

Genesis A eBook

Genesis A

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GENESIS A



I.

Ours is a great duty—to praise in word and love at heart the heavens' Ruler, the glorious King of Hosts: He is the substance of all power, the head of all high things, the Lord Almighty. Origin or beginning was never made for Him, nor shall an end ever come to the eternal God: but, on the contrary, He is for ever supreme by His high puissance over the heavenly kingdoms; just and mighty, He rules the mansions of the sky, which were established far and wide through the power of God for the sons of glory, the keepers of souls.



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These angelic hosts were wont to feel joy and rapture, transcendent bliss, in the presence of their Creator: their beatitude was measureless. Glorious ministers 15 magnified their Lord, spoke his praise with zeal, lauded the Master of their being, and were excellently happy in the majesty of God. They had no knowledge of working evil or wickedness, but dwelt in innocence 20 forever with their Lord: from the beginning they wrought in heaven nothing but righteousness and truth, until a Prince of angels through pride strayed into sin: then they would consult their own advantage no longer, but turned away from God's lovingkindness. They had 25 vast arrogance, in that by the might of multitudes they sought to wrest from the Lord the celestial mansions, spacious and heaven-bright. Then there fell upon them, grievously, the envy, presumption, and pride of the Angel who first began to carry out the evil plot, 30 to weave it and promote it, when he boasted by word— as he thirsted for conflict—that he wished to own the home and high throne of the heavenly kingdom to the north. Thereupon God became angered and hostile 35 towards the beings whom he had formerly exalted in beauty and glory: he created for the traitors a marvelous abode as penalty for their action, namely the pangs of Hell, bitter afflictions; Our Lord called forth that 40 abysmal joyless house of punishment to wait for the outcast keepers of souls.[3] When he knew that it was ready, he enveloped it in eternal night and equipped it with torment, filling it with fire and fearful cold, with fume and red flame: then he commanded the terrors of suffering to increase throughout that hapless place. 45

They had committed a dire sin against God: on that account dire punishment befell them. They asserted, in fierce mood, that they wished to seize the kingdom and could easily do so: but this presumption mocked them when their Lord, the high King of heaven, lifted 50 up his almighty hand against the throng. The mad rebels, accursed ones, could not make head against God, but the Highest troubled their spirits and humbled their pride, for he was incensed; he stripped the sinners of 55 victory and might, of dominion and honor, and further took from his foes happiness, peace, and all joys, as well as bright glory, and finally, with his own exceeding power, wreaked his wrath on his adversaries in mighty ruin. 60 He was stern in mood, grimly embittered, and seized upon his foes with resistless grasp and broke them in his grip, enraged at heart, and deprived his opponents of their native seat,[4] their bright abodes on high. For 65 our Creator dismissed and banished from heaven the overweening band of angels: the Lord sent away on a long journey the faithless multitude, the hateful host, the miserable spirits; their pride



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was broken, their threat 70 overthrown, their glory shattered, and their beauty dimmed; thenceforth they abode in desolation, because of their dark exile. They did not dare to laugh aloud, but lived wearied by the torments of hell and became familiar with woes, bitterness, and sorrow; covered with 75 darkness, they bore their pain,—a heavy sentence, because they had begun to battle against God.

Then, as formerly, true peace existed in heaven, fair amity: for the Lord was dear to all, the Sovereign to his 80 servants; and the majesty of the joyful angelic hosts increased, through the favor of the Almighty.

II.

So those who inhabited the sky, home of glory, were at peace; hatred was gone, as well as sorrow and strife among angels, ever since the rebellious hosts, bereft of the 85 light, had relinquished heaven. Behind them stood in grandeur their seats rich in glorious workmanship, teeming with blessings in God's kingdom, bright and perennially bountiful, —but all devoid of occupants, ever since the 90 miserable spirits had gone to their place of punishment, their vile prison. Then our Lord bethought him, in meditative mood, how he might people again, and with a better race, his high creation, the noble seats and glory- 95 crowned abodes which the haughty rebels had left vacant, high in heaven. Therefore Holy God willed by his plenteous power that under the circle of the firmament the earth should be established, with sky above and 100 wide water, a world-creation in place of the foes whom in their apostasy he hurled from bliss.

As yet there was nothing at all created here, except shadows, but this broad earth stood deep and dim, idle 105 and useless, alien even to God himself; on it the King whose purpose never falters turned his eyes and beheld the place void of joy; he saw dark clouds, black under the firmament, throng in the eternal night, dun and 110 waste, until this world-creation came to pass through the word of the King of Glory. First the everlasting Lord, protector of all things, created heaven and earth; as the almighty King put forth the firmament and with 115 victorious might established this ample world. The earth was as yet unadorned by vegetation: the ocean covered it far and wide, turbid waves in the eternal night. Then was the glorious Spirit of heaven's guardian 120 borne over the sea with sovereign virtue. For the King of the angels commanded Light, dispenser of life, to come forth over the broad expanse: quickly was the Arch-King's mandate fulfilled, and Holy Light appeared 125 over the waste spaces, as the Creator had ordained it. The Wielder of Victory next sundered light from darkness, shadow from radiance, over the surge of the sea. Then he formed the two names of the dispensers of life: light was first called "Day" by the word of the Lord, a 130 beauteous creation. This period of creation greatly pleased God, in the beginning: the first day saw the dark shadows duskiyly flee away over the wide earth.



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III.

Time now went forth over the frame-work of the 135 world: after this shining splendor, the Lord our Creator fashioned the first evening, but on its track rushed a thronging welter of darkness which the Lord himself called by the name of "Night." Our Saviour sundered 140 these two: ever since then they have ceaselessly wrought and fulfilled the will of the Lord over the earth. Then the second day advanced, light after darkness; and the Ruler of Life straightway commanded a glad 145 sky-substance to appear in the midst of the flood: our Master parted the waves and wrought there the found-ations of the firmament: this the Mighty One, omnipotent King, reared aloft from the earth through his own word. 150 The flood was divided under the high heavens by holy power, the waters from the waters, and still they remain so under the firmament which roofs all nations.

Then swiftly came advancing over the world the third 155 great morn. Nor were the spreading lands and ways yet deemed needful by our Lord, but the earth stood girt fast by water. Through his word, the Ruler of the angels bade the waters be gathered together, which now hold their course beneath the skies in an appointed 160 place. Then speedily the broad ocean stood all together under heaven, as the Holy One commanded, for the flood was sundered from the dry land. Thereupon Life's Ruler looked upon the dry land, the Preserver of mankind [found it] widely visible, and the King of 165 Glory called it "Earth." He established a proper channel for the waves, the broad flood, and fettered....

* * * * *

(*Lacuna in MS.*[5])

* * * * *

The Ruler of Heaven did not think it fitting that 170 Adam, the keeper of Paradise and shepherd of the new creation, should be alone any longer: so the supreme King, Ruler Almighty, made a companion for him— created Woman, and gave this helpmate to his cherished 175 Man as the first and fruitful light of his life. He took his material from Adam's body and skilfully removed a rib from his side: the latter was deep in repose and slumbered peacefully; he felt no pain, though a little 180 uneasiness, nor did a drop of blood come from the wound, but the Prince of the Angels took from his body a living bone while the man was unwounded. From this God fashioned a noble woman, and put into her the breath of life and an immortal soul: these two were like the 185 angels. Thus was Adam's bride[6] endowed with a living spirit. They were both radiantly beautiful in their youthfulness, in the world prepared by the might of the Lord: they did not know how to undertake or 190 work evil, but on the contrary there was in the breast of each a burning love of God. Then the benign King, Ruler of everyone born of the

race of man, blessed these first two creatures, father and mother, woman and man.
Thereafter he spoke these words: 195



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“Be fruitful now and increase; fill the verdant earth with progeny, your race, both sons and daughters. Under your sway shall be the salt water and all the created world. Enjoy prosperous days, [ruling over] both 200 the fishes of the deep and the fowls of the air. Into your power are given the sacred herd and the wild beasts and every living thing that walks the earth; all breath-ing creatures, whatsoever the sea brings forth over the 205 whale-paths, all things belong to you two.”

Then our Maker beheld the beauty of his works and the fullness of his abundance, his new creations. Pa-radise stood, good and holy, filled with blessings, ever- 210 lasting bounty. That kindly soil was beauteously watered by the rushing seas and springing fountains; for never yet had clouds dark with wind brought down rains over the broad earth: but none the less the ground stood crowned with its harvest. From this new Garden 215 four noble river-streams have their outflow: these were all partitioned out of one fair-shining water by the might of the Lord, when he created the earth, and [were thus] 220 sent out into the world. Men dwelling on the earth, the peoples of the nations, call one of these Fison, which broadly girdles with its bright streams a quarter of the earth beyond Hebeleac[7]: in that ancestral soil the sons 225 of men, nations near and far, find the best gold and precious stones,[8] as the books tell us. Then the second [river], whose name is Geon, girdles the land and govern-ment of Ethiopia, an ample kingdom. The third is 230 Tigris, a foaming stream which encircles the people of Assyria. Such likewise is the fourth, which men among many a nation now widely call Eufrates....[9]

* * * * *

(Genesis B intervenes here.)

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Then the Almighty King, the great Lord, came forth into the garden about mid-day, by his divine will; for 855 our Saviour and merciful Father wished to find out what his children were doing: he knew that they were sinful to whom he had given perfection. Bereft of their beatitude and stricken in spirit, they avoided his presence by retreating among the shadows of the trees; 860 they hid themselves in dark recesses, when they heard the holy word of the Lord and feared him. Straight-way the King of Heaven began to call for the keeper of the [newly] created world; the mighty Lord bade his son come to him forthwith. He answered him then, 865 the wretched one himself, destitute of clothing, [and] said:

“Lord of my life, I am hiding myself here because unclothed; basely sinful, I am covering my shame with leaves: my pain is cruel, most bitter in my heart. I dare 870 not now go forth before thy presence: I am all naked!”

X.[10]



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To him then God at once replied:

“Tell me this, my son: why do you seek the shadows, in shame? You certainly received no disgrace at my 875 hands, but on the contrary delight in all things! How come you to know evil and hide shame and behold sor-row and cover your body with leaves and, saddened and crushed by the woes of life, say that you need clothing, unless you have tasted of an apple from the tree which 880 I forbade to you by express command?”

Adam then answered him again:

“The woman, my Lord, the fair woman gave into my hand this fruit, which I accepted in sin against thee. 885 Now I bear this manifest sign in myself: I know so much the more of sorrow!”

Then Almighty God asked Eve about this:

“Why did you forfeit these plenteous delights, daughter, the new creations of paradise, abundant blessings, when 890 in your cupidity you seized on the trunk and took the fruit from the branch of the tree and ate the accursed thing in defiance of me, and gave of the apple to Adam, when you both by my prohibition were so strictly for- 895 bidden to do so?”

Then the fair maiden, the woman overcome by shame, answered him:

“The serpent tempted me and urgently prompted me to sin; through fair words the worm goaded me into accursed frowardness, until I basely performed the 900 deadly act, committed the crime, and robbed the tree in the grove, as it was not lawful to do, and ate the fruit.”

Then our Saviour, the Lord Almighty, ordained wide wanderings for the serpent, the venomous worm, and 905 spoke further in these words:

“To far distant times shalt thou, an outcast, crawl over the broad earth on thy breast, thy belly; without feet shalt thou move about, so long as life and breath remain in thee. Dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy 910 life, since thou hast accomplished so evil a deed here. Thee the woman shall war against, and hate thee [worse than anything else] under heaven, and shall tread upon thine accursed head with her feet; thou shalt lie in wait at her heels, in ever-new conflict: for there shall be war between thy offspring and her offspring 915 always, as long as the earth exists under the cloudy skies. Now dost thou understand and know, baleful destroyer of mankind, how thou shalt live!”

XI.

Then God wrathfully spoke to Eve:



“Depart now from bliss! Thou shalt be ever under the sway of men; with fear of men cruelly oppressed, 920 thou shalt sorrowfully endure the heinousness of thine offence and wait for death, and with weeping and wailing and great anguish bring into the world thy sons and daughters!”

Likewise to Adam did the Eternal Lord, Source of 925 Light and Life, declare a cruel edict:



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“Thou shalt seek another country, a joyless dwelling-place, and wander in exile, naked and needy, driven away from the blessings of paradise; the separation of soul and body is now ordained for thee. Lo, thou hast wickedly originated sin: therefore thou shalt toil, and win thy sustenance on earth by thyself, acquire it by the sweat of thy face, and thus eat thy bread so long as thou livest here,—until ungentle disease, which thou didst recently take to thyself with the apple, strikes thee cruelly to the heart: then shalt thou die.”

Behold, we learn thus how bitter afflictions and universal miseries came upon us.

Thereupon the Guardian of Glory, our Creator, girded them with clothing; the Lord bade them cover their nakedness with some simple garments, and bade them set forth and depart from paradise into a harder life. Behind them, by God's command, a holy angel with a fiery sword shut the gate of their blissful home of peace and joy; nor may any guileful sin-stained man ever fare thither again, for the warder has might and strength who keeps for the Lord that greater life rich in glories. Yet the Almighty, our First Father, would not take away all comforts from Adam and Eve, though they had fallen away from him: but he still let the lofty roof studded with holy stars stand as a solace for them, and gave them ample possessions, and bade the seas and land bring forth for the pair multitudes of each of the young-producing species [necessary] for the sustenance of this life. So, after their sin, they inhabited a more sorrowful land, a dwelling and country less fertile in every kind of blessing than their former abode had been, from which they had been driven out after their misdeed.

Then they began, by God's command, to produce children, as the Lord had charged them. To begin with, by Adam and Eve were brought into the world two fair first-born sons, Cain and Abel. The books tell us how these first toilers, loving brothers, gained their subsistence, riches and food: the one who was elder born tilled the earth with his strength; the second kept the flocks, helping his father, until a great number of days passed. They both brought an offering to the Lord: the Prince of the Angels, King of all things, looked upon Abel's offering with [favorable] eyes, but would not consider the sacrifice of Cain; that caused strong indignation in the heart of the man: rage arose in the youth's breast, livid hatred, and wrath by reason of envy: then he wrought evil deeds with his hands, slew his kinsman, his own brother, shed his blood,—yea, Cain [shed] Abel's. And the earth soaked up this blood shed by murder, the life-blood of a man.



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After this fatal blow woe was aroused, the long train of afflictions: since then from this twig have hatefully sprouted ever longer and stronger bitter branches: these 990 branches of calamity spread far and wide over the nations of men: hardly and sorely did the twigs of misery strike the sons of men (and so they still do), from which the broad leaves of all suffering began to spring. We may 995 tearfully lament this account, this death-bringing fatal-ity, and not in vain: but the fair woman injured us [more] severely through the first sin which men dwelling on earth ever committed against the Lord, since Adam 1000 was filled with the breath of life by the mouth of God!

XII.

Then the Master of Splendor asked Cain through his word, where Abel was, upon the earth. Quickly there-upon the wicked worker of slaughter answered him: 1005

“I know not Abel’s coming or going, my kinsman’s course: I was not my brother’s keeper!”

Then the Prince of Angels, the Spirit rich in good things, spoke to him again:

“Why didst thou cast that virtuous man, thy brother, 1010 on his death-bed with thy violent hands, and his blood now calleth and crieth unto me? For this murder shalt thou undergo punishment and wander in exile 1015 accursed unto distant ages: nor shall the earth, fair for all necessary sustenance, yield thee harvest, for it drank sacred blood at thy hands: therefore the earth, verdant in beauty, denies thee its bounties. Infamous, thou shalt sorrowfully wander from thy native land, because thou hast been Abel’s murderer: thou shalt 1020 go forth an outcast over a long road, hateful to all thy relatives!”

Then Cain answered him[11]:

“Now I dare not hope for any grace in the kingdoms of the world, for I have forfeited, O high King of heaven, 1025 thy favor as well as love and peace: therefore shall I travel far ways in expectation of woes, whensoever any one far or near shall find me, in my guilt, who may remember my crime, my brother’s murder: I shed his 1030 blood, his life-blood on the ground. On this day thou dost banish me from comfort and drive me from my native land: someone of my foes shall be my murderer; accursed, O God, shall I wander from thy sight.” 1035

Then the Lord of Victory spoke to him:

“Thou needst not as yet dread the terror of death and murder, though thou shalt depart far from thy friends, an outcast. If any man by his own hand 1040 deprives thee of life, then shall come upon him sevenfold vengeance for his sin, as penalty for his deed.”



Our Ruler and glorious Lord set on him a sign, the 1045 Master [set] a symbol of immunity, so that none of his foes far or near might dare to approach him with warlike intent; then he bade the wicked one leave forever his mother and sons, all his family. Thereupon Cain set out and departed sorrowing from before the face of God, 1050 a joyless exile, and built himself a dwelling to the east, a habitation far from his fatherland: there a fair maiden, a woman of the country, bore him offspring.



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The eldest was called Enos, first-born of Cain; he 1055 began at once to build a city, with his kinsfolk: that was the first beneath the clouds of all the fortifications which heroes and swordsmen have caused to be built. 1060 Therein his offspring first arose, born of his wife in the citadel: the eldest son of Enos was called Jared. Thence arose the tribe of Cain, which increased the numbers 1065 of its race. Next to Jared, Malalehel was the keeper of the heritage after his father, until he passed away. Afterwards Mathusal shared the royal treasures with his kinsfolk, with his brothers, scion after scion, until 1070 wise through length of days he had to consummate his departure from the world and forsake life. After his father's day, Lamech received the household goods and domestic wealth: two wives, Ada and 1075 Sella, women of the country, bore offspring to him: of these one was Jabal by name, son of Lamech, who through skilful cunning first of dwellers here below awoke by his hands the song of the harp, that melo- 1080 dious sound.

XIII.

Likewise, at this same time, there was in this family a man called Tubal Cain, a son of Lamech, who through the abundance of his skill was a master-smith, and first 1085 among men through the craft of his mind he was the inventor of agricultural implements upon earth: since then the sons of men dwelling in cities have known far and wide how to use brass and iron.

Once on a time Lamech himself made in words a wicked 1090 confession to his two wives, his dear bed-fellows, Ada and Sella:

"In murder I have slain a certain one among my near relations; I stained my hands with the gory death of 1095 Cain, destroyed with my hands the father of Enos, the slayer of Abel, and poured on the ground the life-blood of a man. Well knew I that for this shall come at last the sevenfold vengeance of the King of Truth, great 1100 according to the crime: my fall and destruction shall be more sternly meted out, with grim horror, when I depart!"—

Now, there came to Adam in Abel's place another 1105 heir born in legal wedlock, an upright son, whose name was Seth: he was happy and contributed greatly to the comfort of his parents, Adam and Eve, his father and mother, and took Abel's place in worldly affairs. 1110

Then the first of men spoke these words:



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“The Eternal Lord of Victory and Ruler of Life has given me a son in place of the dear one whom Cain slew, and our God has driven my grievous sorrow from 1115 my heart with this man-child: to Him be praise for this!” When he began again to raise up another son to him-self by his wife, to be his heir, Adam the vigorous cham-pion had [numbered] 130 winters of this life in the world. 1120 The Scriptures tell us that on earth here for 800 years after that, Adam increased his family with maidens and youths: in all he had 930[12] winters, when he had to 1125 give over this world through the departure of his spirit. After him Seth ruled over the people,[13] the son held the heritage after the parents, and took unto himself 1130 a wife: he counted 105 winters when he first began to increase the numbers of his family by sons and daughters. The eldest son of Seth was called Enos: he first of all 1135 the children of man called upon God,[14] since Adam stepped upon the green grass, endowed with the spirit of life. Seth was happy, and afterwards begot sons and daughters for 807 winters: in all he had 912, when 1140 the time was fulfilled that he should accomplish his departure.

After him, when he departed out of the world, Enos held the heritage, after the earth had received the body 1145 of Seth, fruitful in the Lord. He was dear to God, and lived here 90 winters before he begot children here by his wife through intercourse: to him then was Cainan first born, an heir in his ancestral home. Afterwards 1150 for 815 winters[15] in the peace of God, the wise hero begot offspring, sons and daughters: he died, the sage patriarch, when he had [fulfilled] 905 [years].

After Enos, Cainan was chieftain, keeper, and leader 1155 of his race: he had [numbered] 70 winters before a son was born to him: when an heir was born for the patri-mony, this son of Cainan was called Malalehel. There- 1160 after for 840 [years] he increased the number of his family by [begetting] children. In all, the son of Enos had [lived] 910 winters, when he left this world, when 1165 the number of his appointed days under the expanse of the skies was fulfilled.

XIV.

After him Malalehel kept the land and inheritance for many seasons. The chieftain had [lived] 65 winters, 1170 when he began to beget children by his wife. His wife brought a son to him, the woman to the man: this son in his childhood, as I have heard, the man-child in his youth, was called Jared. After this Malalehel lived 1175 long and rejoiced in [his] blessings, [all] the delights of men here below and worldly treasures: 895 winters had he numbered when he departed; to his son he left the 1180 land and the government.



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After him for a long while Yeared dispensed gold to the people; the chieftain was noble, a pious hero, and a ruler dear to his subjects; 165 expectant winters he 1185 lived his life in this world, when his happiness arrived, for his wife brought a son into the world: this son was called Enoch, his fair first-born. But the father still added descendants to the number of his race, for 800 1190 [years]: in all he had [counted] 965 [years] by night-reckoning when he departed, the ancient patriarch, when he gave up this world. And Yeared left land and 1195 government to his wise [son], the dear leader.

After this Enoch raised aloft the sovereignty, the sagacious leadership of the people: in no wise did he let fall the dominion and authority[16] while he was guardian of his 1200 kinsfolk: he enjoyed days of happiness, and begot sons, for 300 winters; the Lord, the Ruler of the Skies, was gracious to him. From this world the hero sought in the body the joy and bliss of the Lord; in no wise did 1205 he die the death of this earth, as men [ordinarily] do here, young and old, when God takes away from them their possessions and substance, [all] earth's treasures, and their life as well: but while living he set forth with 1210 the King of Angels out of this transitory life into bliss,[17] [clad] in the robes which his spirit received before his mother brought him forth to men. He left the people to his to his eldest son, his first-born; 365 winters had he 1215 [numbered] when he left the world.

For some time after him, his son Mathusal held the inheritance, who for the longest space of time enjoyed 1220 the pleasures of the world in this body: he begot a multitude of sons and daughters, before the day of his death. When he had to depart from among men, the venerable hero had [enjoyed] 970 winters.

After him, his son Lamech held the government: for 1225 a long time thereafter he ruled over the world; he had [lived] 102 winters when the season came for the chief-tain to begin to beget noble heirs, sons and daughters.

After this the lord and chief of the people lived 595 1230 [years], enjoyed many a winter under the skies, ruled the race well, and begot children: youths and maidens arose as heirs to him. The eldest of them he named Noe, who reigned over the land among men after Lamech 1235 departed.

This sage ruler of the noblemen was 500 years old when he first began to beget children, as the books tell. The eldest son of Noe was called Sem, the next Cham, 1240 the third Jafeth.

The people multiplied widely under the skies: the race of men increased in number over the earth, by 1245 [the birth of] sons and daughters. Now the descendants of Seth, that beloved leader of the people, were still very much cherished, dear to the Lord and prosperous.



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XV.

But when the sons of God began to seek brides among the race of Cain, the accursed folk, and chose wives 1250 from among them against the will of God, the children of men from among the sinful maidens, beautiful and bright, then the Ruler of the heavens pronounced his wrath against mankind and spoke these words:

“The men of Cain’s race have not been absent from 1255 my mind, but that stock has sorely offended me. Now the sons of Seth renew my wrath and take to themselves the maidens of my enemies as wives: the fairness of the 1260 women, the maidens’ faces, and the eternal Fiend have shamefully captivated the multitude of men who were formerly in peace.”

After that, for 120 winters, duly numbered, exile afflicted the accursed race in this world; then the Lord 1265 wished to inflict punishment upon the covenant-breakers, and to smite with death the doers of evil, the giant folk unloved by God, the great and sinful foes hateful to the Lord, when the Wielder of Victory himself saw what 1270 was man’s wickedness on earth, and how they all were bold in crime and utterly vicious. He thought to punish rigorously the races of men, to seize upon the 1275 peoples grimly and sorely, with cruel might: he repented exceedingly that he had ever created the author of the nations, the source of the peoples, when he fashioned Adam. He said that on account of the sins of men he would utterly blot out all that there was on earth, 1280 destroy every one of the bodies in whose bosom the breath of life was concealed: all that came near to the sons of men, the Lord determined to annihilate.

Noe, the son of Lamech, just and honorable, was dear 1285 to God, the Preserver. The Lord knew that the virtue of the true man prevailed in the innermost thoughts of his breast; therefore the Lord, holy in helpfulness, Pro- 1290 tector of all men, told him by revelation what he pur-posed inflicting upon the wicked ones: for he saw the earth full of unrighteousness, the broad plains laden with sin, polluted with foulness. Then spoke the Al- 1295 mighty, our Saviour, and said to Noe:

“I am resolved to destroy humanity by means of a deluge, and also every kind of living thing that the air and waters produce and support, both beast and bird: but thou shalt have shelter, with thy sons, when the 1300 dark waters, the black floods of death, destroy mankind, the vile sinners. Begin to build thee a ship, a mighty sea-house, in which thou shalt give a place of refuge to many a one and a safe home to every species on earth, 1305 after thine own. Build partitions in the midst of the ship. Make the boat fifty cubits wide, thirty high, three hundred long, and joint it stoutly against the 1310 assault of the waves. There shall be a creature of every living species, a scion of every race on earth, led within that wooden fortress; so must the Ark be the greater!”



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Noe did as the Lord commanded him, obeyed the 1315 holy King of Heaven, began at once to build that Ark, the mighty sea-chest; he told his kinsmen that there was a horrible thing impending over the people, dire punishment: but they heeded this not at all. Then, 1320 after several winters, the Changeless Lord saw that the vast sea-house, Noe's vessel, towered up in readiness, strengthened within and without with the best earth-lime, against the waves; it is unique in its kind: the harder the fierce waters of the dark billows beat it, the 1325 stouter does it ever become.

XVI.

Then our Preserver spoke to Noe: "I give thee my pledge for this, O dearest of mankind, that thou mayst now take up thy course with the creatures of all kinds 1330 which thou shalt bear across the deep water for many days, in the bosom of thy vessel. Lead on board the Ark, as I bid thee, thy sons, the three first-born, and your four wives. And do thou take into the sea-house 1335 seven [members] duly counted of each of the species that live to [supply] nourishment for men, and two of each of the others: likewise take on the Ark some of all plants growing on earth used for food by the people who are 1340 to sail over the floods with thee. Feed freely the different species of animals, until I shall prepare a place under heaven by my Word for those who are saved from this watery journey. Depart now with thy household into 1345 the Ark, with the multitude of dependent things; I know thee for a good and true man: thou art worthy of safety and mercy, with thy sons. In seven nights now I shall let the deadly rain fall from above upon the face 1350 of the broad earth. For forty days will I set my vengeance against mankind, and with a deluge blot out all the possessions and possessors that are beyond the sides of the Ark, when the black storm begins to descend." 1355

Then Noe left him, as our Preserver commanded, in order to lead his children on board the Ark, men and their wives together on the great ship; and all that God Almighty wished to preserve for perpetuating their species, went on board to their food-giver, as the Almighty 1360 Lord of Hosts bade them through his word. With his own hands, the Guardian of Heaven, Wielder of Victory, locked the entrance of the sea-house behind them, and 1365 our Saviour blessed [all] within the Ark with his own grace. Noe, the son of Lamech, had 600 winters when he embarked with his sons, at God's command, —that 1370 wise man, with the young people, his dear kinsfolk.



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The Lord sent rain from heaven, and likewise let the springs from every source rush upon the world far and wide, [let] the dark ocean-streams burst forth in 1375 tumult: the seas rose up over the boundaries of the shore. Strong and stern was He who ruled the waters, for he covered and shrouded with wan waters the accursed wickedness of the sons of the earth and devastated the 1380 land and homes of men: the Lord wreaked [his fury] upon men for their offences. The sea cruelly gripped the wretched folk for forty days, and nights as many bitter was the suffering then, cruelly fateful to men. The waves of the King of Glory drove the souls of the 1385 vicious ones forth from their bodies. The flood covered everything; turbid under the sky [it covered] the high mountains over the broad earth, and on its crest raised the Ark aloft from the ground, and its noble crew with it, [the Ark] which the Lord Himself, our Creator, blessed, 1390 when he locked the ship. Thereafter this best of ships rode widely under the skies over the circle of the sea, fared [forth] with its freight: the terrors of the flood 1395 would have seized them with violence in the sea-traver-sing vessel, but the Holy God led and preserved them. Fifteen ells deep, by man's measure, stood the deluge over the hills. That is a memorable occurrence: there 1400 was nothing at hand for [the Ark] but destruction, except that it was raised aloft into the upper air when the inundation killed all creatures upon earth other than those whom the Lord of Heaven saved on board the Ark, when the Holy God everlasting, the steadfast King, let 1405 [the flood] rise up with ever-increasing[18] stream.

XVII.

Then God, Wielder of Victory, was mindful of those floating on the deep, the son of Lamech and all his 1410 family, whom the Source of Light and Life had locked up against the water in the bosom of the ship. The Lord of mankind led the heroes by his Word over far lands. Soon the flood began to abate; the deluge ebbed, dark under the sky: the true God had turned back again 1405 the foaming waves, for his children; the Glorious One [had] stilled the cataracts of rain. For 150 nights under the skies the foamy ship floated, from the time when the well-nailed sides of this best of boats first arose upon the flood until this number of days of dire time 1420 had passed. Then the Ark of Noe, greatest of ocean-homes, settled on high with its burden on the hills which are called Armenia: there the pious son of Lamech 1425 awaited the sure promises for a long time, when the Keeper of Life, the Almighty King, gave him relief from the perilous chances which he had long undergone, when the dark waves bore him abroad on the deep over 1430 far countries.



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The flood was sinking; the sea-farers, the heroes and their wives, longed [for the time] when they might venture to step out of their straitened quarters over the well-nailed side out on the bank, and take their goods 1435 out of their crowded home. So the guardian of the ship tried to find out whether the waters were still sinking under the clouds: accordingly, after many days from the time the high mountain-sides received the possessions 1440 and persons of the races of earth, the son of Lamech let a black raven fly out of the Ark over the high flood. Noe believed that if it found no land in its flight, it 1445 would zealously seek him again on the ship over the wide water. But this hope failed him; for the evil [bird] alighted upon a floating corpse: the dark-feathered fowl would not seek [further]. Then again after a week he sent from the Ark a purple dove to fly over the high water 1450 after the dark raven, for the purpose of finding out whether the foamy sea, the ocean, had given up any portion of the green earth, as yet. Widely she sought 1455 her desired object, and flew afar: nowhere did she find a resting-place, since she could not settle on land on foot because of the flood, nor alight on a leaf of a tree because of the waves; for the steep mountain-sides were 1460 hidden by the waters. The wild bird set out in the evening to seek the Ark over the dusky flood, and sank weary and famished in the hands of the pious hero. Then after a week the wild-dove was again sent out 1465 from the Ark: she flew far, until greatly rejoicing she found a fair place for rest and settled with her feet on a tree; she exulted glad at heart, because exceedingly weary [as she was] she could sit in the bright branches 1470 of a tree: she shook out her wings and started to fly back again with her gift, [for she] brought in her flight an olive twig, green leaves, into the hands of one [on board]. Then quickly the leader of the voyagers perceived that solace had come, relief from their perilous experience. So again after a third week the happy man sent out a wild dove; it did not come flying back to the ship, for it found land, green groves: the glad 1480 creature did not wish to show itself ever again under the pitch-smeared roof on the Ark, when there was no need.

XVIII.

Then to Noe spoke our Preserver, Ruler of Heaven, with holy voice:

“For you is a dwelling-place again appointed, fair 1485 on the dry land, joys on earth and rest after your voyage. Depart in peace out of the Ark, and lead forth upon the bosom of the earth out of this lofty structure your companions and all the creatures which I mercifully preserved 1490 from the peril of the flood, while the deluge held sway [and] covered your home with its abundance.[19]”



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He did so, and obeyed the Lord, stood forth upon the strand, as the Voice bade him, and with great joy led 1495 out of the ship the survivors of these perils.

Then Noe began to institute a sacrifice to our Preserver, and immediately took a part of all his possessions which the Lord had given to him for his comfort, and then, 1500 zealous for the offering, even to God Himself, King of the Angels, the clear-souled man proffered the sacrifice. Certainly our Saviour let it be known, when he blessed 1505 Noe and his sons too, that [the patriarch] had given Him this offering acceptably and in his youth had merited by his good deeds that Almighty God, Glorious in Splendor, should be gracious to him with all blessings. 1510 Then again the Lord, Ruler of Glory, spoke a word to Noe:

“Increase now and multiply, enjoy your honor, with the gladness of peace: fill the earth, make all things teem. Into your possession is given a noble heritage, the produce 1515 of the sea, the fowls of heaven, and the wild beasts,— the verdant earth and every treasure. You shall never dishonorably procure your food through bloodshed, 1520 sinfully stricken in its life-blood. Each one first of all injures himself in the riches of the spirit, who with the edge of the sword takes the life of another: nor shall he dare to rejoice in thought over the spoils, for I will avenge a man’s death all the more severely upon the 1525 slayer and upon the fratricide, in proportion as blood-shed, the slaughter of a man with weapons, or murder by [violent] hands, seems to succeed. Man was first created in the likeness of God: every man has the form of the 1530 Lord and of the Angels, whose virtues follow my holy will. Increase and multiply, enjoy riches and honor on earth. Fill the countries of the world with people, your offspring, sons and daughters. I will set up for you this 1535 my pledge, that I will never again let loose the floods upon the earth, the waters over the broad lands: you may see this witness frequently upon the clouds, when 1540 I show my rainbow, [as proof] that I will certainly keep this bond with men, while the world lasts.”

Thus was the prudent son of Lamech, the keeper of the heritage, disembarked from his ship after the flood 1545 with his three sons; and their four wives were named Percoba, Olla, Olliva, and Ollivani,[20] saved from the waters by the true God. The stout-minded heroes, 1550 the sons of Noe, were called Sem and Cham, and the third Japheth: from these warriors the nations sprang and all this earth was filled with the children of men.

XIX.

Then for the second time Noe began to establish his 1555 home, with his kinsfolk, and to till the earth for food; he struggled and toiled, planted a vineyard, sowed many seeds and tended them carefully, so that the green 1560 earth, with its fertile boon, brought him fair harvests.

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Then it befell once that the blessed man was in his dwelling, drunken with wine; weary of feasting he slept, and thrust the robe from his body, as was not fitting, and lay there with naked limbs: little he noticed that it went so ill with him in his hall, when intoxication in his breast gripped his heart in the holy house. In this torpor his intelligence was cruelly crippled, so that he could not call to mind [the necessity for] covering himself with his clothing and concealing his nakedness, as was ordained for men and women, ever since the minister of Glory locked the native abode of life behind our [first father] and mother, with a fiery sword. Now Cam, the son of Noe, chanced to come in where his father lay bereft of consciousness: thereupon would he dutifully no honor show to his own father nor at least conceal the dis-grace from his kinsmen; but laughing aloud he told his brothers how the patriarch rested in the house. They repaired thither speedily, their faces carefully veiled under cloaks, so that they bore aid to the dear man: they were both good men, Sem and Japheth.

Then the son of Lamech awoke from his sleep and soon perceived that Cham would not show him, the nobly born, any affection and duty, when honor was due him. That was bitter to the heart of the holy man, and he began to curse his son with [harsh] words: he said that Ham should be humbled under the heavens, the servant of his kinsfolk on earth: on him and his race those baneful words have fallen heavily, ever since. Then Noe enjoyed his broad heritage with his sons, free men, for 350 winters of this life after the flood: then he passed away.

After that his sons dispensed the treasures: they begot children: great was their wealth. Thus to Japheth was progeny born, a pleasing family of promising young ones, sons and daughters. He was a good man [and] ever prosperously held his patrimony, [sharing his] abundance with his children, until the treasure of his breast, his spirit longing for release, was summoned to the judgment of God: thereupon Geomorph, Japheth's son, shared his father's property with his friends, dear ones, and relatives; with his descendants was filled by generation no small portion of the earth.—

Sons of Cham were born, likewise, heirs for the patrimony: the eldest were called Chus and Cham, very noble of soul, the first-born of Cham. Chus was the chief of the leaders, dispenser of treasure and worldly riches to his brothers, the private property of his father, after Cham fared forth from the body when death fell to his lot. This leader of the people delivered judgments for his race until the number of his days had run: then the hero yielded up this world's goods and sought another life.



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After that, the son of Chus, first-born of the brothers, ruled the paternal[21] heritage, a widely known 1630 man. So the Scriptures tell us, that he had the greatest might and strength of all mankind, in those days: he was a prince of the Babylonian Empire, and first of the nobles raised, spread, and exalted its fame. At that 1635 time one tongue was still common to all dwellers on earth.

XX.

Likewise from Cam's stock sprang many descendants, and to these numerous people great families were born.—

Furthermore many sons and daughters were born into 1640 the world to Sem, noble folk, before the ruler of men took to his death-bed, in the course of years. In this family were good men, of whom one was called Eber, a 1645 son of Sem: from this chief sprang a multitude of people, whom all nations and earth-dwellers now call Hebrews.

They set out then to take their possessions from the eastward, live-stock and treasure; the people were un- 1650 animous: the vigorous heroes sought a less crowded land, until the migrating folk in great multitudes came where their noble leaders firmly took possession. The rulers 1655 of the people settled with their dear followers in Sennar, ample and broad; in the years of their life the fields were ever verdant and the earth fair for the people at that time, with increasing abundance of each [kind of] 1661 treasure.

Then many a man argued with his dear friend, one resolute hero with another, that for their greater glory, before the masses of the people should scatter again over 1665 the earth, numbers of the nation in search of land, they should build a city and raise up a tower to the stars of heaven as a sign that they had sought Sennar fields because the mighty fore-fathers of the race, the patriarchs, long 1670 lived there with pleasure: with craft the people wrought, in labor and industry, until in arrogance and rashness they showed their skill, built a fortress and raised aloft scaling- 1675 ladders towards heaven, mightily erected a solid stone wall beyond man's measure, eager for glory:—[all this did] the heroes with their hands. Then Holy God came to inspect the work of the race of men, the fortress of the warriors, 1680 and that beacon-tower likewise which the sons of Adam began to rear up to the skies; and the steadfast King achieved the prevention of this evil design, when in wrath he distributed different languages among the 1685 inhabitants of earth, so that they no longer had control of their speech. They found then multitudes at the tower with victorious strength, leaders of work in vast battalions: but not one of the tribes understood what 1690 another was saying. It could not be, that they should build up the stone wall further; but they wretchedly parted in bands separated by their speech: one had become to another a strange race, after the Lord by the 1695 fullness of his might had confused the speech of men. The disunited sons

of the patriarchs then parted in four directions to seek land: behind them, both the 1700 mighty tower of stone and the lofty city stood on Sennar [plain] together, half-finished.



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Then the race of Sem increased and multiplied under the clouds, until a man arose in the number of that kingly people, a sagacious man, prudent in habit. To 1705 this nobleman sons were born, two free children were born in Babylon, and these chieftains, strong-minded heroes, were called Abraham and Aaron. The Sovereign 1710 of the Angels was friend and guide to both these leaders. Then to Aaron was born a son, upright in life, whose name was Loth. Thereafter the righteous heroes, Abraham and Loth, throve nobly in the Lord's sight, as 1715 the inheritance in the kingdom came to them from their parents; therefore they widely glorified the sons of men with gifts.

XXI.

Now the period of time had come when Abraham 1720 brought a wife, a fair and free-born bride to his house, where he possessed a dwelling: the woman was named Sarra, as the books tell us. They enjoyed life thus for many winters, held the property together in peace for 1725 many years. But it was not vouchsafed to Abraham as yet that his bright-faced bride should bring into the world a guardian for his heritage, that Sarra [should bear] sons and daughters to Abraham.

Then Abraham's father set out with his family and 1730 [all] his substance to pass through the Caldean country: he wisely wished to seek the land of Canan, with his household. The cousins chosen by the Lord, Abraham and Loth, went with him out of their heritage. Then 1735 the nobly-born sons of the patriarchs took up their dwelling in Carran, the men with their wives. In his home here Abraham's father departed this life, the 1740 steadfast worthy: he had told 205 winters, in all, when he fared forth ripe in years to meet his fate.

Then the holy Guardian of the heavenly kingdom, the 1745 Eternal Lord, spoke to Abraham:

"Set forth now, and take thy movable possessions and fertile herds with thee. Give up Carran, thy father's dwelling-place. Depart, as I bid thee, O dearest of men, and heed well my instructions, and seek the land 1750 which I shall show thee, a broad verdant country. Thou shalt live blessed under my protection: if any of the dwellers on earth greet thee with evil, I will set upon 1755 them my curse and my hatred, long-lasting affliction; and I shall give favors, abundance of blessings, to those who treat thee well. Through thee shall all earth-dwellers, sons of man, receive peace and friendship, 1760 my grace and blessing, in this world. Far spreading under the sun shall be the number of thy race by [the birth of] sons and daughters, until many a region of the 1765 earth shall be filled with thy progeny."



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Then Abraham, preeminently upright, rich, and blessed with gold and silver, set out to take his flocks and possessions from Carran into the country of Egypt, as 1770 the Warder of Victory, our Ruler, bade him through his Word: they sought the land and nation of Canan. Thus the man dear to God came to lead his wife, his dear bed- 1775 fellow, and his nephew's wife, into this inheritance, into happiness. He had [numbered] 75 winters when he had to fare forth, to give up Carran and his kinsfolk. So Abraham set out, mindful of the instructions of the 1780 Father Almighty, to look for the broad land beyond these nations, at his Lord's command, until prospering in his journey the courageous man came to Siem, of the Cananite race. Then the Lord and King of the Angels, Sovereign of men, manifested himself to Abraham and 1785 said:

"This is the country, verdant and bright and adorned with fruits, that I intend to give into the power of thy descendants, an ample kingdom!" 1790

Then the good man built an altar and offered sacrifice to the Ruler of Life and Source of Light, the Protector of souls. Thereupon Abraham traveled still further from the east in order to search with his eyes for the choicest 1795 of lands (he remembered the favors, God's promises, which the King of Victory Himself truthfully declared to him through his holy word), until the people came with their possessions to the place where the town is called Bethlem: the glad-hearted chieftain and his brother's 1800 son, pious men, went forward over the storied land from the east, with their possessions, over the precipitous mountain-sides, and chose a dwelling-place for them-selves where the fields seemed bright and fair to them. 1805

XXII.

There Abraham for the second time built an altar: there he called upon God with noble words, and offered sacrifice to the Lord of his life. Not at all sparingly did God, through His own hand, give him reward for this,—rich bounty, in the very place of sacrifice. 1810

There for a while the wise leader dwelt in his home and enjoyed happiness, the hero with his bride, until a frightful calamity began to press upon the Cananite race, cruel hunger, deadly to home-staying men. Then 1815 the wise Abraham, chosen by the Lord, went into Egypt to seek sustenance; the sage fled before evil: the plague was too strong. Abraham spoke,—for he saw the white 1820 pinnacled halls of Egypt and the tall cities shining brightly,—and then the ruler, the sagacious man, began to instruct his wife, in these words:



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“When many haughty Egyptians shall gaze with their eyes upon thy countenance, then should the nobly- 1825 born chieftains suppose, O woman fair as a goddess, that thou art my bright bed-fellow whom some one of the warriors will wish to have for himself, then I may well fear for myself lest some one of my foes may deprive 1830 me of life with the edge of his sword by reason of his amorous desire. Say then, Sarra, that thou art my sister, my blood-relation, when the strange men ask thee what degree of familiarity may exist between us 1835 two foreigners, who come from so far away: hold fast true speech from them, and thus thou shalt preserve my life,—if the Lord of Peace, our Almighty Ruler, grant me longer life in this world, as he did before, who 1840 ordained these travels for us in order that we might seek aid and secure sustenance for ourselves in Egypt.”

Thereupon Abraham, the vigorous leader, proceeded 1845 with his possessions into Egypt, where the people were strange to him, and friends unknown. Many haughty men spoke of the beauty of his wife in their remarks, men distinguished by their wealth: to many high-spirited 1850 men, vassals of the king, his wife seemed noble in countenance. They brought the news to their liege-lord, and[22] few women did they repute fairer before the king, but they lauded exceedingly Sarra’s countenance for its 1855 great beauty, until he bade them bring the lovely woman to his own hall. The ruler of the people and chief of the nobles bade them enrich Abraham with treasures. But the Lord God became aggrieved and incensed against 1860 Farao for his love of the woman: the joy of his house-hold[23] bore this wrath hardly with his intimates. How-ever, the ruler of the people perceived what the Lord was sending upon him for punishment: urged on by 1865 fear, the king of Egypt called Abraham to him and gave him his bride, [returned] his wife into his keeping, bade him seek friends elsewhere, noblemen of another race. Then the ruler of the country ordered his vassals and 1870 ministers to escort him out of their land again, honor-ably, uninjured in any respect, so that he might be in peace.

Then Abraham took [all his] possessions out of the country of Egypt: these worthy heroes took their wives, 1875 both brides and rings, while they brought their flocks to Bethlem, a familiar dwelling-place, [brought] their womenfolk and treasures and their worldly goods. 1880 Then they began to build there, and to erect their city and settle their homes, and renew their prosperity. The men built an altar in the meadows near the one that Abraham had formerly reared to his Lord, when he came to this western land: there the fortunate man 1885 exalted the Name of the Eternal Lord once more; the high-minded ruler offered sacrifice to the King of the Angels, thanked exceedingly the Source of Light and Life for his happiness and honor.



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XXIII.

Abraham and Loth lived in these dwellings and had abundance of prosperity, ruled over their heritage, until they could not enjoy plenty together any longer in that land and keep the possessions of both there, but the worthy warriors had to seek broader seats elsewhere. There were often dissensions among the followers of the steadfast heroes, quarrels among the herdsmen. Then the blessed Abraham, mindful of their honor, began to speak fairly to Loth: 1900

“I am thy father’s born brother, thou art my nephew; quarrels shall not wax great between us, nor anger grow: may God forbid that! But we are blood-relations: between us shall nothing be except, most fittingly, long-enduring love. Now bethink thee, Loth, that about our borders dwell mighty men, powerful peoples with lords and vassals, the Cananite and Feretite nations, with energetic warriors: their landed property will not make any more room for us. Therefore shall we remove our differences from this place and seek broader dwelling-places for ourselves: I speak what is best for us both, son of Aron, a true saying. I leave the choice to thee, dear friend. Ponder with thyself and consider in thy heart in which direction thou wilt take thy departure, go forth with thy herds: now I have yielded thee the choice!”

Then Loth left him to seek land by the Jordan, fertile country: it was refreshed with waters and enriched with fruits, bright with rivers, and like to the earthly paradise of God, until God the Saviour because of men’s sins gave Sodoma and Gomorra to destruction, to the dark flames. So the son of Aron chose his dwelling-place there, a settlement in the city of Sodoma, and brought thither all his possessions, rings and private property from Bethlem, goods, and wrought gold. For many years thereafter he dwelt by the Jordan: fair dwelling-places were there, but vicious men also, hateful to the Lord. The people of Sodoma were bold in sin, shameful in their deeds: they brought upon themselves eternal woe. Loth would never adopt the customs of the country, but he always eschewed the habits of this people, [their] evil and sin, even though he had to live in their land, and kept himself pure, virtuous, and patient, even in this nation, just as if—mindful of [his Lord’s] teaching—he did not know what these people were doing.

Abraham dwelt by the habitations of the Cananites: the King of the Angels, Lord of mankind, held him under his protection, with abundance of good things and worldly treasures, love and joy; therefore the races of men, children of baptism, sing his praise widely under the clouds. Pious and prudent, he freely obeyed the Lord in his land as long as he enjoyed the heritage: never need a defenceless human being ever become in any way a terrified and fearful man before the Lord, if he will always, until his departure from life, thank Him heedfully in speech and in heart, by word and deed, with wise mind after every favor.[25]



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XXIV.

Then I found that the king of the Elamites, Orlahomar, 1960 a pious leader, made an expedition: in aid of him Am-brafel set forth from Sennar with a great multitude. Four kings then set out with mighty power to seek 1965 Sodoma and Gomorra, southward from there. Then was the country of the men by Iordan widely besieged by warriors, the land [was surrounded] by foes. Many a terrified pale-cheeked maiden would have to go trem- 1970 bling to the embrace of a stranger: the defenders of the brides and rings would fall, weak with wounds. Against them with warlike zeal five kings came forth 1975 from the south, with their armies, who wished to rid the city of Sodoma of its foes: for twelve winters before of necessity they had had to yield tribute and pay indemnity to the men of the north, until the people no longer would enrich the king of the Elamites with 1980 their own treasures, but revolted from him.

In rage the slaughter-hordes came together: the jav-elins were loud; the dark fowl sang among the flying weapons, the dewy-feathered [raven] looked for the slain. 1985 The warriors rushed on in cohorts with unfaltering cour-age, until the nations' armies had come together widely, from south and north, protected by their helmets. There was bitter struggle, exchanges of deadly spears, great 1990 tumult of war, loud din of conflict. The heroes drew from the sheath with their hands the ring-mailed sword, keen of edge. Then was booty easy to find for the chieftain who before this was not readily sated with 1995 battle! The northern men were fatal to the southern men: the men of Sodoma and Gomorra, dispensers of gold, were bereft of their dear allies at the shield-clash-ing. They went forth from their homesteads to save 2000 themselves by flight; behind them the youths of the race fell, slain by the sword, [and] their allies [were] cleft with the edge. The leader of the army of the Elamites had 2005 victory in battle, was master of the battlefield. The survivors of the weapons fled to seek fastnesses. The enemy seized upon gold, robbed with devastation the treasure-cities of the people, Sodoma and Gomorra. Then misery requited the great strongholds; the maidens, 2010 wives, and widows, deprived of friends, departed from their homesteads. The enemy led out with them from the city of Sodoma, with their spoils, the kinsman of Abraham.

We may now relate this true history further, as to what was the fate of the war-wolves after the battle, 2015 who carried off Loth and the goods of the people, the treasures of the southlanders, [and] exulted in victory.



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A warrior, a survivor of the sword who was spared in battle, escaped from them suddenly, to seek Abraham: 2020 he reported to the Ebrew chieftain the outcome of the fray,—the people of Sodoma sorely stricken, the nation's wealth, and Loth's situation. Thereupon Abraham re-ported the evil tidings to his friends; the steadfast hero 2025 requested aid of his favorite companions, Aner, Mamre, and thirdly Escol, saying that it would be gall to his heart and bitterest grief if his nephew should have to 2030 suffer slavery: bade the warriors famed in battle think of some plan so that his dear kinsman might be freed, the hero with his bride. In reply the three brothers, famed in war, with great readiness assuaged his grief by their 2035 hardy words, and pledged their troth to Abraham that they would avenge his injury upon his foes, with him, or else fall in battle.

Then the holy man bade his companions take their 2040 weapons: he found there 318 spear-bearing warriors, loyal to their ruler, of whom he knew that every one could well support the tawny linden-shield in an onset. 2045 So Abraham set out with the three chieftains who had just pledged their troth to him, and the band of their followers. He wished to rescue his kinsman at least, Loth, from suffering.[26] These warriors were famous: they bore their shields forth boldly on the march. The 2050 war-wolves, [meanwhile], had nearly reached their camping-place: then the prudent man, the son of Thare, spoke to his war-leaders in these words, (great was his need!), that they[27] should advance on the enemy in two 2055 divisions with grim conflict and hard swordplay: said, [further], that the Holy Lord Everlasting might easily give him success in the spear-fight.

Then I heard how under the cover of night the heroes 2060 ventured on into battle: the din of shields and shafts arose in their sleeping-quarters, the slaughter of archers and impact of battle-arrows; sharp swords smote hate-fully under the breast of men, and the bodies of foes 2065 fell thickly, where the exulting heroes and comrades were bringing together the spoil. Victory, men's glory in war, turned aside again from the battle of the north-men. Abraham gave armed conflict and not in any 2070 wise wrought gold, as ransom for his nephew; he slew and felled the enemy in fair fight: to aid him, the Guard-ian of the heavenly kingdom took [a part in the fray]. The four armies were put to flight, [with] the kings and leaders of the people: behind them pressed the joyful 2075 band and [there] the heroes were slain; the others were given over to flight,—those who had stolen the gold of Sodom and Gomorra, and robbed the stewards: fiercely did 2080 the uncle of Loth requite them for it. The noble leaders of the Elamites were fleeing, bereft of power,



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until they were not far from Domascus. Then Abraham set out on 2085 the war-track to see the retreat of the wicked men. Lot was freed, the chieftain with his possessions, [while] the women [and] wives were restored to joy. Far and wide they saw the birds of prey rending the murderers of free-men in sword-slaughter. Abraham brought back again 2090 the treasure and brides of the southlanders, the children of the nobles nearer their homes, the maidens to their families. Of all men living here [on earth], no one ever achieved a more worthy military expedition with a 2095 small force which was attacking so great a multitude.

XXV.

Then the people of Sodoma was southward from there, to bear the news as to what rout of their fierce foes had occurred. Forthwith the king of the people, bereft of his nobles and stripped of friends, went out to meet Abraham; he brought with him the master of the 2100 treasure of Solomia: that was the great Melchisedec, bishop of the people. He came with gifts to greet fairly the prince of the warriors, [to approach] Abraham honor- 2105 ably, and he pronounced upon him the blessing of God and spoke thus:

“Highly wert thou exalted among the number of heroes before the eyes of Him who gave thee the glory of the ash-spear in battle: that is God himself, who mightily destroyed the forces of the hostile armies and let thee with 2110 thy weapons hew out bloody paths broadly [through the foe], regain the booty, and fell the warriors. They were encamped by the way: nor could the withdrawing army prevail in hand-to-hand conflict, but God put it to flight, 2115 who with His own hands preserved thee with thy warriors in the fight, against the terror of superior numbers, and [so likewise] the sacred pledge [preserved thee] which thou rightfully holdest with the Keeper of the skies.”

With his own hand the hero gave him a return for this 2120 blessing, and Abraham bestowed upon the bishop of God the value of every tenth part of the army's booty. Then spoke the war-king, ruler of Sodoma, bereft of his people, to Abraham, (to him mercy was needful): 2125

“Give me back the maidens of my people, whom thou by the might of thy army hast snatched from the deadly bonds of the foe. Keep thou the wrought gold which formerly was the property of our people, [keep] the 2130 herds and the treasure. Only let me lead back again in freedom, to their hearths and desolated homes, the children of the people, the wives and boys and wretched widows. The young men, my companions, who should have 2135 held the borders with me, are dead, [all] but a very few.”

Then Abraham answered him straightway, in the pres-ence of the chieftains exalted in valor, power, and vic-tory, and nobly said:



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“Ruler of the people, I pledge to thee this my word, 2140 before the Holy One who is sole Master of heaven and this earth: there is no worldly treasure that I will take for my own, neither riches nor money of thine which I have rescued from the [hostile] bowmen, O great king, protector of thy nobles, lest thou oft hereafter say that 2145 I became rich on earth through the treasure and former wealth of the kingdom of Sodom;[28] but thou shalt take hence the booty which I regained for thee in battle, 2150 all except the shares of these noble warriors, Aner, and Mamre, and Escol. I am unwilling to deprive these warriors of their rights: for they stood by me in the combat, and fought in your behalf. Go now and take home the wrought gold and the beloved maidens, the 2155 womenfolk of thy people. Thou needst not fear for a while the attack of the hostile warriors, the battle of the northmen, for the birds of prey sit all smeared with blood, among the fastnesses of the mountains, well 2160 gorged with the slaughter of the armies.”

So the king set out on his return home with the spoils which the pious lord of the Hebrews, regardful of honor, gave up to him.

Then again to Abraham the High-King of Heaven 2165 showed himself, with holy speech comforted the wise-hearted man, and spoke to him thus:

“Great are thy rewards. Let not now thy heart grow idle, thou steadfast [doer] of my will. Nor needst thou fear anyone, while thou heedest my commandment, for with my own hands will I shelter and shield thee 2170 during thy life-time here against every woe: thou needst not be fearful.”

XXVI.

Then Abraham, famed for his deeds, answered his Lord and asked Him, in the fullness of his days:

“O Ruler of spirits, what dost thou give me for free- 2175 men’s solace, now that I am thus solitary? I have no need to found an ancestral seat for any sons of mine, but after me shall my distant kinsmen dispose of my goods; thou hast not given me a son, and therefore sorrows weigh upon me very heavily in my heart; I myself can 2180 not devise any counsel. My steward goes rejoicing in his sons, and is firmly persuaded in his thoughts that after me his sons shall be the keepers of the heritage: they see that no children are born to me of my bride.”

To him then at once God answered: 2185

“Never shall thy steward possess the heritage of thy sons: but thine own children shall hold the treasure, when thy flesh lies [in the grave]. Behold the sky. Count those jewels, the stars of heaven, which now freely scatter 2190 their glorious radiance far

and wide to shine brilliantly over the broad surface of the sea. Such shall be the multitude of thy descendants, rich in progeny.



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Let not thy heart be bound by sorrow. A son shall yet be born 2195 to thee, a child born of thy wife by ordinary birth, who after thee shall be the keeper of the inheritance, rich in property. Grieve no more: I am the Lord, who many winters ago led thee out of the stronghold of Caldea 2200 with but few followers, and promised thee a broad dwelling-place for thy possession: I give thee now my pledge, man of the Hebrews, that many a broad land on this earth shall be peopled with thy progeny, regions 2205 of the world as far as Euphrates even from the borders of Egypt, as many men and as wide a kingdom as the Nile cuts off and the sea bounds: all this shall thy sons 2210 own, each of the countries, as these three waters sur-round with their streams the lofty cities of stone, the foamy floods [surround] the refuge of the people.”

Then Sarra was grieved at heart that no son had come 2215 to Abraham through their wedlock, a free-born heir for their solace; so the sorrowful one began to speak to her husband in these words:

“The Ruler of heaven has denied me this, that I 2220 might augment the number of thy family under the skies with sons of thine own. Now I am hopeless that an heir will ever be given us together: I am too old, in my misery. My lord, do as I bid thee. Here is a 2225 woman, a fair damsel, an Egyptian maid in our possession: bid her now repair to thy bed forthwith, and see if the Lord will allow any heir for thy goods to come into 2230 the world through this woman!”

Then the holy man yielded to the advice of his wife, and bade the handmaiden go to his couch as a bride.[29] 2235 Her spirit exalted itself, when she had become pregnant with a man-child by Abraham; stiff-necked in scorn she began to despise her mistress, showed insolence, was overweening, and was unwilling to endure servitude but 2240 boldly began to resist Sarra strongly.

Then I heard how the wife spoke to her husband in the sorrow of her heart, with these words; sad in mind she spoke, and said bitterly:

“Thou dost not deal properly and rightfully with me. 2245 Thou hast hitherto allowed it to happen that my hand-maiden afflict me every day by deed and word, ever since Agar entered thy bed in place of thy wife, as was my entreaty: she shall pay for this mercilessly, if I 2250 may still control mine own before thee, dear Abraham; of this may the Almighty Lord of Lords be judge between us two!”

The wise-minded man then answered her at once in 2255 these words:

“Never shall I leave thee without honor, while we both live; but thou must manage thine own maid as pleases thy heart!”



XXVII.

Then Abraham's queen became unkind, wrathful in 2260 heart towards her serving-maid, hard and cruel, spoke bitter insults to the woman. Thereupon the latter fled from threat and thralldom: she would not endure evil and retribution for what she had formerly done to Sarra, 2265 but went forth on a journey to go into the wilderness. There a servant of glory, an angel of the Lord, found her sorrowing; he eagerly asked her:



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“Whither do you intend to push your journey, my 2270 poor woman? Sarre owns thy service!”

She answered him at once:

“Deprived of every pleasure, jeered out of the house by the hatred of my mistress, I have fled from woes, afflictions, and injuries. Now with tear-stained cheek must I await my fate^[30] in the wilderness, [the time] 2275 when hunger or a wolf removes life and sorrow together from my heart.”

Then the angel answered her:

“Seek not thou in flight far hence to avoid thy con- 2280 cubinage, but return again, earn honor for thyself, begin submissively to cultivate dutifulness, become dear to thy master. Thou shalt, Agar, bring a son into the world to Abraham: with my word I tell thee now that this 2285 man-child shall be called Ismahel, among men. He shall be rough, warlike, hostile to the races of men and to his own kinsfolk: many a one shall struggle against 2290 him in wrath, with assault of arms. From this prince nations shall spring, numberless peoples. Depart now to seek thy master again: live with those who own thee!”

In accordance with the angel’s command, she at once returned to her lord, as the holy spirit-messenger of God 2295 bade her, in sapient speech. Thus was Ismael born to Abraham, even when he had [lived] 86 winters in the world. The son grew and flourished, as the angel, the 2300 true minister of peace, had promised to the woman by his own word.

About thirteen years after that, the Lord and Ever-lasting King spoke with Abraham:

“Dear man, as I command thee, so do thou keep well our covenant: I will to all time exalt thee in blessings. 2305 Be thou zealously observant of my will in thy deeds: I will still further confirm with truth the pledge which I gave to thee as earnest of comfort, when thy spirit grieved. Thou shalt hallow thy household: set a true 2310 sign of victory on each one of the male sex, if thou wilt have in me a Master or dear Friend of thy race. I shall [always] be keeper and sustainer of this people, if thou 2315 dost obey me in thy innermost thoughts and art willing to fulfil my commands. In his infancy shall every individual of the male sex in this race, about seven nights after he comes into the world, be marked for me with 2320 the sign of victory, or from the face of the earth be driven far through my hostility, thrust out from his possessions. Do as I bid: I will be true to you all, if ye bear that sign with true faith. Thou shalt possess 2325 a son, a child by thy wife, whom men shall all call Isaac. Nor needst thou be ashamed of this son: but I will give to this man-child my divine gifts, by the might of the spirit, abundance of friends, with prosperity. He shall 2330 receive my grace and blessing, love and favor. From this

prince shall come broad nations, shall arise many famous warriors, keepers of kingdoms, world-kings widely 2335 renowned.”



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XXVIII.

Then Abraham in haste laid his cheek on the earth, and with scorn turned over these words in his mind, the thoughts of his heart: at that period of time he himself 2340 did not believe that Sarra, his grey-haired bride, could bring a son into the world to him; he knew well that his wife had already numbered at least one hundred winters, by actual reckoning. So then, wise in years, he spoke 2345 thus to the Lord:

“May Ismael live according to Thy commandments, Lord, and give thee thanks with wise and steady mind and stout heart, doing Thy will day and night in word 2350 and deed!”

Then the Almighty King and Everlasting Lord answered him fairly:

“Though much worn in years, Sarra shall bring a son into the world to thee; the future shall truly proceed in 2355 accordance with these words here pronounced. I will now bless with my grace Ismael, as thou art petitioner, for thy first born, so that he may dwell many days in the kingdom of this world with spreading progeny; be thou 2360 sure of that! But Isaac thy son, the young child who has not yet come into the world, I will distinguish exceedingly with abundance of joys and every kind of riches, in his days, and certainly leave in his heart my 2365 pledge and holy faith, and be kind to him.”

Abraham did as the Eternal bade him, set the sign of peace on his son, by the Lord’s command, and bade 2370 every one of his household of the male sex bear that high sign,—wise in heart, and mindful of the pledge which God had given him as assurance of good faith,— and then himself received the exalted sign. The Lord 2375 and Just King continually advanced his glory in the kingdom of this world, with blessings: He wrought this for him as soon as he might first perform the will of his Master in [every] expedition....[31]

Then the woman laughed at the Lord of Mankind not 2380 at all mirthfully, but full of years she laid away this promise in her mind with much scorn: she did not believe it true that the fulfilment of this promise was to follow. But when the Ruler of Heaven heard that the 2385 wife of Abraham had given way to hopeless laughter, in her bower, then the Holy God said:

“Sarra will not believe in the truth of my word: nevertheless this decree shall be fulfilled, as I promised 2390 thee at first. I tell thee truth, at this very season a son shall be born of thy wife: when I return to this same dwelling another time, then shall my promise of increase be fulfilled: thou shalt look upon a son, thine own child, 2395 dear Abraham!”

XXIX.

Then at once, after this speech, they departed with speed, eager to be gone; from the place of the conference, the holy spirits made their way (the power^[32] of 2400 light itself was in their midst!) until they could look upon Sodom, the lofty city: they saw palaces tower up above treasures, halls above red gold. Then the righteous Ruler of the skies began to speak with Abraham, 2405 gave him no little information.



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“In this city I hear tumult, the din of sinners exceeding loud, the vain-glory of those drunk with ale; evil speech have the people, behind their walls: for the 2410 sins of the race, of the treacherous apostates, are heavy. I will now find out what the men are doing, O man of the Hebrews, [to see] whether they [actually] commit sins so grossly in their habits and thoughts as they perversely speak of crimes and vices: sulphur and black 2415 flame, sorely and grimly, hotly and vehemently, shall avenge this on the heathenish people.”

XXX.

The men with their wives were approaching their punishment, sufferings within their walls: arrogant in riches, they requited the Lord for their prosperity with 2420 insult, until the Protector of spirits, the Source of Light and Life, would tolerate their offence no longer: but to them the steadfast King sent two strong messengers of his, who arrived at eventide at the fortress of Sodoma, 2425 in their traveling. At the city-gate they found the warrior, the son of Aron, sitting by himself, so that they appeared before the eyes of the wise man as young men. Then the servant of the Lord arose before the spirits, 2430 went forward to greet the strangers civilly, thought their demeanor very proper and agreeable, and invited the men to be his guests for the night. The noble messengers of our Preserver answered him thus:

“For the courtesy which you have extended to us, 2435 accept our thanks. In this street we expect quietly to wait for the time when the Lord shall let the sun [go] forth again for the morning.”

Then humbly Loth[33] bowed at the feet of the strangers 2440 and eagerly offered them the repose and refreshments and shelter and service of his dwelling. They accepted thankfully the benevolence of the good man, and followed him forthwith inside his walls, as the Hebrew chieftain invited them. There in his hall the generous wise- 2445 souled man gave them fair hospitality, until twilight departed: then came night, after the close of day, and veiled with darkness the lake-streams, seas, and broad 2450 land, and [all] the pomp of this life. Then the men of Sodoma came, young and old, hateful to God, to demand the strangers, with a great throng so that they surrounded 2455 Loth and his guests by the multitude of their force; they bade [him] lead out of the lofty hall the holy messengers [and put] the men in their power; they said openly in words that they would have intercourse with the men shamefully, and had no regard for decency. Then 2460 Loth, who often knew what was best, quickly arose in his house, and went out at once; and the son of Aron, mindful of his cunning, spoke thus over all the mass of people:

“Here are within two spotless [maidens], my daughters: 2465 neither of these damsels knows intercourse as yet through sleeping with a man: do then as I bid you, and cease from this sin. I give them both to you, before you commit this vileness against nature,

heinous evil against 2470 the sons of men. Receive these maidens and let my guests go free, since I will defend them against you as well as I can, before God!"



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Thereupon the crowd, the shameless race, answered 2475 him through common consent:

“It seems very right and fitting that thou shouldst depart out of this neighborhood, thou who bereft of friends and with the step of an exile soughtest this people from afar, in thy need: wilt thou, if thou mayst, be our 2480 ruler here, the teacher of the people?”

Then I heard of Loth how the heathen masses gripped him with their hands, with hostile grasp: his guests aided him well and the righteous strangers drew him 2485 out of the clutches of the enemy back within the walls, and then speedily closed fast the eyesight of every one of the people of Sodoma standing around: the whole 2490 crowd of citizens forthwith became blind; nor could they, in their evil rage, break into the house after the guests, as they intended, but the messengers of God were [too] active for them; the stranger had power, irre- 2495 sistible vigor, and was very severe upon the people in [inflicting] punishment. Then the dear ministers of peace spoke fairly to Loth, in these words:

“If thou hast a son, or dear relative, or any friend among these people besides these maidens whom we see 2500 here, lead out of this city those who are dear to thee, with great haste, and save thine own life, lest thou perish with these law-breakers. For the Lord has commanded us, because of the people’s sins, to give over Sodoma and 2505 Gomorra to black flame and fire, and to slay these people, [striking] the race in their cities with deadly horrors, and so wreak His wrath [upon them]. It has nearly reached the appointed time. Set out on thy way, to save thy life: the Lord is merciful to thee....”[34] 2510

Loth then hastily answered them:

“I cannot, with these womenfolk, seek my safety so far from here in a journey on foot. You manifest to me kindness and fair friendship, you grant me grace 2515 and goodwill. I know a lofty town near here, a little fortress: leave me there, in honor and peace, so that we may seek safety above, in Sigor. If you will protect that 2520 lofty fastness from the fire, we can abide in that place unharmed, in safety, and so preserve our lives.”

Then the righteous angels answered him benevol- 2525 ently:

“Thou shalt be successful in this petition, now thou speakest about that city: withdraw immediately to that fastness. We shall keep thee in peace and safety. We must not wreak the wrath of God upon these law- 2530 breakers and destroy the sinful race, before thou hast led thy children and wife likewise into Saegor.”



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Then the kinsman of Abraham set out for the fastness: the chieftain did not spare the pace for his womenfolk, 2535 but he pushed his steps most hastily until he had brought his wife and children to the citadel of Saegor. When the sun rose, [when] the peaceful luminary of the nations went forth, then, I have heard, the Master of Glory sent 2540 sulphur out of heaven, and swart flame for the punish-ment of men, swelling fire, since they had offended the Lord for a long period in former days: thus the Ruler of spirits gave them retribution. Utmost terror seized upon 2545 the heathen race: tumult arose in the city, the outcry of the accursed race over shameful death, just beginning. The flame seized upon all that it found green, in the rich city, just as around outside no small portion of the broad 2550 earth was filled with conflagration and terror: trees and earth's harvests turned to ashes and embers, even as far as the avenging curse direly extended over the 2555 broad country of the people. The devastating fire rushing on in tumult devoured all things together, far and wide, that men had owned in the cities of Sodoma and Gomorra: all this, together with the people, God 2560 the Lord destroyed.

When Loth's wife, his bride in the city, heard the din of fire, the death of the people, then she looked back-ward [to see] this devastation. The Scriptures tell us that she immediately turned into the likeness of a pillar of salt: ever since then this statue has stood there 2565 motion less (this is a strange story), where she incurred this severe penalty because she would not obey the ministers of glory in their commands: now, stiff and erect, she will have to await her doom in that place, at 2570 the Lord's Judgment Day, when the world has com-pleted its [allotted] number of years. This is one of the miracles which the King of Glory has wrought.

XXXI.

Then Abraham went forth alone, at dawn, so that he 2575 again stood in the place where the pious leader had formerly spoken with his Lord in words. He saw the reek of death and destruction ascending widely from the earth. Riches and feasting preoccupied [the people] to such an extent that they had become bold in wicked 2580 deeds, eager for sin: they forgot the Truth and God's commandments, and who had given them prosperity and wealth in their cities; therefore the King of the Angels sent his fervid fire to punish them. Our faithful 2585 Lord then remembered Abraham mercifully, the dear man, as he often had done, and saved his kinsman, Loth, when the multitude perished. The [latter] hero, famed for his deeds, did not dare to tarry longer in the strong- 2590 hold for fear of the Lord, but Loth departed from the city with his children to seek a dwelling-place far from the place of slaughter, until they found a cave in the side of a high dune: there the pious Loth, dear to his 2595 Lord, dwelt in righteousness for a great number of days, with his two daughters....[35]



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They did thus with the drunken man: ... the elder of the two went first to her father's bed. Nor did the 2600 venerable man know when the two maidens ... were with him in the manner of a bride, fast bound [as he was] in heart, mind, and memory, drunken with wine, 2605 so that he could not escape the enterprise of the maidens. The young women became pregnant, and the devoted sisters brought men-children into the world, sons to their old father. One of these noble children was called Moab by his mother, that daughter of Loth who was the 2610 elder in years of life; the Scriptures tell us, the sacred Books, that the younger called her son Ammon. From these princes sprang numberless people, the glories of 2615 two nations: one of these nations all earth-dwellers call Moabites, a widely famed race; the other, men and sons of heroes call Ammonites.

XXXII.

Then the brother of Aron set out with his wife to take 2620 his possessions and his household to Abimelech. Abra-ham told all men that Sarra was his sister, [and] thus preserved his life by his words: he knew very well that 2625 he had few relatives and friends among that people. Then the king sent his ministers and bade them bring to him [the wife of Abraham]. [36] Thus for the second time in a foreign land, the wife of Abraham was taken 2630 from her husband to the embrace of a stranger. Then the eternal Lord assisted him, as he had often done: our Preserver came himself by night to where the king lay drunken with wine. Thereupon the Lord of Truth 2635 began to speak to the king through a dream, and threat-ened him in wrath:

"Thou hast taken Abraham's wife, his bride from the hero; for that deed death shall tear thy soul from thy breast!"

To him thus the sinner, gorged with feasting, replied 2640 in his sleep:

"What! Wilt Thou ever, High King of the Angels, through thy wrath let him be deprived of life who lives 2645 here in righteous habits, [who] in his counsel is upright in mind, and who asks mercy of Thyself? In her own words, unasked, this woman told me first that she was 2650 Abraham's sister. I have not sinned against her, nor wrought any evil at all, up to this time!"

Then again the Eternal Lord and True God spoke to him straightway through that dream:

"Give back this woman to Abraham, his wife, into 2655 his possession, if thou wishest for life any longer in this world, as protector of the nobles. He is good and wise, and may himself speak with [God] and see the King of Glory. Thou shalt die, with thy flocks and thy sub-stance, if thou deniest his wife to the warrior: if he will 2660 at once honestly and patiently prefer to me thy earnest wishes, he may obtain his request that I

yet allow thee living to enjoy pleasures and prosperity in thy days, 2665 [allow thee] in sound health [to enjoy thy] riches.”



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Then the keeper of the people broke forth from sleep, bade his councillors come to him; shaken with terror, Abimeleh quickly told the nobles the word of the Master. The men dreaded [as retribution] for this deed, blows 2670 from the hand of the Lord in accordance with the dream. The king himself bade them bring Abraham before him, in great haste. Then the ruler of the kingdom spoke:

“Man of the Ebrews! this wilt thou now tell me in 2675 words: what have I done that, since thou broughtest thy possessions into this country among us, Abraham, thou hast thus bitterly contrived a plot against me? Thou, a foreigner, wouldst deceive us in this country 2680 with evil and pollute us with sin: thou saidest in plain words that Sarra was thy sister, thy blood relation; through that woman thou wouldst have foully put upon me sin, measureless evil! We received thee honorably, 2685 and in friendship gave thee a dwelling-place among this people, land at thy pleasure: now thou makest return and thankest us [most] ungratefully for our favors!”

XXXIII.

Abraham then answered: 2690

“I did that, not for evil nor for hostility nor for any woe that I might bring upon thee. But by this stratagem, O ruler of men, I protected myself against blows of the fierce sword, far from my kinsfolk [as I was] Since the Holy One[37] first led me from the family of 2695 the prince, my father, I have sought out many peoples, strange allies, and this woman with me, destitute of friends: I always kept this peril in mind, when some foe 2700 should deprive me—a stranger—of my life, who wished to have this woman for his own. Therefore I have told warriors in plain words that Sarra was my sister, wher- 2705 ever on this earth we have had to contend against foreigners in our exile. I did the same thing in this country, great king, after I chose thy protection: nor was there any knowledge in my heart as to whether 2710 the fear of God Almighty was in this race, when I first came here; therefore I concealed from thy ministers and from thyself as well as possible the true statement that Sarra was wont to enter my bed with me as my wife.” 2715

Then Abimeleh began to enrich Abraham with worldly treasures and returned his wife to him: he gave him to boot, when he received his wife, live stock and bright silver and serving-folk. The protector of the nobles 2720 spoke further to Abraham, in these words:

“Dwell with us and choose thee a dwelling-place in this land, a noble site where it is most to thy liking: I must have thee; be a faithful friend to us; we will give 2725 thee riches.”

Then quickly the dispenser of treasure spoke further to Sarra, in other words:



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“Nor need Abraham, thy lord and master, set it in reproach against thee that thou hast trodden the ways of my dwelling, O woman goddess-fair: for I have richly 2730 repaired thine offence with him, with white silver. Do not trouble yourselves to seek riches and strange friends away from this land, but dwell here.”

Abraham did as his king bade him, and at the ruler’s 2735 behest accepted friendship, love, and peace. He was dear to God: therefore he enjoyed tranquility happily and proceeded under the shadow of his Creator, covered 2740 by His protecting wings, while he lived. But God was still angry at Abimeleh for the sin which he had committed against Sarra and Abraham, when he sepa-rated these two loving ones, the wife and the husband. 2745 He received a severe penalty for this deed: for neither free nor slave women could reward[38] the men their masters with children, for the Lord prevented it, until the holy Abraham began to pray Eternal God for grace 2750 in behalf of his king. The Protector of the Angels granted him his prayer, and restored to the king the fertility of the free and the enslaved, men and women; again the Ruler of the skies allowed the number of their off- 2755 spring to increase, their prosperity and possessions: the Almighty Keeper of Mankind became mild in heart towards Abimeleh, as Abraham entreated Him.

Then the Almighty Lord came to Sarra, as He Himself 2760 promised: Our Master, the Ruler of Life, had fulfilled His promise to the dear man and woman. A son was begotten of Abraham upon his wife, whom the Prince of the Angels named Isaac even before the mother was great 2765 with child by the chieftain. Abraham with his own hand set the sign upon him, as the Lord glorious in splendor bade him, about a week from the time when his mother 2770 brought him into the world to mankind.

XXXIV.

The boy grew and thrive, inasmuch as noble [traits] were native to him from his ancestors. Abraham had [numbered] 100 years when, to his joy, his wife bore him a son: he had waited for this for a long time, since the 2775 Lord first through His own word foretold this day of happiness. Now the matter so happened that his wife once saw Ismael playing before Abraham where they were both seated at a banquet, holy in heart, and all 2780 their household retainers were drinking and singing. Then the noble woman spoke, as wife to husband:

“Forgive me, my dear lord, keeper of the ring! But bid Agar depart elsewhere, and take Ismael with her. 2785 We should no longer be together, for my pleasure, if I might have my way. Never shall Ismael share the heritage with Isaac, my own son, after thee, when thou yieldest up thy spirit from the body.” 2790



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Then was Abraham heavy at heart, because he must drive away his own son into exile; then speedily the True God came to his aid, for He knew that the heart of the man was in dire straits. The King of the Angels, 2795 the Eternal Lord, spoke to Abraham:

“Let the sorrow and heart-felt grief slip from thy breast, and obey the woman, thy wife. Bid both Agar and Ismael to go away, [send] the boy from thy home. 2800 I will make his race far-spreading and powerful in the number of its sons, prosperous in blessings, as I promised thee by my word.”

Then the man obeyed his Master and drove from his home the sad-minded pair, [drove] from his patrimony 2805 the woman and his own son....[39]

“Clear it is and manifest that the True God, the King of Glory, is on thy side, since he gives thee the victory, with wise power, and strengthens thy heart[40] with 2810 divine gifts. Therefore thou hast succeeded hitherto in whatsoever thou hast begun to perform against friend or foe, in word or deed. The Lord our Master thrusteth forward thy desires with His own hands: that is widely known among men. I pray thee now, 2815 chief of the Ebrews, by my words, to give me a faithful assurance of thy pledge that thou wilt be a true friend to me, in return for the good things which I have given 2820 for thy glory, since thou camest solitary from afar into this country with the tread of an exile. Requite me now with thy favor, so that I may not be sparing of land and pleasure to thee. Be propitious now to this people 2825 and city of mine, if Our Almighty Lord who holdeth the fates will grant that thou mayst further distribute riches and pleasing treasures, and set up thy landmarks, among 2830 the warriors in this country.”

Then Abraham gave pledges to Abimeleh that he would [do] thus.

XXXV.

After this the holy son of Thare, chief of the Ebrews, was a dweller in the Filistine nation for a long time, 2835 alone amid strangers. The Lord of the Angels showed him a dwelling-place which the men dwelling in the city called the land of Bersaba. There the pious man built a high hall, constructed a place of shelter and planted 2840 a grove, erected an altar and on the sacrificial stone made an offering, an oblation, at once, to his Master who had given him a prosperous life under the sky.

Then the powerful King began to try this hero, 2845 tested stringently what the noble one's fortitude was, and spoke to him in stern words with his voice:

“Go forth now speedily, Abraham, hasten thy steps, 2850 and take with thee thine own child. Thou shalt thyself offer up Isaac to me, thy son as a sacrifice. After thou ascendest on foot the steep dune, the bordering circle of that high land which I shall show thee from here, there 2855 thou shalt prepare a funeral pyre, the death-pile of thy



son, and then thyself sacrifice thy son with the edge of the sword and then burn his dear body with black flame, and thus make offering to me.”



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He did not decline the expedition, but straightway began to hasten the procedure: the word of the King 2860 of Angels was sacred to him, and his Master was beloved. Then the pious Abraham forsook his nightly repose, with no resistance at all to the command of the Saviour, but the holy man girded himself with his grey sword 2865 and declared that the fear of the Keeper of Spirits dwelt in his breast. Worn with age, the dispenser of gold began to harness his asses, and bade two young men go with him: his own son was the third and he himself the fourth. Without delay he then set out to lead Isaac 2870 from his own home, the ungrown child, as the Lord bade him; hastened exceedingly and hurried forth on the way, as the Lord showed him the paths over the wastes, until the glorious beginning of the third day 2875 arose across deep water. There the worthy man saw a high dune rise, as the King of Glory had foretold to him. So Abraham spoke to his servants:

“My men! Remain ye here in this place. We shall 2880 return, after we have offered to the King of Spirits what was entrusted to us both.”

The noble man then departed with his own son toward 2885 the designated spot which the Lord showed him, striding through the forest; the son bore the wood, the father fire and sword. Then the man young in years began to ask Abraham about the affair, in these words:

“We have here fire and sword, my lord: where is the 2890 noble victim that you expect to bring as a burnt-offering to God?”

Abraham replied (he had once for all decided that he would do as the Lord directed him):

“That the True King, Guardian of mankind, will 2895 himself provide, as it seemeth to him meet.”

Then with unfaltering purpose he ascended the steep dune, with his son, as the Eternal had bidden him, until he stood on the crest of the high land, on the [spot][41] which the mighty, faithful Lord had shown him in his 2900 words. Forthwith he began to build the funeral-pyre and kindle the fire, and he bound his son hand and foot, and then laid young Isaac on the pile, and then straight-way grasped the sword by the hilt: he was resolved to 2905 kill his son with his own hands and allay the flames with his child's blood.

At that moment a minister of God, one of the angels, called Abraham from above, with a loud voice. Motion-less he answered the angel and awaited the herald's 2910 speech. To him then forthwith God's glorious spirit-messenger spoke from above, out of heaven, in these words:



“Beloved Abraham! Do not slay thine own son, but take the boy alive from the pile, thy child. The God 2915 of Glory has spared him. Prince of the Ebrews, through the holy hand of the King of Heaven thou shalt thyself receive recompense and true rewards of victory, ample gifts: the Keeper of Spirits will enrich thee with blessings, 2920 because his peace and favor were dearer to thee than thine own child.”



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The pyre stood there blazing. The Lord of mankind had made joyful the breast of Abraham, kinsman of Loth, when he gave him back his son, Isaac, alive. Then 2925 the holy hero looked about over his shoulder, and there not far from him the brother of Aron beheld a ram standing alone, caught fast in the thorn-bushes. Abra-ham took this and laid it on the pyre with great zeal, 2930 in place of his own son, brandished the sword, and dec-orated the burnt-offering, the smoking altar, with the blood of the ram, offered that oblation to God, [and fin-ally] gave thanks for these blessings and for all those[42] mercies which, late and early, the Lord had bestowed 3935 upon him....[43]

NOTES

[Footnote 1: Thorpe's translation of the *Genesis*, published with his edition, in 1828, was not accessible to the present writer and presumably will not be accessible to the general public, so that on the mere score of availability it seems high time for the appearance of another translation; moreover, in the last eighty-five years critical scholarship has produced a greatly improved text of the poem.]

[Footnote 2: Aside from necessary omissions made for *Genesis B*, the Sections are numbered consecutively in this translation (regardless of vagaries in the original MS. numbering), on the assumption that each illuminated capital in the MS. was intended to indicate the beginning of a new Section. After the excision of *Genesis B*, the numbering has been resumed with X instead of XV, because the XIII at line 440 in the MS. must really represent VIII.—Cf. Note 8, page 59, inf. (page 199, inf.)]

[Footnote 3: ll. 39b-41a. *Wraecna*, gen. pl. with *bidan*, = *outcasts*; I take *weardas* as in apposition with it (the acc. being either a scribal error or an anacoluthon), and then translate *wraecna* as an adjective for the sake of idiomatic fluency. For *gasta weardas* as an epithet for angels, though then unfallen, cf. line 12a, sup.—The passage has given scholars much trouble and is unsatisfactory, at best.]

[Footnote 4: line 63b. I take *aeethele* as a form of *aeethelu* = *nobilitas, principatus, natales, origo, genus, etc.* Grein's *Sprachschatz*, 1.52.]

[Footnote 5: line 168a. Three pages seem to be missing in the MS. Doubtless the remaining events of the third day, with those of the fourth, fifth, and perhaps first part of the sixth, days, including the creation of man, (i.e., apparently the contents of Gen. 1.11-2.17, incl.) were retold in these pages.]

[Footnote 6: line 186b. This line is apparently imperfect, metrically, for the second hemistich seems to be wanting. As the sense is complete, without emendation, I have not followed the various scholars who would insert after "Adam's bride" some such clause as, "Whom God named Eve."]



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[Footnote 7: ll. 221-224a. The text here is corrupt and scholars differ widely in their conjectural emendations and interpretations. Since none of their versions is satisfactory or convincing, I venture upon an independent reading. *Hebeleac*, of course, is the Scriptural Havilah (Gen. 2.11); *Fison* is obviously Pison, and *Geon*, 230b inf., is Gihon.]

[Footnote 8: ll. 226, 227a. I construe *the best* with *gold and gems*, rather than with *sons of men*, because of Gen. 2.12.]

[Footnote 9: ll. 235-851. After line 234 there is a break in the MS. Sievers has shown that the following 617 lines, called *Genesis B*, were written and interpolated later, by a different hand, and have Old Saxon affiliations. *Genesis B* describes the Fall of Man and also gives a new version of the revolt and overthrow of Satan. *Genesis A* begins again, at line 852, with the conversation between Adam and Eve and Jehovah (Gen. 3.8 ff.)]

[Footnote 10: line 872. I follow the divisions of the MS. This line begins with the tenth large decorative initial, the others having occurred at ll. 1, 82, 135, 246, 389, 442, 547, 684, and 821. Where the editors so widely disagree as to the proper subdivisions of the poem, it seems safer to follow the original initializing (but not the marginal numbering of the original MS.: this skips from VII to XIII at line 440—doubtless accidentally substituting X for V—and is otherwise irregular). Cf. footnote, page vi, sup.—For lines 869-70, cf. *Jour. Eng. Germ. Phil.*, 12.257.]

[Footnote 11: line 1022. A hemistich seems to be missing here, metrically.]

[Footnote 12: line 1125. A hemistich seems to be missing here, metrically.]

[Footnote 13: line 1128. I here adopt Grein's emendation, reading *leod* for *leof*.]

[Footnote 14: line 1137. Cf. Gen. 4.26, with cross-references, alternative translation, etc.]

[Footnote 15: line 1150. I follow Grein in supplying *wintra* to complete a metrically imperfect line.]

[Footnote 16: line 1199. A hemistich seems to be missing here, metrically; and surely the sense requires the interpolation of several lines, to record the birth of Methuselah in Enoch's 65th year. Cf. Gen. 5.21.]

[Footnote 17: line 1211. We may restore the last word of this line, *fan* in the MS., either as tautological *freat*, with Dietrich, or as tautological *feran*, with Grein.]

[Footnote 18: line 1405. I follow Dietrich in reading *edniowe* = *self-renewing*, for the meaningless *edmonne* in the MS.]



[Footnote 19: line 1492. This difficult passage may be clarified by reading *ethryethe* = *strength, copious power*, in place of the meaningless *ethridda* = *third*, in the MS., and at the same time making *brymme* the object of *haefde* (reading *brymmas*, if necessary).]



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[Footnote 20: line 1549. At least one line is missing, in the MS. here. I have healed the breach by altering the case of *waerfaest metod*, in preference to supplying conjectural material.]

[Footnote 21: line 1628a. The difficulty here may be obviated, with slight emendation, by letting *Faederne* modify *yrfestole*, and changing *breether*, as a genitive plural, to *broethra*.]

[Footnote 22: ll. 1852b-1853. I follow Dietrich, who seems to me to make the best of this bad business.]

[Footnote 23: line 1862b. *Haegstealdra wyn* refers to Pharaoh, of course.]

[Footnote 24: line 1929a. A hemistich is missing here, in the MS., and a verb must be supplied; I adopt Grein's suggestion, *laedde*.]

[Footnote 25: line 1956b. The alliteration is defective, unless a word be supplied; but the sense may be preserved, without emendation, by construing *aefter* with *sped*.]

[Footnote 26: line 2047a. Metrically, a hemistich seems to be missing.]

[Footnote 27: line 2055a. Metrically, a word or two seem to be missing.]

[Footnote 28: line 2148b. Metrically, a hemistich seems to be missing.]

[Footnote 29: line 2234b. *Larum* here seems to be tautological, perhaps a scribal error. It might be taken with *bryde*, in an absolute construction: *after the example, or in the manner, of a bride*. The reading *lastum* is supported by line 2715a.]

[Footnote 30: line 2275b. I take *witodes* here as equivalent to *wyrdes*: cf. Sievers' "OE. Grammar," ed. A.S. Cook, 1903, 269, N. 5.]

[Footnote 31: line 2379. Grein remarks that a page is missing here from the MS.]

[Footnote 32: line 2400b. I read here *maegn* for *maeg*;—cf. line 2494b. Or, retaining *maeg*, the line might be translated: "The Father of Light Himself was" etc. Cf. Gen. 18.1, 16.]

[Footnote 33: line 2439b. Defective metre and sense, owing to the loss of a hemistich, but the sense is complete. Grein's suggestion, *feoll on foldan*, adds nothing to the following *hnah*.]

[Footnote 34: line 2510. A passage is missing here in the MS. Cf. 2568b-2569a; and the XXXVII at 2574, after the XXXV at 2417.]



[Footnote 35: lines 2597, 2598, 2601b-2602a. There are several lacunae here, in the MS.]

[Footnote 36: line 2628b. Some words are evidently missing here. In the brackets I give the emendation supported by most scholars.]

[Footnote 37: line 2695b. I follow most of the editors in taking *hyrde* as *family* and *freat* as an appositive with *faeder*.]

[Footnote 38: line 2747b. Whatever the precise form of emendation to be adopted, this is certainly the sense of the word and passage.]

[Footnote 39: line 2805. A passage is missing here, in the MS.]

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[Footnote 40: line 2810b. A hemistich is missing here, metrically.]

[Footnote 41: line 2899a. This word (*stowe*) is Dietrich's obviously correct emendation.]

[Footnote 42: line 2934a. Grein's emendation, *saeletha* = *prosperity*, helps the metre but not the sense. I do not adopt it.]

[Footnote 43: line 2935. In the MS., *Genesis* ends here and *Exodus* follows at once; as 28 Chapters of the Biblical Genesis are passed over, it seems probable that several pages in the MS. of the poem have been lost or were not transcribed.]