

There was a **Plowman** with him there, his brother. [The pronoun *him* refers to the Parson.]

Many a load of dung one time or other  
He must have carted through the morning dew.

He was an honest worker, good and true,  
Living in peace and perfect charity.

And, as the gospel bade him, so did he,  
Loving God best with all his heart and mind

And then his neighbor as himself, complained [These are biblical allusions to teachings of Christ.]

At no misfortune, slacked for no content, [The plowman never complained about his problems and seemed content in every situation.]

For steadily about his work he went  
To thrash his corn, to dig or to manure  
Or make a ditch; and he would help the poor  
For love of Christ and never take a penny

If he could help it, [He was poor, but he helped other poor people without accepting pay.]

and, as prompt as any,

He paid his tithes in full when they were due

On what he owned, and on his earnings too. [Church law only required tithes to be paid on earnings, but he also paid on what he owned.]

He wore a tabard smock and rode a mare. [There is no irony here. The plowman is everything he appears to be.]