

LENVOY DE CHAUCER A BUKTON

My maister Bukton, whan of Crist our kyng
Was axed what is trouthe or sothfastnesse,
He nat a word answerde to that axing,
As who saith, "No man is al trewe," I gesse.
And therefore, though I highte to expresse 5
The sorwe and wo that is in mariage,
I dar not writen of it no wikkednesse,
Lest I myself falle eft in swich dotage.

I wol nat seyn how that yt is the cheyne
Of Sathanas, on which he gnaweth evere, 10
But I dar seyn, were he out of his peyne,
As by his wille he wolde be bounde nevere.
But thilke doted fool that eft hath levere
Ycheyned be than out of prison crepe,
God lete him never fro his wo dissevere, 15
Ne no man him bewayle, though he wepe.

But yet, lest thow do worse, take a wyf;
Bet ys to wedde than brenne in worse wise.
But thow shal have sorwe on thy flessch, thy lyf,
And ben thy wives thral, as seyn these wise;
And yf that hooly writ may nat suffyse, 21
Experience shal the teche, so may happe,
That the were lever to be take in Frise
Than eft to falle of weddyng in the trappe.

[*Envoy*]

This lytel writ, proverbes, or figure 25
I sende yow; take kepe of yt, I rede;
Unwys is he that kan no wele endure.
If thow be siker, put the nat in drede.
The Wyf of Bathe I pray yow that ye rede
Of this matere that we have on honde. 30
God graunte yow your lyf frely to lede
In fredam, for ful hard is to be bonde.

Explicit.

5 **highte**: promised

8 **eft**: again dotage: foolishness

10 **Sathanas**: Satan

12 **As by**: so far as it concerns

15 **dissevere**: part, get away from

23 **take**: taken prisoner **Frise**: Frisia

25 **writ**: composition **proverbes**: series of proverbs **figure**: metaphorical statement

29 **Wyf of Bathe**: The Wife of Bath's Prologue

Source: *The Riverside Chaucer, 3rd Ed.*, ed. Larry D. Benson et al.
Boston: Houghton, 1987. Page 655-6.