

<County: Berkshire>

<Code: L6761b>

<MS reference: Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson C 882>

<Text: Poor Caitiff>

<fol. 11v>And ri3te as almy3ti god brou3te þulke puple . oute  
 of bodeli þraldome & bondage of pharao ; so gostly  
 he brou3te vs oute of þe þraldome & bondage of  
 þe deuel . þat is bi pharao taken & vnderstonde Forwhi  
 be-fore þe tyme . þ<sup>t</sup> crist be-come man al mankynde  
 was *in* egipte gostly . þ<sup>t</sup> is *in* derkenesse of  
 synne . & þraldome of pharao . þat is to sey . vnder  
 þe fendes powere . For were he neuere so goode . &  
 holy þat deiede in þ<sup>t</sup> tyme he wente *in* to helle . þ<sup>t</sup>  
 is bi egipte gostly be-tokenede . ¶ But crist come  
 doune fro heuene . & be-com man & dede many wondres  
 . & many merueiles *in* þe egipte of þis worlde  
 be-fore pharao . þe fend kynge of egipte . And  
 þoru3 his blodi passion . delyuerede his puple oute  
 of þraldome . & drenchede þe fend pharao w<sup>t</sup> al his  
 oost . For crist þoru3 his paynful passion ouercome  
 þe fendes powere and lefte him bounde *in* helle for  
 a þousande 3ere after ; as seynt Jon seiþ *in* þe boke  
 of pryuetes . And þus god þoru3 his grete my3te  
 & mercy delyuerede his puple oute of egipte of  
 helle & of þraldome of þe fend pharao . And  
 þou3 man hadde no moo causes ; but onli þis .  
 me þinkeþ hit shulde singulerli moue *him* to sette  
 al his treste & his worshepe & his loue in to god  
 þat is þus ful of my3t & of mercy . For þer was  
 noon oþer creature þat my3tte brynge mankynde  
 out of þe fendes þraldome ; but onli he  
 þat hadde duble kynde *perfitly in him-self* . & were  
 boþe god & man . & wolde meke *him-self* as myche  
 after þe wil of god ; as adam bi pride dede a3ens

þe wil of god . ¶ Forþer-more *in* tixt of þis ma<> <gap in text>  
 <fol. 12r>lerne bi þe si3te of hem to folwe seyntes lyuynges ;  
 goode hit is to eche man . þis sentence seiþ seynt *gregor*  
 to serge þe bishope as þe lawe wittenesset . þerfore  
 whan men comen to þe chirche . first bi-holde he  
 vp to þe hey3e auter . For þer is godes bodi *in* forme  
 of bred *in* þe boxe oþer *in* coupe . & þanne haue þei hie  
 vp to heuene þe ey3e of here soule . þ<sup>t</sup> þe entent  
 of here soule & here herte . whiy þou3t & my3te  
 & deuocion of here soule . þanke þei almy3ti god  
 þat he wolde fouche-saafe . eche day to come fro  
 þo hey3e heuene . for þe helpe of oure soules . ¶  
 And þan 3ef þei seen eny likenesse of crist do oon þe  
 cros . haue þei mynde on þe bitter payne & passion  
 þ<sup>t</sup> he suffrede for saluacion of mannes soule .  
 & hertely þan3ke þei him þerfore . & after þ<sup>t</sup> . 3ef þei seen  
 eny ymage oþer likenesse made *in* mynde of eny  
 oþer seynt ; rere þei vp þe mynde of here soule to heuene  
 praiyng al þe seyntes þ<sup>t</sup> ben þere to be mediatores  
 . & prayours or bidders for hem to god ¶ Nou3t  
 bileuynges oþer trastynges ; þ<sup>t</sup> þulke ymage oþer  
 liknesse my3te bryng eny man or womman out of  
 gostly oþer bodili meschefe eþer 3eue helye oþer richesse  
 oþer take a-vey . ¶ Hit is wretten *in* godes lawe ; þ<sup>t</sup>  
 þei mowen neþer 3elde to eny man neþer yuel ne  
 good . neþer 3eue richesse ne take a-vey . And þou3  
 any man make a vowe to hem & 3elde bit nou3te ;  
 þei shullen nou3t seche it þei shulle nou3t delyuere .  
 eny man fro deþe neþer restore a blynde man to his  
 si3te . þus seiþ holy writte . ¶ But onli to teche men  
 bi þe si3te of hem to haue þe beter mynde on hem  
 þ<sup>t</sup> ben *in* heuene . & to seche bisilyche what lyfe þei  
 <fol. 12v>þei lyueden *in* erþe þou3 þe whiche bi þe mercy of  
 god þei ben nowwe seyntes & to folowe þulke lyf  
 in al þat man may . ¶ For seynt austyn seiþ . a  
 deuoute sewere oþer folowere . pleseþ more god  
 þan eny idol herer oþer preisere . ¶ For whi as he  
 seiþ trewe herynges of herte ; is folowynges of  
 werke . ¶ For soþe to worshiþe & nou3t to folwe ;

is noo þinge elles . but liyngeli to flaterre . soþeli  
 þe company of seyntes han goo to-fore . þe excusacion  
 of sleuþe is taken a-wei . as seiþ seynt austyn  
 . ¶ More-ouer god seiþ *in* his comaundement ; þat  
 he is a gelours louere . for he wolde þ<sup>t</sup> al mannes  
 herte . strengye . vnderstondyng & witte be ocupiede  
*in* his loue . þ<sup>t</sup> neþer þ<sup>u</sup> vnderstonde ne wil .  
 ne þinke eny þinge contrarie to god as seynt austyn  
 seiþ . seynt *gregor* seiþ . þ<sup>t</sup> prouynge of loue . is 3euyng  
 of werke . we louen god vereli ; 3ef we  
 kepen <sup>[his]</sup> hestes & refrayn+ous fro oure lustes he þ<sup>t</sup>  
 fletteþ a-brode bi vnlefful lustes . & desireþ nou3t  
 god ; for he a3en seiþ *him in* his wil . as seynt *gregor* seiþ .  
 ¶ seynt austyn seiþ loue departeþ holi men ; fro þe  
 worlde & maken men of o wil to dwelle *in* þe  
 hous he þ<sup>t</sup> haþ nou3t verri loue he his nou3te &  
 no cunnyng . ne feiþ . ne 3euyng of catel to poure  
 men: ne penaunce of bodi profiteþ eny þinge to  
 him ; þ<sup>t</sup> haþ nou3t loue As he seiþ . þe tonge . soule  
 & lif . be axed of þe louere of god . þe tonge þ<sup>t</sup> he  
 speke nou3t foul . ydol . ne wikkede wordes . but  
 clene chast & as godes wordes . þe soule þat hoe  
 þenke noon vnclene . ne foule & ydol or yuele  
 þoutes . but chast clene & swete heuenely þoutes  
 <fol. 13r>þe lif þat hit worche plessyng to godes worshipe  
 for þe loue as seynt *gregor* seiþ is neuer idel . for  
 3if hit is loue ; hit worcheþ grete þinges plesyng  
 to god . Crist comaundeþ *in* þe gospel . þat eche man  
 loue him *in* al his herte . þis ⁘ <mrg>is</mrg> þ<sup>t</sup> crist seiþ of al þe herte ;  
 & of þe soule reseyueþ nou3t departyng *in-to* oþer  
 þinges . for howe myche mannes herte is sette *in*  
 oþer þynges ; for so myche hit is departed fro god .  
 ¶ God secheþ þrefolde loue of man . Of his herte .  
 soule . & strenges . to w<sup>t</sup>-drawe man . fro þe þrefolde  
 lustes of þe worlde . ¶ þat is . fro þe loue of  
 þe possessions . oþer of riches . fro þe loue of hi3enesse  
 & vayn worshipes . & fro þe loue of fleschely  
 lustes . for *in* þese þre was crist tempted & þefore  
 to teche man a3enstonde þese ; he seiþ ¶ þou

shalt loue þi lord god of al þyn herte . & of al þi  
 soule . & of al þi strengþes . jn þat þ<sup>t</sup> god seiþ *in* þis  
 comaundement þ<sup>t</sup> he visiteþ þe wickenesse of  
 fadres *in* þe children & so forþ . he sheweþ boþe loue  
 & drede . but for a man shulde kyndeli bi ladde  
 bi loue þerfore he medleþ more of loue . þan  
 he doþ of drede . whanne he seiþ þ<sup>t</sup> he doþe veniaunce  
 noon but *in* to þe þrede oþer þe ferþe generacion  
 ; of hem þ<sup>t</sup> hatein *him* . but he doþ mercy  
*in-to* a þousand kynredes of hem þat louen *him*  
 & kepen his hestes . ¶ For bi þeise tweyne þ<sup>t</sup> is  
 bi loue & drede ; god chastep his children as by  
 3erde & staf . ¶ And þerfore he seiþ bi his prophete .  
 3if j be þi god ; where is my loue . & 3ef j be þi lord :  
 where is my drede . For bi a loue drede . eche  
 man shulde serue god ¶ And þerfore seynt austyn  
 <fol. 13v>seiþ ; þ<sup>t</sup> ri3te as a bristel bringeþ in a þreed ; ri3t  
 so þe holi drede of god bringeþ in loue . ¶ But  
 vnderstonde nou3t . þat god doþ veniaunce oþer  
 punyscheþ þe child for þe fader oþer moder þat  
 haþ synned: for þe childe shal nou3t bere þe wikkenesse  
 of þe fader . as god seiþ bi his prophete ; but  
 þis is vnderstonde þus ; 3if þe fader be synneful  
 & weked . & 3ef þe childe folweþ & vsuþ þe synneful  
 lyuyng of þe fadir ; þanne god wol punysche  
 þe childe iustly . for his owene giltes . & þ<sup>t</sup> is  
 þat god seiþ *in* þe tixit ; þ<sup>t</sup> he wolle punysche þe  
 children of *hem* . þ<sup>t</sup> haten *him* god punyscheþ no3t  
 þe childe for þe fadres oþer þe modres giltes ; but forre  
 þe children warden liche *hem in* maneres & yliche *in* synnes  
 & hateden god . as seynt Jerom & austyn expounen  
 . ¶ God punyscheþ þe children ; for þei folwen  
 þe synnes of here fadres and modres . <mrg>& nou3t for hure fadrus & modrus</mrg> han synned ;  
 & þerfore god seiþ þ<sup>t</sup> he wol vsite þe wikkenesse  
 of fadres *in* þe children *in-to* þe þrede & þe ferþe kynrede  
 . of hem þ<sup>t</sup> haten *him* . ¶ For oþer while fadres  
 & modres lyuen so longe for to here children  
 haue children . & so forþ to þe þrede degree oþer þe ferþe .  
 þe whiche children þ<sup>t</sup> comen after folwen or folwyng

þe wykkenesse of here fadres bifore goynge  
 ; maken hem-self as eires of þe wikkedenesse  
 . of here fadres & modres .

¶ JN þe secunde comaundement god seiþ þus to eche  
 man ¶ þou shalt nou3t take þe name of þi lord  
 god *in* vayn . ¶ For god wil nou3t haue him w<sup>t</sup>-oute  
 gilte . þ<sup>t</sup> takeþ his name *in* ydel oþer w<sup>t</sup>-oute  
 cause . ¶ In twei maneres may a man take go  
 <fol. 14 r>des name *in* vayn . boþe *in* manere of lyuynge . & also *in*  
 vayn swerynge . whanne a man is baptemede & takeþ  
 cristendome . þanne is þe name of crist preyntede *in*  
 his soule . whiche is boþe god & man a name a-boue  
 al names . as seynt poule seiþ . & þer he for-sakeþ  
 þe fend & al his werkes . þ<sup>t</sup> is synne . & makeþ couenaunt  
 to be cristes trewe seruaunt ; & to kepe his bydynges  
 ¶ But whanne man brekeþ þis couenaunt  
 & bi-comeþ þe fendes seraunt doynge dedly  
 synne ; þanne he takeþ cristes name *in* vayn . while  
 he serueþ þe fend doynge his werkes . as seynt petir  
 seiþ . ¶ And þerfore seynt austyn seiþ . No man deme  
 him self ; to be a veri cristene man . no but 3ef he life  
 after þe lore or techynge of crist . Also *in* oþer manere .  
 man takeþ godes name *in* vayn . as *in* swerynge & forswerynge  
 and riccheþ nou3t how . ¶ For fro a 3onge  
 childe þ<sup>t</sup> vnneþe can speke til an olde bedrede  
 man . þ<sup>t</sup> god haþ al-most biraft his speche ; þis  
 heste of god is reufulliche broken . for myche folke  
 han brou3t hem-self *in*-to siche a *perleus* custome ;  
 þ<sup>t</sup> vnneþe kunne speke eny worde ; but 3ef þei swere  
 bi god *in* vayn oþer bi *somme* of his creatures .  
 Seynt austyn seiþ . þat to swere bi god oþer bi eny  
 oþer seynt ; is to clepe him to bere witnessse of þulke  
 þynge þ<sup>t</sup> þ<sup>u</sup> swerest fore ¶ And bi-þenke þe ri3t wel .  
 þat 3ef þou clepedest a poure man to bere witnessse  
 of eche worde þ<sup>t</sup> þ<sup>u</sup> spekest *in* litel tyme ; he  
 wolde haue endynacioun þer-of . & seie þ<sup>t</sup> þ<sup>u</sup> scornedest  
 him . & myche more wolde almy3ti god þ<sup>t</sup> forfendeþ  
 al suche swerynges ; & clepinge to be witnessse  
 . for þe cause shulde be trewe . & ri3t . and ne

<fol. 14v>deful 3ef men shulde clepe suche a lord as god is ; to  
 bere witnesse þer of . And þerfore god forfendeþ þis  
 veyn swerynge bi his name *in* þis comaundement  
 & in many oþer places *in* his lawe . ¶ And crist forfendeþ  
 swerynge bi creatures . *in* þe gospel of matheu  
 . where he comaundeþ to swere nou3t . neþer bi  
 heuene ne bi þe erþe . ¶ And *in* þæt þat he forfendeþ . to  
 swere bi heuene ; he forfendeþ to swere bi seyntes  
 þæt ben in heuene: And *in* þæt þat he forfendeþ to swere  
 bi þe erþe . he forfendeþ . to swere bi eny creature  
*in* erþe ; as bi sonne or mone oþer fier oþer bi eny  
 oþer siche . as seynt Jerom witnesseþ . & here w<sup>t</sup>  
 a-cordeþ seynt Jame seiynge . dere broþer bi-fore  
 al þinges . ne swere 3e neþer bi heuene ne bi  
 erþe . ne bi eny oþer op ; lest 3e falle vnder þ<sup>e</sup> dome  
 of god . And seynt Jon crisostom seiþ . þæt hit is  
 ydolatrie oþer worshipe to false godes ; to swere bi  
 a creature . 3e+as he seiþ þis is suuereyn blasphemye  
 syþen þis swerynge bi+as myche as is *in* þe swerer  
 makeþ þe creature . bi whicche he swereþ . to be god .  
 Seþen hit is reseruede to god onli þat men swere  
 bi him . w<sup>t</sup> þre condicions þæt god reherseþ bi Jeremy  
 þe prophete . þæt is þæt he þat shal swere be compellede  
 bi doome . & þat he knowe verili þæt his cause be  
 trewe . & also nedful to helpe his euene cristene ; *in*  
 here ri3t . & elles shulde eche man kepe *him* fro swerynge  
 . For <sup>[if]</sup> eny of þeise þre condicions faileþ ; hit is a  
 periure oþer forswerynge . as seynt jerome witnesseþ *in*  
 þe comune lawe . ¶ And seþen almy3ti god seiþ *in*  
 his lawe . þat þulke shal nou3t be vnponeschede þæt  
 takeþ godes name *in* vayn . what punyschyng sup  
 <fol. 15r>pose we . schullen þei haue . þæt not only taken his name  
*in* vayn . but also dismembre & crucifien *him* .  
 as myche as is *in* hem . swerynge bi his herte &  
 bi his woundes & oþer membres ¶ Suche doon  
 more dispit to crist . þan þe Jewes duden þæt naileden  
*him* to þe cros . As seynt austyn seiþ & gregor boþe . //  
 For þis manere of swerynge is cleped blasphemye .  
 & oon of þe most despites þæt man may do to god .



to swere bi his lymes & a-twyte oþer obreyde him .  
 of his paynful passion . ¶ And þerfore hit is written  
 in þe lawe of holi chirche . þ<sup>t</sup> 3ef eny swereþ bi  
 þe heer .or bi þe hede oþer bi+suche oþer membres of  
 crist . eþer vse þe blasphemye aʒens god in oþer manere  
 ; be he deposed or degraded ; 3ef he is in þe ordre  
 of þe chirche ; 3ef he is a lewed man be he acursed .  
 ¶ And 3ef eny man swereþ bi a creature ; be he chastised  
 most sharpli . þis is þe lawe þere . ¶ And þerfore  
 al þulke þat des<sup>yl</sup>ron to scape þe bitter curse of god ;  
 absteine þei hem fro alle suche swerynge . ¶ But  
 þe fend hæp founde þre fals excusacions in swerynge  
 . & tau3t hem his seruantis . to witstonde & excuse  
 here synne ¶ For sume seien on scorne . as  
 þe fend techeth hem . what he seiþ . is it nou3t good  
 to haue god in mynde . ¶ And summe seien J may  
 swere ; for J swere soþe . ¶ And summe seien . but 3ef  
 J swere no man wol leue me . w<sup>t</sup> þis þree fals  
 excusacions men supposen . to excuse hem-self ; of  
 suche synful & vayn swerynge . ¶ But þei acusen  
 hem-self bi-for god . & maken here synne greuoser .  
 ¶ For as to þe first popynt J pray þe . 3ef þi seruaunt  
 dede a þinge . þat þou haddest him forfendede . euer  
 <fol. 15v>þe ofter þ<sup>t</sup> dede hit ; þe worse þ<sup>u</sup> woldest be a-payd .  
 ¶ And more-ouer 3et 3ef he scornede þe þerto . & seide þ<sup>t</sup>  
 he dede soo for þi loue . to haue þe in mynde . loke  
 now þou bi þi self how þe þinkeþ namely 3ef þ<sup>u</sup>  
 were his lord or his kyng . þan myche more wol  
 god . þat is lord of al . Seþþen þ<sup>u</sup> ert so bolde to do  
 þilke þynge þ<sup>t</sup> he forfendeth & 3et scornest him þer-to ;  
 & seiest þat þou dost it to haue him in mynde . ¶ And  
 þerfore eche cristene man be war þ<sup>t</sup> he haue nou3t  
 þus god in mynde . as þe prophete rekeneth . Lest he be  
 put out of mynde a-monge þe chosene of god . as  
 þe prophete rekeneth . ¶ Also to þe secunde false & fened  
 excusacion may be answered þus . a man schulde nou3t  
 swere al wey whanne he seiþ soþ . For eche man oweþ  
 to seie soop . whanne he shal ou3t speke . for-whi  
 god forfendeth eche man to lye & þus bi þis false &

fened excusacioun ; man shulde swere at eueri word  
 3if it were leful to <sup>[s]</sup>were euere whanne he seiþ soop .  
 ¶ But þis is openly false . as holi writte wittenesseþ  
 . For þe holi gost seiþ bi þe wise mannes mouþe  
 þat a man þ<sup>t</sup> swereþ myche ; shal be fulfild w<sup>t</sup> wikkenesse  
 . & veniaunce shal nou3t departe fro þilke hous ;  
 in whyche many oþes ben vsed and þerfore man and  
 woman J consele take hede of þis sentence of god .  
 & be war of veniaunce for 3oure myche swerynge .  
 ¶ And to þilke þ<sup>t</sup> seien þ<sup>t</sup> no+man wil leue hem but  
 3ef þei wollen swere ; þis me þinkeþ a foule excusacion  
 eny man to seie . seþun a false man may swere as  
 myche as a trewe man . ¶ And þus shulde men byleued  
 bi oþes as wel a fals man ; as a trewe . For  
 comenly þe more fals þ<sup>t</sup> a man is ; þe moo oþes  
 <fol. 16r>wol he swere . & comenly he þat wol bliþely swere  
 . wol gladly forswere . & also bi-gile . For he þat  
 dredeþ nou3t to breke godes hestes ; he wol nou3t be  
 a-drad for to be fals .