

**WHITNEY
ORSON
FERGUSON**

ELIAS: AN EPIC OF THE
AGES

Orson Whitney

Elias: An Epic of the Ages

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Orson F. Whitney

Elias: An Epic of the Ages

FOREWORD

"Elias" was begun in the spring of 1900, and was first published in the autumn of 1904, when an edition de luxe, limited to one hundred and fifty copies, and two less pretentious editions, were subscribed for by friends of the author. He was hardly a party to the project, the initial step being taken without his knowledge. Prior to that time he had read the poem to select gatherings in private homes and in two of the leading church schools, but had no thought of printing it so early, until solicited by a committee of prominent citizens to allow them to undertake, in his behalf, its publication.

That committee consisted of Governor Heber M. Wells, Senator George Sutherland, President Anthon H. Lund, Major Richard W. Young, and Mr. H. L. A. Culmer. These gentlemen, out of pure public spirit and a friendly feeling for the author, had associated themselves together for this purpose. Though aware of many defects in his work, and anxious to mend them before facing the public and the critics, he nevertheless accepted gratefully the very generous offer. All the members of the committee gave to the enterprise their hearty support, and two of them, Major Young and Mr. Culmer, conducted most of the business necessary to putting the book through the press.

Since the original issuance the author has endeavored to bring the work into a more finished state, and the results are now before the reader. The poem is in twelve parts—a prelude, ten cantos, and an epilogue. Following these are explanatory notes, for the benefit of students; the introduction of the epic as a text book into the schools being one of the purposes for which it was written.

The character and scope of the work are partly indicated by the title, "Elias—An Epic Of The Ages." It is an attempt to present, in verse form, historically, doctrinally, and prophetically, the vast theme comprehended in what the world terms "Mormonism."

THE AUTHOR.

DEDICATION

(SEE NOTE.)

This song to thee, friend, chieftain, sixth to rise
From him, the foremost of a seeric line,
Mock of the worldly, marvel of the wise,—
His martyred brother's son! May light divine,
Which 'lumined them, forever on thee shine,
Flooding with splendors new thy lineal fame;
And ancient rays with modern beams combine
To glorify a brow whose stalwart aim,
To merit heaven's high praise, nor fear a world's false blame!

THEME

(SEE NOTE.)

"And if you will receive it, this is Elias, which was to come to gather together the tribes of Israel and restore all things."

ARGUMENT

The aim of this poem is to point out those manifestations of the Divine Mind and those impulsions from human enterprise which have contributed in all ages to the progress of the race toward perfection.

Thus it deals not only with man's origin and destiny, with earth's creation, redemption, and ultimate glorification, but with events and epochs leading up to and having those greater ends as their decreed consummation. The Christ theme, in its heavenly and earthly phases, is supplemented by the sacred and secular history of man upon both hemispheres. God's direct dealings through prophets, apostles, and other inspired agents, and His indirect dealings through poets, painters, philosophers, inventors, discoverers, statesmen, kings, conquerors and the like, are indicated, and the experiences of the Church of Christ in various dispensations portrayed.

The title "Elias," signifying restoration and preparation,—the lesser going before the greater with those objects in view,—is used to denote and personify the Genius of Progress, whose beneficent workings, under the guidance of the Infinite Spirit, through the aeons and the ages, behind the scenes and upon the stage of human action, are the warp and woof of the entire poem. The medial point is the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times, the era of restitution, when the House of God is to be set in order, and all things in Christ are to be gathered into one.

PRELUDE

(SEE NOTE.)

The work for Him I asked and aimed to do,
Ere death should claim my dust, my spirit free,—
That, looking down from where the wise and true
Inherit glory, gracious eyes might see
A spark I kindled beaming endlessly,
And lighting other wanderers to the goal
Where blends the life that is with life to be;—
Now done, or well or ill, the lettered scroll
Of what is writ on heart and mind I here unroll.

CANTO ONE

As From a Dream[1]

Youth's morn was breaking, when I dreamed a dream,
Splendid as springtime's weft of wonders rare;
Idyllic vision, beauteous, bright romance,
Glory of love and glamor of renown.
I dreamed that fame held all of happiness,
Save the sweet charm that lurked in woman's smile.

Wealth wooed I not, nor power—to wear the sign
And wave the symbol of authority;
To speak, and have hosts tremble; or to frown,
And find all pale and prostrate at my feet. 10
But oh! to sway, like swinging forest boughs
In summer breeze, men's yearning hearts and minds,—
Sway them in duty's name, in virtue's cause,
By tongue of thunder or by pen of flame,
Leaving some wise, sublime, benefic deed,
Some word or work of merit and of might,
To fix the fleeting gaze of centuries!

Glory and love—these were my guides divine,
The planet passions of my destiny,
The Baal and Astoreth[2] to whom I bowed, 20
At human shrines a worldly worshiper,
Adoring beauteous dust, my fellow clay,
And coveting an earthly immortality.

And at the feet of these dear deities,
Careless of great Jehovah's smile or frown,
In the fresh morning of my youth's fair might,
Slumbering I dreamed, till golden grew the dawn.

A strange and stern awakening—a sky,
Pearl, gold, and sapphire, clear and calm till then,
Cloud-curtained, grim, with anger audible, 30
Tortured and torn with swift-flung darts of fire;
Booming and crashing, bolt on bolt descends;
Earth, air, and heaven are wrapt in roaring flame.

And when the rifted storm has rolled away,
And stillness reascends her solemn throne,
Ruin looks forth from retrospection's tower,
And memory weeps where desolation reigns.

It was the end. Dispelled illusion's dream.
Youth's fond ideals, thunder-stricken, strewn,
Lay level with the dust. But light had come! 40
My soul had cast its fetters and was free.

I slept and dreamed no more; I was awake!
And saw and heard with other eyes and ears,
Which taught me things unseen, unheard, before;
Things new yet old—old as eternity,
Old e'en to time, though new and strange to me.

I talked with Truth on solemn mountain tops;
I soared with winged thought the sunlit dome;
Studied the midnight stars; and when anon
The hurrying, far-flung legions of the storm 50
In supermortal might went forth to war,
Would fain have charioted the charging plain,
Or spurred the tempest as a battle steed,
Grasping the volted lightnings as they flew,
And thundering through the mists on things below.

Rejoicing in my new-found strength, I gave
Glory to Him, the Source and Sire of all;
That God whom I had neither loved nor feared,
That God whom now I worshipt and adored.
Who girdled me with Light, truth's triple key[3], 60
Unlocking what hath been, what yet shall be,
Probing death's gloom, life's three-fold mystery,
Solving the secret—Whither, Whence and Why.

Oh, wondrous transformation! when with wand
Of wakening might, that all-uplifting power
Waved o'er the cross where hung fond hopes impaled,
Waved o'er the tomb where loved ambitions lay,
Touched the strewn fragments of my shattered dream,
Bidding the dead arise in bodies new,
Building, on ruined hope, faith's battlement, 70
Love's palace, peace-domed, pinnacled in light,
In glory greater than earth's grandest dream,
Than glittering fame's most splendid spectacle;
Ideal transcending ideality,
Ideal made real past all reality!

Whose earth-dimmed eye could see what then I saw?
Whose earth-dulled ear such harmonies could hear?
When the all-searching Spirit tore the veil
Of things that seem, and showed me things that are.

Beauty, both good and evil—lamp to heaven 80

Or lure-light o'er the marshes of despair.
Beauty, divine—but not divinity;
Not parent—child of purity and truth;
Nor fount, nor stream, but bubble lost in air,
Nor tree, nor fruit—only a fragrant flower,
Flung from ambrosial gardens[4], here to grow
That life might be the less a wilderness.

But lo! a loveliness that blooms for aye,
That, withering here, is there revived,
A loveliness made lovelier evermore; 90
The beauty of the restful and the risen,
Of Paradise[5] and Glory's higher home.

Pure as the mountain monarch's ice-crowned crest,
Pure as the snow-king's mantle, diamond-strewn,
Pure as the cascade's limpid crystalline,
Leaping from cliff to chasm, the breeze-flung flood
Blown into spirit spray of dazzling sheen;
So pure the love that warmed my boyish breast,
And lit the yearning of my youthful eye.

But pure love, e'en the purest, may be blind. 100
Truth spake—then fell the blindness from Love's eyes[6],
Revealing life in hues of hopefulness;
Love's rainbow dream, that only time's vale spans
To human vision, widening now till lost
Beyond the pale peaks of eternity.

Heaven's gold love is, though mixt with earth's alloy—
Dross, that betimes a needful part doth play
In nature's wise and true economy.

Love dies not—'t is love's seeming that dissolves,
Low to its serpent level, native dust, 110
A grave unmemoried in lethean ground[7].
The while see heaven-born, heaven-aspiring love,
Immortal spirit of the universe,
Soaring past sun and stars to worlds unknown!
Heir to herself, a self-succeeding queen,
Still regnant on life's throne when life is o'er.

O thou, of beauty[8], loveliest form and phase!
Kindler and keeper of the quenchless flame!
Partner and peer of human majesty!
Sharing with him life's dual sovereignty, 120
Well canst thou wait for thrones and diadems.
Queen of the future, Eve of coming worlds,
Mother of spirits that shall people stars,

And hail thee empress of a universe!

No more I deemed of crowning consequence,
That mortal clay to mortal eye should shine;
That human mites should shout and sing in praise
Each of the other's midget mightiness—
A molecule, by atoms glorified!

Apple of ashes[9] to the longing lip! 130
Brine to the burning throat and thirsting soul!
Phantom, delusion, misty ghost of fame!
Voidest and vainest of all vanities!

"Be not beguiled!" A vibrant thunder note,
Pealing from clouds that canopied my life,
The warning, lightning-winged to purify,
Up-kindling all the summits of the soul.
"Be not beguiled; not what men think and say,
But what God sees and knows, is what avails.

"Who knoweth aught, unknowing of the all? 140
Unknowing all, who knoweth perfectly
'Twixt small and great, 'twixt failure and success,
'Twixt heights of glory and the gulfs of shame?
What cares eternity for time's decrees?
Defeat hath oft deserved the conqueror's crown;
Dishonor worn the wreath of victory.

"Greatness—is it to loom 'mid glittering show?
Goes power but hand in hand with prominence?
Largeness or littleness, or high or low,
Has but to breathe, and straightway he is known. 150
What speech conceals, the spirit manifests.

"Fame, place, and title find a fitting use,
And rightfully demand all reverence due.
But envy not the empty lot of him
Who, winning without merit, wins in vain.

"Greatness, true greatness, mightiness of mind,
And greater greatness, grandeur of the soul,
Tell but one tale—capacity, not place;
Capacity, whose sire, experience,
Whose ancestors, innate intelligence, 160
Original, inborn nobility,
As oft in hut as mansion have their home.

"'Tis not the crowning that creates the king.
Man's proper place where God hath need of him.

"Naught can be vain that leadeth unto light;
Struggle and stress, not plaudit, maketh strong;
Victor and vanquished equally may win[10],
Climbing far heights, where fame, eternal fame,
White as the gleaming cloak of Arctic hills,
Rests as a mantle, fadeless, faultless, pure, 170
On loftiest lives, whose snowy peaks, sun-crowned,
Receive but to dispense their blessedness.

"Eternal life demands a selfless love.
Hampered by pride, greed, hate, what soul can grow[11]?
Conceive a selfish God! Thou canst not, man!
Then let it shame thee unto higher things.
Who strives for self hates other men's success;
Who seeks God's glory welcomes rivalry.
Seeking, not gift, but Giver, thou shalt find
No sacrifice but changes part for whole. 180

"Fare on, full sure that greatest glory comes,
And swiftest growth, from serving humankind.
Toil on, for toil is treasure, thine for aye;
A pauper he who boasts an empty name."

So spake the Spirit of the Infinite[12].
The Messenger and Mind of Holy Twain.

Some men I found embodiments of all
The goodness, all the greatness, I had dreamed;
Men seeming gods, bestowing benefits
As suns their beams, as seas and skies their showers. 190
Others as dwarfs, as despots, by compare,
Devoured with greed, consumed with jealousy.

But truth taught charity, gave me to see,
As face to face one sees familiar friend,
Why men are not alike in magnitude.

Some souls, than others, have more summits climbed,
More light absorbed, more moral might evolved.
Dowered are they with wealth from earlier spheres;
Hence wiser, worthier, than those they lead
Through precept's vale, up steep example's height, 200
To where love, beauty, wealth, power, glory, reign.

While some, innately noble, are borne down
By weight of weaknesses inherited,
By passions fierce, propensities depraved,
Malific legacy of centuries,

That much of their true worthiness obscures,
While spirit strives with flesh for mastery,
For higher culture and for added might.

And yet anon such souls effulgent shine—
As bursts the April beam through banks of cloud— 210
In glory from which envy shades its eyes,
While stands detraction staring, stricken dumb;
The glory of a great intelligence,
Which mortal mists can dim but for a time.

Spirits, like stars, still differ in degree,
And cannot show an even excellence,
Unequal in their first nobility.
Great tells of greater—littleness of less;
Time's hills and vales[13] but type eternity.

Truth taught me more, but bade me silent be; 220
And I had teachers else—toil, prayer, and pain,
With days and nights of misery's martyrdom,
Alone and lorn in grief's Gethsemane:
Till storm above, and earthquake underneath,
Shook down thought's prison house, broke bolt and bar,
And agony set inspiration free.

'Tis thus the Great Musician tunes the harp
That He would strike—strikes thus the harp in tune;
Sweeping with sorrow's hand the quivering strings,
That they may cry aloud, and haply sound 230
A loftier and more enduring lay.

CANTO TWO

The Soul of Song[1]

Alone my soul upon a mighty hill,
Ancient with lingering snows of vanished years,
Where towering forms the templed azure fill,
Wooed by the breath of woodland atmospheres;
Where Nature, throned in solitude, reveres
The God whose glory she doth symbolize,
And on these altars, watered by her tears,
Spreads far around the fragrant sacrifice
Whose incense wafts her sweet memorial to the skies. 240

Here will I rest, where I have loved to roam,
From childhood's rose-hued, scarce-remembered day,
And found my pensive soul's congenial home
Far from the depths where human passions play.
Born at their feet, my own have learned to stray
Familiar o'er these pathless heights, and feel,
As now, the mind assume a loftier sway,
Soaring for themes that o'er its summits steal,
Beyond all thought to reach, all utterance to reveal.

Here let me linger. O my native hills! 250
Solemn and watchful o'er the silent waste!
How great the joy his bounding bosom thrills,
Whose steps, aspiring, mar your summits chaste!
Language! thy richest robe, thy rarest taste,
How clothe description in befitting dress,
When halts imagination's wingéd haste,
Awe-spelled in wonder's conscious littleness,
Where loom the cloud-crowned monarchs of the wilderness?

Grim, storm-plumed guardians! Warriors tempest-mailed,
Federal with freedom, fortressing her land! 260
Had primal man the sacred garden[2] tilled,
'Ere earthly scenes your early vision scanned?
In spirit form took ye your titan stand[3],
Ere rolled a world-creating fiat forth?
Or came ye at convulsion's fierce command,
'Mid loud-tongued thunders bursting from the earth,
The martial music that proclaimed your war-like birth?

Vast, voiceless oracles, whose intelligence
Sleeps in the caverns of each stony heart,
Yet breathes o'er all a boundless eloquence, 270

What wealth historic might your words impart!
Lone, looming, hermit of the hills, apart
From where thy banded mates in union dwell!
A master lyrist seemingly thou art,
Chief harper of a host that round thee swell;
And thine the Orphean boon[4], what could withstand thy spell?

E'en now it whispers from the graven rock,
Scribed with the lightning's pen, in sculpture bold,
Defying time and tide and tempest shock,
Frowning where seas and centuries have rolled. 280
"Oh were my words[5] thus writ!" That sage of old,
Knew he not well, ye mighty tomes of clay,
How firm the trust your flinty page might hold?
Have ye not scorned the fiats of decay?
Are ye not standing now where nations passed away?

Thrice wondrous things, once thine to wisely scan,
Fast as thy frozen snow-crown, still in store,
Hadst thou the melting gift[6]—of sovereign man
The sunlike glory—mightest thou restore,
Till learning's tide o'erwhelmed the shining shore, 290
With rich revealings of lost realms that rose
And fell like frost-hewn flowers thy face before;
Blightings which brought them an untimely close—
Perchance, of spirit lore, some mystic mine disclose.

But like the laboring brain that burns to speak
Mind's inmost thought, in deepest dungeon pent;
Or liker still to inward boiling peak
Of fires volcanic, vainly seeking vent
Where adamantine bolts and bars prevent;—
Thou'rt doomed to utter stillness, and shalt keep 300
The burden of thy bearing till is rent
Yon heavenly veil, and earth and air and deep
Tell secrets that shall rouse the dead from solemn sleep.

And must I be as mute, O silent mount!
Muse of all Melody, shall I not sing?—
Burst these dumb bars, when e'en yon babbling fount
May find in every breeze a wafting wing,
Afar its lightest murmured word to fling?
Where art thou, ancient Soul of Solemn Song?
Asleep? Then wake! Wherefore art slumbering? 310
The world hath need of thee, and waiteth long.
Strike, strike again thy harp, and thrill the listening throng!

Thus musing, lone upon a beetling brow,
Quaffing from unseen fount, those wilds among,

The spirit of the sun-kissed torrent flow,
Methought some lofty, caverned cliff had rung
With echoings of a more than mortal tongue;
Though softly clear the mournful cadence broke,
As notes from off the weird-toned viol flung.
Or was it yon lone cloud that muttering spoke, 320
Heralding the storm king's wrathful shout and shivering stroke?

Amazed I listened. Did I more than dream?
Had random word aroused unhop'd reply?
Or was it sound whose import did but seem?
Hark!—for again it rolls along the sky:
"Then question hast thou none? Or none wouldst ply,
Save to thy soul in meditative strain,
Or heedless winds that wander idly by?
So be it; still to me thy purpose plain,
Thy hidden wish revealed, nor thus revealed in vain." 330

While freshening waves of woodland-scented air
Widened the spell of that immortal tone;
While, as on threshold of a lion's lair,
Speechless I stood, as stricken into stone;
Methought the sun with lessening splendor shone,
As if that wandering cloud obscured his gaze.
Then burst the glory from his midday throne!
Turning, mine eye beheld, in rapt amaze,
What memory ne'er would lose were life of endless days.

A stately form, of giant stature tall; 340
Of hoary aspect, venerable and grave;
Whose curling locks and beard of copious fall
Vied the white foam of ocean's storm-whipt wave.
The firm-fixt eye flashed lightnings from its cave;
Far-darting penetration's gaze combined
With wisdom's milder light. Of study gave
Deep evidence that brow by learning lined,
Thought's towering throne, where ruled his realm a monarch
mind.

The spirit's garb—for spirit so he seemed— 350
Fell radiant in many a flowing fold;
A robe antique, by modern limners deemed
Befitting monk or eremite of old.
Head, hands, and feet were bare; the presence bold
With majesty, e'en as a god might wear,
While condescending to a mortal mould.
He spake—the voice no longer thrilled with fear;
Like some vast organ swell, it charmed, enchained, the ear.

"Long have I watched and waited, but no sound
Broke the wild stillness of this stern abode, 360
Save thunder's fiery foot-print smote the ground,
Or far beneath some torrent's fury flowed;
Anon the screaming eagle past me rode;
The seeker after gold, with toilsome stride,
And eager eye to fix the shining lode,
Hath paused and panted on the hill's steep side;
But none, for greater things, till now have hither hied.

"And thou, O pensive crier in the waste,
Invoker of the Voice now visible!
Prepared art thou a mystery to taste, 370
Whose fruit is joy or woe ineffable?
Pluck not of wisdom's branches bending full,
Drink not of that divine philosophy,
Save thou canst bravely suffer wrong's misrule,
Thy best intent thought ill; save thou canst be
What men deem "fool," real fools despising, pitying thee.

"Not all my ministry to lift the gloom
Yet hovering o'er this mystic hemisphere.
List while I tell, for I am one by whom
Future and past as present shall appear. 380
In me behold Messiah's Minister,
Ancient of time and of eternity,
Spirit of song that moved the Hebrew seer,
Voice of the stars[7] ere earth's nativity;
Exile, for ages gone, of mortal minstrelsy.

"See now my sacred heritage, the prey
Of ribald rhymesters, sensuous, half obscene;
Of gloating censors, glad o'er my decay,
And deeming all but best I ne'er had been!
The body's bard[8] throned, sceptering the scene, 390
A groveling worshiper of earth and time.
Arise! and with thy soul's celestial sheen,
Shame these false meteors, change the ruling chime;
My minstrel, I thy muse, sing thou the song sublime!

"Sing, poet, sing! but not of new—of old,
Of old and new—eternal truth thy theme,
That holdeth past and future in her fold,
That maketh present but a passing dream,
While time and earth and man as trifles seem;
That knoweth not of new, or old, or strange; 400
Whose everduring, all-redemptive scheme,
Fixt and immutable 'mid worlds of change,
On, on, from universe to universe doth range.

"Faint not, nor fear, for all shall fare thy way—
My way, His way, the Master's, evermore.
East shall seem West, rethrown the rising ray,
Shining afar from this most ancient shore[9],
And man shall rise[10] e'en where man fell before.
Fools may deride, may jeer at destiny;
They mock to mourn, oblivion earths them o'er; 410
While they that champion truth, by truth shall be
Exalted, e'en in time, to live eternally."

The ancient paused, and, unperceived till then,
A wondrous harp his bosom swung before,
Such harp as played the shepherd psalmist[11] when
A maddening rage his monarch seized and tore,
And music's magic quelled satanic power.
Seated, his form against the crag reclined,
He waved me to his feet, and forth did pour,
As pours Niagara on the plaintive wind, 420
Floods of majestic song, falling from mind to mind.

Full tale of wonders told, I may not tell,
Though mind be heir to all of mystery;
With milk of truth the breasts of wisdom swell,
Sufficing past and present infancy.
But matching all the modern eye may see
With marvels promised to the future sight,
'Twas as the shrub unto the sheltering tree,
The floating swan unto the eagle's flight,
The hillock to the snow-crowned summit, lost in light. 430

Silent he towered above me, harp in hand,—
Was it a dream? Could dream so vivid be?—
And with his mantle's fold my forehead fanned.
Then leapt to life the flame of poesy!
Was it a vision of my destiny?
Upon the mount, as erst, I stood alone,
And naught was there of muse or minstrelsy;
Save that afar still trembled that strange tone,
And something said within: "That harp is now thine own."

CANTO THREE

Elect of Elohim[1]

Sing I a song of aeons gone, 440
Of life from mystery sprung,
Ere sun, or moon, or rolling stars
Their radiance earthward flung;
Ere spirit-winged intelligence
Forsook those shining spheres.
Exceeding glory there to gain
Through mortal toil and tears.

A song they learn whose lives eterne
Transcend yon twinkling night,
Pale Olea's silver beam[2] outsoar, 450
Shinea's golden flight;
Passing the angel sentries by,
Mounting o'er stars and suns,
To where the orbs that govern burn,
Royal and regnant ones.

Declare, O Muse of mightier wing,
Of loftier lore, than mine!
Why God is God, and man may be
Both human and divine;
Why Sons of God, 'mid sons of men, 460
Unrecognized may dwell,
So masked in dense mortality
That none their truth can tell.

From worlds afar, from heavenmost star,
Heard I, or seemed to hear,
A sweet refrain, as summer rain,
A cadence soft and clear.
A voice, a harp,—Was it the same?—
Harping those harps among,
Leading the lyric universe, 470
On those high hills of song?

In solemn council sat the Gods;
From Kolob's height supreme,
Celestial light blazed forth afar
O'er countless kokaubeam;
And faintest tinge, the fiery fringe
Of that resplendent day,
'Lumined the dark abysmal realm

Where earth in chaos lay.

Silence. That awful hour was one 480
When thought doth most avail;
Of worlds unborn the destiny
Hung trembling in the scale.
Silence self-spelled, and there arose,
Those kings and priests among,
A power sublime, than whom appeared
None nobler 'mid the throng.

A stature mingling strength with grace,
Of meek though godlike mien;
The glory of whose countenance 490
Outshone the noonday sheen.
Whiter his hair than ocean spray,
Or frost of alpine hill.
He spake;—attention grew more grave,
The stillness e'en more still.

"Father!" the voice like music fell,
Clear as the murmuring flow
Of mountain streamlet trickling down
From heights of virgin snow.
"Father," it said, "since one must die, 500
Thy children to redeem
From spheres all formless now and void,
Where pulsing life shall teem;

"And mighty Michael[3] foremost fall,
That mortal man may be;
And chosen saviour Thou must send,
Lo, here am I—send me!
I ask, I seek no recompense,
Save that which then were mine;
Mine be the willing sacrifice, 510
The endless glory Thine!

"Give me to lead to this lorn world,
When wandered from the fold,
Twelve legions of the noble ones
That now Thy face behold;
Tried souls[4], 'mid untried spirits found,
That captained these may be,
And crowned the dispensations all
With powers of Deity.

"Who blameless bide the spirit state, 520
Clothe them in mortal clay,

The stepping-stone[5] to glories all,
If man will God obey,
Believing where he cannot see,
Till he again shall know,
And answer give, reward receive,
For all deeds done below.

"The love that hath redeemed all worlds[6]
All worlds must still redeem;
But mercy cannot justice rob— 530
Or where were Elohim?
Freedom—man's faith, man's work, God's grace—
Must span the great gulf o'er;
Life, death, the guerdon or the doom,
Rejoice we or deplore."

Still rang that voice, when sudden rose
Aloft a towering form,
Proudly erect as lowering peak
'Lumed by the gathering storm;
A presence bright and beautiful, 540
With eye of flashing fire,
A lip whose haughty curl bespoke
A sense of inward ire.

"Send me!"—coiled 'neath his courtly smile
A scarce concealed disdain—
"And none shall hence, from heaven to earth,
That shall not rise again.
My saving plan exception scorns[7].
Man's will?—Nay, mine alone.
As recompense, I claim the right 550
To sit on yonder Throne!"

Ceased Lucifer. The breathless hush
Resumed and denser grew.
All eyes were turned; the general gaze
One common magnet drew.
A moment there was solemn pause—
Listened eternity,
While rolled from lips omnipotent
The Father's firm decree:

"Jehovah, thou my Messenger[8]! 560
Son Ahman, thee I send;
And one shall go thy face before,[9]
While twelve thy steps attend.
And many more on that far shore
The pathway shall prepare,

That I, the first, the last may come,
And earth my glory share.

"After and ere thy going down,
An army shall descend—
The host of God, and house of him 570
Whom I have named my friend[10].
Through him, upon Idumea[11],
Shall come, all life to leaven,
The guileless ones, the sovereign sons,
Throned on the heights of heaven.

"Go forth, thou Chosen of the Gods,
Whose strength shall in thee dwell!
Go down betime and rescue earth,
Dethroning death and hell.
On thee alone man's fate depends, 580
The fate of beings all.
Thou shalt not fail, though thou art free—
Free, but too great to fall.

"By arm divine, both mine and thine,
The lost thou shalt restore,
And man, redeemed, with God shall be,
As God forevermore.
Return, and to the parent fold
This wandering planet bring[12],
And earth shall hail thee Conqueror, 590
And heaven proclaim thee King."

'Twas done. From congregation vast,
Tumultuous murmurs rose;
Waves of conflicting sound, as when
Two meeting seas oppose.
'Twas finished. But the heavens wept;
And still their annals tell
How one was choice of Elohim,
O'er one who fighting fell.

—

A stranger star that came from far 600
To fling its silver ray,
Where, cradled in a lowly cave,
A lowlier infant lay;
And led by soft sidereal light,
The orient sages bring
Bare gifts of gold and frankincense,
To greet the homeless King.

O wondrous grace! Will gods go down
Thus low that men may rise?
Imprisoned here the Mighty One, 610
Who reigned in yonder skies?
Hark to that chime!—What tongue sublime
Now tells the hour of noon[13]?
O dying world! art welcoming
Life's life—Light's sun and moon[14]?

Proclaim Him, prophet harbinger!
Make plain the Mightier's way,
Thou sharer of His martyrdom!
Elias? Yea and Nay[15].
The crescent moon, that knew the Sun, 620
Ere stars had learned to shine[16];
The waning moon, that bathed in blood,
Ere sank the Sun divine.

"Glory to God!—good will to man!—
Peace, peace!"—triumphal tone.
"Why peace?" Is discord then no more?
Are earth and heaven as one?
Peace to the soul that serveth Him,
The monarch manger-born;
There, ruler of unnumbered realms; 630
Here, throneless and forlorn.

He wandered through the faithless world,
A prince in shepherd guise;
He called his scattered flock, but few
The Voice did recognize;
For minds upborne by hollow pride,
Or dimmed by sordid lust,
Ne'er look for kings in beggar's garb,
For diamonds in the dust.

Wept He above a city doomed[17], 640
Her temple, walls, and towers,
O'er palaces where recreant priests
Usurped unhallowed powers.
"I am the way, the life, the light!"
Alas! 'twas heeded not.
Ignored—nay, mocked—God scorned by man!—
And spurned the truth He taught.

O bane of damning unbelief!
When, when till now so rife?
Thou stumbling stone, thou barrier 'thwart 650

The gates of endless life!
O love of self, and mammon lust,
Twin portals to despair,
Where bigotry, the blinded bat,
Flaps through the midnight air!

Through these, gloom-wrapt Gethsemane[18]!
Thy glens of guilty shade
Grieved o'er the sinless Son of God,
By gold-bought kiss betrayed;
Beheld Him unresisting dragged, 660
Forsaken, friendless, lone,
To halls where dark-browed hatred sat
On judgment's lofty throne.

As sheep before His shearers, dumb,
Those patient lips were mute;
The clamorous charge of taunting tongues
He deigned not to dispute.
They smote with cruel palm a face
Which felt yet bore the sting;
Then crowned with thorns His quivering brow, 670
And, mocking, hailed him "King!"

Transfixt He hung,—O crime of crimes!—
The God whom worlds adore.
"Father forgive them!" Drained the dregs;
Immanuel[19]—no more.
No more where thunders shook the earth,
Where lightnings tore the gloom,
Saw that unconquered Spirit spurn
The shackles of the tomb.

Far-flaming might, a sword of light, 680
A falchion from its sheath,
It cleft the realms of darkness, and
Dissolved the bands of death.
Hell's dungeons burst, wide open swung
The everlasting bars,
Whereby the ransomed soul shall win
Those heights beyond the stars.

CANTO FOUR

Night And The Wilderness[1]

A World o'ershadowed by an Eagle's wings[2],
From Scythian snows to hot Hamitic sands,
From Ganges on to Tiber and the Thames. 690

Where goeth forth, unwittingly the tool
Of Truth Eterne, a pathway to prepare,
The law and legion of imperial Rome,
Mighty to crush and to consolidate,
Humbling the hard, the haughty, making way
For peace to flow[3] wider than war can wound
Servant unknowingly of Him she slew,
In pandering to Judah's jealousy.

Victim now Victor, conqueror captive led,
Debtor to justice, darkness serving day, 700
Upon her knotted neck Jehovah's heel,
Her iron hand the Nazarene's defense,
Holding in quell the hierarchal hate,
Curbing the cruel wrath of Greek and Jew;
Israel from Israel's madness made secure—
Lamb from the Lion, by the She-Wolf's might[4].

Ere rose the Iron-Limbed[5], all conquering,
Throned on the wreck of empires earlier born,
Wrought well for Him the brazen loin of power,
The pard-like phalanx, swift, invincible, 710
Spreading the glories of a sapient tongue,
The wing whereon a higher wisdom flew,
Till teemed, of Aryan clans, the Asian kin[6],
Seedlings of Japheth, sire of the Gentile world.
Soul-widening word, broad-sown by Grecia's hand,
To blossom on a furrowed heathen ground.

Servant, erstwhile, the silver-breasted realm,
Kingdom of Kurush[7], shepherd of the King,
Whose sword, that gave the Jew deliverance,
To golden Babylon the guillotine. 720

Whoe'er hath swayed, or yet shall sway, the world,
By tongue or pen, by sword or sceptered rule,
Hath served, or yet shall serve, the sovereign aim
Of Him who wills the welfare of mankind;
For or against, promoting still His plan,

Helping, not hindering, a conquering Cause.

Gone the great Sun—set but to rise again,
More glorious from a night of martyrdom;
Set here to rise on realms and times untold;
All worlds, God's lofty vineyards[8], visiting. 730

Linger the spirit Moon and speaking Stars[9],
Crowning with light the Woman Wonderful[10].

Fair as the morn, though tearful as the eve;
Risen as from the rocky sepulchre,
Where slept betimes the body of her Lord;
Clothed, crowned, and shod, with glory's symboling[11];
Ere winging to the vast invisible,
Returning to the restful wilderness,
She bides to hope, to labor, and endure,
All depths, all heights, with Him inheriting. 740

Henceforth with her another Comforter,
Vicegerent[12] of the vanished Majesty,
Of heavenly Three, the unembodied One[13],
Proceeding from the presence of the Sire,
To manifest the meaning of the Son;
Giver of gifts from Him, the glory-crowned,
Fountain of memory and of prophecy.

After and ere,[14] Messiah's Minister,
Creative hand, omnific arm of God;
Holder with Christ of resurrection's key, 750
The quickener of the living and the dead.
Lamp of the worlds, life of the universe,
Eternal spring of energy divine—
Life, Light, and Love, magnetic mystery,
Whereby all things upheld and heavenward drawn.

Prophet still pleading[15] in the wilderness,
The promise of a perfect yet to come;
Proclaimer of the heavenly commonweal,
Kingdom upon and yet not of the earth,
Whose portal none can enter, none can see, 760
Save born anew—born of a dual birth,
By mystic fatherhood and motherhood
Begotten sons and daughters unto God,
Whose Spirit, omnipresent, immanent,
Unwearied, strives by countless ministries,
By might of word, by miracle of deed,
Mankind to win, wooing while hope remains.

Henceforth with her that holy gift and guide,
Truth's high revealer and interpreter;
Henceforth with her the Father and the Son, 770
Absent, yet present by the Comforter;
Of great lights twain, the lesser, ruling night,
Moon to that Sun, whose realm the rounded Day.

Resplendent night, while flame those fluent stars[16],
That still a spotless brow bediadem;
Circling forever round their central Light,
And, Him withdrawn, repeating from afar,
And gladdening with His rays a gloom-hung world.

As set that Sun, sinking in seas of blood,
Sinking to soar above a mightier morrow, 780
Follow the lingering stars, save haply one[17],
Through mystic night of ages sparkling lone,
And speaking in high splendor things to come.
Most lustrous of the living lamps of God,
'Mid human lights, divinely luminant.
Rarest of twelve, remaining oracle,
Reserved unto a wondrous destiny;
Pilot of peoples, nations, tribes and tongues,
Leading the lost[18] ones from captivity.
Beloved of Love—life's King, death's Conqueror, 790
Tarrying by will of Him through troubled time,
Lighting the way unto eternity.

And thou, e'en thou, O Woman Wonderful!
Safe for a season from the She-Wolf's maw,
Far borne, east, west, on power's imperial wings,
Nourished 'neath Caesar's shield, till Caesar's sword
Hath turned upon and made thee desolate.
Thou too must pass—not perish—in thy time.
Betrayed to foes without, by false within,
E'en as thy Lord thou sufferest martyrdom. 800

But what avails to baffle Him or bind?
Vain, dragon, vain thy deluge of deceit,
Thy flood of lies, thou false one from of old!
Vain, wrath of devils and of men combined,
Bent to defile the sacred Bride of Christ.
Triumphs the Man-Child[19], heaven now summons home;
Triumphs the Woman in the wilderness,
'Scaping the jaws, the hungering gates of hell,
That 'gainst the mortal part alone prevail;
Body, not spirit, crushed and all o'ercome. 810

Throned upon higher worlds, she reigneth still;

And here shall rise unto the regnant place,
When rolls the stone upon the image doomed,
When God hath fanned with fire His threshing floor.

Till then proud Japheth sways[20], while Jacob mourns,
Fainting 'neath yokes and fardels, prostrate, prone,
With Judah undermost, the last of all
The trampled tribes to taste of liberty.
Haply ordained a lesser power to wield,
Antaeus-like[21], from touching of the ground; 820
Bent, curst, yet clutching, and by might of gold
Conquering his dust-adoring conqueror[22].

For God, through all, remembers Abraham,
Ordained of old His lineal house to be.
Came not the Christ their covenant to fulfill?
Who but an Israel might offer Him?
Whose hand than Judah's might Jehovah slay?
"His blood be on our head"—Ay, rests it there!
Weightier than worlds by that high death redeemed.

World-wandering Saul! Was this thy symboling: 830
The Jew struck blind that Gentile hosts might see[23]?

Predestined Israel, martyred, immolate[24],
That nations, blood-besprent, might look and live;
A burden-bearer for the universe,
Outcast and homeless for humanity,
Descending like his Lord all else below,
And yet with Him to rise all else above,
Extremes of woe and weal encompassing,
Wisdom by sweet and bitter made more wise.

From blight springs blessing, and from darkness day; 840
E'en Canaan's neck from 'neath the yoke[25] shall come.
Japheth shall feel the Spirit minister,
And Jacob see and hear his risen Lord[26].

Departed now the Woman Wonderful,
Gone with the spirit gift and guiding power;
O'ercome, world-conquered, sinks degenerate
The washed one to his wallowing in the mire[27];
A drowsy dreamer of the self-same dreams
Dispelled erewhile by lightnings of her eye;

The heaven-lit torch[28] that made the pathway plain 850
O'er rugged mount, through mazy catacomb,
Now dimmed with incense from Diana's shrine[29],
And dashed in pieces 'gainst a pagan throne,

Where prematurely changed was cross for crown,
And Christ's flock fleeced by shearing compromise[30].

God still with man, though not with man's misrule;
Still with the just, though Christian-pagan turn
His prurient ear to fables, from the truth,
And, virtueless as Judah's pharisee,
And graceless as Iscariot, self-hung, 860
Parts in the midst, as wide as East from West[31],
False church and faithless empire, faction-torn,
Twain as the imaged legs of Babel's dream,
A split colossus, fallen 'twixt Greece and Rome.

God still with man, though not with man's misrule,
Never with thee, daughter of force and fraud,
Mother of guile—thy refuge and thy shame!
Never with thee, thou wanton by the way,
Roaming tradition's tangled wilderness,
Lost in a night that seemeth to thee day; 870
In crooked paths that fain would straight appear;
Warming thy withered fingers o'er the coals
Alive 'mid ashes of the ancient fires,
Where She was wont[32] to kindle faith, hope, love,
And flash the beacon o'er a wandering world.
There holding to thy heart an empty urn,
There cherishing a name, a memory,
Mumbling vain prayers, "Lord, Lord," protesting still,
And still forgetful of thy Lord's command!

Nay, not with thee, thou crimson courtesan[33], 880
Robed in the horrid hue of countless crimes!
Fierce dragon's maw, thrice-cruel murderess,
Thy hands a-reek with blood of innocence,
With blood of prophets, blood of priests and kings,
Whose martyred souls sue vengeance, judgment-sworn!
Vengeance on thee, thou slaughterer of saints,
Vengeance on him, thy sceptered paramour,
Whose princes ten (while Mammon's host shall wail),
Loathing where once they loved all lustfully,
And lived, as thou hast lived, deliciously, 890
When found no more God's wheat 'mid Satan's tares,
When thou art saltless, saintless, savorless,
When thou art ripened unto rottenness,
Shall give thy crumbling body to be burned.

Nay, Anti-Christ, presuming tyranny,
Never with thee, usurping power of sin!
Plotting to sway Jehovah's sovereignty,
To rear thy throne where His alone shall stand;

Perdition, warring 'gainst the Saints of God,
And overcoming till the Judgment sits[34], 900
When swift-winged morn shall overtake the night,
And glory lift the gloom[35] of centuries.

Meanwhile the mission of the Moonlike One[36],
Brooding above the waters of the world,
Stronger than storms, mightier than wind or wave,
Moving on mortal seas, on human souls;
Dynamic impulse of Divinity,
Impelling to all action[37] wise, sublime.

That high Ambassador of Elohim,
The Spirit Messenger Omnipotent, 910
Declare His goings-forth, His sendings tell.

Ye patriarchs and prophets of old time!
Ye seers and bards of sacred Israel!
Elect of God, earth-wandering witnesses,
Sowers on goodly and on stony ground!
Souls mercy-sent, man's erring steps to win
From folly's paths of wickedness and strife,
To wisdom's way of purity and peace!
Shepherds to fold and feed a wolf-torn flock,
Holding the hallowed keys that loose and bind! 920
Tell me—are ye alone truth's harbingers?
Are ye alone forerunners of the Light?

Nay, for as kings and conquerors they come;
Anon, as champions of democracy;
Founders of faiths and stern iconoclasts;
Sword, tongue and pen of progress and reform.
The fountain lights of literature, whose rays
Spill their white splendor on the hills of fame;
Masters of melody, whose strains awake
The slumbering memories of eternity; 930
Pilgrims to continents and climes unknown,
Uncurtained for the play of liberty,
Now nearing the finale of her dreams,
Dreams that shall waken to reality;
Waste-winners; probers of the polar way;
Invention's wizards, wielding magic might—
Launching fleet words on atmospheric wave,
Cleaving with bird-like wing the shoreless blue,
Outspeeding speed, outblazing brilliancy,
Thrilling the world with lightning's vivid wand, 940
Ruling all realms with scintillating sway;
Sages in art, in science past profound,
Subduing matter and exploring mind,

Sounding the depths of psychic mystery,
Scaling thought's pinnacles, that pierce the night,
To greet the early glintings of the morn.
These also are the mighty, kin to those,
Divinest of Jehovah's messengers.
Each hath his freedom, and succeeds or fails,
But all subserve the Will Omnipotent. 950

What though some wayward son of Deity[38],
Builder, o'erthrower, of imperial thrones,
In wrongful act of rightful agency,
Here drench with blood, here pave with shattered bones,
To heights of crumbling power and futile fame!
Is God then mocked? Made void His vast design?
Creator foiled by creature? Vain the fear!
Speeds ne'er to earth a spoiler of His plan,
Nor spares His rod a recreant messenger.

Whate'er betide, the soul that sins atones: 960
The grievous sceptre and the slaughtering sword,
The bloodstained ax, the gory guillotine,
The tyrant wrong, the tyrant-trampling right,
Join to make justice of the direst doom.

All oracles of light, all arms of power,
Preparers of the way one face before;
Their strength but part of His omnipotence,
Their fault God-given lest man be deified,
And pride in him dethrone humility.

Declare His truth, His generations tell, 970
O'er whom the many marveled, some to say
Elias, slain of Herod, lives again;
While some said Jeremias[39]. Who say ye,
Man-hated, though God-missioned ministers,
Unctioned with fire, anointed from on High!
Guardians yet watchful o'er the widening fold!
Who say ye was your Master, Teacher, Friend?

"Word that was God, is God, and shall be aye;
Sire by the spirit, and by flesh the Son;
In glory with the Father ere the world, 980
And now with that same glory glorified.
Image and likeness of creation's cause,
Mirror and model of humanity[40],
Of man the parent and the prototype.
Lover of light, hating and righting wrong;
Anointed Lord of Lords and Sire 'mid Sons;
The Sole-begotten, He that doeth here

All He hath seen erstwhile the Father do.
Elias? Nay, Messiah, Saviour, King,
That Greater whom Elias said would come." 990

Sufficeth it. What now, ye learned ones,
School-taught, self-sent, man-missioned ministers,
Creators of a vain divinity!
Daring the thunders of the decalogue,
Disputing Moses, Christ, and prophets all,
Gird up your loins and answer—What of God?
"God?—Mystery incomprehensible[41];
All things made He from nothing"—Hold, enough!
Night and gross darkness—darken it no more.

Yet give to man his meed. Hath he not kept, 1000
Albeit in empty urn, the Name of Names,
And toiled and suffered sore transmitting it
From sire to son through shaded centuries?
Messiah's coming did he not proclaim?
And, trodden yet beneath oppression's heel,
Hoards he not still the precious prophecy?
The Jew, the Christian, each hath played his part,
Each as a star[42] hath heralded a morn.

And what of him, the fierce iconoclast,
Agnostic, doubting or denying all, 1010
Ofttimes in hate and horrid ribaldry?
Maintains he not life's equilibrium,
A tempering shadow to the torrid beam,
A brake upon the wheel of bigotry,
A jet to cool fanaticism's flame,
Unquelled, devouring, devastating all?
An angel, past control, a demon were.
Bold unbelief, reform's rough pioneer,
Unwittingly a warrior for the Cross,
A weapon for the right[43] he ridicules. 1020

God's perfect plan an ocean is, where range
As minnows, monsters, of the wide wave-realm,
Men's causes, creeds, and systems manifold;
Free as the will of Him who freedom willed,
Within the bounds ordained by law divine.
E'en Lucifer, arch-foe to liberty,
Is free, though fettered to his fallen sphere;
Enticing, tempting all, compelling none,
And aiding aye the Power he fain would foil.

All human schemes, all hell's conspiracies, 1030
All chance, all accident, all agency,

All loves, hates, hopes, despairs, and blasphemies,
All rights, all wrongs, to one high purpose bend.
No backward glance gives progress. Upward! on!
Life triumphs ever in death's victory.
Dross hath its ministry no less than gold;
And honest, erring zeal, wherever found,
Hath wrought more good than ill to humankind.

But morn must rise, and night dismiss her stars;
And ocean summon home his seas and streams; 1040
And truth the perfect, truth the part fulfill,
As knowledge faith, as history prophecy.

Day from his quiver drew a shining shaft,
And 'thwart the night the flaming arrow flew.
Hark, to a cry that cleaves the wilderness,
Pealing the clarion prelude to the dawn!

CANTO FIVE

The Messenger of Morn[1]

"Wake, slumbering world! Vain dreamer, dream no more!
The shadows lift, and o'er night's dusky beach
Ripple the white waves of morn. Awake! Arise!

"Ocean of dispensations—rivers, rills, 1050
Roll to your source! End, to thine origin!
And Israel, to the rock whence ye were hewn[2]!
For He that scattered, gathereth His flock,
His ancient flock, and plants their pilgrim feet
On Joseph's mountain top and Judah's plains;
Recalls the children of the covenant
From long dispersion o'er the Gentile world,
Mingling their spirits with the mystic sea,
Which sent them forth as freshening showers to save
The parched and withered wastes of unbelief[3]. 1060
Japheth! thy planet pales[4], it sinks, it sets;
Henceforth 't is Jacob's star must rise and reign.

"Daughter of Zion! be thou comforted,
And wash from thy wan cheek all trace of tears.
Gone are the days of dole and widowhood,
The days of barrenness that brought thee scorn;
Thy wilderness now weds, thy desert blooms.

"Rejoice, Jerusalem! thou art redeemed;
Again thy temple and thy towers arise;
Heard is the harp of David in thy halls; 1070
Greater than Solomon's thy wisdom shines.

"From spirit heights, where thou art beautiful,
Lamp of the nations, send thy light afar!
Take on thy new name—One and Pure in Heart!
For thou shalt see thy God, His presence thine.

"Time, mighty daughter of Eternity!
Mother of centuries[5]—seventy, seven-crowned!
Assemble now thy children at thy side,
And 'ere thou diest teach them to be one[6].
Link to its link rebind the broken chain 1080
Of dispensations, glories, keys, and powers,
From Adam's fall unto Messiah's reign;
A thousand years of rest, a day with God,
While Shiloh reigns[7] and Kolob once revolves.

"Six days thou, Earth, hast labored[8], and the seventh,
Thy sabbath, comes apace! Night's sceptre wanes,
And in the East the silvery Messenger
Gives silent token of the golden Dawn.

"Once more the ancient tidings[9] among men!
Once more the sign and seal of heavenly power! 1090
Renewal of an endless covenant,
Elias, restitution, unity!

"His burden! Hear it, nations! Hear it, isles!
Ere falls an hour, night's darkest hour of doom.
The trial ends, the judgment now begins.
Out, out of her, my people, saith your God!"

—

Who towers aloft, as mountain girt with hills,
Amid the strength of Ephraim's stalwart sons,
To trumpet thus the closing acts of time?
Speak, oracle, what sayest thou of thyself? 1100
Who art thou, man of might and majesty?

"Would God I might but tell thee who I am!
Would God I might but tell thee what I know[10]!"

Then was he of the Mighty—one with those
Descended from the Empire of the Sun,
Adown the glowing stairway of the stars?
Regnant and ruling ere they left the realms
Of life supernal, left their sovereign thrones,
To wander oft as outcasts of mankind,
Unknown, unhonored, e'en like One who came 1110
Unto His own, by them spat on and spurned?
Avails it aught, their name or nation here?
Their state and standing there, the vital tale.

Peers of that Empire, nobles of the skies,
The sceptered satraps of the King of Kings,
The royal retinue of Him who reigns
First-born of many brethren—Gibborim[11],
Great ones worthy the Word[12] that was to come;
Foreknown, elect, predestined, preordained,
Sons of the Gods, and saviours of mankind, 1120
Building the highway for Messiah's feet,
And wheresoe'er He fareth following.

I saw in vision such a one descend,

And garb him in a guise of common clay;
His glory veiling from the gaze of all,
Who wist not that a great one walked with men;
Nor knew it then the soul incarnate there,
Betwixt the temporal and spirit spheres
So dense forgetfulness doth intervene;
Yet learned his truth betime by angel tongues, 1130
By voice of God, by heavenly whisperings.

But who remains his mystery to solve,
His letter to unlock with spirit key?
The veil to lift by death and silence thrown
O'er all the splendors of that life sublime?

Sound, Angel, sound! thou fifth of seven[13], ordained
To usher in the world-millennials,
To storm the dungeon doors of history,
And liberate the thoughts and deeds of men!
Sound, trump of God! Voice of a thousand years, 1140
Call of the Christ—His clear familiar tone,
Heard in the ages and the aeons past,
Told to the times and worlds that went before;
Call of the Spirit, answered by the blood,
Voice of the Shepherd, by the sheep well known.

A living prophet unto dying time,
Heralding the Dispensation of the End,
When Christ once more His vineyard comes to prune,
When potent weak confound the puny strong,
Threshing the nations by the Spirit's power, 1150
Rending the kingdoms with a word of flame;
That here the Father's work may crown the Son's,
And earth be joined a holy bride to heaven,
A queen 'mid queens, crowned, throned, and glorified.

Wherefore came down this angel of the dawn,
In strength divine, a stirring role to play
In time's tense tragedy, whose acts are seven.
His part to fell the false, replant the true,
To clear away the wreckage of the past,
The ashes of its dead and dying creeds, 1160
And kindle newly on earth's ancient shrine
The Light that points to Life unerringly;
Crowning what has been with what now must be;
A mighty still bespeaking mightier.

—

Earth rose from wintry sleep[14], baptized and cleansed,

And on her tranquil brow, that seemed to feel
The holy and confirming hand of Heaven,
The warm light in a wealth of comfort streamed;
Nature's great floor green-carpeting anew
For some glad change, some joyful happening, 1170
Told in the countless caroling of birds,
Gilding the foliage, glorying the flowers,
Mirroring mingled hues of earth and sky.

Glad happening, in sooth, for ne'er before,
Since burst the heavens when Judah's star-lit hills
Heard angel choristers peal joy's refrain
Above the manged Babe of Bethlehem,
Had earth such scene beheld, as now within
The bosom of a sylvan solitude,
Hard by the borders of a humble home, 1180
Upon that fair and fateful morn was played.

Players, immortal twain and mortal one,
Standing but fourteen steps upon life's stair,
An unlearned boy, thinker of thoughts profound,
Boy and yet man, dreamer of lofty dreams.

Not solemn, save betimes, when hovered near
Some wingéd inspiration from far worlds,
Some great idea's all-subduing spell—
His heart grew humbler then, his look more grave;
Not melancholy—mirthful, loving life, 1190
And brimming o'er with health and wholesome glee.
A stalwart spirit in a sturdy frame,
Maturing unto future mightiness.

Bowing to God, yet bending to no creed,
Adoring not a loveless deity,
That saved or damned regardless of desert,
Ne'er reckoning the good or evil done;
Loving and worshipping the God of love,
The gracious God of reason and of right,
Long-suffering and just and merciful, 1200

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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