

TO
KING HENRY THE FOURTH
IN PRAISE OF PEACE

*Electus Cristi, pie Rex Henrice, fuisti,
Qui bene venisti cum propria regna petisti;
Tu mala vicisti que bonis bona restituisti,
Et populo tristi noua gaudia contribuisti.
Est michi spes lata quod adhuc per te renouata
Succedent fata veteri probitate beata,
Est tibi nam grata gracia sponte data.*

O WORTHY noble kyng, Henry the ferthe,
In whom the glade fortune is befallē
The poeple to governe uppon this erthe,
God hath the chose in comfort of ous alle:
The worschipe of this lond, which was doun falle,
Now stant upriht thurgh grace of thi goodnesse,
Which every man is holde forto blesse.

The highe god of his justice allone
The right which longeth to thi regalie
Declared hath to stonde in thi persone, 10
And more than god may no man justefie.
Thi title is knowe uppon thin ancestrie,
The londes folk hath ek thy riht affermed;
So stant thi regne of god and man confermed.

The text is that of the MS. at Trentham Hall (T). Variations marked Th are those of the copy in Chaucer's Works, ed. 1539, ff. 375 v^o—377.

No title in T Iohan Gower vnto the worthy and noble kyng
Henry the fourth Th

Latin Verses placed at the end of the poem Th

1 O Noble worthy kyng Th 3 uppon this] here vpon Th
4 chosen Th 8 highe Th high T

••

Ther is no man mai seie in other wise,
 That god himself ne hath thi riht declared,
 Whereof the lond is boun to thi servise,
 Which for defalte of help hath longe cared:
 Bot now ther is no mannes herte spared
 To love and serve and wirche thi plesance, 20
 And al is this thurgh godes pourveiance.

In alle thing which is of god begonne
 Ther folwith grace, if it be wel governed:
 Thus tellen thei whiche olde bookes conne,
 Whereof, my lord, y wot wel thow art lerned.
 Axe of thi god, so schalt thou nocht be werned
 Of no requeste which is resonable;
 For god unto the goode is favorable.

Kyng Salomon, which hadde at his axinge
 Of god what thing him was levest to crave, 30
 He ches wisdom unto the governynge
 Of goddis folk, the whiche he wolde save:
 And as he ches it fel him forto have;
 For thurgh his wit, whil that his regne laste,
 He gat him pees and reste unto the laste.

Bot Alisaundre, as telleth his histoire,
 Unto the god besoghte in other weie,
 Of all the world to winne the victoire,
 So that undir his swerd it myht obeie.
 In werre he hadde al that he wolde preie, 40
 The myghti god behight him that beheste,
 The world he wan, and had it of conqweste.

Bot thogh it fel at thilke time so,
 That Alisandre his axinge hath achieved,
 This sinful world was al paiene tho,
 Was non which hath the hihe god believed:
 No wondir was thogh thilke world was grieved,
 Thogh a tiraunt his pourpos myhte winne;
 Al was vengeance and infortune of sinne.

16 thi] the Th	17 bounde Th	21 this is Th	goddes
purveyaunce Th	godespourveiance T	30 to om. Th	31 the
om. Th	35 unto the] in to his Th	36 his storic Th	42 he
om. Th	45 paynem Th		

Bot now the feith of Crist is come a place 50
 Among the princes in this erthe hiere,
 It sit hem wel to do pite and grace;
 Bot yit it mot be tempred in manere:
 For as thei finden cause in the matiere
 Uppon the point, what aftirward betide,
 The lawe of riht schal nocht be leid aside.

So mai a kyng of werre the viage
 Ordeigne and take, as he therto is holde,
 To cleime and axe his rightful heritage
 In alle places wher it is withholde: 60
 Bot other wise if god himsilve wolde
 Afferme love and pes between the kynges,
 Pes is the beste above alle erthely thinges.

Good is teschue werre, and natheles
 A kyng may make werre uppon his right,
 For of bataile the final ende is pees.
 Thus stant the lawe, that a worthi knyght
 Uppon his trouthe may go to the fight;
 Bot if so were that he myghte chese,
 Betre is the pees, of which may no man lese. 70

(Sustene) pes oghte every man alyve,
 First for to sette his liege lord in reste,
 And ek these othre men that thei ne stryve;
 For so this world mai stonden ate beste.
 What kyng that wolde be the worthieste,
 The more he myghte oure dedly werre cesse,
 The more he schulde his worthinesse encesse.

Pes is the chief of al the worldes welthe,
 And to the heven it ledeth ek the weie;
 Pes is of soule and lif the mannes helthe, 80
 Of pestilence and doth the werre aweie.
 Mi liege lord, tak hiede of that y seie,
 If werre may be left, tak pes on honde,
 Which may nocht be withoute goddis sonde.

54 as om. Th	63 erthly Th	71 S . . . pes (erasure
after S) T	To stere peace Th	eueriche on lyue Th
may stande Th		74 lande

With pes stant every creature in reste;
 Withoute pes ther may no lif be glad:
 Above alle othre good pes is the beste,
 Pes hath himself whan werre is al bestad,
 The pes is sauf, the werre is evere adrad:
 Pes is of alle charite the keie, 90
 Which hath the lif and soule forto weie.

My liege lord, if that the list to seche
 The sothe essamples that the werre hath wroght,
 Thow schalt wiel hierie of wisemennes speche
 That dedly werre turneth into noght.
 For if these olde bokes be wel soght,
 Ther myght thou se what thing the werre hath do,
 Bothe of conqueste and conquerour also.

For vein honour or for the worldes good
 Thei that whilom the stronge werres made, 100
 Wher be thei now? Bethenk wel in thi mod.
 The day is goon, the nyght is derk and fade,
 Her crualte, which mad hem thanne glade,
 Thei sorwen now, and yit have noght the more;
 The blod is schad, which no man mai restore.

The werre is modir of the wronges alle;
 It sleth the prest in holi chirche at masse,
 Forlith the maide and doth hire flour to falle.
 The werre makth the grete Citee lasse,
 And doth the lawe his reules overpasse. 110
 There is no thing wherof meschef mai growe
 Which is noght caused of the werre, y trowe.

The werre bringth in poverte at hise hieles,
 Wherof the comon poeple is sore grieved;
 The werre hath set his cart on thilke whieles
 Wher that fortune mai noght be believed.
 For whan men wene best to have achieved,
 Ful ofte it is al newe to beginne:
 The werre hath no thing siker, thogh he winne.

89 euer TTh 90 al TTh 93 that] what Th 96 ysought
 Th 108 here T her Th

Forthi, my worthi prince, in Cristes halve, 120
 As for a part whos feith thou hast to guide,
 Ley to this olde sor a newe salve,
 And do the werre awei, what so betide:
 Pouchace pes, and set it be thi side,
 And suffre noght thi poeple be devoured,
 So schal thi name evere after stonde honoured.

If eny man be now or evere was
 Aycin the pes thi preve counseillour,
 Let god ben of thi conseil in this cas,
 And put awei the cruel werreiour. 130
 For god, which is of man the creatour,
 He wolde noght men slowe his creature
 Withoute cause of dedly forfeiture.

Wher nedeth most, behoveth most to loke.
 Mi lord, how so thi werres ben withoute,
 Of time passed who that hiede toke,
 Good were at hom to se riht wel aboute;
 For everemor the werste is forto doute:
 Bot if thou myghtest parfit pes atteigne,
 Ther schulde be no cause forto pleigne. 140

Aboute a kyng good conseil is to preise
 Above alle othre thinges most vailable;
 Bot yit a kyng withinne himself schal peise,
 And se the thinges that ben resonable,
 And ther uppon he schal his wittes stable
 Among the men to sette pes in evene,
 For love of him which is the kyng of hevene.

Ha, wel is him that schedde nevere blod,
 Bot if it were in cause of rihtwisnesse:
 For if a kyng the peril undirstod, 150
 What is to sle the poeple, thanne y gesse,
 The dedly werres and the hevynesse,
 Wherof the pes distourbid is ful ofte
 Schulde at som time cesse and wexe softe.

121 hast be gyde Th 122 Ley Th Leie T 124 sette
 TTh 126 euer TTh 127 euer TTh 129 Lete T Lette
 Th 130 put Th putte T 148 neuer TTh

O kyng fulfild of grace and of knyghthode,
 Remembre uppon this point for Cristes sake,
 If pes be profred unto thi manhode,
 Thin honour sauf, let it nocht be forsake.
 Though thou the werres darst wel undirtake,
 Aftir reson yit temprer thi corage, 160
 For lich to pes ther is non advantage.

My worthi lord, thenk wel, how so befaller,
 Of thilke lore, as holi bokes sein,
 Crist is the heved and we ben membres alle,
 Als wel the subgit as the sovereign:
 So sit it wel that charite be plein,
 Which unto god himselve most acordeth,
 So as the lore of Cristes word recordeth.

In tholde lawe, er Crist himself was bore,
 Among the ten comandementz y rede 170
 How that manslaghtre schulde be forbore;
 Such was the will that time of the godhede:
 And aftirward, whanne Crist tok his manhede,
 Pes was the ferste thing he let do crie
 Ayein the worldes rancour and envie.

And er Crist wente out of this erthe hiere,
 And stigh to hevener, he made his testament,
 Wher he beqwath to his disciples there
 And yaf his pes, which is the foundement
 Of charite, withouten whos assent 180
 The worldes pes mai nevere wel be tried,
 Ne love kept, ne lawe justefied.

The Jewes with the paiens hadden werre,
 Bot thei among hemself stode evere in pes:
 Whi schulde thanne oure pes stonde out of herre,
 Which Crist hath chose unto his oghne encres?
 For Crist is more than was Moyses,
 And Crist hath set the parfit of the lawe,
 The which scholde in no wise be withdrawe.

155 and knyghthode Th 162 þenke T thynke Th 165 the
 subgit] be subiecte Th 173 But afterwarde Th 175 Ayeinst
 Th 177 stighed Th 181 neuer TTh 183 paynyms Th
 185 erre Th

To yive ous pes was cause whi Crist dide; 190
 Withoute pes may no thing stonde availed:
 Bot now a man mai sen on everi side
 How Cristes feith is every dai assailed,
 With the Paiens destruid, and so batailed
 That for defalte of help and of defence
 Unethe hath Crist his dewe reverence.

The righte feith to kepe of holy chirche
 The firste point is named of knyghthode,
 And everi man is holde forto wirche
 Uppon the point which stant to his manhode. 200
 Bot now, helas, the fame is sprad so broode,
 That everi worthi man this thing compleigneth,
 And yit ther is no man which help ordeigneth.

The worldes cause is waited overal,
 Ther ben the werres redi to the fulle;
 Bot Cristes oghne cause in special,
 Ther ben the swerdes and the speres dulle;
 And with the sentence of the popes bulle,
 As forto do the folk paien obeie,
 The chirche is turned al an other weie. 210

It is to wondre above a mannys wit
 Withoute werre how Cristes feith was wonne,
 And we that ben uppon this erthe yit
 Ne kepe it nocht, as it was first begonne.
 To every creature undir the sonne
 Crist bad himself how that we schulden preche,
 And to the folk his evangile teche.

More light it is to kepe than to make;
 Bot that we founden mad tofore the hond
 We kepe nocht, bot lete it lightly slake. 220
 The pes of Crist hath altobroke his bond,
 We reste ourselve and soeffrin every lond
 To slen ech other as thing undefendid:
 So stant the werre, and pes is nocht amendid.

194 paynyms Th 200 which] þat Th 202 worthi om. Th
 203 is there Th which] that Th 209 payne Th 211
 a] any Th 216 how om. Th 219 the om. Th

Bot thogh the heved of holy chirche above
 Ne do noght al his hole busnesse
 Among the men to sette pes and love,
 These kynges oughten of here rightwisnesse
 Here oghne cause among hemself redresse :
 Thogh Petres schip as now hath lost his stiere, 230
 It lith in hem that barge forto stiere.

If holy cherche after the duete
 Of Cristes word ne be noght al avysed
 To make pes, acord and unite
 Among the kinges that ben now devised,
 Yit natheles the lawe stant assised
 Of mannys wit to be so resonable,
 Withoute that to stonde hemselfe stable.

Of holy chirche we ben children alle,
 And every child is holden forto bowe 240
 Unto the modir, how that evere it falle,
 Or elles he mot reson desalowe :
 And for that cause a knyght schal ferst avowe
 The right of holi chirche to defende,
 That no man schal the privilege offende.

Thus were it good to setten al in evene
 The worldes princes and the prelatz bothe,
 For love of him which is the king of hevene :
 And if men scholde algate wexe wrothe, 250
 The Sarazins, whiche unto Crist be lothe,
 Let men ben armed ayein hem to fighte ;
 So mai the knyht his dede of armes righte.

Uppon thre pointz stant Cristes pes oppressed :
 Ferst holy cherche is in hirsilf divided,
 Which oughte of reson first to be redressed ;
 Bot yit so highe a cause is noght decided.
 And thus, whan humble pacience is prided,
 The remenant, which that thei schulden reule,
 No wondir is though it stonde out of reule.

227 men] people Th 238 him selfe Th 241 euer TTh
 251 ayenst Th 254 is om. Th hersilf T her selfe Th

Of that the heved is sick, the limes aken : 260
 These regnes that to Cristes pes belongen
 For worldes good these dedly werres maken,
 Whiche helpeles as in balance hongen.
 The heved above hem hath noght undirfongen
 To sette pes, bot every man sleeth other,
 And in this wise hath charite no brother.

The two defaltes bringen in the thridde,
 Of mescreantz, that sen how we debate,
 Betwen the two thei fallen in amidde, 270
 Wher now aldai thei finde an open gate.
 Lo, thus the dedly werre stant algate ;
 Bot evere y hope of King Henries grace
 That he it is which schal the pes embrace.

My worthi noble prince and kyng enoight,
 Whom god hath of his grace so preserved,
 Behold and se the world uppon this point,
 As for thi part that Cristes pes be served :
 So schal thin highe mede be deserved
 To him which al schal qwiten ate laste,
 For this lif hiere mai no while laste. 280

See Alisandre, Ector and Julius,
 See Machabeu, David and Josue,
 See Charlemeine, Godefroi, Arthus,
 Fulfid of werre and of mortalite.
 Here fame abit, bot al is vanite ;
 For deth, which hath the werres under fote,
 Hath mad an ende of which ther is no bote.

So mai a man the sothe wite and knowe,
 That pes is good for every king to have :
 The fortune of the werre is evere unknowe, 290
 Bot wher pes is, ther ben the marches save.
 That now is up, to morwe is under grave ;
 The mighti god hath alle grace in honde,
 With outen him pes mai nought longe stonde.

263 helpples T helplesse Th 269 Betwene TTh 276
 Beholde TTh 283 Godfray and Arthus Th 288 mai]
 many Th 291 ben] is Th 294 pes] men Th

Of the Tenetz to winne or lese a chace,
 Mai no lif wite er that the hal be ronne:
 Al stant in god, what thing men schal pourchace,
 Thende is in him er that it be begonne.
 Men sein the wolle, whanne it is wel sponne,
 Doth that the cloth is strong and profitable, 300
 And elles it mai nevere be durable.

The worldes chaunces upon aventure
 Ben evere sett, bot thilke chaunce of pes
 Is so behoveli to the creature,
 That it above alle othre is pierles:
 Bot it mai nocht be gete natheles
 Among the men to lasten eny while,
 Bot wher the herte is plein withoute guyle.

The pes is as it were a sacrament
 Tofore the god, and schal with wordes pleine 310
 Withouten eny double entendement
 Be treted, for the trouthe can nocht feine:
 Bot if the men withinne hemself be veine,
 The substance of the pes may nocht be trewe,
 Bot every dai it chaungeth upon newe.

Bot who that is of charite parfit,
 He voideth alle sleighes ferr aweie,
 And sett his word upon the same plit,
 Wher that his herte hath founde a siker weie:
 And thus whan conscience is trewly weie, 320
 And that the pes be handlid with the wise,
 It schal abide and stonde in alle wise.

Thapostle seith, ther mai no lif be good
 Which is nocht grounded upon charite,
 For charite ne schedde nevere blod,
 So hath the werre as ther no proprite:
 For thilke vertu which is seid pite
 With charite so ferforth is aqweinted,
 That in hire may no fals semblant be peinted.

295 Off (for Or) T
 al other peerles Th
 329 here T her Th

301 neuer TTh
 306 begete Th

305 That is aboute
 321 the pes] these Th

Cassodre, whos writinge is auctorized, 330
 Seith, wher that pite reigneth, ther is grace,
 Thurgh which the pes hath al his welthe assised,
 So that of werre he dredeth no manace.
 Wher pite dwelleth, in the same place
 Ther mai no dedly cruelte sojorne,
 Wherof that merci schulde his weie torne.

To se what pite forth with mercy doth,
 The cronique is at Rome in thilke empire
 Of Constantin, which is a tale soth;
 Whan him was levere his oghne deth desire 340
 Than do the yonge children to martire,
 Of crualte he lafte the querele,
 Pite he wroghte and pite was his hele.

For thilke mannes pite which he dede
 God was pitous and mad him hol at al;
 Silvestre cam, and in the same stede
 Yaf him baptisme first in special,
 Which dide awai the sinne original,
 And al his lepre it hath so purified,
 That his pite for evere is magnified. 350

Pite was cause whi this emperour
 Was hol in bodi and in soule bothe,
 And Rome also was set in thilke honour
 Of Cristes feith, so that the lieve of lothe,
 Whiche hadden be with Crist tofore wrothe,
 Resceived weren unto Cristes lore:
 Thus schal pite be praised evermore.

My worthi liege lord, Henri be name,
 Which Engelond hast to governe and righte, 360
 Men oghten wel thi pite to proclame,
 Which openliche in al the worldes sighte
 Is schewed with the help of god almightie,
 To yive ous pes, which longe hath be debated,
 Wherof thi pris shal nevere ben abated.

331 ther om. Th
 350 euer TTh

336 wei T way Th
 356 were TTh

345 made Th

My lord, in whom hath evere yit be founde
 Pite withoute spot of violence,
 Kep thilke pes alwei withinne bounde,
 Which god hath planted in thi conscience :
 So schal the cronique of thi pacience
 Among the seintz be take into memoire 370
 To the loenge of perdurable gloire.

And to thin erthli pris, so as y can,
 Which everi man is holde to commende,
 I, Gower, which am al thi liege man,
 This lettre unto thin excellence y sende,
 As y which evere unto my lives ende
 Wol praie for the stat of thi persone
 In worschipe of thi sceptre and of thi throne.

Noght only to my king of pes y write,
 Bot to these othre princes cristene alle, 380
 That ech of hem his oghne herte endite,
 And see the werre er more meschief falle :
 Sette ek the rightful Pope uppon his stalle,
 Kep charite and draugh pite to honde,
 Maintene lawe, and so the pes schal stonde.

Explicit carmen de pacis commendacione, quod ad laudem et memoriam serenissimi principis domini Regis Henrici quarti suus humilis orator Iohannes Gower composuit. Et nunc sequitur epistola in qua idem Ioannes pro statu et salute dicti domini sui apud altissimum deuocius exorat.

REX celi deus et dominus, qui tempora solus
 Condidit, et solus condita cuncta regit ;
 Qui rerum causas ex se produxit et vnum
 In se principium rebus inesse dedit ;
 Qui dedit vt stabili motu consisteret orbis

365 euer TTh 371 loenge] legende Th 378 and thy throne Th 382 mor T

EXPLICIT 3 suis Th 4 Et nunc—exorat om. Th

Instead of the Latin lines that follow Th has here the lines 'Electus Cristi—sponte data,' which in T stand at the beginning, and after these without a break, 'Henrici quarti—futura deus,' twelve lines which are written at the end of the Trentham MS.

Fixus in eternum mobilitate sua ;
 Quique potens verbi produxit ad esse creata,
 Quique sue mentis lege ligauit ea ;
 Ipse caput regum, reges quo rectificantur,
 Te que tuum regnum, rex pie, queso, regat. 10
 Grata superueniens te misit gracia nobis,
 Quo sine labe salus nulla perante fuit.
 Sic tuus aduentus noua gaudia sponte reduxit,
 Quo prius in luctu lacrima maior erat :
 Nos tua milicies pauidos releuauit ab ymo,
 Quos prius oppressit ponderis omne malum :
 Ex probitate tua, quo mors latitabat in vmbra,
 Vita resurrexit clara que regna regit :
 Sic tua sors sortem mediante deo renouatam
 Sanat et emendat, que prius egra fuit. 20
 O pie rex, Cristum per te laudamus, et ipsum
 Qui tibi nos tribuit terra reuiuia colit.
 Sancta sit illa dies qua tu tibi regna petisti,
 Sanctus et ille deus qui tibi regna dedit.
 Qui tibi prima tulit, confirmet regna futura,
 Quo poteris magno magno honore frui.
 Sit tibi progenies ita multiplicata per eum,
 Quod genus inde pium repleat omne solum.
 Quicquid in orbe boni fuerit, tibi summus ab alto
 Donet, vt in terris rex in honore regas : 30
 Omne quod est turpe vacuum discedat, et omne
 Est quod honorificum det deus esse tuum.
 Consilium nullum, pie rex, te tangat iniquum,
 In quibus occultum scit deus esse dolum.
 Absit auaricia, ne tangat regia corda,
 Nec queat in terra proditor esse tua.
 Sic tua processus habeat fortuna perhennes,
 Quo recolant laudes secula cuncta tuas :
 Nuper vt Augusti fuerant preconia Rome,
 Concinat in gestis Anglia leta tuis. 40
 O tibi, rex, euo detur, fortissime, nostro
 Semper honorata scepra tenere manu :
 Stes ita magnanimus quod, vbi tua regna gubernas,
 Terreat has partes hostica nulla manus :

10 Teque T 39 augusti T

TO KING HENRY THE FOURTH

Augeat imperium tibi Cristus et augeat annos,
 Protegat et nostras aucta corona fores :
 Sit tibi pax finis, domito domineris in orbe,
 Cunctaque sint humeris inferiora tuis.
 Sic honor et virtus, laus, gloria, pax que potestas
 Te que tuum regnum magnificare queant. 50
 Cordis amore boni, pie rex, mea vota parau; ;
 Corpore cum nequii, seruido mente tibi :
 Ergo tue laudi que tuo genuflexus honori
 Verba loco doni pauper habenda tuli.
 Est tamen ista mei, pie rex, sententia verbi,
 Fine tui regni sint tibi regna poli.

48 Cuncta que T 49 paxque T 50 Teque T 53 laudique T