

<County: Northern>

<Code: L0022b>

<MS reference: Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson C.285; Hand B>

<Text: Form of Perfect Living>

<Tranche 1>

<fol. 44r><line 26>¶ Knaw

yat yi lif semes gyfuen til ye *seruyce* of god . yan es it
 schame til ye ; bot if you be als gud or better w^t-jne yi
 <fol. 44v>saule ; als you ert semand at ye sigth of men . ¶ Turne for-yi
 yi thoghtes *parfyte*ly til god ; als it semes als you has don yi body . For
 J wil nogth yat you wene yat all er haly yat has ye habyte of ha
 lynes . and er nogth occupied with ye werld ; ne yat all er ille
 yat melles yaim w^t erthely bisenes ; bot yay er anly haly what
 staate or degre so yai be Inne ; ye whilke despises all erthe
 ly thyng yat es at say ; lufs it nogth . and brynnes in ye luf
 of Jhesu cryst . And all yair~ desyres er sette til ye joyes of
 heeuene . and haates all synne . and ceeses nogth of gud wer
 kes and feles a swetenes in yair~ hert of <rbd><1 word></rbd> life w^toutene end
 And neuer~-ye-latter yai thynke yaim-self vylest of all . and
 haldes yaim-self wrytchedest last ad laghest . yis es haly
 nese of lyfe . Folow it . and be haly . and if you wil be in
 mede w^t appostells . thynke nogth what you forsakes ; bot
 what you despises . For als mykell yai forsake yat folowes
 Jhesu cryst in wilfull poueert ; and in mekenes ad in
 charyte . and in pacyence ; als yay may couayte yat folwes hym
 nogth . And thynke w^t how+mekyle and how gud wile you
 presentes yi woves byfor hym . For til yat . he has his
 egthe . And if you with grete desyre offre yi prayers . and
 w^t grete feruour~ couayte to se hym ; and sekis na erthly
 comfort bot ye saueour of heeuene . And in comtemplacyoun
 yair-of haue yi delyte ; wondirfully Jhesu wirkis in his
 lufers . ye whilke he reeues fra ye lust of flesshe and
 blod thurgh tendir lufe . he makis yaim to haf wil to na

erthly thyng . And dose yaim ryse in-^[to] solace of hym . And
 to+for-gete vanytese and flesshely luf of ye werld and to
 dreede na sorow yat may fall to laghte w^t ouer~-mykele
 bodily eese . To suffre for his luf ; yaim thynke it ioy . And
 to be solutary yay haue grete comfort . yat yai be nogth letted
 in yair~ deuocyon~ . ¶ Now may you se yat many er werre
 yan yai seme . and many er better yan yai seme . And naamly
 amang yaa ; yat has ye habyte of halynes . For-yi afforce ye
 in all yat you may ; yat you be nogth were yan you semes .
 and if you wil do als J lere ye in yis schort fourme of lyf
 yng ; J hop thurgth ye grace of god ; yat if men hald ye gude ;
 you sale be wele better<rest of line dotted>

At ye bigynnyng turnn ye entierly to yi louerd Jhesu *cris*
 yat turnyng til Jhesu es nogth ells ; bot turnnyng fra
 all ye couaytese and ye lykyng and occupacyoun ad ye byse
 nese of ye werld . Ad of flesshely lust ad vayne luf swa
 yat yi thogth yat was ay downward moldand in ye erth ;
 whiles you was in ye werld ; now be ay vpward als fyre
 sekand ye heghest place in heeuene . rygth til yi spouse yar~ he
 sittes in his blisse . Til hym you ert turned ; when his gra
 ce illumyns yi hert so yat it forsakes al vices ; and confour
 mes it til vertus and gud thewys . and til all maner of debo
 nerte and mekenes. Ad yat you may last ad wax in gudnese
 yat you has bygune with-outene slawnes ad sarynes ad irk
 ynge of yi lif ¶ Four thyngs sal you haue in yi thogth .
 til you be in *parfite* luf For when you ert comen yar-til ; yi
 Joy ad yi desyre wil ay be brynnand in Cryst . ¶ Ane es
 mesur~ of yi life here yat so schort es . yat vnneethes es it
 ogth . For we life bot in a poynt . yat es ye lest thyng yat
 may be . and sothely our life es lese yan a+poynt ; if we
 lickyn it to ye lif yat lastes ay . ¶ Another es . Vncertay
 nte of our endyng For we whate neuer~ when we sal
 <fol. 45v>dye . ^[how we sal dye] ne whare ne whidir we sall ga ; when we er deed . And yat
 god wil yat yis be *certayne* til vs ; for he wil yat we be ay redy
 to dye . ¶ ye thrid es yat we sal answer~ by-for ye rygthwys
 Juge of all ye tyme yat we haue here ; how we haf lifde .
 what our occupacyons haf bene and why . And what gud we
 mygth haf don~ when we haf ben jdele . For-yi sayd ye *prophete* .
 he has called ye tyme agayne me . yat es ylke day yat he has

lent vs here ; for to dispend in gud vse . ad in penance ad in
 goddis *seruyce* . Jf we waast it in erthly luf and vanytese ;
 ful+griefously mon we be demed and punyst . for-yi yat es ane
 of ye maast sorowe yat may be . Bot if we afforce vs man
 ly in ye luf of god . and do gud til al yat we may . to-whyles
 our schort tyme lastes . And ylk a tyme yat we thynke nogth
 on god ; we may account it als ye thyng yat we haue tynt .
 ¶ ye fierth es yat we thynke how mykel ye Joy es yat yai
 haue ye whilk lastis in goddis luf til yair endyng for yai
 sal be brethir~ and felaghs with aungels and haly men .
 lufand and hafand ; loouand and seand ye kyng of Joy in ye
 fayrehed and schynyng of his maieste . ye whilke sygth sal
 be mast mede and delyte ; yat any creatur may thynke . And
 mare yan any man may telle ; til al his lufers with-ouen+end .
 jt es mykell lyghter to com to yat blysse ; yan to telle it ¶
 Alswa thynke what sorow and what payne and tourment
 yay sal haue ; ye whik lufs nogth god ouer all other thynges yat
 man sees in yis werld . bot files yair~ saules in lust and lycchery
 of yis lif . jn pryd and couaytes and other synnes ; yai salle
 brynne in ye fyre of helle with ye deeuele wham yai
 haue *serued* ; als lang als god es in heeuen . with his *sergean*
tis . yat es eeuer-mare ; ¶ J wil you be ay clymband til Jhesu
 <fol. 46r>ward and ekand yi luf and yi *seruyse* in hym Nogth als foles dose
 yat bygynnes at ye heghest degre ; and comes <exp>comes</exp> doun til ye
 lagthest . J say nogth for j wil if yat you haue bygune vnskyl
 wys abstynence yat you hald it ; bot for many yat war bryn
 nande at ye bygynnyng and able to ye luf of Jhesu cryst ;
 For ouer-mykele penance yai haue alledgede yaim-self . and
 made yaim so feble ; yat yai mygth nogth luf god als yai suld .
 Jn whilk luf yat you wax ay mare and mare ; es my couatyng
 and myne amonestyng ¶ J hald ye neeuer of ye lesse meryte
 if you be nogth in so mykele abstynence . Bot if you sette al
 yi thogth how you may luf yi spouse Jhesu cryst mar~ yan
 you has donne ; yan dar j say yat yi mede es waxand ad
 nogth wanande . wherefor yat you be rygth despoosed bath
 for yi saul and yi body ; you sal vndirstand four thyngs
 ¶ ye first es what thyng files a+man . ¶ ye tother what thyng
 makis hym clene . ¶ ye third what haldis hym in clennes . ¶
 ye fierth what thyng drawes for to ordayne his wile al at

goddis wile . ¶ For ye first wite you yat we synne in
 thynges yat makis vs foul yat es with hert w^t mouth ad dede .
 ¶ ye synnes of ye hert ; er yir . Ille thogth . Ille delyte . Assent
 til synne . Desire of ille . wikked wile . Ille suspeccoun . vn
 deuocoun . If you lat yi hert any tyme be jdell ; with-uten
 occupacioun~ of ye luf and ye loouyng of god . Jle drede . Jle
 luf . Errour . Flessly affeccioun til frendis . or til other yat
 you lufs . Joy of any mans Jlle-fare whethir yai be ene
 myse or nane . Despite of pour~ or of synfull men . To
 honour~ Ryche men . for yair rychesse . Vnconable joy of any
 wordis of vanyte . Sorow of other mens wele-fare . Vn
 <fol. 46v>thoolmodenes . *Perplexite* yat es doute whate es at do ; what nogth .
 For ilke a+man agth for be sekir what he sal do ; and what he
 sal leue . Obstynacyoun in ille . Noy to do gud . Angr~ to *serue*
 god . Sorow yat he did na mar~ ille or yat he did nogth yat lust .
 or yat wile of his flesshe ; ye whilke he mygth haue don .
 Vnstablenesse of thogth . Pyne of penance . Jpocrysy . Luf to
 please men . Drede to desplease yaim . Schame of gud dede .
 Joy of ille dede . Synguler wite Couaytice of honour~ or of
 dignyte . or to be haldene *better* yan other or rycher or fayrer
 or to be mar~ drede . Wayne-glorye of any guddes of kynde .
 or of happ or grace . Schame of pouer freyndis Pryde of ry
 che kyne or of gentil . for all we er ilyke fre ; byfor goddis
 face ; bot if our dedis make any *better* or wers yan other . Dis
 pite of gude counsayll . ad of gude teechnge .

<Tranche 2>

<fol. 59r>thogth yar-to . it sal ken ye all yat ye nedis . And it sal gette ye all
 yat ye wantes . And yarfor when you sal ryse agayns ye gronde
 of syn . in generale or ellis agayne any speciale syne . Hynge fast
 apon yis desire And sete ye poynt of yi thogth mare opon god
 wham you desires . yan opon ye syn ye whilke reproues . For
 if you do swa . yan feghtes god for ye . and he sal destrue syn
 in ye . you sal mekyl soner com til yi *purpose* if you do swa . yan
 if you lefe yi meke desire to god pryncypaly . ad wile set yi
 hert anly agaynes ye styryng of syne . als yof you wald destrue
 it be mastery of yi-self . you sal neeu^{er} swa bryng ot aboute . Bot
 doe as J hafe sayd . & *better* if you may . And j hope by ye grace

of god Jhesu you sal make ye deeuell aschamyde . & all swylk
 wyked stiryngs . you sal breke away yat yai sal nogth mykel der~_{ye} . <followed by blank line>
 Jf you wille be wele with god . and haf grace to rewyle yi lif .
 rygth . ad com to ye ioy of luf . yis name Jhesuc fest it sa fast
 in yi hert ; yat it come neeu^{er} owt of yi thogth . And when you
 spekis til hym . ad says Jhesu thurgth costome . Jt sal be in yi
 heer ioy . in yi mouth hony . in yi hert melody . For ye sal thynke
 ioy to here yat name be neeuend . swetnes to speke it . myrgth
 & sang to thynke it . Jf you thynke Jhesu contynuely ; ad hald
 stably ; Jt purges yi syne ad kyndeles yi hert it claryfis yi
 sawle . remoues angers . dos away slawnes . jt wondis in luf
 ffulfillis of Charyte . it chases ye deeuell . & puttis out drede .
 it opyns heeuene . ad makis a contemplatif man haf in memorie Jhesu
 for all vices & fantoms it puttis fra ye lufer . Jf you wil noth
 deceyue ; ne be deceyfd . Jf you wile be wys ad nogth vnwys .
 Jf you wile stand & nogth fall . thynke on yis name Jhesu
 contynuly . Jt destruis all vices ad vanytes Jt sawes charyte &
 <fol. 59v>vertus in ye saul and 3ettes in sauour of heeuene . and fulnes of
 goddis grace in erthe . wha so lufs yis name Jhesuc with-outene
 forgettyng dies in woundirfull melody . ad es taken with angels
 & brogth bifor hym yat he lufd . yis name Jhesuc es abouene
 all names . to whilke all knees kneels of heeuene & erthe &
 helle . ¶ Ete and drynke slepe & wake . Speke & hald si
 lence . pray & thynke wyrke And all yat you dos doe it
 inn ye namme of Jhesu Saynt Paul bedis Gode
 blisse you & kepe you ad gif you gud perseuerance thurgthe
 ye vertu of yis Joyfull name Jhesu Amen <blank line following>

Our lord til his chosyn makis ye day scharpe

yat yai delite nogth in ye gate ; and forgete ye Joy of hee
 uen . Jf temptacyounn pute vs nogth . we suld trow yat we war
 of sum vertu . Rygth-wys+men in als mykell mare verrayly eer
 kasten out of ye baf of syne Jn how mykell yai er mare gre
 uously tourmentyde . Jn als mykell ert you mad mar~ vile to
 god . Jn how mykell yat ye semes mare precyous to yi-self .
 ye ner you ert to god yat ye thynke yi-self vnworyi .
 Jt es mare gloriows to ouer-come ; beand stil yan answerand .
 to haf victorie . ye mynd son scrythes in-to wers . Jf it be
 nogth kepid stratly vndir+strayte kypyng . Jt es gret com
 fort in suffryng . of yuele . to thynke on god we haf had ye

memor~ of gode ; temper ye payne of ye schourge & ye tourment
 of ye schoure ; byte ye gladnes of gode

**How ane Ankares sal hal hir to yaim yat
 comes to hir**

Now you says yat you may noght kepe ye fra vanytese of
 heryng . For diuerse men werldly ad othir comes oft
 <fol. 60r>for to speke with ye ; and tellis ye talis ; sum-tyme of va
 nyte . And vnto yis J say yat yat commyng & comunyng w^t yi
 eeuenecristene es nogth mykell agaynes ye . bot helpis ye sum
 tyme ; if y^u wirke wisely . For you may assay yare-be ye me
 sure of charyte . to yi eeune-cristene whethir it be mykel or litil .
 you ert bonden ; als ylke a man & womane es ; to luf yi ee
 uenecristene pryncypaly in yi hert . Ad als-swa in dede .
 for to schew hym takynyngs of luf ad charyte as reson
 askis in yi mygth . & yi knawynge . Now sythen it es
 swa yat you aw nogth gaa oute of yi howse for to speke
 occasyone ; how you mygth profite yi euencristene . be dedis
 of mercy ; be-cause yat you ert enclosed . Neeuer-yelesse you
 ert bonden for+to luf yaim all in yi hert . ad to yaim yat
 commes to ye for+to schewe yaim takynyngs of luf southfast
 ly . Ad yarfore wha so wile speke w^t ye . whate yat he be . in whate degre he be . & you knawys
 nogth what
 he es . ne why he comes . be sone redy w^t a gud wile .
 for+to wite whate es his wille . be nogth dayngerows ne
 suffre hym lang to abyde ye . bot loke how redy & howe
 glade you wald be ; Jf ane angele of heeune wald
 come & spek w^t ye . swa redy & swa bouxum be you
 in wile for+to speke w^t yi eeuenecristene . whene he comes
 to ye . For you wate nogth whate he is ne whi he co
 mes . ne whate nede he has of ye ne you of hym .
 to you haf assayd . Ad other you be in prayer or in de
 uocyon~ yat ye thynke lath for to breke of . For ye thynk
 you suld nogth lefe god for na mans speche . me thyn
 ke nogth ^[swa] in yis case . For if you be wyse you sall
 nogth leue god bot you sal fynd hym & haf hym
 & se hym in yi-n+euencristene als wele als in prayer Bot on a-nothir
 maner you sal haf hym .
 <fol. 60v>Jf you couth wele luf yi eeuenecristene it suld nogth hyndre
 ye for+to spek with hym discretely Discrecyon sal you haue .

in yis maner as me thynk wha sa comes to ye aske hym mek
 ly what he wile . and if he come for+to telle ye his dissesse
 ad for+to be comfort of yi speche ; heer hym gladely ad
 suffre hym say whate he wile . for eese of his awene
 hert ad whene he has done ; comfort hym if you can
 gladely & charytablely . ad sone breke of . And yan after
 if yat he wald fall in til ydell talis or vanytes or
 othir menes dedis . assuer hym bot litell ; ne fede hym
 nogth in his speche & he sal sone be hirke & sone tak
 his leue . Ad if he be a-nothir yat comes for+to ken
 ye als a+man of haly kyrke . heer hym lawly w^t reuer
 ence for his order ad if his speche comfort ye aske
 of hym & make ye nogth for+to kene hym . It fallis noth
 to ye for+to ken a+prest . bot in nede Jf his speche <ill><3 words></ill>
 fort ye nogth ; assuer litill ad he wile son take his lef .
 Jf it be anothir man yat comes for+to gif ye his almos or
 ellis for to here ye speke . or for be kennyd of ye . speke
 gudely gladly & mekely to yaim all . **Reproue na man** of his defautes . it fallis nogth to ye And
 schortly for to
 say . als mykels as you consayuys y^t you suld profite to yi
 eeuenecristene namely gastly if you can may you say . &
 he wile take it . And of all thir thyngs kepe silence
 als mykel as you may . and you sal in a Schort tyme haf
 bot litil prese yat sal lete ye . and yus me thynke .
Saynt Ancelyne ersbiscop of Cantybery says
yat a seke man languyssand to ye dede sulde
 <fol. 61r>of his prest yus be askide ; and yus he answer . Brothir es you glade
 yat you sal in crysten trouth dye ; He answer . 3a . Forthynkis ye yat ;
 3a . has you wile to amend ye if you haf spase of lif ; He sal answer
 3a . Trowys you yat Jhesu cryst goddis son was borne of ye virgyne
 marye ; and for ye dyede on gude fryday ; Answer he 3a . Thanke
 you hym for thir benefyces . answer he 3a . Trowys you yat you
 may nogth be safe ; bot be his dede . Say he 3a . For als lang .
 as yi saule . es yn ye . Sete all yi trayst in yat dede allane .
 hafand trayst in no othir thyng . vmlappe ye all in yis dede ; Thynk
 nogth on yi wyfe ; ne of yi childer ; ne rychesce . bot allane of ye
 passione of Jhesu cryst . And if our lord god wile deme with ye ;
 say lord J sete ye dede of our lorde Jhesu crist by-twyx me ad
 my wikked dedis Ad his meryte J offer for ye meryte yat J



suld hafe & has nogth . And say eftsons . lord J sete ye dede
of our lord Jhesu crist etwyx me ad yi wryth . yan sal he say .
thrys <lat>Jn manus tuas domine</lat> &c . ad clerkes answerand acordandely ;
and yan he dyes sikirly ; ¶ when a seke man sal be envntyd .
ye Crucifix suld be brogth . ad he suld enowryn it . Jn ye wyr
schipe of Jhesu crist yat bogth hym w^t many hard paynes . ad
schedynde of his precious blod & for ye dyed on ye crosse Amen