

be embodied as a vital element in the personality of the satirist. Langlande was thus bold and, when necessary, defiant, even though vacillation would have been natural. The Romish hierarchy was against him. Monks and Friars were closely watching his movements. When, however, he sees the Pope of Rome or Avignon deceiving the people in the name of religion; when he sees the pampered mendicants filled with "the grace of guile;" when, as in the days of the Florentine plague, curates leave their charges for safer quarters; when revelry and extortion, gay attire and sumptuous feasts, long prayers and greed for gold, were the order of the day among church dignitaries, then his spirit was stirred to its depths and he used that strong, Saxon satire which was a part of his natural endowment. What he opposed, from first to last, was fraud—behind the chancel and at the altar; beneath the embroidered surplice of the priest; "spiritual wickedness in high places;" flagrant wrong under the guise of goodness. To denounce it as he did and when he did demanded the courage of Knox, and no amount of studied concealment could successfully hide injustice from his view. He had a mission to fulfill, and he fulfilled it.

Here we note his *conscientiousness* as a satirist. He was, in no sense, a satirist from a literary point of view as Horace was, in Latin letters, and Moliere, in French, and Pope, in English. He did not pen this poem merely as an author with his eye upon aesthetic effect. As one of his editors has expressed it, "His satire is that of a man who is constrained to speak out the bitter truth, and it is as earnest as is the cry of an injured man who appeals to heaven for vengeance." It is, indeed, under the sense of a kind of personal injury that he cries out for redress—injury to the English Commonalty; injury to good government, good morals and true religion in England, and thus injury to himself. Critics have spoken of the seriousness of his satire. It was, of a truth, sedate, as is all genuine satire addressed to moral reform. Beneath all pleasantry and play of humor there was a Senecan solemnity of manner, eminently becoming a poet who thought more of truth than of effect, more of Christianity than of rhythm and metre. Langlande never could have written satire as Rabelais and Butler wrote it—for literary pleasure or polemic triumph. He wrote it as Caedmon wrote his "Paraphrase" and Latimer, his "Homilies." It is in "this intense moral feeling" that Milman and others note his superiority to his age. In a day when Romish intolerance was enslaving human reason and sealing the Scriptures, he was pleading for liberty of faith and opinion, and, in an era of widespread profligacy, pleading for chastity and purity. This poem is thus a kind of Protestant evangel nearly two centuries before the Protestant Reformation, and we are not surprised at its popularity among the Elizabethan Reformers and later English Puritans. Thus he predicted that very overthrow of the monastic system which took place under Henry VIII.;