Still was the night, Serene & Bright,  
when all Men sleeping lay;  
Calm was the season, & carnal reason  
thought so 'twould last for ay.  
Soul, take thine ease, let sorrow cease,  
much good thou hast in store:  
This was their Song, their Cups among,  
the Evening before.

Wallowing in all kind of sin,  
vile wretches lay secure:  
The best of men had scarcely then  
their Lamps kept in good ure.  
Virgins unwise, who through disguise  
amongst the best were number'd,  
Had closed their eyes; yea, and the wise  
through sloth and frailty slumber'd.

For at midnight brake forth a Light,  
which turn'd the night to day,  
And speedily a hideous cry  
did all the world dismay.  
Sinners awake, their hearts do ake,  
trembling their loynes surprizeth;  
Amaz'd with fear, by what they hear,  
each one of them ariseth.

They rush from Beds with giddy heads,  
and to their windows run,  
Viewing this light, which shines more bright  
than doth the Noon-day Sun.  
Straightway appears (they see 't with tears)  
the Son of God most dread;  
Who with his Train comes on amain  
to Judge both Quick and Dead.

Before his face the Heav'ns gave place,  
and Skies are rent asunder,  
With mighty voice, and hideous noise,  
more terrible than Thunder.  
His brightness damps heav'ns glorious lamps  
and makes them hang their heads,  
As if afraid and quite dismay'd,  
they quit their wonted steads.

No heart so bold, but now grows cold  
and almost dead with fear:  
No eye so dry, but now can cry,  
and pour out many a tear.  
Earth's Potentates and pow'rful States,  
Captains and Men of Might  
Are quite abasht, their courage dash'd  
at this most dreadful sight.

Mean men lament, great men do rent  
their Robes, and tear their hair:  
They do not spare their flesh to tear  
through horrible despair.  
All Kindreds wail: all hearts do fail:  
horror the world doth fill  
With weeping eyes, and loud out-cries,  
yet knows not how to kill.

Some hide themselves in Caves and Delves,  
in places under ground:  
Some rashly leap into the Deep,  
to scape by being drown'd:  
Some to the Rocks (O senseless blocks!)  
and woody Mountains run,  
That there they might this fearful sight,  
and dreaded Presence shun.

Would you have griev'd to have receiv'd  
through Adam so much good,  
And had been your for evermore,  
if he at first had stood?  
Would you have said, 'we ne'er obey'd,  
nor did thy laws regard;  
It ill befits with benefits,  
us, Lord, so to reward.'

Since then to share in his welfare,  
you could have been content,  
You may with reason share in his treason,  
and in the punishment.  
Hence you were born in state forlorn,  
with nature so deprav'd:  
Death was your due, because that you  
had thus yourselves behav'd.

You think, 'if we had been as he,  
whom God did so betrust,  
We to our cost would ne'er have lost  
al for a paltry lust.'
Had you been made in Adam's stead,  
you would like things have wrought,  
And so into the selfsame wo,  
yourselves and yours have brought.

I may deny you once to try,  
or grace to you to tender,  
Though he finds grace before my face,  
who was the chief offender:  
Else should my grace cease to be grace;  
for it should not be free,  
If to release whom I should please,  
I have no liberty.
If upon one what’s due to none
I frankly shall bestow,
And on the rest shall not think best,
compassion’s skirts to throw,
Whom injure I? will you envy,
and grudge at others’ weal?
Or me accuse, who do refuse
yourselves to help and heal.

Am I alone for what’s my own,
no master or no Lord?
O if I am, how can you claim
what I to some afford?
Will you demand grace at my hand,
and challenge what is mine?
Will you teach me whom to set free,
and thus my grace confine?

You sinners are, and such a share
as sinners may expect,
Such you shall have; for I do save
none but my own elect.
Yet to compare your sin with their
who liv’d a longer time,
I do confess yours is much less,
though every sin’s a crime.

A crime it is, therefore in bliss
you may not hope to dwell
But unto you I shall allow
the easiest room in hell.”
The glorious king thus answering,
they cease, and plead no longer:
Their consciences must needs confess
his reasons are the stronger.

Thus all men’s pleas the judge with ease
doth answer and confute.
Until that all, both great and small,
are silenced and mute.
Vain hopes are crop’d, all mouths are stop’d,
sinners have nought to say,
But that ’tis just, and equal most
they should be damn’d for aye.

Now what remains, but that to pains
and everlasting smart,
Christ should condemn the sons of men,
which is their just desert;
Oh rueful plights of sinful wights!
Oh wretches all forlorn:
’T had happy been they ne’er had seen
the sun, or not been born.

The saints behold with courage bold,
and thankful wonderment,
To see all those that were their foes
thus sent to punishment:
Then do they sing unto their king
A song of endless praise:
They praise his name and do proclaim
that just are all his ways.

Thus with great joy and melody
to heaven they all ascend,
Him there to praise with sweetest lays,
and hymns that never end.
Where with long rest they shall be blest,
and nought shall them annoy:
Where they shall see as seen they be,
and whom they love enjoy.