

Cynewulf
Christ

translated by

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Advent

Thou art the wall-stone that of old the builders rejected. Well it seemeth that Thou become the head of the spacious hall, binding in firm embrace wide-running walls and flint unbroken; that every eye throughout the world may marvel evermore, O Lord of glory! In skilful craft show forth Thy handiwork, truth-firm, triumphant; leave wall upon wall. The work hath need that the Craftsman come, the King himself, and repair that house which now lieth decayed under its roof. For He wrought the body and the limbs of clay; and now the Lord of life shall free that wretched throng from foemen, the all-forlorn from fear as oft He did.

O Thou Ruler, Thou just King, who holdest the keys, who openest life, vouchsafe us victory, and winsome way of life, withheld another man unless his work avail him. Verily in need we speak these words, entreating Him who shaped the race of man, that He choose not wrathfully to speak His doom on us, who here in sadness and in prison sit sorrowing all the glad journey of the sun. When on us the Lord of life shows forth His light, may He be a shield unto our souls, clothe the frail mind with splendour and grant us worth whom He chose unto His glory, when we, downcast, deprived of native home, must turn aside unto this narrow land. Wherefore he may say, whoso speaketh truth, that He redeemed the race of man, that was gone astray.

The maid was young, a virgin without sin, whom He did choose to be His mother. Without man's love it came to pass the bride was great with child. In all the world, before or since, was never woman's guerdon like to that. That was a secret wonder of the Lord. Then ghostly grace spread over all the ways of earth, and many a thing was lightened by the Lord of life, enduring lore which formerly lay hid in shades of darkness, songs

of the prophets, till the Ruler came, who in its path enlargeth every prayer of such as will but laud the name of their Creator with eagerness and wisdom.

O Thou Vision of peace! Holy Jerusalem! Choicest of kingly thrones, fortress of Christ! Homeland of angels—and in thee forever rest the souls of the righteous alone, joying in glory. Within that dwelling-place shall be revealed no sign of sin; from thee shall all transgression flee away, all strife and every curse. Thou art wondrous full of holy hope as thou art named. Lift up thine eyes! The ample universe, the dome of heaven, regard thee round on every hand, how that the King of heaven in His journey seeketh thee, Himself cometh and abideth in thee, as prophets sang of old, wisely foretold the birth of Christ, and to thy comfort spake, thou fairest among cities. Now that Child is come, born to cast down the works of the Hebrews. Bliss He bringeth thee, thy bonds unlooseth, for man endeavoureth, knoweth his heavy need—how that the wretched wight must wait upon mercy.

O joy of women in the host of heaven! Winsomest maid through all the borders of the world, of whom the ocean-dwellers ever have heard story! Reveal to us that wonder which came upon thee from on high, how thou in childbirth didst conceive, yet knewest naught of human love after man's kind. Truly, we have never heard that such a thing befell in days of old as unto thee was granted in wondrous grace; neither may we look for it to happen in any time to come. Verily, fair faith abode in thee, for that thou barest in thy bosom the Prince of glory, yet was thy radiant maidhood no whit stained. As all the children of men sow in sorrow, so again they reap; they bring forth unto death. The blessed damsel spake, holy Mary, rich in triumph:

“What is this wondering wherewith ye wonder, and this sorrowing that ye mourn with sorrow, Salem's daughters and sons? Eagerly ye ask how I did keep my chastity, my maidhood, and yet became the mother of the glorious Son of God. To men that wonder is not known, but in David's beloved kinsmaid Christ made known that all the sin of Eve is done away, the curse cast out, the lowlier sex lifted up. Now hope is come that both for man and maid amid celestial joy of angels, with the Father of truth, bliss may abide forever.”

Hail Day-Star! Brightest angel sent to man throughout the earth, and Thou steadfast splendour of the sun, bright above stars! Ever Thou dost illumine with Thy light the time of every season. As Thou, begotten God of God, Son of the True Father, without beginning abodest ever in the splendour of heaven, so now for need Thy handiwork beseecheth boldly that Thou send the bright sun unto us; that Thou come and shed Thy light on those who long ere this, compassed about with mist and in the darkness, clothed in sin, sit here in the long night, and must needs endure the dark shadow of Death. Now are we full of hope and put our trust in Thy salvation, heralded to the hosts of men by the word of God, which in the beginning was with God, with the Almighty Father coeternal, and afterward was made flesh unstained of sin, which the Virgin bare, a solace unto wretched men. God was seen among us without sin; together dwelt the mighty Son of God and the son of man, in peace among the people. Wherefore we may rightfully give thanks forever to our Victor-Lord, that He would send Himself to us.

O God of spirits! how wisely and with right wast Thou named with the name Emmanuel; as the angel spake it first in Hebrew tongue; which unriddled in its inner mystery, is "Now is the Warden of the skies, God Himself, with us," as men of old, in days gone by, sang truly that the King of kings would come, the Priest all undefiled; also in olden days, Melchizedek the mighty, wise of heart, made known the godly splendour of the Eternal Lord. He was the bringer of laws, the giver of precepts, to such as long abode His hither-coming, as had been promised them that the very Son of God would cleanse the peoples of the earth, and journey also by His spirit's might unto the pit of hell. Patiently they bode in bondage until the Son of God should come to wretched men. Thus they cried aloud, prostrate in their woe: "Now do Thou come Thyself, O King of heaven! Bring Thou a life of healing unto us, weary thralls spent with weeping with our bitter, burning tears. In Thy hand only lieth respite after our heavy need. Come to us, prisoners soul-sorrowful, and when Thou farest hence leave not behind this mighty host, but show Thy pity upon us in kingly wise, O Saviour Christ. O Lord of glory, let not the cursed have dominion over us. Grant us the eternal gladness of Thy glory, that we may worship Thee, O Lord of hosts, whom Thou didst

shape of old with Thine hands. Thou dwellest in the heavens above with the all-wielding Father, forever and forever.

(Mary.) "O my Joseph, son of Jacob! Thou kinsman of mighty David! Wilt thou forsake my firm affection, and leave my love?"

(Joseph.) "I am worn with sorrow and despoiled of honour; for I have heard through thee many a word of measureless woe and taunts and insult; and men speak scorn against me and mocking words. I must pour out my tears, soul-sorrowful. Yet easily may God heal all the grieving of my heart, and console me in my wretchedness. Alas! thou damsel young, Maid Mary!"

(Mary.) "Why dost thou mourn and wail in grief? Never found I any guilt in thee, nor any blame of evils wrought; and yet thou speakest words as though thou wert full of all transgression and direful deed."

(Joseph.) "I have known too much of bale by this child-bearing. How may I withspeak the hostile word or find an answer to my foes? Widely is it known that, glad of heart, I gained a maiden pure and sinless from the radiant temple of the Lord; and now, I know not how, is come a change. Now availeth me nor speech nor silence. For if I speak the truth, then must the daughter of David die, stoned with stones. Yet is it more bitter fate to hide the sin and live for sworn from this time forth, hated of every people, dishonoured among the folk."

Then the maid revealed the mystery and thus she spake: "By the Son of God, Saviour of souls, I speak the truth that yet I know not the embraces of any man on earth. But in my early years within my home it was granted me that Gabriel, high angel of heaven, gave me greeting and told me truly that the Spirit of heaven would shed on me His splendour; that I should bear a radiant son, the Glory of life, exalted Child of God, of the bright Lord of glory. Now am I become His temple without sin. The Spirit of comfort abode in me. Wherefore do thou put aside all bitter sorrow, and give eternal thanks unto the mighty Son of God, that, still a maid, I am become His mother, and thou throughout the world in wide belief art called His father, if this prophecy be verily fulfilled in Him."

O Thou Righteous Ruler! Prince of peace! King of all kings! Christ mighty overall! Before all the orders of the world Thou wast with Thy glorious Father, through His skill and power begotten Son. Nor is there any earl under the skies, nor any man of counsel so exceeding wise that

he may recite unto the sea-dwellers, or rightfully rehearse how heaven's Warden took Thee first to be His noble Son. In the beginning, first of all those things that man hath heard of among the nations, it befell under the clouds that the all-knowing God, Author of life, royally divided light from darkness. His was doom's dominion, and thus the Lord of hosts uttered His decree: "Let there be light forever, a gleaming gladness unto every living thing that in the generations shall be born." Straightway it came to pass, as well should be, that light shone forth upon the tribes of men, radiant with stars through all the rolling seasons. Ere aught of this befell, by His decree, Thou His Son wert co-existent with Thy sole Lord. Thou art the wisdom that with all-ruling God did shape the wide creation. None is so discerning or so wise of heart that he may fully tell Thy kinship unto the children of men. Come, Thou Victor-Lord, Shaper of man, graciously make known Thy mercy upon us. Great is our craving to know the wonder of Thy mother-kinship; that Fatherhood we may not comprehend. Bless the earth mildly by Thine advent hither, O Saviour Christ; and bid Thou open, Thou High King of heaven, the golden gates that full long stood locked in days of old. Then seek us, stooping meek to earth. Of Thy pity is there need. The cursed Wolf, that dark death-shadow, hath scattered far Thy flock, O Lord, in wide confusion; which Thou, O God, didst purchase with Thy blood aforetime; which the baleful One doth take in bondage and smiteth sore against our dear desire. Wherefore, O Saviour, with yearning hearts we pray that Thou make haste to help us, weary wretches, that the scathing Spoiler may sink headlong to hell, and Thy handiwork, Creator of mankind, may mount and come to righteousness, unto that glorious and celestial kingdom, whence by lust of sin the dusky Spirit drew us down by guile; that, shorn of glory, evermore must we endure distress, except Thou swiftly will to save us from the Spoiler, Eternal Lord, Thou Living God, Thou Helm of every creature.

O thou radiant glory of the world, thou purest maid of earth, of all such as have lived in the long ages! How rightfully in every realm all mortal men, dowered with speech, blithe of heart, name thee and bespeak thee bride of the Lord of the blissful sky. So also in heaven the highest, the thanes of Christ, chant and sing that by thy holy might thou art the lady of the heavenly host, of all estates on earth under the

heavens, and of such as dwell in hell. For thou only of all mankind wast boldly minded to bring thy maidhood unto God and tender it unstained of sin. There came no other like to thee of all mankind, no bride adorned with rings, who with pure heart sent her radiant offering unto its heavenly home. Wherefore, the Lord of triumph bade His herald hither fly from out the angelic host, and straightway proclaim to thee the fullness of His might, that thou shouldest bear the Son of God in pure nativity, in mercy unto man, and thou thyself, Mary, unto every age be ever undefiled.

Also have we heard that long ago a prophet, Isaiah, in the days of old spake truth of thee: that he was led where he might see the abiding-place of life in its eternal home. Then gazed the man of wisdom round about through all the realm, till that he fixed his eyes where there was set a princely portal. That lofty door was bound about with precious treasure, compassed with wondrous bands. Deeply he mused that any one of men should ever put aside those firm-fixed bars or undo the bolting of that city-gate to all eternity, ere that God's herald-angel lovingly revealed to him the way and spake this word:

"I say to thee," as true befell, "that on a time by Spirit's might will God Himself, the Almighty Father, traverse these golden gates, and through these firm fixed bolts come down to earth, and after Him to all eternity shall they stand ever closed, nor shall another ever again unlock them, save only the Saviour God."

Now is all fulfilled which there the man of wisdom with eye beheld. Thou art that wall-door; through thee the all-ruling Lord once journeyed out to earth; and even so, adorned with power, pure and chosen, Christ the Almighty found thee; even so the Prince of angels, Lord of life, locked thee after Him as with a key, all undefiled. Reveal to us the mercy which the angel, God's herald Gabriel, brought unto thee. We city-dwellers pray that thou show forth thy Son, a comfort to the peoples. Henceforward may we all have hope, since now we see the Babe upon thy breast. Do thou with eager word now intercede for us, that no long time He suffer us to be subject unto error in this valley of death, but that He guide us unto the Father's kingdom, where sorrowless forever we may dwell in glory with the Lord of hosts.

Hail Thou Holy Lord of heaven! Thou wast of old co-eval with Thy Father in that princely home. Nor yet was any angel made, nor any of that great majestic host that in the heavens above watch o'er Thy kingdom, the glorious courts of God and of His thanes, when Thou wast first, with the Eternal Lord, establishing the wide creation, the broad and spacious lands. Unto You twain is fellowship with the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. All in lowliness, O Saviour Christ, we pray that thou hearken unto the cry of captives, of Thy needy thralls. O Saviour God, how are we harried by our own self-will! Sorely have those wretched spirits, the hostile fiends of hell, oppressed us in our exile, laid bitter bonds upon us. In Thy hand only lieth respite, O Eternal God. Help Thou the joyless that Thy hither-coming may comfort those in sorrow, though against Thee through lust of sin have we wrought hatred. Have mercy upon Thy servants and be mindful of our wretchedness, how with weak mind we stumble and miserably go astray. Come now, Thou King of men, tarry not all too long. To us is need of mercy, that Thou deliver us and grant us righteously Thy saving-grace, that henceforth among men forever we may thrive in better things and do Thy will.

O Glorious, Heavenly Trinity, high and holy, full of honour, widely blessed throughout the spacious lands! Rightfully must all men dowered with speech, the hapless dwellers of earth, with all might glorify Thee on high, that now the Faithful Saviour hath shown us God, that we might know Him. Wherefore the righteous order of Seraphim above, eager in deed and crowned with judgment, ever chanting with the heavenly angels in unwearying strains with clear and winsome voices, sing sweetly far and near. They have the fairest of service with their King; for Christ hath granted them, adorned with light, that with their eyes they may enjoy His presence, and ever without ceasing, far and wide, worship the Lord of all. And with their wings they shield the face of the Almighty Lord, the eternal God, and press about His royal throne, eagerly striving which of them in flight may stoop nearest unto our Saviour in those peaceful courts. They praise the Well-beloved, exalt the princely Author of all created things, and in His light chant unto Him this word:

“Holy art Thou, Holy Lord of angels, true Prince of triumph! Ever art Thou Holy Lord of hosts! They doom endureth wide revered on earth, among the sons of men to every age. Thou art the Lord of hosts, for

Thou hast filled the heavens and earth with Thy glory, O Shield of warriors, Thou Helm of all! Eternal glory be to Thee on high, and radiant praise on earth with men. Live, blessed Thou, who in the name of the Lord camest unto men, a comfort to the lowly. And on high eternal praise be Thine forever."

Lo! how wondrous change is wrought in the life of men, since the mild Creator of mankind received from mortal maid flesh undefiled; neither knew she any whit the love of man, nor by the seed of man came the Lord of triumph upon earth. But more of craft was that than all the dwellers of earth might comprehend, how wondrously the Glory of the skies, High Lord of heaven, through His mother's womb wrought help to men. And so the Saviour of the nations, the Lord of hosts, dealeth out each day in succour unto man forever His forgiveness. Wherefore we should exalt Him by deed and word in all devotion, eager in glory. High rede is that to every one of men, whoso is mindful of past things, that he forever most often and in secret and most eagerly should pray to God. He granteth him reward of love, even the hallowed Saviour, in that country where he never came aforetime, in the joy of the land of the living, where thenceforth he may dwell in bliss, and bide without an end forever. Amen.

Ascension

Now eagerly in inward thought and wisely seek, thou man of great renown, with understanding heart, that thou mayest know aright how it came to pass when the Almighty God was born in purity, when that He shelter sought at Mary's hand, the flower of maids, the radiant virgin, that angels came not robed in garments white, when the Prince came unto Bethlehem. Heralds there were who spake unto the shepherds, and proclaimed true joy, for that the Son of God was born upon earth in Bethlehem. Yet in the Books it saith not that they were seen arrayed in white in that glorious hour, as in those latter days when the great Lord, the Prince of majesty, summoned unto Bethany His throng of thanes, that well-loved band. Nor in that day did they despise the words of their Teacher, their dear Giver of treasure. Straight were they made ready unto the holy mount, the disciples with their Lord, where the Prince of

splendour, the Helm of heaven, showed them many a token in words of mystery, ere that the One-begotten Son ascended up, the co-eternal Child unto His own Father, after the space of forty days from when he rose from death, from out the earth. By His agony had He fulfilled the words of the prophets, as they had sung aforetime in the world. Then His thanes glorified and lovingly adored the Lord of life, the Father of created things. And unto them in gentleness in after time He gave reward, and, destined to fare hence unto His Father's kingdom, the mighty Prince, the Lord of angels, spake this word:

"Rejoice in heart, never will I forsake you but I will fulfil my love upon you and give you might; and I will dwell with you forever, that by my gift ye may never lack any good thing. Fare ye now over all the spacious earth, throughout the wide ways. Make known to men, preach and publish bright belief, and baptize the people under the sky and turn them unto heaven. Cast down their idols, destroy and lay them low; abolish enmity and sow peace in the hearts of men, in the fulness of might. Henceforth I will dwell with you to comfort you, and in peace will I preserve you and steadfast strength in every place."

Then suddenly was heard upon the air a clear sound; and there came in company a throng of heaven's angels, messengers of majesty, a beauteous band. Our Lord departed through the temple roof even as they beheld, the chosen thanes who in that meeting-place gazed on the last footprints of their well-loved Prince. They saw the Lord, the Son of God, ascending up on high from earth. Their souls were sorrowful within them, hot at heart a mourning spirit for that they might not longer under heaven behold their well-loved Lord. But the heavenly heralds raised a song, magnified their Prince, adored the Giver of life, rejoicing in the light that shone from the head of the Saviour. And round about that First-born Child, the Glory of kings, they beheld two radiant angels gleaming in array. From on high with wondrous words, clear voiced, they called aloud over the throng of men:

"What wait ye tarrying round about, ye men of Galilee? Now do ye clearly see the Righteous God, the Lord of triumph, departing into heaven. The Prince of princes, the Lord of nations, with these angel-bands will from hence ascend unto His home, His Father's native seat. With such a throng, with this blithe company, unto that bright city

above the arching skies fain will we lead our Lord, the best and fairest of the Sons of triumph, on whom ye gaze and to your comfort see Him gleaming in array. Yet will He on a latter day Himself seek out the tribes of earth with countless train. Then will He judge each deed, whatsoever the nations have wrought beneath the heavens."

Then was the Warden of heaven, the King of High-Angels, Helm of the holy, caught up above the roofs of earth into the clouds. Hope was renewed and bliss in the cities at the coming of the Prince. And exulting in His triumph the eternal Author of joy sat at the right hand of His Father. And they departed, journeying unto Jerusalem, those stalwart-hearted men, unto that holy city, sorrowful in soul leaving the spot where last with their eyes they had beheld their God ascending up, their Giver of bliss. Then was there sound of weeping. Their true love hot at heart was crushed with woe. Their souls welled up within them, their spirits glowed. There the glorious thanes abode their Lord's behests, in that bright city ten nights' time, as He Himself, the Lord of heaven, the Wielder of all, had bidden ere He ascended up into the secret places of the sky. And to the gracious Lord of earls came angels robed in white. Well is it spoken, as the Writings tell, that unto Him in hosts came shining angels in that holy hour descending on the heavens. Then in heavenly glory arose the greatest of rejoicings. It was well fitting that thanes in bright array came to the city of God, unto that bliss, a beauteous band; beheld their welcome Friend, the King of heaven, Life-Lord of men, on His high judgment seat, wielding in splendour the world and the hosts of glory.

Now hath the Holy One harrowed hell of tribute, of all that in the days of yore it swallowed up unrighteously into that house of torment. Now are these devil-champions all undone, cast into everlasting torture, bound in the pit of hell, despoiled of might. Nor in that battle might these foes of Hell, in that clash of weapons, know success, when by His might alone the King of glory, the Helm of heaven, waged battle on His olden enemies; when He led forth from thraldom, from the city of His foes, exceeding spoil, a countless train of folk, this very multitude whereon ye gaze. Now will the Saviour of souls, the very Son of God, depart unto the mercy-seat of spirits after the battle-play. Now do ye know aright who is that Lord who leadeth this array. Unto your friends

go boldly glad in heart—Open, ye Gates! For with no little train the all-ruling King, the Author of creation, leadeth unto you, into the joy of joys, within the city, that folk which He in triumph wrested from the foes of hell. From this time forth forever shall be peace to men and angels, covenant of God and man, spiritual faith, and love, and hope of life and gladness in all light.

Lo! we have heard how by His hither-coming the Son of healing, Mighty Child of God, vouchsafed salvation, freed and upheld the folk beneath the clouds, that now each man of men while he dwelleth here alive may choose the shame of hell or the splendour of heaven, the gleaming light or the loathsome night, the spell of glory or the vengeance of darkness, joy with the Lord or tumult with devils, torment with fiends or bliss with the angels, or life or death, as may be dearer to him to accomplish so long as flesh and spirit dwell together in the world. And to the majesty of the Trinity be glory and eternal thanks. Wherefore it seemeth well that mortal men give thanks to God for every goodly thing which late and early He hath wrought for us by the mystery of many a marvel. He granteth us food and wealth of substance, weal in wide-stretching lands, and kindly weather under the sheltering skies. The sun and the moon, candles of heaven, brightest of stars, shine unto all men on the earth. Dew falleth and rain; they bring forth plenty for sustenance unto the children of men; they enlarge the abundance of earth. Wherefore should we give thanks and praise unto our God, more especially for that salvation which He hath granted us at His Ascension to be our hope, when He dispelled that woe which we endured aforetime; and for mankind the One-begotten King appeased that greatest feud with His dear Father. That doom He turned aside in peace unto our souls which aforetime, with wrathful heart, was spoken for a sorrow unto the sons of men:

“I wrought thee of earth; on the earth shalt thou dwell in woe, living in toil, suffering exile, unto the joy of fiends chanting a song of death. Unto that same shalt thou return, teeming with worms, and from the earth seek out the fire of torment.”

Lo! this hath the Prince made easier unto us, unto the sons of men, when that He put on limbs and flesh. When the Son of God, the Lord of

hosts, was fain of His ascending up unto the land of angels, then at that holy hour came a will to help us in our woe.

Of Him Job wrought a song, as well he knew; adored the Helm of men and praised the Saviour and, in true love, unto the Son of God contrived a name. And he named him Bird, which the Jews might no whit understand in godly strength of spirit. Unknown and secret to its foes on earth, was the flight of that Bird, unto all such as had in soul a clouded wisdom and a stony heart. Nor would they recognize those radiant tokens which the fair Son of God had wrought before them, many and manifold throughout the world. Thus that fair Bird made trial of flight when bold and strong in might it sought out that radiant home, the angels' realm above; and when again it stooped unto these mortal lands, in grace of spirit sought the folds of earth, and turned its way unto the world. Of it the prophet sang: "In the arms of angels was He lifted up in the bounteous fulness of His might, high and holy, above the majesty of heaven." Nor might they know in any wise the flight of that Bird, whoso rejected the Ascension, nor held belief that the Lord of life in the image of a man was lifted up in holiness from earth above the majesty of the heavenly hosts. So He that shaped the world, the Spirit-Son of God, showeth us honour and granteth us grace, eternal habitations with the angels. And He soweth varied wisdom of mind and setteth it in the hearts of men. Unto one He sendeth wise skill of tongue through the spirit of his mouth and noble insight in his heart, and richly may he sing and utter all things, whoso hath might of wisdom hidden in his heart. And with his fingers one may fairly sound the harp before the hosts, clearly strike upon the glee-wood. One may read aright all godly law, and one telleth the mysteries of the stars and the wide universe. One may write skilfully the spoken word. He speedeth the strife of one in battle when the archers send a shower of darts, a flashing flight of arrows over the shield's defence. One may boldly drive his ship over the salty sea, stir up the raging waves. And one ascendeth upon the steep, high cross. One may work a fair weapon, a tempered sword, and one knoweth the path of the plains, wide-stretching ways. So unto us the Lord, the Son of God, dealeth out His gifts on earth. But to no single man doth He give all wisdom of heart, lest that in his strength beyond others pride take hold upon him to his hurt. Thus mighty God, King of

every creature, with bounteous blessings showeth honour and power upon the children of earth. So unto the blessed He granteth bliss in heaven and foundeth peace for angels and for men for ever.

So He showeth honour on His handiwork. Of Him the prophet spake that holy gems were lifted up on high, the radiant stars of heaven, the sun and moon. What are these gems so beauteous save God Himself? He is the true brightness of the sun, a noble radiance unto angels and the dwellers of earth. Above the earth gleameth the moon, a ghostly star; even so shineth bright the Church of God where righteousness and truth are met together—as it saith in the Books—since that the Son of God ascended up from earth, the Prince of purity. Then the Church of the fulfillers of the law suffered persecution under heathen shepherds. Those sinful men recked not of truth, nor of the Spirit's need; but they cast down and burned the Church of God, wrought bloody deeds, hated and harried. Yet by the Spirit's grace came forth bliss for the thanes of God after the Ascension of the Eternal Lord. Of Him sang Solomon, the son of David, versed in songs and spiritual mysteries, ruler of peoples, and this word he spake:

“It shall be known that the King of angels, the Lord strong and mighty, shall ascend a mount, leap the high dunes and compass about the hills and knolls with splendour. And He shall save the world and all that dwell therein by that noble leap.”

The first leap was when He came unto the Maid, the Virgin undefiled, and without sin put on mortal image; and that became a comfort unto all earth-dwellers. The second leap was the birth of the Babe, what time He lay within the manger, in the image of a child, all wrapped in swaddling clothes, the Glory of all glories. The third leap was the course of heaven's King when He ascended up upon the cross, the Father's Spirit of Comfort. The fourth leap was to the grave, when He descended from the cross into the fast-closed tomb. The fifth leap was then when He cast down hell's habitants into eternal torment; bound their king, the hostile-minded, advocate of fiends, with burning bonds within, where still he lieth in his durance, chained in fetters, fast in sin. And the sixth leap was the triumph of the Holy God, when He ascended up to heaven unto His olden home. Then in that holy hour the angel-throng grew blithe in rapture and in gladsomeness. For they beheld the Lord of glory,

the Prince of princes, come unto His native land, unto the shining dwellings. Then the triumph of their Prince became an everlasting joy unto the blessed habitants of heaven. As here on earth the Eternal Son of God ascended up by leaps over the high hills, above the mountains, so should we mortal men in our heart's musing mount by leaps from strength to strength; seek after glory that we may ascend unto that highest summit, by our holy works, where is hope and joy, a perfect band of thanes. Our need is great that with our hearts we seek salvation, we who earnestly believe in spirit that the Son of healing, the Living God, with our mortal body ascended up from hence.

Wherefore should we despise all idle lusts, the wounds of sin, and joy in better things. Verily we have the Almighty Father for our comfort in the heavens. He sendeth from on high in holiness His heralds hither unto us, and they will shield us against the grievous arrows of the spoilers, lest that the hell-fiends work us wounds when the Lord of evil sendeth forth a bitter dart from his deceitful bow against the folk of God. Wherefore should we steadfastly and warily hold ward against the sudden onslaught, lest that the poisoned dart, the bitter shaft, the cunning imagination of our foes, should pierce within our frame. Dire is that hurt, wanest of wounds. Wherefore let us watch so long as we have dwelling upon earth. Let us make supplication for the peace of God, the Father, and pray to the Son of God, the gentle Spirit, that He, who granted us life and limbs and body and spirit, may shield us from the wiles of the wicked, the weapons of our foes. To Him be praise and heavenly glory forever!

Nor need any man of the race of men on earth fear for the darts of devils, the spear-flights of fiends, if that God, the Lord of hosts, doth shield him. That doom is near when we must reap rewards according as we have won them by our deeds during the days of life on the wide earth. In the beginning, as it saith in the Books, that Treasure-Hoard of might stooped meekly unto earth, unto the Virgin's womb, the noble Son of God in holiness from heaven. Verily I look with dread unto that sterner doom when the Prince of angels cometh yet again—I who kept not well what things my Saviour bade me in the Book. I shall behold the terror of the vengeance of sin, I ween full well, when many shall be led unto the assemblage, before the face of the Eternal judge.

Then the *Courageous*(C) shall quake. He shall hear the King speak, the Ruler of heaven, uttering wrathful words unto such as aforetime in the world hearkened feebly unto Him when *affliction*(Y) and need(N) most easily might find comfort. Then shall many a one in fear on that plain wearily await what dire penalty He shall will to him according to his deeds. Then shall the *winsomeness*(W) of the treasures of earth flee away. Long time was *our*(U) portion of life's joys compassed about by *ocean*(L) floods, our *possessions*(F) on earth.

Then shall treasure burn in the fiery blast; brightly shall rage the swift, red flame darting in wrath over the wide world. Plains shall perish and castles crumble away. Then shall the fire be fleet; greediest of spirits, it shall devour ancient treasure ruthlessly, which men possessed in olden days while still was pride on earth. Therefore will I teach each well-loved man that he give heed unto the Spirit's need, nor pour it forth in pride while God willeth that he may dwell here in the world, while the soul journeyeth on in the body, that friendly inn. Let every man of men bethink him earnestly in the days of his life how mildly came the Lord of might to us of old by the word of an angel. Yet shall He be wroth when He cometh again, stern and righteous. Then shall the heavens be shaken and the mighty ends of the earth shall tremble. The radiant King shall reward it that they lived on earth in deeds of wickedness, defiled with sin. Long time shall they in the bath of fire, weary of heart, compassed about by its surges, receive dire recompense.

Then shall the King of might come unto the assemblage with the greatest of hosts, and loud shall the terror of man be heard in the thunders of heaven, the clamour of them that wail; joyless they shall lament before the face of the Eternal judge, they who in their works have feeble hope. Then shall be seen a mightier fear than ever since Creation was known on earth. But in that sudden hour, unto every one of the workers of sin, it shall be dearer far than all this fleeting world that he may shelter him in that victorious band when the Lord of hosts, the Prince of princes, shall judge to all, unto them that are dear and them that are hateful, to every one of men a just reward. Great is our need that ere that day of terror in this barren time we eagerly be mindful of the spirit's glory.

Now is it most like as if on ocean floods, over the chill waters we sail in ships, in our ocean steeds over the spacious sea, journey on in our barks. Fearful is that stream, those surges high whereon we toss throughout this changeful world; windy the waves over the deep sea-path. Bitter was our way of life until we sailed to land over the ocean's ridge. Then help came unto us that the Spirit-Son of God guided us into the harbour of salvation, and granted us grace; that we may have knowledge even from the vessel's side where, fast at anchor, we may moor our stallions of the sound, our old seasteeds. Wherefore let us set our hope upon that haven which heaven's Lord, in holiness on high, hath opened unto us by His Ascension.

Doomsday

Then in the midnight the great day of the Lord of might shall come with power unto mortal men, the radiant world, even as a crafty thief, a robber bold, who creepeth in the darkness, in the black night, and falleth suddenly on care-free men bound in slumber; evilly assaileth earls all unprepared.

So on Mount Sion shall gather a mighty host, faithful unto the Lord, bright and blithe; and unto them shall blessedness be given. Then from the four borders of the world, from the uttermost kingdom of earth, four radiant angels in accord shall blow upon the trumpet in one great blast. Then shall the earth tremble, the ground under the foot of man. They shall sound together, steadfast, glorious, unto the path of the stars; they shall peal and send their voice south and north, cast and west over all creation. They shall wake from death, out of the ancient earth, in terror, the sons of warriors, the race of man, unto the judgment. They shall bid arise out of firm slumber suddenly.

Then shall be heard a wailing folk, sorrowful in soul, bitterly disquieted, lamenting in woe the deeds of their days of life, trembling in terror. That shall be the greatest of portents, of all such as early or late have ever been revealed to man. There shall meet together the secret hosts of angels and of devils, the radiant and the dark. And both shall come, the white and black, according as a home is wrought for them, in different wise for angels and for fiends.

Then suddenly from out the south and east cometh upon Mount Sion, from the Lord, the radiance of the sun, gleaming more brightly than men may imagine it in their hearts, shining in splendour, when the Son of God, through the arching heavens, appeareth hither. Then cometh the wondrous presence of Christ, the beauteous radiance of the noble King, eastward from the skies, pleasant in spirit unto His own people, bitter unto the sinful, varied in wondrous measure, unto the blessed and unto the wretched unlike.

Unto the good shall He be gracious, winsome and fair to see unto that holy host, beautiful in joy, a gentle friend. Pleasing and blissful shall it be to well-loved men to see that radiant splendour, mild in pleasure, the coming of their Lord, the King of might, unto such as pleased Him well of old in heart, in their words and works. But unto evil men He shall be fearsome, terrible to see, unto the sinful, unto such as thither come with transgressions all undone. That may be a warning of punishment to him that hath wise thought, so that he may be no whit afraid; for the terror of that presence he shall have no dread of heart when he beholdeth the Lord of all creation moving on with mighty wonders to judge the hosts. And round about him on either hand fly thronging angel-troops, a band of radiant beings, hosts of the holy, in ample train.

Then shall resound the vast creation, and before the Lord there shall go forth the mightiest of surging fires over the wide earth; the hot flame shall leap. Then shall the heavens crash, the steadfast stars and radiant shall fall. The sun shall be turned dark unto the hue of blood, which gleamed so brightly over the ancient world unto the sons of men. The very moon, that in the night of old shed her light on men, shall sink from her station; so also shall the stars fade from heaven, through the fierce air, smitten with storms.

And the Almighty with His angel-throng, the Lord of mighty kings, the glorious Prince, will come unto the assemblage. There shall be an exultant throng of thanes. Holy souls shall fare forthwith their Lord, what time the Warden of peoples, with menace of terror, shall Himself seek out the tribes of earth. Then loud shall be heard throughout the spacious earth the noise of the trumpets of heaven, and on the seven sides the winds shall roar, shall blow, howling in mightiest tumult. They

shall wake and wither the earth with tempest, filling the world with their breath. Then shall be heard a heavy crash, loud and measureless, deafening, violent, mightiest of thunders, terrible to men.

The weary hosts of men in multitudes shall depart into the wide flame, where a destroying fire shall come upon them still alive, some up, some down, smitten of the flame. Sure is it that then, all fulfilled of care, the race of Adam shall wail in sore affliction; nor for little cause, these woeful tribes, but for the greatest of heavy hardships, when in one embrace the wan surge of fire, the dusky flame, far and wide shall seize on all three together, the seas with their fish, the earth and her hills, and the heaven, above with all its stars. Fierce and furious the consuming flame shall burn all three. And all the world shall wail in woe in that dread hour.

So shall the greedy spirit run through earth, the destroying flame through high-built halls. The wide-known blast of fire, hot and devouring, shall fill the plain of earth, the very world with the terror of its flame. Broken city-walls shall fall together, mountains shall melt and lofty cliffs, that shielded earth of old against the sea, firm against the floods, secure and steadfast, barriers against the waves, the rolling surge. Then on every creature, on bird and beast, that fire of death shall seize, and over earth shall fare the dusky flame, a raging warrior. As of old waters flowed, the driving seas, then in that bath of fire the sea fish shall burn, sundered from the deep. All forspent each monster of the sea shall be consumed, water shall bum as wax.

Then shall be more of marvels than any may imagine in his heart, when the whirlwind and the storm and the fierce air shall rend the broad creation. Men shall mourn, sorrowing with tears and woeful voices, downcast and sad of soul, distressed with sorrow. The dusky flame shall blaze on those undone by sin, and fire shall devour golden jewels, the olden treasure of the kings of the land. Then in the thunder of heaven there shall be tumult and woe, strife of the living, lament, loud wailing, the pitiful plaint of men. Then may not any stained with sin win peace, or ever on earth escape away from that burning. But the fire shall take all things in the world, shall burrow grimly, eagerly search out all the folds of earth within and without, till that the heat of its flame hath burned away all the stain of the sin of the world in its billowing surge.

Then shall mighty God come unto that glorious mount with the greatest of angel-bands, the King of heaven's angels shining in holiness, resplendent above His train: the all-wielding God. And round about Him shall gleam in glory the best of noble hosts, holy armies, the blessed angel-throng. Troubled in their innermost thoughts they shall tremble in the fear of God, the Father. No marvel is it if the impure race of mortal men, sorrowing in care, have heavy dread when this holy order, white and heavenly bright, the Spirit-host, are smitten with terror before His presence, when these bright creatures await with trembling the judgment of the Lord. Direst of days shall that be in the world, when the King of Glory in majesty chasteneth every people; biddeth mortal men dowered with speech rise up from out the graves of earth; biddeth the nations come to judgment, all mankind.

Then straight shall all the race of Adam put on flesh; they shall be at an end of their tarrying, their rest in the earth. At the coming of Christ shall each one rise to life, put on limbs and body, grow young again. He shall have upon him all of good or evil that in days of yore upon earth he garnered into his soul as the years passed by. He shall have both together, body and soul. And then shall come to light before the King of heaven the form of his works and the memory of his words, and the musing of his heart.

Mankind shall be enlarged and renewed by the Creator; a mighty host shall rise to judgment when the Lord of life looseth the bonds of death. Then shall the air be kindled, the heavenly stars shall fall; widely the greedy flame shall pillage. Spirits shall turn away unto their long home. For the deeds of men shall be known on earth, nor may they at all dissemble before their Lord the hoard of their hearts, their secret thoughts. No deeds are dark to Him, but God shall know on that great day how each one of men hath deserved eternal life, and all that early or late they wrought in the world shall come to light. Nor shall any of the musings of men be secret, but that great day will reveal the hoard of the casket of the soul, all the thoughts of the heart. Wherefore he should early be mindful of his spirit's need, whoso would bring a beauteous aspect unto God, when the hot, consuming fire testeth in the presence of the Victor-judge how souls are held against the storms of sin.

Then the sound of the trump and the gleaming standard, the burning flame and the heavenly host, the angel-band and the menace of terror, the day of wrath and the lofty cross, lifted on high for a sign of sway, shall muster before Him all the multitudes of men, every soul of those that early or late put on limbs in the flesh. Then this mighty host shall pass before the Lord, forever living and ever young, with desire and heavy need. Named by name they shall bear the hoard of their hearts, the treasure of their souls, before the Son of God. Then will the Father know how His children bring their souls unmarred from that land wherein they dwelt. They shall be of good courage who bring a radiant beauty unto God. Their might and joy shall be exceeding full to recompense their souls, reward their works. Well is it with them that in that awful hour find grace with God.

Then shall sin-stained men with woe of heart for their lot behold the greatest of sorrows. Nor shall it bring them grace that there, present before all peoples, standeth the cross of our Lord, brightest of beacons, with the blood of the King of heaven all bedewed, drenched with His pure blood. And it shineth resplendent over the wide creation. Shadows shall be dispelled where that radiant tree casteth its light on men. Yet shall it become an affliction, a woe unto the nations, unto all such as working iniquity knew no thanks to God, for that He was hung upon that holy tree for the sins of men. There for mankind with love He purchased life, He, the Prince, on that day with the ransom—His body, which had wrought no evil, no transgression nor sin—wherewith He set us free. Yet will He sternly take recompense again for all, when the red cross shineth over all the heavens in the place of the sun.

And the timid, undone in transgression, swart workers of sin, shall behold it in sorrow. They shall see it as a bale, which came best of all things unto them, had they but known it as good. Ruefully they shall see the former wounds upon their Lord, and the open gashes where plotters of hatred pierced with nails the white hands and the holy feet; yea! from His side let blood, and water and blood come forth together in the sight of all, ran out before the eyes of men, when He was on the cross. All this then may they see, open and clear, that for the love of sinful men He suffered many sorrows. Truly may the sons of men perceive how they denied Him in their lying hearts, flouted Him with words of insolence,

spat their spittle in His face, deriding Him. With their hands hell-destined men struck that blessed face with outstretched palm and fist, and round about His head they bound a bitter crown of thorns, blind in heart, strayed and erring men.

They saw the dumb creation, the radiant-green earth and upper sky, with trembling feel its Saviour's agonies; and though they lived not, woefully they wailed when men of evil seized upon their Maker with sinful hands. The sun was darkened, veiled in sorrow and in Jerusalem men saw the best of goodly webs, whereon the multitude had gazed of old, the glory of that holy house, rent from above so that in two halves it lay upon the earth. The temple-veil, wrought with wondrous colour to be the beauty of that house, was cleft in twain even as though a keen sword-edge had pierced it through. Many walls and rocks throughout the world were burst asunder; also the earth, shaken with terror, trembled in tumult. The broad sea made known the strength of its might, and from its bonds in wrath broke forth unto the lap of earth; and from their shining stations the stars forsook their splendour sweet. In that same hour heaven clearly knew who decked it brightly with its starry gems; wherefore it sent its herald when first was born the radiant King of all the world. Lo! sinful men saw truly, on that very day whereon He suffered, a mighty wonder, when earth gave up all those who lay within. Quickened they rose to life whom she of old had firm constrained, the dead and buried, who held within their hearts the Lord's behests. And Hell perceived, she who avenges sin, that the Creator, the all-wielding God, was come, when she gave that horde the hosts from out her burning bosom.

Then was blessing come to many a heart, and from their souls sorrow stole away. Yea! the sea made known who stablished it upon the spacious earth, the mighty King of glory. Wherefore it yielded Him a way when God would walk upon the waves, nor dared the ocean-stream to cover with its floods the feet of God. And many a tree, no little number, revealed who shaped them with their blossoms, when mighty God mounted on one of them, whereon He knew affliction for the need of human kind, a baleful death to succour men. Then many a tree wept bloody tears under its bark, ruddy, abundant tears; the sap was turned to blood. Nor may the dwellers of the world unriddle that, by craft of

wisdom, how many lifeless things, that might not feel, still knew the Passion of our Lord. They that are the noblest of the tribes of earth, and eke the heaven's high halls, for that alone grew sorrowful and smitten with fear. For though by nature they had no understanding hearts, yet wondrously they weened it when the Lord departed from the flesh.

But the tribes of men, blind of heart, harder than stones of flint, knew not to confess their God that the Prince, the Lord Almighty, delivered them from the torments of Hell, by His holy might, and that from the first beginnings of the world far-seeing men, prophets of the Lord, holy and sage of heart, with searching wisdom, full oft nor once alone spake to the sons of men anent that noble Son that, through the holy maid, the Precious Stone, the Lord of glory, Prince of bliss, would become a refuge and a comfort unto human kind.

What weeneth he who is not mindful in his heart of the gentle teachings of his Lord, and of all the sorrows that He suffered for the sons of men, since He was fain that we might have for ever a heavenly home. In the grim day of the great doom it shall go sadly with that man who, all defiled by deadly sin, gazeth on the gashes of the Lord, his wounds and woe. With weary hearts they shall behold that greatest of sorrows, how with His body, with pitying heart, the King himself redeemed them from their sin, that they might live set free from their transgressions and have the everlasting blessedness of glory. But for that gift they knew no thanks unto their Lord; wherefore in God shall they behold the token of their woeful lot, manifest, boding ill.

Then Christ shall sit upon His royal throne, on His high judgment-seat; the God of heaven's hosts, the Almighty Father, the Shining Lord, the Sovereign of the skies, shall adjudge unto every folk rightfully according to the things they have wrought. On the right hand shall be mustered the multitude of the pure, chosen unto Christ Himself for all that is choicest, for that they eagerly fulfilled His words in the days of their life. And the workers of sin shall be sundered unto a harder lot before their Lord. The true King of victory shall bid that sinful horde on the left hand depart. Then detected they shall wail and tremble in terror before God. As foul as goats, an unclean folk, they may not hope for mercy. Thus before God shall the soul's judgment be decreed unto

the generations of men according to the things that formerly they wrought.

There among the blessed, easily to be discerned, shall be three tokens that they have heeded well their Master's will in their words and works. The first clear token is that they gleam with light before the peoples, with glory and splendour through the dwellings of the cities. And on them shine the works that formerly they wrought, on every one of them, more radiant than the sun.

And a second token shall be shown that they in glory know the grace of God, beholding with enraptured eyes that in the heavenly kingdom they may know bright joys in blessedness among the angels. And the third token shall be that the blessed hosts may see how those undone by sin suffer sorely in requital of their transgression—the raging flame and the sting of serpents with bitter jaws, a host of burning souls. And in their heart waxeth a winsome joy. When they see others suffer that evil which by God's mercy they escaped, then the more eagerly do they give thanks to God for blessedness and bliss—they who see that He redeemed them from that evil torment and granted them eternal joy. For them is Hell fast locked and the Kingdom of Heaven yielded up. So shall recompense be given them who heeded well in love their Maker's will.

But to those others shall unlike decree go forth. Full too many a woe must they behold upon themselves, abundant evil, suffering for transgressions done. Unto them sorrowing cleaveth sore distress, a grievous widespread evil on three sides. And of those many miseries whereon they gaze one shall be the dreadful fire of Hell before them, prepared in punishment, wherein forever they must strive and suffer curse and exile.

Likewise there shall be a second misery to the shame of guilty men that they, by sin defiled, must needs endure most deep disgrace. In them the Lord beholdeth no small toll of loathsome sins; likewise the radiant throng of heavenly angels and the sons of men, all they that dwell on earth and the grim fiend shall know their dark craft and every deed of evil. Through the flesh may they behold the stains of vice upon the soul. The sinful flesh shall be shot through with shame as a bright glass, that men most easily may gaze it through. And in their heavy need a third sorrow, a wailing woe, shall be that they behold how guiltless men in gladness rejoice in their good deeds, which they, unhappy men,

disdained to do while yet their days endured. And for their deeds shall come distress and weeping, that formerly so freely they accomplished sin.

They shall see better men shining in bliss, nor shall their misery only be a torment unto them, but the blessedness of those others shall be a sorrow, that they in former days passed by so fair and winsome joy through the deceitful pleasures of the body, the idle lust of sinful flesh. Then confounded, smit with shame, they shall stray dizzily, bearing their sinful burden, their deeds of guilt which all that folk doth see. Then were it better for them had they humbled them before one man aforetime for their works of sin, every iniquity and wrongful act, and to God's messenger confessed that to their shame they knew their deeds of evil. Neither may he that shriveth see through the flesh upon the soul whether one speaketh truth or lying words when he confesseth sin. Yet man may heal his every evil and unclean act if he but tell it to one single man. And none may hide on that grim day an evil unatoned; but then the host shall see it. Yea! with the body's eyes shall we behold upon our souls hateful transgressions, the wounds of sin, impure meditations, musings of ill. Nor may any man tell it to another with what eagerness each one of us by every act is fain in striving after life, anxiously endeavouring after days of living, to purge away the rust of sin to chasten self, to heal the scars of former wounds, what little time of life remaineth, that pure and undismayed before the eyes of them that dwell on earth he may enjoy his heritage with men so long as soul and body live together.

But with the heart's eyes should we eagerly and wisely gaze through the soul's casing to the sins within. For with those other eyes, the jewels of the head, in no wise may we penetrate the spirit of the secret thought, whether below it evil dwell or good, that it may be pleasing unto God in that dread hour.

Then in glory He shall shine above all hosts, in radiant flame from His high seat, where before angels and all the tribes of men He first shall speak to the most blessed, with loving kindness grant them grace in holy words. The High-King of heaven shall show them gentle comfort and bring them peace. He shall bid them, free of stain, and full of blessing, depart unto the land of the joy of angels, and ever gladsomely enjoy it.

“Now with friends receive ye the Kingdom of My Father, that was prepared for you in winsomeness before all worlds, blessedness with bliss, bright beauty of home, where ye with well-loved men may see true weal of life, sweet heavenly joy. This have ye merited since joyfully ye received with gracious heart wretched men, the needy of the world; when in My name they humbly craved your pity then did ye grant them help and shelter, unto the hungry bread, clothes to the naked, and those that lay diseased in pain, enthralled of sickness, their souls ye softly stayed with love of heart. All that ye did unto Me what time ye sought them out with kindly love, ever strengthening their souls with comfort. Wherefore in blessedness with My beloved long shall ye reap reward.”

Then shall all-wielding God in the menace of terror begin to speak unto the evil, unto those on His left hand in unlike wise. They may not look for mercy from the Lord, nor life nor pity, but there a reward shall come unto all men, unto all with speech endowed, according to their acts of word and deed. They shall suffer a righteous doom full of terror. And on that day the great mercy of the Almighty Lord shall be cut off from all the tribes of men when wrathfully He imputeth to that folk perverse their sinful deeds; in words of anger biddeth them make accounting of their life which formerly He gave for blessedness unto so wicked men. Almighty God shall begin to speak as He were speaking to one only man, yet shall He mean all sinful folk.

“Lo! man! with my hand I wrought thee first, gave thee reason, shaped thy limbs of clay, yea! and breathed a living spirit in thee. Over all created things I honoured thee. I gave thee form and aspect like to Me; granted thee fulness of might, weal over all wide lands. No deal of woe thou knewest for thy portion, nor of the darkness thou must now endure. Yet knewest thou no thanks that I shaped thee in beauty, wrought thee winsome, granted thee wealth of riches that thou mightest wield it over the things of the world, where I set thee on the fair earth that thou mightest enjoy the bright profusion of Paradise, radiant of hue. Thou wouldest not keep the word of life, but broke My bidding at thy Bane’s behest, hearkening rather unto scathing spoilers than to the Lord that made thee.

“Now I pass by that ancient tale how thou in the beginning wroughtest evil, squandering in deeds of sin that I gave thee as profit.

That I gave to thee abundantly of good and in it all there seemed unto thy heart too little of felicity, if thou mightest not have fulness of might of like greatness with God's, therefore thou grewest estranged from that delight, cast out afar after the will of thy foes. The beauty of Paradise, the home of spirits, thou must needs forego, sorrowful in soul, wicked and wretched, shorn of all thy bounty and blessedness. Then wast thou driven out into the gloomy world to undergo heavy affliction all this weary while, pain and toilsome strife and darksome death, and on thy going hence must needs in Hell abjectly perish, bereft of helping hands. Then was I rueful that My handiwork should fare forth into fiends' dominion, that the sons of men should know destruction, make trial of a dwelling all unknown, and grievous fortune.

"Then I Myself descended as a son unto his mother; yet was her maidenhood inviolate of man. I only was born a comfort unto men; and with their hands men swathed Me, clad Me in weeds of the needy, and laid Me in darkness wrapped in swarthy raiment. Lo! that have I endured for the world. Little I seemed unto the children of men. I lay on the hard stone, an infant in a manger, that I might save thee from torment, and the burning bale of Hell. That misery I suffered that thou mightest shine holy and blessed in eternal life.

"No pride it was to Me; but I suffered in My youth misery and shameless pain of body that I might be like thee, and that thou, purged of sin, mightest grow like to My winsome beauty. And for My love of man My face and head have suffered, enduring grievous blows. Oft on My face I received the spittle of sinners, from the mouths of graceless men. Bitterly they blended unto Me an unsweet drink of vinegar and gall. There before that folk I suffered the hatred of hostile men; they afflicted Me with outrage, shrank not from enmity, with scourges scourged Me. That misery in meekness all for thee I suffered, insult and reviling word. About My head they wreathed a wounding crown, heavily pressed it home, all wrought of thorns. Then was I hung upon the lofty rood, fastened upon the cross. And straight with spear from out My side they let My blood flow forth, My gore unto the ground, that thou thereby mightest be freed from the dominion of devils. So, unstained of sin, I suffered torment, evil affliction, till I sent forth alone from out its house of flesh My living spirit. Behold the deadly wounds

they wrought of old upon My hands and feet, whereby made fast I hung in agony. Still mayest thou behold clearly in My side the bloody gash. How is the account unequal 'twixt us twain! I bore thy suffering that in blessedness thou mightest happily enjoy My native kingdom; for thee I purchased dearly by My death long life that thenceforth in the light, unstained of sin, thou mightest dwell in beauty. My body, which wrought no harm to any, lay enfolded in the earth, buried in the sepulchre below, that thou mightest be on high brightly exalted 'mid the host of heaven. Why didst thou forsake that shining life that with My body I kindly bought in love for thee, a succour unto wretched men? Surely thou wast void of understanding that thou knewest not thanks to God for thy redemption. I ask nought for that bitter death I suffered for thee. Yield Me thy life; that life for which I gave Mine own in ransom, in martyrdom, that life I now demand, which thou hast slain with evil to thy shame. The holy temple which I had hallowed in thee, a house of joy—why hast thou fouled it of thine own self-will in lust of sin and filthy deed?

“Yea! the very body that I redeemed from out the clutch of fiends, forbade it sin, working thy wickedness, thou hast stained with shames. Why didst thou hang Me on a cross of thy hand's making in greater agony than I hung of old? Lo! this to Me the harder seemeth. Severer unto Me thy cross of sins whereon I am reluctant hung, than was that other cross whereon I mounted up of Mine own will, when urgently thy woe repented Me in heart, when forth from Hell I drew thee, where thenceforth thou wast fain to dwell. In the world was I poor that in heaven thou mightest have wealth; wretched was I in thy kingdom that thou mightest have bliss in Mine. Yet for all in thy heart thou knewest no thanks unto thy Saviour-God. Lo! I gave you bidding to cherish well My brothers in the world, with all the goods I gave you on the earth to help the poor; ye have fulfilled it ill. Ye have denied the needy to enter in under your roof, refused them everything with stony heart, clothes unto the naked, meat unto those anhungered, though in My name weary, in sickness, they besought for water, bountiless, plagued of thirst, distressed for drink. Roughly ye refused; the sorrowful ye visited not, spake unto them no gentle word of comfort, that they might gain a better cheer. All this ye did to Me, unto the scorn of the King of heaven.

Wherefore ye shall suffer grievous, endless torment, endure exile with fiends."

Then over all the Warden of victory shall issue an awful sentence, abounding in pain, over that fated folk. He shall say to that band of sinful souls:

"Fare ye now accursed, by your own wills bereft of angel's joy, unto eternal fire, hot and grim, that was prepared of old for Satan and his fellows, the Fiend and his dark host. Ye shall sink therein."

Shorn of counsel they may not scorn the sentence of the King of heaven, but swiftly they shall sink into the deep pit, into the dusky flame the host of the sinful, spirits doomed under the folds of earth, unto the dwelling of fiends the horde of the guilty, to destruction the cursed, unto the house of torment, death hall of the devil. Never again shall they seek remembrance of God, nor escape out of their sins, but stained of evil, bound in burning flame they shall suffer death. Ever vengeance for their sins shall be upon them, that is eternal torment. Nor may that flaming pit ever in the eternal night bum away sin from the sons of men, pollution from their souls forever. But ever the deep abyss feedeth those wretched souls; bottomless it holdeth spirits in the darkness, consumeth them with ancient flame and chilling terror, with serpents dire and many a torment. with bitter jaws it scatheth all that folk.

Of that may we have heed, declaring straightway, telling truly that the warden of the soul hath lost life's wisdom, he who regardeth not whether his soul know misery or bliss, where, after his going hence, he shall dwell forever. He feareth not to work his wickedness, rash-hearted man, nor any whit hath he of rue in heart, that the Holy Ghost depart away from him by reason of his sins in this fleeting life. Then the worker of evil, trembling before God, shall stand black-hearted at the judgment, stained with death, accursed with his sins. The faithless shall be filled with fire, unworthy of life, smitten of dread before the face of God. Dusky, devoid of beauty, he shall have the hue of the damned, a sign of the guilt of the soul. Then when there is no time the sons of men shall weep their tears and wail for their transgressions. Too late they shall do to the comfort of their souls, when the Lord of hosts will not regard how sinful men bewail in bitterness their olden treasure in that revealing hour. Nor shall any time of sorrow be vouchsafed to men, that he, who

will not win his soul's salvation, while still he dwelleth here on earth, may then find healing. On no good man shall woe be visited, nor weal on any evil, but every wight shall bear his works alone.

Wherefore he who would fain win life at his Creator's hand must haste while soul and body dwell together. Let him cherish eagerly the beauty of his soul after the will of God, be heedful of his words and deeds, his bearing and his inward thoughts, so long as this world gliding in the shadow may shine for him, that in this fleeting hour he lose not the bounty of his joy, his toll of days, and comely deeds, and his reward of glory that the King of heaven in that holy hour justly granteth, as guerdon of their triumph, unto all such as hearken unto Him with eager hearts.

Then heaven and hell shall be filled with the children of heroes, the souls of men. The gulf shall swallow up God's enemies; the hurtling flame shall seize on wicked men mortal transgressors, neither allow them thence to flee away with joy to any refuge. But fire shall bind the fast imprisoned horde and scourge the children of sin. Insolent to me it seemeth that men endowed with spirit will not heed in their hearts what the Ruler layeth on them in His vengeance, upon hostile men. Then life and death shall take their fill of souls; the house of torment shall be open and revealed to faithless men. Men swift to sin shall fill it with their blackened souls. Then to avenge their guilt the wicked horde shall be sundered, the cursed from the holy, unto destroying pain. There shall thieves and spoilers and liars and adulterers have no hope of life; and perjurers shall know the guerdon of sin, bitter and terrible. Then shall hell take in the host of the faithless and God shall give them over to destruction unto fiends. The damned shall suffer grievous mortal bale. Wretched shall be that man who willet to work transgression so that in his sin he shall be sundered from the Lord at the day of doom to death below, among the race of hell, in that burning fire, under locks of flame. There shall they yield their limbs to be bound, to be burned, to be scourged in vengeance of sin.

Then at the word of the King, by the might of God, shall the Holy Spirit fasten the locks of hell, that greatest of torture-houses, filled with fire and the horde of fiends. Direst of deaths shall that be of devils and of men. That is a joyless house. Thence may not any ever flee away from

out his icy bonds. They broke the King's behest, the bright commandments of the Books. Wherefore they must dwell in everlasting darkness, endure an endless woe for ever, stained with sin, they who scorned on earth the glory of the heavenly kingdom.

Then the chosen shall bear before Christ bright treasure, and joy shall live upon the day of doom. They shall know the blessedness of peaceful life with God, which shall be given unto all saints within the heavenly realm. That land shall never come unto an end, but there forevermore, all free of sin, they shall know bliss, praise the Lord of hosts, dear Saviour of their life, all wreathed in light, enwrapped in peace, safe from sorrows, glorified with joy, loved of the Lord. Always in bliss forever they shall know the fellowship of angels, and radiant in grace adore the Lord of men. The Father of all hath power and upholdeth the host of the holy. There is the song of angels, the bliss of the blessed; there is the Lord's dear face more radiant than the sun unto all happy souls. There is life without death, a gladsome band of men; youth without age, the glory of the hosts of heaven; health without pangs unto the righteous; rest without toil, the lot of the blessed; day without darkness, bright and filled with glory; bliss without sorrow; love between friends forever without discord; peace without strife for blessed souls in heaven in the company of holy men. There shall be no hunger nor thirst, neither sleep nor heavy sickness, nor burning of the sun, nor cold, nor care. But that blessed band, fairest of hosts, shall know the favour of their King forever and glory with the Lord.

Second Ending

That shall be the fairest of delights when first they meet, the angel and the blessed soul; when it forsaketh the joys of earth, leaveth that fleeting rapture and from the body stealeth away. Then shall the angel speak—for he hath higher order—greet that other spirit and declare unto it God's commands.

“Now mayest thou fare whither long and oft thou strovest. I will lead thee. The ways are mild and the light of glory radiantly revealed. Thou art a wayfarer unto that holy home where never cometh rue and where is healing for affliction. There shall be rapture of angels, peace and

holiness and rest for souls. There evermore may they take joy with God who keep his judgments here on earth. He keepeth an eternal reward for them in heaven, where the Highest, the King of all kings holdeth dominion over his cities. There are the dwellings that never shall decay, neither for misery shall life flee away from those that dwell therein; but it shall be fairer and more enduring. They shall enjoy youth and the mercy of God. Thither after death may come the souls of the righteous who teach and keep the law of God, and sing His praise. They shall subdue accursed spirits and win the peace of heaven. Thither early or late shall rise the spirit of that man whoso hath cherished his own soul on earth that clean of sin it may pass at last into the hand of God."