

Truth, or The Ballad of Good Counsel

by Geoffrey Chaucer

FLEE fro the press, and dwell with soothfastnesse;	[crowd]	
Suffise thy thyng, though it be smal;	[your own possessions]	
For hoord hath hate, and climbing tickelnesse;	[hoarding] [insecurity]	
Press hath envye, and wele blent overal.	[wealth / blinds]	5
Savoure no more than thee behove shal;	[relish] [suits]	
Rule wel thyself, that other folk canst rede:	[control] [advise]	
And Trouthe shal deliver, it is no drede.	[fear/doubt]	
Tempest thee nought al crooked to redresse,	[fix]	
In trust of hire that turneth as a bal;	[of her = Wheel of Fortune / luck]	
Much wele stant in little businesse;	[wealth; well-being] [business]	10
Be war therfore to spurne ayains an al.	[awl (tool); rowel on stirrup]	
Strive nat as doth the crokke with the wal.	[crockery, pot] [wal]	
Daunte thyself that dauntest otheres deede:	[challenge; correct]	
And Trouthe shal deliver, it is no drede.		
That thee is sent receive in buxomness;	[obedience]	15
The wrastring for this world axeth a fal;	[fighting] [asks for]	
Here is none hoom, here nis but wildernesse:	[is nothing but]	
Forth, pilgrim, forth! Forth, beast, out of thy stall!		
Know thy countree, looke up, thank God of all.		
Hold the heigh way, and lat thy gost thee lede:	[high-way] [spirit]	20
And Trouthe shal deliver, it is no drede.	[fear/doubt]	
ENVOY		
Therefore, thou Vache, leve thyn olde wrecchednesse	[Cow] [wretchedness]	
Unto the worlde; leve now to be thral.	[stop, quit] [held captive]	
Crye him mercy, that of his heigh goodnesse	[God]	
Made thee of nought, and in especial	[nothing]	25
Draw unto him, and pray in general,	[come closer]	
For thee and eke for other, hevenlich meede:	[heavenly reward]	
And Trouthe shall deliver, it is no drede.	[fear/doubt]	

Modernised Orthography

Flee from the press, and dwell with truthfulness;
Suffice thee thy good, though it be small;
For hoard hath hate, and climbing tickleness,
Press hath envy, and weal is blent o'er all,
Savour no more than thee behove shall; 5
Read well thyself, that other folk canst read;
And truth thee shall deliver, it is no dread.

Paine thee not each crooked to redress,
In trust of her that turneth as a ball;
Great rest standeth in little business: 10
Beware also to spurn against a nail;
Strive not as doth a crocke with a wall;
Deeme thyself that deemest others' deed,
And truth thee shall deliver, it is no dread.

What thee is sent, receive in buxomness; 15
The wrestling of this world asketh a fall;
Here is no home, here is but wilderness.
Forth, pilgrim! Forthe beast, out of thy stall!
Look up on high, and thank thy God of all!
Weive thy lust, and let thy ghost thee lead, 20
And truth thee shall deliver, it is no dread.

Envoy

Therefore, thou beast, leave thine old wretchedness
Unto the world; leave now to be thrall;
Cry him mercy, that of his high goodness
Made thee of nought, and in especial 25
Draw unto him, and pray in general
For thee, and eke for other, heavenly meed,
And truth shall deliver, it is no dread.