

	For we looked over-late about;	35
	Therefore, now, woe is me!	
	For he has wandered some way wrong,	
	And none are worthy to blame but we.	
JOSEPH:	Back, then, I say, we should be gone,	
	The right way to that same city,	40
	To ask all those that there do throng --	
	For surely homeward must he be!	
MARY:	Of sorrows sore shall be my song	
	Until my seemly son I see.	
	He is but twelve years old!	45
JOSEPH:	Whichever way he wends,	
	Woman, we may be bold	
	To find him with our friends	
MASTER 1:	Masters, pay me close intent,	
	And read your reasons in a row;	50
	And all the people here present,	
	Each one of you his sayings show.	
	For I would wish, ere we hence went,	
	By learning clear that we might know	
	If any man whom life is lent	55
	Aught would allege against our law.	
	Either in more or less,	
	If we defect might feel,	
	Duly we shall make redress	
	By judgement true as steel.	60
MASTER 2:	That was well said, it seems to me;	
	Such matters to mention, I think we need.	
	For masters in this land are we,	
	And have the laws loyally to lead.	
	And doctors also in our degree,	65
	Who judgement have of every deed.	
	Lay forth our books at once! Let's see	
	What would most profit us, indeed.	

- MASTER 3: We shall ordain so well,
Since we all learning know, 70
That defect none shall feel
In word or deed, I vow!
- MASTER 1: Masters, hark here to what I say,
For Balaam prophesies
And speaks in his book in this way: 75
A star, he says, shall rise
- And it shall come from Jacob, lo,
And brightly shall it shine.
Masters, I see here also
That out of Israel's line 80
- A sceptre, says he, up shall spring,
All Moab's might to scourge;
Waste to Seth's children shall it bring,
His proud people to purge.
- In our law thus does Balaam speak 85
In his true prophecy.
Some meaning here now should we seek,
Masters, as it appears to me.
- MASTER 2: Your saying seems to me secure,
For David speaks of such indeed: 90
A duke that ever shall endure --
These words we wisely here should heed!
- Daniel also, and many more
In my book of this kind;
And also, masters, in our lore, 95
Isaiah's words I find:

That a virgin should bear,
And his name thus they tell:
From the time he is born there,
He shall be called "Emmanuel". 100

"Counsellor," and "God of strength"
And "wonderful" also
Shall he be called, in breadth and length
As far as any man may go!

MASTER 3: Masters, your reasonings are good, 105
And wonderful to be heard;
Yet more I find in Habbakkuk --
Sirs, listen awhile unto my word:

Our woes shall turn to well-being
Here, afterward some day; 110
A wand from Jesse's root shall spring --
The certain truth thus can he say;

And of that wand shall spring a flower,
That shall spring up full height;
Thereof shall come a sweet odour, 115
And thereupon there shall alight

The Holy Ghost, most great of might.
The Ghost of wisdom and of wit
Shall build his nest, and with true right
Shall in it breed and sit. 120

MASTER 1: But when, trust ye, this prophecy
Shall be fulfilled in deed,
That here is told so openly,
As we in scripture read?

- MASTER 2: A great marvel, in truth it is 125
For us to hear of such mastery;---
A virgin to bear a child -- why, this,
Without man's aid, is fantasy!
- MASTER 3: The Holy Ghost shall in her light, 130
And maintain her virginity.
Whoso abides to see that sight
Shall never doubt, trust me!
- MASTER 1: Of all these prophets, wise of lore, 135
That knew the prophecy, more and less,
None ever told us here before
When he should come to buy us peace.
- MASTER 2: Whether he has come or not, 140
No knowledge have we in certain;
But he shall come, that doubt we not:
Many prophets have preached it very plain.
- MASTER 3: Much, I think, are these prophets
Beholden to God, that is on height,
Who knowing have of his behests,
And may clearly tell of his great might.
- Then Jesus comes
- JESUS: Masters, love be with you present, 145
And honour to this company!
- MASTER 1: Son, hence away I would thou went,
For other affairs in hand have we.
- MASTER 2: Son, whosoever thee hither sent, 150
They were not wise, thus tell I thee;
For we have more business to attend
Than now with boys bantering to be.

MASTER 3: Son, the purpose of thy life is clear: to live by Moses' way:
Come hitherward, and thou shall hear the sayings we will say.

For in some mind it may thee bring 155
To hear how each his rulings reads.

JESUS: To learn of you I need no thing:
I know your sayings and your deeds.

MASTER 1: Hark yonder child with his chattering!
He thinks he knows more than he knows. 160
Nay, surely, son, thou art over-young
In learning yet to know our laws.

JESUS: I know as well as ye how that your laws were wrought.

MASTER 2: Come sit! Soon shall we see -- for surely, so seems it not!

MASTER 3: It would be wondrous if any man 165
Unto our reasons should so reach;
Yet thou says thou has full command
Of our laws, truly to tell and teach!

JESUS: The Holy Ghost on me did light,
And anoint me, each in each, 170
And gives to my voice power and might
The kingdom of heaven to preach.

MASTER 2: No whence may this baby be,
Who shows these tidings new?

JESUS: Certainly, sirs, I was ere ye, 175
And shall be after you.

MASTER 1: Son, of thy speech God grant us bliss,
And of thy wit -- a wondrous thing!
But in the long run, I must guess
That in will falter in the working -- 180
Though David deems youth's voice to raise
When he says of children young,

"Ex ore infancium et lactencium, perfecisti laudem" --
 Out of babes' mouths, says David, well
 Our Lord has perfected praise. 185

Nevertheless, son, stint you here yet
 Your sayings in matters large,
 For where such matters are duly met,
 Children's words are not in charge.

For certain, however eager your brain 190
 To turn its thoughts to learn the law,
 Thou art neither of might nor main
 To know it as a clerk may know.

JESUS: Sirs, I say it is certain
 Truth shall be in my every word. 195
 And power have I, pure and plain,
 To say and answer as I have heard.

MASTER 1: Masters, what may this mean?
 A message, I think, have we
 From whence this child has been 200
 And learned to speak so learnedly.

MASTER 2: In world so wide as we oft went,
 Found we never message so fair;
 Surely, I swear the child was sent
 Sovereignly to cure our care. 205

JESUS: Sirs, I shall prove to all present
 All I have said, without a flaw.

MASTER 3: Which calls thou the first commandment
 And the chief, in Moses' law?

JESUS: Sirs, since ye sit here thus 210
 Among your books so wise,
 Show here, now sirs, to us
 How rightly ye advise.

MASTER 1: I tell that this is the first bidding
 That Moses told us to fulfil: 215
 Honour thy God over every thing
 With all thy wit and all thy will;
 And all thy heart shall hang on him,
 Early and late, loud and still.

JESUS: Ye need no other books to bring, 220
 But seek this to fulfil.

 The second may men prove,
 And clergy know thereby:
 Your neighbours shall ye love
 Just as yourself, truly. 225

This commanded Moses to all men
 In his commandment clear;
 On these two biddings, shall ye know,
 Hangs all the law we must revere. 230
 Whoso fulfils these two laws, then,
 With might and mind and manner here,
 He fulfils truly all ten
 That follow after, as it doth appear.

Then should we God honour
 With all our might and main, 235
 And love well each neighbour
 As ourself, this is plain.

MASTER 1: Now, son, since thou has told us two,
 Which are the eight? Can thou any say?

JESUS: The third bids, "where so ye go, 240
 That ye shall hallow the holy day;

 From bodily work take ye your rest,
 As your household must do also,
 Both wife, child, servant, and beast."
 The fourth is then, "in well and woe 245

Thy father, thy mother, thou shall honour,
Not only with thy reverence,
But in their need shall them succour,
And keep aye good obedience."

The fifth bids thee "no man destroy,
Nor harm him ever in word or deed,
Nor suffer him not to be in woe
If thou may help him in his need." 250

The sixth bids thee "thy wife to take,
But not other, lawfully;
Lust of lechery thou flee and fast forsake,
And dread thy God whereso thou be." 255

The seventh bids thee "be no thief's friend,
Nor nothing win with treachery;
Usury nor simony come not near,
But conscience clear keep thou truly." 260

The eighth, "be true in deed," bids thee,
And "false witness look thou none bear;
Lie not for friend nor family,
Lest to thy soul it cost thee dear."

The ninth bids thee "not desire
Thy neighbour's wife, nor his women,
But as holy church would wish it were,
Just so hold to thy purpose then." 265

The tenth bids thee, "not for this
Thy neighbour owns yearn wrongfully:
His house, his rent, nor what is his;
And Christian faith trust steadfastly." 270

Thus on tablets, know ye then,
To Moses wrote our Lord.
These are the commandments ten, 275
Which all wisdom afford.

MASTER 2: Behold how he alleged our laws,
Who never learned in book to read!
Most subtle sayings, I think, he says --
And also true, if we take heed! 280

MASTER 3 Yea, let him wander on his ways,
For if he stay, without a doubt
The people here will soon him praise
Much more than us, for all our clout.

MASTER 1: Nay, nay! then work we wrong!
Such speaking will we spare. 285
As he came, let him begone,
And we shall carp no more.

Then Joseph and Mary come, and Mary says:

MARY: Ah, Joseph, what thoughts fill your head?
Of our great sorrow no cure may be; 290
My heart is heavy as any lead,
My seemly son until I see.
Now have we sought in every stead,
Both up and down these days three;
And whether he be quick or dead 295
Yet know we not. Ah, woe is me!

JOSEPH: Sorrow had never man more!
But mourning, Mary, may not amen;
Farther do I advise we fare,
Till God some succour send. 300

To the temple, perhaps, he has been brought? --
Ah, that I wish we knew this night!

MARY: Ah, surely I see what we have sought!
In world was never so seemly a sight!

Lo, where he sits! -- see ye him not, 305
Amongst yon masters much of might?

JOSEPH: Blessed be He that hither us brought!
In land now lives there none so light.

MARY: Now, dear Joseph, as have ye bliss,
Go forth and fetch your son and mine; 310
This day is gone; the light grows less,
And we have need for to go home.

JOSEPH: With men of might I may not meddle,
And all my labour would I waste;
I can not ask them -- this know ye well -- 315
They are so rich, with fine furs graced.

MARY: To them your errand plainly say --
Surely in that you dread no peril!
They will heed you in every way
Because of age; this know I well. 320

JOSEPH: When I come there, what shall I say? --
For I know not, as God me heal!
But thou will have me shamed for aye,
Since I can neither bow nor kneel.

MARY: Go we together -- I hold it best -- 325
To yon fine worthies now with speed.
And if I see, ere I can rest,
That ye will not, then must I plead.

JOSEPH: Go thou and tell thy tale first --
 thy son to thee will take good heed: 330
 Wend forth, Mary, and do thy best;
 I come behind, as God me speed.

MARY: Ah, dear son, Jesus!
 Since we love thee alone,
 Why do you mistreat us thus, 335
 And cause us make this moan?

 Thy father and I between us two,
 Son, for thy love have suffered ill
 We have thee sought both to and fro,
 Weeping sore, as parents will. 340

JESUS: Why should ye, Mother, seek me so?
 Offtimes it has been told ye full.
 My Father's works, in well or woe,
 Thus am I sent for to fulfil.

MARY: These words, as God me heal, 345
 I can well comprehend.
 I shall think on them well,
 And seek my will to bend.

JOSEPH: Now truly, son, the sight of thee
 Has comforted us of all our care. 350
 Come forth now with thy mother and me:
 At Nazareth I wish we were!

JESUS: My leave I take, my lords, of thee,
 For with my family will I fare.

MASTER 1: Son, whereso thou shall bide or be, 355
 God make thee a good man ever more.

MASTER 2: No wonder that thou, wife,
 Of his loss did so complain.
 He shall, God grant him life,
 Grow to a goodly swain. 360

MASTER 3: Son, look thou hide, for good or ill,
 The matters that we spoke of now;
 And if thou like to abide here still
 And with us dwell, welcome art thou.

JESUS: Gramercy, sirs, of your good will!
 No longer can I bide with you.
 My parents' wish I shall fulfil,
 And to their bidding obediently bow.

365

MARY: My heart swells with this tide:
 Now may we make good cheer!

370

JOSEPH: No longer will we abide.
 Farewell, all who rest here!

Here ends the pageant of the Doctors