme forto preche to the puple aftir her synne askith,	as their sin requires
	And somme in bothe lyves laboren full soore,	[active and contemplative]
	Liche unto the angels in Jacobis ladder.	Like
	See now, Jak, thi-silf, how these bothe lyves	both these lives
315	Opinli ben expressid in the epistle of James:	
	"Cleen religioun it is," he seith, "to visite the widewis,	widows
	The fadirles and the modirles — lo! actif lyf expressid —	
	And undefoulid, us to kepen from al worldly werkes."	undefiled
	Byhold, of contemplacioun opinli he spekith,	
320	So this may be resonably the conclusioun of my tale:	
	That no religion more is than techith Sent Jame.	
	Jak, thou seist we piken from the pore and from the riche,	rob
	And not yeven ayenward though that thei ben nedys. <sup>4</sup>	
	That almes is pykyng I fynde it in thi boke,	alms is thievery
325	And I herde it nevere aforn in no manere scripture.	any kind of writing
	But if alwey pikers, Jak, thou wolt us maken,	
	Ther we piken but seely pans, thi secte pikith poundis.	Where; steal mere pennies
	What we yeven to the pore, it nedith not thee to telle,	

<sup>1</sup> [Composed] of such folk as those who are gathered together in convents

<sup>2</sup> Who stay in cloisters to (avoid) worldly entanglements

<sup>3</sup> And according as charity grows in them, the greater is their reward

<sup>4</sup> And give them nothing in return although they are indigent

*Friar Daw's Reply*

- For almesdede shul be hid and sweten in thin hondis.      *pleasing in your hands*
- 330 "Whi bi mannes mariage ye ben weddid to your abitis  
Wele harder than worldly men ben weddid to her wyves,  
Which thei mowe leeve and let go as longe as hem list?"  
Jak, for siche manere scole ye cacchen Cristis curse,  
So freli to mayntenen Maniches errours,      *fraternal habits*
- 335 To make men breke her matrimonye and leeve her wyves,  
And whan the goode man is oute, pleye thei god rode.  
Jak, to oure abite be we not weddid  
More than eny preest is weddid to his coroun  
That is over-growun with heer, and he preest nevere the lesse,      *More firmly*
- 340 Or ellis shulde every barbour make newe preestes.  
Right so oure clothis maken us not men of religion,  
But oonli oure profession byndith us to the stake,  
And so apostasie mowe we maken in oure soule,  
Liche men of religion abidinge in oure abitis.      *they wish*
- 345 If Sathanas were transfirgurid in to his forme farnesse,  
Trowist thou he were ought ellis but a dampned aungel?  
And so not for the levynge of oure clothis we be not punishid,  
But bicause it bitokeneth forsakyngh of oure reule;  
And, Jacke, no more than thi sadil makith thin hors a mere,      *for such teachings*
- 350 No more makith oure abitis monkes ne freris.  
Jak, of oure presciouse clothis fast thou carpist,  
The which ben so fyne that noman werith better.  
Every man may perseyye apertli, Jakke, that thou liest;  
Were we no sendal, ne satyn, ne goldun clothis,      *Manichaean*
- 355 And these passen in presciousitee many-foold ouris.      *apostasy may we*
- But if my cloth be over presciouse, Jakke, blame the werer,  
For myn ordre hath ordeyned al in good mesure.  
Thou axist me, Jacke, of my grete hood, what that it meeneth,      *Like*
- My scapelarie, and my wide cope, and the knottide girdil.      *original*
- 360 What meeneth thi tipet, Jakke, as longe as a stremer,  
That hangith longe bihinde and kepith thee not hoot?  
An hool cloith of scarlet may not make a gowne,  
And the cloith of oo man myghte hele half a doseyne.      *Do you think*
- The pokes of purchace hangen to the erthe.      *signifies*
- 365 Why is thi gowne, Jakke, widder than thi cote?  
And thi cloke al above as round as a belle,  
Sith lasse myghte serve to kepe thee from coold?      *saddle; mare*
- Since less; keep      *wears*
- comfort; dozen  
bags full of spoils  
wider      *plainly*
- ask      *We wear*
- scapulary; cloak; belt      *surpass; many times ours*
- wearer      *wearer*

### *Friar Daw's Reply*

- |     |  |   |
|-----|--|---|
|     | Jak, answer thou to <i>that</i> oon, and I shal to that other.<br>My grete coope that is so wijd signefieth charite  |   |
| 370 | That largeli longith to be sprad to sibbe and to frende, <sup>1</sup><br>Figurid in the faire cloith of Salomons table,<br>And bi wedding garnement that Crist hadde at His feeste.<br>My greet hood behynde, shapun as a sheeld,<br>Suffraunce in adversitee sothely hit scheweth,                      | garment<br>fashioned; shield<br>represents  |
| 375 | Herbi to reseyve repreef for oure Goddis sake.<br>Or ellis bisynesse of oure feith it may wel bitokene,<br>Which that ye Lollardes constreyne you to distroie.<br>The scapelarie also that keverith the schuldris,<br>It bitokeneth boxumnesse dewe unto oure prelatis,                                  | By this to receive rebuke<br>Or else activity<br>seek to destroy<br>covers the shoulders<br>obedience due |
| 380 | And boxomly bere birthuns that they wole leyen upon us. <sup>2</sup><br>Off the knottide girdil knowe I no mysterie;<br>Therfore what it meeneth, axe Frere Menours.<br>But Jacke, amonge oure chateryng yit wolde I wite<br>Whi that the Lollardis weren moost greye clothis.                           | Concerning; knotted belt<br>consult the Minorites<br>I wish to know<br>mostly; clothes<br>think; humility |
| 385 | I trowe to shewe the colour that signefieth symplenesse,<br>And withinne, seith Crist, ye ben ravenous wolves.<br>"Whi," seist thou, "holde we more scilence in oon hous than another,"<br>Sith over-al a man is holden forto seie the goode?"<br>To thi lewide question Salomon thus answerith:         | silence<br>obliged; say good things   |
| 390 | <i>Est tacens sciens tempus apti temporis, et homo sapiens tacet usque ad tempus. Tempus tacendi, tempus loquendi. Et iterum. Sicut urbs patens absque murorum ambitu, ita qui in loquendo non potest cohibere spiritum suum.</i><br>Thus perfit scilens bi Scripture is approved.                       | perfect silence   |
| 395 | Jakke, if thou undirstonde no Latyn, go to thi paroche prest,<br>And undur you bothe, with Goddis grace, marren ye wolen ful yvele. <sup>3</sup><br>Whi also ete we no flesh in every hous iliche,<br>But chesen therto an hous and leeuen another?<br>Jak, if every hous were honest to ete flesh inne, | parish priest<br>meat; alike<br>choose; one<br>appropriate  |
| 400 | Than were it honest to ete in a gonge.<br>Whi is not <i>thi</i> table sett in thi cow stalle?  | decent; toilet  |

<sup>1</sup> Which freely desires to be extended to kindred and strangers

<sup>2</sup> And obediently [to] endure burdens that they lay upon us

<sup>3</sup> And with both your understandings, despite God's grace, you will err very greatly

*Friar Daw's Reply*

- And whi etist thou not in thi shipun, as wele as in thin halle?      sheep-cote  
 But al is good ynowgh for thee where that evere thou sittist.      enough  
 Whi doith not thi cow make myry wedir in thi dish?      urinate in your dish  
 405     But, Jacke, in this mater appose thou the monkes,      you contradict  
 For thei kepen this sermonie more streiter than freris.<sup>1</sup>      introduce  
 More-over thou mevest, Jak, another mater:      masters  
 If oure patrouns be perfit and oure reule also,      run; absolved  
 Whi renne we to Rome to be assoilid      From the oath  
 410     Of the oth that we han maad, and be Popis freris?      run; more; are  
 Jak, summe rennen to Rome, but mo ther ben at hoom,  
 And dewli done her never aftir that thei han chosen,<sup>2</sup>      regret very much  
 And that the Lollardis forthinken ful soore.  
 Ye wolden that there were as many freris as ther ben moones,  
 415     And though there were oon lesse, ye yave nevere tale,      you'd never say  
 That ye myghten have your reyke and prechen what you list,  
 And with your privy pestilence enpoisoun the peple.      fling; wish  
 Jak, that Judas was a shrewe, what was Crist the worse?<sup>3</sup>      secret  
 And so that summe ben exempt and rennen to your ritis,  
 420     And summe bi apostasie ben Sathanas servauntis,      run; rites  
 Whi shulde oure patrouns be ever the lasse perfit?      masters  
 Ferthermore, "Whi make ye you as men dede,  
 Sith in begginge ye ben as quic as ben ony other,  
 And unsemeli it is to see deed men begge?"      dead men  
 425     Jak, me thinkith thou lernedist nevere of Poulis pistlis,      alive  
 Whiche in a fewe shorte wordes answerith to thi sentence:  
*Quasi morientes et ecce vivimus. Glossa: quasi  
 morientes, id est, de vicio in vicium secundum  
 opinionem aliquorum; et ecce vivimus, in bonis  
 operibus in rei veritate.*      from Paul's epistles  
 meaning  
 So though we ben deed to the world, aftir *thin* opynyon,  
 Yit is oure soule in the bodi, and grace in the soule.  
 "Whi," seist thou, "suffre ye not your children to come in to your conseil,  
 If it be good and able and aftir Goddis lawe?"      competent  
 430     A, Jak! *mafey*, me merveilith moche of thin lewidheed!      upon my faith; stupidity

<sup>1</sup> For they observe this teaching more strictly than the friars

<sup>2</sup> And rightly do their duty according to [how] they have chosen

<sup>3</sup> Jack, although Judas was a villain, how was Christ the worse for it?

*Friar Daw's Reply*

	Herdist thou nevere how Crist was transfigurid in the hil And ther to his privete he chees but three apostlis, Forbedinge hem to tell that conceil ony ferther? And so were there nyne fro that conceil refusid.	<i>Have you never heard secrets; chose Forbidding them denied</i>
440	Crist also took to Him alle his twelve apostlis, And tretide of His passioun in right privy maner; And the rude peple that folowiden knewe no thing therof. Shal we, Jak, therfore seie his conceil was not able — Suspect, and not good confourmed to Goddis lawe?	<i>spoke of say; competent</i>
445	Another cause resonable, me thinkith I can telle, For counceil owith to be kept and not to be clatrid, And children ben ay clattringe, as thou wel knowest. Another skil may be groundid of Salomons sawis: “To him,” he seith, “that is wijs, it longith to kepe conceil,	<i>ought; broadcast always chattering reason; proverbs</i>
450	And children ful seldun ben foundun wijs.” Jak, wolt thou telle thi knave as myche as thi wyf? Furthermore thou spekest of oure costly housis. Thou seist it were more almes to helpen the nedys Than to make siche housynge to men that ben deede,	<i>very seldom; wise servant; much it requires more such</i>
455	To whiche longith but graves and mornynge housis. Jak, is not a man better than a rude best? Yit makist thou to thi sheep a shepen, and to thi hors a stable, And many a pore man ther is that hath noon hillyng. But oonli heven is his hous; the bestes stond kevered.	<i>To whom belong only beast sheep-pen shelter beasts remain sheltered</i>
460	Whi houses thou not pore men as wele as thi beestis? Take hede to sumwhat that is seid biforen, And thou answeare to my question, answer to thin owne. Thou carpist also of oure coveitise and sparist the sothe. Thou seist we ben more ryal than ony lordis.	<i>Why don't you house Pay attention; something If prate; suppress regal</i>
465	Coventis have we noon, Jacke, but cloistrers we ben callid, Foundid afor with charite or that he were flemyd. <sup>1</sup> But sith entride envie and revyd hath oure houses, That unnethes the hillinge hangith on the sparres. <sup>2</sup> And yit thou thinkist hem over good; yvel fare thou therfore! <sup>3</sup>	<i>entered; robbed</i>

<sup>1</sup> Founded originally with charity before it was chased away

<sup>2</sup> Such that the roof scarcely hangs on the cross-beams

<sup>3</sup> And yet you think they are too fine; ill luck to you for that

### *Friar Daw's Reply*

- |     |  |   |
|-----|--|---|
| 470 | Jak, where saw thou ever frere houses thourghout the rewme,<br>Lich in ony realte to the toure of Londoun,<br>To Wyndesore, to Wodestoke, to Wallingforde, to Shene,<br>To Herforde, to Eltham, to Westmynster, to Dover?<br>How maist thou for rebykyng lye so lowde,   | <i>realm</i>  |
| 475 | To saye that oure coveitise passith the lordes?<br>But so longe, by my leute, thou hast lerned to lyen,<br>That thi tonge is letteroun of lyes, thou lettist for no shame.<br>“We leten,” thou seist, “to lymytours, al this rewme to ferme,” <sup>1</sup><br>As that we were welders and lordes of alle.        | <i>surpasses<br/>loyalty; prevaricate<br/>lectern; cease<br/>As though; possessors</i>                      |
| 480 | Unsikir thing, sothly, it were to sette to ferme, <sup>2</sup><br>And fooles were the fermeres to taken it to tax.<br>I trowe thou menys the pardonysters of Seint Thomas of Acres,<br>Of Antoun, or of Runcevale, that rennen so fast aboute.<br>For of the kynges rewme have we no more astate                 | <i>realm; claim</i>   |
| 485 | Than thou hast of Paradis or of the blisse of heven,<br>For the which, I trowe, thou maist of hasilwode singe.<br>“Why,” seist thou, “paye ye to no taliage to oure Cristen kynge,<br>Sith Crist paide tribut to the hethene emperour?”<br>Jak, of no dewte ne of no dette paide Crist noo tribute, <sup>3</sup> | <i>(see note)<br/>tax<br/>paid tribute; heathen</i>   |
| 490 | But oonliche of mekenesse, performynge the lawe,<br>And forto fleen occasioun of aftirward apechinge;<br>Whan that afor Pilat He shulde be forjugalid.<br>But aftir the Scripture preesthode shulde not paien<br>To tax ne to taliage with the comun peple;  | <i>only out of<br/>avoid; impeachment<br/>before; judged to death</i>                                       |
| 495 | For whan the folk of Israhel were putt undir servage,<br>Pharao suffride preestes in her former fredome<br>To be saved and susteyned of the comoun store.<br>But now is the compleynt of Jeremye trewe:<br>The prince of provynces sugette is undir tribute.   | <i>in bondage<br/>allowed</i>   |
| 500 | Not for thanne the comun lawe may wel suffren<br>That preesthode may paye bi assent of prelatis,<br>Freli of her owne wille, no thing constreynede.<br>And thus prelatis and persouns aftir her state,   | <i>Jeremiah<br/>is subject to tribute<br/>permit<br/>only by [the]<br/>not at all compelled<br/>parsons</i> |

<sup>1</sup> "We rent," you say, "to limiters, to carve up all this realm"

<sup>2</sup> An uncertain thing it is, truly, to farm out land

<sup>3</sup> Jack, Christ paid no tribute out of obligation or debt

### *Friar Daw's Reply*

- Ben stended to paien what that nede askith,  
 505 But neithir freres ne annuellers save now late.  
 God woot it worchipeth not to beggen of beggars.<sup>1</sup>  
 Off lettris of brothirhood also, Jak, thou spekist,  
 And wounders that we wynnen noon of pore men and of preestis,<sup>2</sup>  
 And yit ye desiren that every man shulde have *your* lettris.  
 510 Of pore mennes preieris to be persevers we wolden,<sup>3</sup>  
 And of her lettris, and of her sele, if autentike thei weren.  
 But of your preestis *Pater Nosters* we desiren noon,  
 For comunliche her blake bedes thei delen to freris,  
 But thei shal cleve unto thi chekes and Cristis curse also.  
 515 As wissely as we holden us not more perfit than ony other,  
 Ne no suffragies sellen for a certeyn bi yere,<sup>4</sup>  
 Ne maken men more perfit than her blessid baptisme,  
 For praier may not satyllyn but oonliche on them alle.  
 And so that gilden trentels that thou spekist of,  
 520 That now is purchasid of preestis out of freris hondis,  
 Delyverith noo soule out of the peyne of helle,  
 Ne purgen may of purgatory but as it is deserved,  
 For charite is the mesure that demeth that meyne.  
 Also thou seist, Jak, that we men enformen,  
 525 That oure holy abite shulde helpen men fro helle,  
 And nameliche tho that ben beried therinne;  
 And Cristis clothis dide not so, ne noon of the apostlis.  
 Jak, that frere was over lewid that lernede the this lessoun.  
 Or on thi ficol fantasie thou faynst this fable,  
 530 For Austyns ne Prechours proponen no siche pointis.  
 Whether the Carmes of her copes mowe maynten an error,<sup>5</sup>  
 Or whether Seint Fraunce hath geten to his habite  
 That vertu be his grace, witterly me ne wote,  
 But wel I wote that Cristis cloith helide a womman  
 535 From the longe fluxe of blood, as the Gospel tellith.
- limited; what is required  
except only recently*  
*Of; fraternization*  
*Both; seal; authentic  
"Our Fathers"*  
*beads; bestow on friars  
cling to your cheeks*  
*certainly*  
*setile  
gilt trental*  
*Nor may deliver from  
determines that company*  
*fashion men  
habit (dress)*  
*those; buried in the habit*  
*taught you*  
*fickle; fabricate*  
*advance; arguments*  
*has acquired for  
certainly I don't know*  
*know; healed*  
*Of her chronic blood ailment*

<sup>1</sup> *God knows there is no honor in begging from beggars*

<sup>2</sup> *And you marvel that we get nothing from poor men and priests*

<sup>3</sup> *We would like to persevere on behalf of poor men's prayers*

<sup>4</sup> *Nor [do we] sell any prayers for the dead for so much a year*

<sup>5</sup> *Whether the Carmelite friars may assert such an error of their copes*

*Friar Daw's Reply*

- But His predestinacion may onlich save soulis,  
 And His privy presciens may dampne whom Him list.  
 Jak, ferthermore of felony thou felly us enpechest,  
 Of stelyng of children to drawe hem to oure sectis.
- 540 To tille folk to Godward I holde it no theft,  
 But if thou calle Crist a theef that dide the same,  
 Sayinge to the riche man, "Go, and selle thi goodis,  
 And gif hem to the pore, yif thou wole be perfit,  
 And aftirward folowe me and be my disciple."
- 545 And in the same Gospel se what he seith also:  
 "Who so forsake not his fadir and his modir,  
 His sone and his droughtir, his sistir and his brothir,  
 His lond and his tenementes, and him-selven also,  
 He nys not worthi to ben my folower."
- 550 And to His twelfe chosen, eftsoones He seide:  
 "Behold fro the world I have chosen you alle,  
 That ye gon and beren fruyte, and your fruyte may dwellyn."  
 And thus to reven the world and spoilen him of his persouns —  
 It ne is no robbery but Criste appreveled thefte.
- 555 Thou seist also ferthermore that "prestis shul not enprisoun,  
 For it nys not foundid in al Goddis lawe,  
 But undirnym bi charite and so wynnen her brothir,  
 And yif he wil not be so wonnen, have him as hethene";  
 And thus bi thin opynyon no man shulde be enprisound.
- 560 But, Jakke, in thi frensy thou fonnest more and more!  
 Thou wenyst to make to me a dicthe, thou fallist thi-silf therinne! <sup>1</sup>  
 For if thou pursue thi purpos, thou assentist thi-silf in tresoun,  
 Menusyng the kyngis majeste, privyng him of his power.  
 For if we taken the Gospel aftir the menyng,  
 Nethir emperour ne kyng may honge ne drawe,
- 565 Heved, ne enprisoun, ne haunte no domes,  
 But al in fair manere shulen ben undirnomen;  
 And who wil not amenden him, yeve him the brydil,  
 And bothe robbers and revers, mansleeris and treytours,  
 And al maner mawfesours shulden ben unpounishid.
- 570 Jak, the Pope hath a prisoun, and yit he is a prest,
- secret foreknowledge  
 viciously; accuse  
 stealing  
 entice; to God  
 Unless  
 Saying  
 give; if
- see  
 father; mother
- himself  
 isn't worthy  
 soon again
- go; remain  
 rob; despoil it
- isn't grounded  
 undertake; win over  
 if; heathen  
 according to
- frenzy; act foolishly
- Diminishing; depriving  
 according to its meaning  
 draw and quarter
- Behead; nor rely on precedents  
 undertaken  
 whoever; give; the control  
 pirates; murderers
- malefactors; unpunished

---

<sup>1</sup> You believe you are creating a ditch for me, but you fall into it yourself!

### *Friar Daw's Reply*

- The bishop of Cantirbury and of Londoun also,  
And many other bishopis bi leeve of her kyng.  
Art thou hardy to seien it is not Goddis lawe?
- 575 But I blame thee not gretli, though thou bere hem hevy,<sup>1</sup>  
For goldsmythis of thi crafte ofte haveth hem haunted,  
And yit thei shulen ofter, bi the helpe of heven.  
Also, thou seist no sacrament we covetyn ne desiren,<sup>2</sup>  
But schrift and biryngne, that longeth to the peple.<sup>3</sup>
- 580 Alas, Jak, for shame! Why art thou so fals  
Fortho reverse thi-silf in thin owne sawes?  
Thou seidist in thi begynnynge, whan thou seidist of freres,  
Thei sellen seven sacramentes with Symoundis eyris,  
And now that we coveite noon but the sacrament of schrifte,
- 585 For beriyngne is no sacrament but an almesdede.  
Thou jawdewyne, thou jangeler, how stande this to-gider?<sup>4</sup>  
By verre contradiccion thou concludist thi-silf,  
And bryngest thee to the mete there I wolde have thee.  
Who wolde take entent to suche wreches wordes,
- 590 That nevere more yeveth tale to be take with a lesyng?<sup>5</sup>  
Whi, axist thou ferthermore, wil we not shryven  
Ne birien the pore as wel as the riche,  
And do other dedes of almes done at her nede?<sup>6</sup>  
But if we schryve not the pore, whi ben perssons so wrothe,
- 595 And paroche preestes also, for schryyyng of her parishens?  
For every lenten us ayen thei aleggen the lawe<sup>7</sup>  
Off *Omnis utriusque sexus*, with the favourable glooses.  
But, Jak, do thi won and lette not to lyene,<sup>8</sup>
- by permission  
bold (enough)*
- (see note)  
more often*
- statements*
- Simon's offspring  
confession*
- burial; charitable act*
- true; refute  
bring yourself; place  
pay attention*
- you ask; confess  
Nor bury the poor*
- are parsons so angry  
parish priests*
- interpretations*

---

<sup>1</sup> *But I don't blame you too much, although you accuse them with serious charges*

<sup>2</sup> *Also you say we covet or desire no sacrament*

<sup>3</sup> *Except confession and burials, which belong to the people*

<sup>4</sup> *You half-wit, you chatterbox, how can these statements be reconciled?*

<sup>5</sup> *Who doesn't even care if he is caught in a lie*

<sup>6</sup> *And perform other charitable acts as they are needed*

<sup>7</sup> *For each spring they claim the law against us*

<sup>8</sup> *But, Jack, do what you usually do and don't stop lying*

### *Friar Daw's Reply*

- |     |   |  |
|-----|---|--|
|     | I have as leef thi leesing as thi soth saw, <sup>1</sup><br>For who is oonis suspect, he is half honged.<br>Thou seist that we prechen fallace and fables<br>And not Goddis Gospel to good undirstondinge,<br>And we ben more holdun thereto than to alle other reulis,<br>For we wynnen more therwith than Crist and His apostlis. | once suspect; half hanged<br>fallacies                               |
| 600 | What we ben holdun to I wil not forsake,<br>For moche of oure lyvynge is of the Gospel.<br>So dide Poul and other disciplis,<br>And lyvede of colectis made generali bi chirchis<br>For sustinance of prechours and also of the pore.   | profit<br>derives from<br>St. Paul<br>from collections<br>To sustain |
| 605 | And if thou leve not me, loke Poulis pistlis,<br>And the glose therwith, and there thou shalt fynde it.<br><i>Quis, inquit, militat suis stipendijs unquam?</i><br><i>Et iterum, Dominus ordinavit hijs qui evangelium annunciant, de evangelio vivere.</i>   | don't believe me, consult<br>And its gloss                           |
| 610 | And so to his prechours Crist also thus seide:<br><i>In quamcumque domum intraveritis, manete in eadem edentes et bibentes etc.</i><br><i>Dignus est enim operarius mercede sua.</i><br><i>Et ad Romanos: Probaverunt Macedones</i>   |  |
| 615 | <i>et Achaya collectionem facere in pauperes sanctorum qui sunt in Iherusalem.</i><br>Ayens that thou saist, that we prechen but fallace and fables<br>And leve the Gospel that moste us al save:<br>Loke that every werke is knownen pleinli bi his eende;   | against what<br>abandon; must<br>its result                          |
| 620 | And so the peple hath the pathes of feith and of bileve,<br>And, God woote, freres prechinge hath wrought to this ende.<br>But ye han cast cursidly Cristendome to distroye,<br>And of Cristis Gospel make Machometis lawe,<br>Ayens whom with opin mouth other while we romee,   | acted<br>plotted<br>Mohammed's<br>roar                               |
| 625 | Ayens that thou saist, that we prechen but fallace and fables<br>And leve the Gospel that moste us al save:<br>Loke that every werke is knownen pleinli bi his eende;   |  |
| 630 | And sumtyme brynge you til a bay, if God wil it graunte.<br>For this cause ye calle us "bastard branchis,"<br>Pursuyng preestes to prisoun, and to fire also.<br>But, Jak, thei ben bastard braunches that launchen from oure biley,<br>And writhyn wrongli away from Holy Chirche techinge.  | to bay<br>deviate<br>swerve  |

<sup>1</sup> I respect your lying as much as your true statements

### Friar Daw's Reply

- 635 Siche beren yvel fruyte and soure to atasten, taste  
 Worthi to noon other good but in the fire to brenne. Worthy of nothing better than  
 And so forto pursue an heretike to fire or to prisoun; heretic  
 I holde it more holsum than to halewe a chirche consecrate  
 In prisonyng of the poysen that mortherith many soulis,<sup>1</sup>
- 640 Afir Cristis doctrine in the holy Gospel:  
*Omnis, inquit, arbor quae non fert fructum  
 bonum excidetur et in ignem mittetur. Et iterum.  
 Qui non manserit in me, mittetur foras sicut palmes,  
 et arescat: et colligent, et in ignem mittetur –*
- 645 Disseverynge you from the tree that is Crist Him-silfe. Severing you  
 But how shulden freres pursue heresie,  
 And many of hem wite not what heresie meneth?  
 Jak, I am not lettered but I am Frere Dawe, literate  
 And can telle wel a fyn what heresie amoundith. in the end
- 650 Heresie that is Grw is divisioun on Latyn, Greek means division in Latin  
 The whiche in our langage meneth “sunderyng” and “partyng.”  
 He thanne that sundrith him from Crist and His Chirche  
 And frely forgith sentences contrarious to oure feith, liberally concocts (forges)  
 Siche manere of forgers heretikes we callen,
- 655 And also her felowis taken the same name; confederates  
 And her sory sentences ben clepid heresies — miserable opinions; called  
 But namely whan thei ben holdun of obstinat hertis,  
 And I shal this mater more largely declare.
- 660 Sixe maner of heretikes ben foundun in the lawe,  
 For he is callid an heretike that rasith oure bileve. to be found  
 And he is callid an heretike that heresies sowith,  
 As Arrians, Wyclifanes, Sabellyanes, and other. eradicates; belief  
 And the corruptours of Scripturis heretikes ben holdun,  
 That other-wise undirstondin than the Holigoost techith. disseminates
- 665 Also we clepen hem heretikes that sacramentis sellyn, Wycliffites; Sabellians  
 Or ben from hem dividid bi cursyng of the Chirche. are considered  
 He is also an heretike that doutith our bileve,  
 And with a litil evydence goith out of the waye.<sup>2</sup> sell  
 And also an heretike him shulde we holde excommunication  
 questions our faith

<sup>1</sup> To imprison the venom which murders many souls

<sup>2</sup> And draws outrageous conclusions from a little evidence

*Friar Daw's Reply*

- 670 That distrieth privyleges grauntid of the Pope. by  
 This sixe maners put Hostiensis in his Summe,  
 And if this sentence be soth, I can noon other seien  
 But thou and thi secte ben heretikes alle.  
 Jak, thou spekist furthermore of messis and of preires  
 675 And askist what we sellen whan we seyen oure messe — say nothing else  
 Whether the sacrament, our preieres, or our traveile;  
 And if ony of this we done, thou arguest a greet errour.  
 Jak, unto this questioun onwyse may be answerid,  
 Aftir that Seint Austyn spekith of the apostlis. Except [that]  
 680 "The apostlis," a seith, "reseyved frely her breed, masses  
 Of hem that freely token her techinge." he says  
 And so, Jak, freely graunte we our masse to hem received their instruction  
 That freely yeven us her almesse,  
 And synnen no wyse bi noon other vice, their alms  
 685 To selle no sacramentis ne spiritual preier. not at all in  
 And thus among freres gete thei no logginge,  
 But bete hem to gretter men and geten her herbegage<sup>1</sup> covertly  
 Of patronis of chirchis, or privly with preestes,  
 Which to fatte benefices wolde be promotid. lucrative; want to be preferred  
 690 Jak, suppose that my labour I selle,  
 What wil thou seie therto? Do I ony symonye?  
 How than shal tho persons seye that setten her chirches to ferme,<sup>2</sup>  
 That ben more spiritual than bodili traveile, Which (i.e., churches)  
 And these paroche preestes that ministren the sacramentis administer  
 695 For a certen sawd bi yeer of ten mark or of twelfe, amount each year  
 And al these annuellers that syngen for a tyme, annual mass-singers  
 Takynge for her traveil as thei may acorde? deem appropriate  
 But thei can answer for hem-silf, and we shal for us. themselves  
 Another mater ther is meved, that touchith begging thou seist,  
 700 That we falsly Crist Him-silf disclaundren, to seie that He beggid, slander  
 Sith He was Lord of al, and al in His demeyns. territories  
 But for this mater, Jacke, thou most undirstonde concerning; must  
 That Crist in His godhede is Lord of alle thingis,  
 As testimonie of Scripture preveth in many places. attests

<sup>1</sup> *But turn their attentions to wealthier men and find their lodgings*

<sup>2</sup> *What shall those persons say who hire out their churches*

*Friar Daw's Reply*

- |     |   |  |
|-----|---|--|
| 705 | As touching His manheed, He was nedи and pore,<br>For of his nede spake David in his Psalms:<br><i>Ego, inquit, mendicus sum et pauper;</i><br><i>et Dominus sollicitus est mei.</i><br>And aftir Austin and Jerom this word of Crist was seid,                                     | <i>Concerning</i>  |
| 710 | So thanne these twey stonden wel to-gidere:<br>That Crist aftir oo kynde was Lord of alle,<br>And aftir that other nedide to begge.<br>For if Crist seie soth, Him-silf ne hadde noon harborow<br>To resten in His owne heed, and steken out the stormes —                          | <i>two agree with one another</i><br><i>according to one nature (divine)</i><br><i>needed to beg</i><br><i>had no shelter</i><br><i>shut out</i> |
| 715 | <i>Vulpes, inquit, etc., ubi caput suum reclinet.</i><br>And if we shulen yeve credence to doctours wordes,<br>Heere what seith Seint Jerom and Seint Bernard also:<br><i>Cave, inquit Jeronimus, ne mendicante Deo</i><br><i>tuo alienas divicias ageas. Et Bernardus.</i>         | <i>shall give</i>  |
| 720 | <i>Ut te, Domine, per omnia nostre paupertati</i><br><i>conformares, quasi unus in turba pauperum</i><br><i>stipem per hostia mendicabas.</i><br>Wherfore thou feynest fonnedli that oure Lord we sclaudre<br>Or ellis oure holy doctours diden not her dever.                      | <i>foolishly pretend</i><br><i>else; their duty</i><br><i>don't wonder that</i><br><i>once; food-buyer</i>                                       |
| 725 | Jak, have no merveyle that I speke Latyn,<br>For oones I was a manciple at Mertoun Halle,<br>And there I lernede Latyn bi roote of clerkes.<br>Of clamour us also begging thou chaterist and crijst, <sup>1</sup><br>And seist it is uttirli forbodun in Goddis lawe.               | <i>by clerical rote learning</i><br><i>forbidden</i>   |
| 730 | Jak, the blynde begger sat bi the weye<br>And lowde criede upon Crist, as the Gospel tellith,<br>But him was yovun iye-sight, for al his grete noise.<br>And also the pore man at the specious yate<br>Praiede to the apostlis to parten of her almes,                              | <i>loudly</i><br><i>given his eyesight despite</i><br><i>poor; beautiful gate</i><br><i>Prayed; share their</i>                                  |
| 735 | And ther the begger unreproved, of crokidesse he was heelid.<br>I foryete not the lazар that beggide of the riche,<br>And criede lowde at his gate to cachen his almes.<br>Where redist thou that he was repreved of his begging?<br>I rede wel he was ful soone in Abrahams bosum. | <i>lameness</i><br><i>don't neglect; begged</i><br><i>receive</i><br><i>have you read; rebuked for</i><br><i>in Paradise</i>                     |
| 740 | Thou makist also more ado for writing in oure tablis  | <i>tablets</i>   |

---

<sup>1</sup> You also jabber and cry out against noise in our begging

*Friar Daw's Reply*

- Of sich mennes names that yeven us her almes,  
Wenynge that God were a fool not knowinge mennes dedes  
But if he were mengid bi weie of your writyng.  
Jak, writyng was ordeyned for sliperneſſe of mynde,  
745 Not of God but of us men, hirt in oure nature,  
And bi bodili buystousnesſe fallen to foryetyng.  
Now ſpecial preier, as clerkes ſeien, moſte helpeth ſoulis,  
And that may not be done withouten ſpecial mynde.  
Thanne for oure forgetfulneſſe it nedith us to noten,  
750 And this is cauſe whi we writun in oure tablis.  
And Esdras wroot a newe book to have the lawe in mynde.  
To Seint Joon in the Apocalips it was bodun also  
That privy revelacion to writun in his book,  
For unstabilneſſe of mynde, ſeith the comoun glose.  
755 "Whi also," thou axiſt, "make ye ſo many maistris,  
Ayens Cristis bidding in the holi Gospel?"  
Forſothe, Jak, among other, this is a lewid queſtion.  
Taking heed to thin aſtaate, thou art but a knave,  
And yit thou lokist that thi knave ſhulde calle thee maistir.  
760 Leve Jacke Jawdewyn, how kepiſt thou the Gospel?<sup>1</sup>  
Never the les, to thi queſtion anſwerith the comoun glose:  
That neithir the acte of teching, neithir the acte of maistir  
Ben forbodun of Crist, but oonli ambicion  
And the nyce appetiſte of worldly worship.  
765 Thou askiſt also ferthermore whos ben alle oure jewels,  
And we ſeyen we han right nougħt in propre ne in comoun,<sup>2</sup>  
But gederen the goodes of the rewme to make the Pope riche.  
Jak, the two and twentithe pope, Joon, wroot ayens thi mater,  
And Frere Menours ayens him, as her actis shewen.  
770 Examyne her actis and loke who hath the beter.  
I knowe noon other ordre thi perfitneſſe approveth.  
Thou grucchist also that we gon two of us to-gider  
For of the perfit apostlis wenten but oone aloone.  
Thou ſeift that we pretenden the perfeccioun of apostlis —  
775 Parfay, Jak, in Scripture thou failiſt here ful foule!
- such; who give  
Supposing  
Unless; reminded  
established; frailty  
by; impaired  
corporal failings; forgetting  
considerations  
(the) reason why  
commanded  
secret  
instability; explanation  
you ask; masters  
Against Christ's command  
other [things]  
estate; only; servant  
make sure  
  
Was forbidden by  
foolish aspiration  
  
collect; realm  
against; matter  
their records witness  
better [arguments]  
fraternal order; perfection  
complain; walk  
  
err; most grievously

<sup>1</sup> Dear Jack Ignoramus, how do you observe the Gospel?

<sup>2</sup> And we say we don't have anything of our own or in common

### *Friar Daw's Reply*

- |     |  |   |
|-----|--|---|
|     | Herdes thou nevere the processe of the Actis of the apostlis,<br>In what maner the Holigoost chees Bernabe and Poule <sup>1</sup><br>To gone bothe to-gidere and Cristis seed to sowun?<br>And aftirward whan Bernabas from Poul was departid,   | Barnabas<br><i>To go; sow</i>   |
| 780 | Another felowe Tymothe toke Poul to his feere.<br>And yit thei weren perfit bi fastinge and bi preieris,<br>And resseyved hadde the Holigoost bi the apostlis hondis.<br>And thus we gon two to-gider folwinge her stappis,<br>But more for the mysterie includid in the noumbre,                  | <i>took Paul as his companion</i><br><i>perfect; prayers</i><br><i>had received; from</i><br><i>go; their footsteps</i><br><i>symbolism</i> |
| 785 | Forto do workes of charite fulfilling the lawe.<br>And two tablis of Moises there the lawe was writun,<br>And two cherubyns in the temple, and two in the tabernacle.<br>It was not good to Adam forto be aloone,<br>And Crist seith "Woo" to sool in aventure that he falle.                      | <i>tablets of Moses on which</i><br><i>masses</i><br><i>don't know</i><br><i>such [people]</i><br><i>Woe; the solitary life</i>             |
| 790 | Also for fraternite ful harde thou us holdist,<br>To graunt part of merit and also of messis,<br>Because that we witen not whether that we ben in grace or in synne,<br>And happili for we praien for suche that ben dampned in helle.<br>Jak, if this cause were good, al preier were reproved,   | <i>masses</i><br><i>mass</i><br><i>prayers</i><br><i>prayer</i><br><i>would be repudiated</i>   |
| 795 | And thanne were set at nought bothe messe and matynes,<br>And holy bedis and orisons seid in Holi Chirche.<br>Thanne shulde we leve Cristis bede, the holy <i>Pater Noster</i> ,<br>Thanne was the <i>Memento</i> put falsly in the masse,<br>And Hooli Chirche voidli or madli biddith preye,     | <i>vainly; commands to pray</i>   |
| 800 | And alle siche yonge impossibilitees folowen therof.<br>For who is that that knowith him-silf worthi forto preien,<br>But God bi revelacion speciali wolde it shewe?<br>For noman, seith the Scripture, woot whether he is worthi love,<br>Or ellis maugree but God it oonli knowith. <sup>2</sup> | <i>immature</i><br><i>that [man] who</i><br><i>knows</i>  |
| 805 | And who can telle, ferthermore, whiche shulde be dampned,<br>Sith Goddis privy domes man mai not comprehendē?<br>And so shal noman preie for other, ne noman for him-silf.<br>Jak, se now thin errorr and sumtyme sesse for shame,<br>For thou jangelist as a jay and woost not what thou meenest. | <i>which persons</i><br><i>God's secret judgments</i><br><i>for a while cease out of</i><br><i>jay-bird</i>                                 |
| 810 | More over thou movest multipliying of so many freris —   | <i>posit</i>  |

<sup>1</sup> In what manner the Holy Ghost chose Barnabas and Paul

<sup>2</sup> Or else he only knows despite what God knows

### *Friar Daw's Reply*

- |     |   |   |
|-----|---|---|
|     | Whiche encresen combrouseli ayens Goddis wille<br>(Sith preestis with other religious myghte serve the peple) —   | <i>increase unmanageably</i>  |
|     | For twelve apostlis and fewe moo serveden al the world,   | <i>little more</i>  |
|     | And mo fyngries on myn hond than foure and the thombe   |   |
| 815 | Amenusith my worching more than it acresith. <sup>1</sup><br>And so thou seist that freris letten Cristis growinge in to heven. <sup>2</sup><br>Jacke, thou weenest thou wynne lond but thou concludist thi-silf.   | <i>think; contradict</i>  |
|     | Thou seist that God alle thingis hath maad in mesure, weighte, and noumbre,   |   |
|     | And that every frere is sum thing thou maist not denye;   |   |
| 820 | And thou seist freris ben maad ayens Goddis wille: —<br>Than hath God maad sum thing that He wolde not make,<br>And so His sovereyne goodnesse is contrarious to Him-silfe.   | <i>are created against<br/>He didn't wish to make<br/>contrary<br/>sayings</i>                |
|     | Lo, Jakke Jospinel! What folowith of thi sawis!<br>Jakke, if than a fewe moo myghte serven al the world,  |   |
| 825 | Thanne myghte a fewe preestes serven a litil rewme.<br>Whi renne thanne these yonge clerkes so faste to the ordres<br>To encresen preestes above many hundridis?  | <i>realm<br/>run</i>  |
|     | And if freris ben combrouse, preestis ben wel more!<br>Or ellis telle a beter skil thanne thou hast begunne,  | <i>burdensome; even more so<br/>better argument</i>   |
| 830 | Whi the toon is chargeaunt more than the tother.<br>Also the ensaumple of thin hond is no thing to purpos,<br>For kynde hath determinyd the noumbre of thi fyngries,<br>And if it passe noumbre it is clepid monstruosite.                                | <i>the one; more persuasive<br/>example; not relevant<br/>nature<br/>exceeds; monstrosity</i> |
|     | But God and Holi Chirche determinyd noo noumbre   |   |
| 835 | Of preestis ne of freris to helpen mannis soule,<br>For the mo good ther ben the better is Cristis spouse,<br>And though fewer myghten done that that man nedith,<br>Yit many hondis to-gider maken light werk.   | <i>i.e., the Church</i>   |
|     | Another mater thou movest, Jak, moost to be chargid,  |   |
| 840 | Of the solempne sacrament of Cristis owne bodye,<br>Conteyned in figure of breed, sacrifice for synne.<br>Thou drawist a thorn out of thin hele and puttist it in oure,<br>Thou berist us on honde that we seien there is not Cristis bodye, <sup>3</sup> | <i>broached; credited<br/>subject (substance)</i>   |
|     | But roundnesse and whitenesse, and accident withouten suget.  |   |

<sup>1</sup> Diminishes my ability more than it increases it

<sup>2</sup> And so you say that friars hinder Christ's Church from growing up to heaven

<sup>3</sup> You accuse us of saying Christ's body is not there (in the bread)

*Friar Daw's Reply*

- 845 Jak, we seie with Holy Chirche that ther is Cristis bodi,  
 And not material breed with Wiclyf your maistir,  
 The whiche put ther but as a signe and not verre Cristis bodi, *truly*  
 Afir a manere spekyng that Holy Chirche usith — *According to*  
 As we clepen Crist a stoon, a lomb, and a lioun,
- 850 And noon of these is Crist, but oonli in figure. *figure of speech*  
 This heresie holde not we but *ye* his false folowers,  
 Privyly as *ye* doren and opinli *ye* wolden, *dare; [as] you wish*  
 Ne were the sharp ponishinge of your former fadirs.<sup>1</sup>  
 And now I wil thee telle the freris *Confiteor* *Confession*
- 855 Touching to this sacrament how that thei bileven:  
 Thei seie breed is turned in to flesh, and wyne in to blood, *flesh*  
 Thourgh the myght of oure God and vertue of His wordis. *Through; power; strength*  
 The flesh is mete, the blood is drynke, and Crist dwellith, *remains*  
 No thing rasyd, no thing dividid, but oonli broken in signe,<sup>2</sup>
- 860 And as moche is in oo partie as is al the hole.<sup>3</sup>  
 Ther leeveth not of the breed but oonli the licensse, *remains nothing; appearance*  
 Which that abideth therinne noon substeyned substans.<sup>4</sup>  
 It is deth to yvel, lyf to good, encresing of oure grace. *evil*  
 It wole not be confect but oonli of a preest *created*
- 865 That lawfulli is ordeyned bi Holy Chirche keies. *keys*  
 And so carpenters ne sowters, card makers ne powchers,  
 Drapers ne cutellers, girdelers, coferers, ne corvysers,<sup>5</sup> *cobblers; pouch-makers*  
 Ne no manere of artificeris this sacrament mowe treten  
 But the privite of preesthode wer prickid in her soulis.<sup>6</sup> *craftsmen*
- 870 And yit your secte susteynes wommen to seie massis,  
 Shewyng to trete a sacrament as preestes that thei were,<sup>7</sup>  
 Reversyng holy doctours and decree of Holy Chirche.  
 Allas! your brymme blastis awake the wilde wawis, *fierce; waves*

---

<sup>1</sup> *Were it not for the harsh punishments of your founding fathers*

<sup>2</sup> *Not at all obliterated, not at all divided, but only broken as a sign*

<sup>3</sup> *And [Christ] is as much in one part as in the whole [wafer]*

<sup>4</sup> *"Whatever remains in it is quintessential matter"* (PLH)

<sup>5</sup> *Cloth-makers, nor cutlers, belt-makers, coffer-makers, nor shoemakers*

<sup>6</sup> *"Unless the sacred mystery of priesthood should be planted in their souls?" (PLH)*

<sup>7</sup> *Offering to administer a sacrament as if they were priests*

*Friar Daw's Reply*

	And scailen sely Petership and putt it in highe perile.	i.e., the papacy
875	Ne were God the giour and kept the stern, With the sterne stormes that refulli ye reisen, Al shulde wende to wrak in to the waast watriſ. <sup>1</sup>	guide (pilot) stir up
	The releef of Cristis feeste ye renden and rapyn That his almners the postlis gaderid to-gidere	succor; tear up and destroy disciples; apostles
880	And delith it to dogges and ravenouse beestes; And the prescioouse perlis ye strownun to hogges: The sutil metis of Scripturis to cherlis stomakes, And maken hem als comoun as the cart weye, Ayens Pouſis ſentence and Pouſis owne doctrine:	give it out to pearls; scatter subtle food; churl's as common; cart road
885	<i>Non, inquit Paulus, potui vobis scribere quasi spiritualibus, sed quasi carnalibus, etc.</i> Se also what Crist ſeith in the holy Gospel: <i>Multa habui vobis dicere: sed non etc.</i>	
	Also in many other place thus ſpekiſt He to His perfit diſcipliſ:	
890	<i>Vobis datum est noſcere miſterium, regni Dei.</i> <i>Ceteris autem in parabolam etc.</i>	
	Than the lewide and the lerid aught not yliche; <sup>2</sup> The Scripturis ben ſcatrid in his privy pointes. <sup>3</sup>	
	Jak, thou ſeift at the last that charite is chacid,	ouſted
895	To vengyn our defautis and mende us of oure myſſe, <sup>4</sup> Levyng eure rotyn ritiſ, folowinge Goddiſ lawe.	
	Jak, oure ritiſ ben nougħt rotyn, her rootiſ ben al freiſhe,	corrupt riſes
	Plantid in the Gospel, as I ſeide biforeſ.	
	But, good Jak, your grace, where be ye foundid?	
900	Not in Goddiſ Gospel but in Sathanas piſtile,	(ſee note)
	Wher of ſorowe and of ſorcerie noon is to ſeken, <sup>5</sup>	
	But al maner of doloſiſe to you is enditiſ,	anguish; written
	As in thi lewid daliaunce apertli thou haſt preved. <sup>6</sup>	
	But moche mawgre mote thou haue thus to frayn a frere	ſpite; question

<sup>1</sup> All ſhould go to ruin in the empty waters

<sup>2</sup> Then the ignorant and the learned do not poſſeſſ the ſame understanding

<sup>3</sup> Scripture is diſperſed in its ſecret places

<sup>4</sup> To avenge our faults and amend us of our miſdeeds

<sup>5</sup> In which you don't need to look far for ſorrow and ſorcery

<sup>6</sup> As in your ignorant tittle-tattle you haue openly demonstrated

### *Friar Daw's Reply*

- |     |   |                                   |
|-----|---|-----------------------------------|
| 905 | That slyl wolde have silent aweye and noman have greved. <sup>1</sup><br>But for thi grete labour thi gardoun thou shalt gete:<br>Thou shalt have the Popis curse and al Holi Chirchis.   | reward                            |
|     | And if thou sett this at nought, God mowe sende thee more:<br>The curse that He hath yovun to Caym, and Choreis sone also;  | count; nothing                    |
| 910 | Thou shalt also have the curse that Crist yaf to Phariseis,<br>Figurid in the figge tree that nevere bare fruyte aftir.   | gave; Pharisees                   |
|     | Thou shalt have the weleaway of Gelboth hilles,<br>The sorowe of Sodome and al sinful citeis.   | sorrowing; Mount Gilboa<br>cities |
|     | Take for thi faire speche the preier of <i>Deus laudem</i> ,  |                                   |
| 915 | The greable gardoun for al opin sclaudris. <i>comforting reward; public slander</i><br>Thou shalt have the malisoun of Moab and Ariel,<br>The benysoun of Bethsaida shal make thy beddis heed. <i>prayers more attentive</i>                                  | curse                             |
|     | And, Jakke, for thou apprisist not the curse of Seint Franceis,<br>But scornyst the malisoun of the fourre ordris,  | didn't value<br>malediction       |
| 920 | Take the malisoun that God yaf to brekers of His lawe,<br>In the book of Deutronomye, the seven and twenty chapitre.  | curse; gave                       |
|     | But evere beware of Cristis curse and of cattis tailis,<br>The which, if thou have grace to cacchen, nevere shal thou thryve.   | (see note)                        |
|     | Now fare forthe to thi fourmures and, Jak, thou hem telle   | teachers                          |
| 925 | The mater of oure talkynge, and loke how hem likith; <i>it pleases them</i><br>And if hem thinke not thi sawes sufficientli assoilid, <i>words adequately repudiated</i><br>Lat hem senden ayen, it shal be amendid. <i>Let them report again; dealt with</i> |                                   |
|     | And sai hem that it nedith not to sharpen oure clerkes, <sup>2</sup><br>For Frere Dawe is scharpe ynowgh for al sich enditinge.   |                                   |
|     | enough; such composing  |                                   |
| 930 | Fare wele, Jak Jawdewyne, I thee God bitake,<br>And nomore of freris I thee rede to preche.   | commend you to God                |
|     | To lower state than thei ben thou maist hem not dryve,<br>And if thei evere come to higher — the wers shal thou thryve!   | I advise you<br>worse; prosper    |

*Explicit dictamen Fratris Daw Topias,  
quem in fine appellat Johannem Walssingham,  
contra questiones Johannis Uplond.*

<sup>1</sup> Who slyly wished to have slunk away and no man [would have] cared

<sup>2</sup> And say to them that there is no need to hone our clerks' wits

### **Notes**

- 1–2     *Who shal graunten.* Based on Jeremiah 9.1. The apocalyptic opening was commonplace in fraternal writings and complaint literature. A promendicant Latin poem begins with that scriptural passage, as does John Pecham's defense of the friars, *Tractatus pauperis contra insipientem*.
- 3       *For charite is chasid.* Apparently an allusion to the “cooling of charity” motif from Matt. 24.12, which was regularly understood as a sure sign of Doomsday’s approach. Ironically, the cooling of charity was more often invoked against friars than, as here, against Lollards.
- 4       *state.* Estate or condition. John Gower often ascribed the lack of order in his times to decadent political conditions. See also *JU* note to line 6.
- 5–6      *Now apperith the prophecie.* Rev. 6.12–13 and Joel 2.28. This political use of prophecy derives from Latin tradition and specifically from “The Prophecies of Merlin” in Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *History of the Kings of Britain*. See also “Political Prophecies” in *Historical Poems of the XIVth and XVth Centuries*, ed. R. H. Robbins (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), pp. 118–21.
- 11       *twelve pointes.* Twelve stars (Rev. 12.1).
- 15       *ground of Goddis.* PLH, after a manuscript corrector of D, reads *grounding of bis*, but the MS and Wr read *ground in goddis*. I emend to *ground of Goddis*. The phrasing comes from *JU*. See note to *JU* 79.
- 18       *poverte that Crist hath approved.* Luke 6.20: “Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.” Daw refers to the general attacks on mendicancy in *JU* and other Lollard treatises.
- 21       *Foxes frettid in fere.* An allusion to the story of Samson and the Philistines (Judges 15.4–5). Samson loosed three hundred foxes, joined at the tails and carrying torches, into the Philistines’ wheat; the flames also burned the

### *Notes*

vineyards and oliveyards. The allusion here is meant to convey general devastation.

- 23     *Achan*. Achan stole from Jericho and was stoned in the Vale of Achor (Joshua 7). D reads *anchor*; but Wr and PLH emend to *Achan*. “Substitution of man for place is demanded by the sense” (PLH).
- 24     *Lollardis*. Lollards were often accused of substituting fables for Scripture, although they also attacked others for telling fables and stories. See the exchange between Host and Parson in *The Parson’s Prologue*.
- 25–26    *Dathan and Abiron*. Dathan, Abiram, and Korah, sons of Levi, aspired to the priesthood but God destroyed them, sending them down to Sheol (Numbers 16).
- 27     *Baal preestes*. An allusion to the priests of Baal who, at Elijah’s instructions, ask their god to send fire for their sacrifice. When Baal fails but the Lord sends fire for Elijah’s sacrifice, all the priests of Baal are killed (3 Kings 18.20–40).
- 31–66    Reply to *JU* 56–63.
- 31     *On wounder wise*. In his Notes to *JU*, Skeat observes that the author of *FDR* sometimes echoes Upland’s phrasing, as in this phrase, “On wounder wise,” which mocks *JU*’s “and in a wondir wise” (57).
- 34     *Wede, corn*. The phrasing is from *JU* 60 (which, however, reads in the MSS either *wode corn* or *corne wode*). PLH emends to *whete corn* reading *whete, corn*; I emend *JU* to *wede, corn* based on this line (and 55); but the correct reading may be *wede corn* (= wheat-corn). Or perhaps *wede* means “weeds”, in which case there could be an allusion in 31–35 to Matt. 13.25, 38–39 (the parable of the weeds).
- 41     *leyen hem a water*. An idiom for “overcome them” or “set them to rest.” See *PPC* 782.
- 42     *summe ben lewid, summe ben shrewid*. A proverbial or formulaic expression that appears often in Middle English lyric poetry.

### *Friar Daw's Reply*

- 45 *Frere Daw Topias.* The name *Daw* may be explained as a completion of “Jackdaw,” with “Jack” referring to Jack Upland, whose tract *FDR* answers. The name *Topias* seems to allude to Chaucer’s Sir Thopas, anti-hero of Chaucer the pilgrim’s first attempt at a Canterbury tale. Sir Thopas, a bumbling, comic knight, is a parody of the hero of tag-line romances, and his name, “topaz,” a girl’s name, suggests that gem’s lapidarian perfection: purity. The point seems to be that Friar Daw Topias, like his romance namesake, undermines himself such that he becomes a figure of ridicule. It is odd that the narrator of this supposedly polemical work refers to himself in the third person and characterizes himself as “lewid as a leke.”
- 46–51 D and Wr print these lines in the following order: 47, 49, 50, 46, 48, 51. PLH prints them in a different order: 47, 46, 48, 49, 50, 51.
- 49–51 *That we ben not lege men . . . obeien to bishopes.* See *JU* 58–59 and 145. Daw acknowledges that friars report immediately to their Provincial and then to the Pope; they obey bishops but “not so fer forth as seculer preestes,” who report to a more rigorous hierarchy than friars.
- 51–52 *We obeien.* Friars did not answer to bishops but rather directly to the Pope through their Provincial. The secular clergy often complained that friars circumvented the traditional ecclesiastical hierarchy through their own chain of command. See FitzRalph’s *Defensio curatorum*, a widely disseminated work.
- 55–56 *Wede, corn . . . ferme the dikes.* Daw points out that friars, unlike commoners or “Jack Upland,” do not perform manual labor. This replies to *JU* 59–60.
- 57–58 *Although Poul.* See especially 1 Thess. 2.9, where Paul mentions both working and preaching; and Acts 6 (division of labor between working and preaching).
- 66 *But thi venym.* Compare Chaucer’s Pardon, who says of his preaching: “Thus spitte I out my venym under hewe / Of hoolynesse, to semen hooly and trewe” (VI [C] 421–22).
- 67–74 Daw’s reply to *JU* 64–65.

### *Notes*

- 71      *wickide worme – Wiclyf by name.* Daw indicates that John Wyclif (d. 1384) and his followers, the Lollards, are the enemy. Later on, Daw refers to Upland’s “sory secte” (119). Wyclif’s attacks on the Church ranged far beyond criticism of mendicancy. Both the Franciscan friar William Woodford and the Benedictine monk Uthred of Boldon *inter alia* assailed Wyclif’s writings. See also *PPC* 528 note.
- 72      *cisme.* Probably a reference to general divisions in the Church rather than to the Great Schism, which began in 1378 with the election of Urban VI (the Italian Pope) and the subsequent election of Gregory VII (the French Pope).
- 75–83    Reply to *JU* 65–67.
- 75      *seven sacramentes.* The rites of baptism, confirmation, the Eucharist, penance, extreme unction, ordination, and matrimony.
- 84–92    Reply to *JU* 68–69.
- 84–85    *fife ordres . . . foure.* For the four orders (Franciscans, Dominicans, Austins, and Carmelites), see *PPC*. The fifth order might be the Crutched Friars (PLH), but Daw himself is confused as to the fifth order.
- 87      *I preise not at a peese.* See the note to *PIT* 1163.
- 88      *Fiton.* PLH shows that the Vulgate uses “pythones” for fiends speaking from the womb (Deut. 18.11 and Isaiah 19.3).
- 89      *thi god is a-slepe.* Elijah mocked the prophets of Baal, who could get no response from their god (3 Kings 18.27).
- 92      *than Balames ass.* The ass spoke to Balaam, but it was the Lord, rather than the ass, who actually spoke (Numbers 22.21–33). The story is a cautionary tale about obedience to the Lord.
- 93–104   Reply to *JU* 69–70.
- 102     *forme . . . lowe chaier.* Daw implies that the Lollard curriculum for “men’s wives” involves “study” close to the floor.

*Friar Daw's Reply*

- 103     *in your lawe.* PLH omits this phrase as hypermetrical, and comments: “*in your lawe* probably interpolated because the first half-line imputes a moral perfection that in the eyes of the orthodox no Lollard could lay claim to.”
- 104     *callen hem forth her.* PLH emends to *call on men for þer* but the emendation is unnecessary. See Hudson, *The Premature Reformation*, p. 189 note 83. I adopt Hudson’s emendation of *redip* for *nedip*. Hudson glosses: “and ask for lessons for themselves, saying ‘Sister, read to me’” (p. 189).
- 105–11     Reply to *JU* 70.
- 106     Perhaps an allusion to Luke 2.49, where Jesus protests that in God’s house he “must be about my Father’s business.”
- 112–28     Reply to *JU* 71.
- 114     *a rewle.* See Matt. 7.20: “Wherefore by their fruits you shall know them.”
- 121     *Who tythith.* Matt. 23.23: “Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites: because you tithe mint, and anise, and cummin, and have left the weightier things of the law, judgment, and mercy, and faith.”
- 122     *Sterching your faces.* Matt. 6.16: “And when you fast, be not as the hypocrites, sad. For they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast.”
- 123     *Blaunchid graves.* Matt. 23.27: “Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites: because you are like to whitened sepulchres, which outwardly appear to men beautiful, but within are full of dead men’s bones, and of all filthiness.”
- 126     *Thourgh quenching of torches.* PLH cites the Dominican coat of arms, whose Scottish version features a dog with a firebrand running behind St. Dominic.
- 130     *seven trompes.* See Rev. 8–11, esp. 11.15. Lines 129–209 paraphrase Revelations 8–11 and continue the apocalyptic theme broached in the poem’s opening lines. Lines 129–224 reply to *JU* 28–72.

### *Notes*

- 134–35 *he noieth . . . myngid*. PLH emends to *noiep . . . myngid* because of the “clumsy” syntax. I have adopted *myngid* in line 135 but have retained MS *he noieth* in line 134 despite the somewhat awkward syntax.
- 138 *sunderers*. PLH’s good emendation for MS *hinderers*. *Sunderers* completes the alliteration and makes sense of line 139: “divisioun’ ben callid.”
- 140 *love-daiies*. A time when disputes could be settled, including out of court settlements, treaties, and other public and private arrangements. Daw claims that Lollard teachings cause so much discord that disputing parties cannot be reconciled in seven years. Ironically, friars were criticized for involving themselves in litigation during lovedays. Chaucer’s Friar Huberd meddled in legal arbitration: “In love-dayes ther koude he muchel help” (I 258).
- 144 *ben bitter therof*. In Rev. 8.9 the sea-creatures *die* after the mountain falls into the sea; but Daw speaks of figurative applications. Hence the Lollards send Satan into souls, and he causes people to become obstinate of heart and caustic (145–47). Compare Chaucer’s *Parson’s Tale*, on Envy: “Thanne cometh eek bitternesse of herte, thurgh which bitternesse every good dede of his neighebor semeth to hym bitter and unsavory” (X 510).
- 151 *With men*. PLH provides this reading, giving *wipinne?* as the MS reading. Wr reads *withinne*. PLH comments: “Abbreviation mark misplaced, but the scribe probably intended *wipinne*. It makes odd sense in the context; before a plural object *wip* can mean ‘among’ (*OED*, *with* ii.11 = *among* A.6) which is preferable to ‘within’ in any of its senses.”
- 157 *Maximine ne Maniche*. Two unorthodox thinkers: Maximinus, an Arian heretic, who debated with St. Augustine on the Trinity in 427–28; and Mani or Manes, who lent his name to a dualistic strain of medieval Christian heresy (the Manichaeans). When Daw says *Maniche* he probably refers to later medieval dualism, which was broadly attributed to Mani. Lollardy and Manichaeism share an oppositional stance toward the established Church.
- 159 *fourthe*. The MS, PLH, and Wr read *iiij<sup>e</sup>* in line 159 and *iij<sup>e</sup>* (“thridde”) in line 160.
- 162 *westheth*. Thus the MS. Wr reads *wescheth* and glosses “screameth?” PLH emends to *scricheth*, and comments: “The corruption results from misjoining of

### *Friar Daw's Reply*

original *ve scricheth*. ‘Screech’ (*OED*, *scrīch* v.) is used from early ME. of the crying of birds.” The general sense is clear from Rev. 8.13.

- 170     *fift*. MS and Wr read *first*, but PLH correctly emends to *fift*. See Rev. 9.1.
- 192     *At the sixt*. MS and Wr read *In þe siȝt of*. I adopt PLH’s emendation, which is based on Rev. 9.13.
- 194     *thridde*. MS and Wr read *ferthe*. PLH emends to *thridde* based on Rev. 9.15. The MS reading probably anticipates the four angels and four sins of line 195.
- 198     *Poverte preamblis*. MS, PLH, and Wr *poerte*. PLH emends *presse* to *preisen* and moves line 198 to before 202.
- 205     *noise in heven was made*. Thus MS and Wr. PLH emends to “voises in heuen seide” based on Rev. 11.15 and comments: “The generalized reading of the MS. is slightly uncomfortable with the following ‘that’ clause.”
- 208     *Shulde for a short tyme*. There seems to be a verb, such as “rule” or “govern,” missing from this line.
- 210–15     *thus to dubby with Scripture*. Lines 210–15 = perhaps a reply to *JU* 73–81, or perhaps to the general tenor of *JU*. Daw’s confessions of ignorance seem to go beyond “the convention of simulated ignorance” of *PPC* 845–47 alleged by PLH.
- 212–13     *an a from the wynd mylne . . . bole foot*. Daw professes to be virtually illiterate, although he comes close to saying he doesn’t know a hack from a handsaw. The pose is apparently meant to be satirical in that he may not know his letters and yet he understands perfectly well that Upland is a heretic (214–16). See also 648–49: “Jak, I am not lettered but I am Frere Dawe, / And can telle wel a fyn what heresie amountith.”
- 225–33     Reply to *JU* lines 79–81.
- 225     *holilich*. MS (margin) *holilicch*, correcting *holy chirche*. PLH emends to *holily*.
- 227     *how Judicare cam in to Crede*. A reference to the phrase *inde venturus est iudicare vivos et mortuos* of the Apostles’ Creed. It seems to mean “how the section

### *Notes*

on Judgment came to be placed in the Creed." Utley comments: "To say that a man knows how *Judicare* comes in the Creed would mean in general that he *knows* his Creed, that he rightly performs his religious duties and realizes their significance, that he knows 'how to die' and how to be prepared for the day when Christ will come to judge the quick and the dead." A frequent charge against friars was that they did not know the Apostles' Creed. See *PPC* 62–63 and note.

- 232–33 *unkissid is unknowun . . . Robyn Hood.* PLH directs to Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* 1.809 and 2.859–61 and Gower's *Confessio Amantis* 2.467. See also B. J. and W. H. Whiting, *Proverbs, Sentences, and Proverbial Phrases* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), R156.
- 236–57 Reply to *JU* 82.
- 239–43 The Holy Ghost proceeds from both the Father and the Son. Daw seems to misunderstand Jack Upland's question about the fraternal orders since he responds generally about God's disposition and "ordering" of all things.
- 245 *thre ierarchies, dividid in ordres nyne.* The angelic orders were, in descending order, seraphim, cherubim, thrones, dominations, principalities, powers, virtues, archangels, angels. The MS and PLH read *iij ierarchies*; Wr *iij. ierarchies*.
- 251 *Of templeres, hospitalers.* Both the Knights Templar and the Knights Hospitalers were crusading orders: the Poor Knights of Christ and the Knights of St. John respectively. They became wealthy and powerful through their various military campaigns. Chaucer's pilgrim Knight may have been a Hospitaler. Canons, both regular and secular, were members of a religious order attached to a cathedral. They were frequent objects of satirical attack, as in Chaucer's *Canon's Yeoman's Tale*.
- 252–53 *Seint Thomas bokes.* Thomas Aquinas, a Dominican, defended canons, monks, and Knights Templar in *Contra impugnantes Dei cultum et religionem*. See PLH's note.
- 255 *manniskynde* (PLH's emendation). The MS reads *cowde calkyn al manere kyndes* perhaps anticipating, through homeoteleuton, *how many kyndes* of 256.
- 258–70 Reply to *JU* 83–90.

*Friar Daw's Reply*

- 266     *Lust of flesh . . . hyvnyge.* A reference to the three temptations of 1 John 2.16: “because all that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.” This passage was one of the chief texts for medieval *contemptus mundi*. By denying the devil three times, Christ is said to have “reversed” or resisted the three temptations.
- 271–321     Reply to JU 91–96.
- 271     *Jacke boy.* *Boy* = a term of contempt similar to *sirrah*; it translates roughly as “rascal” or “lout.”
- 283–86     *two perfyt lyves.* Mary and Martha, John and Peter, and Rachel and Leah were traditional pairs for exemplifying the contemplative and active ways of life. In the Epistle of James, the issue is between faith and works (e.g., chapter 2).
- 287–89     *These lyves ben groundid.* PLH translates: “These lives are founded on love by diverse classes of people, by men who, establishing separate orders as a consequence of their vows, and affording us a manifest example, may teach us the Christian life.”
- 315–18     *the epistle of James.* See James 1.27 which, according to Daw, defines both the active and contemplative lives.
- 322–29     Reply to JU 95–96.
- 328–29     *What we yeven.* PLH translates: “it is unnecessary to tell you what we give to the poor, for an act of charity ought to be secret and since it [sc. the act of charity = what we give] will suffer severely at your hands [i.e., come into your possession].”
- 330–50     Reply to JU 99–108.
- 334–35     *Maniches errors.* Daw refers to the charge against the Manichaean dualists that they encouraged promiscuity because of the Manichaean strictures against marriage. Upland had attacked friars with being wedded to their orders more firmly than some husbands were wedded to their wives.

### *Notes*

- 336 PLH suggests Prov. 7.19 as a possible source of this line: "For my husband is not at home, he is gone a very long journey." He also cites an antifraternal lyric ("Preste, ne monke, ne ȝit chanoun") that contains lines to the effect that a friar will do "his will" with "oure dame" while the "gode man is fro hame" (HP XIV & XV, p. 158).
- 343 *And so apostasie.* PLH suggests: "And so we are able to commit apostasy in our souls, our religious habits notwithstanding."
- 349–50 These lines might be translated: "And, Jack, our habits no more make (us) monks and friars than your saddle makes your horse a mare."
- 351–57 Reply to *JU* 109–11.
- 358–81 Reply to *JU* 112–14.
- 360–67 *What meeneth thi tipet.* Daw's charges against a Lollard for extravagant clothing may seem inappropriate, since friars and not Lollards were proverbial for fancy dress. Yet there are records of fraternal censures against Lollards with respect to clothing. Hudson cites William Woodford, a fourteenth-century Minorite, who claimed that "the Lollards wore widefurred hoods, fine linen, silver buckles, and furred gowns to their feet" (*The Premature Reformation*, p. 146).
- 360 *tipet.* A long, narrow strip of cloth attached to a hood. It was purely ornamental. Chaucer's Friar Huberd wears a tippet stuffed with gifts for wives (I 233–34).
- 364 PLH deletes this line altogether. In the MS it follows line 363, but PLH observes it does not belong there since 363–64 form a unit of thought. PLH speculates: "It may be that this is a piece of Lollard marginalia induced by indignation at 360–66 (perhaps with original *bi* for *be*), subsequently incorporated into the text." After this line, the line numbering of the present edition differs from PLH's.
- 369–70 *My grete coope . . . to frende.* Highly ironic, since antifraternal criticism alleged that the large copes signified the very opposite of charity. PLH emends *frende* to *fremde*, alien, stranger, but *fremde* was often spelled with an *n*. See *PIT* line 626.

*Friar Daw's Reply*

- 371      *cloith of Salomons table.* 1 Sam. 2.7?
- 372      *wedding garnement.* Matt. 22.11–12.
- 383–86    Reply to JU 115.
- 384      *moost greye clothis.* The lower classes were supposed to wear drab colors such as gray and black. Hudson quotes Thomas Netter as observing that the Lollards wore uniform garments of gray; but she also points out that “russet” and “gray” were only “chance variations in the same dyeing process” (*The Premature Reformation*, p. 146 and note 176). See also Wendy Scase, *Piers Plowman and the New Anticlericalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 168 and 219–20 note 18. The Franciscans, or Greyfriars, wore grey.
- 386      *And withinne.* Matt. 7.15, said of false prophets. This scriptural reference was often applied to friars rather than Lollards.
- 387–96    Reply to JU 115–17.
- 389–92    Here and elsewhere a conglomeration of biblical texts. *Et iterum* = and again. *Est tacens.* Eccl. 20.6–7: “[There is one that holdeth his peace, because he knoweth not what to say: and] there is another that holdeth his peace, knowing the proper time. A wise man will hold his peace till he see opportunity: [but a babbler, and a fool will regard no time].” *Tempus tacendi.* Eccles. 3.7: “A time to keep silence, and a time to speak.” *Sicut urbs.* Prov. 25.28: “As a city that lieth open and is not compassed with walls, so is a man that cannot refrain his own spirit in speaking.”
- 396      *And undur you.* PLH emends to *And blundir 'ze*, and translates: “and if, despite God’s grace, you both misinterpret, you will go very badly astray.” This emendation makes good sense of the line but is far away from the MS reading. Hudson accepts PLH’s emendation, glossing *blundir 'ze bothe* as “go blindly both of you” and *marren* as “perish” (*Premature Reformation*, p. 190).
- 397–406    Reply to JU 117–18.
- 403      *But al is good ynowgh for thee.* This line seems to allude to the Lollard custom of eating meat on fast-days. Aston has suggested that Lollards turned meat-

### Notes

eating “at forbidden seasons [almost] into a kind of secret rite” (*Lollards and Reformers*, p. 93).

- 406      *this sermonie.* Wr and PLH emend to *serimonie* on the basis of *UR*. Daw seems to undercut himself once again as he admits that monks observe the rule of eating in refectory better than friars.
- 407–21    Reply to *JU* lines 119–27.
- 408–09    I adopt PLH’s emendation. The lines in the MS read: “Whi renne we to Rome to be assoilid of þe / Op þat we han maad & be popis freris.” Compare Chaucer’s description of the Parson, a parish priest, in the General Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*: “He sette nat his benefice to hyre / And leet his sheep encombred in the myre / And ran to Londoun unto Seinte Poules / To seken hym a chaunterie for soules, / Or with a bretherherd to been withholde; / But dwelte at hoom, and kepte wel his folde” (I 507–12).
- 422–32    Reply to *JU* 128–31.
- 427–30    *Quasi morientes.* 2 Cor. 6.9: “As dying, and behold we live.” The gloss, from the *Glossa ordinaria*, translates: “as dying, that is, from sin to sin, according to the opinion of certain people; and behold we live, that is, in good works according to truth itself.”
- 433–51    Reply to *JU* 132–34.
- 436–38    *transfigurid.* Matt. 17.1–9.
- 440–41    *Crist also took.* Matt. 20.17–19.
- 449–50    *To him.* See Prov. 10.19: “In the multitude of words there shall not want sin: but he that refraineth his lips is most wise.” See also Chaucer’s *Manciple’s Tale*: “The firste vertu, sone, if thou wolt leere, / Is to restreyne and kepe wel thy tonge; / Thus lerne children whan that they been yonge” (IX 332–34).
- 452–62    Reply to *JU* 135–38.
- 461      *Take hede.* I adopt PLH’s emendation from a marginal corrector. PLH also emends *is* to *I*.

### *Friar Daw's Reply*

- 463–77 Reply to JU 138–41.
- 463–64 *oure coveitise*. PLH emends to *coventis* because of line 465. But see also line 475 and note.
- 472–73 *To Wyndesore . . .* Daw names the chief royal residences, noted for their splendor.
- 475 The MS reads *couetise passip*, but PLH emends to *couentis passen* (as in 463). Here, although Daw speaks of convents, he also is talking about the sin that lies behind the sumptuous convents: avarice.
- 478–86 Reply to JU 147–50.
- 482–83 *pardonysters*. Much to the resentment of friars, pardoners collected alms at the hospitals of St. Thomas of Acre, St. Anthony, and St. Mary Rouncesval (Charing Cross). Chaucer's Pardoner preached and collected money at Rouncesval.
- 486 *hasilwode*. Proverbial for futility, as in Chaucer's *Troilus*: “From haselwode, there joly Robyn pleyde, / Shal come al that that thou abidest heere” (5.1174–75).
- 487–506 Reply to JU lines 154–67.
- 488 *Sith Crist paide tribut*. Matt. 22.21: “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God, the things that are God's.” The meaning of this passage was much debated in the late Middle Ages.
- 494 *To tax ne to taliage*. “This alliterative formula is an example of one of a number of stylistic devices widely used in English wills, charters, writs, and other legal instruments from very early times” (PLH).
- 499 *The prince of provynces*. Lam. 1.1: “the princes of provinces made tributary.”
- 500 *comun lawe*. “Probably the bull *Clericis laicos* of Boniface VIII, 1296 . . . asserting the complete immunity of the clergy from taxation by the state unless levied with papal permission, on threat of excommunication” (PLH).

### *Notes*

- 503      *persouns*. MS *perilous aftir*. A corrector has inserted *persouns* in the margin, which PLH adopts as the best sense for the passage.
- 505      *annuellers*. Those who sing a mass each year ("annually") for a fee. An *annuell* was money for saying a yearly mass. See *PPC* line 414 and note. Of the new taxation PLH comments: "Convocation of Canterbury, 3 October 1419, levied a noble from chaplains of parochial chantries (*annuellers*) of seven marks annual value and upwards."
- 507–14    Reply to *JU* 151–53.
- 507      *lettris of brothirhood*. Fraternal orders extended letters of fraternization to those who donated to the convent. See *PPC* 327 (and note) and 417.
- 509      *lettris*. PLH's emendation. There is a gap in the MS after *zour*.
- 511      *if autentike thei weren*. Official documents, and their seals, were often forged. Daw admits that his order authenticates letters and seals before taking action on them.
- 513      *blake bedes*. Either their thirteenth bead on their prayer beads or their wicked prayers.
- 515–23    Reply to *JU* 154–67.
- 516      *suffragies*. Prayers, esp. for the dead; from Lat. *suffragia*, pl. of *suffragium*, prayers. The *OED* cites pseudo-Wyclif: "No prelat may assoylle ne graunte hevenely suffragies."
- 518      *satyllyn*. The general sense of lines 515–18 seems to be that people, including friars, are human, hence fallible, and that prayers are efficacious only to a limited extent. They "settle" or "fall" on everyone in similar circumstances.
- 519      *trentels*. PLH emends to *trentel*. A trental was thirty masses for the dead.
- 524–37    Reply to *JU* 160–63.

*Friar Daw's Reply*

- 533     *me ne wote.* The MS reads *me wote*, and a corrector has added *ne*. PLH emends to *I ne wote*.
- 534     *helide a womman.* Matt. 9.20–21. The woman hemorrhaged for twelve years. Daw omits Christ's important statement to the woman in verse 22: "Be of good heart, daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole."
- 538–54   Reply to *JU* 168–71.
- 542–44   *Sayinge to the riche man.* Matt. 19.21: "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me."
- 555–77   Reply to *JU* 172–76.
- 557     *undirnym.* MS and Wr read *undermyn* with possibly the idea that charity subverts false imprisonment. But PLH emends to *undernym*, which makes better sense with *and so wynnen her brothir*; moreover, *JU* in the corresponding passage reads *vndirmyme hem in charite & so to wynne hem* (PLH's text). See also 567: *ben undirnomen*.
- 561     *Thou wenyst.* PLH, observing that the thought is commonplace, directs to Psalm 7.16: "A lake he openede, and dalf it out; and fel in to the dich that he made."
- 564–67   The point of these lines is that civil administration and positive law collapses if Christ's injunctions in the Gospel were to be followed literally.
- 565     *emperour.* MS reads *Empour.* Wr and PLH emend to *emperour*.
- 566     *ne haunte no domes.* MS and Wr read *no haunte no domes*, which looks like dittography.
- 569     *bothe.* PLH; MS and Wr *be*.
- 576     *goldsmythis.* It is possible that the craft of goldsmiths was involved in Lollardy. See PLH's note to 575.
- 578–90   Reply to *JU* 177–78.

### *Notes*

- 586      *Thou jawdewyne.* *MED* uncertain of exact signification or etymology, suggesting OF *geude* (etc.) “foot soldiers, band of foot soldiers” and OIt *geldra* “ragamuffin” as perhaps related words, and “a fool, jester” as the apparent signification. S.v. *jaudewin*. See also lines 760, 930 of *FDR*.
- 591–600    Reply to *JU* 178–87.
- 597      *Omnis utriusque sexus.* A decretal which stated that members of a parish must be confessed by their parish priest at least once a year. This decree angered friars, who derived considerable income from their powers of confession.
- 600      *oonis suspect . . . half honged.* Proverbial. See Whiting and Whiting, *Proverbs, Sentences, and Proverbial Phrases*, S918, N20.
- 601–30     Reply to *JU* 188–96.
- 605      *holdun to.* PLH’s emendation. MS and Wr omit *to*.
- 612–21     *Quis, inquit.* 1 Cor. 9.7: “Who serveth as a soldier at any time, at his own charges?” 1 Cor. 9.14: “So also the Lord ordained that they who preach the gospel, should live by the gospel.” *In quamcumque.* Luke 10.5: “Into whatsoever house you enter, first say: Peace be to this house.” (See also *JU* 194 note.) Luke 10.7: “And in the same house, remain, eating and drinking such things as they have: for the labourer is worthy of his hire.” Rom. 15.26: “For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a contribution for the poor of the saints that are in Jerusalem.”
- 624      *Loke that every werke.* In this line and in lines 626 and 631–36 Daw alludes to the tree and fruit metaphor of Matt. 3.10, quoted in lines 641–42.
- 631–45     Reply to *JU* 197–201.
- 641–44     *Omnis, inquit.* Matt. 3.10: “Every tree therefore that doth not yield good fruit, shall be cut down, and cast into the fire.” *Qui non manserit.* John 15.6: “If any one abide not in me, he shall be cast forth as a branch, and shall wither, and they shall gather him up, and cast him into the fire, and he burneth.”
- 646–73     Reply to *JU* 202–06.

*Friar Daw's Reply*

- 662     *As Arrians.* The Arian heretics maintained that Christ was not fully divine. The Sabellians denied the doctrine of the Trinity, holding that the three Persons are merely three aspects of the one God.
- 671     *Hostiensis.* Wr and PLH emend the scribal abbreviation (-er MS). *Hostiensis* was the common name for Henry of Susa (d. 1271), an expert on canon law and author of *Summa aurea* (*Summa Hostiensis*).
- 674–98     Reply to JU 207–11.
- 685     *To selle no sacramentis.* PLH conjectures that at least a line may have been omitted prior to this line, since there is no proper antecedent for *thei*, observing that lines 682–85 are not easily reconciled with lines 686–89.
- 690     *Jak, suppose.* So PLH; MS *Iak I suppose.*
- 699–727     Reply to JU 220–21.
- 703–04     *Crist in His godhede.* See, for example, Col. 2.9–10: “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead corporeally; And you are filled in him, who is the head of all principality and power.”
- 705–08     *As touching His manheed.* Ps. 39.18: “But I am a beggar and poor: the Lord is careful for me.”
- 709     *And aftir Austin and Jerom.* Jerome’s gloss to Psalms 39.18 reads: “Egenus et pauper Christus” (Christ was needy and poor).
- 711–13     *Crist aftir oo kynde . . . noon harborow.* Daw distinguishes between Christ’s divine and human natures. As divine, He had no need to beg; as human, He was poor and needy. FitzRalph condemned the argument that Christ begged unnecessarily: “Also ȝif Crist beggide wilfulliche he was a verrey ypcrite, semyng a begger, & was no verrey begger, for Crist was neuer a verrey begger, for no man þat may haue y-nowȝ at his wille, is a verrey begger, þouȝ he begge. But he is a verrey faytour (=deceiver), & he þat beggeþ wilfullich may haue y-nouȝ at his wille; for elles he beggeþ nouȝt willfulliche, but he is dryue to by nede, and Crist was neuer ypcrite. Panne Crist beggide neuer wilfulliche, noper as a faytour.” *Defensio curatorum*, trans. Trevisa, p. 84.

### *Notes*

- 715      *Vulpes, inquit.* Matt. 8.20: “And Jesus saith to him: The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.”
- 718–22    *Cave, inquit Jeronimus.* Beware, says Jerome, lest by begging for your God you exalt another’s riches. And Bernard: O Lord, how you conformed yourself to our poverty in all things, as if one in a crowd of poor men you begged alms from door to door.
- 726–27    *a manciple at Mertoun Halle.* A manciple was an officer charged with buying food and other provisions for a college, convent, etc. Daw claims he was a manciple at Merton, one of the oldest colleges at Oxford, and that he learned Latin by rote while supervising purchasing. Chaucer’s pilgrim Manciple apparently purchased food for one of the Inns of Court and took considerable pride in outwitting the scholars. It is uncertain whether 726–27 are autobiographical or an aspect of Daw’s “lewid” persona.
- 728–39    Reply to JU 222–26.
- 730–32    *the blynde begger.* Matt. 20.29–34.
- 733–35    *the pore man.* Acts 3.2–10.
- 736–38    *the lazar.* Luke 16.20–22.
- 739        *Abrahams bosum.* Luke 16.22: “And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom.” See also PP B 16.254. Thomas Aquinas explained “Abraham’s bosom” as Limbo.
- 740–54    Reply to JU 227–28.
- 747        *helpeth soulis.* PLH’s emendation. MS *helpeþ þe soulis.*
- 751        *Esdras wroot a newe book.* 2 Esdras (or Nehemiah) 8. “Ezra, though a scribe, did not write the book of the law; he carried it to Israel” (PLH).
- 752–54    *To Seint Joon.* Rev. 1.10–11: “and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying: What thou seest, write in a book.”
- 755–64    Reply to JU 237–39.

*Friar Daw's Reply*

- 755–56 *so many maistris.* Matt. 23.10: “Neither be ye called masters; for one is your master, Christ.”
- 760 *Jacke Jawdewyn.* See 586 note.
- 761–64 *the comoun glose.* PLH cites from Nicholas Lyra on Matt. 23.7: “Desiderare enim scientiam et actum docendi non est malum, sed meritorium: sed desiderare nomen tanum, hoc est malum et superbiae peccatum.” (To desire knowledge and the act of teaching is not wicked but meritorious. But to desire the name alone [of rabbi or teacher] — this is wicked and the sin of pride.)
- 765–71 Reply to JU 240–46.
- 768 *the two and twentithe pope.* PLH’s emendation; MS *foure and twentipe*. The correct pope is John XXII and not John XXIV. John XXII quarreled especially with the Spiritual Franciscans in the early fourteenth century.
- 772–89 Reply to JU 249–51.
- 776–82 *Herdes thou nevere.* Daw here tells stories of the apostles drawn from Acts 8, 15, and 16. Barnabas and Paul disagreed about circumcision, and they went their separate ways, Barnabas choosing Mark as his companion and Paul choosing Timothy.
- 784 *the mysterie.* Daw tries to establish the authority of friars traveling in pairs through other “twos” in Scripture: the two Mosaic tablets (Exod. 31.18); two cherubim in the temple (3 Kings 6.23); and two cherubim in the tabernacle (Exod. 25.18). The friars were criticized for this kind of allegorical exegesis.
- 785 *Forto do.* PLH’s emendation; MS *Forto bi*, which makes no sense.
- 789 *Crist seith.* See Eccles. 4.10: “Woe to him that is alone, for when he falleth, he hath none to lift him up.”
- 790–809 Reply to JU 271–76.

### *Notes*

- 798      *the Memento put falsly.* PLH's emendation; MS *fassy*, Wr *fally*. The *Memento* refers perhaps to "the commemoration of the faithful departed in the mass: 'Memento, Domine, famulorum, famularumque tuarum etc.'" (PLH).
- 803–04    *For noman, seith the Scripture.* See 1 Cor. 8.2–3: "And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he hath not yet known as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known by him."
- 804      PLH suggests: "Or else he only knows in spite of God himself."
- 808      *sesse.* PLH's emendation; MS *se* (dittography?).
- 810–38    Reply to JU 286–95.
- 818      *God alle thingis.* Wisd. 11.21: "but thou hast ordered all things in measure, and number, and weight." See JU lines 289–90, and PP B 20.254–69, where Conscience tells the friars that God has established everything, including the religious orders, according to measure and number; but, says Conscience to the friars, "ye wexen out of noumbre" (269). See also Szittyá, *The Antifraternal Tradition*, pp. 224–27.
- 824      *Jakke, if than.* PLH's emendation; MS *if thou[ʒ]*; Wr *if thouʒ*. The point is that the world might be better served with more friars, not more Lollards.
- 837      *that that man nedith.* MS *pat nedip*; Wr *that nedis*. The sense requires "that which is needed."
- 838      *Yit many hondis.* Proverbial, as in Douce MS 52 (c. 1350): "Many hondys makyn lyghth worke" (quoted in *The Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs*).
- 839–93    Reply to JU 316–25.
- 840–44    *Of the solempne sacrament.* Wyclif argued that the substance ("subject") of the bread and wine was not transubstantiated in the Eucharist, whereas the orthodox held that only the "accidents" — "roundnesse," "whitenesse" — remained after the Transubstantiation. The Lollards (and some orthodox thinkers) were especially concerned about sinful or "unclean" priests having the power to handle Christ's body and perform the sacrament of Transubstantiation.

*Friar Daw's Reply*

- 866–68 *carpenters ne sowters.* “The Lollards drew most of their support from prosperous tradesmen and artisans. Those hanged on 13 January 1414 after the failure of Oldcastle’s rising included a brewer, a carpenter, a dyer, a glover, ‘and other craftsmen of smaller repute’” (PLH).
- 878 *rapyn.* PLH’s emendation; MS and Wr *ratyn.* PLH cites the phrase *rape and rend.*
- 885–86 *Non, inquit Paulus.* 1 Cor. 3.1: “And I, brethren, could not speak to you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal.”
- 888 *Multa habui vobis dicere.* John 16.12: “I have yet many things to say to you: but you cannot bear them now.”
- 890–91 *Vobis datum est.* Luke 8.10: “To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to the rest in parables, that seeing they may not see, and hearing may not understand.”
- 893 *Scripturis ben.* So MS and Wr. PLH emends to *scripture is*, and comments: “If *scripturis* is a collective singular (cp. Mustanoja, p. 63, quoting *CT* I 1039) *ben* is difficult. Daw’s argument is based on the secrecy he imputes to Christ in 435–41 and to the Bible in 210–15: ‘the secrets of the Bible have been dissipated and betrayed.’”
- 894–923 Reply to JU 326–31.
- 899 *your grace.* Ironic.
- 900 *Sathanas pistile = Epistola Luciferi or Epistola Sathanae ad Cleros.* This was “an anti-clerical satire in the form of an open letter to popes and bishops sardonically commanding their life and pleading only for a little more loyalty to Beelzebub. Very popular in the Middle Ages, it was current in a number of versions. . . . A Latin version in the Register of John Trefnant, Bishop of Hereford (1389–1404) . . . is translated in Foxe’s *Actes and Monuments* (1570), i, 599–600. Its close association with Lollardy is suggested by the appearance of an English version immediately following, and in the same hand as, the copy of *Upland* in C.U.L. MS Ff. vi. 2” (PLH). The *Epistola Sathanae ad Cleros* has been edited by Anne Hudson in *English Wycliffite Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

### *Notes*

- 901      *sorcerie*. I adopt PLH's emendation of MS and Wr *snowcrie*, which the *OED* records as a *hapax legomenon*.
- 909–11    *The curse*. Daw links the pope's excommunication with Old and New Testament curses: God's curse on Cain and his family (Gen. 4.11–15); God's curse on Korah and his family (Num. 16.24–33); and Christ's curse on the barren fig tree (Matt. 21.19). Daw imagines Upland and his ilk will become cursed wanderers like the descendants of Cain, damned to hell like Korah and his followers, and spiritually barren and ineffective like the cursed fig tree. I have adopted PLH's emendation *figge* for MS *figre*, which may be dittography after *Figurid* at the beginning of the line.
- 912      *Gelboth hilles*. The Philistines defeated the Israelites at Mount Gilboa, killing Saul and his sons, which occasioned much lamentation. 1 Kings 31; 2 Kings 1.
- 913      *The sorowe of Sodome*. See Gen. 19 and the *Pearl*-poet's *Cleanness*.
- 914      *Deus laudem*. A reference to Psalm 108, which begins: "O God, be not thou silent in my praise."
- 916      *Moab and Ariel*. Moab and the Moabites were ancient foes of Israel. See Gen. 19.37; Num. 24.17; Amos 2.1–3; etc. God curses Ariel, or Jerusalem, in Isaiah 29.1–2: "Woe to Ariel, Ariel the city which David took: year is added to year: the solemnities are at an end. And I will make a trench about Ariel, and it shall be in sorrow and mourning, and it shall be to me as Ariel."
- 917      *The benysoun of Bethsaida*. Matt. 11.21–22: "Woe to thee, Corozain, woe to thee, Bethsaida: for if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the miracles that have been wrought in you, they had long ago done penance in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment, than for you."
- 918      *the curse of Seint Franceis*. Saint Francis, who wished his brothers only to pray and not to read, cursed a Friar Minor who founded a convent for study in Bologna. The friar fell ill and died when a ball of fire and sulphur struck him in his bed.
- 920–21    *the malisoun*. Deut. 27.15–26.

*Friar Daw's Reply*

- 922      *cattis tailis.* The *MED* s.v. *cat* 3 (a) cites this phrase as “the great mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*).” But this seems to make no sense in the context of Satan’s letter, sorcery (900–01), and Christ’s curse. Kissing the buttocks of a cat was thought to be an aspect of Lucifer worship. Another (remote) possibility is the “cat o’ nine tails,” but the earliest recorded instance of this word dates from the seventeenth century (*OED*; not mentioned in *MED*).
- 924–33    Reply to *JU* 332–34.
- 933a     *Explicit.* “Here ends the composition of Friar Daw Topias, / who at the last invokes John Walssingham / against Jack Upland’s questions.”

## *Upland's Rejoinder*

### *Introduction*

*UR*, an anonymous poem in 393 semi-alliterating lines, responds to *FDR* in much the same way that *FDR* answers *JU*. Like *FDR*, it exists only in Bodleian Library, Oxford MS Digby 41, and is executed as marginal glosses to *FDR*. *UR* was written down in two different hands. Hand 1 (= *UR*), lines 1–393, is mid fifteenth century; hand 2 (= T), lines 394–440, dates from about the same time. N. P. Ker has dated the hand of the *UR* scribe to shortly after 1450. P. L. Heyworth, who edited the standard edition of *JU*, *FDR*, and *UR*, argues that the *UR* text is a holograph and that the T hand is an interpolator and not a scribe who had access to a different version of the poem than the *UR* scribe. Hence he emends very sparingly and only when he believes the T interpolator, or a corrector, has altered *UR*'s text.

*UR* purports to be written by an outraged countryman, “Jak Uplonde” (line 2), against the evil Friar Daw Topias and on behalf of the secular clergy. Despite the similar narrative persona and name, the author of *UR* is not the one who wrote *JU*. By the time *UR* was written, “Jack Upland” had become a type representing those who opposed fraternal invasions of privileges traditionally enjoyed by secular clerics, especially priests. Both *JU* and *UR* score points against the friars with arguments formulated by antifraternal writers such as William of St. Amour and especially Richard FitzRalph (see the Introduction to *FDR*). In *FDR* Daw, answering *JU*'s sixty-five questions, had preceded his responses with “Jak,” “Thou axist me, Jacke,” a rhetorical technique that echoes Upland’s “Frere,” “Frere, what charite is it” in *JU*. In *UR* the author replies to *FDR* similarly, by preceding his retorts with “Daw,” “Dawe, thou blaberest.” He says, for example: “Daw, thou fablest of foxes and appliest hem to a puple / Of whom nether thou knowyst kunning, ne her conversacion” (lines 14–15). This answers Daw's apocalyptic *exemplum*: “Foxes frettid in fere wasten the cornes, / And Cristes vine is vanishid to the verray rote” (lines 21–22). *UR* adheres closely to the text of *FDR* and could not exist as a separate poem; it is ironically dependent on *FDR* even as *FDR* exists only as a response to *JU*. Whatever other similarities there may be between and among *Piers Plowman*, on the one hand, and *FDR* and *UR*, on the

### *Upland's Rejoinder*

other, the latter works do not stand alone as independent narrative poems. But whereas the author of *FDR*, through wording and sometimes through quotation, indicates precisely what lines of *JU* he is replying to, the author of *UR* is often vaguer, perhaps because the reader can see which lines are intended on the manuscript page.

The Lollard author of *UR*, like Langland and Daw/Walssingham, supports his polemical arguments with Latin scriptural quotations, sometimes with mere allusions that point toward larger references, such as “*12<sup>a</sup> q 2<sup>a</sup>Gloria episcopi*,” which is clerical shorthand for a passage in Gratian’s *Decretum* concerning Christ and poverty. More typical of Upland’s style is a brief quotation from the Gospel or from a Pauline epistle.

If Daw’s specialty is the *tu quoque*, Upland’s is the *ad hominem* reduction. His rhetoric sometimes approaches cursing, as when he associates Daw with the soil: “Daw dirt, thou claterist meche” (120), or “And so thes similitudes, with thes soluciones, / Ben not worthe the devellis dirt, Dawe” (202–03). He characterizes Daw’s exegesis as “arseword,” the earliest recorded instance of this word. He has a wealth of insulting appellations for Daw: “Daw, blaberere and blynde leder” (71); “Dawkyne” (156); “Lewde Dawe” (197); “Dawe Dotypolle” (353). He depicts his antagonist as a senile blind dog stupidly baying at the moon (88–91). He calls Daw and friars sodomites (59, 263) and accuses them of being found “alle day with wymmen and wifes” (58). He speaks approvingly of the hanging of friars as “traytoures” (272). None of these countercharges or nicknames is very different from what Daw had said of Jack Upland.

In some lines *UR* somewhat resembles alliterative verse of the mid- to late fourteenth century, as in line 5, which contains alliteration on *ch* and something like a caesura: “*Chidying with blasfemie, on chyteryng as chowghes*.” In other lines there seems to be no attempt at either vocalic or consonantal alliteration, as in line 22: “*Til that thai destried the corne alle about hem*.” More typical of the poet’s verse are lines with weak or imperfect alliteration, as in the following lines: “*Loke how Sampson bonde the foxes two and two to-gedir*” (21). Sometimes lines contain different alliteration in the two halflines, or alliteration on consonants within rather than at the beginning of words; at other times alliteration in one line seems to carry over to another, as in lines 225–26 (“alliteration” on *g* and *b*?):

Bot ye youres with beggery, bargenyng, and robberye;  
For grounde have thai non bot if it be here.

### *Introduction*

It is easy to impugn the poet's prosodic skill, but it is more useful, I believe, to describe what he does. After all, no one, in his time or our own, would read the poem solely for its aesthetic qualities. Its interest and appeal resides in its historical and cultural value as a witness to late medieval antifraternal and Lollard verse.

This text is based on P. L. Heyworth's standard edition of 1968 (abbreviated PLH) and is checked against a microfilm version of the unique Digby MS (abbreviated MS). I have also consulted Wright's edition (abbreviated Wr). In the Notes I record only substantive variants from the MS text and not obvious spelling emendations, such as the corrector's addition of the *s* to *holine* at line 180.

### *Manuscript*

Oxford University Bodleian Library MS Digby 41.

### *Modern Editions*

Wright, Thomas, ed. *The Reply of Friar Daw Topias, with Jack Upland's Rejoinder*. In *Political Poems and Songs Relating to English History*. Rolls Series 14. Vol. 2. London: Longman, Green, 1861.

Heyworth, P. L., ed. In *Jack Upland, Friar Daw's Reply, and Upland's Rejoinder*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1968.

### *Studies*

Heyworth, P. L. "Jack Upland's Rejoinder, a Lollard Interpolator, and Piers Plowman B.X. 249f." *Medium Aevum*, 36 (1967), 242–48.

### *Bibliography*

Robbins, Rossell Hope. "XIII. Poems Dealing with Contemporary Conditions" in *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English 1050-1500*, vol. 5. New Haven, Conn.: The Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1975. Pp. 1450–51, 1679.

Upland's Rejoinder

	An answer to this tretis that a frere hath forgid — <sup>1</sup> He callith hymself Daw Topias — ayens me Jak Uplonde. He groundith hym upon seven thynges, as his ordre askith: Lesynges with losengery, cursynges and false glose, Chidyg with blasfemie, on chyteryng as chowghes. <sup>2</sup> Thou saist thi name is Dawe, it may right wel be so, For thou hast condiciones of a tame chowghe. He chiterith and he bribith alle that he may gete; This he doth in dede assay of hem that knowith.	against order requires <i>Lies and falsehood</i>
5	Dawe, thou blaberest blasfemies and reson hast thou non, Thou leggist oft Goddis lawe bot to a false entent — Yee, falselier than the fende whan he saide to Crist, <i>Quia angelis suis mandavit de te.</i>	are like chatters; begs does; overt trial none allege; but for more falsely
10	Daw, thou fablest of foxes and appliest hem to a puple Of whom nether thou knowyst kunnyng, ne her conversacion, <sup>3</sup> Bot iche man that witte hath, and happe of discrecion, <sup>4</sup> May knowe thee and thin ordre, as Crist saith, bi the werkes.	people your works
15	Take propirte of twey foxes and werkes of twye freres, And than thou fyndest hem in eche acorde, bot freres ben the warse.	property; two; works worst
20	If thou saist this is not so, bot groundid with-out skil, Loke how Sampson bonde the foxes two and two to-gedir, Til that thai destried the corne alle about hem, And this was, as a doctour saith, the figur of freres.	proper argument Observe destroyed; them
25	Dawe, thou saist proudly I lie, for I telle the trouthe; For that ye ben not lege, men knowlechen wise, <sup>5</sup> For whan ye ben trespassoures, in theft or other vices,	

<sup>1</sup> [This is] a rejoinder to the treatise (FDR) that a friar has composed

<sup>2</sup> Rebuking with blasphemy, chattering like choughs (see note to line 7)

<sup>3</sup> Of whom you don't know their knowledge or their ways of speaking

<sup>4</sup> But each man who has understanding, and chance of discernment

<sup>5</sup> "For wise men recognize that you are not loyal" (PLH)

*Upland's Rejoinder*

	Your priour may at his wille fette you home to hym,	<i>prior; recover</i>
	With-out kynges commission, bot gret ayen reson.	<i>powerful beyond reason</i>
	For oft ye leden a-waye mennes wifes and ben sette in stokkes,	<i>wives</i>
30	Bot your captaynes chalengen you and asken not leve of kynges. <sup>1</sup>	
	Me mervelith of thi lewdnes, Dawe — or of wilful lesynges —	
	For Poule laborid with his hondes, and other postilles also: —	<i>apostles</i>
	Yee, oure gentil Jesu, as it is opunly knowe.	
	And thes were the best prestes that ever rose on grunde,	
35	And the best messes song, not lettyng hem her labour, <sup>2</sup>	
	Bot suche bolde beggyng hatid thai in worde and werke.	<i>But; they hated</i>
	Dawe, thou spekist proudly apechyng our prestes;	<i>accusing</i>
	Bot of oon thyng am I certen: thai ben lasse evel than ye.	<i>less evil</i>
	For alle if thai synne oft, as it is wel knownen, <sup>3</sup>	
40	Yit the grunde that thai have is playnly Cristis religion;	<i>foundation</i>
	And thowgh thai straye oft therfro yit mowe thai com to grace.	<i>yet may</i>
	Bot ye han left that grunde and your patron bothe,	<i>But; founder</i>
	For as the prophetes of Achab wer multiplied in many	
	And by oon holy prophet were thai alle destried,	<i>i.e., Elijah; destroyed</i>
45	So the Chirche is cropun now to multitude of cursid men,	<i>has come to include</i>
	Whiche of sadde bileve most nede be destried. <sup>4</sup>	
	Bot I prayse nother preestes ne thee for your assent in symonye.	
	Daw, I have askid questiones of thee and of thi freres,	<i>your friars</i>
	Bot that I lied oones on you, knowe I me not guilty. <sup>5</sup>	
50	For Goddis lawe forbedith this in many place, I wene,	<i>forbids; believe</i>
	And thowgh I be Jak Uplonde, yit drede I Goddis lawe.	<i>yet fear</i>
	Bot I suppose thi secte tristith so meche in her habites, <sup>6</sup>	
	That thai kun lye of custom, as Peter prophecith of hem:	<i>lie habitually</i>
	<i>Fuerunt pseudopropheete in populo, magistri</i>	
55	<i>mendaces etc.</i>	
	Bot to lie thus playnly and opunly on men,	<i>manifestly; to</i>
	Ye count it not synne, as your wordes shewen.	<i>don't count it as</i>

---

<sup>1</sup> Unless your chiefs challenge you and don't ask permission of kings

<sup>2</sup> And the best masses sung, not preventing their labor

<sup>3</sup> For despite the fact that they often sin, as is well known

<sup>4</sup> Which, because of their serious beliefs, must needs be destroyed

<sup>5</sup> But [of the charge] that I once lied about you, I know I am not guilty

<sup>6</sup> But I suppose your sect trusts so much in its customary practices

*Upland's Rejoinder*

	Your freres ben taken alle day with wymmen and wifes,	caught all the time
	Bot of your privey sodomye speke I not here.	secret
60	Bot lat see, Dawe, if thou or any lyer of thin ordre Can preve this on oon of hem that clepist my secte, And sicurly shalt thou have of me an hundrith pounde.	liar [you] call truly; hundred
	Daw, thou leggist Salomon for your hie houses, <sup>1</sup>	
	Bot olde holy doctoures ben ayen thee here,	against
65	And specialy Jerom, that saith in the lawe: Who wil allege the temple for glorie of our Chirche, Forsake he to be Cristen, and be he newe a Jewe.	cite; Solomon's temple again
	<i>12<sup>a</sup> q 2<sup>a</sup> Gloria episcopi.</i>	
	For sith the pore Lorde, he saith, halowed his pore Chirche,	poor; sanctified
70	Take we Cristis Crosse, he saith, and counte we delices claye. <sup>2</sup> Daw, blaberere and blynde leder, thowgh thou bigile symple hertes,	leader
	With thi gildyn gloss and with thi costly houses,	gilt gloss
	Thou bigilest not Jak with your thevishe logges.	ill-begotten convents
	<i>Unde in Evangelio, vos autem fecistis eam speluncam latronum.</i>	
75	Topias, thou writest me to be a lewed man, <sup>3</sup> Bot lewed men prechen not, as thou canst saye bot if the list lye; <sup>4</sup>	
	Bot I wot thou saist thus by vertuouse prestes,	know; because of
	Bot thai ben ful bisie to edifie the Chirche	
80	That the multitude of you han allemost destried.	have almost destroyed
	For the Gospel saith,	
	<i>Surgent multi pseudopropheete.</i>	
	Bot of hem ben fewe and gretly dispiside,	there are few; despised
	And of you ful many, and ever the mo the warse.	
85	Me mervelith, Daw, thou darst thus lie on suche a gret clerke, <sup>5</sup> And in hys tyme knownen wel a vertuouse man,	
	Of riche and pore that hym tho knewe.	then
	Bot thou as blynde Bayarde berkest at the mone,	bark; moon
	As an olde mylne dog when he bygynnith to dote.	mill; to get old

<sup>1</sup> *Daw, you call upon Solomon to justify your sumptuous houses*

<sup>2</sup> *Let us take up Christ's Cross, he says, and reckon [worldly] delights as clay*

<sup>3</sup> *Topias (i.e., Daw), you write about me as an illiterate man*

<sup>4</sup> *But ignorant men don't preach, as thou realize unless you choose to lie*

<sup>5</sup> *I marvel, Daw, that you dare to lie about such a great ecclesiastic (John Wyclif)*

*Upland's Rejoinder*

90	Bot wel I wot thi baffyng, lye thou never so lowde, May not menuse this seint, that lyved and taught so truly. <i>Quia dignus est operarius mercede sua.</i>	barking; outrageously diminish
	I drede me, Dawe, the sentence of whiche the prophet spekith, Shal falle hevy on thin hede, and many of thi brether:	fear head; brethren
95	<i>Ve vobis qui dicitis bonum malum, et malum bonum.</i> For alle trwe sentence that we taken here, Thou turnest in to falsenes, that woo shal the bitide, For to our secte that is Cristis, we drawen bot fewe puple, For thou and other pseudo han marrid hem in the way,	true meaning woe shall befall you attract; people fales men; spoiled
100	That bot if God of His grace sende His honde of help, The Chirche that shuld folowe Crist is lykly to synke. <i>Qui mihi ministrat, me sequatur. Attendite a fermento Phariseorum, quod est ypocrisia.</i> <i>Homo apostata, vir inutilis, graditur ore perverso.</i>	unless likely
105	Dawe, thou hast light conscience thus fynaly to deme, For here thou damnest men to helle with-out any condicion. Whe have leve of Scripture to deme after mennes werkes, Bot for to deme as thou dost is to robbe God of His power; For the apostil saith,	judge unconditionally We; leave; judge judge; do
110	<i>Noli ante tempus judicare, quoad usque veniat Dominus.</i> Litil wondir thowgh lordis mysse tyme that han suche confusoures! <i>Quia si cecus cecum ducat, ambo in foveam cadunt.</i>	Little
	Thou saist thou knowist no lettre here, as if thou wer noo clerke.	
115	To take a clerke as it shuld be, aftir his undirstondyng, <sup>1</sup> Than sayst thou here more trwly than in any other place. Clerk is als meche to mene as of the sort of God, <sup>2</sup> And so thou previst thi-self non suche if thou loke right, Bot a liere apostata with alle his other pointes.	prove; see it apostate liar; traits
120	Daw dirt, thou claterist meche of ordires of aungeles in heven, <sup>3</sup> Bot lykkyn not thes to thin ordre, ne thin ordre to hem; For thai ben ordenid of God there with-outen synne, And thin is ordened of man, with many rotun rites.	don't compare have been ordained ordained; corrupt

<sup>1</sup> To understand a cleric as [he] should be, according to his meaning

<sup>2</sup> Cleric is as much as to say a person of God

<sup>3</sup> Daw dung, you prate much of orders of angels in heaven

*Upland's Rejoinder*

- |     |  |  |
|-----|--|--|
| 125 | And so as the prestes of Bel stale undir the awter,<br>To bigile the kyng to thefly cache here lyfode,<br>So ye forge your falshed, undir ydil ypocrisie,<br>To bigile the puple, bothe pore and riche,<br>And as the prestes fayned that Bel ete the kynges sacrificise,<br>So your wikkid wynnnyng, ye saye, wirchipith God. | <i>thievishly steal; altar<br/>by theft; livelihood<br/>untruths; vain<br/>people</i>              |
| 130 | Yit Daw, in this mater thou broylist up many lesynges,<br>For grounde of thin ordre not groundid in the Gospel.<br>For see thes thre vertues, whiche thou here rehersist,<br>Faylen in thin ordre welny in every persone.<br>For in obedience, and chastite, and poverte also,   | <i>gains; honors<br/>stir up; lies<br/>basis; anchored<br/>rehearse<br/>nearly (well nigh)</i>     |
| 135 | Ye folowen more Anticrist than Jesu Crist our Lorde.<br>Ye ben more obedient to your owne reules<br>Than to the reules of Crist groundid in lawe.<br>And as to chastite of body, ye breken it ful oft;<br>Bot chastite of soule, forsakyng Crist our spouse,   | <i>own rules<br/>rules<br/>disobey it very often</i>   |
| 140 | For ye ben apostatas gon bak fro Holichirche.<br><i>Initium omnis peccati apostatare a Deo.</i><br>As to verrei poverte, who that wil right loke,<br>Ye ben the most covetouse of alle men in erthe,<br>For with symonye, and begrye, and sellyng of shrift  | <i>apostates from Holy Church<br/>true; properly enquire<br/>on earth<br/>begging; confessions</i> |
| 145 | Ye pillen bothe gret and smal, and prive hem of bileyve.<br><i>Avaricia, quod est ydolorum servitus.</i><br>Dawe, thou ratelist many thynges, bot grounde hast thou non,<br>For where groundist thou in Goddis lawe to close men in stones   | <i>pillage; rob them of faith<br/>prate about</i>  |
| 150 | Bot if it were wode men or giloures of the puple,<br>Sith alle that is not groundid smacchith grete synne,<br>Bot if ye taken — as ye usen — arseworde this Gospel: <sup>1</sup>   | <i>Unless; madmen; beguilers<br/>Since; smacks of</i>  |
| 155 | <i>Non potest civitas abscondi super montem posita.</i><br>Or ellis,<br><i>Neque accendunt lucernam et ponunt eam<br/>sub modio.</i><br>Or wher fyndist thou, Dawkyn, that men shulden kille her brether,<br>Sith Crist our aller duke brought us verrei pees,<br>Bot if thou be of the ranes that ran fro Anticristis nose —  | <i>else<br/>little Daw<br/>leader of us all; true peace<br/>frogs (see note)</i>                   |
|     | <i>Pacem relinquo vobis, pacem meam do vobis.</i>  |  |

<sup>1</sup> Unless you interpret — as you usually do — this Gospel text backwards

*Upland's Rejoinder*

- |     |  |  |
|-----|--|--|
| 160 | Touchyng this pagyn, Dawe, thi lesynges ben ful rif,<br>For her thou spekist of twey lyves and ye don nother wel:<br>For Martha groundid hir labour fully in Goddis lawe,<br>So may not ye your beggyng, ne your castelles nouther.<br>Bot of contemplacion ye usen not bot as foxes,  | <i>specious argument; rife<br/>here; two; neither<br/>her<br/>nor; either</i>  |
| 165 | So in this ye leven Crist, Martha and Marie both.<br>As touchyng yiftes to pore men, ye pike that thai shulde have,<br>Bothe of godes and faithe of soule, I, Jak, can see non other.<br><i>Panis egentium vita pauperis est; qui defraudat<br/>eum homo sanguinis est.</i>  | <i>abandon<br/>steal what they<br/>goods</i>   |
| 170 | We can not make mariage, Dawe, ne pursue no divorce,<br>We wynne not meche money with thes, as thi secte doth ful oft.<br><i>Quod Deus conjunxit, homo non separat.</i>  | <i>nor<br/>gain; much; does</i>  |
| 175 | I praise not, Dawe, the stremere that thou herof spekest,<br>Bot of suche wide clothing, tateris and tagges,<br>It hirtith myn hert hevly, I wil that thou it wite.<br>Bot your ypocrites habit, to whiche ye ben harde weddid,<br>Doth more harme than thes, bi thes two skilles:<br>Oon for the coloure that signifieth sadnes,<br>Whan ye ben most unstedfast of any folk in erthe; | <i>cloth strips<br/>torn clothing<br/>hurts; want you to know<br/>fast committed<br/>Does; for; reasons<br/>One; seriousness (black)<br/>Since; fickle; on earth</i> |
| 180 | An other for your disformed shap that signifieth your holines.<br>So if it be soth that ye therof saye,<br>It wold with litil help make an ape a seint!<br>The tipet is a comyn reule if it be not superflue,<br>And so it doth gode to bynde a mannes hede;   | <i>true; say about it<br/>would take very little<br/>rule; superfluous<br/>does good; man's head</i>   |
| 185 | Bot your misse-shapen shelde, bihynde at your shulderes,<br>Blowith your ypocrisie and blyndith many foles.<br><i>Genimina viperarum, quis demonstravit vobis<br/>fugere a ventura ira?</i>  | <i>misshapen hood<br/>Proclaims; hypocrisy; fools</i>  |
| 190 | Yit, Dawe, me thynkith thou usist thi customale condicion: <sup>1</sup><br>Thou hast so lerned to lye, thou canst not leve werk.<br>Bot yit I am gladde thou groundist thee on the Gospel —<br><i>Diabolus est mendax, et pater eius.</i><br>The secte that thou seggist of — I wot is Jesu Cristis —<br>Tellen litil by clothing, bot now oon, now other.                             | <i>prevaricate; stop doing it<br/>Little values; one [thing]</i>   |

---

<sup>1</sup> Yet, Daw, I think you resort to your accustomed state

*Upland's Rejoinder*

- 195 Thowgh thou accuse the Menours have I not to do,<sup>1</sup>  
 Bot wel I wot ye ben alle drawnen in oo maner draggee.      *from the same draft*  
 Lewde Dawe, whi laist thou forthe so many blunt resones,      *set forth; arguments*  
 For Salomon spekith not of silence propirde to an house,      *as appropriate for*  
 Bot of silence in iche place, in tyme and in reson.      *each; in [its] time (season)*
- 200 Bot the cursid yopocrisie of etyng of your fleshe,      *eating; meat*  
 Shuld iche man despise for your rotun rewle.      *Each man should; corrupt rule*  
 And so thes similitudes, with thes soluciones,      *appearances; measures*  
 Ben not worthe the devellis dirt, Dawe.      *devil's dung*
- Daw, thi wordes ben many and ever medled with venom;      *mingled; venom*  
 205 For ayenes gode men strecche I no malice,      *against good; extend*  
 Ne non of thilk Cristis secte that myn callist,<sup>2</sup>      *against; boasters; liars*  
 Bot ayenes heritikes, bosteres, and lieres,      *blabberers*  
 Whiche han chosen hem a reule with blabereres of Baal;      *come; Josiah*  
 And yit shal tyde the tyme when Josie shal regne,
- 210 And make an ende of suche fendes, and Cristis reule shal renue.      *fiends; renew*  
 Yee, Jamnes and Mambres japid not so the kyng,      *tricked not the king as much*  
 As thou with thi cursid secte the kyng and the puple.  
*Attendite a falsis prophetis, qui veniunt ad vos  
in vestimentis ovium.*
- 215 I til thee, Daw, with-out dout thes wordes ben said of you,      *tell; doubt*  
 With other pregnant prophecies of Peter and of Poule.      *significant; Paul*  
 Daw, thou laborist fast to lede thi-self to helle,  
 And blyndest many lewde foles with thi stynkyng brethe.  
 For bi this apis argument that thou here now ratelist,
- 220 He that drynkith a quart wyne most nedis drynk a galon.      *gallon*  
 Bot ayen house in mesure, Dawe, grucche I right nought,<sup>3</sup>  
 And thowgh thou saye ascorne a shepe house I have,      *scornfully; sheep-house*  
 That hath more grounde in Goddis lawe than alle your Caymes castelles.<sup>4</sup>
- I thank God I beldid it with trwe-bygeten gode,      *built; truly-begotten goodness*  
 225 Bot ye youres with beggery, bargenyng, and robberye;      *bargaining*  
 For grounde have thai non bot if it be here.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> *Although you accuse the Friars Minor, I don't need to do so*

<sup>2</sup> *Nor [against] any of that sect of Christ which I call mine*

<sup>3</sup> *But against a convent in moderation, Daw, I don't complain at all*

<sup>4</sup> *That has more basis in God's law than all your Cain's castles*

<sup>5</sup> *For they don't have any ground unless it is here (on earth)*

Upland's Rejoinder

*Non habemus hic manentem civitatem. Et idem,  
Ve qui edificatis civitatem in sanguinibus,  
Et ve qui conjungitis domum ad domum.*

- |     |   |                                    |
|-----|---|------------------------------------|
| 230 | Yit, Dawe, thowgh thou accusest pardoneres that ben fals,<br>Thou lovest lesse a trwe prest than thou dost hem alle,<br>For thai gon neere you apostatas in gilyng of the puple. <sup>1</sup> | <i>true priest</i>                 |
|     | Bot that ye ferme to limitoures it may not be denyed, <sup>2</sup><br>Lye thou never so lowde and therto sette a sele,  | <i>outrageously; affix a seal</i>  |
| 235 | Bot thus with many fals meenes oppresse the cuntrees.<br>Bot as to payng of tribut as Crist Hym-self did,   | <i>ways; countries</i>             |
|     | Thou lyknest you to Pharoes, and so ye ben, and warse,<br>Ayenes Cristis payng and alle other mekenes.  | <i>paying; tribute</i>             |
|     | Thou autorisest your pride ayenes His holi werkes.  | <i>compare yourself; worse</i>     |
| 240 | <i>Qui non est tecum, contra me est: et qui<br/>non colligit tecum, dispergit.</i>  | <i>(form of) payment; meekness</i> |
|     | Dawe, I saide first to thee oon of thi groundes was cursyng.  | <i>license; works</i>              |
|     | Whare autorisist thou this lewde saw — answere nowe!  | <i>did you authorize; decree</i>   |
|     | Thi resones ben a staf of rede that lightly persen the honde.   | <i>reed; pierces</i>               |
| 245 | I marvel that thou, a clerk, blaberst thus blyndely.  | <i>marvel; blabber on</i>          |
|     | Thou takest comynly no grounde of Crist ne of His lawe,   |                                    |
|     | Bot ether of the Pope, as if he were thi God,   | <i>But either</i>                  |
|     | Or of other fantasies that han no grounde hem-self.   | <i>themselves</i>                  |
|     | For whi shuld not alle prestes be meke after Crist  | <i>priests; following</i>          |
| 250 | In payng of tribut and alle other werkes?   |                                    |
|     | Daw, lat be thi false glose: it drivith thee to the devel!  |                                    |
|     | <i>Benedicite, et nolite maledicere.</i>  |                                    |
|     | Lo, Daw, with thi draffe thou liest on the Gospel,  | <i>chaff; lie about</i>            |
|     | For Crist said it Hym-self: the vertu passid fro me.  | <i>power</i>                       |
| 255 | And here thou maist see I knowe a <i>b</i> from a bole fote,  | <i>bull's foot</i>                 |
|     | For I cacche thee in lesynges that thou laist on the Gospel.  | <i>attribute to</i>                |
|     | Bot thus to stele a childe is a gretter theft   | <i>steal</i>                       |
|     | Than to stele an oxe, for the theft is more.  | <i>more reprehensible</i>          |
|     | Dawe, for thou saist ye robbe hym fro the worlde,   |                                    |
| 260 | Ye maken hym more worldly than ever his fadir —   |                                    |
|     | Yee, thowgh he were a plowman lyvynge trwe lyf,   | <i>Yea; virtuous life</i>          |

<sup>1</sup> For they (pardoners) are close to you apostates in deceiving the people

<sup>2</sup> But it may not be denied that you farm out [territory] to limiters

*Upland's Rejoinder*

- Ye robbe hym fro the trwe reule and maken hym apostata,      *true rule; apostate*  
 A begger and a sodomit, for suche thai ben many.
- Ve vobis qui facitis unum proselitum. Suple,*  
 265      *filium gehenne duplo quam vos.*
- Daw, I do thee wel to wite, frentike am I not,  
 Bot it semith thi sotil witte marrith many man.      *subtle wit; harms*
- Bot how stondith this to-gedir: ye sle men in your prison;
- Ye have your conspiracies when ye gode likith;      *see fit*
- 270 Ye damne the trwe, ye hyen the false; deme, Dawe, wher this be gode!      *support*
- And the kyng, by his juges trwe, execute his lawe,      *Even if; judges*
- As he did now late whan he hangid you traytoures.      *recently (see note)*
- Wilt thou Dawe, alleges, compere you to the kyng,  
 Or to other lordes that han her grounde in God?      *nevertheless, compare yourself  
who have their grounding*
- 275 Lefe, fole, thi losengerie, and studie Cristis lyf.      *Desist; deceipts*
- Que conventio Christi ad Belial? Quid  
communicabit cacabu ad ollam?*
- Daw, how maist thou saye — for shame! — that Crist stale thus childre,      *stole*  
 And Poule beggid as ye don, ye lyven bi the Gospel?      *St. Paul; according to*
- 280 Yee, Dawe! Ye selle derrere lesynges and poyson      *at greater expense lies*
- Than ever did Poule alle his holy writyng.
- Ever thou likynest you to Crist whan ye ben verrei Anticrist;  
 And if bisshopes byside wel to knowe alle your dedes,      *deeds*
- 285 Thai fonde you werse than harlotes or joguloures ether;      *jugglers either*
- For ye begge or ye preche, many tymes and oft,  
 Somen men and threten hem, bot if thai yif you gode.      *preach*
- Bot the harlot wil drawe the blode of his arse      *wretch*
- Or he ask any gode or any rewarde.      *Before*
- And Daw, truly your dedes contrarie Crist.
- 290      *Mordent dentibus et predican pacem; et si quis  
non dederit in ore eorum quippiam,  
sanctificant super eum proelium.*
- Daw, here thou blaberist to-gedir falsenes and trouthe,  
 For a bastarde is he that holdith ayenes the sothe.      *argues against*
- 295 (God and trwe men discusse wher that be ye or I!)      *whether*
- For if thou callist Holichirche the techyng of Crist,  
 The reules of apostles, the lyf of hem alle,  
 I summitte me to hem, and wil while I lyve.
- If thou callist, Dawe, your Dominikis reules,  
 300 With determinacion of many false prestes,
- submit myself*

*Upland's Rejoinder*

	Holichirche — as I wene as oft thou hast done — I forsake the for ever, with this cursid Chirche. <i>Odivi ecclesiam malignantium.</i>	<i>believe you have done very often</i>
305	If thou purposist to pursuwe and drawe men to deth, I mervel not meche, for it is thin office; The fadires of freres, whiche were the Pharisees, Pursuwed Crist to the paynful deth — Ye, callid Hym a blasfeme as ye clepen hem heritikes That holde ayenes your falsehede, alle if thai men truthe.	<i>intend to persecute</i> <i>don't wonder much</i>  <i>Yea; blasphemer</i> <i>argue against; mean</i>
310	<i>Et vos implete mensuram patrum vestrorum.</i> Daw, thou hast lerned so long to lye, thou wenest thou saist soth Whan thou liest most lowde and sclauderist the truthe. Thou saidist thou were no lettered man; thou prevest thi-self fals, For thou spekist of jerarchies, of herisies also.	<i>think</i> <i>outrageously</i> <i>prove yourself</i> <i>hierarchies</i>
315	Thou art gilty in alle thes poyntes, and thi brether bothe; That I wolde preve apertly if that the tyme suffrid. Lok your lyvynge, your prechyng, with other opun dedes, And laye it by the apostles lyf, and se how thai acorde; And, as I wene, the Holigost appreveth nether nouther. <sup>1</sup>	<i>brethren also</i> <i>move openly; allowed</i> <i>Examine; plain deeds</i> <i>compare; agree</i>
320	Me thinkith ye ben tapsteres in alle that ye don. Ye tappe your absoluciones that ye bye at Rome: Your prechyng, your praying, and also your beryng. Bot thou accusist other men that han bot the mote In the comparison of alle your gret synnes.	<i>bartenders ("tappers")</i> <i>siphon off; buy</i> <i>burials</i> <i>who have only the speck</i>
325	<i>Ypocrita, eice primo trabem de oculo tuo.</i> Dawe, ye folowen Crist as greyhounde doth the hare; For as God yaf Kyng Saule in his wodenes, So ye ben clekkid out to pursuwe Holichirche. <i>Periculum in falsis fratribus.</i>	<i>gave [to]; madness</i> <i>marked out</i>
330	Yit, Dawe, thou drawist in many fals prompynges, For to hirt symple men, bot me never a del; For Crist in His membres beggid ful oft For synne of the puple whan thai were at mischef; <sup>2</sup> Bot as suche bolde beggeres in bodily hele,	<i>instigations</i> <i>injure; not at all</i> <i>i.e., Christ's disciples</i>
335	Begged never Crist ne non of His membres.	<i>health</i> <i>disciples</i>

<sup>1</sup> And, as I believe, the Holy Ghost will approve neither your life nor that of your brethren

<sup>2</sup> Because of the people's sin, when they (disciples) were in distress

*Upland's Rejoinder*

	For Crist, that is truthe, may in no wise Contrarie Him-self, ne God that is His Fadir, For in many places thai damnen suche sturdy beggyng. And so, Dawe, thou dorest, allegyng the water,	<i>in no manner</i> <i>Contradict; Father</i> <i>begging by sturdy folk</i> <i>behave foolishly, denying</i>
340	The asse, or the herberowe, for He was Lorde of alle. And so thou mysse-takist Jerom and lyest on Bernarde, For Alrede his clerke wrote this reson That thou mysse-layst and dokkist it as the likith.	<i>misinterpret</i> <i>Ailred; argument</i> <i>misplace; mutilate</i> <i>may he ill prosper</i>
345	Herfor a clerke saith, that "evel mote he spede That beggith of the puple more than is nede."	<i>required</i>
	<i>Mendax mendicus non est veritatis amicus.</i> <i>Nutantes transferantur filii eius et mendicent.</i>	
	God gif the grace to knowe how thou art Judas childe, Whiche psalme thou leggist to me as to an evel entent.	<i>give you</i>
350	Yit, Dawe, thou hewist hye and puttist thi mouthe in heven; <sup>1</sup> Thy tong likkith the chesefat and the garner also, And the pore wedowes porse, thowgh she have bot a peny, And yit, Dawe Dotypolle, thou justifiest this harlotrie.	<i>tongue licks; storeroom</i> <i>widow's purse</i> <i>Dumbhead; wickedness</i>
	Why lykkennest thou writyng of names, which thou dost for money, <sup>2</sup>	
355	To the Holi Scripture that is our bileve? For God ne any godeman appreved never this symonye.	<i>never authorized</i>
	Thou approvest your capped maisters with a glasen glose, Whiche galpen after grace, bi Symonye your sister, And after sitten on hie dece and glosen lordes and ladies;	<i>(see note)</i> <i>gape (gulp)</i> <i>high dais; flatter</i>
360	And this is no liknes bitwix my knave and hem, For of thes and suche it ben that Crist spekith in His Gospel:	<i>servant</i>
	<i>Amant enim primos recubitus in cenis, et primas</i> <i>cathedras in synagogis, et vocari ab hominibus Rabbi.</i>	
	Daw, thou herdist me not grucche that ye went two to-gedir,	<i>complain</i>
365	For other while ye gon three, a womman is that oon; Bot whether ye go two or oon, if ye wol do wele, It were a gret joye to me, God wot the sothe.	<i>i.e., the third</i> <i>or alone; behave well</i>
	Bot wel I wote that charite may not duelle there, Where covetise crepit in and lecherie is loggid;	<i>dwell</i> <i>creeps; lodged</i>
370	Therfor, Dawe, allegge thou no figur for thin ordre	<i>cite no emblem</i>

<sup>1</sup> Yet, Daw, you chop your ax high and frame your words piously

<sup>2</sup> Why do you compare the writing [down] of names, which you do for money

### *Upland's Rejoinder*

- |     |  |   |
|-----|--|---|
|     | Bot if it be Zambre with Corby his lotby,<br>Or Jamnes and Mambres, Pharaouse freres.  | <i>Unless it should be; concubine</i>                         |
|     | <i>Hii sunt qui penetrant domos, et ducunt<br/>mulierculas oneratas peccatis.</i>  |   |
| 375 | Oft, Dawe, in thi writtyng thou wryngist out contradiction,<br>Bot yit thou puttist defaut to prestes, as erst thou didist to curates.<br>I wot thai ben defectif, bot yit stondith Cristis religion,<br>Of whose defaut I dout not, Dawe, ye ben the chef cause.<br>Bi this it suwith not God bot Sathanas brought you in. <sup>1</sup>         | <i>bring forth<br/>blame; before<br/>imperfect</i>            |
| 380 | Thou saist, Dawe, as thou felist, that <i>there</i> is Cristis body;<br>Bot I afferme faithfully that <i>that</i> is Cristis body.   | <i>i.e., the wafer</i>  |
|     | Daw, aske thi capped maisters as if thai were heritikes,<br>What is the sacred host, and grounde hem in Scripture —  | <i>[academic] masters</i>                                     |
| 385 | To whiche we knele and doffe our hodes and don alle this wirchip:<br>And I bileyve that sacred, whiche is bothe whit and rounde,<br>Is verrei Cristis body, as men shuld bileyve,<br>And did to the tyme that Sathanas was unbounde.<br>The witnesse of this reson is Crist and His apostles,<br>With many holi doctoures of the thousande yere; | <i>hoods; do<br/>host (wafer)<br/>truly<br/>did [believe]</i> |
| 390 | Bot this ye falsely forsake, with alle your secte (or many),<br>And blynden the puple with heresie, and leven Goddis lawe,<br>For ye sayen ther is Cristis body and nought that sacred host.   | <i>company<br/>abandon</i>                                    |
|     | <i>Commutaverunt veritatem Dei in mendacium.</i>   |   |

<sup>1</sup> From this it follows [that] Satan, not God, admitted you

### **Notes**

- 7      *tame chowghe*. The chough is a species of crow (*Pyrrhocorax*), but Upland here associates the chough with another crow-like bird, the daw or jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*), which could be tamed and taught to mimic the sounds of human voices. Upland portrays Daw's apocalyptic opening (*FDR* 1–30) as the chattering of birds, which was denounced in Deut. 18.10 as utterly worthless for purposes of divination.
- 13     *Quia angelis suis*. Matt. 4.6: “That he hath given his angels charge over thee” (from Psalm 90.11). This occurs in Satan’s second temptation of Christ.
- 21     *Loke how Sampson*. See *FDR* 21 and note. The comparison of “twey foxes” and “werkes of twye freres” (18) together with Solomon’s fable of the foxes bound two together alludes to the controversial issue of paired friars (*FDR* 772–89). Upland’s point is that paired friars are doubly destructive. Lines 14–23 reply to *FDR* 21–24.
- 24–30    Reply to *FDR* 49–54.
- 31–36    Reply to *FDR* 55–62.
- 32     *For Poule laborid*. 1 Cor. 4.11: “Even unto this hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no fixed abode; And we labour, working with our own hands.”
- 33     *oure gentil Jesu*. When people marvel at Christ’s teachings, they ask: “Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joseph, and Jude, and Simon?” (Mark 6.3).
- 37–47    Reply to *FDR* 75–83.
- 43–44    *the prophetes of Achab*. Elijah, with the Lord’s help, killed all of Achab’s prophets, who worshipped Baal (3 Kings 18.20–40). Upland here responds to *FDR* 27: “Baal preestes ben bolde sacrifice to make.”

### *Notes*

- 47      *ne thee for your.* “The pronominal variation is explicable if *your* is taken to refer both to priests who practise simony and to Daw who implicitly approves of it” (PLH). *Symonye* was the selling of clerical preferment.
- 48–62    Reply to *FDR* 99–104.
- 52      *her habites.* Their practices, although there is word-play (paronomasia) on *habites* as gowns.
- 54–55    *Fuerunt pseudopropheete.* 2 Pet. 2.1: “But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there shall be among you lying teachers, who shall bring in sects of perdition, and deny the Lord who brought them: bring upon themselves swift destruction.”
- 59      *speke.* PLH’s emendation of MS *spake*, which is also Wr’s reading. *Here* at the end of the line may be by a corrector, in which case “Upland” may refer to some previous instance of his not speaking about Daw’s “privy sodomye.” Or the line may be an ironic *occupatio*.
- 63–75    Reply to *FDR* 105–11.
- 68      *12<sup>a</sup> q 2<sup>a</sup> Gloria episcopi.* A reference to Gratian’s twelfth-century *Decretum*, the fundamental treatise for the academic study of canon law, which formed part 1 of the *Corpus juris canonici*. The decree reads: “Nunc uero, cum paupertatem domus suae pauper Dominus dedicauit, portemus crucem, et delicias lutum putemus” (in PLH). (Now then, since the indigent Lord dedicated His house [= Church] to poverty, let us take up the Cross, and let us consider delights [to be] clay.)
- 71      *blynde leder.* Matt. 23.16: “Woe to you, blind guides.”
- 71–73    *thowgh thou bigile.* “Though you may fool simple people with your (i.e. Daw’s) persuasive gloss and your talk of rich buildings, you don’t fool me into accepting your (i.e. friars’) ill-founded convents” (PLH).
- 74–75    *Unde in Evangelio.* Mark 11.17: [Whence in the Gospel]: “But you have made it a den of thieves.”

*Upland's Rejoinder*

- 76–84    Reply to *FDR* 114–28.
- 82        *Surgent multi pseudopropheete.* Matt 24.11: “And many false prophets shall arise.”
- 84        *ever the mo the warse.* PLH’s emendation; MS and Wr *ever po [tho] mo be [the] warse.* PLH speculates that *po* anticipates *mo*. “Ever the more the worse” was a common Middle English expression.
- 85–92    Reply to *FDR* 148–58.
- 88        *blynde Bayarde.* Bayard was more commonly the proverbial name of a horse than a dog. See Chaucer’s *Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale* VIII (G) 1413–14; *Troilus and Criseyde* 1.218. But here Upland seems to refer to a dog’s “barking” and “baffing.”
- 92        *Quia dignus est.* Luke 10.7: “for the labourer is worthy of his hire.” “A favourite text for those who attacked the friars. FitzRalph uses it three times in the *Defensio*” (PLH).
- 93–103    Reply to *FDR* 159–69.
- 95        *Ve vobis.* Isaiah 5.20: “Woe to you that call evil good, and good evil.”
- 102–04    *Qui mihi ministrat.* John 12.26: “If any man minister to me, let him follow me”; Luke 12.1: “Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy”; Prov. 6.12: “A man that is an apostate, an unprofitable man, walketh with a perverse mouth.”
- 104–13    Reply to *FDR* 191.
- 107        *Whe have leve.* PLH suggests Matt 5.16: “So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works”; and Matt. 7.20: “Wherefore by their fruits you shall know them.”
- 110–11    *Noli ante tempus judicare.* 1 Cor. 4.5: “Therefore judge not before the time; until the Lord come.”
- 112        *confusoures.* A *bon mot* which combines “confusion” with “confessors.”

### *Notes*

- 113      *Quia si cecus.* Matt. 15.14: “And if the blind lead the blind, both fall into the pit.”
- 114–19    Reply to *FDR* 210–16.
- 119      *pointes.* Wr reads *partes*. The MS is difficult to decipher here.
- 120–29    Reply to *FDR* 234–57.
- 124–25    *as the prestes of Bel.* The priests of Bel (Baal) asked the king to leave food and drink for the god under the altar and to seal it up with his ring; but they had constructed a secret entrance and consumed the food themselves together with their families. Daniel discovered the ruse, and the king slew the priests and their families. See Dan. 14.
- 130–46    Reply to *FDR* 260–81.
- 141      *Initium omnis peccati.* Eccl. 10.14, 15: “The beginning of the pride of man is to fall off from God . . . for pride is the beginning of all sin.”
- 146      *Avaricia.* See Col. 3.5: “covetousness, which is the service of idols.”
- 147–65    Reply to *FDR* 282–313.
- 152      *Non potest civitas.* Matt. 5.14: “A city seated on a mountain cannot be hid.”
- 154–55    *Neque accendunt.* Matt. 5.15: “Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel.”
- 158      *ranel.* “Probably an adaptation of Lat. *rana* ‘frog.’ Cp. Rev. xvi. 13: ‘Et uidi . . . de ore pseudoprophetae spiritus tres immundos in modum ranarum’ [“And I size thre vncleene spirites in to manere of froggis for to go out of the . . . mouth of the false prophet”]; see Augustine, *Expositio in Apocalypsim*, Hom. xiii (*PL* xxxv. 2446–7). The sense is perhaps ‘mucus’” (PLH).
- 159      *Pacem relinquo vobis.* John 14.27: “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.”

*Upland's Rejoinder*

- 161–65 *twey lyves.* The two “lives” or “ways” of Martha, symbol of the active life, and of Mary, symbol of the contemplative life. See Luke 10.38–43. Upland criticizes Daw and friars generally for failing to live up to the ideals of the active life, which they abuse through begging and rich living, or of the contemplative life, which they evade while pursuing fraud.
- 166–69 Reply to *FDR* 322–29.
- 168–69 *Panis egentium.* Eccl. 34.25: “The bread of the needy, is the life of the poor: he that defraudeth them thereof, is a man of blood.”
- 170–72 Reply to *FDR* 330–36.
- 172 *Quod Deus conjunxit.* Matt. 19.6: “What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.”
- 173–88 Reply to *FDR* 337–64.
- 174 *tateris and tagges,* fashionably tattered and dagged clothing. Chaucer’s Parson denounces such fashion in his *Tale:* “. . . ther is also costlewe furrynge in hir gownes, so muche pownsonyng [punching] of chisels to maken holes, so muche daggynge of sheres [cutouts with scissors].”
- 178 *the coloure.* Upland seems to identify Daw as a Dominican both here, with the reference to the “coloure that signifieth sadnes,” and at line 299: “If thou callist, Dawe, your Dominikis reules.” MS *siginfieþ;* Wr, PLH *signifieþ.*
- 185 *missee-shapen shelde.* This refers to Daw’s hood; see *FDR* 373: “My greet hood behynde, shapun as a sheeld.”
- 187–88 *Genimina viperarum.* Luke 3.7: “Ye offspring of vipers, who hath shewed you to flee from the wrath to come”; or Matt. 3.7: “Ye brood of vipers, who hath shewed you to flee from the wrath to come.”
- 189–96 Reply to *FDR* 365–82.
- 192 *Diabolus est mendax.* See John 8.44: “You are of your father, the devil, and the desires of your father . . . for he is a liar, and the father thereof.”

### *Notes*

- 197–203 Reply to *FDR* 387–406.
- 198–99 *For Salomon spekith not of silence.* Solomon refers to a time and season for everything, including silence, rather than to the official observance of silence in convents. See *FDR* 389–90 and note and 390 and note.
- 200 *etyng of your fleshe.* Eating meat on fast-days was a point of contention between the Lollards and the clergy. See *FDR* 397–406 and note to 403.
- 203 “A horizontal stroke, probably an abbreviation mark, stands after *dawe*; the letter over which it was presumably placed lost in cropping” (PLH). PLH punctuates “Dawe < . . . > |”
- 204–16 Reply to *FDR* 407–21.
- 209–10 *And yit shal tyde.* 4 Kings 22, 23. Josiah repaired the temple, abolished idolatry, and renewed the law. He also threw out the vessels of Baal and put the sooth-sayers to death.
- 211 *Jannes and Mambres.* See 2 Tim. 3.8: “Now as Jannes and Mambres resisted Moses, so these also resist the truth, men corrupted in mind, reprobate concerning the faith.” “[I]t is generally assumed that the Egyptian sorcerers of Exod. vii. 11, 22 are meant. The names are traditional from the earliest Christian times” (PLH).
- 213–14 *Attendite a falsis prophetis.* Matt. 7.15: “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep.”
- 217–29 Reply to *FDR* 452–77.
- 219–20 *For bi this apis argument.* Upland refers to Daw’s argument, justifying wealthy fraternal convents, that man is better than a beast. See *FDR* 452–59.
- 223 *Caymes castelles*, i.e., fraternal houses. See *PPC* 486n and *JU* 56n.
- 227–29 *Non habemus.* Heb. 13.14: “For we have not here a lasting city.” *Ve qui edificatis.* Hab. 2.12: “Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood.” *Et ve qui conjungitis.* Isa. 5.8: “Woe to you that join house to house.”

*Upland's Rejoinder*

- 230–35 Reply to *FDR* 478–86.
- 230 *thou accusest pardoneres.* See *FDR* 482–83 and note.
- 236–52 Reply to *FDR* 487–506.
- 236 *paiyng of tribut.* See *FDR* 488 and note.
- 240–41 *Qui non est mecum.* Matt. 12.30: “He that is not with me, is against me: and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth”; or Luke 11.23.
- 242 *I saide first.* See lines 3–4.
- 244 *Thi resones.* An allusion to the weak but treacherous reed of Isaiah 36.6: “Lo thou trustest upon this broken staff of a reed, upon Egypt: upon which if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it.”
- 252 *Benedicite.* Romans 12.14: “. . . bless, and curse not.”
- 253–56 Reply to *FDR* 524–37. The allusion to “a *b* from a bole fote” refers back to *FDR* 213.
- 254 *the vertu.* Luke 8.46.
- 257–65 Reply to *FDR* 538–54.
- 264–65 *Ve vobis.* Matt. 23.15: “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites: because you go round about the sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, you make him the child of hell twofold more than yourselves.” PLH suggests that *Suple* means something like “namely” or “that is.”
- 266–77 Reply to *FDR* 555–77. *Frentike am I not.* See *FDR* 560.
- 269 *when ye gode likith.* PLH emends to “when ȝou gode likib.” The MS reads *ȝe*.
- 271–72 *And the kyng . . . traytoures.* Skeat thought these lines allude to the hanging of eight Franciscan friars at Tyburn, June, 1402, for their part in a plot against King Henry IV. PLH does not agree with Skeat’s arguments.

### *Notes*

- 276–77 *Que conventio.* 2 Cor. 6.15: “And what concord hath Christ with Belial?” *Quid communicabit.* Eccl. 13.3: “What agreement shall the earthen pot have with the kettle?”
- 278–92 Reply to *FDR* 601–30.
- 287–88 *Bot the harlot . . . any rewarde.* The meaning of these lines is not wholly clear, but the general point seems to be that the scoundrel will go to extraordinary lengths to do Antichrist’s work.
- 290–92 *Mordent dentibus.* Micah 3.5: “. . . that bite with their teeth, and preach peace: and if a man give not something into their mouth, they prepare war against him.”
- 293–310 Reply to *FDR* 631–45.
- 296 *thou callist Holichirche.* PLH’s emendation; MS *pou ?seyst*. There are erasures and the interpolator inserts *seyst*. See PLH’s note to this line.
- 303 *Odivi ecclesiam malignantium.* Psalm 25.5: “I have hated the assembly of the malignant.”
- 308 *Ye, callid Hym a blasfeme.* See Matt. 9.3: “And behold some of the scribes said within themselves: He blasphemeth.”
- 310 *Et vos implete.* Matt. 23.32: “Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.”
- 311–29 Reply to *FDR* 646–98.
- 325 *Ypocrita, eice primo.* Matt. 7.5: “Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thy own eye.”
- 327 *For as God yaf Kyng Saule.* Saul loved David, but a strange “rapture” or madness would come over him, especially when David won success on the battlefield. Upland compares Saul’s madness in the pursuit of David to Daw’s “following” of the Church.
- 329 *Periculum in falsis fratribus.* 2 Cor. 11.26: “. . . in perils from false brethren.”

*Upland's Rejoinder*

- 330–53 Reply to *FDR* 699–739. In lines 330–45 Upland outlines his position on mendicancy: namely, that begging is permissible provided the beggar be both poor and needy. Two Wycliffite conclusions condemned in Gregory XI's *De haeretico comburendi* (1401) were article 23: "That friars should be required to gain their living by the labor of their hands and not by mendicancy"; and article 24: "That a person giving alms to friars, or to a preaching friar, is excommunicate; also the one receiving." See *The World of Piers Plowman*, ed. Jeanne Krochalis and Edward Peters (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975), p. 127.
- 334 *bolde beggeres*. See *Piers Plowman* B 6.213. Langland condemns aggressive mendicancy by both lay and religious beggars.
- 339 *Dawe, thou dotest allegyng*. I adopt PLH's solution to the problem of "allegyng," which seems to mean "setting aside" or "annulling" rather than "citing." PLH thinks the water, ass, and inn (*herberowe*) refer to Christ's walking on the waters (or His rebuking of the sea and winds); His sending disciples to locate an ass for him to ride into Jerusalem; and His securing an inn for the Last Supper. Upland seems to be arguing that Daw conveniently omits or misconstrues evidence of Christ's divine powers.
- 341 *thou mysse-takist Jerom*. This line refers directly back to *FDR* 717–22.
- 343 *likith*. PLH's emendation. MS: *likist*.
- 344–45 *evel mote he spedē . . . more than is nede*. See *JU* 224–25 note.
- 346 *Mendax mendicus*. "A lying beggar is not the friend of truth."
- 347 *Nutantes transferantur*. Psalm 108.10: "Let his children be carried about vagabonds, and beg."
- 349 After this line occurs the first of three interpolations in a different hand from the main text (the interpolator designated T by PLH). For the eight-line interpolation, see PLH's note to 349. T's other interpolations come after lines 374 and 393.
- 350 *Dawe, thou hewist hye*. PLH cites a proverb about receiving wood chips in the eye if one chops the tree too high.

### *Notes*

- 351      *likkith the chesefat.* PLH cites statements concerning licking the fat from someone's beard as a way of depriving them of livelihood, or having one's beard smeared with fat (a sign of low-life indulgence).
- 352      *pore wedowes porse . . . peny.* Friars were often portrayed as so greedy that they would take a poor widow's last penny. See Chaucer's *CT* I 253–55.
- 353      *Dawe Dotypolle.* A term of contempt: "fool, simpleton, blockhead" (*MED* s.v. *doti-pol*). The *Doty* part refers to Daw's alleged foolishness (compare "dote," "dotard," "doddering," "dotty"), and *polle* to the head (*LG polle*, head). Answers Daw's abusive appellations *Jakke Jospinel* (823), and *Jak Jawdewyne* (760, 930).
- 354–56    Reply to *FDR* 740–54.
- 357–63    Reply to *FDR* 755–64.
- 357      *glasen glose.* "A sophistical interpretation, presumably of a biblical text; cf. *MED*, *glasen*, 1b." Robert W. Hanning, "I Shal Finde It in a Maner Glose": Versions of Textual Harassment in Medieval Literature," in *Medieval Texts and Contemporary Readers*, ed. Laurie A. Finke and Martin B. Shichtman (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1987), p. 32. Of *UR* 357–59 Hanning comments: "In this accusation one kind of glossing leads naturally to the other: the tongue that twists language to justify clerical abuses easily becomes the tongue that flatters the rich to open their money bags" (p. 32).
- 358      *galpen.* A blended word akin to gape, gulp, and yelp. *MED* relates the word to opening the mouth wide, yawning, gaping; to *galpen after grace* suggests a greedy eagerness to obtain.
- 362–63    *Amant enim primos recubitus.* Matt. 23.6–7: "And they love the first places at feasts, and the first chairs in the synagogues, and salutations in the market place, and to be called by men, Rabbi." See also *PPC* 567, 761.
- 364–74    Reply to *FDR* 772–89.
- 364–65    *Daw, thou herdist me not grucche.* See lines 58–59.

*Upland's Rejoinder*

- 371–72 *Zambre with Corby.* Zimri, an Israelite, took Cozbi, a Midianite, into his family in defiance of Moses. Phineas slew them both with a single spear thrust. See Numbers 25.6–8. For Jamnes and Mambres — traditional names of Pharaoh's magicians in the time of Moses — see line 211 and note.
- 373–74 *Hui sunt qui penetrant domos.* 2 Tim. 3.6: "For of these sort are they who creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins." Among the frequent charges against friars was that they infiltrated hearth and home. Langland allegorizes the type in his character Sire *Penetrans domos* (*Piers Plowman* B 20.340); and Chaucer represents a similar type in the unnamed friar of the *Summoner's Tale*, who overstays his welcome in Thomas's house. After line 374 there follows an eleven-line interpolation, which PLH prints in his note to line 374.
- 375–79 Reply to *FDR* 810–38.
- 380–93 Reply to *FDR* 839–72.
- 380–81 *Thou saist . . . Cristis body.* The argument, not well stated in these lines, seems to concern substance and accident in the Transubstantiation. Upland tries to articulate the orthodox position. PLH comments: "Of UR's reply I can make nothing; but I feel safe in assuming confusion of thought rather than corruption of the text." Articles 1 and 2 of *De haeretico comburendi* concern Wycliffite conclusions about Transubstantiation: (1) "That the material substance of bread and wine remains, after the consecration, in the sacrament of the altar"; (2) "That the accidents do not remain without the subject, after the consecration, in the same sacrament."
- 387–89 *Sathanas was unbounde.* A reference to the controversial millennial doctrine mentioned in Rev. 20.7: "And when the thousand years shall be finished, Satan shall be loosed out of prison, and shall go forth. . . ." The Church Fathers ("holi doctores") debated the precise meaning of these lines and especially whether there would be a "carnal millennium." Upland implies — as did Wyclif — that Satan has already been "unbound" and that he is loose in the Church.
- 393 *Commutterunt veritatem Dei.* Rom. 1.25: "Who changed the truth of God into a lie." After this quotation there follows a twenty-eight line interpolation, which PLH prints in his note to line 393.

## *Why I Can't Be a Nun*

### ***Introduction***

The impression remains that nuns from the fourteenth century on were in a spiritual backwater which merely provided a respectable manner of living for the aristocratic or wealthy whose families had not been able to provide them with husbands, or who sought a suitable refuge in widowhood. Apparently they did little teaching, even of girls; they were not involved in the active works of charity as were the beguines and the hospitals and their members were not as zealous in the performance of the divine office, nor as interested in learning and culture as the commanding female religious figures of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries.

Margaret Wade Labarge (pp. 114-15)

*Why I Can't Be a Nun* poses a dilemma: how should a young woman, devoted to piety, live a good life if the institutions originally designed to enhance her spiritual welfare have become residences of sin rather than devotion? The poem reflects poignantly the decline of the conventional life from the point of view of one strongly committed to fifteenth-century spiritual values. The poem is found in a single manuscript, British Library Cotton Vespasian D.ix, 177a–182b, 190a–190b, where it is tucked in amongst treatises concerned with issues of reform — verses of the Lollards against clerical abuses; verses against the Lollards; verses against heretics in Bohemia; verses in praise of the Virgin Mary; and so on. Although the poem attacks sharply enough the failures of ecclesiastical institutions, it does so more in the tone of elegy than caustic satire. The implication is that if nuns were to reform, the persona might find life in a convent congenial to her spiritual life. But since that is unlikely she attempts to work out a personal rule that, though it might be criticized by skeptical men as a dream fantasy, would satisfy her religious longings. The proposition seems akin to the religious posture of *PPC* in that the concern through most of the poem is personal and essentially domestic, where the meaningful community is the family.

Rossell Hope Robbins and F. J. Furnivall date the composition of *Why I Can't Be a Nun* in the early fifteenth century. The poem, composed in eight-line stanzas

### *Why I Can't Be a Nun*

rhyming *ababbcbc*, is missing both its beginning verses and its conclusion. The manuscript is quite worn, suggesting that it was much used. The poem is perhaps the best example of a *chanson de nonne* in Middle English and reflects admirably the conservative ethical concerns of fifteenth-century parents raising and educating their daughters. The voice projected in the poem is that of an obedient, intelligent girl named Katerine who, in her pious idealism, wishes to enter a convent. Her father, learning of corruption in the convents from the commissioners who have recently surveyed all convents in England, discourages her from pursuing that vocation on grounds that by entering a convent she "may not fulfylle in dede / The purpose that ye have begun" (38–39), that is, to live a good life. One is struck by the father's tender concern for his daughter, despite his laughter of relief when he learns of the corruption in the convents, and the daughter's obedient regard for her father. She is genuinely disappointed at this apparent thwarting of her desire for piety, however, and retires one May morning into her garden where she has a marvelously instructive dream: Lady Experience appears to her and takes her into a typical convent, with its external splendor and internal corruption — Pride, Hypocrisy, Sloth, Vainglory, Envy, Love Unordinate, Lust, Wantonness, and, worst of all, Dame Dysobedyent — all of whom are personified before her. The convent is so corrupt that Charity and Patience are forced to dwell apart in an outer chamber. Lady Experience explains that she has come to show these things to Katerine to help her understand why her father would not consent to her desire.

Katerine then awakens and, speaking now with the voice of experience, advises other young women on how to live virtuously, with specific exhortations to nuns on how to dress so that they will not attract lecherous men. What matters is their inner spiritual lives, not their outward, vain gestures. The poem concludes with reflections upon women saints who lived their lives on earth "relygyiusly," and who now enjoy endless bliss in heaven. The shift in voice after Katerine's awakening is nicely handled by the poet as she matures from her earnest desires into the role of sage counsellor.

Nothing is known about the author of the poem. It could be by a woman, I would think. Certainly the tone of the latter part of the poem is akin to that of instructional verse like that of "How the Good Wif Taught Her Daughter," though the role of the concerned father in the poem might suggest male authorship. Certainly, the poem creates a domestic world remarkable for its thoughtful concerns by both the parent and the daughter; it is a world acquainted with the rhetoric of pleasant instruction through fiction, poetry, ethical manuals (Lady Experience quotes from Aristotle's "Moralite"), and saints' lives. The poet — or, rather, Katerine — emphasizes strongly the importance of obedience to God and

### *Introduction*

parents and the beautiful, protective effects that ensue from such love. In fact, it is the nuns' disobedience to the Prioress that offends Katerine most of all so that she leaves the convent in disgust.

Although Katerine has a keen sense of hierarchy, she also has good understanding of her personal relationship with God, which helps to sustain that hierarchy. Initially, when her father seems to thwart her desires, she turns immediately to prayer. That defensive gesture is a sign of her good breeding as well as her piety. Private meditation is important to her both as a means of understanding her social situation as well as maintaining a clean relationship with God. Her sense of self-worth is crucial to the progress of the poem through all three of its phases — the initial response to her father, the dream vision, and the wise counsel to nuns and other women at the end.

*Why I Can't Be a Nun* lacks the acerb ferocity of *PPC* or the vindictiveness of *PIT* or *JU*. It makes allowance for some good nuns out there, but, alas, there are too few. Its gentler tone is fitting for the instruction of young women. There are things that Katerine's modesty simply prohibits her from saying. Nonetheless, she makes a strong statement against corruption within the institutions of the church and the need for individual attention to personal belief, particularly for women, who may take strength from each other even though the ecclesiastical institutions set up for them may not be congenial to their best concerns. It is striking that the teacher who addresses her in her dream is Lady Experience. In a monastic satire we might expect an allegorical character named Experience to be on the side of Satan. But the woman's world is practically oriented. Chaucer's Wife of Bath founds her exegesis on "Experience," and for Pertelote, in the *Nun's Priest's Tale*, learning begins in the practical instructions of Cato. The implication here is that women learn from other women. They learn from example and, as Katerine's discourse on dress suggests, are mindful that they will in turn be seen as examples.

This edition is based on a photostatic copy of the Cotton Vespasian manuscript, checked against Furnivall's 1862 edition. Furnivall followed the manuscript by not setting the lines in stanzas; and he linked many word units with hyphens (*In-to* for MS *In to*, *be-gan* for MS *be gan*). The present edition organizes the lines into stanzas rhyming *ababbcbc* and silently normalizes spellings (for example, *Into* and *began*). Significant departures from the MS and Furnivall are observed in the notes.

*Why I Can't Be a Nun*

**Manuscript**

British Library MS Cotton Vespasian D.ix. fols. 177a–182b, 190a–190b.

**Editions**

F. J. Furnivall. *Early English Poems and Lives of Saints*. Berlin: Asher, 1862. Pp. 138–48. [Transactions of the Philological Society of London, 1858.]

**Pertinent Studies**

Byrne, Sister M. *Tradition of the Nun in Medieval England*. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1932.

Elkins, Sharon K. *Holy Women of Twelfth-Century England*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988. [Excellent study of the most creative and expansive phase of women's religious life in England.]

Labarge, Margaret Wade. *A Small Sound of the Trumpet: Women in Medieval Life*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1986. [See esp. Ch. 5: "Women who Prayed: Nuns and Beguines," pp. 98–120.]

Power, Eileen. *Medieval English Nunneries*. Cambridge: University Press, 1922. [The definitive study of the subject. See especially Ch. 5: "The Nun in Medieval Literature," pp. 499–562. Comments on *Why I Can't Be a Nun* appear on pp. 545–49.]

Robbins, Rossell Hope. "XIII. Poems Dealing with Contemporary Conditions" In *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English 1050–1500*, vol. 5. New Haven: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1975. Pp. 1452, 1679.

Utley, Francis L. *The Crooked Rib: An Analytical Index to the Argument about Women in English and Scots Literature to the End of the Year 1568*. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1944.

### *Why I Can't Be a Nun*

[The beginning of the poem is missing. The opening lines apparently told how Commissioners were sent to investigate the condition of nunneries throughout the kingdom.]

	And whan they had resceyved her charge, They spared nether mud ne myer, But roden over Inglonde brode and large, To seke owte nunryes in every schyre.	<i>received their orders avoided neither; mire far and wide nunneries; shire</i>
5	Her hertys were alwey on her hyre, And that scheude they wel in her workyng, For they were as ferfent as ony fyre To execute her lordys byddyg.	<i>Their hearts; their work showed; labor fervent; fire orders</i>
10	And schortly to sey, no man abode That on thys erand schulde be sent. Into dyvers schyres dyvers men rode, And one of hem began in Kent.	<i>malingered errand diverse them</i>
15	They token her leve and forthe they went; And to eche of hem was geven grete hyre, And therefore they were so fervent To seke owte nunryes in every schyre.	<i>their leave given; wages</i>
20	But the townes names I ovyr pas, For and I schulde telle alle in fere, Hyt were a long tale for to here. But on a boke I dare well swere,	<i>pass over if; together hear book; swear</i>
	In gode feythe and on womanhode, None was forgete, fer ne nere, Thorowgh Ynglond long and brode.	<i>overlooked; far; near</i>
25	But when they were com home agene That roden owte message to bere, Than my fader was fulle fayne	<i>again father; fully eager</i>

### *Why I Can't Be a Nun*

	And callede hem to hym alle in fere And seyde, "How sped ye there ye were, How faren the nunnes that ye cam tylle?"	<i>all together fares you where visited</i>
30	"Welle, syr," quod they, "and made us gode chere, And yowre desyre they wolle fulfylle."	<i>said They're certainly obliging</i>
	"I thanke hem seres, iwys," quod he, "Now am I glade, so God me spede." And than my fader loked on me,	<i>sirs, indeed; he (the father) prosper</i>
35	"Dameselle," quod he, "now take gode hede, For yowre entent God do yow mede. Ye seyde ye wolde be a nune, But ye may not fulfylle in dede The purpose that ye have begun."	<i>heed intention God reward you</i>
40	"Fader," quod I, and sore I wept, "Wolle ye me here wyth wordys few? I trow my wylle schalle be accept Before owre sovereyne Lorde Ihesu, And to Him I am and wolle be trew	<i>sorely hear believe; acceptable Jesus</i>
45	Wythe alle my wylle and obcervaunce, And I wolle not chonge Hym for no new, For I love Hym wythe owten variaunce.	<i>another [lord]</i>
	"And trewly me repente fulle sore That my wylle may not be had."	
50	Than my fader lowgh and seyde no more, But went hys way and was fulle glade. But than morned I, and was ryght sad, And in my hert I was fulle wo: "Alas," I thowght, "my chawnce ys bad,	<i>laughed</i>
55	I trow that fortune be my fo."	<i>mourned heart; woeful situation believe; foe</i>
	Than hyt befelle in a mornynge of May, In the same yere as I seyde before, My pencyfness wolde not away But ever waxed more and more, I walked alone and wepte sore	<i>pensiveness; [go] away</i>
60	Wythe syhyngs and mornynge chere,	<i>sighs; mournful demeanor</i>

### *Why I Can't Be a Nun*

I seyde but lytelle and thowght the more,  
For what I thowght no man myght here.

*But; hear*

65 And in a gardyne I sportyd me  
Every day at dyvers howres,  
To beholde and for to see  
The swete effecte of Aprellie flowres,  
The fayre herbys and gentyl flowrys  
And birde syngynge on every spray,  
But my longyng and my dolowrys  
For alle thys sport wolde not away.

*entertained myself  
various times*

70 The byrdys sate on the bowes grene  
And syngynge fulle meryly and made gode chere;  
Her federys were fulle fayre and schene  
And alle they maden mery in her manere.  
Than went I into a fayre herbere,  
And set me on my kneys allone,  
To God I made my prayowre,  
And on thys wyse I made my mone:

*birds; green boughs  
Their feathers; shining*

*garden  
knees  
prayer  
manner; complaint*

75 80 "Lorde God, that alle vertu hast  
And haddyst wythowten begynnnyng,  
Kepe me that I may lyve chaste  
For the corpcion of synnyng;  
For thowgh my fadyr and alle my kyn  
Forsake me thus in necessite,  
Yyt I hope suche grace to wyn  
That owre Lord Ihesu wolle resceyve me.

*Protect  
From*

*Yet*

85 90 "Sovereyne Lord omnipotent,  
Now be my comfort, swete Ihesu.  
Before The alle thyng ys present,  
Alle that evyr was, and alle that ys,  
Alle that schalle be aftyr thys.  
Thow knowest alle thyng bothe most and lest.  
Now Ihesu kyng of Hevyn blys,  
Wysse me thy servant what ys best.

*least*

*Show*

*Why I Can't Be a Nun*

- “For now I am alle desolate,  
 And of gode cownesayle destitute.  
 Lord, to my mornynge be mediate,  
 For Thow art oonly my refute,  
 To The for comfort I make my sute,  
 To have that joy that lastythe ay,  
 For her love that bare that frute,  
 Swete Ihesu, miserere mei!
- 100  
 105  
 110  
 115  
 120  
 125  
 130
- counsel  
 grief; mediator  
 refuge  
 appeal  
 forever  
 have mercy on me
- “I can no more, but trust in The  
 In whom ys alle wysdom and wyt;  
 And thow wost what ys best for me,  
 For alle thyng in thy syght ys pyt.  
 Loo here I thyne handmayde syt  
 Dyspysede and in poynte to spylle.  
 My cawse to The, Lorde, I commytte:  
 Now do to me aftyr Thy wylle.”
- And at that worde forfeynte I fylle  
 Among the herbes fresche and fyne;  
 Unto a benche of camomylle  
 My wofulle hede I dyd inclyne,  
 And so I lay in fulle grete pyne,  
 And cowde not cese but alwey wepe,  
 And sore I syghed many a tyme  
 And prayed my lorde he wolde me kepe.
- And at the last a slepe was ibrowght  
 And alle alone in this gardyne.  
 And than com a fayre lady, as me thowght,  
 And called me by name — “Kateryne,”  
 And seyde, “Awake, dowghtyr myne,  
 And to my talkyng take entent.  
 To bryng thyne hert owte of pyne,  
 And to comfort the, now have I ment.
- “Kateryne,” sche sayde, “loke up and have.”  
 And than I behelde welle her fygure —  
 I pray to God in Hevyn her save —
- know; have faith in You  
 knowledge  
 know  
 set  
 Despised; point of death
- in a faint; fell
- head  
 pain  
 cease
- sleep came upon me
- pay attention  
 torment  
 intended

### Why I Can't Be a Nun

- 135
- For hyt was the most godeley creature  
 That ever I saw, I yow ensuer,  
 As I wolle telle yow or I go,  
 For I behelde welle her fature,  
 Her bewté, and her clothyng also.
- assure  
before  
shape  
beauty*
- 140
- And me thowght I was as wakyngh tho,  
 As I am now wythowten lesyng;  
 And I behelde that lady so  
 That I forgate alle my mornyng,  
 For hyt was to me a wondyr thyng
- When  
sadness*
- That lady to beholden and see:  
 Sche was so fayre wythowten lesyng  
 Bothe of clothyng and of bewté,
- lying*
- 145
- Thys that was so godeley arrayed.  
 Sche comfortythe me in dyvers wyse,  
 And speake to me in dyvers wyse,  
 And bad me anone I schulde aryse.  
 And me thowght I rose and knelyd thryes,
- This [person]; handsomely dressed  
comforted; many ways*
- And seyde to her wythe grete reverence,  
 "What ys your name, dame empryse?"  
 Sche seyde, "My name ys Experience."
- asked me soon  
kneeled three times  
most excellent lady*
- 150
- "And, dowghter, my techyng may not fayle,  
 For what so I teche, hyt ys fulle rew,  
 And now at thys tyme for thyne avayle  
 I am com hedyr on the to rew;  
 And wythe the help of Cryste Ihesu
- fail  
benefit  
hither to take pity on you*
- I hope hyt schalle be for the best,  
 For suche thynges as I schalle the schew,  
 I tro hyt schalle set thyne hert in rest."
- show you*
- 155
- "Thanke yow, lady," quod I than,  
 "And thereof hertely I yow pray;  
 And I, as lowly as I can,  
 Wolle do yow servyse nyght and day;  
 And what ye byd me do or say
- promise*
- To yow I promyt obedycence,

*Why I Can't Be a Nun*

- And bryng me owte of thys carefull way,  
My gode dere Lady Experience." *unhappy*
- Than me thowght sche toke me by the honde  
As I knelyd upon my kne
- 170 And up anone sche bad me ryse  
And on thys wyse seyde to me:  
"Kateryne, thys day schalt thou see  
An howse of wommen reguler,  
And diligent loke that thou be,  
175 And note ryght welle what thou seest there." *manner*
- Than me thowght sche led me forthe a pace  
Thorowgh a medow fayre and grene,  
And sone sche brought me to a place,  
In erthe ys none so fayre I wene,  
180 Of ryalle byldyng so I mene,  
Hyt schyned wythowte so fayre and clere,  
But syn had made hyt fulle unclene  
Wythin, as ye schalle aftyr here. *quickly*
- "What place ys thys that stondythe hyre,"  
185 Quod I to hyre that dyd me lyde.  
"Kateryne," sche sayd, "we wyl go nere,  
And what you seyst, take good hede."  
Than at the gates in we yede,  
190 Boldly as thowgh we had be at home,  
And I thowght, "Now Chryst us spedē." *here*
- Than to the cloyster sone we com,  
  
For hyt was a howse of Nunes in trewthe,  
Of dyvers orderys bothe olde and yong,  
But not welle governede, and that was rowthe,  
195 Aftyr the rewle of sad levynge.  
For where that selfe wylle ys reyngyng,  
The whyche causethe dyscorde and debate,  
And resun hathe none enteryng,  
That howse may not be fortunate. *her; lead*
- royal architecture*
- shone*
- sin*
- see; heed*
- went*
- help us*
- a pity*
- regulation of sober living*
- reigning*
- If; access*

*Why I Can't Be a Nun*

- 200 For Arystotelle, who so redythe,  
 In the fyrist boke of hys Moralité,  
 Playnely seyethe that every man nedethe  
 To be ware of the unresonabylité  
 That comethe of the sensualité,  
 205 And not hys bestely condicione sewe,  
 But let resun have the soveraynté,  
 And so he schalle purches vertu."
- whosoever reads [him]*
- beastly; follow  
 achieve virtue
- But what in that place I saw  
 That to religion schulde not long,  
 210 Peraventure ye wolde desyre to know,  
 And who was dwellyng hem among.  
 Sum what schalle I telle you wyth tong,  
 And sum what cownseyle kepe I schalle,  
 And so I was tawght whan I was yong,  
 215 To here and se, and sey not alle.
- That which; belong*
- tongue*
- hear; see; say*
- But there was a lady, that hygh Dame Pride,  
 In grete reputacion they her toke;  
 And pore Dame Mekenes sate be syde,  
 To her unnethys ony wolde loke,  
 220 But alle as who seythe I her forsoke  
 And set not by her nether most ne lest.  
 Dame Ypocryte loke upon a boke  
 And bete her selfe upon the brest.
- was called*
- regarded*
- scarcely any*
- Except*
- beat*
- On every syde than lokede up I,  
 And fast I cast myne ye abowte.  
 Yf I cowde se, beholde, or a-spy,  
 I wolde have sene Dame Devowte.  
 225 And sche was but wythe few of that rowght,  
 For Dame Sclowthe and Dame Veyne Glory  
 By yvolens had put her owte;  
 And than in my hert I was fulle sory.
- eye*
- Devotion*
- But; company*
- Sloth*
- violence*
- But Dame Envy was there dwellyng  
 The whyche can sethe stryfe in every state,  
 And another lady was there wonnyng
- discover*
- dwelling*

## *Why I Can't Be a Nun*

- |     |   |   |
|-----|---|---|
| 235 | That hyght Dame Love Unordynate;<br>In that place bothe erly and late<br>Dame Lust, Dame Wantowne, and Dame Nyce,<br>They ware so there enhabyted, I wate,<br>That few token hede to Goddys servyse.        | <i>was called</i><br><i>ensconsed; know</i>                   |
| 240 | Dame Chastyte, I dare welle say,<br>In that covent had lytelle chere,<br>But oft in poynte to go her way,<br>Sche was so lyttelle beloved there;<br>But sum her loved in hert fulle dere,                   | <i>welcome</i><br><i>about to</i>                             |
| 245 | And there weren that dyd not so,<br>And sum set no thyng by her,<br>But gafe her gode leve for to go.   | <i>didn't care about</i><br><i>gave</i>                       |
| 250 | And at that place I saw muche more,<br>But alle I thenk not to dyscrye,<br>But I wolde sey as I seyde before,<br>And yt ys a poynte of curtesy:<br>For whoso chateryt lyke a py                             | <i>describe</i><br><i>a matter</i><br><i>chatters; magpie</i> |
| 255 | And tellethe alle that he herethe and seethe,<br>He schalle be put owte of company,<br>And scho the gose, thus wysdum us lerethe.   | <i>hears; sees</i><br><i>show; goose; teaches</i>             |
| 260 | And in that place fulle besyly<br>I walked whyle I myght enduer,<br>And saw how Dame Envy<br>In every corner had grete cure;<br>Sche bare the keyes of many a dore.   | <i>influence</i><br><i>door</i>                               |
| 265 | And than Experience to me came<br>And seyde, "Ketaryne, I the ensuer,<br>Thys lady ys but seldom fro home."   | <i>assure you</i>   |
| 270 | Than Dame Pacience and Dame Charyte<br>In that nunry fulle sore I sowght;<br>I wolde fayne have wyst where they had be,<br>For in that covent were they nowght;<br>But an owte chamber for hem was wrowght, | <i>known</i>  |
| 275 | And there they dweldyn wythowtyn stryfe,  | <i>outer; made</i><br><i>dwell</i>                            |

## *Why I Can't Be a Nun*

- |     |   |  |
|-----|---|--|
| 270 | And many gode women to them sowght<br>And were fulle wyfule of her lyfe. <sup>1</sup>   |  |
| 275 | Also another lady there was<br>That hyght Dame Dysobedyent,<br>And sche set nowght by her Prioress.<br>And than me thowght alle was schent,<br>For sugettys schulde evyr be dylygent<br>Bothe in worde, in wylle, and dede,<br>To plese her sovereynes wyth gode entent,<br>And hem obey, ellys God forbede.            | <i>cared nothing about<br/>ruined<br/>subjects</i> |
| 280 | And of alle the defawtes that I cowde se<br>Thorowgh schewyng of Experience,<br>Hyt was one of the most that grevyd me,<br>The wantyng of obedyence.<br>For hyt schulde be chese in consciens,<br>Alle relygius rule wytnesseth the same,<br>And when I saw her in no reverence,<br>I myght no lenger abyde for schame. | <i>deficiencies</i>                                |
| 285 | For they setten not by obedyence,<br>And than for wo myne hert gan blede,<br>Ne they hadden her in no reverence,<br>But few or none to her toke hede.<br>And than I sped me thens a grete spede,<br>That covent was so fulle of syn.  |  |
| 290 | And than Experience dyd me lede<br>Owte at the gates there we com in.   | <i>quickly went away</i>                           |
| 295 | And when we were both wythowte,<br>Upon the gras we setten us downe,<br>And then we behelde the place abowte,<br>And there we talkeden as us lest.<br>And than I prayed Experience for to have wyst<br>Why sche schewed me thys nunery.   | <i>as we wished<br/>make known<br/>showed</i>      |

<sup>1</sup> And were fully in control of their lives

## *Why I Can't Be a Nun*

Sche seyde, "Now we bene here in rest,  
I think for to tellen the why.

- |     |  |   |
|-----|--|---|
| 305 | "Thy fyrst desyre and thyne entent<br>Was to bene a nune professede,<br>And for thy fader wolde not consent.<br><br>Thyne hert wylth mornynge was sore oppressede,<br>And thow wylst not what to do was best;<br>And I seyde, I wolde cese thy grevawnce,<br>And now for the most part in every cost<br>I have schewed the nunnes governawnce. | since<br>way  |
| 310 | "For as thow seest wythin yonder walle<br>Suche bene the nunnes in every warde,<br>As for the most part, I say not alle,<br>God forbede, for than hyt were harde,<br>For sum bene devowte, holy, and towarde,<br>And holden the ryght way to blysse;<br>And sum bene feble, lewde, and frowarde,<br>Now God amend that ys amys!                | district<br>obliging<br>refractory                  |
| 315 | "And now, Kateryne, I have alle do<br>For thy comfort that longeth to me,<br>And now let us aryse and go<br>Unto the herber there I com to the."<br>Than in thys herber sche let be me.<br>I thanked her wyth grete reverence,<br>I pray to God i-blessyd be sche,<br>Thys fayre Lady Experience.  | pertains to my office<br>arise<br>arbor where; came |
| 320 | And whan sche was gone, I wakede anone.<br>And I thought how I may governed be,<br>For nun wold I nevere be none,<br>For suche defawtes that I have see.<br>But yyf they myght amendyd be,<br>And forsake her syn both day and nyght,<br>God yyf me grace that day to se,<br>And ellys hyt wolle not be a ryght.                               | awakened soon<br>deficiencies<br>their sinfulness   |
| 325 |  |   |
| 330 |  |   |
| 335 |  |   |

## *Why I Can't Be a Nun*

- But here peraventure sum man wolde say,  
And to hys conceyte so hyt schulde seme,  
That I forsoke sone a perfyte way  
For a fantesy or for a dreme.  
For dreme was hyt none, ne fantasye,  
Hyt was unto me a gratius mene

perhaps  
understanding  
[too] soon; perfect  
*gracious course of action*

[A piece of the manuscript is torn away here, bearing the last line of this stanza, all of the next, and part of the one following.]

	Holy wryt w . . .	<i>Holy scripture</i>
345	Pleynely go rede hyt wh . . . And hyt ys wretnyn in Genesye, In the fowre and thyrti chapyttyle, How Dyna, for sche bode not stytte But went owte to see thynges in veyne, Sche was defowled agenyst her wylle, And therefore thowsandys of peple were sclayn.	<i>Genesis</i> <i>chapter</i> <i>Dinah</i> <i>slain</i>
350	Yowre barbe, your wymppylle and your vayle, Yowre mantelle and yowre devowte clothyng, Maketh men wythowten fayle To wene ye be holy in levynge. And so hyt ys an holy thyng To bene in habyte reguler.	<i>veil; hood; scarf</i> <i>cloak</i> <i>think; living</i>
355	Than, as by owtewarde aray in semyng, Beth so wythin, my ladyes dere.	
360	A fayre garlond of yve grene Whyche hangeth at a taverne dore, Hyt ys a false token as I wene, But yf there be wyne gode and sewer; Ryght so but ye your vyces forbere, And let alle lewde custom be broken, So God me sped, I yow ensewer, Ellys yowre habyte ys no trew token. <sup>1</sup>	<i>ivy</i> <i>wine; dependable</i>

<sup>1</sup> Otherwise your dress is no true sign (token) of your character

### *Why I Can't Be a Nun*

[Again the manuscript is damaged and the better part of a stanza missing.]

. . . yng . . . nde gode levyng,  
. . . yf they be wythin the contrary  
In Holy Schrypture wythowte lesyng  
They bene called the chyldryn of false ypocrasy.

- 370 Now, ladyes, taketh gode hede to thys exhortacion  
That I have tawght yow in thys lore,  
And beholde the gode conversacion  
Of gode women here before,  
Fulle holy vyrgynes many a store,  
375 The whyche levedyn here relygyisly,  
And now in joy and blysse therefore  
They have possession endlesly:  
*an abundance  
lived on earth piously*
- 380 Seynte Clare and Seynte Edyth also,  
Seynte Scolastica and Seynte Brigytte,  
Seynte Radegunde, and many mo  
That weren professed in nunnes habyte.  
They fulle besy were wyth alle her wytte  
To be ware of syn, and flee there froo,  
And now for evyr they bene qwyte  
385 From alle maner sorow and woo,  
*flee; from  
released*
- Seynte Audre, Seynte Freswyth, and Seynte Emerelde,  
Seynte Wythbuge and Seynte Myldrede,  
Seynte Sexburge and Seynte Ermeynde —  
Of alle these holy women we rede.

[The poem breaks off mid-stanza, apparently incomplete.]

### *Notes*

- 19 There appears to be a line missing here as the b-rhyme continues. The stanza thus has seven rather than eight lines.
- 21 The persona's oath on *womanhode* is the first indication that she is female.
- 24–25 MS and Furnivall indent these lines. MS has *ut* at head of line 24; Furnivall supplies *B*. This stanza marks a narrative division, since the "I" of previous stanzas becomes identified as a woman. Similar narrative divisions occur at lines 120–21 and 159–60.
- 30–31 The implication is that the nuns are worldly and eager to please visitors.
- 32–33 The father is grateful for the report, since now he can make an informed decision to keep his daughter from joining a convent.
- 49 MS and Furnivall: *my will[e] my.*
- 53 So Furnivall; MS: *woo.*
- 56 *Than hyt befell in . . . May.* The *chanson d'aventure* formula provides the shift in scene to the garden in May, where medieval dream visions so often occur. Here the scene defines the girl's domestic security, her place apart where she can relax and meditate. The merry innocence of the singing birds inspires her prayer for purity even though she feels she is in opposition to her father's wishes.
- 63 Katerine is so modest that she will not reveal her innermost thoughts to the reader: see also lines 211–14.
- 99 So MS; Furnivall: *are.*
- 102 *her love.* The Virgin Mary's love, she the fruit of whose womb was "swete Ihesu."

*Why I Can't Be a Nun*

- 105 So Furnivall; MS: *an wyt*.
- 108 *handmayde*. In her obedience, Katerine would be like the Virgin Mary, the handmaiden of the Lord (*ancilla domini* — Luke 1.38).
- 120–21 MS and Furnivall indent these lines (as at 24–25). The scribe, anticipating a rubricated *A*, left a space before *nd*. The scribe indented here because this point marks the beginning of the narrator's dream.
- 137 So MS; Furnivall omits this line.
- 144–51 The rhyme scheme of this stanza — *abbbbcbc* — is faulty; and the identical “rhyme” of lines 145–46 (not *rime riche*) is especially corrupt.
- 158 MS and Furnivall *sche* for *schew* (to rhyme with *rew* and *trew*).
- 160–61 These lines are indented in the MS and Furnivall. Line 160 perhaps should read *I thanke yow lady quod I than*.
- 173 MS and Furnivall: *And howse*.
- 173 *wommen reguler*. Women who have taken vows to follow the rules of their conventional order. Their opposite would be “women secular.” Katerine will conclude in the more Wycliffite vein of prescribing her own personal rules for living.
- 176 MS: *thowzt*; Furnivall: *thouzt*.
- 193 So MS; Furnivall: *old*.
- 197 So MS; Furnivall: *dyscord*.
- 215 *and se* inserted above the line in the MS.
- 258 *Envy*. MS: *enevy*.
- 274 *Priores*. The Prioress, or Mother Superior, is head of the convent or priory.

*Notes*

- 301     *sche* inserted above the line in the MS.
- 329     MS and Furnivall: *thowȝ*.
- 329     *how I may governed be*. Having rejected the convent, Katerine is still concerned to understand what rule she will follow. Her instruction to ladies at the end serves a dramatic function in the poem's plot: it offers rules within the household as guides to life.
- 336     *sum man*. Katerine seems particularly concerned that some male in her audience, perhaps a church official, might challenge the authority of her vision and her resistance to the convent on grounds that she is simply following her fantasy. Compare line 63, where she likewise seems uncomfortable with the opinions of men.
- 346–49     The Vulgate simply says that Dinah “went out to see the women of that country” (Gen. 34:1), without implying that she has done anything wrong. Katerine’s suggestion that she “went owte to see thynges in veyne” is an unusual interpretation, reflecting her modesty against appearing forward in public.
- 350     Here Katerine appears to be addressing the nuns themselves, or would-be nuns. But her remarks apply as well to all women, who should avoid provocative dress, or dress that is inappropriate to their spiritual welfare.
- 377     *endlesly*. MS and Furnivall: *enlesly*.
- 378–88     The narrator adduces *exempla* of holy nuns including St. Clare of Assisi (d. 1253), who founded the Order of Poor Clares (feasts Sept. 23, Oct. 3); St. Edith of Wilton (d. 984), who refused the English throne (feast Sept. 16); St. Scholastica (sixth century), sister of St. Benedict and principal female saint of the Benedictine Order (feast Feb. 10); St. Bridget (sixth century), “Mary of the Gael,” patron of Ireland with Columbia and Patrick and abbess of the first Irish convent (feast Feb. 1); St. Radegund (sixth century), who founded the double monastery of the Holy Cross at Poitiers, an influential center of learning (feast Aug. 13); St. Etheldreda or Audrey (d. 679), who maintained her virginity despite two marriages and who founded a double monastery at Ely (feast June 23); St. Frideswide (eighth century), patron saint of Oxford, who founded a priory that was said to have healing powers

*Why I Can't Be a Nun*

(feast Oct. 19); St. Withburga (eighth century), who founded a convent at Dereham and whose death inspired a fresh spring to flow (feast July 8); St. Mildred (eighth century), who was known for her piety and aid to the poor (feast July 13); St. Sexburga (late seventh century), who founded Minster Monastery on Sheppey Island and who retired to Ely (feast July 6); and St. Ermengild (d. 703), who helped spread Christianity in England and who joined St. Sexburga at Ely (feast Feb. 13). I am uncertain of the identity of Emerelde (line 385).

381      *weren.* MS: *werenen.*

388      The poem ends at the bottom of folio 190b. Another work begins on folio 191, suggesting that the poem is incomplete.

## *Glossary*

<b>aftorn</b> <i>before</i>	<b>combreñ, encombreñ</b> <i>oppress, harass, trouble</i>
<b>after, aftir, after that</b> <i>according to; after</i>	<b>connen</b> <i>learn; know</i>
<b>and, and if</b> <i>if</i>	<b>connynge</b> <i>knowledge</i>
<b>apert(ly)</b> <i>open, plain; manifestly</i>	<b>couthen</b> <i>make known, show; tell</i>
<b>appreve</b> <i>approve</i>	<b>cowde</b> <i>could</i>
<b>asoile(n)</b> <i>absolve; confer; resolve, release</i>	<b>dampned</b> <i>damned, condemned</i>
<b>axen</b> <i>ask, require</i>	<b>dede, deed</b> <i>dead</i>
<b>ayen, ayens, ayenes, ayenst</b> <i>again, against</i>	<b>defenden</b> <i>prohibit, forbid, disallow</i>
<b>ben(e)</b> <i>to be; been; are</i>	<b>dethe</b> <i>death</i>
<b>Benet(te)</b> <i>Saint Benedict</i>	<b>dirt</b> <i>dung</i>
<b>benyson</b> <i>blessing</i>	<b>doth</b> <i>does</i>
<b>bere</b> <i>bear, convey</i>	<b>dowghtyr</b> <i>daughter</i>
<b>berying</b> <i>burials</i>	<b>drafte</b> <i>chaff, dung</i>
<b>bileve</b> <i>belief, faith</i>	<b>dyvell</b> <i>devil</i>
<b>bot</b> <i>but</i>	<b>eche</b> <i>each</i>
<b>bot if, but (y)if</b> <i>unless</i>	<b>eke</b> <i>also</i>
<b>brennen</b> <i>burn; brent, brende,</i>	<b>ellis</b> <i>else</i>
<b>ybrent</b> <i>burned</i>	<b>encombreñ</b> <i>see combreñ</i>
<b>bronde</b> <i>firebrand</i>	<b>eighe</b> <i>eye</i>
<b>but</b> <i>only; unless, if . . . not; except</i>	<b>ether</b> <i>either; ether . . . ether</i>
<b>ether . . . or</b>	<b>evel</b> <i>evil</i>
<b>cacche</b> <i>catch</i>	<b>everich a</b> <i>each</i>
<b>can, con, conne</b> <i>know; canstow do you know; can you</i>	<b>fader</b> <i>father</i>
<b>catell, katel</b> <i>goods, possessions, wealth</i>	<b>fallace</b> <i>fallacies</i>
<b>clene</b> <i>entirely, wholly, completely; pure, clean; utter; ful clene utterly</i>	<b>fayn</b> <i>glad, happy; gladly</i>
<b>clepe(n)</b> <i>call; cleped, clepid called</i>	<b>faytours</b> <i>deceivers, tricksters</i>
	<b>fele</b> <i>many</i>
	<b>fend, fende(s)</b> <i>fiend(s)</i>

## Glossary

<b>fole</b> <i>fool</i>	<b>leman</b> <i>sweetheart, mistress</i>
<b>fongen</b> <i>receive, take, get; seize</i>	<b>lered</b> <i>lettered, learned, literate</i>
<b>fraynen</b> <i>ask; fraynng inquiry</i>	<b>ler(n)en</b> <i>instruct, teach; guide</i>
<b>fraytour</b> <i>refectory; friars' dining-hall</i>	<b>lesynge</b> <i>lie, falsehood</i>
<b>frere</b> <i>friar</i>	<b>letten</b> <i>prevent, hinder</i>
<b>ful, full</b> <i>very; ful oft(e) very often</i>	<b>leve, lef</b> <i>dear</i>
<b>glose</b> <i>gloss, commentary</i>	<b>leve</b> <i>permission, leave</i>
<b>glosen</b> <i>to gloss, explain (as Scripture); deceive, explain away; flatter</i>	<b>le(e)ven</b> <i>believe; levede, leveden believed</i>
<b>gode</b> <i>good; well</i>	<b>levers</b> <i>believers</i>
<b>godes</b> <i>goods, possessions</i>	<b>lewde, lewed, lewid,</b> <i>unlettered, ignorant, illiterate</i>
<b>good</b> <i>material goods, possessions</i>	<b>lewte</b> <i>truth, loyalty, faith</i>
<b>goedes</b> <i>property, worldly goods</i>	<b>likist</b> <i>please, wish</i>
<b>grees</b> <i>copulate</i>	<b>likynest</b> <i>compare</i>
<b>han</b> <i>(to) have</i>	<b>litil</b> <i>little</i>
<b>harlote</b> <i>villain, scoundrel; harlot- rie, harlotry</i> <i>villainy, wickedness</i>	<b>lorel, losel</b> <i>worthless fellow, lout (lit. "lost one")</i>
<b>heelid</b> <i>healed</i>	<b>losengerie</b> <i>flattery, deceit</i>
<b>heestis</b> <i>commandments</i>	<b>lowde</b> <i>noisily, outrageously</i>
<b>hem(e)</b> <i>them; themselves</i>	<b>lusten</b> <i>wish, desire; hem lust it pleases them</i>
<b>her, here, heir</b> <i>their</i>	<b>lybben</b> <i>live</i>
<b>herber(e)</b> <i>garden, arbor</i>	 
<b>herberowe</b> <i>lodging, inn</i>	<b>meche</b> <i>much</i>
<b>herde</b> <i>heard</i>	<b>mede</b> <i>reward, bribery</i>
<b>hert(e)</b> <i>heart</i>	<b>mete</b> <i>food, meat</i>
<b>heygh(e)</b> <i>high</i>	<b>mo, moo</b> <i>more</i>
<b>hir</b> <i>her</i>	<b>moche</b> <i>much</i>
<b>ho</b> <i>she</i>	<b>morned</b> <i>mourned</i>
<b>howres</b> <i>hours, times</i>	<b>mot, mote</b> <i>may; must</i>
<b>hyen</b> <i>hasten, hie, hurry away</i>	<b>mowe</b> <i>may</i>
<b>iche</b> <i>each; iche a every</i>	<b>mychel</b> <i>much</i>
<b>jangle</b> <i>jabber, chatter</i>	<b>myn</b> <i>my, mine</i>
<b>kendly</b> <i>naturally</i>	 
<b>kne</b> <i>knee</i>	<b>ne</b> <i>nor, not, and not</i>
	<b>nother, nouther</b> <i>either, neither</i>
	<b>nyll</b> <i>won't (= ne + wyll)</i>

## Glossary

<b>off of</b>	
<b>ones once</b>	
<b>ony any</b>	
<b>oo, oon one, a single</b>	
<b>oonli only</b>	
<b>other either, or; other . . . other</b>	
<b>either . . . or</b>	
<b>parfay</b> <i>on my word, by my faith</i>	
(expletive)	
<b>paroche</b> <i>parish</i>	
<b>parishens</b> <i>parishioners</i>	
<b>perfight, perfit</b> <i>perfect</i>	
<b>piker</b> <i>robber, thief; pykyng robbery</i>	
<b>pore</b> <i>poor</i>	
<b>poverte</b> <i>poverty</i>	
<b>preires</b> <i>prayers</i>	
<b>prestis, preetis</b> <i>priests</i>	
<b>privy</b> <i>secret</i>	
<b>puple</b> <i>people</i>	
<b>pursuwe</b> <i>persecute</i>	
<b>quath</b> <i>said</i>	
<b>queynt</b> <i>curious, cunning; subtle;</i>	
<b>queyntliche</b> <i>cunningly</i>	
<b>queyntise</b> <i>cunning</i>	
<b>rede</b> <i>advise, counsel</i>	
<b>rennen</b> <i>run; hasten</i>	
<b>reule</b> <i>rule, regulation; rewlis rules</i>	
<b>rewme</b> <i>realm</i>	
<b>schenden</b> <i>ruin, destroy; blame;</i>	
<b>schent</b> <i>ruined</i>	
<b>schew</b> <i>show, demonstrate</i>	
<b>schrift</b> <i>confession; shryven confess</i>	
<b>seien</b> <i>say; seyde said</i>	
<b>seke</b> <i>seek</i>	
<b>sely</b> <i>poor, simple</i>	
<b>sewen</b> <i>follow, pursue; go</i>	
<b>sikerli</b> <i>certainly, surely; truly</i>	
<b>siche</b> <i>such</i>	
<b>sith</b> <i>since; then; sithen, sythen</i>	
<i>afterwards; then, since, since then</i>	
<b>soore</b> <i>hard, sorely</i>	
<b>soth(e)</b> <i>truth; truly;</i>	
<b>soothfastnesse</b> <i>truthfulness</i>	
<b>speken</b> <i>speak</i>	
<b>stele</b> <i>steal</i>	
<b>suche</b> <i>such men; such people</i>	
<b>suen</b> <i>follow; suweth follow (pl.);</i>	
<b>suede</b> <i>followed; sueres followers</i>	
<b>suffrid</b> <i>suffered, allowed, permitted</i>	
<b>summe</b> <i>some</i>	
<b>swich, sich</b> <i>such</i>	
<b>syn</b> <i>sin</i>	
<b>tapstere</b> <i>bartender; one who hangs</i>	
<i>out in taverns</i>	
<b>teche</b> <i>teach; techyng instruction</i>	
<b>than</b> <i>then; than</i>	
<b>the, thee</b> <i>thee, you</i>	
<b>thin</b> <i>thine (your)</i>	
<b>this, thies, thise</b> <i>these</i>	
<b>tho</b> <i>those; then, at that time</i>	
<b>toten</b> <i>see, spy; ytoted observed</i>	
<b>travaylen</b> <i>work, toil; exert effort</i>	
<b>trowe, trowen</b> <i>believe, think;</i>	
<b>trowist thou</b> <i>do you think?</i>	
<b>trwe</b> <i>true</i>	
<b>unnethe, onethe</b> <i>scarcely, hardly;</i>	
<i>with difficulty</i>	
<b>verrei</b> <i>true</i>	
<b>waxen</b> <i>grow, become, come to be</i>	
<b>wene, wenest</b> <i>think, believe</i>	

## *Glossary*

**werlde** *world*  
**werkes** *works*  
**whan** *when*  
**whou, whough** *how*  
**whijt** *white*  
**wilnen** *desire, wish*  
**wissen** *make known, cause to  
know; teach*  
**witen** *know; wot knows; I ne  
wote* *I don't know*  
**wode** *mad*  
**wolde** *would; desired, wished to;  
would wish*  
**wollen** *will, desire*  
**worthen** *be, become*  
**wyght, wijght** *man, person*  
**wynnen** *gain, get, acquire; wyn-  
nynges* *acquisitions, gains*  
**wyten** *know*  
  
**yede** *went*  
**yere** *year*  
**yeven, yiven, yovun** *to give; given*  
**yhe** *yea, yes*  
**yif** *if; give*  
**yit** *yet*  
**ynow** *enough*  
**yvell** *evil; badly, wickedly; poorly*