



<County: Norfolk>

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<MS reference: Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson Poet. 138>

<Text: Prick of Conscience>

<fol. 3v>yat neyir hath wyt . ^[Ne] Skyl ne mende .
yo men leuen ageyns her kende .
For a man excusyth nowth hys vn-cunnyng
yat hys wyt vsyth nowth in lernyng .
Nowt y^t hym fallet to knowe
y^t myth meken hys herte & maken it lowe
but he y^t can nowth schuld haue wylle .
to ler~ & knowe boye good & ille .
~~yat~~ And he y^t can su~ schuld ler~ more .
to knowe y^t hym nedful wer~ .
For an vnconyng man wyth leryng
May ben browt tyl vndyr-standyng .
Of many thynges to knowe & se
yat hath ben & is & schal be .
Many hath lykyng tryfles to here .
And vanytes welen gladly lere .
& arn besy in word & thowth .
to leren yat here sowles helpys nowth .
but y^t wer~ nedful hem to knowe .
to lysten & heren yei arn ful slowe .
For y^{ei} cu~ nowth knowe ne se .
ye periles y^t yei xulden dreden & fle .
ne quat way y^t yei schuld take .
Ne qwych way yei schuld forsake .
But no wonder is if yei gon wrange .
In merkenesse of knowyng y^{ei} gange .
w^t-owtyn lyth of vndyr-standyng
Of y^t befallas to ryth knowyng .
For ich cristen+man & womman .

yat wytt³ & wysdam Any can .
 yat ye ryth way can nowt ches^{<exp>e</exp>} .
 No y^e periles yat wyse men fles .
 Schulden ben buxhu~ & ouerbesy
 to heren & leren of hem Namely .
 <fol. 4r>yat vndyrstonde & knowys hem be skylle
 qwyche way is good & qwyche is ille .
 He yat ye ryth way of lewyng wyl loke .
 Schuld y^er be-gynne as seyth ye boke .
 to knowe fyrst quat hym-self is
 So may he sonest come to mekeness .
 yat is ground of alle vertuys at y^e laste .
 y^er on alle vertues may ben set faste .
 For he y^t knowes wel & can se .
 Wat he is & quat he schal be .
 A wyser~ man he may be toold .
 Wether he be 3ong man or old
 yane he yat can alle oyer ying .
 & of hym-self hat no knowyng .
 For he may nother knowe good ne fel .
 But he ferst knowe hym-self ryt wel .
 y^er-fore a+man xuld fryst lere .
 to knowen hym-self propyrly here .
 For 3if he knowe hym-selfe kendely
 yan may he knowe god al-mythty
 And of hys endyng thynken schuld he .
 & of ye laste day yat xal be .
 he xulde knowe quat yis werd is
 yat is ful of pompe and lythernes .
 & lere to knowe & thynke wyt alle .
 quat xal after yis lyff be-falle
 Knowyng of al yis schulde hym lede
 And mende wyth alle to mekenesse & drede .
 So may he come to good leuyng .
 And at ye laste to a+good endyng
 & qwan he of yis werd schal wende
 be brougth to blysse w^t-owtyn ende
 <lat></lat>
 <fol. 4v><lat></lat>

The begynnyng of yis *proses*
 Ryth knowyng of a+ma~ hym-self es .
 but *summe* men han gret lettyng
 yat yei may haue non ryth knowyng .
 Of hem-self yat yei schuld ferst knowe .
 yat ferst to mekenesse xuld hym drawe .
 yer-fore foure thynges J fynde .
 yat makyt mannes wytte often blynde .
 And knowyng of hym-self ofte lettes .
 qwer-for~ he hym-self for-gettes .
 yerof Seynt Bernard wytnesse berys
 And four~ other wreten in y^s vers
 <lat></lat>
 <lat></lat>
 yat is ye sauour of ye folke & fayrnesse
 And feruour of thowt & rychesse .
 reues a man skyl & mende .
 to knowe quat hym-self is of kende .
 yis four~ lettes a+mannes in syth .
 yat he knowys hym-self nowt ryth
 & makes hys herte ful Auntayne .
 and ful froward to hys souerayne .
 thys four~ noryches pompe & pryde .
 And othyr vyces y^t men schuld hyde .
 Jn qwo so any of yis four~ is .
 Js seldom sen ony mekeness<exp>e</exp>
 yei lettes a+man yat he nowt es .
 ye peryles of y^s werd & ye vanytes .
 Ne thynkes nowth on ye tyme is to come .
 Of deth ne of ye day of dome .
 he can nowth vnderstande ne se .
 <fol. 5r>ye peynys after his lyf schal be
 to senful+men yat her vsees Foly .
 Ne ye blysse yat good men arn worthy .
 But in delyttes syttes her~ ~~fas~~ hertys faste
 Ryth as her lyff xuld euere-more leste .
 And geues hem al to vanyte .
 By-thenkes hem quat may here lykyng be .
 Swyche men arn nowth rewlyd be skyl

but werkes al after her~ owyn wyl .
 To non thyng . ellys tak yei hede .
 quat wonder is 3if yei haue non drede .
 For quat yei xuld drede knowe yei nowth
 yer-fore of drede haue yei no thowth .
 And al is for defaute of knowyng~
 Of yat myth hem to dred bryng~
 Sum+men wele nowth vndyr~stande
 thouth yat myth hem make dredande .
 For yei wold nowth here but yat hem payes
 yer-fore ye^e prophete in ye sauter sayes .
 <lat></lat>
 he says he hath non wyl to knowe
 Ne vndyrstandyng~ to wyl to drawe
 yese wordes be hem may be sayd here .
 yat wele nowth vnderstande ne lere .
 To drede god & don hys wyl .
 but folwes here foly to fulfyl .
 Summe vndyrstondes as yei her~ telle
 But in her herte non dred may dwelle .
 for defaute of thowth may it wel be .
 Sekere yei trowe nowth but yat yei se
 But grucches qwan yei of drede here .
 yer-fore ye prophetes says on yis maner~
 <fol. 5v><lat></lat>
 ye^e prophete says yei trowe nowth
 but grucchen if yei were greuyd in thowth
 yus faren men yat trowyn no thyngys
 yat men sayn ageyn her~ lykynges
 But grucchen & waxis ful fro-warde
 quan men says owth yat hem thenkys harde
 Summe can swyche thynges in bokys rede
 but lythnes of herte reues hem fro drede
 So yat it may nowth w^t hem dwelle
 And of hem spekys go<exp>o</exp>d in ye gospelle .
 <lat></lat>
 Tyl a tyme he says summe trowe a+thyng
 And pases yer from at tyme of fondyng~
 And also says yus ye prophete dauyd

In a psalme yat a-cordys yer-wyth .

<lat></lat>

<lat></lat>

In yis wordes he says throwe Ay .
 & lauede hys lor~ as yei cowde say
 but 3et yei hadd+yt sone for-gat
 hys werkys & thowt no mor~ of yat .
 Swyche men arn so vnstede-fast .
 yat non drede may wyt hem last .
 For y^{ei} arn so wylde *quan* yei arn qwerte
 yat yai can holde non drede in herte .
 for to haue dred men may lere .
 yat yis tretyis wele rede or here .
 if yei it rede or her~ to ye ende
 ye *materis* yat arn *yer* In contende
 And vnderstondes & in hem trowe
 J hope here xal *sum*what lowe
 For drede yat xul haue *yer*-by
 To vsen good werkys & flen foly
 <fol. 6r>*yer*fore is yis boke in engelys drawe
 Of swyche *materis* yat arn vn-knowe
 to lewd men yat ben vnconnande .
 & latyn can nowth vnderstande .
 For to maken hem-self to knowe
 & fro synnes & vanytees hem drawe
 And for to leren hem in righth for to drede
 qwan yei yis tretys her~ or rede
 For it xal preke her sowle w^t-inne .
 & of yat dred may lownesse be-gynne
 throw comforth of ioies of heuene dere .
 As 3e wysly vnderstonde may her~
 h yis book hym-self beryth wytnesse .
 In seuene *partes* dyuysed Js
 The fyrst part to hauen in mende .
 Js of wretchedenesse of mannys kende
 ye secunde is of mannys *condycyonys* sore<?>
 & ye vnstablesse of yis werd here
 the thrydde party is ryth to rede
 of deth & qwy it is to drede

ye fourthe party is purgatory
 yer sowles arn clensyd of her~ foly
 ye fyfte party is of y^e day of dome
 & of y^e tokenes y^t be-forn xal come
 ye sexte party is of ye paynys of helle
 yer damned sowlys schal euere-more dwelle .
 ye seuene party is of ye ioyes of heuene .
 yus is yis book in partyes seuene
 And in yche part fynden .^[men] may .
 Dyuerse materys for to a-say
 Go we now to y^e part yat fyrst is
 yat speketh of mannys wykke^[d]nes .
 For al yat is wreten on to koke
 is but as an entr~ of yis boke .
 Fryst qwan god made alle yinges of nowth .
 <fol. 6v>Of ye Fowlest materie man he wrouth
 yat is of erde for to skyllys to holde .
 ye ton is for qwy yat god wolde .
 Of fowle materie maken man in dyspyte
 of Lucyfer yat fel so tyte .
 to helle qwan he hadde synned in pride .
 & of alle ye <exp><1 word></exp> felle w^t hym in y^t tyde .
 For yei haue ye more schenchepe .
 & ye more sorwe qwan yei toke kepe
 yat man of swyche materie schulde dwelle
 In yat place fro qwens yei felle
 yat oyis skyl is yus<?> to se
 For man . schulde euere ye meker~ be .
 Euere qwan he ses or thenkys in thouth .
 Of ou foul materie he is wrouth
 god thorwe hys goodnesse & hys myth
 wolde fulfyller yat place in heuene bryth .
 yat was made wyde wyth synne of pride
 yat it wer~ fulfyllid on yche a syde .
 thorw ye vertu of mekenesse
 yat euere contrarie to pride is .
 yan may non man yedyr com
 but he yat meke is or buxhom .
 yat schewys ye gospel propyrlly tyl vs

qwon god says to hese disciples yus .

<lat></lat>

<lat></lat>

He sayd but 3e ben meke & mylde

yat is to say as it wer~ a+chylde .

3e schal nowth Entre be no way

to heuene blysse yat lestys Ay .

yan behouyth a+man her~ to seke

wat thyng may sonest make hym meke .

And no ying may meken hym more .

yan thenken in herte as J sayd yore .

<fol. 7r>How he is mad of a+fowle matere

& yat he is nowt ellys but erthe here

Wat is a+man but erthe & clay

For yus says a+clerke as J 3ow say .

And powder yat wyt ye wynd brekys

yer of iob to god yus he spekys

<lat></lat>

<lat></lat>

He says lord thenke how y^u madyst me .

foul erthe & clay her~ for to be .

Ryth so y^u xalt turne me a-gayne

to erthe & powder yis is certayne .

yus sayth owr~ lord god al-mygthy .

Agayn thus tyl man sertaynly .

<lat></lat>

Thenke man he says askes art y^u now .

and tyl askes agayn turne xalt yow .

yan is man nowt ellys to say .

but askes & powder erthe & clay .

Of yis xulde ich man here han mende .

to knowe wrechedenesse of hys kende .

yat may he se as J schewe can .

In alle ye partyes of ye lyff of man

as lyff of man cast may be .

Pryncypaly in thynges thre

ye ben to owr~ vnderstondyng

be-gynnyng mydward & Endyng

thys may ben thre spaces tolde

Of yche mannys lyff 3ong & olde .

<lat></lat>

Be-gynnyng of mannys lyf y^t fyrst is

Contenyt mekel wretchedeness .

Wher-fore J wele or J pas

<fol. 7v>Schewe quat a+man fyrst was .

Sum tyme was qwan a+man was nowth

be-fore he was be-geten or forth browth

He was be-geten aftyr wel was knowe

of foul seed of man wyt synne sowe

He was conseuyd ful synfully

Wyt-Inne hys owyn moderys body

Wher hys byrthe w^t-Inne was dyth

As dauyd says in ye sauter ryth .

<lat></lat>

<lat></lat>

Lo he sayd as amn kende is

J am conseuyd in wykkedenes

My modyr hath conseuyd me

In mechyl synne and kaytyfte

yer dwellyd man in a+foul dongon~

In a place of gret corrupcyon~ .

Wher he hath non oyer fode

but foul glot & leperde blode

& stynk & fylthe as J sayd are

her-w^t was he norchyd yare .

after y^t he forth came .

Fro y^t dongon~ hys moderes wambe .

& was born to yis werdys lyth .

he hadde neyther strengthe ne myth

Neyther for to gon ne for to stande .

ne for to crepe w^t foth ne w^t hande

yanne hath man lesse myth ya~ a beste

wan he is born of myth is leste .

For a+best wan it is born may go

& sone after rennen boye to & froo

But man hath non myth yer-to

wan he is born so for to do

ya~ may he neyther gon ne crepe

but lyn & crulle cryen & wepe .
 <fol. 8r>For a+chylde is nowth born fully
 wan it be-gynnys to rare & cry
 & be yat cry men may knowe yan
 Wether it is a+man or a+woman
 For qwan it is born it cryit swa
 if it be a+man yan cries+it A
 yat is ye first letter of ye name .
 of owr~ <exp>fade</exp> forn-fader Adame .
 And 3if y^e chylde a woman be .
 Wan it is born yan says it E
 yat is ye fyrst letter~ of eue .
 yat be-gan vs alle to greue
 yer-for~ a clerke made on y^s manere
 yis vers in mater~ y^t arn wreten here .
 <lat></lat>
 <lat></lat>
 Al yo he says y^t come of eue .
 y^t is alle men yat her~ xulle leue .
 wan yai arn born wat so yei be
 yei xal sey fyrst A or E
 y^s is her~ owr~ begynnyng~
 of owre kynes sorwe & gretynge~
 To weche owr~ wrechedenesse ~~ste~~ sterreis vs
 yer-fore Innocent he says vs thus .
 <lat></lat>
 He says alle arn we born gretande
 & makynge sorful semblande .
 For to schewe y^e gret wrechedenesse .
 Of owr~ kende yat in vs is .
 yer qwan ye tyme is of owr~ byrthe
 Alle made we sorwe & no myrthe .
 Hedyr we comyn nakyd & bar~
 & seker so xal we hens Fare .
 <fol. 8v>For a+chylde is nowt born Fully
 wan it be-gynnyth to rare & cry .
 & be y^t cry men may knowe yan
 Wether it is a+man or A+womman .
 For qwan it is born J cryit swa .

If it be a+man yan cryes+it A .
 yat is y^e fyrst letter of y^e name .
 Of ovr~ forn-fader Adame
 And 3if ye chyld a woman be
 wan it is born yan says it E
 yat is ye fyrst letter~ of Eue .
 yat be-gan vs alle to greue .
 yer-for a+clerke ma
 Of yese too thynges we xulde thenke yan
 For yus says Job ye ryth-wys man .
 <lat></lat>
 Nakyd he sayd ferst J come
 hedyr owth of my moderys wombe
 & nakyd xal J turne A-way
 so xul we alle at ovr~ last day
 yus is man at hys fyrst comyng
 Nakyd & bryngyth wyt hym non thyng
 but a+rym yat is wol wlatsum .
 yis is hys clothyng quan he forthe cum .
 y^t is nowth but a+bloody skyn .
 y^t he before was laped<?> in
 wan he in hys moderys wombe lay
 yat is a+foule thyng for to say
 And foulere to here as sayth y^e book .
 & alther foulest yer-on to look
 thus is man born as we may se
 In wretchedenes & kaytyfte
 And yer-to leuen here but a+fewe days
 & yer-to Job on yese wyse says
 <lat></lat>
 <fol. 9r>He says a+man born of a+woman .
 Lyuand schort tyme & fulfylled is yan .
 of many maner~ of wretchedeness
 yus says Job & so it is .
 A+man is born to ryth nowt elles
 but to trawayle as Job ryth telles .
 <lat></lat>
 He say a+man is born to traualy ryth
 As ye foule is mad to flyen in flyth

For lytyl rest in hys lyff is
 but gret trauayle & euer besynes
 Also a+man wan he is born
 is ye fendes sone & fro god lorn
 euere tyl he thoruth *grace* may come .
 To baptem & to crystendome
yus<?> may men her~ begynnyng se
 Alle wrechedenesse & caytyffte .
 <lat></lat>

The secunde part of lyff men calles
 ye medyl age yat nexte after falles .
 & reknes fro ye begynnyng~
 Of mannys lyff in-to hys endyng~
 the begynnyng of man as J tolde
 hys wyll & wreched to be-holde
 but how foul a+man is afterward
 telles a party sen Bernard .
 <lat></lat>
 <lat></lat>

Sayn bernard in hys book *yus* telles
 yat ma~ is no thyng Elles
 but a foul slym vlatsum to men
 & a+sak ful of foul stenkand Fen
 And *vermys* fode yat yei wold haue .
 wan he is ded & leyd in *graue*
 but *summe* foolke ful fayre semes
 <fol. 9v>to syth w^t-owtyn as men demes
 & yat schewys<?> nowth but a+skyn
 but wo myth se hem w^t-in .
 Foulere carayn myth non be
 yan he xuld than on hem se .
 & sertys qwo myth han syth .
 & hadde as clene eyne & as bryth .
 As a+best yat men luk calles
 yat may sen thorw ston walles
 lytyl lykyng xuld man haue thanne
 For to be-helde a fayre woman
 yan myth he sen w^t-owten dowte
 As wel wyt-Jinne as w^t-owte



& if he w^t-Jnne sey aryth .
Sche wer~ wel vlatsum to hys syth
yus foul Inward ich man is
As y^s book her bers~ wytnys .
yan may men sen on yis manere
how foul y^e kend of man is here .
wher-for~ a+man is nowth wytty
yat her~ is proud of hys body
wan he may yus hym-self se .
wat he is & wat he schal be
but prowde men to yis taken no hede
For hem wattys skyl y^t schulde hem lede
wan he is 3ong & leues wylyng .
& hath hys ese & hys lykyng
or if he haue ony gret worchepe
wat hym-self ^[is] takyth he non kepe
For hym-self yan knowyth he lest
he fares as an vnskyful best .
he folwes hys owyn wyl & nowth ellys
As dauid in ye sauter tellys
<lat></lat>
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