

Genesis

translated by

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Right is it that we praise the King of heaven, the Lord of hosts, and love Him with all our hearts. For He is great in power, the Source of all created things, the Lord Almighty. Never hath He known beginning, neither cometh an end of His eternal glory. Ever in majesty He reigneth over celestial thrones; in righteousness and strength He keepeth the courts of heaven which were established, broad and ample, by the might of God, for angel dwellers, wardens of the soul. The angel legions knew the blessedness of God, celestial joy and bliss. Great was their glory! The mighty spirits magnified their Prince and sang His praise with gladness, serving the Lord of life, exceeding blessed in His splendour. They knew no sin nor any evil; but dwelt in peace for ever with their Lord. They wrought no deed in heaven save right and truth, until the angel prince in pride walked in the ways of error. Then no longer would they work their own advantage, but turned away from the love of God. They boasted greatly, in their banded strength, that they could share with God His glorious dwelling, spacious and heavenly bright.

Then sorrow came upon them, envy and insolence and pride of the angel who first began that deed of folly, to plot and hatch it forth, and, thirsting for battle, boasted that in the northern borders of heaven he would stablish a throne and a kingdom. Then was God angered and wrathful against that host which He had crowned before with radiance and glory. For the traitors, to reward their work, He shaped a house of pain and grim affliction, and lamentations of hell. Our Lord prepared this torture-house of exiles, deep and joyless, for the coming of the angel hosts. Well He knew it lay enshrouded in eternal night and filled with woe, wrapped in fire and piercing cold, smoke veils and ruddy flame. And over that wretched realm He spread the brooding terror of torment. They had wrought grievous wrong together against God. Grim the reward they gained!

Fierce of heart, they boasted they would take the kingdom, and easily. But their hope failed them when the Lord, High King of heaven, lifted His hand against their host. The erring spirits, in their sin, might not prevail against the Lord, but God, the Mighty, in His wrath, smote their insolence and broke their pride, bereft these impious souls of victory and power and dominion and glory; despoiled His foes of bliss and peace and joy and radiant grace, and mightily avenged His wrath upon them to their destruction. His heart was hardened against them; with heavy hand He crushed His foes, subdued them to His will, and, in His wrath, drove out the rebels from their ancient home and seats of glory. Our Lord expelled and banished out of heaven the presumptuous angel host. All-wielding God dismissed the faithless horde, a hostile band of woeful spirits, upon a long, long journey. Crushed was their pride, their boasting humbled, their power broken, their glory dimmed. Thenceforth those dusky spirits dwelt in exile. No cause had they to laugh aloud, but, racked with pangs of hell, they suffered pain and woe and tribulation, cloaked with darkness, knowing bitter anguish, a grim requital, because they sought to strive with God.

Then was there calm as formerly in heaven, the kindly ways of peace. The Lord was dear to all, a Prince among His thanes, and glory was renewed of angel legions knowing blessedness with God. The citizens of heaven, the home of glory, dwelt again in concord. Strife was at an end among the angels, discord and dissension, when those warring spirits, shorn of light, were hurled from heaven. Behind them stretching wide their mansions lay, crowned with glory, prospering in grace in God's dominion, a sunny, fruitful land, empty of dwellers, when the accursed spirits reached their place of exile within Hell's prison-walls.

Then our Lord took counsel in the thoughts of His heart how He might people, with a better host, the great creation, the native seats and gleaming mansions, high in heaven, wherefrom these boastful foes had got them forth. Therefore with mighty power Holy God ordained, beneath the arching heavens, that earth and sky and the far-bounded sea should be established, earth-creatures in the stead of those rebellious foes whom He had cast from heaven.

As yet was nought save shadows of darkness; the spacious earth lay hidden, deep and dim, alien to God, unpeopled and unused. Thereon the

Steadfast King looked down and beheld it, a place empty of joy. He saw dim chaos hanging in eternal night, obscure beneath the heavens, desolate and dark, until this world was fashioned by the word of the King of glory. Here first with mighty power the Everlasting Lord, the Helm of all created things, Almighty King, made earth and heaven, raised up the sky and founded the spacious land. The earth was not yet green with grass; the dark waves of the sea flowed over it, and midnight darkness was upon it, far and wide.

Then in radiant glory God's holy spirit moved upon the waters with wondrous might. The Lord of angels, Giver of life, bade light shine forth upon the spacious earth. Swiftly was God's word fulfilled; holy light gleamed forth across the waste at the Creator's bidding. Over the seas the Lord of victory divided light from darkness, shadow from radiant light. The Lord of life gave both a name. By the word of God the gleaming light was first called day. And in the beginning of creation was God well pleased. The first day saw the dark and brooding shadows vanish throughout the spacious earth.

The day departed, hasting over the dwellings of earth. And after the gleaming light the Lord, our Maker, thrust on the first of evenings. Murky gloom pressed hard upon the heels of day; God called it night. Our Lord sundered them, one from the other; and ever since they follow out the will of God to do it on the earth.

Then came a second day, light after darkness. And the Lord of life ordained a pleasant firmament amid the waters. Our Lord sundered the seas and established the heavens. By His word the King, Almighty God, raised them above the earth. The waters were divided under the heavens by His holy might; the waters were sundered from the waters, under the firmament.

Then came hasting over the earth the third fair morning. Not yet were the wide ways and spacious tracts useful unto God, but the land lay covered by the deep. The Lord of angels, by His word, commanded that the waters come together, which now beneath the heavens hold their course and place ordained. Then suddenly, wide-stretching under heaven, lay the sea, as God gave bidding. The great deep was sundered from the land. The Warden of life, the Lord of hosts, beheld the dry ground far outspread. And the King of glory called it earth. For the

ocean-billows and the wide-flung sea He set a lawful path and fettered them...

[Gap in the manuscript of perhaps 200 lines of verse]

...It did not seem good to the Lord of heaven that Adam should longer be alone as warden and keeper of this new Paradise. Wherefore the King, Almighty God, wrought him an helpmeet; the Author of life made woman and brought her unto the man whom He loved. He took the stuff of Adam's body, and secretly drew forth a rib from his side. He was fast asleep in peaceful slumber; he knew no pain nor any pang; there came no blood from out the wound, but the Lord of angels drew forth from his body a growing rib, and the man was unhurt. Of this God fashioned a lovely maid, breathing into her life and an eternal soul. They were like unto the angels. The bride of Adam ... was a living spirit. By God's might both were born into the world in the loveliness of youth. They knew no sin nor any evil, but in the hearts of both there burned the love of God.

Then the Gracious King, Lord of all human kind, blessed these two, male and female, man and wife, and spake this word:

"Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the green earth with your seed and increase, sons and daughters. And ye shall have dominion over the salt sea, and over all the world. Enjoy the riches of earth, the fish of the sea, and the fowls of the air. To you is given power over the herds which I have hallowed, and the wild beasts, and over all living things that move upon the earth; all living things, which the depths bring forth throughout the sea, shall be subject unto you."

And our Lord beheld the beauty of His works and the abundance of all fruits of this new creation: Paradise lay pleasant and inviting, filled with goodly store and endless blessings. Bountifully a running stream, a welling spring, watered that pleasant land. Not yet did clouds, dark with wind, carry the rains across the spacious earth; nathless the land lay decked with increase. Out from this new Paradise four pleasant brooks of water flowed. All were divisions of one beauteous stream, sundered by the might of God when He made the earth, and sent into the world. And one of these the mortal dwellers of earth called Pison, which

compasseth the land of Havilah about with shining waters. And in that land, as books tell us, the sons of men from far and near find out the best of gold and precious gems. And the second floweth round about the land and borders of the Ethiopians, a spacious kingdom. Its name is Gihon. The third is Tigris, whose abundant stream lieth about the limits of Assyria. Likewise also the fourth, which now through many a folk-land men call Euphrates....

[Gap in the manuscript of perhaps one leaf]

(Beginning of Genesis B)

...eat freely of the fruit of every other tree. From that one tree refrain. Beware of its fruit. And ye shall know no dearth of pleasant things."

Eagerly they bowed them down before the King of heaven, and gave Him thanks for all, for His teachings and counsels. And He gave them that land to dwell in. Then the Holy Lord, the Steadfast King, departed into heaven. And the creatures of His hand abode together on the earth. They had no whit of care to grieve them, but only to do the will of God for ever. Dear were they unto God as long as they would keep His holy word.

The Holy Lord, All-wielding God, with mighty hand had wrought ten angel-orders in whom He trusted well, that they would do Him service, and work His will. Therefore God gave them reason, with His own hands shaped them, and stablished them in bliss. But one He made so great and strong of heart, He let him wield such power in heaven next unto God, so radiant-hued He wrought him, so fair his form in heaven which God had given, that he was like unto the shining stars. He should have sung his Maker's praise, and prized his bliss in heaven. He should have thanked his Lord for the great boon He showered on him in the heavenly light, and let him long enjoy. But he turned him to a worse thing, and strove to stir up strife against the Highest Lord of heaven, who sitteth on the throne of glory.

Dear was he to our Lord. Nor could it long be hid from God that pride was growing in His angel's heart. He set himself against his Leader, scoffed at God with boasting, and would not serve Him. He said

his form was beautiful and bright, gleaming and fair of hue. Nor could he find it in his heart to serve the Lord God, or be subject to Him. It seemed to him that he had greater strength and larger following than Holy God might have. Many words the angel spake in his presumption. By his own power alone he thought to build a stronger throne and mightier in heaven. He said his heart was urging him to toil, to build a stately palace in the north and west. He said he doubted in his heart if he would still be subject unto God:

“Why should I slave?” quoth he. “I need not serve a master. My hands are strong to work full many a wonder. Power enough have I to rear a goodlier throne, a higher in the heavens. Why should I fawn for His favour, or yield Him such submission? I may be God as well as He! Brave comrades stand about me; stout-hearted heroes who will not fail me in the fray. These valiant souls have chosen me their lord. With such peers one may ponder counsel, and gain a following. Devoted are these friends and faithful-hearted; and I may be their lord and rule this realm. It seemeth no wise right to me that I should cringe a whit to God for any good. I will not serve Him longer.”

Now when God had heard all this, how His angel was beginning to make presumptuous head against his Leader, speaking rash words of insolence against his Lord, needs must he make atonement for that deed, endure the woe of strife, and bear his punishment, most grievous of all deaths. And so doth every man who wickedly thinketh to strive with God, the Lord of might.

Then Almighty God, High Lord of heaven, was filled with wrath, and hurled him from his lofty throne. He had gained his Master’s hate, and lost His favour. God’s heart was hardened against him. Wherefore he needs must sink into the pit of torment because he strove against the Lord of heaven. He banished him from grace and cast him into hell, into the deep abyss where he became a devil. The Fiend and all his followers fell from heaven; three nights and days the angels fell from heaven into hell. God changed them all to devils. Because they heeded not His deed and word, therefore Almighty God hurled them into darkness, deep under earth, crushed them and set them in the mirk of hell. There through the never-ending watches of the night the fiends endure an unremitting fire. Then at the dawn cometh an east wind, and bitter frost,

ever a blast of fire or storm of frost. And each must have his share of suffering wrought for his punishment. Their world was changed when God filled full the pit of hell with His foes!

But the angels who kept their faith with God dwelt in the heights of heaven. The other fiends who waged so fierce a war with God lay wrapped in flames. They suffer torment, hot and surging flame in the midst of hell, broad- stretching blaze of fire and bitter smoke, darkness and gloom, because they broke allegiance unto God. Their folly and the angel's pride deceived them. They would not heed the word of God. Great was their punishment! They fell, through folly and through pride, to fiery depths of flame in hell. They sought another home devoid of light and filled with fire—a mighty flaming death. The fiends perceived that through the might of God, because of their presumptuous hearts and boundless insolence, they had won a measureless woe.

Then spake their haughty king, who formerly was fairest of the angels, most radiant in heaven, beloved of his Leader and dear unto his Lord, until they turned to folly, and Almighty God was moved to anger at their wantonness, and hurled him down to depths of torment on that bed of death. He named him with a name, and said their leader should be called from thenceforth Satan. He bade him rule the black abyss of hell in place of striving against God. Satan spake—who now must needs have charge of hell and dwell in the abyss in bitterness he spake who once had been God's angel, radiant-hued in heaven, until his pride and boundless arrogance betrayed him, so that he would not do the bidding of the Lord of hosts. Bitterness was welling in his heart; and round him blazed his cruel torment. These words he spake:

“This narrow place is little like those other realms we knew, on high in heaven, allotted by my Lord, though the Almighty hath not granted us to hold our state, or rule our kingdom. He hath done us wrong to hurl us to the fiery depths of hell, and strip us of our heavenly realm. He hath ordained that human kind shall settle there. That is my greatest grief that Adam—wrought of earth—should hold my firm-set throne and live in joy, while we endure this bitter woe in hell.

“Alas! could I but use my hands and have my freedom for an hour, one winter hour, then with this host I would— But bands of iron crush me down, the bondage of my chains is heavy. I am stripped of my

dominion. Firmly are hell's fetters forged upon me. Above me and below a blaze of fire! Never have I seen a realm more fatal—flame unassuaged that surges over hell. Ensnaring links and heavy shackles hold me. My ways are trammelled up; my feet are bound; my hands are fastened. Closed are the doors of hell, the way cut off. I may not escape out of my bonds, but mighty gyves of tempered iron, hammered hot, press hard upon me. God hath set His foot upon my neck. So I know the Lord of hosts hath read the purpose of my heart, and knew full well that strife would grow between our host and Adam over the heavenly realm, had I the freedom of my hands.

“But now we suffer throes of hell, fire and darkness, bottomless and grim. God hath thrust us out into the black mists. He cannot charge upon us any sin or evil wrought against Him in His realm! Yet hath He robbed us of the light and cast us into utter woe. Nor may we take revenge, nor do Him any evil because He stripped us of the light. He hath marked out the borders of the world, and there created man in His own image, with whom He hopes again to people heaven, with pure souls. We needs must ponder earnestly to wreak this grudge on Adam, if we may, and on his children, and thwart His will if so we may devise.

“No longer have I any hope of light wherein He thinketh long to joy, in bliss among His angel hosts; nor may we ever bring this thing to pass, that we should change the purpose of Almighty God. Let us therefore turn the heavenly kingdom from the sons of men, since we may not possess it, cause them to lose His favour and turn aside from the command He laid upon them. Then shall His wrath be kindled, and He shall cast them out from grace. They shall seek out hell and its grim gulf, and in this heavy bondage we may have the sons of men to serve us.

“Begin now and plan this enterprise. If ever in olden days, when happily we dwelt in that good kingdom, and held possession of our thrones, I dealt out princely treasure to any thane, he could not make requital for my gifts at any better time than now, if some one of my thanes would be my helper, escaping outward through these bolted gates, with strength to wing his way on high where, new-created, Adam and Eve, surrounded with abundance, dwell on earth—and we are cast out hither in this deep abyss. They are now much dearer unto God, and

own the high estate and rightful realm which we should have in heaven! Good fortune is allotted to mankind.

“My soul is sorrowful within me, my heart is sore, that they should hold the heavenly realm for ever. But if in any wise some one of you could bring them to forsake God’s word and teaching, soon would they be less pleasing unto Him! If they break His commandment, then will His wrath be kindled. Their high estate shall vanish; their sin shall have requital, and some grim penalty. Take thought now how ye may ensnare them. I shall rest softly in these chains if they lose heaven. Whoso shall bring this thing to pass shall have reward for ever, of all that we may win to our advantage, amid these flames. I will let him sit next me, whoever shall return to hell proclaiming that they have set at naught, by word and deed, the counsels of the King of heaven and been displeasing to the Lord.”

Then God’s enemy began to make him ready, equipped in war-gear, with a wily heart. He set his helm of darkness on his head, bound it full hard, and fastened it with clasps. Many a crafty speech he knew, many a crooked word. Upward he beat his way and darted through the doors of hell. He had a ruthless heart. Evil of purpose he circled in the air, cleaving the flame with fiendish craft. He would fain ensnare God’s servants unto sin, seduce them and deceive them that they might be displeasing to the Lord. With fiendish craft he took his way until he came on Adam upon earth, the finished handiwork of God, full wisely wrought, and his wife beside him, loveliest of women, performing many a goodly service since the Lord of men appointed them His ministers.

And by them stood two trees laden with fruit and clothed with increase. Almighty God, High King of heaven, had set them there that the mortal sons of men might choose of good and evil, weal and woe. Unlike was their fruit! Of the one tree the fruit was pleasant, fair and winsome, excellent and sweet. That was the tree of life. He might live for ever in the world who ate of that fruit, so that old age pressed not heavily upon him, nor grievous sickness, but he might live his life in happiness for ever, and have the favour of the King of heaven here on earth. And glory was ordained for him in heaven, when he went hence.

The other tree was dark, sunless, and full of shadows: that was the tree of death. Bitter the fruit it bore! And every man must know both

good and evil; in this world abased he needs must suffer, in sweat and sorrow, who tasted of the fruit that grew upon that tree. Old age would rob him of his strength and joy and honour, and death take hold upon him. A little time might he enjoy this life, and then seek out the murky realm of flame, and be subject unto fiends. There of all perils are the worst for men for ever. And that the evil one knew well, the wily herald of the fiend who fought with God. He took the form of a serpent, coiled round the tree of death by devil's craft, and plucked the fruit, and turned aside again where he beheld the handiwork of the King of heaven. And the evil one in lying words began to question him:

“Hast thou any longing, Adam, unto God? His service brings me hither from afar. Not long since I was sitting at His side. He sent me forth upon this journey to bid thee eat this fruit. He said thy strength and power would increase, thy mind be mightier, more beautiful thy body, and thy form more fair. He said thou wouldest lack no good thing on the earth when thou hast won the favour of the King of heaven, served thy Lord with gladness, and deserved His love.

“In the heavenly light I heard Him speaking of thy life, praising thy words and works. Needs must thou do His bidding which His messengers proclaim on earth. Broad-stretching are the green plains of the world, and from the highest realms of heaven God ruleth all things here below. The Lord of men will not Himself endure the hardship to go upon this journey, but sendeth His ministers to speak with thee. He sendeth tidings unto thee to teach thee wisdom. Do His will with gladness! Take this fruit in thy hand; taste and eat. Thy heart shall grow more roomy and thy form more fair. Almighty God, thy Lord, sendeth this help from heaven.”

And Adam, first of men, answered where he stood on earth: “When I heard the Lord, my God, speaking with a mighty voice, He bade me dwell here keeping His commandments, gave me this woman, this lovely maid, bade me take heed and be not tempted to the tree of death and utterly beguiled, and said that he who taketh to his heart one whit of evil shall dwell in blackest hell. Though thou art come with lies and secret wiles, I know not that thou art an angel of the Lord from heaven. Lo! I cannot understand thy precepts, thy words or ways, thy errand or thy sayings. I know what things our Lord commanded when I beheld Him

nigh at hand. He bade me heed His word, observe it well, and keep His precepts. Thou art not like to any of His angels that ever I have seen, nor hast thou showed me any token that my Lord hath sent of grace and favour. Therefore I cannot hearken to thy teachings. Get thee hence! I have my faith set firm upon Almighty God, who with His own hands wrought me. From His high throne He giveth all good things, and needeth not to send His ministers.”

Then turned the fiend with wrathful heart to where he saw Eve standing on the plains of earth, a winsome maid. And unto her he said, the greatest of all ills thereafter would fall on their descendants in the world:

“I know God’s anger will be roused against you, when from this journey through far-stretching space I come again to Him, and bring this message, that ye refuse to do His bidding, as He hath sent commandment hither from the East. He needs must come to speak with you, forsooth, nor may His minister proclaim His mission! Truly I know His wrath will be kindled against you in His heart!

“But if thou, woman, wilt hearken to my words, thou mayest devise good counsel. Bethink thee in thy heart to turn away His vengeance from you both, as I shall show thee. Eat of this fruit! Then shall thine eyes grow keen, and thou shalt see afar through all the world, yea! unto the throne of God, thy Lord, and have His favour. Thou mayest rule the heart of Adam, if thou incline to do it and he doth trust thy words, if thou wilt tell him truly what law thou hast in mind, to keep God’s precepts and commandments. His heart will cease from bitter strife and evil answers, as we two tell him for his good. Urge him earnestly to do thy bidding, lest ye be displeasing to the Lord your God. If thou fulfill this undertaking, thou best of women, I will not tell our Lord what evil Adam spake against me, his wicked words accusing me of falsehood, saying that I am eager in transgression, a servant of the Fiend and not God’s angel. But I know well the angel race, and the high courts of heaven. Long ages have I served the Lord my God with loyal heart. I am not like a devil.”

So he urged with lies and luring wiles, tempting the woman unto sin, until the serpent’s counsel worked within her—for God had wrought her soul the weaker—and her heart inclined according to his teaching.

Transgressing God's commandment, from the fiend she took the fatal fruit of the tree of death. Never was worse deed wrought for men! Great is the wonder that Eternal God, the Lord, would let so many of His thanes be tricked with lies by one who brought such counsel. She ate the fruit and set at naught the will and word of God.

Then could she see afar by gift of the fiend, whose lies deceived and artfully ensnared her, so that it came to pass the heavens appeared to her more radiant, and the earth and all the world more fair, the great and mighty handiwork of God, though she beheld it not by human wisdom; but eagerly the fiend deceived her soul and gave her vision, that she might see afar across the heavenly kingdom. Then spake the fiend with hostile purpose—and nought of profit did he counsel:

“Now mayest thou behold, most worthy Eve, nor need I tell thee, how fair thy beauty and thy form how changed, since thou didst trust my words and do my bidding. A radiance shineth round about thee, gleaming splendour, which I brought forth from God on high. Thou mayest touch it! Tell Adam what vision thou hast and power by my coming. And even yet, if he will do my bidding with humble heart, I will give him of this light abundantly, as I have given thee, and will not punish his reviling words, though he deserves no mercy for the grievous ill he spake against me. So shall his children live hereafter! When they do evil, they must win God's love, avert His doom, and gain the favour of their Lord for ever!”

Then the lovely maid, fairest of women that ever came into this world, went unto Adam. She was the handiwork of the King of heaven, though tricked with lies and utterly undone, so that through fiendish craft and devil's fraud she needs must be displeasing to the Lord, forfeit God's favour, and lose her glory and her heavenly home. So often evil dwelleth with that man who doth not shun it when he hath the power.

Of the fatal apples some she carried in her hands and some lay on her breast, the fruit of the tree of death whereof the Lord of lords, the Prince of glory, had forbidden her to eat, saying His servants need not suffer death. The Holy Lord bestowed a heavenly heritage and ample bliss on every race, if they would but forgo that fruit alone, that bitter fruit, which the mortal tree brought forth upon its boughs. That was the tree of death which the Lord forbade them!

But the fiend, who hated God, and loathed the King of heaven, deceived with lies Eve's heart and erring wisdom, and she believed his words and did his bidding, and came at last to think his counsels were indeed from God, as he so cunningly had said. He showed to her a token, and gave her promise of good faith and friendly purpose. Then to her lord she said:

"Adam, my lord! This fruit is sweet and pleasing to the heart; this radiant messenger is God's good angel! I know by his attire he is a herald of our Lord, the King of heaven. Better to win his favour than his wrath! If thou to-day hast spoken aught of evil, yet will he still forgive thee, if we will do his will. Of what avail this bitter strife against the herald of thy Lord? We need his favour. For he may plead our cause before Almighty God, the King of heaven.

"I can behold where in the south and east He who shaped the world sits veiled in splendour. I see the angels circling round His throne, in winged flight, unnumbered myriads, clothed in beauty. Who could give me such discernment, except it be sent straight from God, the Lord of heaven? Widely may I hear and widely see through all the world across the broad creation. I hear the hymns of rapture from on high. Radiance blazes on my soul without and within since first I tasted of the fruit. Lo! my good lord! I bring thee in my hand this fruit, and give thee freely of it. I do believe that it is come from God, and brought by His command, as this messenger declared in words of truth. It is not like aught else on earth except, as this herald saith, it cometh straight from God."

Long she pled, and urged him all the day to that dark deed, to disobey their Lord's command. Close stood the evil fiend, inflaming with desire, luring with wiles, and boldly tempting him. The fiend stood near at hand who on that fatal mission had come a long, long way. He planned to hurl men down to utter death, mislead them and deceive them, that they might lose the gift of God, His favour and their heavenly realm. Lo! well the hell-fiend knew they must endure God's anger and the pains of hell, suffer grim misery and woe, since they had broken God's commandment, when with his lying words he tricked the beauteous maid, fairest of women, unto that deed of folly, so that she spake according to his will; and aided her in tempting unto evil the handiwork of God.

Over and over the fairest of women pled with Adam, until she began to incline his heart so that he trusted the command the woman laid upon him. All this she did with good intent, and knew not that so many evils, such grim afflictions, would come upon mankind, when she was moved to hearken to the counsels of the evil herald; but she hoped to win God's favour by her words, showing such token and such pledge of truth unto the man, that the mind of Adam was changed within his breast, and his heart began to bend according to her will.

From the woman he took both death and hell, although it did not bear these names, but bore the name of fruit. The sleep of death and fiends' seduction; death and hell and exile and damnation—these were the fatal fruit whereon they feasted. And when the apple worked within him and touched his heart, then laughed aloud the evil-hearted fiend, capered about, and gave thanks to his lord for both:

“Now have I won thy promised favour, and wrought thy will! For many a day to come is man undone, Adam and Eve! God's wrath shall be heavy upon them, for they have scorned His precepts and commandments. Wherefore they may no longer hold their heavenly kingdom, but they must travel the dark road to hell. Thou needest not feel sorrow in thy heart, as thou liest in thy bonds, nor mourn in spirit that men should dwell in heaven above, while we now suffer misery and pain in realms of darkness, and through thy pride have lost our high estate in heaven and goodly dwellings. God's anger was kindled against us because in heaven we would not bow our heads in service before the Holy Lord. It pleased us not to serve Him. Then was God moved to wrath and hard of heart, and drove us into hell; cast a great host into hell-fire, and with His hands prepared again in heaven celestial thrones, and gave that kingdom to mankind.

“Blithe be thy heart within thy breast! For here to-day are two things come to pass: the sons of men shall lose their heavenly kingdom, and journey unto thee to burn in flame; also heart-sorrow and affliction are visited on God. Whatever death we suffer here is now repaid on Adam in the wrath of God and man's damnation and the pangs of death. Therefore my heart is healed, my soul untrammelled in my breast. All our injuries are now avenged, and all the evil that we long have suffered.

Now will I plunge again into the flame, and seek out Satan, where he lieth in hell's shadows, bound with chains."

Then the foul fiend sank downward to the wide-flung flames and gates of hell wherein his lord lay bound. But Adam and Eve were wretched in their hearts; sad were the words that passed between them. They feared the anger of the Lord their God; they dreaded the wrath of the King of heaven. They knew that His command was broken.

The woman mourned and wept in sorrow (she had forfeited God's grace and broken His commandment) when she beheld the radiance disappear which he who brought this evil on them had showed her by a faithless token, that they might suffer pangs of hell and untold woe. Wherefore heart-sorrow burned within their breasts. Husband and wife they bowed them down in prayer, beseeching God and calling on the Lord of heaven, and prayed that they might expiate their sin, since they had broken God's commandment. They saw that their bodies were naked. In that land they had as yet no settled home, nor knew they aught of pain or sorrow; but they might have prospered in the land if they had done God's will. Many a rueful word they uttered, husband and wife together. And Adam spake unto Eve and said:

"O Eve! a bitter portion hast thou won us! Dost thou behold the yawning gulf of hell, sunless, insatiate? Thou mayest hear the groans that rise therefrom! The heavenly realm is little like that blaze of fire! Lo! fairest of all lands is this, which we, by God's grace, might have held hadst thou not hearkened unto him who urged this evil, so that we set at naught the word of God, the King of heaven. Now in grief we mourn that evil mission! For God Himself bade us beware of sin and dire disaster. Now thirst and hunger press upon my heart whereof we formerly were ever free. How shall we live or dwell now in this land if the wind blow from the west or east, south or north, if mist arise and showers of hail beat on us from the heavens, and frost cometh, wondrous cold, upon the earth, or, hot in heaven, shineth the burning sun, and we two stand here naked and unclothed? We have no shelter from the weather, nor any store of food. And the Mighty Lord, our God, is angry with us. What shall become of us? Now I repent me that I prayed the God of heaven, the Gracious Lord, and of my limbs He wrought thee for my helpmeet, since thou hast led me unto evil and the

anger of my Lord. Well may I repent to all eternity that ever I beheld thee with mine eyes!"

Then spake Eve, the lovely maid, fairest of women. (She was the work of God, though led astray by power of the fiend):

"Well mayest thou upbraid me, my dear Adam! But thou canst not repent one whit more bitterly in thy heart than my heart repenteth."

And Adam answered her: "If I but knew the will of God, the penalty I needs must pay, thou couldest not find one more swift to do it, though the Lord of heaven bade me go forth and walk upon the sea. The ocean-stream could never be so wondrous deep or wide that ever my heart would doubt, but I would go even unto the bottom of the sea, if I might work the will of God. I have no wish for years of manhood in the world now that I have forfeited the favour of my Lord, and lost His grace. But we may not be thus together, naked. Let us go into this grove, and under the shelter of this wood."

And they turned and went weeping into the green wood, and sat them down apart from one another to wait the fate the Lord of heaven should assign them, since they had lost their former state and portion which Almighty God had given them. And they covered their bodies with leaves, and clothed them with the foliage of the wood, for they had no garments. And both together bowed in prayer; and every morning they besought Almighty God, the Gracious Lord, that He would not forget them, but would teach them how to live thenceforward in the light.

(End of Genesis B)

Then came Almighty God, the Glorious Prince, walking in the garden after the midday, according to His will. Our Saviour, the Merciful Father, would fain discover what His children did. He knew their glory was gone which formerly He gave them. Sadly they stole away into the darkness of the trees, bereft of glory, and hid themselves in the shadows when they heard the holy voice of God, and were afraid. Then the Lord of heaven began to call the warden of the world, and bade His son come quickly unto Him. And he made answer unto God, and spake of his nakedness with shame:

“I will clothe my nakedness with a garment, my dear Lord, and cover my shame with leaves. My heart is troubled and cast down within me. I dare not come before Thy presence, for I am naked.”

And straightway God made answer unto him: “Tell me, My son, why stealest thou away into the darkness with shame? Thou didst not formerly feel shame before Me, but only joy. Wherefore art thou humbled and abashed, knowing sorrow, covering thy body with leaves, sad of heart and wretched in thy woe, saying thou needest clothing, except thou hast eaten of the fruit of the tree which I forbade thee?”

And Adam again made answer: “My Lord! this woman, this lovely maid, gave me the fruit into my hand, and I took it in trespass against Thee. And now I clearly bear the token upon me and know the more of sorrow.”

Then Almighty God questioned Eve: “Of what avail, My daughter, were My abundant blessings, the new-created Paradise and pleasant growing things, that thou shouldest stretch thy hands with yearning unto the tree, and pluck the apples growing on its boughs, and eat the deadly fruit in trespass against Me, and give to Adam, when by My word it was forbidden to you both?”

And the lovely woman, put to shame, made answer: “The serpent, the deadly snake, with fair words tempted me, and eagerly enticed me to that deed of sin and evil appetite, until I basely did the deed and wrought the wrong, despoiled the tree within the wood, as was not right, and ate the fruit.”

Then our Saviour, the Almighty Lord, decreed unto the serpent, the guilty snake, an endless wandering, and said:

“All thy life upon thy belly shalt thou go to and fro upon the fields of the broad earth, accursed, so long as life and spirit dwell within thee. Dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life for the grievous evil thou hast wrought. The woman shall loathe and hate thee under heaven. Her foot shall crush thy head, and thou shalt bruise her heel anew. There shall be strife between your seed for ever, while the world standeth under heaven. Now thou knowest clearly, thou foul tempter, what thy life shall be.”

And unto Eve God spake in wrath Turn thee from joy! Thou shalt live under man’s dominion, sore smitten with fear before him. With bitter

sorrow shalt thou expiate thy sin, waiting for death, bringing forth sons and daughters in the world with grief and tears and lamentation.

And on Adam the Eternal God, Author of life, pronounced an evil doom: "Thou shalt seek another home, a joyless dwelling. Naked and needy shalt thou suffer exile, shorn of thy glory. Thy soul and body shall be cleft asunder. Lo! thou hast sinned a grievous sin. Therefore shalt thou labour, winning thy portion on the earth by toil, eating thy bread in the sweat of thy brow while thou dwellest here, until that grim disease, which first thou tasted in the apple, shall grip hard at thy heart. So shalt thou die."

Lo! now we know how our afflictions came upon us, and mortal misery! Then the Lord of glory, our Creator, clothed them with garments, and bade them cover their shame with their first raiment. He drove them forth from Paradise into a narrower life. By God's command a holy angel, with a sword of fire, closed fast that pleasant home of peace and joy behind them. No wicked, sinful man may walk therein, but the warden has strength and power, dear unto God in virtue, who guards that life of glory.

Yet the Almighty Father would not take away from Adam and from Eve, at once, all goodly things, though He withdrew His favour from them. But for their comfort He left the sky above them adorned with shining stars, gave them wide-stretching fields, and bade the earth and sea and all their teeming multitudes to bring forth fruits to serve man's earthly need. After their sin they dwelt in a realm more sorrowful, a home and native land less rich in all good things than was their first abode, wherefrom He drove them out after their sin.

Then, according to the word of God, Adam and Eve begat children, as God had bidden. To them were born two goodly sons, Abel and Cain: the books tell us how these brothers, first of toilers, gained wealth and goods and store of food. One, the first-born, tilled the fields; the other aided with his father's cattle; and after many days they both brought offerings to God. The Prince of angels, Lord of every creature, lifted up His eyes on Abel's offering and would not look upon the gift of Cain. And the heart of Cain was bitter; wrath shook his soul, and envy burned within him. Then with his hands Cain wrought a deed of shame, struck

down his brother Abel, and poured his blood upon the ground. The earth drank in his blood poured out in murder.

After that mortal blow came woe and tribulation. From that shoot grew more and more a deadly bitter fruit, and the boughs of sin stretched far and wide among the nations; grievously the twigs of evil touched the sons of men (and do so yet), and from them grew broad blades of wickedness. With lamentation must we tell that tale of evil fate, not without cause. Grievous the ruin the lovely woman wrought us by that first of sins that ever men on earth had sinned against their Maker since Adam first was filled with breath from the mouth of God.

Then the Lord of glory spake unto Cain, and asked where Abel was. Quickly the cursed fashioner of death made answer unto Him:

“I know not the coming or going of Abel, my kinsman, his lot or portion; I was not my brother’s keeper.”

And the Gracious Spirit, Lord of angels, made answer unto him: “Why hast thou slain that faithful man thy brother in thy wrath, and his blood calleth and crieth unto Me? Accursed for ever, driven into exile, thou shalt be punished for this deed of death! The earth shall not yield thee of her pleasant fruits for thy daily need, but by thy hands her soil is stained with holy blood. Therefore the green earth shall withhold from thee her beauty and her delights. In sadness and dishonour shalt thou depart from thy home, because thou hast slain thy brother, Abel. Loathed of thy kinsmen, an exile and a fugitive, shalt thou wander on the face of the earth.”

And Cain made answer unto Him: “... I need not look for pity in this world, High King of heaven, for I have lost Thy love and favour and goodwill. Weary the ways my feet must wander, in dread of woe, whenever one shall meet me in my guilt, near or far, and by his hate remind me of my brother’s death. I shed his blood and poured his life-blood on the ground. From this day hast Thou cut me off from good! Thou scourgest me from home! Some cruel foe shall slay me. And I must needs go forth, accursed, from Thy sight, O Lord!”

And the Lord of victory said unto him: “Thou needest not yet dread death, nor the pangs of death, though thou shalt wander, far from kinsmen, with thy doom upon thee. If any man shall slay thee with his

hands, on him shall fall a seven-fold vengeance, and torment for that deed of sin."

And God, the Lord of glory, set a mark upon him and a token, lest any foe from far or near should dare to lift his hand against him; and He bade him go forth in his guilt from mother and kinsmen and from all his tribe. Then with despairing heart, a friendless exile, Cain departed out of the sight of God, and chose a home and dwelling in the eastern lands, far from his father's house; and there a comely maiden bare him children after his kind.

Enoch was first-born of the sons of Cain. He built a city with his kinsmen, the first of all those strongholds under heaven which sword-girt men established; and in the city sons were born to him. Irad was first-born of the sons of Enoch; and he begat children, and all the tribe and race of Cain increased. And after Irad Mahalaleel was warden of the treasure, in his father's stead, until he died. Then Methusael dispensed the treasure to his brothers and his kinsmen, man for man, till, full of many years, he died.

And at his father's death Lamech succeeded to the treasure and the household goods. Two wives bare children to him in his home, Adah and Zillah. Now one of the sons of Lamech was called Jabal; and he was first of all men by his skill to stir the harp to music and its strings to song. And there was also in that tribe another son of Lamech, called Tubal Cain, a smith skilled in his craft. He was the first of all men on the earth to fashion tools of husbandry; and far and wide the city-dwelling sons of men made use of bronze and iron.

Then to his two beloved wives, Adah and Zillah, Lamech rehearsed a tale of shame: "I have struck down a kinsman unto death! I have defiled my hands with the blood of Cain! I smote down Enoch's father, slayer of Abel, and poured his blood upon the ground. Full well I know that for that mortal deed shall come God's seven-fold vengeance. With fearful torment shall my deed of death and murder be requited, when I go hence."

Then another son was born to Adam in Abel's stead; and his name was Seth. He was a righteous son and blessed, a solace to his parents, his father and mother, Adam and Eve. And he filled the place of Abel in the world. Then Adam spake, the first of men:

“The eternal God of victory, the Lord of life, hath vouchsafed me another son in place of my beloved whom Cain slew. So our Lord hath stilled the sorrow of my heart. To Him be thanks!”

Now, when Adam begat another son to be his heir, that sturdy man had lived an hundred and thirty winters of this life in the world. The writings tell us that Adam increased his tribe on earth, begetting sons and daughters eight hundred years. And all the years of Adam were nine hundred and thirty winters, and he died.

And Seth succeeded Adam: at his father’s death the well-loved son possessed the treasure, and took himself a wife. And Seth lived an hundred and five winters in the world and increased his tribe, begetting sons and daughters. Enos was first-born of the sons of Seth; and he was first of all the sons of men to call upon the name of God since Adam, first a living spirit, set foot on the green earth. Seth prospered, eight hundred and seven winters begetting sons and daughters. And all the years of Seth were nine hundred and twelve winters, and he died.

And after he went hence, and the earth received the body of seed-bearing Seth, Enos was warden of the heritage. Dear was he unto God! He lived for ninety winters in the world, and begat children. And Cainan was first-born of the sons of Enos. Eight hundred and fifteen winters the man of wisdom lived, at peace with God, begetting sons and daughters. And all the years of Enos were nine hundred and five winters, and he died.

And after Enos Cainan ruled the tribe as lord and leader. He lived seventy winters, and begat a son. An heir was born unto his house, and his name was Mahalaleel. Eight hundred and forty winters Cainan lived, and increased his tribe. And all the years of the son of Enos were nine hundred and ten winters, and he died, and his appointed days beneath the heavens were fulfilled.

And after Cainan Mahalaleel possessed the land and treasure many a year. The prince lived five-and-sixty winters, and begat a son. An heir was born unto his house, and his kinsmen called him Jared, as I have heard. Mahalaleel lived long, enjoying bliss on earth, the joys of men, and worldly treasure. And all the years of Mahalaleel were eight hundred five-and-ninety winters, and he died, and gave the land and rule unto his son.

A long time Jared dealt out gold to men. He was a righteous prince, a noble earl, dear to his kinsmen. He lived an hundred five-and-sixty winters in the world, and, when her time was come, his wife brought forth her first-born, a goodly son. And his name was Enoch. Eight hundred years his father lived, and increased his tribe. And all the years of Jared were nine hundred five-and-sixty winters, and he died, and gave the land and rule unto his son, the wise and well-loved prince.

And Enoch ruled the folk, led them in ways of peace, and no wise let his sway and power lessen, while he was lord over his kinsmen. Now Enoch prospered and increased his tribe three hundred years. And God, the Lord of heaven, was gracious unto him! In his natural body he entered into heavenly joy and the glory of God, dying no mortal death as men do here, the young and old, what time God taketh from them wealth and substance and earthly treasure and their life; but with the King of angels he departed still alive out of this fleeting life, in the same vestments which his soul received before his mother bare him. He left the people to his eldest son. And all the years of Enoch were three hundred five-and-sixty winters, and he died.

Then Methuselah held sway among his kinsmen, and longest of all men enjoyed the pleasures of this world. He begat a multitude of sons and daughters before his death. And all the years of Methuselah were nine hundred and seventy winters, and he died.

And Lamech, his son, succeeded him and kept the treasure. Long time he ruled the land. He lived an hundred and two winters, and begat children. And the lord and leader of the folk lived five hundred five-and-ninety years, enjoying many winters under heaven, ruling the folk with wisdom. And Lamech increased his tribe, begetting sons and daughters. He called the name of the first-born Noah; and Noah ruled the land after the death of Lamech.

Now Noah, the lord of men, lived five hundred winters, as the books say, and begat children. The first-born son of Noah was Shem, and the second Ham, and the third Japheth. And the folk grew in number under heaven, and the multitude of the race of men increased throughout the earth. The tribe of Seth, the well-loved prince, was still exceeding dear to God, and blessed in His love!

Then the sons of God began to take them wives from the tribe of Cain, a cursed folk, and the sons of men chose them wives from among that people, the fair and winsome daughters of that sinful race, against the will of God. Then the Lord of heaven lifted up His voice in wrath against mankind, and said:

“Lo! I have not been unmindful of the sons of men, but the tribe of Cain hath sorely angered Me. The sons of Seth have stirred My wrath against them; they have taken them wives from among the daughters of My foes. Woman’s beauty and woman’s grace and the eternal fiend have taken hold upon this people who dwelt of old in peace.”

An hundred and twenty numbered winters in the world that fated folk were busied in evil. Then the Lord resolved to punish those faithless spirits, and slay the sinful giant sons, undear to God, those huge, unholy scathers, loathsome to the Lord. The King of victory beheld how great was the wickedness of men on earth, and saw that they were bold in sin and full of wiles. He resolved to bring destruction on the tribes of men, and smite mankind with heavy hand. It repented Him exceedingly that He had made man, and the first of men, when He created Adam. He said that for the sins of men He would lay waste the earth and all that was upon the earth, destroying every living thing that breathed the breath of life. All this would the Lord destroy in the days that were coming on the sons of men.

But Noah, the son of Lamech, was good and dear to God, exceeding blessed, just and meek. And the Lord knew that virtue flourished in the heart of Noah. Wherefore God, the Holy Lord of every creature, spake unto Noah, declaring His wrath and vengeance on the sons of men. For He saw that the earth was full of wickedness, and its broad and fertile meadows filled with sin and defiled with uncleanness. And the Lord our God spake unto Noah, and said:

“I will destroy this people with a flood, man and every living thing that the air and the seas bring forth and nourish, birds of the air and beasts of the field. But thou, and thy sons with thee, shall have mercy when the black waters, the dark, destroying floods, shall overwhelm the hosts of sinful men. Begin to build thee a ship, a mighty seahouse, and in it make abiding-room for many, and set a rightful place for every tribe of earth. Build floors within the ark, dividing it in stories. And thou shalt

build it three hundred cubits long and fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high, and fasten it firmly against the might of the waves. And thou shalt take within the ark the seed of every living thing, and the offspring of all flesh upon the earth. And the ark must hold them all."

And Noah did according as God commanded him. He hearkened unto the Holy King of heaven, and began straightway to build the ark, a mighty sea-chest. And unto his kinsmen he proclaimed destruction coming upon men, and bitter vengeance. And they heeded him not.

Then after many winters the Faithful Lord beheld the greatest of ocean-houses, Noah's vessel, towering up, made tight with the best of pitch within and without against the floods. And it was best of all its kind, growing more hard the more the rough waves and the black sea-streams beat up against it. Then our Lord said unto Noah:

"I give thee My pledge, dearest of men, that thou mayest go thy way, thou and the seed of every living thing which thou shalt ferry through the deep water for many a day in the bosom of the ship. Lead on board the ark, as I bid thee, thy household, thy wife and thy three sons, and thy sons' wives with thee. And take within that sea-home seven of every kind of living thing that serve as food for men, and two of every other kind. Likewise of all the fruits of the earth take food for the company upon thy ship, who with thee shall be saved from the flood! Care well for every creature until I shall cause food to grow again beneath the heavens for the survivors of the ocean floods. Depart now with thy household and thy host of guests, embarking on the ship. I know that thou art good, and of a steadfast mind. Thou art worthy of grace and mercy, thou and thy children. Lo! for seven nights I shall let the rains descend upon the face of the broad earth. Forty days will I visit My wrath upon men, with a deluge destroying the riches of the world and the tribes of men, save what shall be upon the ark when the black floods begin to rise."

And Noah departed, as the Lord commanded, embarking his household upon the ark, leading up his sons into the ship, and their wives with them. All that Almighty God would have for seed went in under the roof of the ark unto their food-giver, even according as the Mighty Lord of hosts gave bidding by His word. And the Warden of that heavenly kingdom, the God of victories, locked the door of the

ocean-house behind him with His hands, and our Lord blessed all within the ark with His blessing. Now Noah, the son of Lamech, had lived six hundred winters, wise and full of years, when he went up with the young men, his beloved sons, into the ark, as God gave bidding.

Then the Lord sent the rains from heaven, and caused the black sea-streams to roar, and the fountains of the deep to overflow the world. The seas surged up over the barriers of the shore. Mighty in His wrath was He who rules the waters! And He overwhelmed and covered the mortal sons of sin with a black deluge, laying waste the native land and homes of men. God visited their offences upon them. Forty days and forty nights the sea laid hold on that doomed folk. Dire was that disaster and deadly unto men. The stormy surges of the King of glory quenched the life from out the bodies of that sinful host. The flood, raging beneath the heavens, covered over all high hills throughout the spacious earth, and lifted up the ark from the earth upon the bosom of the waters, and all within the ark, whom the Lord our God had blessed when He locked the door of the ship. Then far and wide that best of ocean-houses and its burden floated beneath the heavens over the compass of the sea. The raging terrors of the deep might not lay hold on ship or mariners, but Holy God ferried them upon the sea and shielded them. Fifteen cubits deep upon the hills the deluge lay. That was a grievous fate!

But no harm came nigh unto the ark, save that it was lifted up to heaven, when the flood destroyed all creatures on the earth; but Holy God, the Eternal King, the Lord of heaven, stern of heart, preserved the ark when He unleashed the ocean currents and their changing streams. And God, the Lord of victory, was mindful of those mariners, of the son of Lamech, and all the living things which the Author of life and light had locked within the bosom of the ship against the waters' might. The Lord of hosts guided the warriors by His word across the world.

Then the welling floods began to lessen and the black tides ebbed beneath the heavens. The just God turned the waters again from His children, and stilled the downpour of the rains. Foamy-necked the ship fared on an hundred and fifty nights beneath the heavens, after the flood had lifted up that best of vessels with its well-nailed sides until at last the appointed number of the days of wrath were passed away.

And the ark of Noah, the greatest of sea-homes, with its burden, rested high upon the hills which are called Armenia. There the holy son of Lamech waited many days for God's faithful covenant to be fulfilled, when the Warden of life, the Lord Almighty, would give him respite from the perils he had suffered while the black waves bore him far and wide upon the waters over the spacious earth.

The floods receded, and those sea-tossed men, together with their wives, longed for the hour when they might leave their narrow home, and step across the well-nailed sides upon the shore, and from their prison lead out their possessions. And Noah, the helmsman of the ark, made trial whether the sea-floods yet were ebbing under heaven. After many days, while the high hills yet harboured the seed and treasure of the tribes of earth, the son of Lamech let a dusky raven fly forth from the ark over the deep flood. And Noah was sure that in its need, if so be it should find no land upon this journey, the raven would return to him again within the ark across the wide water. But Noah's hope failed him! Exulting the raven perched upon the floating bodies of the dead; the black-winged bird would not return.

And seven days after the dusky raven he let a grey dove fly forth from the ark across the deep water, making trial whether the high and foaming floods had yet receded from any region of the green earth. Widely she sought her heart's desire, circling afar, but nowhere finding rest. Because of the floods she might not set foot upon the land, nor settle on the branch of any tree because of the ocean-streams. The high hills were covered by the deep. And so at evening over the dusky wave the wild bird sought the ark, settling hungry and weary into the hands of that holy man.

And again after seven days a second dove was sent forth from the ark. The wild bird circled widely till she found a refuge and a pleasant resting-place, and settled in a tree. Blithe of heart, she rejoiced that in her weariness she might find rest upon its pleasant branches. She shook her feathers and flew back with a gift, bearing as she flew a branch of an olive tree with its green blades. And the prince of shipmen knew that comfort was at hand, and a requital of their toilsome voyage.

And again after seven days the blessed man sent forth a third wild dove. And she flew not back unto the ark, but came to land and the

green forests. Her heart was glad; never again would she appear under the black roof of the ark. Nor was there need! Then our Lord, the Warden of the heavenly kingdom, with holy word spake unto Noah:

“For thee again on earth a fair abiding-place is founded, blessings upon the land, and rest from far sea-wandering. Depart in peace out of the ark; go forth upon the bosom of the earth. And from the high ship lead thy household, and all the living things which graciously I shielded against the flood, so long as the sea held sway and covered thy third home.”

And Noah hearkened unto God with great rejoicing, and did according as the Voice commanded. And he went out upon the shore, and led forth from the ark all who had survived that time of woe. Then Noah, wise of counsel, began to offer sacrifice to God. And for an offering he took a part of all his goods which God had given him to enjoy, and, great in wisdom and in glory, made sacrifice to God, the King of angels. And straightway our Lord made known that He had blessed Noah, and Noah’s children, because he had offered that thank-offering, and in his youth by good deeds had deserved the bounteous mercies which Almighty God in majesty bestowed upon him. And God, the Lord of glory, spake unto Noah and said:

“Be fruitful and multiply, enjoying honour, delighting in peace. Fill all the earth with your increase. To you is given the home of your fathers, dominion over the fish of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field, over all the green earth and its teeming herds. Never shall ye eat in blood your shameful feasts through sin defiled with blood. For most he injureth himself and his soul’s honour whoso shall slay another with the sword. Verily! in no wise shall his heart have joy in his reward! For many times more heavily will I avenge man’s life upon his murderer, because his sword hath prospered in violence and blood, and his hands in death. Man was first fashioned in the image of God. Each hath the form of God and of the angels, whoso will keep My holy laws.

“Be fruitful and multiply, enjoying grace on earth and every pleasant thing. Fill all the regions of the earth with your increase, your issue, and your seed. And unto you I give My covenant that never again will I bring the waters upon the earth or a flood on the wide-stretching land. Oft shall ye behold the token of My promise in the heavens, when I show

forth My rainbow, that I will keep this covenant with men while the world standeth.”

And the wise son of Lamech, the warden of wealth, came forth from the ship as the flood receded, and his three sons with him. And their four wives were called Percoba, and Olla, and Olliva, and Ollivani. The Faithful Lord had saved them to survive the flood. And Noah’s stout-hearted sons were Shem and Ham, and the third was Japheth. From them sprang many peoples, and all the earth was filled with the sons of men.

Then a second time Noah began to establish a home with his kinsmen, and to till the earth for food. He toiled and wrought and planted a vineyard and sowed seed, and laboured that the green earth might bring forth her shining harvests, her gleaming crops, in every season.

And it came to pass upon a time that the blessed man lay drunk with wine in his dwelling, and slumbered heavy with feasting, and cast off his robe from his body, as was not seemly, and lay there naked of limb. Little did he know what evil plight was his in his dwelling, while drunkenness had hold upon his heart within him in its holy house. But his soul was fast bound in slumber, so that in his stupor he might not cover himself with a garment, nor hide his shame, as was decreed for man and woman what time the thane of glory with a sword of fire behind our first great parents locked the gates of life.

Then Ham, the son of Noah, went in where his lord lay sleeping, and would not look with reverence upon his father, nor cover his shame. But he laughed, and told his brothers how their lord lay sleeping in his home. And straightway, covering their faces with their cloaks, they went in unto the well-beloved to bring him succour. For both were good of heart, both Shem and Japheth.

Then the son of Lamech awoke from his slumber, and learned that Ham had failed to show him reverence or love when he had greatest need. And the holy man was grieved in his heart, and set a curse upon his son, saying that Ham should be an outcast under heaven and servant to his kinsmen on the earth. And the curse lay heavy upon him and on all his tribe. And Noah and his sons as freemen ruled a wide-stretching realm for three hundred and fifty winters of this life, after the flood.

Then he went hence. And his sons possessed his wealth, and begat children and prospered.

Children were born unto Japheth, a glad hearth-band of sons and daughters. He was a godly man, enjoying bliss and blessing with his children, until his soul within his breast, ready to depart, must needs go forth unto the glory of God. And Gormer, Japheth's son, dispensed his father's treasure among his friends and kinsmen, near and dear. And no little portion of the earth was filled with their increase.

Likewise sons were born unto Ham. The names of the eldest were called Cush and Ham, two goodly youths, his first-born sons. And Cush was ruler of his tribe, dispensing joy and worldly wealth and treasure unto his brothers in his father's stead, after Ham died, and his soul departed from this earthly body. He ruled his tribe and gave them laws until his days were run. Then he gave over earthly riches and sought another life and his Father's bosom.

And the first-born son of Cush, a far-famed man, held his ancestral seat. The writings tell us that of all men then alive his strength and power were greatest. He was lord of the kingdom of Babylon, and first of princes to exalt her glory. He enlarged her borders and brought her fame. Now there was yet one common tongue for all men on the earth. And a great tribe was born of the stem of Ham and a mighty people spreading far and wide.

And Shem begat a host of free-born sons and daughters, and, after many winters, went to his last rest. In that tribe men were good! One of the sons of Shem was Eber, and from him sprang a countless race which all men dwelling in the earth call Hebrews. They departed out of the east, taking with them all their substance, their cattle and their goods. That was a dauntless folk! The heroes sought a roomier land, a wandering folk, in mighty multitudes, and chose at last a fixed abode wherein to settle. Far and wide in days of old the leaders of that people, with their well-loved men, possessed the land of Shinar, a land of green plains and pleasant valleys. And at that time they prospered greatly, and had abundance of all good things.

Then many a man besought his friend, and one stout warrior urged another, that, before their multitude and the tribes of their people should be scattered again over the face of the whole earth in search of land, they

should build a city to their glory and rear a tower unto the stars of heaven, to be a sign that they had sought the land of Shinar, where of old the mighty leaders of the folk had lived at ease. And they sought out men for this work and deed of sin, in rash pride showing forth their strength. Greedy for glory, they reared a city with their hands, and raised a ladder up to heaven, and in their vain strength built a wall of stone beyond the measure of men.

Then came Holy God to look upon the work of the children of men, the citadel and the tower which the sons of Adam were beginning to rear unto heaven. Stern of heart, the King reproved their folly, and in His wrath confounded the tongues of the dwellers of earth, and they might not prosper in their speech. Then the leaders of the work in pride of strength met together about the tower in many bands. But no one band could understand another. And they left off to build the wall of stone, and were wretchedly sundered into tribes divided by their speech. And every tribe became alien to every other tribe, when the Lord in His might sundered the speech of men. So the divided sons of men were scattered on four ways in search of land. And behind them the steadfast tower of stone, and the high citadel, stood unfinished together in the land of Shinar.

Now the tribe of Shem increased and flourished under heaven. And a certain man of that tribe, of thoughtful heart and given to virtue, had noble children. Two goodly sons were born to him, and bred in Babylon, great-hearted princes named Abraham and Haran. And the Lord of angels was their guide and friend. Now Haran had a noble son, whose name was Lot. And Abraham and Lot throve excellently before the Lord as was their nature from their elders. Wherefore men proclaim their virtues far and wide upon the earth.

Then was the time fulfilled, and Abraham brought a wife unto his home, a fair and comely woman to his dwelling. And her name was Sarah, as the writings tell us. Many a winter they enjoyed the world, prospering in peace for many a year. But it was not given unto Abraham that his comely wife should bear him children, or an heir unto his house.

And Abraham's father went out with his household, and with all their substance, journeying through the realm of the Chaldeans. Fain would the wise lord with his kinsfolk seek the land of Canaan. And

Abraham and Lot, his kinsmen, dear to God, departed with him out of that country. The noble sons of men chose them a dwelling in the land of Haran, and their wives with them. And Abraham's father the faithful, died in that land. And all his years were two hundred and five winters, and he departed, full of years, to see God.

Then the Holy Warden of the heavenly kingdom, Eternal God, said unto Abraham: "Go forth from this place, and lead thy household and thy cattle with thee. Get thee out of the land of Haran, and from thy father's home. Journey as I bid thee, dearest of men; hearken to My teachings, and seek the land of green, wide-stretching plains, which I shall show thee. Blessed shalt thou live in My protection. If any of the dwellers of earth greet thee with evil, him will I curse for thy sake; and I will set My anger upon him and My enduring wrath. But unto them that honour thee will I be gracious and give them all their heart's desire. Through thee all nations dwelling in the earth shall have My peace and friendship, My bliss and blessing in the world. The number of thy tribe, thy sons and daughters, shall be increased beneath the heavens, until the earth and many a land shall be filled with thy seed."

And Abraham, great in virtue and blessed with gold and silver, departed with much substance out of the land of Haran, leading his herds and his possessions, even unto the borders of the Egyptians, according as our God, the Lord of victory, commanded by His word, and sought a dwelling in the land of Canaan. Beloved of God, he came with gladness to that land, and his wife with him, the dear companion of his bed, and the wife of his brother's son. And his years were five-and-seventy winters when he went out from the land of Haran, and from his kinsmen. And Abraham was mindful of the words of the Almighty Father, and journeyed through all the borders of that people, at his Lord's behest, to view the land afar, and came at last in safety, with undaunted heart, to Sichem and the Canaanites. And the just Lord, the King of angels, revealed Himself to Abraham and said:

"This is the roomy land, the beautiful, green realm, adorned with increase, which I will give thy seed to rule."

And there the prince builded an altar to the Lord, and offered up a sacrifice to God, the Lord of life, Protector of all souls. And Abraham departed again out of the east to view with his eyes this best of lands

(and he was mindful of the gracious promise which the Heavenly Warden, the Lord of victory, had given by His holy word) until they came with their multitudes unto a village called Bethel. Out of the east their leader, blithe of heart, and his brother's son, God-fearing men, journeyed with all their substance through far-famed lands, and over high, steep hills, and chose a dwelling where the fields seemed wondrous fair. And again Abraham builded an altar, calling earnestly on God, and offered sacrifice unto the Lord of life. And God was gracious, and with unsparing hand granted him reward upon the altar.

And for a time thereafter the prince abode in his dwellings, and his wife with him, enjoying all good things, until a grievous famine fell upon the tribes of Canaan, and bitter hunger, grim as death to men within their homes. Then Abraham, wise of heart, and chosen of the Lord, betook him into Egypt to seek a place of refuge. The faithful hero fled from that affliction; too bitter was the woe. And, in the wisdom of his heart, when he beheld the gabled palaces and high-walled towns of the Egyptians gleaming brightly, Abraham began to speak unto his wife and counsel her:

“Lo! many a proud Egyptian shall behold thy beauty, maiden of elfin grace! And if one look upon thee with desire, thinking thou art my wife, I fear lest, in his longing for thy love, some foe may slay me with the sword. Therefore, Sarah, say thou art my sister and my kin, if any stranger question what the bond may be between us two of alien race and distant home. Conceal the truth! So shalt thou save my life if God, our Lord Almighty, who sent us on this journey, that we might strive for honour and advantage among the Egyptians, will grant me His protection as of old, and longer life.”

So Abraham, the dauntless earl, came journeying with all his substance into Egypt, where men were alien to him and friends unknown. And many a proud earl, great in glory, found the woman fair; to many a boldthane of the king she seemed of royal beauty; and this they told their lord. They little thought of any fairer maid, but praised the winsome loveliness of Sarah more highly to their prince, until he bade them bring the lovely woman to his hall. And the lord of men, dispenser of treasure, bade them show honour upon Abraham. But the Lord God visited His anger upon Pharaoh because of his love of the

woman; bitterly the prince of men atoned, and all his household. He knew why the Lord afflicted him with plagues! Then the prince of Egypt called Abraham before him, who was sore afraid; and he gave him his wife again and his consort, and bade him seek friends elsewhere, other princes and another folk. And he bade his thanes and serving men conduct him, uninjured and with honour, out from among that people, that he might be at peace.

So Abraham took his possessions and went out from the land of Egypt. Brave men conveyed the maiden, the bride with rings adorned, and they led their flocks and earthly riches unto Bethel to their olden dwellings again, wife and wealth and worldly treasure. They began to build there, to found a city, and renew their halls and establish a home. And they builded an altar in the plain near that which Abraham had built aforetime to his God, when he came out of the west. And there the blessed man of noble heart gave praise anew unto the name of the Eternal Lord, offering sacrifice unto the Prince of angels, and giving thanks abundantly unto the Lord of life for all His grace and mercy.

Then Abraham and Lot abode in that place, having the fullness of their desires, enjoying bliss, until no longer could they prosper in that land together, with their possessions, but those righteous men must needs seek elsewhere some roomier dwelling-place. For often quarrels rose between the followers of these faithful men, and strife among their shepherds. Then holy Abraham, mindful of honour, spake fairly unto Lot:

“I am thy father’s brother in blood kinship, and thou my brother’s son. No strife shall rise, no feud grow up, between us two. God will not suffer that. We two are kinsmen; naught else shall there be between us save goodness and enduring love. Now, Lot, take thought how strong men dwell about our borders, mighty tribes with thanes and allies, men of valour, the tribe of the Canaanites and the tribe of the Perizzites. They will not give us of their land! Therefore let us go forth from this place, and seek out roomier fields. I give good counsel, son of Haran, for us both, and speak the truth. I give thee choice, my son! Take thought, and ponder in thy heart on which hand thou wilt bend thy course, thou and thy cattle. The choice is thine!”

Then Lot departed to view the green earth and the land that lies by Jordan. And it was watered with rivers, and covered with pleasant fruits, bright with running streams, and like the Paradise of God before our Lord gave over Sodom and Gomorrah unto fire and black flame, because of the sins of men. And there the son of Haran chose him a dwelling and a settlement in the city of Sodom... And thither he took from Bethel all his substance, rings and household treasure and riches and twisted gold. And he abode by Jordan many a year. The place was fair, but those that dwelt therein were impious and hateful unto God. The race of Sodomites were bold in sin, in deeds perverse, working eternal folly. Lot would not adopt the customs of that people, but turned him from their practices, their sin and shame, though he must needs dwell in the land. He kept him pure and spotless and of patient heart among that people, mindful of God's commands, most like as if he knew not what that nation did.

And Abraham abode thenceforth in the dwellings of the Canaanites. And the Lord of men, the King of angels, was his defender, granting him his heart's desires and worldly wealth and love and favour. Wherefore the tribes of men, the children of baptism, exalt his praise full widely under heaven. He served the Lord with gladness while he lived on earth, holy and wise of heart. Never need any man lack shelter or defence, nor be afraid and fearful before God, whoso, in return for His protection, with discerning heart, with wit and word and understanding, in thought and deed will serve Him till his death!

Then, as I have heard, Chedorlaomer, king of the Elamites, a bold folk-captain, marshalled an army, and Amraphel of Shinar and a mighty host were joined with him. Four kings with a great multitude departed into the south against Sodom and Gomorrah. And all the land about Jordan was overrun with armed men and hostile bands. Many a trembling maiden, pale with fear, must needs endure a foe's embrace. Many a warrior perished, sick with wounds, guarding their wives and treasure.

Against them from the south five kings went forth to war with battle-hosts and marching squadrons. Fain would they guard the city of Sodom against the foe. Twelve winters long that folk had given toll and tribute to the Northmen, and would no more enrich the lord of Elam

with their treasure, but they rebelled against him. Onward the hosts advanced, intent on death. (Loud sang the javelins.) Amid the spears the blackbird, dewy-feathered, croaked in hope of carrion. In multitudes, with steadfast hearts, the warriors hastened till the hosts were gathered from afar, from south and north, helmeted men.

Then was hard hand-play; crashing of weapons, storming of death-darts, tumult of battle. From out the sheaths men snatched their ring-decked, keen-edged swords. There might an earl have his fill of fighting, whoso was not yet sated with war. The Northmen smote the people of the south. In the shock of shields the men of Sodom and Gomorrah, dispensers of gold, lost many a well-loved comrade. And they fled away from the place of battle and saved their lives. Behind them, slain with spears and smitten with the sword-edge, their well-loved comrades, sons of princes, fell in death.

And the lord of Elam had the victory, and held the place of battle; and those who escaped the sword fled away to seek a stronghold. The foemen took their gold and sacked their splendid treasure-cities, Sodom and Gomorrah. Women were torn from their sheltering homes, widow and maid, bereft of friends. And the foe led Abraham's kinsman captive out of the city of Sodom, with all his substance. But truly may we tell these war wolves' fate after the battle, boasting their victory, leading Lot captive away, and with him the goods of the people and gold of the Southmen.

For a certain man who survived the battle and the sword came running unto Abraham, the Hebrew prince, and told him the disaster, the fate of Lot, and how the men of Sodom, and their strength, were sorely smitten. And Abraham told these tidings to his friends; the faithful man besought his well-loved comrades, Aner and Mamre and Eshcol, to bear him aid, saying that it was grievous to his heart and greatest of all sorrows, that his brother's son should suffer thralldom. He bade those valiant men devise a plan to free his kinsman, and his wife with him. And quickly the three brothers spake, and healed the sorrow of his heart with manful words, and pledged their faith to Abraham to aid him, and avenge his wrath upon his foes, or fall in death.

Then the holy man bade his hearth-retainers take their weapons. Three hundred and eighteen wielders of the ashen spear he gathered,

loyal-hearted men, of whom he knew that each would stoutly bear his linden shield to battle. And Abraham went out, and the three earls who had pledged their faith, together with a great company of their people. He would fain redeem his kinsman, Lot, from his distress. Brave were the warriors, stoutly bearing their bucklers upon the march. And when these war-wolves had journeyed nigh unto the camp, the son of Terah, wise of heart, bespoke his captains (great was his need that they should wage grim war on either flank, and hard hand-play against the foe) and said that easily the Holy, Everlasting Lord could speed their fortunes in the spear-strife.

Then in the shades of night, as I have heard, the warriors dared the battle. In the camp rose din of shields and spears, death of bowmen, crash of battle arrows. Bitterly the sharp spears pierced the hearts of men. In throngs their foemen, warriors and comrades, fell in death, where laughing they had borne away the spoil. And victory and glory of war forsook the strife of the Northmen. No twisted gold did Abraham offer in ransom for his brother's son, but battle; he smote and slew the foe in war. And the Lord of heaven smote in his behalf. Four armies fled, the kings and captains of the folk. Behind them lay the goodly host of hearth-retainers, cold in death, and in their track lay those who sacked the homes of Sodom and Gomorrah, and bore away the young men and the gold. Lot's uncle gave them grim requital! And the lords of the army of Elam, shorn of their glory, continued in flight until they came nigh unto Damascus.

Then Abraham betook him to the track of their retreat, and beheld the flight of the foe. Lot was redeemed, and his possessions; the women returned with joy. Far and wide upon the field of slaughter the birds were tearing at the bodies of those foemen of the free. And Abraham brought the treasure of the Southmen, their wives and children, unto their homes again, and maidens to their kinsmen. Never did any man of living men with tiny band go forth more worthily to battle than those who rushed against that mighty host.

Southward the tidings of battle were borne to the people of Sodom: news of their fierce foes' flight. The lord of the folk, bereft of earls and desolate of friends, went out unto Abraham, to meet him. And with him journeyed Salem's treasure-warden, Melchizedek the mighty, the bishop

of the folk. He came with gifts, gave Abraham fair greeting, the lord of armed men, and blessed him with God's blessing, and said:

"Well hast thou borne thee among men, before His eyes who gave thee glory in the battle—that is, God the Lord, who brake the power of thy foes, and let thee hew thy way to safety with the sword, regain the spoil, and fell thine enemies. They perished in the track of their retreat. The marching host throve not in battle, but God put them to flight. With His hands He shielded thee against the force of greater numbers in the battle because of the holy covenant which thou dost keep with the Lord of heaven."

And the prince laid his hand upon him and blessed him, and Abraham gave a tenth part of all the booty unto the bishop of God. Then unto Abraham spake the battle-king, the prince of Sodom, bereft of his warriors (he had need of favour):

"Restore me now the maidens of my people whom thou hast rescued with thy host from evil bondage. Keep thou the twisted gold that was my people's, the wealth and treasure. But let me lead again in freedom to their native land and wasted dwellings the children of my people, the women and lads and widows in their affliction. Our sons are dead and all our nobles, save a few only who must guard with me the marches of our land."

And straightway, crowned with valour and victory and glory, Abraham made answer before the earls. Right nobly spake he:

"I say to thee, O prince of men, before the Holy Lord of earth and heaven, there is no worldly treasure I will take, nor scot nor shilling of what I have redeemed for thee among the bowmen, great prince and lord of men, lest that thou afterward shouldest say that I grew rich with the riches of Sodom and its olden treasure. But thou mayest take hence with thee all that booty which I won for thee in battle, save only the portion of these lordly men, of Aner, and of Mamre, and of Eshcol. I will not willingly deprive these warriors of their right, for they upheld me in the shock of battle and fought to thine advantage. Depart now, taking home the well-wrought gold, and lovely maidens, the daughters of thy people. Thou needest not to dread the onrush of thy foes, or war of the Northmen, but the blood-stained birds of prey are resting on the mountain slopes, gorged with the slain of their armies."

Then the king departed to his home with the booty which the holy Hebrew prince, mindful of honour, had given him. And the Lord of heaven appeared again unto Abraham, comforting the noble man of heart with holy speech, and said:

“Great shall be thy reward! Let not thy heart be shaken, doing My will. Thou needest have no whit of dread if thou wilt keep My precepts, but I will shield thee with My hands, and shelter thee from every evil, so long as thy life endureth. Be not afraid.”

And Abraham, full of years and noble deeds made answer to his Lord and asked: “What comfort canst Thou give me, Lord of spirits, who am thus desolate? No need have I to heap up treasure for any child of mine, but after me my kinsmen shall enjoy my wealth. Thou grantest me no son, and therefore sorrow presseth on my heart. I can devise no counsel. My steward goeth to and fro rejoicing in his children, and firmly thinketh in his heart that after me his sons shall be my heirs. He seeth that no child is born to me.”

And straightway God made answer unto him: “Never shall son of thy steward inherit thy goods; but thine own son shall have thy treasure when thy flesh lieth cold. Behold the heavens! Number their jewels, the shining stars, that shed their wondrous beauty far and wide, and blaze so brightly over the spacious sea. So shall thy tribe be and thy seed for number. Let not thy heart be troubled. Yet shall thy wife conceive and bear a son, great in goodness, to be warden of thy wealth, when thou art gone. Be not cast down. I am the Lord who, many a year ago, brought thee forth from out the land of the Chaldeans, with but a few, and gave thee this wide realm to rule. I give thee now My promise, prince of Hebrews, thy seed shall settle many a spacious kingdom, the regions of the world from the Egyptian borders even unto Euphrates, and where the Nile hems in a mighty land and the sea limits it. All this shall thy sons inhabit; each tract and tribal realm and lofty stone-built city, whatsoever those three waters and their foaming floods encircle with their streams.”

Now Sarah’s heart was heavy that she bare no goodly son to gladden Abraham; with bitter grief she spake unto her husband:

“The Lord of heaven hath denied me to increase thy tribe, or bear thee children under heaven. I have no hope that we shall have a son to stay our house. My heart is sad. My lord, do now according as I bid thee.

Here is a virgin subject unto thee, a comely maid, a daughter of the Egyptian people. Bid her go quickly to thy bed, and thou shalt prove if by this woman the Lord will send an heir unto thy house."

And the blessed man gave ear unto the woman's counsels, and bade his handmaid go unto his bed, according as his wife had counselled him. And the maiden conceived by Abraham, and her heart grew arrogant. She stubbornly began to vex her mistress, was insolent, insulting, evil-hearted, and would not willingly be subject to her, but straightway entered into strife with Sarah. Then, as I have heard, the woman told her sorrow to her lord, speaking with bitter grief:

"Thou hast not done me right or justice! Since first my handmaid, Hagar, knew thy bed, according as I counselled thee, thou sufferest her to vex me day by day in word and deed. But her atonement shall be bitter if I may still rule over my own maid, dear Abraham. And may Almighty God, the Lord of lords, be judge between us."

And straightway Abraham, wise of heart, made answer: "Never will I let thee be dishonoured while we two live. But thou shalt deal with thine handmaid even according as it pleaseth thee."

Then was the wife of Abraham hard of heart and hostile-minded, ruthless, and merciless against her handmaid, and bitterly declared her hate. And the maiden fled from thralldom and oppression, and would not brook punishment or retribution for what she wrought against Sarah. But she fled into the wilderness. And there a thane of glory, an angel of the Lord, found her sad of heart and questioned her:

"Whither art thou hastening, unhappy girl, handmaid of Sarah?"

And straightway she answered him: "Devoid of all good things, in misery, I fled away out of my dwelling, from the hate of my lady, from injury and wrong. Here in the wilderness with tear-stained face I shall abide my doom, when from my heart grim hunger or the wolf shall tear my soul and sorrow."

And the angel answered her: "Seek not to flee away and leave thy lord, but return again, deserve honour, be of humble heart, constant in virtue, and faithful to thy lord. Thou, Hagar, shalt bring forth a son to Abraham. And I say unto thee that men shall call him Ishmael. He shall be terrible, and swift to war; his hand shall be against the tribes of men, his kinsmen. Many shall war upon him bitterly. And from that prince

shall spring a race and an unnumbered tribe. Return again to seek thy lord, and dwell with them that have thee in possession."

And she hearkened unto the angel's counsel, and returned again unto her lord, according as the holy messenger of God commanded in words of wisdom. And Abraham, had lived for six-and-eighty winters in the world when Ishmael was born. And the boy grew strong and throve according as the angel, the faithful minister of peace, had told the maid. And after thirteen years the Lord, Eternal God, said unto Abraham:

"Dearest of men, keep well our covenant as I shall show thee, and I will prosper thee and honour thee in every season. Be swift to work My will. I will be mindful of the covenant and pledge I gave thee to thy comfort, because thy soul was sad. Thou shalt sanctify thy household, and set a victor-sign on every male, if thou wilt have in Me a lord or faithful friend unto thy people. I will be lord and shepherd of this folk if ye will serve Me in your hearts, and keep My laws. And each male child that cometh into the world, among this people, shall be devoted unto Me in seven nights' time, by the victor-token, or else cut off from all the world with persecution, and exiled from all good.

"Do as I bid thee; I will be gracious unto you if ye will use that token of true faith. Thy wife shall bear a son, and men shall call him Isaac. Thou shalt not need to shame thee for him, but I will grant him grace divine, by My great might, and many a friend. He shall receive My blessing and My bliss, My love and favour. From him shall spring a mighty people and many a valiant leader, rulers of kingdoms, lords of the world, renowned afar."

Then Abraham laid his face upon the ground and pondered these sayings in his heart with scorn. For he deemed that never the day would come when Sarah, his grey-haired wife, would bear a son. Full well he knew that she had lived an hundred winters in the world. And full of years he spake unto the Lord:

"May Ishmael live according to Thy laws, O Lord, and render Thee a thankful and a steadfast spirit, an earnest heart to do Thy will, by night and day, in word and deed."

And graciously Eternal God, Almighty Lord, made answer:

"Yet shall Sarah bear a son, though old in winters, and fate shall be fulfilled according to My word. I will bless Ishmael, thy firstborn, with

My blessing as thou dost ask, that his days may be long in the land, and his race may multiply. This will I grant thee. So also will I prosper Isaac, thy younger son, who is not yet born, with every good and pleasant thing all the days of his life. And I will surely keep My covenant with him and holy faith, and show him favour."

And Abraham did even as Eternal God commanded, and, in accordance with his Lord's behest, he set the sign of the covenant upon his son, and bade his bondmen also bear that holy token. He was wise of heart, and mindful of the covenant and pledge which God had given him; and he himself received the glorious sign. God, the Mighty King, increased his glory in the world. And he strove in all his ways to work the will of his Lord....

But the woman laughed at the Lord of hosts with derision; full of years, she pondered those sayings in her heart with scorn. She had no faith that His words would be fulfilled. And when the Lord of heaven heard that in her bower the wife of Abraham laughed in unbelief, then spake the Holy God:

"Lo! Sarah trusteth not My word. Yet all shall be fulfilled according as I promised thee in the beginning. I tell thee truly, at this self-same season thy wife shall bear a son. And when I come again unto this dwelling My word shall be fulfilled, and thine eyes shall behold thy son, dear Abraham."

And after these words they departed swiftly away from the place of oracle. The holy spirits turned their steps (and the Prince of light was their companion) till they beheld high Sodom's city-walls. They saw high halls towering above precious treasure and mansions above ruddy gold. And the Righteous Lord of heaven held long discourse with Abraham:

"I hear loud tumult in this city and brawling of sinful men, the boastful words of tipplers. drunk with ale, and evil speech of multitudes within their walls. Heavy are the sins of this people and the offences of these faithless men. But I will search out what this people do, O Hebrew prince, and whether they sin so greatly in their thoughts and deeds as their evil tongues speak fraud and guile. Verily brimstone and black flame, bitter and grim and fiercely burning, shall visit vengeance on these heathen folk." . . .

And so these men abode their punishment and woe within their walls, and their wives with them. Proud in their strength, they repaid God evil for good until the Lord of spirits, Prince of life and light, could no longer withhold His wrath. Stern of heart, God sent two mighty messengers among them who came at even-tide unto the city of Sodom. They came upon a man sitting in the gate of the city, even the son of Haran, and they appeared as young men before the eyes of the sage. Then the servant of the Lord arose and went unto the strangers, and greeted them with kindness; he was mindful of what is right and fitting among men, and offered them a shelter for the night. And the noble messengers of God made answer:

“We thank thee for the favour thou hast showed us. Yet do we think to bide here quietly beside this street until the time of the dawn, when God shall send again the sun.”

Then Lot fell at their feet, and knelt upon the ground before his guests, and offered them food and rest, the shelter of his house, and entertainment. And they accepted the kindness of the prince with thanks, and went in quickly with him unto his dwelling as the Hebrew earl pointed them the way. And the lordly hero, wise of heart, gave them fair entertainment in his hall, until the evening light vanished away. Then night came, hard upon the heels of day, and clothed the ocean-streams with darkness, and all the glory of the world, seas and wide stretching land.

Then in great throngs the dwellers of Sodom, young and old, undear to God, came to demand the strangers, in multitudes encompassed Lot about, and his guests. They bade him lead the holy heralds out from the lofty hall into their power. Shamelessly they said that they would know these men. Of decency they had no heed. Then swiftly Lot arose, deviser of counsel, and went forth from his dwelling; the son of Haran, mindful of wisdom, spake unto all that gathering of men:

“Within my house two stainless daughters dwell. (Neither of them yet has known a man.) Do now as I bid you and forsake this sin. Them will I give you rather than that ye work this shame against your nature, and grievous evil against the sons of men. Take now the maidens and leave my guests in peace, for I will defend them against you before God, if so I may.”

And all that multitude of godless men with one accord made answer unto him: "This seemeth meet and very right: that thou leave this land! An exile, from afar thou camest to this country, desolate of friends, and lacking food. And now wilt thou be judge over us, if so may be, and teach our people?"

Then, as I have heard, the heathen leaders laid hand on Lot and seized him. But his guests, the righteous strangers, brought him aid, and drew him within his dwelling from out the clutches of these cruel men. And straightway the eyes of all those standing round about were darkened; and suddenly the host of city-dwellers became blind. They might not storm the halls, with savage hearts against the strangers, as they strove to do, but stoutly the ministers of God withstood them. Lot's guests had sturdy strength, and smote the host with vengeance. Fairly the faithful ministers of peace spake unto Lot:

"If thou have any son, or kinsman dear among this people, or any friend of these maidens whom we here behold, lead forth in haste from the city those dear to thee, and save thy life, lest thou too perish with these faithless men. Because of the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah the Lord hath bidden give them over to fire and black flame, to smite the people in their dwellings with the pangs of death, and work His vengeance. The hour is nigh at hand. Flee upon the paths of earth, and save thy life. To thee the Lord is gracious." ...

And straightway Lot made answer unto them: "I may not wander so far hence, afoot, in search of safety, with these women. But ye may fairly show me love and friendship, and grant me grace and favour. I know a little high-built town not far from here; there grant me rest and respite, in Zoar to find safety. If ye will shield that lofty stronghold from the flame, we may abide there for a time secure, and save our lives."

And friendly was the righteous angels' answer: "Thou shalt receive this boon, since thou hast spoken of the city. Go quickly to that stronghold, and we will grant thee peace and our protection. We will not wreak God's vengeance on these faithless men, nor slay this sinful race, till thou hast brought thy children unto Zoar, and thy wife with them."

Then Abraham's kinsman hastened to the stronghold. He swiftly journeyed with his women, and stayed not foot until he led his children into Zoar, under the city-gates, and his wife with them. And when the

sun arose, peace-candle of men, then, as I have heard, the Lord of glory sent brimstone out of heaven, black fire and raging flame, in vengeance upon men, because so long in days gone by they had displeased the Lord. The Ruler of spirits gave them their reward!

And a great fear gripped the heathen race; din arose in their cities, wailing of sinful men, a wretched people at the point of death. All that was green in the golden cities the flame devoured; likewise no little portion of the wide land round about was covered with flame and terror. Fair groves and fruits of the earth were turned to ash and glowing ember, even as far as that grim vengeance swept the broad land of men. A roaring flame, destroying all things high and spacious, consumed the wealth of Sodom and Gomorrah. All this the Lord God destroyed, and the people with it.

But when Lot's wife heard the rushing flame, and dying men within the city, she looked behind her to that place of death. Straightway, the writings tell us, she was changed into the likeness of a pillar of salt; and ever since, the image (far-famed is the story) has stood in silence where that bitter vengeance came upon her, because she would not heed the bidding of the thanes of glory. Hard and high-towering in that spot of earth she must abide her fate, the doom of God, till time shall cease and the world vanish away. That is a wonder which the Lord of glory wrought!

And Abraham, the man of wisdom, went out alone at dawn and came again unto the place where he had spoken with his Lord. Far and wide he saw the fatal smoke curling upward from the earth. Pride had come upon that people and drunkenness, and they became too insolent in evil and bold in sin. God's judgments they forgot, and truth, and Him who gave them wealth and blessing in their cities. Wherefore the Prince of angels sent a consuming flame in punishment upon them. But our Faithful Lord was gracious, and remembered Abraham His beloved, as oft He did, and delivered Lot, his kinsman, when the multitude were slain. Now Lot, the valiant, durst no longer dwell in that strong-hold for fear of God, but he departed out of the city, and his children with him, to seek a dwelling far from the place of slaughter, and found, at last, a cave upon the slope of a high hill. And Lot, the blessed, dear unto God and faithful, abode there many a day, and his two daughters with him....

Thus did they, and the elder daughter went in first unto their father's bed, as he lay drunk with wine. And the old man knew not when the maidens came unto his bed, but his mind and wit were clouded within him, and, drunk with wine, he knew not the coming of the maids. And the lovely sisters conceived, and bare sons unto their aged father. Lot's older daughter called her son's name Moab. And the younger called her son's name Ammon, as the sacred writings say. Of these princes sprang a countless folk, two famous peoples. One tribe men call the Moabites, a far-famed race; the other tribe men call the Ammonites.

Then the brother of Haran departed with his wife and household and with all his substance to be subject unto Abimelech. And Abraham said unto men, of Sarah, his wife, "She is my sister," and thereby saved his life. For well he knew he had few friends or kinsfolk among that people. And the prince sent forth his thanes and bade them bring him Abraham's wife.

Then a second time, while dwelling among alien people, Abraham's wife was taken from her husband, and given into a stranger's arms. But the Eternal Lord sustained them as He oft had done. Our Saviour came at night unto the king as he lay drunk with wine. The King of truth spake unto the prince in a dream, and in anger denounced him:

"The wife of Abraham hast thou taken from him, and for this deed of evil death shall smite thy soul within thy breast."

And, heavy with feasting, the lord of sin began to speak in his slumber: "O Prince of angels, wilt Thou ever, in Thine anger, suffer a life to fail which liveth with righteous ways and upright heart, and seeketh mercy at Thy hands? I questioned not the woman, but she said that she was Abraham's sister. And I have wrought no evil against her, nor any sin."

Then again a second time the Righteous Lord, Eternal God, spake unto him in his dream, and said: "O prince of men, if thou reck aught of longer living in the world, restore this woman unto Abraham to be his wife. He is wise and righteous, and may behold the King of glory and speak with Him. But thou shalt perish with thy goods and treasure, if thou withhold this woman from the prince. But if that just and patient man will intercede for thee, he may prevail with Me to let thee live

unharméd, enjoying blessings, friends, and treasure all the days of thy life."

Then in fear the warden of the people awoke from his slumber, and bade summon his counsellors. Smitten with terror, Abimelech told them the words of God. And they feared God's vengeance on that deed, according to the dream. Then the king in haste called Abraham before him. The mighty prince said unto him:

"Tell me now what evil I have done thee, Hebrew prince, since first thou camest to our land with thy possessions, that now so fiercely thou shouldest lay a snare before me. Lo, Abraham! a stranger to this people, thou wouldest entrap us, and defile with sin. Thou saidest Sarah was thy sister and thy kin! Through her thou wouldest have done me grievous hurt and endless evil. We harboured thee with honour, in friendly wise allotting thee a dwelling in this realm, and lands for thine enjoyment. But in no friendly way dost thou reward or thank us for our favours."

And Abraham answered: "I did it not in guile or hatred, nor yet to work thee any woe. But I was far from mine own people, prince of men, and shielded me by craft from violence and death. Since Holy God first led me forth of old from the home of my lord and father, desolate of friends, I have visited many a people, many an alien race, and this woman with me. And ever this fear was in my heart, seeing I was a stranger, lest some foe should slay me, and take this woman to himself. Wherefore I said that Sarah was my sister, and this I told the war-smiths everywhere on earth where we two homeless needs must dwell with strangers. And so I did in this land also, mighty prince, when I came under thy protection. I knew not if the fear of God Almighty was among this people, when first I came here. Therefore, with care, I hid from thee and from thy thanes the truth, that Sarah was my wife and shared my bed."

Then Abimelech began to endow Abraham with treasure and gave him his wife again; and because he had taken his wife he gave him, to boot, wandering herds and servants and gleaming silver. And the lord of men said also unto Abraham:

"Abide with us and choose thee a dwelling in this land, and an abode whereso it pleaseth thee; thee must I keep. Be thou a faithful friend, and we will give thee riches."

And the dispenser of treasure spake also unto Sarah, and said: "No need hath Abraham, thy lord, to reproach thee, O maiden of elfin beauty, because thou hast trod my halls. With gleaming silver will I make requital for this wrong. Care not to go forth from this folk-land, seeking elsewhere unknown friends, but dwell ye here."

And Abraham did according to the bidding of the prince, accepting the friendship offered by his lord, with love and favour. Dear was he unto God; knowing great blessedness and peace, and walking in his Lord's protection and under the shelter of His wings, so long as his life endured.

Yet was God still angered against Abimelech for the wrong he had wrought against Sarah and against Abraham, in severing the bonds of these beloved, man and wife. He suffered woe and bitter punishment; the maidens, slave nor free, might not bear children to their lords, but God denied them, till holy Abraham prayed his Lord, Eternal God, for mercy. And the Lord of angels granted him his prayer, and for the king restored fertility to man and maid, to slave and free. The Lord of heaven suffered again their number to increase, their riches and possessions; and the Almighty Warden of mankind was merciful of heart unto Abimelech, as Abraham besought Him.

Then the Almighty Lord came unto Sarah, according to His word; our God, the Lord of life, fulfilled His promise to His dear ones, the man and woman. His wife brought forth a son to Abraham, and, ere his mother had conceived him, the Prince of angels called him Isaac. And Abraham with his own hand set the glorious sign upon him within the week his mother bare him. And the boy grew strong and throve, and his nature was noble. Now Abraham had lived an hundred winters in the world when his wife, with thankful heart, brought forth a son. And he had waited long for that event since first the Lord, by His own word, announced the day of joy.

And it came to pass upon a time that the woman saw Ishmael playing before Abraham as they sat with holy hearts at meat together, and all their household drank and revelled. Then said his wife, the noble woman, to her lord:

"Beloved lord, and warden of treasure, grant me a boon! Bid Hagar go forth from among us, and Ishmael with her. No longer shall we dwell

together, if I may rule and have my will. Never shall Ishmael, after thee, divide the heritage with Isaac, my son, when thou hast given up the ghost from out thy body."

Then it grieved Abraham in his heart that he must drive his own son into exile; but God, the just and Righteous, succoured him. He knew that the heart of the man was heavy with sorrow. The King of angels, the Eternal Lord, said unto Abraham:

"Let care and sorrow vanish from thy heart, and hearken unto the woman, thy wife. Bid Hagar go forth from this land, and Ishmael, the lad, with her. And I will multiply his race, and stablish them with ample blessings, as I have promised by My word."

And the man hearkened unto his Lord, and drove them forth in sadness from his dwelling, the woman and his son....

"Clear is it that the just God, Lord of heaven, is with thee, granting thee triumph by His might and wisdom, and strengthening thy heart with grace divine. Therefore ye throve in all your dealings, with friend or foe, in word or deed. With His hands the Lord God prospered thee in all thy ways. That is full widely known unto the city-dwellers! Graciously grant me now, I pray thee, Hebrew prince, thy promise and thy pledge, that thou wilt be a faithful friend to me, according to the kindness I have done thee since, wretched and in exile, thou camest from afar unto this land. Requite it now with kindness that I grudged thee not of land or favour. Be gracious to this nation my people, if the Lord our God, who ruleth the fates of men, will grant thee to extend the borders of this people, dealing out wealth to warriors of the shield, and treasure to the brave."

And Abraham gave a pledge unto Abimelech that he would do according to his prayer. And the Hebrew prince, the blessed son of Terah, abode a long time in the land of the Philistines, wretched and in exile. And the Lord of angels assigned him a dwelling-place, and the city-dwelling sons of men call that land Beersheba. There the holy man built a lofty city wherein to dwell, and planted a grove and raised an altar, and on the altar made ample offerings and sacrifice to God. who granted him life and blessing under heaven.

Then the Mighty Lord made a trial of the prince, and proved his strength, and sternly spake unto him, saying:

“Abraham! Betake thee quickly on a journey, and with thee lead thine only son. Thou shalt offer thy son Isaac unto Me in sacrifice. When thou hast mounted the steep downs and the slope of the high land which I will show thee, there shalt thou build an altar, and kindle a flame, slay thy son with the sword, and burn his body with black flame, and offer it a sacrifice to Me.”

He delayed not the journey, but swiftly made him ready. For the word of the Lord of angels was terrible to him, and his Lord was dear. The blessed Abraham rested not nor slept nor spurned his Lord’s behest, but the holy man girded him with a grey sword, and showed that fear of the Lord of spirits abode in his heart. The aged dispenser of gold began to saddle his asses, and bade two young men journey with him; his son was the third, and he the fourth. And he went out from his house with Isaac, the lad, according as God commanded. He went with speed and hastened on the paths of earth, according as the Lord marked out the way across the waste, until, in gleaming glory, the dawn of the third day arose over the deep water.

Then the blessed man beheld the high hills towering up, as the Lord of heaven had told him. And Abraham said unto his servants:

“Abide ye here in this place, and we two will come again, when we have worshipped God.”

And the prince and his son departed across the weald to the place which the Lord had showed him; the lad carried wood, and the father bare fire and sword. And the lad, young in winters, spake unto Abraham and said:

“Here have we fire and sword, my lord! But where is the fair burnt-offering thou thinkest to sacrifice to God?”

And Abraham answered (firm was his resolve to do as God had bidden) “That will the Righteous Lord, the Warden of mankind, provide as seemeth right to Him.”

Stout of heart he mounted the high downs, and his son with him, according as Eternal God commanded, until he stood upon the ridge of the high land in the place which the Firm and Faithful Lord had showed him. And there he built a pyre and kindled a flame and bound his son, hand and foot, and laid Isaac, the lad, on the altar, and seized his sword

by the hilt. With his own hand he would have slain him, and quenched the flame with the blood of his son.

Then a thane of God, an angel from on high, called unto Abraham with a loud voice. In stillness he abode the herald's message and answered the angel. Swiftly the glorious minister of God addressed him from the heavens:

"Slay not thy son, dear Abraham, but take the lad from the altar alive. The God of glory is gracious unto him! Great shall thy reward be, Hebrew prince, true meed of victory and ample gifts, at the holy hands of the Heavenly King. The Lord of spirits will bless thee with His blessing because His love and favour were dearer unto thee than thine own son."

The altar-fire stood kindled. The Lord of men had gladdened the heart of Abraham, kinsman of Lot, when He restored to him his son, alive. And the blessed man, brother of Haran, looked over his shoulder and beheld a ram standing not far off, caught fast in the brambles. And Abraham took it, and laid it upon the altar in the stead of his son, and drawing his sword made ready all offering and an altar smoking with the blood of the ram, and sacrificed that offering to God, and gave Him thanks for all the loving-kindness which the Lord had showed him, early and late.