

to helpe vs in this mischiefe, for thy great goodnes that is withouten end.

Lord, thou ne taughtest not thy disciples to assaylen men of her sinne, and setten them a penaunce for their sinne, in fasting ne in prayeng, ne other almous dede: ne thy selfe, ne thy disciples, v. leden no such power here on earth. For Lord, thou forgouest men their finnes, and bede him sinne no more. And thy disciples\* fulleden men in thy name, in forgeuenesse of her finnes. Nor they toke no such power vpon them as our priestes dare nowe. And Lord, thou ne assayledst no man both of his sinne and of his payne, that was dew for his sinne, ne thou grauntedst no man such power here on earth.

\* Fulleden, that is, baptised.

And Lord, me thinketh that gif there were a purgatorye, and any earthliche man had power to deliueren sinfull men from the paynes of Purgatory, he shoulde and he were in charitie, sauen euerych man that were in waye of saluation from this ke paynes, sith they make them greater then anye bodeliche paynes of this world Also gif the Bishop of Rome had such a power, he himselfe shoulde neuer comen in purgatorye ne in hell. And sith we see well that he ne hath no power to kepen himselfe ne other men nother out of these bodilych paynes of the world, and he may goe to hell for his sinne as an other man may: I ne byleue not, that he hath so great power to assaylen men of their sinne as he taketh vpon hym abouen all other men. And I trowe that in this he higheth hymself aboue God.

Purgatorie.

As touching the selling of Byshoppricks & personages, I trow it be a poynt of falsehed. For agens Gods ordinaunce he robbeth poore men of a porcion of theyr sustenance, and sellere it, other geueth it, to finde proud men in idleness that done the lewd purplelittell profite, but much harme as we told before. Thus ben thy commaundementes of treweth, of meekenes, and of poore nesse, vndone by him that clepeth himselfe thy vicar here vpon earth.

Selling of Byshoppricks and benefices.

A Lord thou gaue vs a commaundement of chastite that is forsaking of fleshlich luites. For thou broughtest vs to a liuing of soule that is ygouerned by the word. For Lord, thou ordeinedst woman more frele than man to ben ygouerned by mans rule & his help to please thee & kepe thine helts. Ne thou ne ordeinedst that a man shoulde desire the company of a woman, and maken her his wife, to lyuen with her in hys lustis, as a swyne doth or a horf. And his wife ne like him not to his lustes, Lord thou ne gaue not a man leaue to departen hym from his wyfe, and taken hym an other.

Marriage.

But Lord, thy marriage is a common accord betwene man & woman, to lyuen together to theyr liues ende, and in thy seruice eyther the better for others helpe, and thilke that thus ben ycome together, bene ioyned by thee, and thilke that God iayneth, may no man depart. But Lord, thou sayest that gif a man see a woman to couieten her, than he doth with the woman lecherye in his hart. And so Lord, gif a man desire his wife in couetise of such lustes, and not to flye from whoredome, his wedding is lecherye, ne thou ne ioynest them not together. Thus was Raguels daughter ywedded to seuen husbandes that the deuill intrangled. But Toby tooke her to lyue with her in clennes, and bringyng vp of her children in thy worship, and on him the deuill ne had no power. For the wedding was I made in God, for God, and through God,

A lesson how to marrye.

A Lord, the people is farre ygo from this maner of wedding. For now men wedde theyr vyues for fairenes, other for riches, or some such other fleshlich luites. And Lord, so it preueth by the for the most part. For a man shall not finde two wedded in a lande, where the husband loues the wife, and the wife is buxum to the man, as they shoulde after thy law of maryage. But other the man loues not his wife, or the wife is not buxum to her man. And thus Lord is the rule of prese, that neuer sayleth no preue whether it be done by thee or no. And Lord, all this mischiefe is common among thy people, for that they knowe not thy worde, but theyr shepheardes and hyred men sedden them with their sweuens and leafinges. And Lord, where they shoulde gon before vs in the field, they seggen theyr order is so holy for thy marriage. And Lord, he that calleth himselfe thy vicar vpon earth, will not suffer priestes to taken them wiuers, for that is agaynst hys law: But Lord, he will dispensen with them to kepen horeen for a certayne somme of money. And Lord, all horedome is forfended in thy law. And Lord, thou neuer forfendest priestes their wiuers, ner thy Apostles neyther. And well I wote in our land, priestes hadden wiuers vntill Anselmus dayes in the yeare of our Lord God, a leue hundred and twenty and nyne, as Huntingdon writes. And Lord, this makes people for the most part beleuen, that lecherye is no sinne. Therefore we lewd men prayen thee that thou wolt send vs shepheardes of thine owne that wolen feeden thy flocke in thy lesse, and gon before the selfe, and so writen thy law in our hartis, that from the least to the most all they mayen knowne thee. And Lord, geue our king and his Lordes, hart to defenden thy true shepheardes and thy sheepe from out of the wolues mouthes, and grace to know thee that art the true Christ, the sonne of thy hea-

Sweuens, that is, dreames.

Priestes had wiuers to the time of Anselmus.

uently father, from the Antichrist, that is the sonne of pride.

And Lorde, geue vs thy poore sheepe pacience and strenght to suffer for thy law, the cruelines of the mischieuous Wolues. And Lord, as thou hast promised, shorten these dayes. Lord we axen this now, for more neede was their neuer.

I doubt not gentle reader, but in reading this goodly treatise aboue prefixed, the matter is manerly & playne of it selfe without any further explication, what is to be thought and iudged of this vicare of Christ, and succellour of Peter, whome we call the Bishop of Rome: whole life here thou seest not onely to be so disordered in all poynts, swaruing from the keepes and example of Christ the Prince and Byshop of our ionles, but also whose lawes and doctrine is to repugnant and contrary from the preceptes and rule of the Gospell, that almost there is no conueniente betweene them: as in the perusing of this complaying prayer, thou mayest notoriously vnderstand. Wherefore hauing no neede to stand in any further expelling of thys matter, but leauing it to thine own consideration, and discretion: I will speede my selfe (Christ willing) to procede toward the time of John wickliffe, and his fellows taking by order of yeares as I go, suche thinges by the way as both happened before the said time of wickliffe, and also may the better prepare the minde of the reader, to the entering of that story. where first I think it not inconuenient to inserte a prophetical parable, written about this time or not much before, which the autho: mozally applych vnto the Byshop of Rome. So what autho: this propheticke or mozall is to be ascribed, I haue not certainly to assume. Some say, that Rupescissanus (of whome mention is made before, pag. 390. was the autho: thereof, & alledge it out of Froylard, but in Froylard as yet I haue not found it. In F meane leas, as I haue told it in Latin expressed, because it painted out hope so rightly in his fetters & colours, as I thought the thing not to be omitted, so I tooke this present place, as most fit (although peradventure misting the order of yeares a litle) to insert the same. The effect of which parable followeth here vnder written.

In the time of hope Innocent the 6. aboue specified, this Iohnnes de Rupe scissa: a Fryer among other hys propheticke mercifully forspake (as alledged Froylard, who both hard and saw him) of the taking of John the frenche king prisoner, and brought forth many other notable collections concerning the perils, mutations and changings in the Church to come. And at what time the pope kept hym at Quinion in prison (where Froylard is sayd to see hym and to speake with him) the sayd Froylard hard in the popes Court this example and parable, recited by the forspake Fryer Rupescissanus, to the two Cardinals, to wit, Cardinal Hostiensis, and Cardinal Auxercentis, which followeth in these wordes.

A parable prophesyng the destruction of the Pope.

¶ When on a certayne time, a byrde was brought into the woerde all bare and without fetthers, the other byrdes hearing thereof, came to visite her: & for that they sawe her to be a mercifulous saye and beautifull byrd they coumlaied together howe they might best doo her good, sith by no meanes without fetthers, she might eyther see or liue comfortably. They all wished her to liue for her excellent forme and beauties sake, in so muche that among them all there was not one, that would not graunt some part of her own fetthers to decaie this byrde withall: yea, and the more trim they sawe her to be, the more fetthers fill they gaue vnto her, so that by this meanes she was passing well penced and fetthered, and began to see. The other byrdes that thus had adourned her with goodly fetthers, beholding her to see abroad, were mercifulously delighted therewith. In the end, this byrd seeing her selfe so gorgeously fetthered, & of all the rest to be had in honor: began to wace proud & haury, in so much that she had no regard at all vnto the byrde, by whose shee was aduanced: yea she pinched them with her beak, plucked them by the skinne and fetthers, and in all places hurted them. Whereupon the byrdes sitting in councill agayne, called the matter in question, demaunding one of an other what was best to be done touching this vnkind byrd whom they louingly with their own fetthers had decked & adourned: Affirming, that they gaue not theyr fetthers to the intent that shee therby puffe vp with pride, shoulde contemptuously dispile them all. The percocke therefore answered itself. Truly sayth he, for that shee is brauchly set forth with my paynted fetthers, I wil againe take them fro her. Then sayth the Falcon, and I also will haue mine againe. This sentence at length took place among them all, so that euery one plucked fro her those fetthers which before they had geuen, chalenging to them their owne agayne. Now this proude byrd seeing her selfe thus to be dealt wythall, began forthwith to abate her haury somacke, and humbly to

The Pope compared to a birde fetthered with other birdes fetthers.

The first rynging of the pope, The proude prosperitie of the pope.

The decay of the pope described.