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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE CONUERCYON OF SWERERS ***

This e-text includes characters that will only display in UTF-8 (Unicode) file encoding:

ãëĩöũÿ (vowel with "tilde" or overline for following m/n)

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All folio numbers except A.iii. were added by the transcriber. Verso pages are shown as ||.

Spelling and punctuation are unchanged unless otherwise noted. Possible errors are shown with mouse-hover popups. Further notes, and a thumbnail view of page A.iii. *verso*, are at the [end of the text](#).



[A.i.]

He frutefull sentēce & the noble werkes
To our doctryne wrytē ī olde ātyquyte

||



By many gret & ryght notable clerkes
 Groüded on reason and hygh auctoryte
 Dyde gyue vs example by good moralyte
 To folowe the trace of trouth and ryght wysnes
 Leuyng our synne and mortall wrechednes

By theyr wrytyng doth to vs appere
 The famous actes of many a champion
 In the courte of fame renowned fayre and clere
 And some endyted theyr entencyon
 Cloked in coloure harde in construccyon
 Specyally poetes vnder cloudy fygyres
 Couered the trouthe of all theyr scryptures

So hystoryagraphes all the worthy dedes
 Of kynges and knyghtes dyde put in wrytyng
 To be in mende for theyr memoryall medes
 How sholde we now haue knowledgyng
 Of thynges past / but by theyr endytyng
 Wherfore we ought to prayse them doubteles
 That spent theyr tyme in suche good busynes.

Amonge all other my good mayster Lydgate
 The eloquent poete and monke of bury
 Dyde bothe contryue and also translate
 Many vertues bokes to be in memory
 Touchyng the trouthe well and sentencyously
 But syth that his deth was intollerable
 I praye god rewarde hym in lyfe perdurable

Amonge all thynges nothyng so prouffyttable
 As is scyence with the sentencyous scrypture
 For worldly rychesse is often transmutable
 As dayly dothe appere well in vre
 Pet scyens a hydeth and is moost sure
 After pouerte to attayne grete rychesse
 Scyens is cause of promocion doubtles

I lytell or nought expert in poetrye
 Remembryng my youth so lyght and frayle
 Purpose to compyle here full breuyatly
 A lytell treatyse wofull to bewayle
 The cruell swerers which do god assayle
 On euery syde his swete body to tere
 With terryble othes as often as they swere

But all for drede plonged in neclygence
 My penne dothe quake to presume to endyte
 But hope at laste to recure this scyence
 Exorteth me ryght hardely to wryte
 To deuoyde ydlennesse by good appetyte
 For ydlennesse the grete moder of synne
 Euery vyce is redy to lette ynne

I with the same ryght gretely infecte
 Lykely to deye tyll grace by medecyne
 Recured my sekene my payne to abiecte
 Commaundyng me by her hie power deuyne
 To drawe this treatyse for to enlumyne
 The reders therof by penytenyall pyte
 And to pardon me of theyr benygnyte



Yght myghty prynces of euery crysten regyõ
 I sende you gretynge moche hertly & grace
 Right wel to gouern vpright your dominiõ
 And all your lordes I greete in lyke cace
 By this my lettre your hertes to embrace
 Besechyng you to prynte it in your mynde
 How for your sake I toke on me mankynde

And as a lambe moost mekely dyde enclyne
 To suffre the dethe for your redempcyon
 And ye my kynges whiche do nowe domyne
 Ouer my comons in terrestriall mancyon
 By pryncely preemynence and Iuredycyon
 In your regall courtes do suffre me be rente
 And my tender body with blode all besprente

[A.ii.]

||

Without my grace ye maye nothyng preuayle
 Though ye be kynges for to mayntene your see
 To be a kynge it may nothyng auayle
 Buy yf my grace preserue his dygnyte
 Beholde your seruautes how they do tere me
 By cruell othes now vpon euery syde
 Aboute the worlde launcyng my woundes wyde

All the graces whiche I haue you shewed
 Reuoule in mynde ryght ofte ententyfly
 Beholde my body with bloody droppes endewed
 Within your realmes nowe torne so pyteously
 Towsed and tugged with othes cruelly
 Some my heed some myn armes and face
 Some my herte do all to rente and race

They newe agayne do hange me on the rode
 They tere my sydes and are nothyng dismayde
 My woundes they open and deuoure my blode
 I god and man moost wofully arayde
 To you complayne it maye not be denyde
 Ye nowe do tug me / ye tere me at the roote
 Yet I to you am chefe refuyte and boote

Wherfore ye kynges reygnyng in renowne
 Refourme your seruautes in your courte abused
 To good example of euery maner towne
 So that theyr othes whiche they longe haue vsed
 On payne and punysshement be holly refused
 Meke as a Lambe I suffre theyr grete wronge
 I maye take vengeaunce thoughe I tary longe

I do forbere I wolde haue you amende
 And graunte you mercy and ye wyll it take
 O my swete brederne why do ye offende
 Agayne to tere me whiche deyed for your sake
 Lo se my kyndenes and frome synne awake
 I dyde redeme you from the deuylls chayne
 And spyte of me ye wyll to hym agayne

Made I not heuen the moost gloryous mansyon
 In whiche I wolde be gladde to haue you in
 Now come swete bretherne to myn habytacyon
 Alas good brederne with your mortall synne
 Why flee ye from me / to torne agayne begynne
 I wrought you I bought you ye can it not denye
 Yet to the deuyll ye go nowe wyllingly



See
 Me (kynde
 Be
 Agayne
 My payne (in mynde
 Reteyne
 My swete bloode
 On the roode (my broder
 Dyde the good
 My face ryght
 red (thynke none
 Myn armes spread oder
 My woundes bled
 Beholde thou my syde
 Wounded so ryght wyde (all for thyn owne sake
 Bledynge sore that tyde
 Thus for the I smerted
 Why arte þ^{ou} harde herted (& thy sweryng aslake
 Be by me conuerted
 Tere me nowe no more
 My woundes are sore (and come to my grace
 Leue sweryng therefore
 I am redy
 To graunte mercy (for thy trespace
 To the truly
 Come nowe nere

A.iii.

||

My frende dere (before me

And appere

☛ I so ☛

In wo (se se

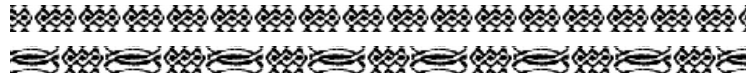
Dyde go

☛ I ☛

Crye (the

Hy

[A.iiii.]



Vnto me dere broder my loue and my herte
Turmente me no more with thyn othes grete
Come vnto my Ioye and agayne reuerte
From the deuylles snare and his sutyl net
Beware of the worlde all aboute the set
Thy flesshe is redy by concupyscence
To burne thy herte with cursed vyolence

Thoughe these thre enmyes do sore the assayle
Vpon euery syde with daungerous iniquite
But yf thou lyst / they may nothyngre preuayle
Nor yet subdue the with all theyr extremyte
To do good or yll / all is at thy lyberte
I do graunte the grace thyn enemyes to subdue
Swete broder accepte it theyr power to extue

And ye kynges and prynces of hye noblenes
With dukes and lordes of euery dygnyte
Indued with manhode wysdome and ryches
Ouer the comons hauynge the soueraynte
Correcte them whiche so do tere me
By cruell othes without repentaunce
Amende be tyme lest I take vengeaunce

Exodi vicesimo / non accipies nomen dei tui in vānum

||

Vnto the man I gaue commaundement
Not to take the name of thy god vaynfully
As not to swere but at tyme conuenyent
Before a Iuge to here recorde truely
Namyngre my name with reuerence mekely
Vnto the Iuge than there in presence
By my name to gyue to the good credence

A my brederne yf that I be wrothe
It is for cause ye falsly by me swere
Ye knowe yourselfe that I am very trothe
Bet wrongfully ye do me rente and tere
ye neyther loue me nor my Iustyce fere
And yf ye dyde ye wolde full gentyllly
Obeye my byddyngre well and perfytely

The worldly kynges hauynge the soueraynte
ye do well obey without resystence
ye dare not take theyr names in vanyte
But with grete honoure and eke reuerence
Than my name more hye of magnyfycence
ye ought more to drede whiche am kyngre of all
Bothe god and man and reyngre celestyall

No erthely man loueth you so well
As I do / which mekely dyde enclyne
For to redeme you from the fendes of hell
Takyngre your kynde by my godhede dyuyne
you were the fendes I dyde make you myne
For you swete bretherne I was on the rode
Gyuyngre my body my herte and my blode

Than why do ye in euery maner of place
With cruell othes tere my body and herte
My sydes and woundes it is a pyteous cace
Alas swete brederne I wolde you conuerte
For to take vengeaunce ye do me coherte
From the hous of swerers shall not be absent

[A.v.]

The plage of Iustyce to take punysshement

¶Vnde. Ecclesiastici .xxxiii. Vir multum iurans implebitur iniquitate et non discedet a domo eius plaga.

A man moche swerynge with grete iniquite
Shall be replete and from his mancyon
The plage of vengeaunce shall not cessed be
Wherefore ye brederne full of abusyon
Take ye good hede to this dyscrypcyon
Come nowe to me and axe forgyuenes
And be penytente and haue it douteles

Augustinus. Non potest male mori qui bene vixit et vix bene moritur q^m male vixit.

Who in this worlde lyueth well and ryghtwysly
Sall deye well by ryght good knowlegynge
Who in this worlde lyueth yll and wrongfully
Shall hardly scape to haue good endynge
I do graunte mercy but no tyme enlongynge
Wherefore good brederne whyles that ye haue space
Amend your lyfe and come vnto my grace

My wordes my prelates vnto you do preche
For to conuerte you from your wretchednes
But lytell auaylleth you nowe for to teche
The worlde hathe cast you in such blyndnes
Lyke vnto stones your hertes hathe hardnes
That my swete wordes may not reconsyle
Your hertes harde with mortall synne so vyle

Wo worthe your hertes so planted in pryde
Wo worthe your wrath and mortall enuye
Wo worthe slouth that dothe with you abyde
Wo worthe also inmesurable glotony
Wo worthe your tedyus synne of lechery
Wo worthe you whome I gaue free wyll
Wo worthe couetyse that dothe your soulse spyll

Wo worthe shorte Ioye cause of payne eternall
Wo worthe you that be so peruerted
Wo worthe your pleasures in the synnes mortall
Wo worthe you for whome I sore smerted
Wo worthe you euer but ye be conuerted
Wo worthe you whose makynge I repente
Wo worthe your horryble synne so vyolent

Wo worthe you whiche do me forsake
Wo worthe you whiche wylyngely offende
Wo worthe your swerynge whiche dothe not aslake
Wo worthe you whiche wyll nothyng amende
Wo worthe vyce that dothe on you attende
Wo worthe your grete vnkyndenes to me
Wo worthe your hertes withouten pyte

Wo worthe your falshode and your doublenesse
Wo worthe also your corrupte Iugement
Wo worthe delyte in worldely rychesse
Wo worthe bebate without extynguyshment
Wo worthe your wordes so moche impacient
Wo worthe you vnto whome I dyde bote
And wo worthe you that tere me at the rote

Blessyd be ye that loue humylyte
Blessyd be ye that loue trouthe and pacyence
Blessyd be ye folowyng werkes of equitye
Blessyd be ye that loue well abstynence
Blessyd be ye vrygyns of excellence
Blessyd be ye which loue well vertue
Blessyd be ye whiche do the worlde eschue

Blessyd be ye that heuenly Ioye do loue
Blessyd be ye in vertuous gouernaunce
Blessyd be ye whiche do pleasures reproue
Blessyd be ye that consyder my greuaunce
Blessyd be ye whiche do take repentaunce

Blessyd be ye remembrynge my passyon
Blessyd be ye makynge petycyon

Blessyd be ye folowyng my trace
Blessyd be ye louynge trybulacyon
Blessyd be ye not wyllynge to trespace
Blessyd be ye of my castycacyon
Blessyd be ye of good operacyon
Blessyd be ye vnto me ryght kynde
Blessyd be you whiche haue me in your mynde

||

Blessyd be ye leuyng yll company
Blessyd be ye hauntyng the vertuous
Blessyd be ye that my name magnefy
Blessyd be ye techyng the vycyous
Blessyd be ye good and relygyous
Blessyd be ye in the lyfe temperall
Whiche applye yourselfe to Ioye celestyall

The brytyll worlde ryght often transmutable
Who wyll in it his lyfe in tyme well spende
Shall Ioye attayne after inestymable
For in the worlde he must fyrst condyscende.
To take grete payne as his power wyll extende
Agaynst the worlde the flesshe and the deuyll
By my grete grace for to withstande theyr euyl

For who can be a gretter fole than he
That spendeth his tyme to hym vncertayne
For a breuyat pleasure of worldly vanyte
Than after that to haue eternall payne
Who of the worlde delyteth and is fayne
Shall after sorowe and cry ve ve
In an other worlde quante sunt tenebre

Who is wyser than he that wyll applye
In the worlde to take payne by due dylygence
After shorte payne to come to grete glorye
Whiche is eterne moost hye of excellence
Where he shall se my grete magnyfycence
With many aungelles whiche for theyr solace
Insacately do beholde my face

[A.vii.]

Regarde no Ioye of the erthly consystory
For lyke as Phebus dothe the snowe relente
So passeth the Ioyes of the worlde transytory
Tyme renneth fast tyll worldly lyfe be spente
Consyder this in your entendemente
Blessed be they that my worde do here
And kepe it well, for they are to me dere

Therefore good brederne your hertes enclyne
To loue and drede me that am omnipotent
Bothe god and man in Ioye celestyne
Beholde my body all to torne and rente
With your spytefull othes cruell and vyolent
I loue you ye hate me ye are to harde herted
I helpe you ye tere me lo how for you I smerted

Mercy and peace dyde make an vnyte
Bytwene you and me but trouthe & ryghtwysnesse
Do nowe complayne byddyng my godheed se
How that ye breke the lege of sothfastnesse
They tell me that by Iustyce doubtelesse
I must take vengeaunce vpon you sykerly
That by your sweryng, agayne me crucefye

For at the request of good mercy and peace
I haue forborne you longe and many a daye
Pet more and more your synnes do encrease
Wherfore my Iustyce wyll no more delaye
But take vengeaunce for all your proude araye
I warne you ofte ye are nothyng the better
But ye amende my vengenaunce shall be gretter

||

¶ Contra iuratores chr^{isti} in celo crucifigentes. per bernardū dicit dominus. Nonne satis pro te vulneratus sum? nonne satis pro te afflictus sum? desine amplius peccare. q^{uia} magis aggrauat vulnus

Am not I wounded for the sufficyent
Haue I not for the ynoughe afflyccyon
Leue more to synne by good amendement
The wounde of synne to me is more passyon
Than the wounde of my syde for thy redempcyon
Thoughe I do spare I shall you desteny
But ye amende to brenne eternally

With my bloody woundes I dyde your chartre seale
Why do you tere it / why do ye breke it so
Syth it to you is the eternall heale
And the releace of euerlastyng wo
Beholde this lettre with the prynte also
Of myn owne seale by perfyte portrature
Prynte it in mynde and ye shall helthe recure

And ye kynges and lordes of renowne
Exorte your seruauntes theyr swerynge to cease
Come vnto me and cast your synne adowne
And I my vengeaunce shall truely releace
With grace and plente / I shall you encrace
And bryngye you whiche reuolue inwardly
This is my complaynte to eternall glory.

[A.viii.]

AMEN.

¶The Auctour as foloweth.

¶Go lytell treatyse deuoyde of eloquence
Tremblyng for dreade to approche the maieste
Of our souereynge lord surmountyng in excellence
Put under the wyng of his benygnyte
Submyttyng the to his mercyfull pytie.
And beseche hys grace to pardon thy rudnesse
Whych of late was made to eschewe ydlenesse.

¶Thus endeth the conuersyon of swerers, made and
compyled by Stephen Hawys, groome of the chambre of
our souerigne lorde Kyng Henry the seuenth. Enprynted at
London, in Fletestrete, at the sygne of the Sonne, by
Wynken de Worde, Prynter vnto the moost excellent
prynses, my lady the kynges graundame, the yere of our
Lord a MCCCCIX. the first yere of the reigne of our
souerayne lord kyng Henry the VIII.



Notes on the Text

Capital **U/V** is shown as “V” for consistency, although the letterform is closer to “U”. Thorn **þ** appears several times at the beginning of lines, and once in an abbreviation; “th” is used everywhere else. A series of lines on page A.iii. verso, starting with “ye neyther loue me nor my lustyce fere”, have initial lower-case “y”. The first of these may have been necessary to avoid collision with the **þ** of the previous line:

**Ye knowe yourselfe that I am very trothe
Yet wrongfullye do me rente and fere
ye neyther loue me noꝝ my Justyce fere**

In verse, nasal abbreviations such as **ā** and **ē** appear only in lines with large initial drop caps. Other abbreviations—mainly in the Latin passages—are shown in this e-text as superscripts: **quⁱ**, **chr^{isti}**. The word shown as **p^{ou}** was printed as **u** directly above **p**: **p̄**. Not all browsers can display this form correctly.

Thumbnail view of **Page A.iii. verso** (entire page):



*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE CONUERCYON OF SWERERS ***

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