

that land for hys heritage, and bad him that he should not eate the tree of knowledge of good and euil, that was * a middle Paradise. Then the deuell that was fallen out of heauen for his pride, had enuie to man, and by a false suggestion he made man eate of this tree, and breake the commaundement of God, and tho was man ouercome of the deuill, and so he lost his heritage, and was put out therof into the world that was a land of trauel, and of forow vnder the seendes thraldome, to be punished for hys trespassse. There man followed wickednes and sinne, and God for the sinne of man sent a floud into this world, and drownd all mankind saue eight soules. And after this flud he let mē multiply in the world, and so he assaid whether man dread him or loued him, & among other he found a man that hight Abraham: this man he prooued whether he loued him and drad him, and bad hym that he should offer Isaac his sonne vpon an hill, and Abraham as a true seruaunt fulfilled his Lords commaundement: and for this buxumnes and truth, God sware vnto Abraham that he would multiply his feede as the grauell in the sea, and as the starres of heauen, and he behight to him and to his heires the lande of behett for heritage for euer, gif they wolden ben his true seruaunts and keepe his heits. And God * held him forward, for Isaac Abrahams sonne begat Iacob and Esau: and of Iacob that is ycleped Israel, comen Gods people that he chose to be his seruaunts, and to whome he behight the land of behett. This people was in great thraldome in Egypt vnder Pharao that was king of Egypt: and they crieden to God that he should deliueren them out of that thraldome, and so he did: for he sent to Pharao, Moses and his brother Aaron, and bad him deliuer his people to done him sacrifice: and to fore Pharao he made Moses done many wonders, or that Pharao wold deliuer his people, and at the last by might he deliuered his people out of thraldome, and led them through a desert toward the lande of behett, and there he gaue them a lawe that they shulden lyuen after, when they comen into their country, and in their way thither ward, the ten commaundements God wrote himself in two tables of stone: the remnaunt of the lawe he taught them by Moses his seruaunt how they shoulde do euerychone to other, and gif they trespassed againe the lawe, he ordeined how they shoulde be punished. Also hee taught them what maner sacrifices they should doe to him, and he chose him a people to ben his priestes, that was Aaron and his children, to done sacrifices in the tabernacle, and after ward in the temple also. He chose him the remnant of the children of Leuy to ben seruautes in the tabernacle to the priestes, and he sayde: When ye come into the lande of behett, the children of Leuy they shullen haue none heritage amongst their brethren, for I wold be their part, & their heritage, & they shullen serue me in the tabernacle by dayes and by nightes, and he ordeined that priestes should haue a part of the sacrifices that were offered in the tabernacle, and the first begotten beastes, both of men and beastes and other things as the lawe telleth. And the other children of Leuy that serued in the tabernacle, should haue tythings of the people to their liueloode, of the which tythings they should geuen the priestes the tenth partie in forme of offering. The children of Leuy both prettes and other, shoulde haue houes and croftes, and leifewes for their beafts in the land of behett, & none other heritage: & so God gaue the their land of behett, and bade them that they ne shoulde worship no other God then him. Also he bade that they should kepe his commaundments, and gif they did so, all their enemies about them shuld drede the and be their seruaunts. And giue they worshipped false gods and so forsaken his lawes, he bight them that he woulde bring them out of that land & make them serue their enemies, but yet he said he wold not benemen his mercy away from them, if they would cry mercy and amende their defaultes, and all thys was done on Gods side.

* Amid Paradise, that is, in the middle of Paradise.

Abraham.

* Held him forward, that is, kept promise with him.

Gods loue to man.

Fewer times that is, oft tymes.

And heere is much loue showed of God to man. And who so looketh the Bible, hee shall finde that man showed him little loue againeward: for when they were come into their heritage, they forgotten their God, and worshipped false gods. And God sent to them the Prophetes and his seruaunts * fewe times to bidde them withdrawen them from their sinnes, and other they haue slouen them, or they beaten them, or they ledde them in prison: and oft times God tooke vpon them great vengeance for their sinnes, & when they cried after helpen to God, he sent them helpe and succour. This is the generall processe of the old Testament, that God gaue to his people by Moses his seruaunt. And al this Testament and this doinge ne was but a shadow and a figure of a newe Testament that was geuen by Christ. And it was byhoten by Ieremie the Prophet, as S. Paul beareth witnes in the Epistle that he wryteth to the Iewes. And Ieremy sayeth in this wise: Loe dayes shall come, God sayth, and I will make a new band to the house of Israel, and to the house of Iuda, not like the forward that I made with their fathers in that day that I tooke their hand to leade them out of the lande of Egypt, the which forward they maden veyne, and I had Lordship ouer them. But this shalbe the forward that I wold make with them after those daies: I wil geue my lawes with them in their inwardnes, and I will wryten them in their hearts, and I wil be their God and they should be my people, and after that a

man shall not teach his neighbour ne his brother. For all (God sayeth) from the least to the most, should knowe me, for I will forgeuen them their sinnes, and I wil no more thinke on their sinnes.

This is the newe Testament, that Christe both God and man borne of the maid Marye, he taught here in this worlde to bryng man out of sinne and out of the deuils thraldome and seruice to heauen, that is land of blisse and heritage to all tho that beleuen on him and kepen hys commaundements, and for his teaching he was done to the death. But the third day arose againe from death to life, and sette Adam and Eue and many other folke out of heil, and afterward he came to his disciples and comforted them. After he tied vp to heauen to his father, and tho hee sent the holy Ghost amonges his disciples: and in time comming he wol come and demen all mankinde after their werkes, and after the wordes he spake vpon earth: some to blisse, with in body and in soule euer withouten end, and some to paine withouten end, both in body and in soule.

This is our beleue and all christen mennes, and this beleue is the first poynt of the newe Testament that yche Christen man is holde stedfastly to beleue, and rather to suffice: the death than forsake this beleue, and so this beleue is the bread of spirituall life, in forsaking sinne, that Christ brought vs to life.

But for asmuch as mans liuing ne stondeth not all on only by bread, he hath ygiuen vs a draught of water of life to drink. And who that drinketh of that water, he ne shall neuer afterward ben a thurst For this water is the cleare teaching of the gospel, that encloueth seuen commaundements.

The first is this: thou shalt loue thy GOD ouer all other things, and thy brother as thy selfe, both enemy and frend.

The second commaundement is of meekenes, in the which Christ chargeth vs to forsake Lordship vpon our brethren and other worldly worshippes, and so he did himselfe.

The third commaundement, is in stondeing stedfastlich in truth and forsaking all falsenes.

The fourth commaundement, is to suffer in this world diseases and wrongs withouten agein stondeings.

The fifth commaundement is mercy, to forgeuen our brethren their trespassse, as often time as they gilteth, without asking of vengeance.

The sixth commaundement is poorenes in spirite, but not to ben a begger.

The seuenth commaundement, is chastity: that is a forsaking of fleshlich likings displeasing to God. These commaundements enclouen the ten commaundements of the old lawe, and tom what more.

Thys water is a blessed drinke for christen mennes soule. But more harme is, much folke would drinke of thys water, but they mowe not come thereto: for God sayth by Ezechiel the prophet: when iche geue to you the most cleane water to drinke, ye troubled that water with your feete, and that water so detoured, yee geue my shepe to drink. But the cleane water is yhid fro the shepe, and but gif God cleare this, it is dread least the sheepe dyen for thurst. And Christ that is the wisdome of the father of heauen, & well of thys wisdome that come from heauen to earth to teache man this wisdome, thorow the which man thould ouercome the sleights of the deuill that is principall enemy of mankinde: haue mercy and pity of his people, and thew if it be his will howe thys water is troubled, and by whom: and * sith clere thys water that his sheepe mowne drinken hereof, and kele the thurst of theyr soules. Blessed mote our Lord bene, for he hath itaught vs in the Gopell, that ere then hee woulde come to the vniuersall dome, then should come many in his name and sayen, that they weren Christ: and they shoulde done many wonders, and begilen many men. And many false prophets thoulden arisen and begylen much folke.

Special precepts or lessons of the Gopell.

Christes sheepe stoped from cleane water, & compelled to drinke puddel.

* Sith that is, afterward.

* Binemen, that is, take away.

* Heryng, that is, worshipping.

The honouring of God standeth in his image.

A Lorde, yblessed mote thou ben of euerych creature: which ben they that haue ysayd that they weren Christ, & haue thus begiled thus thy people? Trulich Lord I trowe, thilke that sayen that they ben in thy steede, and * binemen they worship, and maken thy people worshipping them as God, & haue hid thy lawes from the people. Lorde, who durst sit in thy steede and benemen thee thy woorship and thy sacrifice, and durst maken the people woorship them as gods? The Sauter telles, that God ne wole not in the day of dome demen men for bodiliche sacrifices & Holocaustes: But God sayth, yeld to me sacrifice of heryng, and yeld to God thine auowes, and clepe me in the day of tribuatioun, and ych wole defend thee, and thou shalt worship me.

The heryng of God standeth in 3 things. In louing God ouer al other things. In dreading God ouer al other things. In trusting in God ouer all other things.

These 3 poyntes Christ teacheth in the gospel. But I trowe men louen him but a little. For who so loueth Christ, he wole kepen his wordes. But men holden his wordes for heretic and tolye, and kepeh mennes wordes. Also men dreden more men & mens lawes and their cursings, then Christ and his lawes and his cursings. Also men hopen more in men and mens helpes, than they doe in Christ and in his helpe. And thus hath hee that setteth in