

seest cometh not but for to steale, to sleine, & to destroy. And Zachary the prophet sayth, that thou wouldest reren vp a shepherde vnknowing, that ne wol not hele thy shepe that *beth sick, ne seek thilke that beth lost. Upon his arme is a sward, and vpon his right eye; his arme shall waxe dry, and his right eye shall lese his light. O Lorde, helpe, for thy shepe beth at great mischiefe in the shepheardes defaulte.

But Lorde, ther commeth hired men, & they ne feeden not thy shepe in thy plenteous lessew, but feeden thy sheep with *sweuens and false miracles & tales. But at thy trewth they ne comen not, For Lorde, I trowe thou sendest them neuer. For haue they hire of thy shepe they ne careth but little of the feding and the keping of thy shepe, Lorde of these hired men speaketh Ieremy the Prophet, and thou seyest that woorde by him: I ne sende them not, and they ronnes blin: I ne speake vnto them, and they propheciden. For if they hadden itonden in my counsel, and they had made my words knowe to the puple, ich wold haue turned them away from their yuell way and from their wicked thoughtes. For Lorde, thou seyest that thy woordes ben as fire, and as an hammer breaking stonnes. And Lorde, thou saist: Lo I to these Prophetes meeting sweuens of lesing, that haue ytolde her sweuens, and haue begyled my puple in their lesing & in their fals miracles, when I neither sent ne bede them. And these haue profitet nothing to my puple. And as Ieremie sayth, from the left to the * mest all they studien couetise, and from the Prophet to the priest, all they done gyle.

A Lorde, here is mych mischiefe & matere of sorow, & yet there is more. For gif a lewed man wold teach thy people trewth of thy words as he is yholde by the commaundement of charite, he shal be forboden and put in prison gif he do it. And so Lorde, thilke that haue the key of conning, haue y lockt the trewth of thy teaching vnder many wardes, & yhid it from thy children. But Lorde, sith thy teaching is y come from heauen aboue, our hope is, that with thy grace it shal breken these wardes, and showe hym to thy puple, to kele both the hunger and the thrust of the soule. And then shal no shepheard, ner no fals heridman begile thy puple no more. For by thy law I wryte, as thou * hightest some time, that from the left to the mest, all they shullen knowen thy wil, and * weten howe they shullen please thee euer more in certaine.

And leue Lorde, gif it be thy wil helpe at thys nede, for there is none helpe but in thee. Thus Lorde, by him that maketh himselfe thy viker in earth, is thy commaundement of loue to thee & our brethren ybroken, both to him and to thy puple. But Lorde God, mercy and pacience that beth * tweyne of thy commaundements, beth destroyed, and thy puple hath forsake mercy. For Lorde, Dauid in the Sauter sayth: Blessed beth they that done dome and rightfulness in euerich time.

O Lorde, thou hast itaught vs as rightfulness of heauen, & hast ybden vs forgeuen our brethren as oit as they trespassen agaynst vs. And Lorde, thine olde lawe of iustice was, that such harme as a man did his brother, such he should suffer by the law, as eye for an eye, and tooth for a tooth. But Christ made an end of this law, that one brother should not desire wracke of an other: but not that he would that sinne should ben vapunified, for thereto hath he ordained Kinges and Dukes and other lewde officers vnder them, whilke as S. Paule sayth, ne carien not the sward in vaine, for they ben the ministers of God, and wrakers to wrath, to them that euil done. And thus hath Christ ymade an ende of this olde lawe, that one brother may not suen an other himselfe, * for that to wreken without sinne, for breaking of charity. But this charity Lorde hath thy vicar ybroke, and says that we sinnen, but gif we suen for our right. And we se I wote that thou taughtest vs sometime to geue our mantell also, euer that we shoulde suen for our coate. And so Lorde beleue we, that we ben ybouden to don by thy law, that is all charitye, & officers duty is to defenden vs from thilke theuery though we coplainen not. But Lorde, thy law is turned vpedown.

A Lorde, what dome is it to sleane a theefe that take a mas cattell away from hym, and suffen a spousebreaker to liue, and a lecherous that killeth a womans soule? And yet thy lawe itoned the spousebreakers and leachours, and let the theeues liuen and haue other punishment.

A Lorde, what dome is it to sleane a theefe for stealing of a horf, and to let him liue vnpunished, & to maintaine him that robbeth thy poore people of their liuelod, and the soule of his foode?

Lorde, it was neuer thy dome to sayen, that a man is an heretike and cursed for breaking of mans lawe, and demen hym for a good man for breaking thine heltes.

Lorde, what dome is it to curse a lewed man if he smite a priest, and not curse a priest that smiteth a lewed man, and lesefeth his charitie.

Lorde, what dome is it to curse the lewd people for tythings, and not curse the parson that robbeth the people of tythings, and teacheth them not Gods lawe, but feedeth them with painting of stonnes walles, and songs of Latin that the people knowen not?

Lorde, what dome is it to punish the poore ma for his trespas, and suffer the rich to continue in his sin for a quantity of mony?

Lorde, what dome is it to flaine an vncunning lewed man for his sinne, and suffer a priest, other a clerke that doth the same sin,

scape a liue? Lorde the sinne of the priest or of the cleark is greater trespasse then it is of a lewd vncunning man, and greater ensample of wickednes to the common people.

Lorde, what maner people be we, that neither keep thy domes and thy rightfulness of the old testament that was a lawe of drede, nor thy domes and thy rightfulness of thy new testament that is a lawe of loue and of mercy: but haue an other lawe, and taken out of both thy lawes that is liking to vs, and remnaunt of heathen mennes lawes, and Lorde this is a great mischiefe.

O Lorde thou sayest in thy law, deme ye not and ye should not be demed: for the same mesure that ye meten to other men, men shall meten to you aganeward. And Lorde thou sayest that by their worke we should knowe them. And by what we knowe that thou commaunded vs not to demen mens thoughtes, nor their workes that were not agaynst thy law exprefly. And yet Lorde he that saith he is thy vicar, will demen our thoughtes and aske vs what we thinke: not of the Lorde, of thy heltes, for they caren little for them but of him and of his whilke they fate aboute thine, and maken vs accufen our selfe, or els they willen accufen vs, for our accufers mowen we not knowne. And Lorde thou sayest in thine olde law, that vnder two witnes at the least or three, shoulde stand euery matter. And that the witnes shoulde euer be the first that shoulde helpe to kill them.

And when the scribes and the Pharises some tymes brought before thee a woman that was itake in spouse breaking, and exeden of the dome, thou didst write on the earth, and then thou gauest this dome: He that is without sinne: throw first at her a stone, and Lorde they went forth away from thee and the woman: & thou forgauest the woman her trespasse, and bad her go forth and sinne no more.

Sweete Lorde, if the priestes tooke keepe to thy dome, they would be agast to demen men as they done. O Lorde if one of them breake a commaundement of thy law, he will axe mercy of thee, and not a peine that is due for the sinne, for peyne of death were to little. O Lorde, how daren they demen any man to the death for breaking of thy lawes, other assent to such law? for breaking of thy law they will set penaunce or pardon them, and mayntayne them as oft as they trespasse. But Lorde, if a man ones breake thy lawes or speake agaynst them, he may done penaunce but ones, and after be burnt. Trulych Lorde thou sayest, but if euery of vs forgeue other his trespasse, thy father will not forgeuen vs our sinnes. And Lorde when thou hongest on the crosse, thou praydest to thy father to haue mercy on thine enemies.

And yet the sain Lorde, that they demen no man to the death, for the sain they ne mowen by their law demen any man to the death. A leue Lorde, euen so saden they forefathers the pharises, that it ne was not lawfull for them to kill any man. And yet they bidden Pilate to done thee to the death agaynst his owne conscience, for he wold gladly haue iquitte thee, but for that they threatened him with the Emperour, and broughten agaynst thee false witness also. And he was an heathen man.

O Lorde, how much truer dome was there in Pilate that was an heathen iustice, then in our kinges and iustices that woulde demen to the death and berne in the fire him: that the Priests deliueten vnto them withouten witness or prefe? For Pilate ne would not demen thee: for that the Pharises sayden that gif thou ne haddest not bene a misdoer we ne would not deliuer him vnto thee: for to, they broughten in thy false witness agaynst thee. But Lorde, as thou saydest sometime that it should ben lighter at domes day to Tyro and to Sydon and Gomorra, than to the cities where thou wrought wonders and miracles: so I dred, it shall be more light to Pilate in the dome, then to our kinges and domes men that so demen without witness and prefe. For Lorde to demen thy folke for heretikes: is to holden thee an hereticke: and to brenne them, is to brennen thee, for thou saydest to Paule when he persecuted thy people: Saule, Saule, wherefore persecutest thou me, & in the dome thou shalt say, that ye haue done to the left of mine ye haue done to me.

Thus Lorde, is thy mercy & iustice foredone by him that sayth he is thy vicar in earth: for he neither keepeth it himselfe nor will not suffer other to do it.

The third commaundement, that is pacience and sufferance is also broken by this vicar. Lorde thou biddest sufferen both wronges and strokes withouten agaynstanding, and so thou diddest thy selfe to geuen vs ensample to sufferen of our brethren. For suffering nourisheth loue, and agaynstandeth debate. All thy lawes is loue, or els the thing that draweth to loue.

But Lorde, men teachen, that men shoulde pleten for their right and fighten also therefore, and els they seyn, men ben in perill: and thou bid in the olde law men fight for their cuntry. And thy selfe haddest two swordes in thy company when thou shouldest go to thy passion, that as these clerkes seyn, betokeneth a spiritual sword and a temporal sword, that thou gauest to thy vicar to rule with thy church.

Lorde this is a sleight speech, but Lorde we beleue that thou art king of blisse, and that is thine heritage and mankindes cuntry and in this worlde we ne bene but itraungers and pilgrimes.

Agaynst the canon law.

The popes lawe agaynst Gods lawe, in causing men to accuse themselves, Mowe, that is, may.

Tooke kept, that is, tooke heede.

The breaking of the popes lawe more punished, then the breaking of Gods lawe

For to, that that is, therefore.

Pilate more commended then the pope.

The Pope breaketh pacience.

* Beth, that is, bee. Agaynst hirelings.

* Sweuens, that is dreames.

* Blin, quickly.

* Meste, most.

Popish priests neither teach themselves, nor wyl suffer other beside themselves to teach.

* I hightest, promised.

* Weten, know.

* Tweyne, that is, two.

* For that, is, but.

He complaineth for punishing little faultes, and to let great faultes escape. If he be an heretike that breaketh mans lawe what is the P. that breaketh Gods lawe.

A lewd ma. that is, a lay man.