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## An Edition of Miles Hogarde's A Mirroure of Myserie (1557)

Sobecki, Sebastian

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Sebastian Sobecki

An Edition of Miles Hogarde's  
*A Mirroure of Myserie*

AN EDITION OF MILES HOGARDE'S *A MIRROURE OF MYSERIE*



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Fig. 1. Hieronymus Bosch, *Ship of Fools* (1490–1500)

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Sebastian Sobecki

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*A Mirroure of Myserie*





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An Edition of Miles Hogardé's  
*A Mirroure of Myserie*  
(San Marino, CA, Huntington Library, MS HM 121)

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## Acknowledgments

My deepest gratitude goes to the Huntington Library for having elected me to an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Short-Term Fellowship in 2015. The Library's generous assistance allowed me to study and transcribe Huntington Library MS HM 121, the sole known copy of Miles Hogarde's *Mirrooure of Myserie*.

Without Eileen Joy and Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei's enthusiastic support this project would not have seen the light of day. I am grateful to punctum books for agreeing to take on this edition.



An Edition of Miles Hogarde's  
*A Mirroure of Myserie* (San Marino, CA,  
 Huntington Library, MS HM 121)

Miles Hogarde (also Huggarde) was one of the most remarkable public figures during Mary I's brief reign. The Queen's shoemaker by appointment, the autodidact Hogarde became the leading pamphleteer of the Counter-Reformation. Little else is known about his life. He first appears as hosier to the Queen on 25 November 1553, and nothing is known about him after 1557.<sup>1</sup>

Of his nine known works, only *A Mirroure of Myserie* — his last substantial text — never saw print. It survives in a single manuscript, San Marino, CA, Huntington Library, MS HM 121. There exist relatively few references to this work, and only fragments of it have been quoted by modern scholarship. The sole discussion of this poem amounts to some two pages in Joseph Martin's 1981 book *Religious Radicals in Tudor England*.<sup>2</sup> Despite Hogarde's role as the 'best of Roman Catholic propagandists' at

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1 C. Bradshaw, 'Huggarde, Miles (fl. 1533–1557)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

2 Joseph W. Martin, *Religious Radicals in Tudor England* (London: Continuum, 1989), 103–5. The chapter was first published as 'Miles Hogarde: Artisan and Aspiring Author in Sixteenth-Century England', *Renaissance Quarterly* 34, no. 3 (October 1, 1981): 359–83, but without the material on *A Mirroure of Myserie*.

the time and as the ‘most prolific Marian author’,<sup>3</sup> this 900-line dream poem remains inaccessible to contemporary scholarship.

There are good reasons for editing this poem now. First, the ongoing re-evaluation of the Henrician reformation and its legacy has paved the way for renewed interest in the Mid-Tudor period and the polemical debates during Mary’s reign.<sup>4</sup> Since the religious controversies of the Henrician years spilled over into the Mid-Tudor years, scholars are beginning to see the reign of Mary not as a hiatus in the Protestant historiography of sixteenth-century England but as a significant period for controversialist writings.<sup>5</sup> Second, there is growing awareness of the social impact of Mid-Tudor writers who enjoyed little or no formal education. Hogarde is an example of a new class of writers that emerged during the 1540s and ’50s: literate men and women from non-traditional backgrounds who never went to one of the universities or the Inns of Court. I have argued elsewhere that this group of writers stood behind the various rebellions of 1549.<sup>6</sup> What made these insurgencies so formidable was not so much the sophisticated dialogue with the authorities into which the rebels entered, but the active support lent by ‘lernyd men’ and scribes. For all their social and political significance, these risings exemplified the transformative energies released by access to basic education. By offering their intellectual capital to popular movements, such ‘lernyd men’ turned local riots into

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3 Martin, *Religious Radicals in Tudor England*, 103–5.

4 See, for instance, Greg Walker, *Writing under Tyranny: English Literature and the Henrician Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Brian Cummings and James Simpson, *Cultural Reformations: Medieval and Renaissance in Literary History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

5 Recent examples of this trend are Susan Doran and Thomas S. Freeman, eds., *Mary Tudor: Old and New Perspectives* (London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) and Vivienne Westbrook and Elizabeth Evenden, *Catholic Renewal and Protestant Resistance in Marian England* (London: Routledge, 2016).

6 Sebastian Sobceki, *Unwritten Verities: The Making of England’s Vernacular Legal Culture, 1463–1549* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2015).



political movements that threatened Tudor elites. A good example of this phenomenon is Nicholas Moore. Andy Wood describes him as ‘a man with legal training’ from Colchester who had made a habit of lending his abilities to rebellious causes.<sup>7</sup> Being neither ‘studyed, lerned, nor experienced in the commen lawes of the Realme’, Moore had ‘nevertheles of late tyme taken uppon hym to be aswell a commen counsellor in very many and divrs suts depending [...] in the Kyngs honorable Coort of his Chauncery, as a commen counsellor and a commen Atturney before the bayliffs of the said Borough.’<sup>8</sup> I would like to think that Hogarde was another such ‘lernyd man’. The son of a hosier with no schooling, he produced sophisticated and polished works of religious polemic.

*A Mirroure of Myserie* is a dream poem, consisting of a brief prose address and 833 lines of verse. The poem begins with a preface to Mary written in eight rhyme-royal stanzas, followed by a prologue in twelve cross-rhymed quatrain stanzas. The poem itself is written in 111 rhyme-royal stanzas. The poem’s opening borrows heavily from the fourteenth-century dream vision *Piers Plowman*: in Hogarde’s work the Dreamer stands on a hill overlooking the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah set in a familiarly English landscape. The actual poem consists of a lively dialogue between the Dreamer and an unidentified Old Man, and both systematically discuss the underlying sins that have led to the annihilation of the biblical cities, all the while making pointed remarks about the situation in contemporary England.

In addition to showcasing Hogarde’s theological and rhetorical knowledge, *A Mirroure of Myserie* is indebted to late medieval and early Tudor literature. In the manner of the *Piers Plowman* tradition Hogarde’s persona falls into a dream atop a hill and surveys the moral landscape of England, a scene portrayed in the single illustration contained in HM 121 on fol. 6r. Joseph

7 Andy Wood, *The 1549 Rebellions and the Making of Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 156.

8 *Ibid.*, 42.

Martin also notes similarities in Hogarde's poem with the 'Commonwealth men' of the 1549 risings and with Robert Crowley's pamphlets.<sup>9</sup>

The manuscript, HM 121, measures 135 × 170 mm / 5.3 × 6.7 inches and consists of 26 parchment folios with three flyleaves each at the start and end of the volume. *A Mirroure of Myserie* is the sole text in this volume.<sup>10</sup> For a detailed description of the manuscript and its provenance, consult the entry for HM 121 in the *Digital Scriptorium*: [http://ds.lib.berkeley.edu/HM00121\\_43](http://ds.lib.berkeley.edu/HM00121_43)

### Editorial note

I have modernised *I/J*, *i/j*, and *u/v*. Roman numerals have been replaced with Arabic numbers, suspensions and contractions have been expanded, capitalisation has been adjusted, and punctuation has been modernised.

All references to *Piers Plowman* (henceforth *PP*) are to A.V.C. Schmidt, *Piers Plowman: A Parallel-Text Edition of A, B, C and Z Versions* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2008); all references to the Bible are to the Douay-Rheims text.

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<sup>9</sup> Martin, *Religious Radicals in Tudor England*, 104.

<sup>10</sup> For HM 121 as a gift for Mary, see Richard McCabe, 'Ungainefull Arte': *Poetry, Patronage, and Print in the Early Modern Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 89–90.



*Fig. 1. San Marino, CA, Huntington Library, MS HM 121, fol. 6r. (detail)*



[fol. 1r]

A mirroure of myserie, newly compiled and sett forthe by Myles Huggarde, servaunte to the quenes<sup>1</sup> moste excellente majestie. Anno Domini 1557

[fol. 2r]

To the moste excellente and vertuose ladie and oure moste graciouse sovereigne, Mary by the grace of God Quene of Englande, Spayne,<sup>2</sup> Fraunce bothe<sup>3</sup> Cicilies, Jerusalem, and Irelande, Defendoure of the Faith, Archeduchesse of Austrie, Duchesse of Millayne, Burgundie, and Brabant, Countesse of haspurge, Flaunders, and Tyroll. Youre majesties moste faithfulle loving ande obediente servaunte Myles Huggarde wisheth all grace, longe<sup>4</sup> peace, and quyett reigne frome God the Father, the Sonne, and the Holye Ghoste.

---

1 *quenes*: Mary I Tudor (1516–58), Queen of England from 1553 until 1558.

2 *Spayne ... Tyroll*: except for the claim to France, Mary acquired her continental titles through her marriage to Philip II of Spain in 1554 (Judith M. Richards, 'Mary Tudor as "Sole Quene"?: Gendering Tudor Monarchy', *The Historical Journal* 40, no. 4 [1997]: 913).

3 *bothe Cicilies*: a common name for the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, comprising the kingdoms of Sicily and of Naples.

4 The ms has 'u' for 'n' in 'longe'.

As farre as a guyfte<sup>1</sup> maie goode will expresse,  
 Geven of the gyver after his degree<sup>2</sup>  
 (By whiche guyfte so geven) yitt I muste confesse  
 Thinwarde harte therbie well knowne can not be,  
 5 For dissemblers maie gyve greate guyfte we se.  
 Therefore as a guyfte maye showe the harte I saie  
 Moste hartlie I showe my goode will this waye.

[fol. 2v] Towardes youre maiestie, whom I moste humblie  
 Beseche to pardon my rudenesse<sup>3</sup> herin:  
 10 Sithe<sup>4</sup> this simple guifte, compiled thus grosli<sup>5</sup>  
 As a token that the newe<sup>6</sup> yeare doth begyn,  
 I presente to youre grace, whome God graunte to wynne  
 His favoure that this yeare and many mo  
 Your highnes may reigne and vanquyshe all woo.

15 And moste graciouslye Quene it maie seme that I  
 For lacke of other thing, whiche more mete<sup>7</sup> were  
 To presente youre grace, then thus baseli<sup>8</sup>  
 With suche a rude booke every yeare  
 To trouble youre highness, and yitt doth apere  
 20 I am always harpyng upon one stringe,  
 As thoughe my penne coulde none other frute bringe.

Whiche in dede can little otherwise do  
 Both for lacke of witt and eke<sup>9</sup> experience,  
 Butt whan other matters I wolde applie to  
 25 Againste God by synne, I se suche offence

---

1 *guyfte*: gift.

2 *degree*: social rank.

3 *rudenesse*: ignorance.

4 *Sithe*: since.

5 *grosli*: clumsily.

6 *newe ... begyn*: 1557, some time after 25 March, the beginning of the year.

7 *mete*: fitting.

8 *baseli*: humbly.

9 *eke*: also.

I can not but therin saie my conscience,  
 Which stirreth me to sett<sup>1</sup> other thing a parte,  
 And thus againste synne to open my harte.

[fol. 3r.] Then weyinge with my selfe the greate punysh-  
 mente

- 30 Whiche God did exhibit in every age  
 On those that by synne did hym discontente,  
 To thende that same synne in them shoulde asswage.  
 Then thinkynge of synne, the horrible rage  
 In Sodom<sup>2</sup> and Gomhorre – alas, my hert did rewe! –  
 35 Sith some of their synnes I sawe we did ensewe.<sup>3</sup>

Whiche movith me nowe to marvaile muche lesse  
 At the plages of God, whiche longe felte have we  
 (And yitt not so moche as oure synfulnesse  
 Hath deserved) – this plainly we may se.

- 40 Yitt we persiste still in oure iniquitie  
 Before oure lorde God as he<sup>4</sup> nothinge sawe  
 Of Hym and his plages: we are not in awe!

For the whiche cause, I saie, this little booke  
 I have compiled, to thende we maie all

- 45 As in a myrroure on those cities looke,  
 How horrible there for their synnes did fall,  
 And that we therbie to oure myndes may call  
 Yf we by oure synnes will still offende God.  
 As<sup>5</sup> theie did not so, we shall not escape His rodde.

- 50 [fol. 3v.] Therefore to amende God graunte us His grace  
 And preserve youre highness in longe felicitie,

1 *sett ... parte*: dismiss.

2 *Sodom ... Gomhorre*: Sodom and Gomorrah, two biblical cities destroyed by God as punishments for the sins of their inhabitants (Genesis 18–19).

3 *ensewe*: imitate.

4 *he*: he who.

5 *As ... so*: As those who did not reflect on their sins.

All youre maiesties foose<sup>1</sup> therbie to deface,<sup>2</sup>  
 Debarringe falshede, and place equitie  
 Thatt oure common welth renewed may be.  
 55 Throughe<sup>3</sup> Covetousenes brought in greate decaie,  
 For thamendment<sup>4</sup> whereof all goode men doth praye.

Your highness' pore humble servaunte Myles Huggard.

[fol. 4r.] The prologe

Where welth dothe want, and woo increase  
 Man may that wante bewaile,  
 For wantynge welthe all joyes doth cease,  
 And woo doth there prevaile.

5 This wante of welthe in men private  
 Dothe eche in hym selfe showe  
 Of that contrie the woofull state  
 Wheare welth it doth not knowe.

Whan this wante waxeth<sup>5</sup> generall,  
 10 As here we have it knowe,  
 Then common welthe it dothe apall<sup>6</sup>  
 And is<sup>7</sup> quyte over throwue.

[fol. 4v.] The cause wherof consideringe  
 To be for synne onlie.  
 15 I thought ensample here to brynge  
 That we frome synne shoulde flye.

---

1 *foose*: foes.

2 *deface*: destroy.

3 *Throughe ... decaie*: Through greed [our commonwealth has been] brought in great decay.

4 *thamendment*: correction.

5 *waxeth generall*: becomes common.

6 *apall*: tire, weaken.

7 *is*: the verb refers to 'common welthe'.



- And the rather because I see  
 Like<sup>1</sup> synnes emongest us raigne.  
 As the prophett<sup>2</sup> notith to bee  
 20 Cause of those peoples payne,
- Whiche in Sodom and Gomhorre were,  
 Onlie one<sup>3</sup> synne, excepte<sup>4</sup>  
 Whiche for the filthynes oughte here  
 In silence to be kepte.
- 25 [fol. 5r.] Yitt oughte no man here for to thinke  
 That synne the cause alone  
 Thatt all thies greate Cities did sinke  
 And consumed eche one.
- The sortes of synnes, is playne noted  
 30 By good Ezecheell,<sup>5</sup>  
 Wherwith their soules was foule spotted,  
 Whiche hereafter I tell
- Requyringe you, goode reders, all  
 to accepte my good will.  
 35 And where faltes be mende them I shall,  
 Youre pleasures to fulfill.
- [fol. 5v.] Synne to reprove I do delite,  
 Though I moste synfull be.

---

1 *Like*: similar.

2 *prophett*: Ezekiel 16:49–50. Alternatively, this may also refer to Isaiah, who stresses the causal link between sin and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah most explicitly among the prophets of the Old Testament (Isaiah 1:9–10; 3:9, and 13:19–22).

3 *one synne*: homosexuality (Genesis 19:4–5).

4 *excepte*: excepting.

5 Ezekiel 16:49–50: ‘Behold this was the iniquity of Sodom thy sister, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance, and the idleness of her, and of her daughters: and they did not put forth their hand to the needy, and to the poor.’

If I the truthe in thinges do write,  
 40 I truste none will blame me.

Wisshinge<sup>1</sup> oure synfulness to cease  
 Yf we will welthe possesse,  
 For God oure plages will not release  
 Yf still we so transgresse.

45 Who<sup>2</sup> graunte us grace; we shortlie maie  
 Applie oure willes to His.  
 Then shall we at oure endyng daie  
 Enjoy eternall blysse!

[The poem] [+illustration, *fig. 1*]

[fol. 6r.] Beinge in studie of the worldes estate<sup>3</sup>  
 weyinge the workes of every wyghte,<sup>4</sup>  
 Alas, my corage it did clene abate<sup>5</sup>  
 Frome all Joyfulnes to Joy<sup>6</sup> in of righte.  
 5 Penury<sup>7</sup> his Pavilion had pighte<sup>8</sup>  
 Heare forto remayne, wherbie I did see  
 Pore<sup>9</sup> and riche punished in their degree.

All menne whiche are of noble progeny  
 Their estate this day right well may bewayle,  
 10 Consideryng, as thaire maye if they vew thorowly,

---

1 *Wisshinge ... possesse*: we desire to lead a less sinful life if we have acquired material wealth.

2 *Who*: He who (i.e., God).

3 *estate*: condition.

4 *wyghte*: person.

5 *abate*: lessen, withdraw.

6 *Joy ... righte*: unclear. Perhaps deserved joy or redemption as opposed to carefree joy.

7 *Penury ... pighte*: *PP*, A. 2.41: 'Was pi3t vp a paupyloun proud for þe nones.'

8 *pighte*: pitched.

9 *Pore ... riche*: this phrase appears frequently in *PP*, starting with A and B Prol. 18.

Howe farre frome their fathers theyre fame doth fayle  
 Touching howse<sup>1</sup> kepyng, for pore folkes avails<sup>2</sup>  
 A Plage it may be, as trewly it is,  
 to the hartes of suche as dothe thinke of this.

- 15 [fol. 6v.] Pore menne eke are plaged by penurye  
 Receyvinge of some riche menne but smalle relefe.  
 For lacke of foode, thaie saie, many dothe die  
 Of hunger was never felte the like grefe.  
 Butt of all this woo what shoulde be causee cheefe?  
 20 This entringe my heade I was at a staye.<sup>3</sup>  
 So many I sawe, I wiste not whatt to saye.

- The nombre was suche here dayly sene  
 Thatt I, studyng the right cause to conceive,  
 Was forced, as I many tymes have bene,  
 The foly of fancy for to deceyve,  
 25 To walke abrode suche pleasure to receyve  
 As tyme dothe mynyster in geminy,<sup>4</sup>  
 when flore<sup>5</sup> the erthe dothe freshly beautyfie.

- The pleasure wherof so ravished my witte  
 That layinge<sup>6</sup> me downe in a slepe I fell.  
 30 Morpheus,<sup>7</sup> the god of dreames, spyng<sup>8</sup> it,

---

1 *howse kepyng*: owning property or running an estate.

2 *avails*: help, support.

3 *staye*: standstill.

4 *geminy*: when the sun is in the sign of Gemini, between the end of spring and late summer (Rachel Fletcher, "The Geometry of the Zodiac," *Nexus Network Journal* [2009]: 114).

5 *flore*: flowers.

6 *layinge ... fell*: the dreaming narrator *PP* also falls asleep in late spring in similar circumstances: *PP* A and B Prol. 11; C Prol. 8.

7 *Morpheus*: the Greek god of sleep. Morpheus sleep-inducing powers are summoned in a number of medieval dream poems, including Geoffrey Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*.

8 *spyng*: spying.

Placed<sup>1</sup> hym in fancy<sup>2</sup> wheare ofte dothe dwell,  
 And theare all my studie he perceyvinge well  
 Did take me by the hand, and as me thoughte,  
 He saide straunge thinges to my sighte shoulde be  
 broughte.

- 35 [fol. 7r.] Then forthe he led me frome thence as I was.  
 In whatt sorte<sup>3</sup> I wente it paste frome my mynde,  
 Butt therin, me thoughte, he tooke smalle solace.<sup>4</sup>  
 Wee flewe,<sup>5</sup> to my semyng, more swifte than the mynde.  
 I wondered whether he had me assynde<sup>6</sup>  
 40 For over seas and mowntaynes we toke oure flighte.  
 Then in a straunge place wee at lengthe did alighte,

- Whiche was uppon an hill, pleasaunte and hie,  
 Wheare, as he lefte me standyng alone,  
 Then leyng my selfe theare, 'Oh, Lorde!', thought I,  
 45 'Heare am I comfortles. All my joyes are gone'.  
 And as I stooode thus, makyng this mone,<sup>7</sup>  
 Sodenlie an olde manne to me did apert,<sup>8</sup>  
 who, whan he spied me, began to drawe nere.

1 *Placed ... broughte*: this passage and subsequent stanzas are modelled on Kynde granting the dreaming Will a vista of Creation from Mount Middle Earth in *PP* B.320–67. In the C text the mountain of Middle Earth becomes the 'myroure of Mydelethe' (132); the equivalent passage in C is in 13.131–78.

2 *fancy*: imagination.

3 *sorte*: manner.

4 *solace*: delight.

5 *flewe*: although this passage draws on *PP* B.11 and Kynde lifting Will onto the top of Mount Middle Earth, the noetic flight of the narrator here echoes a similar passage in Chaucer's *House of Fame*, where an oversized eagle carries the dreaming Geoffrey, granting him a similarly revealing view of Creation (Larry D. Benson, *The Riverside Chaucer* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987], ll. 896–909).

6 *assynde*: ascent.

7 *mone*: complaint.

8 *apert*: appear.

- Streighte he asked me whatt I did there make  
 50 And whi I loked so sorowfullie.  
 ‘Alas’, quod<sup>1</sup> I, ‘some pitie on me take  
 For I can not tell how I came nor whie.  
 I thinke in this place sure I shall die’  
 ‘Nay, for that be thawe<sup>2</sup> not sory’, quod he.  
 55 ‘Feare thowe nothinge; thie warraunte<sup>3</sup> I will be.’

[fol. 7v.] ‘Thowe haste no cause<sup>4</sup> here, thou seist, to be  
 ladde,<sup>5</sup>

- Sythe all thinges plentie dothe here brede and growe  
 That for thie bodie is mete<sup>6</sup> to be hadde –  
 Mylke and hony dothe this land overflowe.  
 60 The lyke, I dare saie, thow diddest never knowe’.  
 ‘What,<sup>7</sup> for thatt’, quod I, ‘I had rather bee  
 In my pore Cottage in myne owne contrie’.

- ‘I beleve the’, quod he, ‘so saide the Jewes,  
 To whome this<sup>8</sup> contrie was longe promysed.  
 65 Havyng in wildernes, as scripture<sup>9</sup> shewes,  
 Meate<sup>10</sup> that frome above to them descended,  
 And their<sup>11</sup> clothes also no<sup>12</sup> whitte peryshed,  
 Thus cled and fed, they were, for 40 yeares spare,  
 Yitt to be contente thaye had not the grace’.

1 *quod*: said.

2 *thawe*: thou, second person singular pronoun.

3 *warraunte*: protector.

4 *cause*: motive, reason.

5 *ladde*: led, brought.

6 *mete*: meet, fitting, in the sense of ‘nourishing’.

7 *What*: well.

8 *this contrie*: Israel.

9 *scripture ... spare*: Exodus 16:1–36.

10 *Meate*: food, here the biblical manna given to the Israelites following their Exodus from Egypt.

11 *their ... peryshed*: Deuteronomy 29:5.

12 *no whitte*: not in the least.

- 70 Then at this talke to muse muche I beganne  
 And wiste nott whatt I shoulde therto saye.  
 'Is this', quod I, 'the lande of Canaan?'<sup>1</sup>  
 'Yea, that it is', quod he, 'well perceyve thou maye'.  
 'And I was in Englande', quod I, 'once to daye'.  
 75 'Whatt then', quod he, 'thou waste hither broughte  
 By that whiche was as swifte as thy thoughte?'

- [fol. 8r.] 'That maie be so', quod I, 'for trulie I  
 Can not Imagyn the xcedinge swyftnesse  
 That I in the aire did hitherwarde flie,  
 80 And nowe am lefte here in greate distresse  
 For what he mente therbie he did not expresse'.  
 'What he mente, it dothe not skill',<sup>2</sup> quod he.  
 'Sithe thou arte lette in this pleasaunte contree

- Wherin to rest, it thow causte be contente.  
 85 More worldlie welth no wight can here attayne.  
 [*margin*: Gene: 12] Oure<sup>3</sup> father Abraham<sup>4</sup> hither was  
 sente,  
 This<sup>5</sup> land to enjoye, the scripture is playne.  
 And his seede also for ever to remayne'.  
 'Yitt', quod I, 'theie fell into captivitie  
 90 And loste that land. How doth this agree?'

'It semith', quod he, 'as I tolde the before,  
 That as the Jewes of their welth were wery  
 And loste this lande therfore for evermore,

1 *Canaan*: the Israelites reached Canaan after forty years of wandering (Exodus 16:35).

2 *skill*: matter (verb).

3 *oure ... playne*: Genesis 12.1–8.

4 *Abraham*: the Old Testament patriarch.

5 *This land*: Canaan.

[*margin*: Num: 14] Excepte<sup>1</sup> Josua<sup>2</sup> and Caleb onelie  
 95 [*margin*: Deut: 1] Nott one came in it of all that company<sup>3</sup>  
 Whose unfaithfulnes was onlie the lett.<sup>4</sup>  
 I thinke thowe and they are all even<sup>5</sup> well mett’

[fol. 8v.] ‘For thow enjoying this lande dost doubtes caste,  
 As thow of thie welth forced,<sup>6</sup> nothing  
 100 Thowe regardest more. Thie worldie state paste,  
 Then here to enjoye a pleasaunte lyvyng.  
 Therfore leave of the<sup>7</sup> thie folyshe reasonyng,  
 Lest fro this place thow be quite banyshed  
 And also frome the places<sup>8</sup> by this figured’

105 ‘Of what is it, quod I, ‘a figure<sup>9</sup> then?’  
 ‘Of heaven’, quod he, ‘as all lerned men saie’.  
 ‘Then me thinke’, quod I, ‘they spake butt like men  
 Fo it can figure heaven aptlie no waye,  
 Which, as I take it, prove thus I maye:  
 110 [*margin*: Num: 20] Moyses<sup>10</sup> nor Aron entred not this land,  
 Though in goddes favoure highly they did stande’

‘Now, if this lande muste heaven signifye,  
 How dothe the truthe – the figure – aunswere<sup>11</sup> here?  
 Moyses never entred it. Personallie

- 
- 1 *Excepte ... company*: of the twelve spies sent by Moses to examine Canaan only Joshua and Caleb were allowed to enter the Promised Land (Numbers 13–14).  
 2 *Josua ... Caleb*: two tribal leaders sent by Moses to Canaan (Numbers 13).  
 3 *company*: the Israelites.  
 4 *lett*: hindrance, impediment.  
 5 *even ... mett*: equal (to one another).  
 6 *forced*: compelled, overpowered in the sense of having lost his wealth through force.  
 7 *the*: then.  
 8 *places ... figured*: places represented by this place, i.e., figuratively.  
 9 *figure*: allegory, metaphor.  
 10 *Moyes ... stande*: Numbers 20. The Old Testament prophets and brothers Moses and Aaron.  
 11 *aunswere*: confirm.

115 Therefore, I saye to me it doth appeare  
 The figure the truth herin will not bere  
 For I beleve Moyses is in heaven sure  
 Whiche can no be aunsweringe the figure<sup>1</sup>.

[fol. 9r.] 'Nere<sup>1</sup> thow maiest knowe thyne ignoraunce' quod  
 he.

120 'All figures whiche did Christe prefigure  
 Did not in all poyntes poyntinglie<sup>2</sup> agree,  
 As no poynte therin should be vacuate.<sup>3</sup>  
 Christe is calde a lyon butt after what rate?<sup>4</sup>  
 [*margin*: Apoc: 5.] Not<sup>5</sup> as a lyon is a beaste ravynouse  
 125 Butt as a lyon is a beaste victoriouse!'

'So thoughe Moyses and Aron, entred not here  
 To enjoy this lande, as they did purpose.  
 The cause in scripture doth playnlie apere:  
 For mystrusting God this lande they did lose,  
 130 Yitt did he nott use<sup>6</sup> them, as<sup>7</sup> he did his fole,  
 [*margin*: Deutro: 32.] But of his frutefull lande he gave  
 them sighte.  
 The figure in parte is here aunswered righte<sup>7</sup>.

'For this was to them (sithe God so wolde it)  
 Nott onlie a cause theire synnes to lamente,  
 135 Butt praised God – not grudgyng any whitt –  
 That theire ofsprynge shoulde there be residentm  
 So it followes nott, thoughe theie were nott here present,  
 Thatt therfore in heaven they cannott now be  
 Because to the figure it dothe not hole agree<sup>7</sup>.

1 *Nere*: soon.

2 *poyntinglie*: exactly.

3 *vacuate*: empty, as in 'ignored'.

4 *rate*: proportion or aspect of a whole.

5 *Not ... victoriouse*: Apocalypse 5:5.

6 *use*: treat.

7 *as ... fole*: Deuteronomy 32:1–43.



- 140 [fol. 9v.] ‘Did the sighte,’ quod I, ‘as moche truth implie  
 Touching the aunsweringe of the figure  
 As thoughe the pleasure they had bodilye  
 Enjoyed in this lande? I thinke not so, sure.  
 For as hunger to eate doth man allure,  
 145 Then to quenche the same what helpis sight of meate<sup>1</sup>  
 To the hungrie man if he none therof eate?’

- ‘So God to the Jewes did promyse this lande  
 Who, as ye saie, for their unfaithfulnesse  
 And grudginge at God, as I understande,  
 150 Perished in the waie and did nott possesse.  
 Yea, Moises and Aron did lykewise transgresse,  
 Entringe no further butt<sup>2</sup> onlie to the sighte  
 Were<sup>3</sup> nott their pleasures all lyke matched righte’.

- ‘And yitt if I shoulde saie my conscience,  
 155 To Moyses and Aron the sighte was more payne,  
 Havinge there no bodily residence  
 Where they sawe so greate pleasures remeyne,  
 Then it was to those whom God did disdayne,  
 Nott suffering them neither to enter nor see.  
 160 This to me doth apere moste trewe to bee’.

- [fol. 10r.] ‘Remembrest thou not,’ quod he, ‘that I erste<sup>4</sup>  
 saide?  
 The sighte of this land such penaunce in them wroughte  
 Sith by their follie frome it they were staied.<sup>5</sup>  
 Seynge to what pleasure they shoulde here have bene  
 broughte  
 165 That God (who ever for manes health hath wroughte)

1 *meate*: food in general.

2 *butt ... sighte*: but were only granted a glimpse.

3 *Were ... righte*: where their identical delight (at seeing the land of Canaan) dit not match their (lack of) entitlement.

4 *erste*: earlier.

5 *staied*: prevented, excluded.

For that theire pennaunce by that sighte moved  
Showeth them of God to be dearlie loved.

‘Furthermore, where God suffred them to see  
This frutefull lande and the pleasures therin  
170 To the truth dothe very aptlie agree  
Sithe the greatest joye that man in heaven can wyne  
[margin: Psalm: 63.<sup>1</sup>] Is the sighte<sup>2</sup> of God, which heare to  
begynne  
[margin: Ioh: 17.] To expresse doth<sup>3</sup> passe all mortall  
mennes witt.  
Then the figure beinge sight the truth answers it’.

175 ‘This begyns’, quod I, ‘to come somwhatt nere  
To resolve the doubttes wherein I late was.  
Then’, quod I,<sup>4</sup> ‘sithe that doth to the apere,  
I will showe the a sighte or<sup>5</sup> thowe hence passe –  
Whiche to show the doth greve my harte, alas’.  
180 ‘Thow toldest me’, quod I, ‘here was all pleasure!  
‘Can pleasure, I pray the, have sorrowe in<sup>6</sup> ure?’

[fol. 10v.] ‘Yea’, quod he, ‘so moste conveniente  
For the Catholicke Church on erth mylytante<sup>7</sup>  
Figureth heaven where Joy is ever permanent,  
185 And therefore we call it the Church triumphaunte’.  
‘Yit the Church on erthe, I thinke, thou wylte graunte

1 63: not 63 but 61:8.

2 *sighte ... God*: Psalm 61:8.

3 *doth ... witt*: probably either John 17:25 or John 1:18.

4 *I*: a mistake for ‘he’.

5 *or*: before.

6 *in ure*: bring about, effect.

7 *mylytante*: the Church Militant, as opposed to the Church Triumphant, is the community of the Christians on Earth, locked in constant struggle with secular powers. The Church Militant is a central concern of *PP* and many works written in the *Piers Plowman* tradition.

Though it figure heaven, yitt the name doth expresse  
That it reignethe not here ver<sup>1</sup> in quietnesse’

‘And wheare thou thinkest it an inconvenience<sup>2</sup>  
190 That I shoulde show the here eny carefull<sup>3</sup> sighte  
Because this place in pleasure hath prehemincence,<sup>4</sup>  
Me thinke reason in this should give the sighte  
Because in the Scripture<sup>5</sup> thou haste a rule righte  
That God, his aungells, and his saintes also  
195 Seith “frome hence mens wickednes and how their lyves  
doth go”’.

‘So, I saie, frome hence a sighte thou shalte see  
Whiche will move the inwardlie to lamente  
How God hathe punyshed menns iniquitie,  
Whiche maie move the worlde suche vice to repent.’  
200 With that to the edge of an hie<sup>6</sup> hill we wente,  
Where he poynted me a contrie to vewe,  
At the sighte whereof I founde his wordes trewe.

[fol. 11r.] For there I sawe a contrie quite overflowne  
With filthie water, moste foule and stynkinge.  
205 ‘Yonder’, quod he, ‘was welthie cities knowne’.  
Whiche vewing at that word to my thinkinge  
I saw the toppes of turette still sinkinge.  
‘Alas’, quod I, ‘whatt contrie was this  
That sonke into therthe so horrible is?’

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1 *ver*: ever.

2 *inconvenience*: unnatural occurrence.

3 *carefull*: sorrowful, distressing.

4 *prehemincence*: preeminence, in the sense of being characterised by something.

5 *Scripture ... go*: this does not appear to be a reference to any particular passage in the Bible, though it may invoke the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise in Genesis 3.

6 *hie hill*: the elevation and vista presented to the narrator recalls Mount Middle Ealthe in *PP* B.320–67.

210 'Yonder stode the welthie Cities', quod hee  
 'Of Sodom and Gomhor, and other mo,  
 Whose wicked workes were of such iniquitee  
 That in the nose of God their sinnes did stinke so  
 [*margin*: Gen: 19.] That He<sup>1</sup> willed Loth with all his stock  
 thence to go,  
 215 And that to looke backe they shoulde in no wise,  
 Butt yitt did Lothes wife, Goddes preceptes dispise<sup>2</sup>.

'For that whiche she was turned into a salte stone  
 Because that as salte doth make meate saverye,  
 She shoulde emonge others ensample be one  
 220 That before nor since was not seene with eye,  
 To thende that the worlde shoulde therbie  
 To Goddes preceptes evermore to obeie  
 And nott againste His will to worke their owne waie<sup>3</sup>.

[fol. 11v.] 'Alas', quod I, 'what synnes did they commytt  
 225 That God so greate vengeance on them did take?'  
 'Forsoth',<sup>2</sup> quod he, 'the prophett<sup>3</sup> showith it:  
 Of foure synnes greate rehersall he doth make  
 Whiche caused Goddes grace in them so to slake  
 That there fell to the fifte synne now to name  
 230 To the at this tyme I will not for shame<sup>4</sup>.

'Yitt tell me', quod I, 'whiche those foure synnes were  
 Uppon the whiche the fifte synne did ensewe?'  
 [*margin*: Ezeche: 16.] 'That', quod he, 'in<sup>4</sup> Ezecheell doth  
 apere:  
 [*margin*: Pride.] Pride was the firste synne, whiche their  
 sore did rewe'.  
 235 'Pride', quod I, 'God forbid – it shoulde be trew!'

1 He ... stone: Genesis 19:15–26.

2 Forsoth: truly.

3 prophett: Ezekiel.

4 in Ezecheell: Ezekiel 16:49.

‘Truth’, quod he, ‘it is; the Prophett can not lye.’  
 ‘Then God have mercie uppon us!’, quod I.

‘For in Englande, sithe I firste remembre, maie  
 More pride nor the like pride was never seene.  
 240 Ambicion hath broughte a nombre to decaie,  
 As by experience tried<sup>1</sup> this hathe bene.  
 God and their prince they have forgott clene.  
 Pride their wicked hartes doth so elevate  
 Thatt proudlie their wolde clyme above their estate.’

245 [fol. 12r.] [*margin*: The pride vaynegloriouse of heretikes,  
 pryde of lerning, Connyng, Beautie, Auctorytie, and  
 also of manye other thinges.]  
 ‘Pryde besides this manie braunches hathe,  
 The whiche upon vaignglory do depende,  
 As namelie those whiche repugnith the faith.  
 So many wayes that if I tyme shoulde spende  
 To shewe them all, I should not make an ende,  
 250 I thinke, all this daie, and therefore will I  
 Say no more leste I shoulde make yow wery.’

[*margin*: Pride in apparell.] ‘Yitt maie I not slippe<sup>2</sup> the gre-  
 ate excesse  
 The whiche in England doth remaine at this daie  
 In vayne apparell, wherbie their transgresse  
 255 Both God and mannes lawes. And yitt, I dare saie,  
 [*margin*: Paynfull pryde] Yf<sup>3</sup> payne by pride forced coulde  
 their pride staie,  
 Some in their purses shoulde nott be so bare  
 whiche nowe to other uses hath small to spare.’

1 *tried*: confirmed, proved.

2 *slippe*: omit.

3 *Yf ... spare*: If suffering as a consequence of their pride could force them to contain their pride, then some of them wouldn't have purses so empty that they leave them with only little to spend on other causes.

‘That this is a plage and a payne grevous  
 260 Where the purse is emptie, recorde I. Take<sup>1</sup>  
 Of those whose apparell is righte gorgiouse  
 (Thoughe yitt to the worlde a faire fate theie make),  
 Butt and it credit towarde such men did slake.  
 Their apparell by their purses wolde appere  
 265 For after their paymente their clothes theie should were.’

[fol. 12v.] ‘And then, I doubtte not, butt as tholde proverbe  
 saith:

‘A<sup>2</sup> purse that is withoute money, saie thaye,  
 Is like a bodie the whiche no soule hath’.  
 I doubtte nottt it credit did faile them, I saye.  
 270 Their pursis emptie, their joyes wolde delaie.  
 Their wolde to the worlde as jocunde apere  
 As if their soules in an other worlde were’.

‘This pride dothe pynche them with pryve<sup>3</sup> payne,  
 Thoughe the world they will not be aknowne.<sup>4</sup>  
 275 The mercer and draper with<sup>5</sup> other knowith playne  
 To whome faire wordes so many swete blastes hath blowne  
 On those which are not proude therof one whitt  
 Butt rather repentith their hastie creditt.’<sup>6</sup>

1 *Take ... were*: Only take away the garments from those whose clothes are luxurious, and though to the world their clothers project material success, the good will extended to such people will diminish.

2 *A ... hath*: this proverb is usually associated with Martin Luther’s argument for the importance of spoken words in the celebration of the sacraments: ‘Without them, the sacraments are dead and empty, like a body without a soul, a cask without wine, a purse without money’ (Robert C. Croken, *Luther’s First Front: The Eucharist as Sacrifice* [Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1990], 19).

3 *pryve*: secret.

4 *aknowne*: laid open, revealed (to the world).

5 *with other*: and others.

6 *credit*: reputation, good standing.

'Yitt is pride paynfull in some besides this  
 280 In thinges worne for pride and unprofitable.  
 I will not tell in whome this pride proved is,  
 Butt sure it is thought muche discommendable,<sup>1</sup>  
 And to the wearers nothinge profitable.  
 Butt I thinke sure if it were not for pride  
 285 The payne therof wolde sone saie<sup>2</sup> suche thinges aside.'

[fol. 13r.] 'This is to me a darke<sup>3</sup> sayinge', quod he.  
 'What doest thow meane? This kynde of pride to name  
 Which thou notist unprofitable to be  
 And discomendable to open<sup>4</sup> this same?'  
 290 'I dare not', quod I, 'lest some will me blame.'  
 'Tushe!'<sup>5</sup> quod he, 'what nedist thow to feare  
 Sith no man butt I thie counsell doth heare?'

'Then', quod I, 'under benedicite,<sup>6</sup>  
 Trewlie, by womens vardingales<sup>7</sup> I meane.'  
 295 'What maner of garment is that?', quod he.  
 'The name I have not herde, nor the garmente seene.'  
 'No mervaile, quod I, 'for it hathe not bene  
 Anongem them longe usid. Yitt herde I whan  
 Some wearers curste those that them first<sup>8</sup> began.'

300 'Then belike,<sup>9</sup> quod he 'thaie are to<sup>10</sup> straitte layste?'  
 'Nott a whitt', quod I, 'where vardingales are worne.

1 *discommendable*: to be disapproved of.

2 *saie ... aside*: see such things be set aside.

3 *dark*: unclear.

4 *open ... same*: reveal this very type of pride.

5 *Tushe!*: disparaging exclamation, 'nonsense!'

6 *benedicite*: 'good gracious!'

7 *vardingales*: farthingales, frameworks of hoops worked into some kind of cloth, formerly used for extending the skirts of women's dresses (*OED*).

8 *first began*: Mary I is usually credited with having been one of the first to introduce this style to England.

9 *belike*: probably.

10 *to ... layste*: laced too tightly.

For the pride of them is beneth the wayste:  
 All their clothes therwith a grete bredth is borne,  
 Sett out with hopes,<sup>1</sup> almost herde<sup>2</sup> as horne.  
 305 'Perhappes', quod he, 'it is to gether wynde?'  
 'In winter', quod I, 'no suche cause theie fynde.'

[fol. 13v.] 'In winter', quod he, 'theie were them not I  
 trowe!  
 'That theie do', quod I, 'and is it not a payne  
 To weare suche garmente, in colde froste and snowe?'  
 'Bye<sup>3</sup> ladie', quod he, 'that I beleve playne!'  
 310 'Yitt do they', quod I, 'more than this susteyne,  
 For on horsbacke or stoole theie sitt not at ease,  
 Yitt for pride they seme not it shoulde them displeas.'

'Trulie I have knowene whan the tyme hathe bene  
 That honest women wolde have beene ashamed  
 315 Their clothes borne up so hie to be sene.  
 Butt belike theie thinke the worlde is tamed,  
 And with suche sightes will not be enflamed.  
 Ys not this thinke,<sup>4</sup> ye, discomendable?'  
 'Yea, god graunte', quod he, 'it be not as damnable.'

320 'I will saie no more', quod I, 'for feare of offence.  
 Butt unprofitable<sup>5</sup> theie<sup>6</sup> knowe that theie<sup>7</sup> be  
 Besides the price, whiche is a vayne expence  
 And displeasith God muche, I do feare me'.  
 'Doubeles theie shall aunswere for it', quod he,

1 *hopes*: hoops.

2 *herde ... horne*: farthingale hoops were typically made of whalebone.

3 *Bye ladie*: by Our Lady.

4 *thinke*: thing.

5 *unprofitable*: harmful.

6 *theie*: people.

7 *theie*: farthingales.



325 And for all superfluouse thinges in like sorte,  
As Elai<sup>1</sup> the prophet doth to us reporte:

[fol. 14r.] [*margin*: Elai: 3.] “The daughters of Syon are so  
proude”, saith he,

“With stretched out neckes and wanton eies vayne  
Tripping with their feete as nice<sup>2</sup> as may be.

330 Therefore shall God shave their heades playne  
And their gorgeous rayment<sup>3</sup> from them restrayne,<sup>4</sup>  
As spanges,<sup>5</sup> cheynes, collers, brooches, and bracelette,  
wide embrothered rayment, ringe, and partelette.”<sup>6</sup>

“Thies dothe he name with many thinges mo,

335 Wherewith by pride thies women did offende.  
The whiche to punyshe God did threaten sore,<sup>7</sup>  
Whiche threates to Christen women eke doth extende,  
And shall be punyshed if theie not amende,  
Whose excesssyve pride is more at this daie  
340 Then it was in Jury.<sup>8</sup> ‘Truth’, quod I, ‘no<sup>9</sup> naye.’

‘Alas’, quod I, ‘yitt it grevith my harte

To heare that this contrie for synne did sinke,

And namelie that pride was cause therof a parte.

Suche pryde emonge them was not more, I thinke,

345 Then is nowe in Englande, at whiche to wynke<sup>10</sup>

1 *Elai ... partelette*: Isaiah 3:16–23.

2 *nice*: foolishly.

3 *raymente*: adornment.

4 *restrayne*: withdraw.

5 *spanges*: spangles, glittering ornaments.

6 *partelette*: an item of clothing worn over the neck and upper part of the chest (*OED*).

7 *sore*: grievously.

8 *Jury*: Judea; the land of the Israelites.

9 *no naye*: indeed.

10 *wynke*: close his eyes, make an exception.

God doth not showe, for his plage dothe us threate,  
That<sup>1</sup> his displeasure againste us is greate<sup>2</sup>.

[fol. 14v.] 'Yt muste nedes be so', quod he, 'where pride  
doth reigne.

For pride drove Lucyfere<sup>2</sup> frome Heaven to helle.

- 350 By pride oure firste<sup>3</sup> parente did Goddes hestes<sup>4</sup> disdayne,  
For whiche into<sup>5</sup> greate myserie they felle.  
Nabuchodonozor<sup>6</sup> wolde God in heaven excelle,  
For whiche pride God make hym 7 yeares a beaste.  
Thus to punyshe Pride God yitt never ceaste<sup>7</sup>.

- 355 [*margin*: the seconde synne of the Sodomytes.] 'Now the  
sconde synne ensuyng this pride  
Was fulness<sup>7</sup> of meate, with so greate excesse  
Thatt frome all honestie theie were as farre wide  
As those whiche never had herde godlynesse'.  
'Did fulnes of meate', quod I, 'as you expresse,  
Oure Lord God here so grevouslie offende?'  
360 'Thou maiste<sup>8</sup> perceiue that', quod he, 'by theire ende'.

Alas, with that worde my herte was gone quyte.

'Then', quod I, 'wo maie we be in Englande

For in excesse of meate we so muche delite

That oute of feare of God and man we stande

- 365 To feede the carcasse we<sup>9</sup> so take in hande  
That the pamperinge therof we do more regarde

1 *That*: so that.

2 *Lucyfere*: the rebel angel who led a revolt against God (Isaiah 14:12).

3 *firste parente*: Adam and Eve.

4 *hestes*: behests, orders.

5 *into ... felle*: Genesis 3.

6 *Nabuchodonozor*: Nebuchadnezzar II, king of Babylon in the sixth century BCE. In Daniel 4 Nebuchadnezzar's madness leads him to live seven feral years in the wilderness.

7 *fulness ... meate*: excess of food, gluttony.

8 *maiste ... perceiue*: can see.

9 *we*: that we.

Then by punyshing it to have Goddes rewarde.

[fol. 15r.] ‘Do<sup>1</sup> they beleve eny rewarde,’ quod he, ‘trowist  
thow,

At Goddes hand to be had for fastinge frome meate?’

375 ‘I thinke not,’ quod I, ‘for then theie wolde allowe

That<sup>2</sup> kynde of fast to be a vertu greate

Sith of the vile flesh it doth kille the heate

Beinge Joyned with praier, as it shoulde be.

‘That is not unlike to be trwe,’ quod he.

375 [*margin*: Deut:<sup>3</sup> 34. / 3 Regu:<sup>4</sup> 21. / 1 Esdr:<sup>5</sup> 8.&2. / Esdr: 1.

/ Iudith:<sup>6</sup> 4. / Hest:<sup>7</sup> 4. / Luc:<sup>8</sup> 14. / Math:<sup>9</sup> 6.] ‘Yitt if theie

rede Scripture advisedlie,

Settinge theire carnall<sup>10</sup> affeccions aparte,

Theie shall fynde that those which God favoured hie

By thoutwarde fastinge did showe thinwarde herte.’

‘To be penytente butt,’ quod I, ‘overthwarte<sup>11</sup>

380 Frome that kynde of pennaunce the worlde is gone.

Of<sup>12</sup> all partes therof theie thinke fastinge none.

1 Do ... meate?: ‘Do you think,’ he said, ‘that they believe that any reward can be obtained from God by abstaining from food?’

2 That ... praier: ‘In combination with prayer this kind of fasting can neutralise the hot humour [underlying the desire to crave more food] of the corrupted body.’

3 Deut 34: probably a mistake for Deuteronomy 9, where Moses fasts on Mount Sinai.

4 3 Regu 21: 1 Kings 21.

5 1 Esdr: 8.&2 ... Esdr: 1: Ezra 8:21–23. ‘Esdr: 1’ could be mistake, in combination with the preceding digits, for ‘Esdr. 8.&21’, i.e., Ezra 8:21.

6 Iudith: 4: Judith 4:7–11.

7 Hest: 4: Esther 4:3 and 16.

8 Luc: 14: Luke 14 is not concerned fasting but with humbling oneself and hosting feasts for those in need.

9 Math: 6: Matthew 6:16–18.

10 carnall affeccions: carnal pleasures, here delight in food.

11 overthwarte: opposite.

12 Of ... none: ‘They did not regard fasting as being a part of this world.’

‘Yitt’ quod he, ‘oure mother, the Churche Catholike,  
 Because<sup>1</sup> with vertue all hirs shoulde be fedde,  
 Forseinge that to fall the fleshe was quicke  
 385 And unto vertewe wolde hardlie be ledde,  
 [*margin*: Ioh:<sup>2</sup> 14.] Beinge governde by Gode<sup>3</sup> Spirit, as it<sup>4</sup> is  
 redde,  
 She poynteth<sup>5</sup> tymes and daies for all hirs to faste,  
 That<sup>6</sup> God his faveure uppon them may caste.’

[fol. 15v.] ‘The whiche all hir children was<sup>7</sup> wonte forto  
 kepe.  
 390 Knowinge hir preceptes, theie were bounde to obey,  
 But, alas, my herte for sorrowe dothe wepe  
 To here that many force not at this day  
 For the fleshe to caste all vertue awaie,  
 [*margin*: Tobi:<sup>8</sup> 12] Nott wayinge howe the Churche doth  
 consider  
 395 How goode it is to faste and prairie together.’

‘Theie se not that,’ quod I, ‘for theie do not beleve  
 Thatt the Churche of Christe can man on whit bynde  
 To obeie to that which doth the fleshe greue.  
 Bycause by Scripture it is nott allynde.’<sup>9</sup>  
 400 ‘Nott so farre,’ quod he, ‘as themselves can fynde.  
 Ys it not a goode argumente than  
 Theie can nott fynde it, ergo none other can?’

1 *Because*: In order to.

2 *Ioh: 14*: John 14:26.

3 *Gode Spirit*: Holy Spirit.

4 *it ... redde*: can be read.

5 *poynteth*: has appointed, fixed.

6 *That*: So that.

7 *was wonte*: were accustomed.

8 *Tobi*: Tobit 12:8.

9 *allynde*: connected.

‘Sainte Mary!’, quod I. ‘Theie saie sithe theie can rede,  
 And redinge the Scripture in thinglishe tonge,  
 405 If it were there, theie coulde finde it in dede  
 For theire wittes, saie theie, is not therin yonge!<sup>1</sup>  
 ‘Theie be rotten’, quod he, ‘or theie be halfe<sup>2</sup> spronge,  
 Which causeth them in Scripture nott to fynde  
 The thinge thatt soundeth againste theire carnall mynde.’

410 [fol. 16r.] ‘Butt sithe neyther redinge nor yitt preachinge  
 Can restrayne them frome theire excessive fare,  
 Lett this plage here be to them a teachinge  
 That God this contrie for synne wold nott spare,  
 Butt, as you thou seist, did his vengeaunce declare.  
 415 Doubte not if Englande synne in the like,  
 He will not faile yit grevouselie to strike!’

‘And thinke uppon this what tholde proverbe saithe:  
 Whan<sup>3</sup> the bellie is full, the bones wolde be at reste.  
 And to vertewe man no desire hathe,  
 420 Butt all kynde of vice is then moste preste  
 Whiche in those wicked people was expreste  
 For by theire bellie chere of so greate excesse  
 Theie fell into vice of moste filthynesse.’

‘This fedinge the bellie, disdaynyng to faste,  
 425 The prophet<sup>4</sup> saieth, was one greate procurement<sup>5</sup>  
 Thatt God his favoure frome them clene did caste.  
 Then into filthie synne further theie wente.  
 Therefore let all men by myne advisemente

1 *yonge*: naive, untrained.

2 *halfe spronge*: half-grown.

3 *Whan ... reste*: common proverb, see Roman Dyboski, ed., *Richard Hill's Commonplace Book*, EETS OS 101 (London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1908), 129.

4 *prophet*: Ezekiel 16:49.

5 *procurement*: cause.

Call for grace and amende, leste God for synne  
 430 As he punyshte here to punyshe them begynne.

[fol. 16v.] ‘The thirde thinge whiche caused the launde to  
 fall

Was of worldlie welth greate aboundaunce.

[*margin*: The third cause whiche Sodomites felle was  
 aboundaunce of all worldelye thinges.] Not thankyng  
 God thefore, as gyver of all,

Butt in bellie joie sett all their pastaunce,<sup>1</sup>

435 Abusinge beastlie their worldlie substaunce.

‘Alas’, quod I, ‘did that brynge them in this case?’

‘It was a meane’,<sup>2</sup> quod he, ‘to fall frome Goddes grace.’

‘Then’, quod I, ‘if I mighte be belevid,

Wolde<sup>3</sup> God I were at home in Englande:

440 If with thabuse of riches God be greved,

I wolde theie knewe how the case here doth stande!

This lighte here, I thinke, effectualle<sup>4</sup> skande,

Wolde frome their riches to God turne their love

If grace eny waye frome vice maie them move.’

445 ‘Doste thou thynke’ quod he, ‘their wolde beleve the  
 Sithe in the Scripture this storie is preude?’<sup>5</sup>

And reding it dailie no better their be,

Butt rather worse and worse God their offende.’

‘God’ quod I, ‘more grace emonge us all sende

450 And a toward<sup>6</sup> will, the same to obeye

Whiche grace God offeringe we still caste awaye.’

1 *pastaunce*: recreation.

2 *meane*: means.

3 *Wolde God*: ‘O, that God would’.

4 *effectualle skande*: thoroughly discerned.

5 *preude*: proved, recorded.

6 *toward*: favourable.

[fol. 17r.] ‘So may ye, quod he, ‘fall in an evil case.<sup>1</sup>  
 There can be to God no greater offence  
 Then here wilfullie to refuse his grace.  
 455 For suche folkes of synn makis no conscience.  
 ‘Of that, quod I, ‘we have to mucche experience,  
 For never was there realme to oure lorde more bounde  
 Then Englande is, and so unthankfull founde!’

‘For covytouse<sup>2</sup> catchinge of worldie riches  
 460 Is rooted in mens hartes thatt theie do not passe<sup>3</sup>  
 By subtilitie and crafte poore men to oppresse.  
 More gredie, I thinke, than this lande ever was!  
 Nor did not therbie oure Lorde more trespas  
 Than England doth now, for whiche dothe appere  
 465 To punyshe it sore He doth nott forbere.’

‘To shhew<sup>4</sup> the cawtels<sup>5</sup> of covitouse men  
 Greate substaunce to gett, I can nott tell all.  
 In whiche thinge entringe, I can not tell when  
 To make an ende, and therfore I shall  
 470 Knytte<sup>6</sup> it up in a centence butt small:  
 The covitouse mans eye saithe the wise man  
 Is never satisfied, gather what he can.’

[fol. 17v.] ‘Nor how suche gettith goodes not one whitt  
 theie care.’  
 ‘Thatt, quod he, ‘the Scripture doth affirme playne:  
 475 The coythouse man for mony will not spare

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1 *case*: predicament.  
 2 *covytouse*: strong desire.  
 3 *passe*: proceed.  
 4 *shhew*: reveal.  
 5 *cawtels*: tricks, stratagemes.  
 6 *Knytte ... up*: compact, express.

[*margin*: Miche:<sup>1</sup> 3.] To<sup>2</sup> have the pore mens skynne frome  
the fleshe flayne

And the fleshe frome the bones, theire welth to mayn-  
teyne.

“Whan<sup>3</sup> will the newe mone passe over”, saie theie,

[*margin*: Amos: 8.] “And the Saboth that sell vitaille we  
maie”,

480 “And make scaresetie of corne,<sup>4</sup> and the busshell lesse,  
And sett up false weightes to deceive the nedie,  
And sell chaffe for corne the poore to oppresse?”  
This do theie which<sup>5</sup> are of riches gredie<sup>6</sup>.

‘To amende’, quod I, ‘God make them spedie,

485 For if thatt prophett<sup>6</sup> nowe in Englande were,  
His prophicie he shoulde se playne appere’.

‘How<sup>7</sup> scarce withoute cause corne with us hathe bene,  
Wherbie pore folke for lacke of breade did sterve.  
The lyke derth in Englande was never seene!

490 Havyng corne inogh, the people to serve,  
To fulfille the prophicie theie do nott swerve!  
[*margin*: Corne maisters] For oure corne maisters yll  
councell did take,  
Howe theie greate scarsetie of corne mighte make’.

[fol. 18r.] ‘And further by their vile covitousnesse,  
495 When God dothe sende plentie of grasse and haye,  
Theie are so gredie of worldelie richesse  
Thatt their cattell theie will not sell awaie

1 *Miche*: 3: Micah 3:2–3.

2 *To ... bones*: Micah 3:2–3.

3 *Whan ... oppresse*: Amos 8:5–6.

4 *corne*: grain.

5 *which*: who.

6 *prophett*: probably Ezekiel.

7 *How ... make*: this passage echoes *PP* A 7.183 and B 6.140.



Because with small cardge<sup>1</sup> then kepe them thei maye  
 To<sup>2</sup> gett theire owne price. Ought suche beastes to lyve?  
 500 No, nor shoulde not if I theire Judgement myghe gyve<sup>3</sup>.

‘Yea,’ quod he, ‘butt God<sup>3</sup> to the shreude cowe doth lende  
 Shorte hornes, as tholde proverbe doth saie.  
 Butt I wolde advise England shortlie to amende,  
 Leste God by greater plages thake hir welth awaie.  
 505 Trulie, if aboundaunce did this lande decaie  
 For abusing the same, what maie Englande thinke  
 That doinge as evill God will therat winke?’

‘Aboundaunce of goodes, I thinke, to possesse  
 Is not the thinge that doth oure Lorde offende,  
 510 For theie be Goddes guyfte, geven of His goodnesse,  
 As He<sup>4</sup> to Abraham and Loth did sende.  
 Goode are geven to all men,’ quod he, ‘to one ende,  
 Butt if of those twayne theie wolde lerne goddes to use  
 Then shoulde not so many them so farre abuse.’

515 [fol. 18v.] ‘For thabuse of aboundaunce was the cause part-  
 lie  
 Of all this Contries hole distruccion.’  
 ‘Then,’ quod I, ‘lett England take warnyng therbie,  
 For by Sathanas false seduccion  
 It<sup>5</sup> hath therunto like introduccion.  
 520 Thoughte emonge the moste aboundaunce is small,  
 Yitt wicked possessours maie cause Englandes fall.’

1 *cardge*: charge, load.

2 *To ... price*: to drive up the price of cattle by creating demand through scarcity.

3 *God ... hornes*: God gives the bad-tempered cow short horns [to cause less damage]. A common proverb; see Shakespeare’s *Much Ado about Nothing* II.i.24 and Muriel Saint Clare Byrne, *The Lisle Letters: An Abridgement* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 49.

4 *He ... sende*: Genesis 13.

5 *It ... introduccion*: England has been led into this sinful state in a similar manner [to Sodom and Gommorah].

[*margin*: The fourth cause for the Sodomites fall was idlenes.] ‘Nowe the fourth vice wherebie thies Cities did fall

‘Was idelnes, the roote of all myschefe’.

‘Did theie lyve<sup>1</sup> quod I, doinge nothinge att all

525 That God therwith did take so greate grefe?

Then tell me playnlie for my wittes releefe:

Coude theie lyve and do nothinge butt sitt still?’

‘Yea, quod he, ‘excepte theie<sup>2</sup> did thatt was yll’.

‘Then tholde sayinge, quod I, ‘in them trewe<sup>3</sup> was tried

530 whiche saithe when men do no godlie busynes

As<sup>4</sup> goode idle as not well occupied’.

‘Truth it is, quod he, ‘as thow doste expres.

Of to bad yitt better had bene idlenes,

Yitt ydlenes here hath not one respecte

535 For thosee thatt do – all are idle in effecte’.

[fol. 19r.] ‘Then, alas’ quod I, ‘my fleshe quakes for fere

To thinke how many in Engalnde at this daie

Doth lyve as thoughe none other worlde were,

[*margin*: unlawfull games] And in vayne games doth  
spende the tyme awaie’.

540 [*margin*: Games used without gyle or for covitousenes are  
tollerable] ‘Yitt, quod he, ‘understand well what I saie:

Honest games mans mynde to recreate

I meane<sup>5</sup> not to be evill and clene<sup>6</sup> frustrate<sup>7</sup>’

1 *lyve*: leave off, cease.

2 *theie ... yll*: ‘what they did was evil’.

3 *trewe ... tried*: proved.

4 *As ... occupied*: neither idle nor well occupied, a common proverb (see George Latimer Apperson, *The Wordsworth Dictionary of Proverbs*, ed. Martin H. Manser [Ware: Wordsworth, 1993], 407).

5 *meane*: understand.

6 *clene*: truly, completely.

7 *frustrate*: destructive.

- [*margin*: All games wherby man maie tryie his strenghte  
 God doth allowe] ‘Some games be to man a helthfull  
 exercise,  
 And for the comon welth right commodiouse;<sup>1</sup>  
 545 Some that jentlemen oughte moste to practise,  
 In<sup>2</sup> feates of armes to be ingeniose.<sup>3</sup>  
 Suche pastymes lightlie can not be viciouse,  
 Onles in the doinge a pride theie take.  
 The pastyme they maye use, butt the vice forsake.’
- 550 [*margin*: Thuse of all kyndes of artillerie<sup>4</sup> which maie be  
 fore defence of eny ralme is most lawfull<sup>5</sup> where the same  
 be by the lawe<sup>6</sup> permytted] Other games there be, to be  
 frequented  
 Of the Comon sorte for comon welthes gayne,  
 With whiche pastymes well done God is contended  
 Sith he willeth man comon welth to maynteyne.  
 Eche in his owne contrie, where he doth remayne,  
 555 For<sup>7</sup> whiche entent God geveth fort heire defence  
 In sondrie feates, sondrie experience.’
- [fol. 19v.] ‘Sith that is so’ quod I, ‘God graunte that I may  
 Se that in Englande men wolde exercise  
 Their gifte geven of God to that ende, as ye saie.
- 560 [*margin*: Cardes, dice, boules and all suche like.] But many  
 other games theie rather devyse,  
 Neither good nor lawfull experince tries,<sup>8</sup>

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1 *commodiouse*: profitable.

2 *In*: [so that they will be] in.

3 *ingeniose*: resourceful.

4 *artillerie*: arms, not necessarily ballistic.

5 *lawfull*: permissible under God’s law.

6 *lawe*: secular legislation.

7 *For ... experience*: ‘To which end God provides [such games or exercises] for their defence through various achievements and different forms of knowledge.’

8 *tries*: produce.

At which many idle folkes that bene leue<sup>1</sup>  
Thatt better occupied at home myght have bene<sup>2</sup>.

'Then, quod he, 'on<sup>2</sup> whome doste thou complayne?'  
565 'I feare', quod I, 'all suche are not yitt knowne.  
Thefore my complaynte maie theron remayne  
Sith mucche wicked seede thies gamsters have sowne,  
For many false dice emonge them are throwne.  
Ys not this thinke a kynde of idlenes  
570 And mucche worse', quod I, 'as I gesse?'

[fol. 20r.] 'Oh, good Lorde!' quod he, 'If all men did thynke  
Of the straicte<sup>3</sup> accompte that eche man shall render  
whan he shall approche evin<sup>4</sup> to the pittes brinke  
Of eternall death. Unles he do tender  
575 His soule helthe in tyme, and here remember  
[margin: Math: 12.] That eche idle worde shall not scape  
judgemente,  
He wolde beware how he the tyme myspeute.'

'Alas', quod I, 'what wretched men are we,  
which do not onlye by evill dedes offende  
580 Butt in tyme, whan we moste devoute shoulde bee,  
Thatt tyme of all tymes we do moste myspeude?  
[margin: Thabuse of the holie dayes.] The sondaie we  
shoulde oure lyves to amende,  
Call for Goddes grace that we his will maye do,  
Butt, Alas, I saie, we will not come therto.'

585 'For either theie will resorte to games vayne  
Or go oute of the towne on the holie daie.  
To come to the Church theie do so disdayne

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1 *leue*: indifferent.

2 *on*: about.

3 *straicte accompte*: full account.

4 *evin*: right up to.

[*margin*: Math: 7.] That perceyve<sup>1</sup> their faith by their  
frute ye maye.

In place of goode prayer they do practise playe.  
590 Of suche peoples lyyvynge whatt maie we gesse  
Is not suche doinges as yvill as idlennesse?

[fol. 20v.] 'And worse, to', quod he, 'as comparison  
Of two bad dedes together maie stande,  
For all men are bounde of very reason  
595 Oure Lorde God to serve on water and lande'.  
'Yea, Mary!', quod I, 'but how is this scande'<sup>2</sup>  
To serve God all where bounde is every man?  
Whatt nede we saie thaie to come to Church than?'

'Upon this their lewde libertie taken  
God is not served as He oughte to be –  
600 Perfecte devocion is clene forsaken.  
More frome Godde service men did never fle'.  
'Then the feare of God they sett aside', quod he,  
'An ydle life they lyve, not regardinge  
The workes that leadithe to lyfe everlastynge'.

605 [*margin*: Math: 20.] 'Whan<sup>3</sup> the husbnde man wente  
forth, as Scripture showith,  
To call worke men to worke in his vyneyarde,  
He sett them then to worke of that that there growith  
And eche to have a penny for his rewarde.  
But if to his worke he have no regarde  
610 And do the thinges there not mete<sup>4</sup> to be wroughte,  
Thoughe he be doinge, yitt idle is he thoughte'.

1 *perceyve ... maye*: Matthew 7:16.

2 *scande*: interpreted.

3 *Whan ... rewarde*: Matthew 20:1–16, the parable of the labourers in the vineyard.

4 *mete ... wroughte*: supposed to be done.

[fol. 21r.] ‘Me thinke’, quod I, ‘thies wordes soundeth not well.

Yf it chaunce<sup>1</sup> some men this sayinge to reede,  
 They will saie that obeyinge the Gospell  
 615 To obeie the Churche theie have no nede.  
 Your wordes, theie will saie, therto doth them leede.  
 Theie doynge the workes mete<sup>2</sup> for the vyne yarde.  
 Other workes beside theie nede not to regarde<sup>3</sup>.

‘The whiche dothe cause them that theie do neglecte  
 620 All workes by the Churche: to the comaunded<sup>3</sup>  
 Theie saie hir<sup>4</sup> preceptes are of none effecte,  
 Whiche of youre wordes maie well be gathered  
 Sith none other workes maie there be frequented  
 Butt<sup>5</sup> suche a vyne yarde doth apperteygne  
 625 All other workynge theie will saie is but vayne<sup>6</sup>.

‘For the vine yarde dothe the Churche signyfie,  
 And workes to be wroughte there are Goddes preceptes  
 pure.  
 And<sup>6</sup> to be bounde, say they, other workes to applie  
 Not comaunded us by the playne Scripture  
 630 To be done standith<sup>7</sup> in their owne pleasure.  
 Therefore the Scripture theie followe, saie they,  
 And are no whitt bounde the Churche to obeye<sup>7</sup>.

1 *chaunce*: happened.

2 *mete*: appropriate.

3 *comaunded*: the binding teachings of the Church.

4 *hir*: of the Church.

5 *Butt ... apperteygne*: ‘except for such as belong to a vineyard’.

6 *And ... obeye*: an attack against the Refored theological position of sola Scriptura and the Protestant rejection of ‘unwritten verities’, the teachings of the Church.

7 *standith ... pleasure*: optional, not binding.

[fol. 21v.] ‘To prove theie oughte’ quod he, ‘I will soone  
declare!

Did not Christe<sup>1</sup> to his owne disciples saie

635 [*margin*: Math: 23] Those<sup>2</sup> thatt dothe sitt, quod He, in  
Moyses chaire,

Looke what theie byd you do therto obeye,

Butt as theie do do in no wise ye maie

For hevie burthens theie bynde other to do,

butt themselves will not put a finger therto.

640 ‘Were Christes disciples bounde by this precepte

To obeie the Pharesies or no? Lett them tell me.

‘Theie will say: “yea”, quod I, ‘as longe as theie kepte

The lawe in their mouthes, to this theie agre.

‘What<sup>3</sup> if in Scripture no suche preceptes be

645 As thei commaunded? Whatt saie theie than?’

‘Mary’, quod I, ‘that soone aunswere theie can.’

‘Theie will saie that those thinges theie disalowe.’

‘Butt Christe’, quod he, ‘there makis none exception

Butt saith “whatsoever<sup>4</sup> theie do comaunde you

650 That do”, saithe He, makyng no mencion

Of the lawe, butt to showe his meanynge theron.

“Theie<sup>5</sup> bynde hevie burdens to be borne”, saithe He.

Thies<sup>6</sup> burthens thowe seilte the lawe can not be.

[fol. 22r.] ‘For the burden of the lawe God hym selfe  
bounde

655 And not the Pharesies. This theie muste graunte me.

1 *Christe ... therto*: Matthew 23:1–4.

2 *Those*: the Pharisees.

3 *What ... than?*: these two lines appear to be spoken by the narrator’s interlocutor.

4 *whasoever ... do*: Matthew 23:3.

5 *Theie ... borne*: Matthew 23:4.

6 *Thies ... be*: ‘These burdens that you have sealed cannot be the law.’

Then<sup>1</sup> thoughe thies burthens were not in the lawe founde,  
 Yitt Christe worlde have them obeyed. Thow maiste see,  
 Then, if the Church of Christe more perfecte be,  
 [*margin*: Thauctoritie of the Church of Christe] She maie,  
 as she dothe, suche goode lawes ordeyne  
 660 As to honeste lyvyng dothe apperteyne<sup>2</sup>.

'And all hir<sup>2</sup> children muche more bounde therto  
 Then all the Jewes to the Pharesies were,  
 For Christes Church can will us none evill to do  
 Sithe by Goddes spirit she is ever ledde here  
 665 [*margin*: Joh:<sup>3</sup> 16 & 14] Into all truth, therefore it doth  
 appere.<sup>4</sup>

'And where as theie tooke a lewde libertie  
 Not to come to the Church<sup>5</sup> materiall  
 With other to praie in perfecte charitie,  
 Because<sup>6</sup> all where to oure Lorde they maie call  
 670 (Whiche I graunte), butt yitt fynde this theie shall:  
 That Christe to the Jewes doth saie and declare  
 "My<sup>7</sup> house", saith He, "is calde the house of prayer".

[fol. 22v.] 'And nowe to come to my purpose agayne,  
 Those that in Christes vyneyarde sitte still  
 675 Or ells are doinge of dedes that are vayne,  
 whiche may be in their kynde,<sup>8</sup> neither goode nor yll.

1 *Then thoughe*: Even though.

2 *hir*: of the Church.

3 *Joh: 16 & 14*: perhaps references to John 14:6 and 16:13.

4 This stanza only has five lines. The rhyming couplet at the end appears to have been omitted.

5 *Church materiall*: the physical Church with its human, sinning members.

6 *Because ... graunte*: 'Because God can be called on in every place, which I grant'.

7 *My ... prayer*: Matthew 21:13.

8 *kynde*: nature.



Yitt eche of those doubles<sup>1</sup> dothe againste Goddes will  
 And muste yeve<sup>2</sup> accompte of suche doinges all,  
 As of ydle<sup>3</sup> wordes Christe saith eche man shall.

- 680 'Idlenes is a daungerouse thinge  
 [*margin*: Eccle:<sup>4</sup> 333.] For, saithe the wise man, therof do-  
 the ensewe  
 Muche myschefe sithe there is no man lvyng  
 Butt beinge idell frome workes of vertue.  
 The devill is redie his will to subdewe  
 685 To suche workes as maie the fleshe satiltie<sup>5</sup>  
 As, for example, this a truth to trie'

- 'If<sup>6</sup> David the kynge had not idle bene,  
 But had used some goode exercise,  
 He had not Bersabee in the bathe sene,  
 690 The beautie of whome so shone in his eyes  
 That his herte was enflamed. In suche wise  
 Adultrie and murther therbie had successe.  
 Suche is the daunger of this idlennesse!'

- [fol. 23r.] 'Nowe, as idlenes is in one respecte  
 695 Idellie to sitt still and do nothyng  
 And many tymes comys to a wicked effecte,  
 [*margin*: Omyttyng of vertuose workes was a faulte  
 emongest the Sodomytes.] So is there synne in vertue  
 omyttyng,  
 Whiche synne in thie cities was remaynyng.  
 For besides thies whiche I have reherste,  
 700 Pitie on pore folkes their hartes never pearste'

1 *doubles dothe*: twice offends.

2 *yeve*: give, render.

3 *ydle ... shall*: Matthew 12:36.

4 *Eccle: 333*: Ecclesiasters 10:18.

5 *satiltie*: to thin or weaken.

6 *If ... successe*: 2 Samuel 11, the story of David and Bathsheeba.

“For”,<sup>1</sup> saithe the Prophett, “besides thies synnes all  
 Theie reached not their handes to that pore and nedie”,  
 whiche was an offence, thowe maiste here, not small.  
 Yitt worldelie goodes they possesse abountauntlie.  
 705 ‘Alas, if that offende God so’, quod I,  
 ‘Englande hath grete cause to call for Goddes grace,  
 For trulie she maie matche this lande in that case.’

‘Lesse mercie’, I thinke, ‘there was never seene  
 In all thies contries whiche so wicked were  
 710 Then is nowe in Englande, and late that bene.  
 Pore folke hath sterved for foode, farre and nere,  
 Because no mercie in those doth appere  
 Whiche had ynoughe their pore neybours to seerve.  
 Yitt like mercylesse men they wolde se them sterue.’

715 [fol. 23v.] ‘Butt wheare the Prophett doth note their of-  
 fence  
 For not gyvynge almose,<sup>2</sup> to be so grevous  
 In Englande, alas, we had experience!  
 [*margin*: Oure case is worse than the Sodomytes in  
 some respecte] That our case therein in muche more  
 daungerouse<sup>3</sup>  
 For thoughe thies cities were moste vicious  
 720 We rede not that they did pore menne oppresse  
 Nor made not the harboured<sup>4</sup> harbouresse.’

‘Nor pouled<sup>5</sup> not pore men by raysinge of rentes,  
 Or takynge of fynes, or incomes<sup>6</sup> so moche  
 As is nowe in Englande, which pore folk repentes  
 725 And shall as longe as there is eny soche.

1 For ... *nedie*: Ezekiel 16:49.

2 *almose*: alms.

3 *daungerouse*: grave.

4 *harboured harbouresse*: create homelessness.

5 *pouled*: plucked, stripped.

6 *incomes*: entry and arrival fees.

Butt yf God, I saie, did thies with plages toche  
 For not gyvyng to pore folkes, whatt shall we saie  
 To those that dothe pull their lyvynges awaie?

- ‘Trulie’, quod he, ‘God muste of His Justice  
 730 Plage those people, whatsoever theie be.  
 For, as thowe saiest, their offence in this  
 Is before God muche more impietie  
 Then theie did comytte in this vile contrie.  
 Thefore if thei do not reprente and amende,  
 735 God will to them doubltes muche grater plages sende’.

- [fol. 24r.] ‘Alas’, quod I, ‘whatt wofull case is this  
 That men beinge never more worldelie wise  
 Then theie be at this daie, and well sene it is,  
 And knowith wherein oure moste myserie lies.  
 740 Yitt not one is founde that will exercise  
 Havyng witte joyned with auctoritie’.

- ‘ The cause therof’, quod he, ‘as I conjecture,  
 Is because themselves feare therbie to lose,  
 [*margin*: Private welthe is the cause that oure Common  
 welthe amendeth nott.] And therefore for their owne  
 private pleasure  
 745 To amende this theie do nott themselves dispose,  
 Butt all thinges rekened,<sup>1</sup> I dare depose.<sup>2</sup>  
 Some<sup>3</sup> rente raisers therbie dothe not moche gett  
 If all thinges he buyeth to tholde price he sett’.

1 *rekening*: tally, account.

2 *depose*: attest, confirm.

3 *Some ... sett*: The sense seems to be that landlords who raise rent gain only little because his further acquisitions are rented out at the old, lower price. The reasoning here is unclear, but the narrator may be thinking that a low rent is used to lure tenants who would not rent for a higher price.

‘We do’, quod I, ‘butt caste stones againste the wynde,  
 750 For<sup>1</sup> this till God worke is paste remedie.  
 ‘And Goddes workynge’, quod he, ‘ye shall nott fynde  
 Till man to Goddes grace this good will applie’.  
 ‘Then God graunte that to be shortlie’, quod I.  
 ‘Lest God His grace agayne from us do pulle,  
 755 whose offer to us hathe bene so plentyfulle’.

[fol. 24v.] ‘Amen’, quod he, ‘and graunte all Christen landes  
 To lerne by<sup>2</sup> thies Cities, thus punyshte for synne,  
 With prayer to oure Lorde to lyfte up their handes  
 And to amende their lyves, lovinglie begynne  
 760 That<sup>3</sup> the lande figured by this we are in  
 We maie at the laste daie fullie possesse  
 With God and his saintes, the glorie endles’.

‘Amen!’, quod I. Than with that worde me thoughte  
 He vanyshed awaie, leavyng me alone.  
 765 Then came Morpheus, whiche me thither broughte,  
 And bad me not feare: ‘Thoughe he was gone,  
 For thou shalte be where I found the anone’.  
 He had no soner spooke, butt I did awake.  
 Then home to my house my waie I did take.

770 Wheare this vision thus groslye I did write,  
 Voide bothe of lernynge, witte, and eloquence,  
 Requirynge the lerned, whiche can endite<sup>4</sup>  
 Suche matter more fyne, by their experience  
 To pardon my fautes here where I make offence,  
 775 And by lernynge with favore the same to correcte.

1 *For ... remedie*: ‘For this is a lost cause as far as God’s work is concerned’.

2 *by*: from.

3 *That ... in*: ‘That the land represented by this is vision is the one we are in’.

4 *endite*: write, craft.

For my will is goode, thoughe my witte I suspecte.<sup>1</sup>  
FINIS

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1     *suspecte*: doubt.



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