

COMPLETE WORKS OF BL. CHAVARA

VOLUME II

1. COMPUNCTION OF THE SOUL (ATHMANUTHADAM)
2. DIRGE (DANA)
3. ANASTHASIA'S MARTYRDOM



Published by

THE COMMITTEE FOR THE CAUSE OF
BL. CHAVARA, MANNANAM

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COMPLETE WORKS OF BL. CHAVARA, VOL. II

Translated by

Rev. Sr. Mary Leo cmc et Al.

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INTRODUCTION

Feb 8, 1986 is an ever memorable day in the history of the Indian Church. Pope John Paul II beatified Fr. Kuriakose Elias Chavara and Sr. Alphonsa—the First Fruits of the Syro-Malabar Church.

The Syro-Malabar Church has always felt proud in her being apostolic in origin. It considers St. Thomas as its Founding Father. It was the strong and vibrant faith in Christ that prompted St. Thomas to go over to India and other far away countries. His sons and daughters have always endeavoured to draw upon his apostolic experience, spirituality and dynamic faith. In Bl. Kuriakose Elias Chavara, we have a heroic follower of St. Thomas.

The holy Founders of the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMI) had imbibed a spirituality that was deeply biblical and liturgical. Bl. Chavara considered the Carmelite way of life as a dynamic synthesis of Eastern religious life with its emphasis on scripture, prayer, silence, asceticism, together with apostolic orientation. Contemplation was for him God experience; its sharing, apostolate. His life was the realization of both these.

There are two important documents of the Holy See about Bl. Chavara. The first one was published on 7th April, 1984. It is the official pronouncement of the Church on his holiness. The second one is the homily of the Holy Father during the Beatification at Kottayam on 8th February 1986. These documents shed light on the spirituality of Bl. Chavara:

1. No words of Our Lord are found more reflective of Bl. Chavara's holiness than the following: "If anyone loves me he will keep my word. My Father will love him, we shall come to him and make our home with him" (Jn. 14:24). In his spiritual diary Bl. Chavara points out how enamoured he was about the divine indwelling. Even ordinary folk would look upon him as a man of God or as one full of divine graciousness.

2. Because of his clear faith vision, he could see the ever present and ever active Creator, guiding everything smoothly and harmoniously to their proper destiny.
3. Imbued with a dynamic faith, he wanted very much to be closely linked with God through prayer and contemplation of the divine mysteries. For him, prayer is conversation with God, as one does with an intimate friend. He considers it a great privilege that God graciously allows human beings to talk with Him.
4. It was again his ardent faith that moved him to love the Mother Church. He was also exceptionally loyal to the Holy Father.
5. More particularly the Church in Kerala was the Mother he loved and served. Hence his constant care to work for the growth and development of the Church.
6. Bl. Chavara's spirituality found expression in areas like the following: preaching the Word of God, renewal programmes for priests, press apostolate, Catechumates, home for the destitute, strengthening Liturgical life, preventing schism, fostering loyalty to the Church etc.

Blessed Chavara had also to his credit some writings, such as chronicles, spiritual notes, poems and correspondence.

Compunction of the Soul (Athmanuthapam) is based on "The Mystical City of God, Divine History of the Mother of God" by Maria de Agreda (1665). The Spanish original purports to be the account of special revelations made by the Bl. Mother. What interests us most are the autobiographical traits contained in the book, especially in the first two sections; and the conclusion is a heart felt prayer for protection on the part of the Bl. Mother in the last moments.

May God bless all those who have contributed to the publication of this book in the English language.

P G House

Ernakulam

May 11, 1989

Fr. Vijay Anand Nedumpuram C M I

Prior General

LIFE SKETCH OF BL. CHAVARA

Bl. Chavara was born at Kainakari, Kerala, India on Feb. 10, 1805, and was baptized in the Parish Church at Chennamkary. He was given the name Kuriakose. His mother took him to the Shrine of Our Lady at Vechoor, and offered him to her special patronage. Both mother and son used to renew this every year. Mother introduced him to the mysteries of faith and to a life of simple prayer. She rejoiced at his desire to become a priest.

In 1818 Kuriakose joined the Seminary at Pallippuram under Fr. Thomas Palackal as Rector. Later he was sent to Verapoly to study Latin. He was ordained at Arthungal on Nov. 29, 1829. He offered his first Holy Mass for the realization of a religious house at Mannanam.

Fr. Kuriakose was associated with Fr. Palackal in the running of the Seminary. Fr. Thomas Palackal, Fr. Thomas Porukara and Fr. Kuriakose made many trips in search of a convenient place for the monastery. On May 11, 1831, the foundation stone was laid at Mannanam. Fr. Palackal and Fr. Porukara went to their eternal reward in 1841 and 1846 respectively. Subsequently Fr. Kuriakose had to take lead. A good number of priests and young men joined the community at Mannanam.

On Dec. 8, 1855 Fr. Kuriakose made his religious profession before the Bishop's delegate at Mannanam. He then accepted the vows of 10 other priests.

On June 8, 1861, Fr. Kuriakose was made the Vicar General. He successfully fought against the Roccas Schism, and restored the unity of the Church.

The first indigenous religious Congregation for women was started at Koonammavu.

Feb. 18, 1868, Fr. Kuriakose wrote his famous letter to parishners at Kainakary. In 1870, he wrote his last testament to the Congregation, entrusted it to a Scholastic to be given to Fr. Leopold after his death.

On 3rd Jan. 1871 Fr. Kuriakose went to his eternal reward. On 8th Feb. 1986, Pope John Paul II beatified him and placed him for public Veneration, at Kottayam, Kerala, India.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am immensely happy to present to the public the English Version: "COMPLETE WORKS OF BL. CHAVARA VOL. II", translated from the Malayalam edition published in 1981. *Athmanuthapam* (Compunction of the Soul) was translated by Rev. Sr. Leo cmc, *Maranaveettil Paduvanulla Pana* (Dirge) by Rev. Sr. Sheila cmc, and *Anastasia's Martyrdom* by Rev. Sr. Sergius cmc. Rev. Sr. Leo had also given finishing touches to the whole book.

One can imagine how difficult it is to translate the old Malayalam, especially poems. I am happy to note, with satisfaction, that Rev. Sr. Leo and others have done a commendable job; they have brought out a beautiful English version.

Ernakulam,
May 11, 1989

Fr. George H. Ambooken CMI
General Secretary for Pastoral Ministry

COMPUNCTION OF THE SOUL

(ATHMANUTHAPAM)

Translated by

Rev. Sr. Mary Leo cmc

FOREWORD

Nowhere in the manuscript of this important epic of Bl. Chavara, the ATHMANUTHAPAM, is found *the name of the poet*, in his own hand-writing. But in the 'Chronicles' of the time there are several references to this poem. Rev. Fr. Zacharia Ephrem Kalathil, Rev. Fr. Mathai Mariam Palakunnel, Rev. Fr. Varkey Parappuram and others have incidentally referred to this work. Besides Fr. Leopold who happened to be his Spiritual Director, along with a short Biography of Fr. Chavara had published some parts of the poem, *Athmanuthapam* as early [as 1871, the year of the poet's death. Fr. Leopold has given the following title to the Biography of Fr. Chavara as "A brief life-history of the Saintly Soul who has composed these devotional verses".

The manuscript that has come to us is in twelve chapters of 143 pages (19 × 12 cms). The corrections seen here and there in the M. S. are in the poet's own hand-writing. It is evident that the poet got the verses copied down by some one and while reading through it he made his own corrections.

The events that took place in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ and His mother form *the main theme of the poem*. He narrates them in a meditative vein and often he gets lost in reflections on his own life, his sins and imperfections that caused that Son of God to bear all the tribulations and painful passion and finally an ignominious death on the cross, vividly described in the Gospels. From these personal references we obtain a satisfactory knowledge of his early life.

He seems to be indebted to several books besides the Old and New Testament of the Holy Bible for composing this long poem cast in the epic mould. The Spanish book by Maria Agrada entitled, 'The City of God' is obviously the source of the description of the happenings in the life of our Lady.

As to *the date of Composition* of the poem we have a reliable piece of evidence in the editorial note written by Fr. Leopold Bocoaro, an Italian Missionary, a contemporary and Co-worker of his. He writes that the book was composed in the evening of his life, probably in the year '1869-70'. He was bed-ridden in September in 1870.

The work is undoubtedly a treasure - house of pious reflections both inspiring and informative. Written at a time when Malayalam was still in its infancy there are numerous out-moded usages which may pose as serious impediments to the modern reader's easy understanding of the poem. At times he seems to be led by the mere music of sounds. 'Alliteration' exercises a charm on the poet and he is unwittingly led to intricate constructions. One feels that his weakness on this count is similar to Shakespeare's weakness for 'puns' which as Dr. Johnson thought, was sometimes the bane of his otherwise excellent poetry. The verses abound in metaphors and similes, even longtailed ones. One cannot but admire the vast erudition of the gifted poet.

As a piece of spiritual treatise the poem stands supreme. Strangely enough, it is not any grievous sin but simple faults, imperfections that send him to spasms of compunction. He is even conscious of the ugliness of sin that pains the heart of his Heavenly Father - "Father, my loving Father, I regret my offences", is the long dream sigh that sweeps through the whole poem. Hence I am even tempted to suggest for the title, "MY FATHER, MY LOVING FATHER".

I am painfully aware of my incapacity to do justice to the work; but my only consolation is that I have made a sincere effort spending long hours of prayer and thought trying to get at the heart of his meaning. If I have succeeded in a small measure, I attribute it to the Holy Spirit and to Bl. Chavara.

Sr. Mary Leo c m c

I

(The poet expresses his deep gratitude to the Almighty for granting him the grace of being born a human being in this world and in an autobiographical vein recollects the incidents of his childhood in succession and with a contrite heart asks forgiveness of God for withholding his homage to God so long)

God almighty, who WAS in the beginning
You created me, a son of Adam
O God, wherefore this grace, reveal to me
O Lord eternal, your infinite mercy

4

Were I but a common brute of the earth
What right would have I, to ask you why
Who on earth and heaven would even dare
To question you of your mighty deeds?

8

Omnipotent your will, that me a sinner
You moulded truly great in your likeness
O God, despite my limitless unworthiness
You did show in it, your mercy boundless

12

Perfect One, it was your Holy Will
Impeccable, that let me be born on earth
A human being, me, impoverished you raised
To the highest skies, Your Abode.

16

A worm creeping on the face of the earth
You created me from dust of dust
Granted me a guardian spirit so pure
That I may dwell on earth in grace & ease.

20

From the first moment of my human birth
 To shield me from dangers dire, you did grant
 To be beside me each passing moment
 To guide and guard me, an infant, to survive ! 24
 Or What in sooth could a frail mother do
 To preserve her child from every ill on earth ?
 While in sleep her infant quiet reposes
 A sleepless angel, vigilant, her darling gurads. 28
 God of unbounded kindness, Holy Lord,
 O Sea of Mercy, of mighty depth unfathomed
 You did look on me with tender care
 And tended me with unstinted love. 32
 O Fount of Mercy, in your crystal streams of grace
 Was my soul once cleansed and made spotless fair
 Beauteous, bright, bedecked in gems of virtue
 Through my Baptism, a boon, a day of days ! 36
 What shall I render you, my Lord, my God,
 For all your wondrous gifts of mercy and love
 For cleansing my soul, so holy, spotless and fair
 At the very start of my journey of life ? 40
 Through Baptism's grace, you made me your
 cherished son,
 And showed me Heaven's joys to tend me grow
 Gave me parents grounded in faith secure
 And faith in me engraved full firm, besides 44
 A mother to feed me while yet a feeble babe
 To shield me from pain and sorrow and tend me soft.
 To pour that tender love you filled her with,
 That nectar, unto my tiny blissful heart. 48
 Mixed in her sweet milk, she regaled me
 With thoughts of heaven, and words of grace so pure !
 And when reason grew strong, my little mind
 Patiently, informed, to lisp holy names. 52
 Huddled close to her feet, I learnt aright
 Gently, of matters sublime, of my Faith
 As at midnight she rose and knelt at prayer
 Warding off sleep and petty dullness to the air 56

Long hours, on her knee in prayer she stayed
 Leaning on her then I would seat myself
 While devoutly a string of pious words
 To Mother of God and the Christ, King of Kings. 60
 In thanks and praise, heart strung with solid Faith :-
 "Light Eternal, Jesus Christ, save us all
 Hail, earth-born flower, Lord Immortal!"
 Thus she'd pray in her melodious voice 64
 And I, list'ning to the lullaby sweet
 Near my gentle mother quietly reposed.
 And, when my infant tongue 'gan to lisp,
 Up to the sky, her finger pointing oft 68
 The holy names of Jesus, Mary and Joseph
 She, my noble Mother made me repeat
 Of God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit
 The Son Incarnate in Mary's purest womb, 72
 (A myst'ry to human minds inconceivable)
 Took birth as man, this petty earth to bless !
 Bore pain and agony untold, in Pilate's days
 And died and thence rose from dismal death 76
 This tragic tale, she taught me piece by piece ;
 But that fiery stare I dreaded so to see
 As signs of childish distraction dimmed my eyes
 And list'ning grew dull ! I feared that loveless gaze ! 80
 Never once did she use the rod to chastise
 Nor with a harsh touch did she smite me
 Her eyes, they wielded the mighty power to hit me
 Or needs be, to fondle me, in approval. 84
 While being nurtured in body and mind
 Was I beloved too of God, my Father,
 Fast sped five years of my life;
 And I was made to learn of a pagan guru. 88
 He sat by my side and with my finger bade me
 Write on grains of rice spread afloor
 Made me repeat every object by name
 And I with humble accord obeyed him. 92

All my colleagues save a few of them
 Held not the Christian faith and I
 Marking their deeds and my Master's lofty words
 Fell to observing rituals like ablution in tanks 96
 And what not? a miserable fool! How oft have I
 Indulged in deeds of pagan blindness!

Alas, my Lord! God of love and goodness,
 Joy and peace, since from me have fled 100
 My heart sore-pressed with sorrow and pain; I felt
 I was no more the privileged child of God!

Mingling free with those my dizzy friends
 Stilled became my gratitude to God; 104
 Steeped in flaws; amid such Godless chums
 Who could reap but dust, the dingiest clod?

Temptations abounded where'er I cast my looks
 The scenes around me beckoned me to sin 108
 Indecent pranks, immodest words and deeds
 Nude forms athwart the stage* of life
 Woe to me I beheld but filth around!
 Rites and rituals fit for powers of Hell 112

Ten long years passed riotously by
 And on that day of days, He called me back
 Sowed in me a sacred seed of wisdom
 †A firm resolve, else what my fate had been! 116
 No priest ordained among kinsfolk until then
 Welcome tidings it came to all and sundry.

My Mother's heart leaped with exultation
 That God did ear-mark me to be His possession 120
 Tear-dimmed eyes gleamed as sun amid clouds
 Could a heart maternal brave such parting?

Emotions twain wrung her heart in sooth
 That her son, one of two, God's own would be. 124

* Stage—Platform in the Shakespearean sense, for enacting plays.

† 'A firm resolve'—to turn away from his so called bad ways.

Pain of parting a wrench foreseeing
 She wisely prepared, to the Holy Will to bow
 She wooed detachment, her heart firm fixed on God
 Praising Him for the Infinite Mercy He showed. 128

"Though a sinner, my unworthiness He redeemed
 O wonder of wonders!", she cried "Grace Supreme"
 Your mercies will I sing for ever and ever!"
 And forthwith to the seminary her son she sent. 132
 The church of St. Joseph oped its portals wide
 And peace superb, filled her noble heart!

With open arms the leader priest received him,
 The bright-eyed boy, and 'gan tending him 136
 Nourishing his soul, he was tutored in paths
 Of virtue; to assist at the Holy Mass
 Gently taught to tread the ways of holiness;
 To shun all evils that'd retard his onward march. 140

11

(This section treats of the extra-ordinary good nature and piety, of his dear Mother; how in his early childhood he was laid at the feet of Mary and dedicated to her; of how he was in those days preserved from an epidemic which threatened his life and also his sincere compunction at not having fought sufficiently against his temptations through mortification of his senses, in those early days)

The Lord of mercy in His great compassion
To His blessed mother did enslave me
And while on nectar mother on earth fed me
Mary at her feet, houtly kept me safe. 4

"Accept him as your humble slave
To your maternal love, I entrust him
My humble womb's worthless "tender fruit" 8

So saying, me her infant child
At Mary's feet, she humbly laid
An off'ring of holy waters and fragrant flowers 12

Handing me o'er to my mother, the august priest
Declared in deliberate tone thus to her,
"Tend him with care; know you that he's no more yours
But Our Lady's - solemn your sacred bond!" 16

My mother I've heard, oft repeat the tale
To me, a tiny tot, when reason dawned.
On the day of grace, September eighth
Holding her hand, to Mary's altar I'd go 20

Pay my ransom, never once failed unto death;
She performed the pious deed in devotion true
And warned me oft, "She your mistress, you her serf
Beware my son, preserve this in your mind!" 24

But alas! when I grew up, my fervour dimmed,
My infant piety I gently forsook
I thought and spoke unseemly unholy words
In heedless speech like, a silly sot 28

A profligate life, wallowing in vice
Plunged in untruth, sore estranged to grace
An unrepenting lad, I failed to seek
Heaven's salvage through a contrite heart 32
A giddy headed lout, woe to me
Verily a prodigal son, in those cursed days!

Rumour ranged from every spot around
That grave epidemics laid waste the land; 36
Not a city, town or street was there
Where with wails and cries was not rent

The dark dismal hand of death was seen
Stretched forth, while around the Altar, 40
Steeped in prayer, they stood; heard aloud
Screams and cries of people young and old
Were I to die then, Oh God of Mercy
In eternal misery, I, then would have rolled 44

Full worthy to be condemned though I'd been
Through his infinite mercy was I saved
What reason, that His Hand of retribution
Fell on many, and my soul He spared 48

I saw and heard-and was fully convinced
His loving Hand did ward off the scourge
While safe my soul was preserved from seol
Souls better for than mine were destined to die 52

Like faded leaves dropped parents and off-spring I
My heart faints as the days now I recall
How saintly they, compared to sinful me
My humble soul in mute gratitude bathes me 56

Wafted aloft on the ocean of your mercy
What reason was it that your pity, unstinted
You did lavish on my ignoble soul, my Master
What reason for such a grace, except your love I 60

Yea, Your boundless love, no reason else I see
 Hail, hail, my almighty God supreme!
 Reflect, dear my heart on your deeds
 The numberless ungracious words and thoughts to boot 64
 The auspicious moment of your birth did see
 The birth of several more like you.
 Some sad infidels, devoid of grace, blighted
 They still remain as they had been 68
 To the Jewish race some belonged
 Others to creeds to doubtful perhaps
 They woefully tread the face of earth
 Holding fast to error with Mercy and pain 72
 Me, you treated with kind predilection
 Wedded to your dear chosen people
 What thanks shall I render thee my Lord,
 For this your kindness, so unlimited! 76
 Shapely limbs, undeformed you gave me
 Neither blind nor deaf you made me
 While myriads are born sans hearing and speech
 Others have ears and eyes, but pictures painted 80
 Thus are they born, and thus they live on
 Dolefully, on earth, their existence drag
 Another woe they bear, besides; each day
 Their very sustenance on their knee they beg 84
 How numerous they who penury bear!
 Such suff'ring you did me spare
 All because of your tenderness my Lord
 To serve you, hence, how much I'm bound 88
 Yet, another gift, have I to sing about!
 Numberless ones, there are, who wield their power
 Kings, Chieftains, yet others rolling in gold
 Oh, how numerous, My Goodness Infinite 92
 Had I but been one such magnate, high
 In this world, what fate had been mine!
 The middle path you granted me to tread
 Hence I live thus in peace and joy 96

While yet an embryo in my mother's womb
 Assiduous attempts the devil did make
 To blast me in the bud; your blessed Hand
 As quickly then, in mercy, you did shield! 100
 The devil watched my birth with growing ire
 Restless stretched his vigil night and day
 Fortured me that unbaptized I may die
 Smiting blow upon blow with steady resolve 104
 Then your saving gaze fell upon me
 And cleansing waters of Baptism I received
 The dawn of grace led to growth in virtue
 Sumptuous goodness swelled my soul, as 108
 In sacred waters, I was lavishly laved
 And cleansed from guilt, to divine sonship restored
 The fountain of grace, flushed forth from my soul
 On that grace-filled day, Heaven rejoiced 112
 As my name was writ on Eternity's page
 Never so blessed a day, has seen my life
 Gone are the days of innocence and of grace
 In wilful vice, I plunged with light-hearted ease 116
 Anger and pride and every ugly sin
 Filled my piteous soul, intolerable woe!
 Lovely, flawless, mayhaps dropped off Heaven
 A darling angel, ignorant of crime 120
 The parable great by His merciful lips
 So thoughtfully told in words of wisdom
 The ancestral vault, with bright sepulchres filled
 Full showy wrought in precious stones 124
 Behold one singular, painted white
 Or seeming so, through craftsman's splendid skill
 * A lily - white one of spotless marble made
 But lo! the inside when deftly split and viewed 128
 What awful stink of rotting human flesh
 A dreadful sight, obnoxious to behold

* Mathew 23/27.

Of bones impure, spread with creeping worms !
 How pleasant the outside to all who looked 132
 The same was I, my words and tongue for sooth
 You know it best, how vile they were !

Through Baptism you raised me to sublime sonship
 Ignorance drove me far from grace divine 136
 Severed me from that fountain of life
 Worse, satan's slave had I become !

With suff'ring intense caused by sin
 My eyes sank in depth of despair and pain 140
 Severed from you, my God my only good
 What joy, peace or well-being can be mine ?

You my Love, my joy and all my good fortune
 If not with you, how could I live my life 144
 My very breath, my food, my drink
 What solace have I save in you !

In the stream of wisdom, you my Sovereign
 To you I vow my allegiance at last for aye 148
 And reject wisdom's enemy and his pomp
 The Infernal being, the Prince of Darkness

In Faith firm and strong, I pledged to remain
 My forefathers, witnesses to my tryst shall be 152
 And the purity of my faith to proclaim
 That day a spotless white garment I wore*

A waxen candle, lit, I held in sacredness
 To bruit forth my virtue to the world at large. 156
 That I may not perish in ugly sin
 Blessed salt I ate and sealed my strength.

Fount of virtue, God of all creation
 Wedded to kindness Eternal, Giver of Peace 160
 You, through your Benevolence Infinite
 A Being Immortal, Infinite Great !

A son of Adam, who by original sin
 Destroyed ruthless, all that was good and fair. 164
 Finding salvation as if by anticipation
 From punishment I was saved, and so my kin

* The poet refers here to his Baptism

And, besides through your sole Mercy
 To send forth your son you made a pact. 168

Your promise to fulfil, came your son
 Assumed human form, on the earth
 True man and true God you came from above
 And on earth sojourned our Elder Brother 172

And besides, every sorrow and pain
 Of the earth you patiently bore
 Ransomed me, ave raised me to Heaven,
 For which your sweat had sufficed, O King of Kings ! 176

To augment my love, ungrateful me,
 With infinite concern, on earth you sojourned
 Full thirty years and three, my God,
 From your very Birth at Bethlehem 180

Lord of all, where else such story of pain
 A God being born in a messy manger poor !

Seated betwixt the Father and the Spirit
 The Seraphim and the nine orders of angels. 184
 In humble adoration before you bowing
 As the king of the triple world you made

Yours the earth's glory, and mighty Kings
 Pivoted on thy look ceaseless spin 188
 The global train, cities, huts and towers
 Nations entire dictated by your will.

The miscreant mankind to restore and save
 And to reinstate in grace, was your will ! 192
 Deserted your mighty throne on High and
 Came searching a lowly cattle shed
 Among cows and colts and bleating sheep
 You a Jewish lion cub was born ! 196

Crying aloud for warmth from winter's chill
 Your infant arms, helpless you held aloft
 Shiv'ring in the breeze and severe snow
 The door ajar, that should shield you warm ! 200

Poorest of the poor, a Prince of dire poverty
 In a filthy manger, wrapt in swaddling clothes

And your mother a humble Jewish maiden,
Sung by Isias, born of David's tribe.(Luke 1/22) 204

Who every better shelter denied you then,
Shining Quilts, mattress and cots to boot
Silken pillows wrought by crafts-men skilled
And flowery cushions your sacred head to rest. 208

Linen coverlets, woven in yarn, purest
Blankets gem-decked on your body soft
Are'nt these your rank most fitting my Lord,
And yet, you welcomed abject Poverty's lot. 212

Oh ye angels and princes of highest heaven
See you not your sov'reign God of gods.
In Bethlehem's cave, wrapt in suff'ring sore
Midst asses' train? Why, Oh why? 216

On a rough mattress of straw, behold,
Your master lies apace! Mark it well
Beneath his soft little pate, a stone
Hard and rough! Was ever a sight so sad? 220

Mary, Mother, Holy Queen of Virgins
Intense the pain, that alas, you did feel
While your son and creator in one
The Glory of His greatness did reveal. 224

Hence, when you behold His lowly state
Your grateful heart merged in misery deep
Dear as your soul, you priced your robe of purity
Laboured momentarily, to preserve it un-tainted. 228

Or why did you tenderly press in your lap
The lovely Infant wrapped all in white
Safe and secure, nursed it at your breast
Fondling Him, raining on Him your kisses? 232

His radiant visage, limbs and throbbing temples
One by one with soft lips you pressed
And the babe winked his azure eyes
Sending waves of cheer athwart your heart - 236

They gaze each at the other, Mother and child
With the warmest love pure, eternal
St. Joseph, your succor, in the meantime
Turns to your son with forbearing patience and love! 240

O God-man, my master, seat of mercy, Lord
Look with eyes of pity on me a sinner
Scant worth have I, your look to claim
Being a votary of your mother fair. 244

You, my sole hope, Oh Virgin Mother
Contrite, that I deemed you not such
But forget it not that my mother you are
Your mercy in me I bear, behold! 248

To oblivion I brushed you, ungrateful brute was I
Beauteous maiden, spurn me not like wise
At dawn of life, my loyalty to you I surrendered
You helped and guarded me, your very own! 252

As often as I God's ire merited,
Betwixt me and God's uplifted Hand
Mother of God, a potent shield you posed
Pleading my cause, Oh fount of Love and Mercy 256

Through my sins ignoble, your Son's anger
I set ablaze; and as retribution just
With punishment fitting threatened me
Sweetly you stepped in, your service to Him recounting, 260
Binding with love, His uplifted Hand to arrest.
And despite this forgiving, in bold claring
Whilst wafting in sins, sinking deep in them,
Your pitying hand raised me aloft, your love 264
Fanned the fire of divine vengeance cold
And again and again prayed for me a sinner.

As a heartless brute unmindful of this love
Falling deeper still splashing in sin, 268
Bitter resentment seethed in your Son;
Resolved to cast me away ne'er to recall
Your benevolence, how eager sought
To bring me back to His Sacred self, how oft! 272

He mercy forbearing, Oh Morning Star
 Your immense love for Him you proclaim
 Point to your virgin womb untainted,
 Your lovely hands and knees that tenderly bore Him 276
 And with gracious words repeat to Him
 "Look with pity on this my erring son";

"Though undeserving of your kindness, think
 Nourished by your mercy he was nurtured 280
 For the sweet sake of your mother
 And the womb that bore you long months nine
 Those sacred breasts that gave you suck
 The arms and knees that bore you Lord with love 284

"And with tender care watched your growth,
 Save your humble servant from severe lot!"
 Thus arose for me her fruitful prayer
 Hence you forgave my sins and cursed me not? 288

Time sped; This sinner grew callous again,
 Through hateful malice heaped sin upon sin!
 O gaze a moment, the spotted canopy of heaven
 The radiant fun and the pale fair moon 292
 The mighty globes and bright cluster of stars
 The green grass of the earth, its floral wealth
 Gaze at the universe entire and quietly muse
 Why they were called to be, and judge your worth! 296
 If such be your potion on the transcient earth
 How great, the treasures in store for you above?

Eyes you were given to note these goods supreme
 Ungrateful wretch, Oh what did you with these? 300
 Viewing the colours apparent, vanishing, in them
 Shameless, you placed your hope and trust entire!

Thought you not, all things that move are
 Transcient like the swift lightnings flash! 304
 Avidly I drank in all that pleased my sight
 Glued to them my mind, though they are dust.

With the eyes given to me by my Lord,
 Oh woe of woes, I insulted Him sore! 308

Alas, the earth and the objects visible on it
 Suffer inevitable change minute by minute

The fresh green grass of today, by morrow
 Shrivels, turns seer in the heat of the sun 312
 Blossoms bright of various hues and scents
 Lose their shades and fragrance in the air
 Momently they change and faded fall on the ground,
 How transcient its wealth of beauty and form! 316

Behold, the wealthy Sion, clad in silks
 Whom his servile flatterers served ignobly,
 Uniquely wise, mighty in limb and nerve
 His lands as spacious as the desert sands 320
 Mealy mouthed, spitting honied words
 Lips, ruby-red with beetle-stain
 Handsome to a fault, seeming light diffusing
 Fair sons and daughters a score around him 324
 Wealth and beauty a myriad varied sorts;
 Long immersed in luxury he runs his life.

And, one day with faltering steps, leaning
 On a feeble staff, transformed he is seen! 328
 Can this be the same Prince of wealth?
 O what chanced this strange, deterioration?
 But folly: no change has ever come o'er him
 All that he truly had, he still owns! 332

Oh sure, but has any one seen him years before
 Wreathed in smiles, his face ever shone
 Wondrous sharp his intellect! But alas
 O piteous change, to behold him a pity now! 336

The eyes you gave such sights to see and muse
 And wisely turn to you my Eternal Good,
 With countless ills I hurt you sore my Lord,
 I made them tools to insult you, withal. 340

The ears you gave me words of wisdom to hear
 Yea, with them I myself abused and my mind.
 And the feet you gave me to reach your Holy Presence
 The hands in devotion to worship you, my God! 344

All deformed, the blind, the lame and the dumb,
 Would revile me and my ugly soul !
 While to son-ship divine you raised me
 The grace I cast away, and turned a devil. 348

The spotless garment, Baptism bestowed on me
 That I a beacon light would shine for those
 In my wake, who walked, a sot that I am,
 I rudely sailed and turned all virtue to vice. 352

And Oh, the pity of it! The older I grew
 My lamp, its oil consumed held a smoking wick !
 (Who else so unfortunate as worthless me !)
 Its flame extinguished, ere I was aware ! 356

The torch, lit in my soul to light others' feet
 I put out; and brought pitch darkness around.
 This even in my days of childhood; and
 Destroyed all well-being unhappy me ! 360

Saviour mine, by virtue of the tears
 You shed at your holy birth
 Forgive me my childhood's sins
 With pain, I for pardon crave 364
 *Emmanuel, Lord praise to you !
 Singing carols, I praise you !

* Emmanuel—God with us

III

(The incidents in the life of Christ from his Birth
 to the very end are beautifully depicted in this
 Canto. The poet repeats the words "I long to
 see Jesus" as he relates His birth to each inci-
 dent of the Holy Bible beginning from the birth
 of Jesus Christ)

The Lord of mercy, the son of God
 His glorious splendour, I long to see

The fountain of mercy, God Incarnate
 Who, the ugly form of man assumed 4
 To uproot him from the slush of sin
 The Redeemer of human kind, I long to see

He concealed in his form
 The effulgence that dims the stars 8
 The nativity of God the highest
 From mercy, the virgin, I long to see

How He stayed for nine months
 In the womb of His mother I long to see 12
 Borne in her womb, to Bethlehem he came
 To obey mighty Caesar, I long to see

God becoming one with man
 "Emmanuel", I long to see 16
 His parents denied a resting place
 Though painful, I long to see

The birth of God in a manger
 From the town rejected, I long to see 20
 God's "Kenosis" to chide
 The Pride of man, I long to see

His birth without pain or stain
 In His mother I long to see 24
 The infant whom she worshipped
 without a winks' respite, I long to see

The son of God the angel placed
 In the mother's arm I long to see 28

The holy child gazing at His mother
 With darling eyes, I long to see

The lips enkindled with a smile
 The fire of love, I long to see 32
 The tiny hands embracing the mother
 With longing love, I long to see

Joy exuberant, ecstatic
 The infant felt, I long to see 36
 The mother fondly feeding her child
 With milk at her breast I long to see

The holy awe, the mother enjoyed
 While feeding him, I long to see 40
 The limitless joy, Joseph felt
 While watching them both, I long to see

Now the mother beckoned him nigh
 whom she loved as her heart 44
 And how with reverence and fear
 He came to her I long to see

How she placed her lovely babe
 In his arms, I long to see 48
 The praises he poured upon his son
 As his spouse listened, I long to see

The added comfort and love they gave
 To the babe asleep, I long to see 52
 How the shepherds thronged to them
 Hearing the news, I long to see

How the crowd, unceasingly offered
 Praise and worship, I long to see 56
 The lovely boy, the angles adored
 In humble strain, I long to see

How on the octave the priest named
 The holy Babe, Jesus, I long to see 60
 The blood he shed, the pain he bore
 At circumcision, I long to see

How the three Kings on the thirteenth day
 Paid him homage, I long to see 64

How the mother to the temple brought him
 As enforced by law, I long to see
 The holy feet, old Simeon longed to see 68
 Ere he died, I long to see

Fearless, the Lord, I long to see
 Who fled to Egypt, seeking shelter
 How those people long waited
 To receive the boon, I long to see 72

How Jesus, Anna's grand son
 Was hunger-smitten, I long to see
 And with the Pharises discussed law
 In his twelfth year, I long to see 76

The agony the parents bore
 On losing their Son, I long to see
 And joy recovered on the third day
 On finding their Son, I long to see 80

His obedience to His Parents
 For me a model, I long to see
 The priest who taught Him
 Law and rituals, I long to see 84

His Baptism at the hands of
 John the Baptist, I long to see
 His fast and severe penance
 In the lonely desert, I long to see 88

How temptations planned by Satan
 He skillfully foiled I long to see
 At the wedding Feast, how
 He changed water to wine I long to see 92

The first miracle he performed
 At his mother's request I long to see
 Call of disciples, O Lord of the Gospel
 To proclaim your 'word', I long to see 96

The Good Shepherd, seeking his flock
 That had gone astray, I long to see
 The Lord of goodness, proclaiming Himself
 As our loving friend, I long to see 100

III (Cont.)

(Recollecting the incidents that took place at the Cave of Bethlehem from time of the Birth of our Lord, in an ecstasy of devotion, the poet gives vent once again to his ardent desire to see the Holy Infant and witness the miracle of the Incarnation. These verses are probably an after thought and hence a supplement to the third Canto)

Merciful Lord, Son of almighty God,
O, that I may see!
Sea of Mercy, seat of Compassion
Who effaced the stain of Sin 4

Who the imprisoned souls redeemed
O that I may see!
O source of all treasure, your eminence debased
From misery to save me. 8

From the debasement of a pig's life,
Little Prince you lifted me.
To raise me from slavery, you descended
To the depth His will to obey 12

To redeem mankind born low, Him
O that I may see!
Sinful me, to enrich with grace
To sorrow you bent 16

How you became the Son of man
To save me, I would see!
Omni present, immovable, unaffected
To divert my evil fate 20

In a well of dirt, in a cattle shed
Your birth, I long to see!
To save unworthy me, How as a child
You cried, I long to see! 24

Regal lion, your noble grace
Our Kerala would see
On this Earth, with misery filled
The power of evil holds sway 28

Your creed, that gave us strength to live
All accepting, I long to see
God's just anger to stem, your accepting
The shepherd's role, I long to see 32

Your mother tenderly holding you
And nursing you, I would see
Your chubby cheeks the mother kissing
with joy, I long to see! 36

The art with which she made you smile
O Beauty, I long to see
Merciful God allow me unworthy
In your presence to stand 40

You seated in your mother's lap
In joy I long to see!
You came down below and became man
To give us salvation 44

In the arms of Mary, Queen Mother
My Master, I long to see
To elevate us to the Right Hand of God
You the Perfect, became man 48

An infant slumbr'ing on the Earth
Peacefully, I long to see
The Lord of the stars of the Firmament
Lying in the midst of cattle 52

An Infant asleep on the Earth
 Helpless, I would see
 Your beauteous face, blooming like a blossom
 With love intense, I gaze 56

Lord of all, behold me a slave
 You alone I would see
 You who own all riches in plenty
 Your darling arms stretching 60

The sweet smile you show your parents
 Beloved Babe, I, long to see
 O God Emmanuel, I, a Sinner
 With love, adore 64

O Lady, clad in the rays of the Sun
 Holding the moon at your feet
 Forgive the sins of sinful me
 And fold me to your feet! 68

IV

(In this canto are described the long tedious journey
 of the expecting Virgin Mother to Bethlehem, her sad
 plight on being refused admittance into any of the
 inns in the town of her own city, her helplessness
 and the subsequent sad reflections of the poet's
 contrite heart)

Mother benign, O crown of woman kind
 Through you was God's promise to man fulfilled.
 Since Eve, the First parent, the mother of all
 Was deluded by the vile serpent's vice 4

The Supreme God-head then to the Serpent spoke
 "Athwart the earth you'll crawl and eat of dust"
 Pointing to the Blessed Mother he said,
 "Betwixt her sons and you I'll enmity evoke" 8

"The son born of her, your head shall crush
 Underfoot without fail!" This curse
 Found fulfillment in you, Hence for all
 Ages to come, generations will hail you 'Blessed' 12

Though you were born as a child of Adam
 No trace of sin, the cause of every woe
 Shall ever taint you, good Lady pure
 Your sacred feet, the serpents' head did crush. 16

Woman, accursed by her deadly sin
 She will conceive and give birth in pain
 But you, untainted by like misfortune
 Will pass your days in grace and glory gain 20

From the moment of your conception holy
 Nothing shall ever befall you except in joy"
 † In those days the mandate of Emp'ror Augustus
 Bade you go on foot to Bethlehem city 24

* Genesis 3/14

† Luke 2/3; Is 7/14

At times, in obedience to your spouse Joseph
 Inspired by love you did ride an ass
 And when you reached the city through roads all rough
 Lights were put out and dark the place alas ! 28

God almighty, the fountain of all goodness
 The King of Kings, Omniscient Lord of All
 The Second Person of the Holy Trinity
 The Lord borne by the Queen of the World 32

The Blessed Mother bearing in her womb, a child
 Of nine months, on a journey tedious and sore
 Alas, my Queen, Spotless virgin mild
 This bitter pain was caused by sins of mine 36

Infinite Goodness the fountain of Compassion
 As was prophesied to our ancestors,
 Solomon, the King who ruled the Jewish Nation
 By his rare wisdom and inspiration 40

Built a temple grand and beautiful
 Hung in it curtains colourful
 And in the Holy of Holies, in the centre
 Between Seraphim, wrought in solid gold, 44

In this tabernacle he placed the Tablet
 Inscribed with the commandments divine
 So in your sacred womb immaculate
 The Adorable Deity, calmly dwells 48

Not the stately house of the Lord divine
 Clad in sacred vestments but the mother
 Bearing you in her holy womb arrived
 You so worthy of adoration entire ! 52

As when the Ark of the Covenant arrived
 *Lay prostrate the idol calf borne in the Chariot
 When slowly towards Philistinia she paced,
 The people who saw her nearing bowed their head 56

* The idol of god Dagon fell down as the Ark of the covenant
 was borne into the temple (1 . Sam 5/3)

This ark David bore with his vassals
 In a pompous progress to the Temple
 And his subjects from end to end of Israel
 From Dan to Simeon, to follow, did assemble 60

With gifts and off'rings and various sounds of music
 The king, like a common man led them on
 *On the way, a priest unanointed
 Touched the Ark, and lifeless fell to the ground 64

Even to approach the Ark and to bear it
 None but the Chief Priest was granted leave
 But Lord, your loving mother, oh the contrast
 On her bare feet, walks across thorns and dust 68

Alas, this and more listen my comrades
 To narrate further, I am choked with shame
 Holy Joseph, among the Just, the prime
 With pain the suff'ring of his spouse, he shared 72

His kinsmen, clan and friends, sev'ral were there
 They would surely wipe his fatigue, if seen
 So thought he in mind as he went,
 But, what befell when they to Beth'lem came ! 76

Chieftains there were many and so, friends !
 From no one came a hearty word of cheer
 The wealthy came in numbers, all aliens
 To obey the mandate proud of mighty Caesar 80

Yet to my Father Joseph the noble sire
 And to the sweet mother merciful
 To place their feet and rest for a while
 They gave not a spot on that day woeful ! 84

"In this our fore-fathers' land for certain
 We will secure a safe shelter to stay" —
 With this assurance they reached the place
 But alas, there was no room even to step in ! 88

* The unanointed priest Ussa on touching the ark fell down lifeless
 (2. Sam 6/7)

An impoverished tiny hut would suffice
 And that through some one's aid we may device
 When thus with assurance they did muse,
 They met one, A chief he was. 92

Several dwellings large and small he owned
 In one of them, sure he'll let us stay
 Hoping thus, the man they slowly approached
 But lo, like a perfect stranger he turned away 96

Without even a look of recognition.
 A thorn stung deep in his heart and with pain
 Joseph turned; soon in the horrizon sank the sun
 While Mary awaited with expectation 100

"No friend, guide nor light to lead us on
 By your mercy, I was made her companion
 Your mother suffers and myself the reason
 Dear, my Lord, what else might not happen 104

"Where do I find a place for her to rest,
 In holy Expectation she stands, of women the First
 Alas, were she to remain thus on the street,
 That would be of calamities, the greatest 108

"Lord your mother so full of mercy
 Why did you entrust her to me, a worm
 As the shining moon hid by rain clouds
 You son now reposes calmly in her womb 112

"If in this way I stand reflecting at ease
 And if, today, my God, He is to be born!
 But why this conflict, let's go hence at once
 I know not what best is to be done! 116

"My boast that this is my city, my clan, my own
 Oh, how futile, blasted are my hopes
 Yet, my Lord remember your Mother she is
 Her heart so fair, pure immaculately so! 120

"Though the foremost of all, her blessed feet
 To relax and rest there's no space here
 Was n't it you, Lord who bade us be
 Kind and hospitable to the weary way farer? 124

"Even this simple virtue none e'er showed her.
 All because of my unworthiness
 Ah, but why do I tarry here now,
 Oh, what will she be thinking of me! 128

Sev'ral inns there are up this street
 Sure, there'll be room for strangers forlorn
 At least, one such shelter I must seek
 Nothing can save me else from this strait 132

Thus thinking, he hastened to the place
 But to find the inns crowded and choked
 The holy sire, sad, oppressed with pain
 Turned again to meet his blessed spouse. 136

My grave sins or this city's curse,.....
 What be your holy will my Lord!
 Blames on me, I accept as my lot
 But wherefore must this virgin pure bear this? 140

"Charity covers an ocean of offences
 So says the great proverb ancient
 Had you come a little sooner my friend
 My grace by so much you had multiplied" 144

Such gibes and ridicule the holy one bore
 With joy and cheer infinitely great.
 Thus while wallowing in utter misery,
 To collect the tax, the kings officials came 148

When the officers had left Joseph found
 They were nearing the middle of the night
 He went up to the holy Virgin then
 Stood loooking at her sad and down cast 152

As when water dropping from the cloud
 On high, falls on the dusty earth
 The fluid pure changes its crystal hue
 And mixing with the slime turns impure forsooth 156

So by reason of my dark sin
 You the mother of God's own dear son
 As decreed by the Lord of Heaven
 Came to His own to be rejected by them 160
 The Lord adored by the angels above
 By my vice had cause to mourn!
 Leave the city, we must, this no place for us
 In the cave we saw on the way, we'll sojourn 164
 Thus the holy sage. Then the Virgin
 Approving of it, set forth at once,
 The Lord's mother as her time approached
 Founded no room alas! to rest at ease. 168
 Is this not the city of Royal David?
 Is he not the son of Royal David?
 Is he not to rule the city as King?
 Is she not the Queen of the triple world? 172
 Alas, great city, whom have you rejected?
 Do you deserve anything again but sorrow?
 You did forsake Him and cast him out
 Sure, you'll be by Him rejected! 176
 How eagerly you did await Him?
 Reputed Kings and all the prophets.
 Today you've forgotten all the past
 When again you wish, you'll not be blest 180
 The great patriarch Abraham's abode
 For receiving the mighty earned signal repute
 But when the Lord of all the great arrived
 Woeful, indeed, they turned Him out 184
 Thus my Father the supreme chief of men
 His heart heavy with grief started his journey
 Why, oh why do I so mean accuse them,
 The same, through my concupiscence have I done! 188
 My Lord the Blessed Babe Emmanuel
 Did choose to make his dwelling in my heart
 But planting my love low on things of the earth
 The just one, I ruthlessly drove apart 192

In His priceless Blood, to save my soul
 He did bathe me and with joy I wished
 To stay there with Him but the archfiend,
 Instead, I made my friend and with him abode 196
 It pains me deep, on my sins to reflect
 My God, my Sire, I listless, made my foe
 How small their guilt, ungrateful me
 My sins many a fold, deeper so. 200
 You, my loving father, aware of my lot
 Draw me close to your beloved Son
 And by the prayers of your dear spouse
 Forgive the misdeeds, in my childhood, I've done 204
 Mary, my mistress, remember now your Servant
 Redeemer, my Treasure, my love for you is great
 Your slave of yore, now and so for aye
 And so I'd be when I from this world depart. 208
 Remember me, entercede with your son
 Grant me a happy death and Salvation
 Unto you this body and Soul of mine
 I offer. I entrust them to you alone!
 In you, my hope entire I place
 All my sins and due penalty efface! 214

V

(On reaching the Cattle-shed, while the blessed couple wait in holy expectation, the Nativity of our Lord takes place. The angel train sing their celestial praise. They pass the good news to the Shepherds. The angels sing praise to the couple. The poet with sincere feelings of love describes the scene of St Joseph fondling the child Jesus in his arms - With a soul-enthraling description of the Infant Jesus, this section concludes)

As the branches severed off a tree
Give shade to the wood-cutter rude;
As milk and honey feed the Viper,
While upto them he spits his venom, 4
So God-born man, to suffer pain
Loved the wicked, who tortured them,
His virtuous friends, the Elect of Heaven,
And remembered not their Vice; 8
The night was dark, when journey done,
They reached the stable dark and cold
Lo; soon, bright-winged angels brought
The star-lit skies like 'day' to the earth. 12
The Sun at at the Moon's feet; To the Arch -
Saint, her brave spouse, the Lady said :-
"The night's far spent, you are tired;
Seek you for your eye-lids some rest;" 16
At this, the saint from the spot retired
And praising God haste to sleep
As if all his woe had been effaced
Discarding pain, he cheered his heart 20
Wept tears of joy, he knew not why;
Like fountain gushed his tears
And with a singing heart, he turned to God
He uttered a prayer wrung from his depth. 24

"Lord of all, Giver of gifts
As the Sun, tearing clouds, shines forth
May your Son, you granted to be
Saviour of all, come forth the virgin womb; 28
Petmit us to adore Him on earth
Come, quick to slake our thirst;"
While thus prayed the saint, the Lady
Entering the cave, wrapt in piety
The folds of her mantle spreading afloor,
Lost in contemplation, knelt. 34
Just then, a gentle tremor of her child
Sweet, in her womb, she felt.
The queen of virgins by sin untainted
Knew not the least pain of child-birth 38
Filled with joy unprecedented
To overflowing, her holy soul,
Gazing up at the Father, thus
In utter humility prayed :- 42
"O Father, Sea of Mercy, your Spirit
The Lord, took birth in my womb
The blessed Gem of your Son I pray
Place in my arms, that men may see;" 46
Thus prayed she, and humbly bowed;
Her son, she saw lying before her;
Quietly as the Sun's ray penetrates glass
'To the virgin, a son was born!' 50
The mid-night hour like noon-tide shone
And illumined the stable bright;
Brighter far than the son it glowed;
And in a festal train decended 54
Myriads of celestial beings singing
In jubilant notes, full loud
The angel chorus "GLORY TO GOD
IN THE HIGHEST HEAVENS AND 58

PERFECT HOPE TO MAN ON EARTH
 BRIGHTEST GLORY TO GOD ON HIGH
 From there the angels sped
 With the good news to shepherd folk. 62

"Hark ye shepherds, the happy news.
 Joyous and bright to all the World
 A saviour Babe is born to you
 Haste to Bethlehem and Him adore;" 66

They danced, they rained on Earth and Heaven
 On Homes blessed, their blossoms sweet
 The arch-angels Michael and Gabriel adored
 The Infant God, the Lord of all. 70

They fondled the Babe and with awe replaced
 Him in His mother's arms.
 Fragrant bloomed the flower, a mystery
 Born without 'Labour' of her virgin womb. 74

The child of her womb, in her arms received
 Hailed Him King of Kings, His mother
 His Infant eyes he then ope'd
 At His mother Beautiful, He gazed. 78

As if to say, for us to emulate
 "Beloved mother, watch over me,
 Show yourself a mother to me"
 And in gratitude, He sweetly smiled 82

Mary seeing her creator then
 In the miniature of her child,
 Reverently kissed His blessed Feet
 And His Hand as the King of Kings. 86

Her cherished Son, off-spring longed for,
 With delight she kissed His cheeks.
 And then pressed Him to her Breast
 And fed Him full with her milk so pure. 90

"My Son, who came to sate my wish
 On earth you'll be filled with pain
 Severer than may be your choice!
 Yet you'll redeem it of its sin" 94

The Babe on hearing His mother's voice
 Stretched forth His lovely arms
 The virgin holding Him closer still
 Fondled Him with her soft hands 98

The heavenly light at the holy Birth,
 The music of the angel train;
 Aware of these was St. Joseph
 The perfect of all men born 102

Yet, propriety forbade him
 Tresspass into the privacy
 Where the Lady, his spouse retired
 To work to pray or to repose 106

The Birth of the 'Omniscient' Babe, he saw
 And the earth clad in glowing Light
 The strains of celestial music there
 Yet too humble he felt to enter. 110

His modesty, she knew full well
 So to See their Son, she invited him
 And joyously he came the chief of saints
 To the presence of the virgin sweet! 114

In her lotus hands, bright as the Sun
 The brave saint, viewed with delight.
 The Infant Lord, the Prince of the Earth
 And fell prostrate before Him, adoring 118

The virgin, her sacred son
 Handing over to her spouse
 "Accept, kiss Him as you will,
 Welcome woe as well as joy!" 122

This beyond deserving, he felt
 Yet stretched his eager arms,
 The Babe held his hands aloft
 His foster-parent clasped Him tight 126

As the lotus full intent on the sun
 With devotion he kissed His Feet

Raised Him so, His Feet touched his Read
And kissed His lovely baby Hands. 130

The Baby son, as great as the Father
Showed His sweet smile with his lips in joy
The sight called forth from his eyes
Tears that like rivers flowed! 134

The Son so chaste, the Friend of the Just
Conceived of a virgin in purity preserved
Of the purest bride of the chief of celebrities
Was born and she a virgin still! 138

The angels' chief stood praising
The Mother of God and her spouse
Lord, God, saviour of man
Look with pity on me, a sinner 142

O Lord of all, sinless, pure
Behold your slave, a miscreant
It makes me wholly heavy and sad
As on your glory and virtue I muse! 146

You my father, you my maker,
And ever changeless, I know, is your Love
But when of my heavy sins I think
How could I stand thus before you! 150

Unworthy to linger, dull to be wary,
O mine of mercy, whither shall I go?
Your sacred limbs, holy face
Your sparkling eyes, nostrils bright. 154

Ruby lips, coach-shaped teeth
The honeyed words flowing from your lips
I wish to hear, for a vision I long
Though steadfast to look, unworthy my eyes, 158

O furnace of love, ardently I thirst
For the treasure of your mercy e'en though

Hindered by sin; when your eyes benign
Oft I've felt, chasing my doubt. 162

When your bright visage I see
My gloom effaced, Love glows
In your look of mercy I behold
A gentle saviour, not a judge 166

Your out-stretched arms seem as though
Yearning to lock me in your bosom
Your soft lotus feet, I surmise
Are on a race to capture sinners! 170

Ungrateful though your servant is
My fevered heart is fanned cool.
O shepherd gracious, seeking lost sheep
You came; save me, I've gone astray 174

In my childhood, I did leave you,
Today I stand craving help
Stretch forth your arm, bless me Lord
From my sins absolve me, I pray 178

Abide with me, save me from troubles
Guard me, to your grace draw me
Devoutly I pray, in the words of David
Your blessed ancestor thus 182

"The sins of my youth, remember not
By your mercy" Infant, save me

VI

(The events commencing from the Nativity of our Lord, up to the circumcision form the contents of this section. There is also a conversation, as imagined by the poet, between our Lady and a Shepherdess, Santhi by name, added here. There are references to the second coming of our Lord, the end of the world, and the Last Judgement. The pathetic spiritual lament of the poet is once again repeated)

The skies aglow with brilliant festal lights
 Reverberating notes of songs of delight
 Sung by angels, reached the ears of shepherds
 And men who guarded the sheep — They listened. 4

“Glory to God; peace and joy in hearts
 Of human folk, who dwell the earth below
 The Son of God, the Lord of all is born
 As man in the land of Bethlehem! 8

Go ye, quick, bend low and Him adore
 See Him ‘mid asses and cattle low’
 The burthen of their song thus they heard; beside
 Lovely angels, the servants of God, they espide 12

The glowing light of the sight and their praise
 Of the Saviour’s birth, a welcome news.
 The shepherds hearing, in haste they race
 To the Presence of the infant Prince 16

They saw, they paid him homage, the news passed
 From mouth to mouth to kith and kin it spread
 They came, some alone, some in crowds
 The Infant Christ, the Lord of Lords they reached 20

The yong and old, children and mighty men
 Wives and dames came to see the babe

Little lambs some, others milk to drink
 To the Baby Shepherd they gave 24

Fruits of trees, garlands of blossoms sweet
 Babes in glee, tiny birdies they bring
 Off’ring these before His Sacred Feet
 To the Infant bright as the sun, they bow! 28

Sweet-limbed damsels, avowed virgins
 Adore their spouse’s feet with floral wreaths
 And borne aloft in His gentle mother’s arms
 He with His soft Hands benediction gives 32

As the lotus bloom or water lily rests?
 The Babe reclined on the “ocean’s star”
 As the baby swan on a lotus bed
 Him, the ‘star of the sea’ in her arms cradled 36

Santhi; an aged shepherdess one day
 Drew to the beautiful Mother’s feet and said
 “How comes, sweet my Lady, your son beloved
 Leaving His mighty sire, sorrow embraced? 40

King of Kings, Son of the most high
 Why did he such dire poverty court?
 Soldiers, powerful army-chiefs unnumbered
 Has He not in His heavenly court? 44

The only begotten Son of God the Father
 Is left helpless today, O, woeful sight!
 The noble maiden, crowned with a diadem of stars,
 The crescent at her feet, spoke thus: 48

“Kings feeble and helpless are by soldiers
 Amply served; but men in misery who
 Of themselves naught could do have angels around
 All things to perform, and perfectly too! 52

Self-created almighty God makes
 And preserves all in a trice and needs no help
 Whatever He wills, ‘tis done at once
 Why then does he need a server’s aid? 56

And besides, His just laws to maintain
 Ages back, a warning message He sent
 But men on earth with burning passions rife
 His Will defied and were with fire destroyed! 60

Then He displayed undisputed justice
 But now He comes His shining mercy to show
 To bring them back to the glory lost of yore
 Through their greivous transgressions sore! 64

To repeal the curse that came to man on earth
 To forgive all, the Father Himself descends"
 Hearing this, Santhi spoke again
 "Another burning theme have I in mind 68

Mistress, benign, for your son's sake
 Resolve the doubt that burdens me so oft
 At the advent of the Son of the mighty God
 Will not the world with certain awe be filled? 72

Oft I've heard my forefathers hold as true
 The message of God in the sacred scripture
 That the Earth would tremble with awful fears -
 When God's own Son the Prime Prince appears. 76

And more I'd wish to hear you truly say
 If twice He would on the face of earth appear
 First to bring salvation to erring men
 And then, the just and evil to prize or punish 80

To prove His mercy to man so miserable, mean
 Has He come forth now into this world, indeed
 Patience and Obedience as a team of oxen of a plough
 Furrowed His soft, body and made it bleed. 84

He watered the field with every grace it needed
 He sowed the seeds of kindness and of mercy
 And gath'ring the grains that in the fields did flourish
 His dear little ones He'll tenderly nourish! 88

Had he commanded to bear poverty and pain
 And not trodden the path for us to emulate
 Who would bear with patience his sad fate?
 Showing forth a crimson apple to men 92

If one eats it declaring to men at large,
 "Beware, I say, this is deadly poison
 But taste it and sure you'd drop dead"
 Who on earth to these facts'd give credit? 96

Not so the Lord, these ills nobly to bear
 In His sacred body, He now is born
 And His perfect Justice and might to show
 In His Glory He'll on the last day appear! 100

Signs He'll show in the firmament full clear;
 Seing them all men on earth'd quake
 Thunder claps and disastrous lightnings with fear
 Would chase men to the woods in their wake. 104

The oceans would surge and its water's o'erflow
 Wild beasts in tumult run amok
 The earth'll tremble in its very entrails
 And the spheres in Heaven into fragments crack. 108

The bright Sun into darkness pale
 The pale moon turned; and men
 Shaking at the strange sights, in beastly caves
 Hide, beasts in cities sulk to be safe! 112

Terrific fears and tremendous pains then
 Hit human minds turned to distraction
 And a conflagration would follow and like
 Swift gushing waters, the sea'll spit fire 116

The human race will be swept entire
 To ashes all that's created would turn
 God then with His will-ful Hand divine
 Would sweep together all flesh and fish. 120

The triple world then would resound with
 Loud trumpet blasts of archangels train
 "Rise, all ye dead and come forth quick
 To receive the mead of your deeds ill or good" 124

At this all spirits of human kind entering
 Their corporeal forms, forsake their graves
 And in Josephat's valley would in crowds assemble
 The virtue of evil and good of their deeds survey, 128

Voluntarily station themselves in dual blocks
 The good on the right hand would stand
 The evil, poor damned souls on the left.
 Far, far from God His anger to display. 132

And now in the sky amid clearest clouds'ld appear
 The luminous cross, the banner of the dear Lord
 Battallions, heroic captains, angelic warriors
 Arrays of numberless bright men to boot. 136

Lastly, the mighty God, Co-existent with the Son
 With glowing visage, on the wings of clouds'ld appear
 Oh Immense, terrific to all, the scene,
 Piteously baneful, by far, for the souls damned. 140

His glowing face shone as bright as the sun
 Like a pair of burning forches were His eyes
 From His mouth started lightening shafts
 His Feet, they'ld put to shame the sheen of gold. 144

A single glance of his would shake the skies
 From His sight one could nothing hide
 Obious would be to Him at once, the thought
 Inmost of men stationed on either side ! 148

Then would each one guage his own crimes
 And wicked make no secret of motives ill
 Musings of the mind and words but breathed
 And read in defiance, as clear as day would be ! 152

Men held great in this transcient world
 Would in utter shame bow their heads
 And the Lord of justice with scathing looks
 Address the ignoble men, contemptible Thus : 156

His eyes like burning fires in furnaces hot
 Words as sharp as flitting swords of flame.
 His visage, oh dreadful the sight for those who look
 No being on earth so bold, His eyes to face. 160

In a voice like thunder that'ld shatter granite hard
 The God-man would address the foolish folk
 "For ye wicked wretches, we appeared
 Though the creator, a sinner in this world ! 164

Clouds pregnant with water would shed their burden
 And power again on earth my gifts in sooth
 Behold my mangled body with wounds I bore
 For ye ! witness them on my palms ! 168

On a mountain high mid hillocks I did
 Sleepless render ye lessons in penance severe;
 Like a wee calf in the cave of Bethlehem
 Among herds of cattle was I born for you. 172

For thirty years and three, like a bondman on earth
 Did I sojourn for reparation of your sins
 To retrieve the world from curse let my blood
 Stream forth in the garden of Gethesemane 176

My people, my own, turned conspiring foes
 And thief-like, hands tied, me to a pillar bound
 And lashed me and smashed alike my flesh and bones
 Undeservedly, though I was in justice found. 180

"That you be transported to Heaven on my shoulders
 Bearing an ugly cross, I to the summit
 Of a mount trod; And my limbs pinned to it
 My veins ruptured and bled, was I raised upright. 184

"Scorched in the non-tide heat, did I not pray
 Hanging on cruel nails that tore my flesh
 At my suff'ring, even the sun grew dim
 Yet my brethren, your callous hearts were unmoved ! 188

"Rocks split, the temple curtain rent in twain
 Eyes wept, all in heart knew my pain
 The graves of corpses depleted stood gaping
 Yet you, heartless, did know me not. 192

"My name disgraced, norms of wisdom dispelled
 You paid homage to the prime of darkness and ill
 Begone, for from my sight, begone, at once !
 Fall into the alyss deep of Hell, and forever burn !" 196

Woe of woes, alas, pity immense !
 All is lost for ever and ever again
 The dread words they heard, and desperate turned
 Roared aloud in pain, but all, in vain 200

Mother mine, alas, this picture so fills me
With dread, O Lady, I shudder with fear
I find my soul, O misery! packed with vice
Bitter agony unsettles my mind! 204

And one sin, a sin terrible augments my woe
You alone my hope, none else have I
Behold your son gently on your bosom rests
Reclining quiet, sleeps in unmolested peace! 208

Breathe unto His Ears, a word of prayer for me,
Heedless of the words of grace uttered by Him
I your bondman did unwittingly transgress
Me so miserable, disloyal beyond measure 212

Distressed I feel, when now I see Him nearing
Who came with a message of peace sublime
Come, sweet Lady, station you before Him
Remember you are His Mother and mine. 216

On His right side shall you be enthroned to judge
Of the triple world, you are the queen
Let me then hide in your garment's fold
In that dread hour, dear my Lady! 220

"When the Lord who smiles sweetly in your lap
Turns His glance into cruel sternness
Beneath your throne let me hide my timid eyes
Blinking in fear, oh my mother sweet. 224

"When those gentle eyes that gaze at you
Emit fierce sparks of wrath apace
To arrest the shafts of hot burning flame
Queen of the worlds, with your mantle, shield me! 228

"The judgement severe of curse directed to the wicked
Spare your humble leigeman from hearing
All the vicious deeds I've done till this day
I regret in shame - all my dark offences! 232

"Humbly I bow before your Blessed Son
Assure me, Mother, of forgiveness of sins entire!
Harshly rebuking the wicked, to the right you then turn
And in fulness of love these tender words you utter. 236

"My friends, my counsels you faithfully obeyed in life
And boldly renounced all comfort and joy on earth,
And preserving the solid graces I granted
Augmented them through sufferings well borne. 240

"While in hunger and thirst I wandered apace
You slaked my thirst and amply regaled me
And whenever you met me poor, naked, unclad
To remove my shame threw garments on me! 244

"When like a stranger I wandered across your land
You welcomed me home and offered shelter secure
When sorely sick and at times in prison bemoaning
To health you nursed me back and helped me through 248

"For these your deeds, dwell with me for aye!
Joyous, sans every thought of care and pain"
Like drops of nectar sank these soothing words
Unto their noble heart and filled them with joy! 252

Then their bodies made pure did send forth
Rays resplendent, transcending the Sun
For the wicked, the Earth rent her womb
That closed on them, who sped from sight 256

"With His chosen souls in triumph he entered
The Heavens, for all times His presence to enjoy
Not such an advent this, know ye in sooth
Now His glory all He has turned to mercy. 260

This, the Lord of Mercy's first advent
To save His people through mercy's display
The wondrous tidings, spread and day after day
Santhi and her kinsmen came, the Lord to adore. 264

And on the eighth night, a blinding light
Gleamed from compass round, at the hour of midnight
Thousands of angel warriors of the Lord of the world
In battalions were seen, howering the skies above 268

Clad in garments bearing golden light,
With breast-plates decked in gold, picturesque bright
In a circlet of gold across the bosom glowed
His name inscribed in purest ink of gold. 272

The captains twain marched together both
Michael and Gabriel, the chiefs of the celestial clan
The crowns inscribed with the self - same gold
Their brightness illumined both earth and heaven 276

The luxurious gang marched in rows endless
Two abreast in artistic perfection sweet
Between them was held aloft a beautiful circlet
Wrought in sovereign of gems, a topaz bright 280

The crown of the crowed putting all the rest to shame
Saved are they who His name would but think
They came and two by two they bowed to Him
The chieftains twain, they held aloft His name 284

They came, they bowed before the elders, low
In awe they adored at the Feet of the Lord and Master
Since the child was to save all mankind on earth
The archangels too bowed and paid their homage 288

And they bruited, Lo the God-man, God's son
Of the highest repute, as Redeemer, 'Jesus'
Hearkened all at once with awe sublime
Together clashed the notes of harp and timbrel ! 292

The triple world at the sound of its savior's name
Rejoiced and sang in voices clear and loud
Hearing the name of the world's protector great
The dark night on earth as mid-day loomed 296

The name that would dispel the enemies' might
At its sound the powers of darkness trembled
The virtuous sire, the unfading stalk of bloom
His spouse with a crown of stars and a moon at her feet 300

Gratefully exalting His sacred name, devoutly
Reverently they bowed at the Feet of the saviour,
And when the day was full blown and bright
To accomplish fully the will of the Lord of the World, 304

They summoned the Holy Priest and duly performed
The rite of circumcision; and in spite of pain
Justly to merit the title of "The World's Redeemer"
And as proof, He shed precious drops of His blood ! 308

Dear, my Lord, tender, flower - like immaculate
Have you thus deigned in Infancy to show your mercy
Your body as delicate as a tender flower
How painful the feel of the sharp weapon's thrust ! 312

To install me this unworthy slave by your side
A base bondman you turned descending low
Softer far than the very pupil of my eye
Is the silky skin of your feet, I espy ! 316

But softer still your tender infant body
Ah, supremely fair, smooth and sacred
Awareness we possess not in our infancy
Intense pains we endure, but know them not. 320

But you, omniscient Babe had awareness perfect
From the moment of your birth, your knowledge was whole
In vivid consciousness you knew all things
Every ache of your flesh, full keenly you felt 324

Yet, as seen in every common child
Your eyes welled up with tears which streamed down
your cheeks

Alas, my Lord, oh pity, my lack of love,
My grave offences, the cause of it all. 328

His Mother, with her eyes, she looked on all things
Her heart was rent and tears like rivers flowed
At the Lady's plight, at the wound and woe of his son
The father looked on and was lost in utter woe 332

My Lord, my Master, Saviour, my Hope, I see
In this a visible surety for my redemption
Your shapely lips that ever at your mother smiled
Are now twitched and crimson turned with pain ; 336

Your eyes that ever shone with glowing love
Are wink'ed tight through biting sorrow
Your cheeks, fair spheres all aglow
Are now trembling so, a picture painful ! 340

Like a flower of gold on a silver plate
 A shapely nose arose betwixt the eyes.
 And above the eyes a beauteous forehead to boot
 Now wrinkles in pain, a sorrow intense ! 344

And like stamens at the core of a rose
 To perfect the picture a trembling tongue appears
 That'd delight all hearts, uttered cries
 As nectar flowed notes of painful music 348

He who created all through His simple will
 Weeps now as if devoid of every might
 Wherefore my Lord ! Sure your love divine
 No reason else do I see for this plight 352
 Grant, O Mercy, that with sanctity my soul may flood;
 Forgiveness of Sins through your precious Blood !

VII

(The arrival of the magi, the offering of their gifts, the presentation of the holy Infant in the temple, the prophecies of Simon and Anna are first described in this section. This is followed by a solemn meditation of the poet on the sorrows and passions foretold by the prophet, to be endured by Our Lady and then a solemn confession of the fact that it was his innumerable sins and failures that did cause these pains and his sincere repentance for them and finally a heart-felt prayer that he may like St. Andrew Corsini, be converted and sanctified, form the theme of this canto)

Then at His birth was spread a splendid sheen
 Of universal brilliance all the world over
 It was held by ancients as truly spoken
 That Hagar, the Second wife of the Sire, 4
 While taking over the silks and gold, their father
 Had left for her sons as their lawful share
 Foretold that they would once pay homage
 To the Son of God, yet to be born, 8
 With the dearest desire to redeemer His people
 And to mark the day a bright Star would appear
 These words of the Sire, the sons heard and left
 And in those days as slaves they passed in Egypt 12
 A prophet divined that in Jacob's clan
 A new star would rise. This as a proven fact
 They soundly believed and from those days
 They set astronomers to gaze at the sky 16
 As they sat watching and divining, the Scholars,
 Chieftains and Kings, who were as Magi known
 In the sky perceived a wondrous star,
 Shining full bright, a new Star ! 20

Forthwith they knew it was the one awaited
 The Kings and servants and slaves and all their train
 Together they walked over hills and planes
 The star in the sky steadily showing their way 24

The MAGI reached the city of Jerusalem bright
 And when they came to the great tower's gate
 The star that led them on was no more in sight
 Sad and surprised they came to the king and said ! 28

"God, the king of the jews was born and so
 Came we to adore, each led by the star
 With eyes affixed on it we came; but alas,
 The Light has vanished, where is he, the Prince?" 32

Herod, the wicked king listened shrewdly
 The chiefs of his land he summoned swiftly.
 Feigned as if eager to see the Holy Infant
 His respects to pay it's meet that he should go. 36

The wise men of repute, in Beth'lem, he called
 Skilled in science, learned divines, and said :
 "Go ye forth, and humbly adore Him, stop here
 On your return, tell us what you'd seen. 40

Hearing these words of Herod they set out to see
 The sight; and again they espied the star brilliant
 Coursing athwart the sky; it ceased to move
 O'er the dwelling of the Lord, the spot to point 44

They came and reverently entered the cattle-shed
 Bowed before Him and their gifts joyously offered
 The Infant, He knew all but feigned as if
 Utterly helpless, and nothing was He aware of 48

Seated in State in His Mother's blessed lap
 Viewed each one's face and gave his benediction
 Lord, God of the Universe, my master, gracious
 Bend your eyes on me and grant me you blessing 52

You are the Lord of all and though omniscient
 Your piteous wailings your weakness display
 You, the author of all, who all things direct,
 In the arms of the mistress of all, you repose 56

Through your cries you proclaim your hunger and woe
 And your mother grants at once your wish
 All, all, for my redemption entire
 All your pains, for the remission of our sins 60

And I a sinner in ingratitude steeped
 Sin upon sin, oh piteously, I heaped
 Master, look on me, forgive my folly
 In sheer justice I'm deplorably condemned. 64

The kings who nobly ruled their several regions
 The Astronomers gifted, of alien climes
 All and sundry have to their king their homage paid.
 *But they who long awaited like fools ignored Him 68

I too, through my sins was once estranged
 Though ungrateful, now at your Feet, I adore
 Lift your baby arms as you did for them
 And your blessing sacred, on me bestow. 72

Gross offences have I done as a child,
 Forgive my sins and your benediction grand !
 Now, after adoring the kings had left
 In brightness magnificent the angels appeared. 76

And told them leave the path by which they came,
 And return to their homes by a different route
 After they in obedience had left the place
 The news spreading for, many came in crowds, 80

That his son's wish was, to remain obscure
 The holy St. Joseph knew, for so was he
 Hence with the Mother as the crowd drew near
 Withdrew into a cell, the tiniest in Bethlehem 84

* This line refers to the Israelites who failed to see in Christ their redeemer

They entered it; The Lord, he, his spouse
 The mistress, the mother of God and until on
 The fortieth day, in the Temple to present the Lord
 As the law did prescribe, therein the abode 88

And before their departure from the manger
 The Mother of God to an angel, one of the many
 Who lingered with them, bade to guard the cave
 In which her son sojourned, alertly to watch 92

Since the creator supreme was born herein
 Guard it from pollution by animal or beast
 And to this day, the rule was kept intact,
 Wolves or beasts were not allowed to stray in 96

Thus forty days, duly went by;
 To the magnificent temple to adore God
 As by law imposed, to offer Him their gift
 Along with the Mother and the sacred son 100

To God the father their lawful duty to perform
 They with happiness holy, unlimited
 Arrived in the chief city of Jerusalem
 Where prophet Simeon was the chief-priest 104

He came to the temple by the spirit inspired
 Adored the Holy Infant and bowing low
 Kissed His Sacred Feet, and lovingly implored
 That on seeing Him, his soul be set free 108

"Your grace, mercy and kindness, Lord, have I seen
 Me your servant, now bid me leave !
 As the Light of the World, you are born
 In you has Israel found her glory and praise ! 112

Prophetically he then proceeded thus,
 "Though a Light to man; He shall cause
 Downfall to many and to many sure salvation;
 Verily I say, A sword shall pierce your heart. 116

"Sure", said he to the virgin, my mother, a sharp
 Point of a sword shall wound your heart, so pure
 By the self-same words were at the instant
 The sinless heart, of the most perfect of fathers pierced 120

Just then the saintly dame Annah the aged
 The same who nursed the holy mother in the temple
 Knowing by the Spirit's prompting, proclaimed aloud
 That, this certainly was the Son of the Mighty 124

With intense pain let the sequence be stated
 After they had arrived in the lovely city
 And all rituals performed as they ought to be
 All things accomplishing as the law prescribed 128

The lovely face of the mother at the sacred words
 Turned woeful as struck by a cruel sword
 Whenever she took the bright face of her infant
 Between her sacred palms and held it in caress 132

And looked intently and lovingly, joy to find,
 Sorrow and pain welled up in her heart
 For His holy little feet sweet and flower-like
 And his soft, lovely baby palms, 136

She remembered with intense pain, would one day
 Be mercilessly pierced and He be pinned
 To a cross with three cruel nails; His heart
 With a mighty spear torn and opened. 140

Dear my Lord, immaculate treasure of grace
 Untainted e'en by the shadow of sin
 The pains and passions of your beloved son
 And your own unpathomed sea of sorrow. 144

All, all, the outcome sure of my sins !
 How deep my agony when I do remember,
 I find exemplified in me the saying wise
 Of the ancient ascetic, those words are mine ! 148

"My body, exhausted, O sad fate, turned to
 A lump of putrid flesh, a mass of dirt"
 When I recall my sins their sole cause
 A fear, horrible, also grips my soul ! 152

Alas, my fear, what could be its cause ?
 Whatever it be, my journey hence is sure
 One remedy alone, I find; what else
 Could make amends ? All else bootless ! 156

Penance, the sole remedy for sin, I ken
 But to live an ascetic my strength has wanned
 Useless it is to feed on vain desire
 It pays little, merely to thirst alone ! 160

When strength was mine, luck favoured me not
 Now that the chance is past, what for this thirst ?
 Yet when desire turns my will resolute
 Sure His passion shall lend me a share ! 164

Hence, my mistress, my mother sweet, who else
 My support today, if not you ?
 Your faithful servant, sure, I was of yore
 Through desires sinister, a sinner became ! 168

But you, my lady, my mother forsook me not
 Sure signs of your favour, I still do see
 So, ashamed I feel of the desires base
 And sensuous, that through my heart do course. 172

Fortunate, I deem it, that you the Mother of Carmel
 Have as your own servant donned me
 Yes, me so base, unworthy you did choose
 O, wherefore this joy, I'm unworthy to guess. 176

I fear to recount my past, yet I venture
 To confess what deeds I then have done
 The great Saint Andrew Corsini, I've heard
 Of him, who is with glory crowned in Heav'n 180

A vision had his mother of her son
 Who in her womb, she saw as the cub of a wolf
 And verily the same cruelty later showed
 But when he came to the door of Carmel 184

The boy became a gentle lamb in sooth –
 A vision oft celebrated unto this day
 He now enjoys exquisite glory on high ! –
 Oh how truly this could be said of me ! 188

Yet, my mother, you gave me the coveted title
 Your servant in Carmel, and so you see me for succor
 Fall at your feet, with all my offences mighty
 My sins, my grave sins filthy, mudlike ! 192

Oh, I'm favoured, highly favoured, my Lady
 For your son bequeathed to me His mother
 As he did to all men; I was offered
 Again by my mother, as slave at your feet. 196

And you did accept me, a blessing rare !
 Once again through a mediator
 St. Dominic who bound me to your Rosary
 And lastly, as by sheer luck, I deem 200

A while ago, your holy 'habit' I donned
 Through your devote, Our Supreme Head
 Was I accepted into the House of Carmel
 As on these I reflect and how you've changed me 204

Though awful, wicked, I take heart !
 Hence at your sacred feet, with compunction
 I come weeping, oh listen to my moans !
 The holy Infant reposing in your arms 208

Suffered severe pains, which like swords
 Did pierce your tender heart; all these
 Were by my sins caused; and for pardon
 I have no reprieve but His passion 212

Grant me succor, my mother, my hope
 O Lord, my God, if you in justice judge me
 A sinner so great, what stay shall I have
 But when I reflect on your sacred words 216

My heart feels secure of certain salvation
 The younger son, the prodigal, I am
 Yearning for mercy, as in your parable
 Having all the wealth and riches you gave 220

Unjustly squandered, oh for dire pity
 And pained your loving heart my father benign
 You who ever was the source of joy
 It pains me now to see your mangled from ! 224

Like torrents of rain flowed your precious blood;
 Your hands gave me being and still uphold me
 Two sturdy hands you blessed me withal
 In return, I sin with those very hands. 228

Piercing mercilessly your palms so sacred,
And the feet you gave me to tread along the way
With mighty nails I punched yours, my Lord.
My sinister deeds tore your tender flesh 232

Tiger-like, I tore your flesh apiece
By my unseemly thoughts and impure
Drove sharp thorns across your brain;
For granting me sight and hearing both 236

Across your eyes, bored needle-like thorns
O misery, piteous, lamentable
What refuge can I took for and where
This wicked piteous ungrateful wretch! 240

Yet, the product of your handiwork am I
My refuge, my eternal good.
From your sacred presence I fled in fear
And verily O Lord, in oblivion I thrust you. 244

Certain, I ken, you have'nt cast me off
When I forsook and turned myself away
Still rememb'ring, you followed my trail
Did you not subjugate my mind? 248

Though a miscreant you forsook me not
A creature abject, you did permit me
To join your people, who are your chosen delight
You gave me leave, me a sinner 252

You rejected me not a creature unwanted
Not eternally lost but exhausted.
Through this signal blessing you did grant it
Possible to reach you, had I but willed it! 256

In spirit, I come to your Gathesemani
Fount of mercy, eternal son of God,
Co-existent with the Lord of all,
Sovereign of mankind, royal son of David! 260

For eternal salvation, who else but you, my God,
In the dark of night, you came down
Unto this forest wild, you, who by
Nine rows of angels are momentarily worshipped 264

What came you to seek, Lord of all?
"To seek you the object of my love
To this earth I came and laboured in love
With abiding sorrow, for years three and thirty 268

Searching for you so insignificant
Exhausted, my son, I've turned!
In agony I trampled thorns and stones
Through mounts and valleys and streams I wandered 272

Tarried not, in idleness a moment;
Leaving ninety-nine good sheep in the wild
In search of you, just one in the fold
Deserting my father's divine lap, I sped 276

Come back quick, of sorrow relieve me
Consider my Love, I am your sire
Let not your misery stop you, the past's no more!"
"Ah, my Father Beloved, God of all. 280

For shame, I dare not lift my eyes
Though to see your sacred face I long
I doubt alas, for immense is my vice!"
"Come to me your sins entire I condone 284

Let me stretch out my lifted Hand and wash,
Think now, that I'm your Father benevolent
Come near that I may press on you, my kiss"
"A slave miserable, because of sins so violent 288

My soul in perdition sends forth a foul stink!
Say but the word with your sacred tongue
And my renewed spirit shall its virtue win back
Cleansed in the blood, from your body streaming 292

My sins and sorrows shall be cleansed
Alas! I see before me a huge crowd
And leading them, the disciple ruthless
Who draws near and on His Face so sacred 296

As if to greet, with a kiss betrays Him
Yet meekly he turns round to say
"Do you, my friend, so heartlessly behave?"
And seing then before Him the crowd 300

"Say you, why you did come" he asked
 "To seek by royal mandate a man by name
 Jesus of nazareth hither we came!"
 "Know ye, I am He, who is Jesus!" 304
 Leave my disciples alone, harm them not"
 On hearing these words, "I am He!"
 Each and each, they dropped down as dead
 My Lord, my God not an angry word 308
 Escaped your lips; great indeed your strength
 Hark the day ire will soon arrive
 Your mighty cross will send forth shafts of fire
 Remember well what the Gospel says 312
 It is all in fine the message unique of love
 Who you are, whom you came to capture,
 Do you mark well, I'm the creator
 And besides you are my subjects. 316
 While in the land of Egypt you were tortured
 I am he who took you unto my care
 And led you to the land of joy and blessing!
 When in the wilderness you faced hunger and thirst 320
 The rock quenched your thirst and manna your
 hunger slaked
 Yet again in the valley of Josephat
 Your vice and virtue shall I rightly judge!"
 These and many such facts did he state 324
 And to me accursed, the same he'll say
 Since reason pointed right and wrong in me,
 In my soul have I borne these failures
 These evil thoughts as my feet that bore me 328
 He saw these outrages; yet through His mercy
 Observing His Spirit abiding in my heart
 His words divine he recalled to his mind
 "I am your Father, I, your loving God, 332
 Yet, you thrust this cruel spear in my Heart"
 "Alas, my Father, my Creator, my Lord
 In utter shame I bend down my head
 And when despite all my intellect dull 336

Goes ahunting base wordly passions,
 You in sheer sympathy dog my foot-steps,
 Showing love and mercy you call me back,
 O pity, I, a sinner, steel my ears 340
 And woefully persist in treading paths of evil
 Frequent ways of sin and dismal treason.
 You; like a father, patiently followed my trail
 Whispered unto my heart "you are my love 344
 Mark ye, my son, a good Father am I
 And a mother both" - you filled my mind
 With such thoughts, while villainously
 I forsook you! - For these and other sins of mine 348
 When I discover I am but a worm, worse
 Even than they, I tremble with fear and woe
 Will you forsake me an ungrateful wretch?
 Yes, your wisdom impels, your mercy forbids! 352
 "To learn of my mercy, come follow in spirit
 To calvary mount, use your thought and memory
 On its summit you'll see the deeds of my Love!"
 "Lord, my Hope and solace, Death is near! 356
 "Hope have I none but in thought of you my master
 You, who came in search of your lost sheep
 The sick alone do need you, the Healer!
 Every sorry sinner, who fled to you 360
 "Found mercy in you in the fullest measure
 They who with penance for sins made amends
 In perfect confidence, they draw near to you
 But I a sinner, am pressed with the weight of sins! 364
 To turn an ascetic, I lack the needed strength
 I can muse upon your sacred passion
 And seek my hope in your precious blood
 All else is beyond my power, my Lord! 368
 Yes, impossible, your blood, my hope
 The blood so madly thirsted for by your foes.
 On hearing those words you uttered then,
 Blood thirsty men closed on him like tigers! 372

They pressed His throat and blood coursing veins
 And with beastly anger they pulled Him about
 Him, the king of kings, and dashed Him down
 Slapped His face and plucked his hair apart. 376

Bound His hands behind Him like a thief
 Angry men, they barked like hellish hounds
 Slashed Him like a venomous reptile,
 With the triumph of victorious swords - men 380

His disciples all fled afar in fright -
 Thus along the streets of Jerusalem
 Pulled the Blessed Lord along in ropes
 He, who, with His Hands gave me form 384

With my hands, my gratitude I showed
 Yet in mercy to spare my damnation -
 The proper punishment I much deserved!
 The just one appeared a hideous sinner 388

Meekly, before aged Annas for judgement
 And again before the chief priest Caiphas
 Was the great one dragged by cruel folk!
 "Tell us, straight, all that you taught the people 392

Where are they, your dear disciples now?"
 He blankly gazed around at the mob gathered
 "Ask of them," He serenely stated, mild,
 Know ye, nothing in secret have I said!" 396

Unbridled anger choked them, they smote Him
 On His cheek; the cause of His pain I'm aware
 The dismal crimes I fearlessly did!
 He spared me the pain, which else would be mine! 400

The cruel verdict! - My master, it hit me hard!
 Still painful the tortures you bore at night
 Your repeated falls, you patiently bore
 And at peep of dawn, your enemy train 404

To Pilate the fair - skinned, for judgement presented you
 But he, finding in you nothing faulty
 Proclaimed you fully innocent!
 But then your mortal foes, apparently, to please 408

For a reprieve stated the accused condemned
 To the jurisdiction of Herod belonged
 Sent Him straight to Herod as law ordained -
 Your miracles rare in person to perceive, 412

Many a query the villain made to you
 O God most pure, your blessed voice to hear
 But he, a sinner deserved not the grace
 "My loving Father, I'm your son. 416

But oh, I tremble, for a sinner I am
 Today this man, to hear your voice divine
 Was deemed unworthy; keep not your words from me!"
 Alas, he once again judged you insane. 420

Your glowing body was clad in crimson silk,
 For a pity made false witnesses against you
 And ruthlessly sent you back to Pontius Pilate
 Once again to please your callous foes. 424

To the heartless soldiers' mercy, they cast you,
 My God so pure, of beauty unsurpassed,
 Sentenced to be scourged for my ugly sins
 O virgin God, of Body Immaculate! 428

Decreed by fate, none could exceed forty
 Lashes each, but only-nine and thirty!
 O how did you merit this outrage my Lord?
 They plucked your cloak and to the pillar bound you 432

The soldiers were paid instantly for scourging you
 O mother, my Queen, my mistress benevolent
 Purest - limbed, my supreme strength, my Lady
 Alas, you were destined the sad sight to see! 436

Behold your beloved son, for whom while yet
 In your Holy Womb, He quietly dwelt
 A sacred garment you wove with your hands
 Using the yarn you did spin with your hands 440

Beauteously wrought into small swadling clothes
 Decked with blossoms fragrant by her spouse
 Roses and chempaks, jasmines and flowers else
 Pressed in cases exhuming fragrance of choice 444

Sweet scented herbs and kindred spices rare
 Wisely culled and pressed with art and care
 Sprinkled with perfume and jealously guarded
 Locked and sealed, long before your birth. 448

And besides, in the days of your blessed childhood
 In Egypt land were you made to clad
 Before you were five summers old
 As your dear self did wish t'is told 452

It grew with your growth as in years you grew
 It shines even now as it did of yore
 This garment the wicked pluck asunder
 And your holy limbs so ruthlessly bind 456

The precious body guarded from other's touch
 The mother sees it mangled torn and bleeding
 The heavy stirpes that fell from wicked whips
 Cleave His sacred body strip in strip. 460

Lashes repeatedly falling on your body torn
 The flesh fall shattered in pieces around
 O mother, behold the once, graceful form
 Great your sorrow on seing thus your son 464

The hearts of the enemies to flatter and please
 The cruel men tear your flesh again,
 The sins of my flesh, the very cause,
 O, I do blame the enemy train in vain! 468

Master, punish this sinner as you will
 Mother, my mistress, I've caused you distress
 Great indeed my offence; Why this penance
 To repair the sins of this ungrateful wretch 472

Had I sinned a little less, I see
 Your sufferings too would have been less
 I sinned in every limb of my body
 Hence, you suffered in every inch of yours! 476

Yet, oh Fount of Mercy, I understand
 I could but palliate the pain you felt
 From head to foot, through compunction deep
 Bore in my heart, how else could I help? 480

Thus the wicked completed a thousand lashes
 On your person in the pitch of anger
 All your limbs were diseased sick and sore
 The former wholeness, alas, lost forever! 484

They paused for a time and then means devised
 For tortures renewed and still worse, to boot
 All in return for granting your people beloved
 A kingdom, and then a sovereign's crown. 488

As if for this their gratitude to show
 With a diadem of thorns your head they decked
 Oh, the thorns our ancestor's sin created
 By mistake pierced the creator's Head; 492

Pierced; and points sharp drove into your brain
 As a symbol to prove the name they called Him by
 An ancient ragged cloak they threw on Him
 And placed in His hand a rod; Moses once 496

Parted the deep sea with Moses' rod
 With the same rod he beat a rock
 And several were supplied with water to drink
 He bequeathed the sceptre to Kishan's Son 500

*As if to bring to fulfilment the solemn words,
 By his great Grand Son solomon pronounced
 In his palm they thrust a feeble reed
 For sceptre—all the regal signs to complete 504

Pontius on this throne seated Him in pomp
 And showed Him to those gathered the sight to see
 And said "Ecce Homo" — 'Behold the man'!
 Like angry blood hounds the crowd screamed, 508

And howled declaring "Crucify Him!"
 "Shall we hang Him Jesus, your king,
 Hang Him deftly on the cross, shall we?"
 He asked them again and pointed to Him 512

"No king have we but Caesar, today", they said
 "Well, let the curse of His innocent blood
 Fall on you!" he said and washed his hands.
 On hearing this our mother, our mistress 516
 Bent low and in her abode fell
 Prostrate on her knees and so did
 His disciple beloved, John and the rest!
 The heartless Jewish folk shouted aloud 520
 "Let it fall on us and our off-spring!"
 *Alas, why do I elaborate their vice,
 Their ingratitude, I describe?
 In sinful pride haughtily you behaved. 524
 Rue your own wicked passions, my soul
 True it was my sins that caused you to blood
 O woeful, it was I, who sorely
 Through my hearing and looks caused you hurt. 528
 Long sharp thorns I rudely pressed on you
 Had I my eyes and ears held bridled
 The pricks less sharp and painful had been
 Loving Father, me with eyes you gifted. 532
 Was it for this that your eyes were pinned?
 Had I but in my infancy died
 Or you punished me, each time I sinned
 The thorns less rudely had pierced your head 536
 And a little less had been your pains!
 Long life and health you did grant
 I used them rudely to commit graver sins
 They served but to augment my offences great 540
 The wrath of your enemies burning hot
 Their angry shouts shook Pilate with fear
 He wrote the sentence, it was a verdict of death,
 In a heavy throng they rushed to hear 544

* The poet is ruefully accusing himself for having caused this pain to Our Lord.

Pointed to the Lord the baneful cross
 The virgin mother and John at the sight
 With the pious women fell prostrate
 But you gazed at it in perfect delight 548
 You then stretched forth your sacred Hand,
 Pilate beat the drum to silence the throng
 To read out distinctly the cruel sentence
 Terrific! O God my Father, Lord of Justice! 552
 O remember, the shameless cruel verdict
 And open for us the gates of Heaven
 All your mighty celestial chieftains great
 Gabriel and Michael, Heavens army captains 556
 Raphael Judael, Varkheal Celestiel
 And Uriel, the seven prime warriors of heaven
 And all the nine rows of angel train
 Hailed to hear the verdict on your son. 560
 Only to hear it pronounced was highly baneful
 O Father kind, my dark sins its cause.
 Like a culprit you bowed to it to save me
 And the reputed city of Jerusalem 564
 The august consul of Galilee and the
 Famous all powerful emperor of Rome
 Placed the right of judgement at Ceaplus
 On the Roman Senate and Tiberius Caesar 568
 Jesus of Nazareth, a man of little worth
 Posing a king, caused dissension among persons
 As per royal mandate, for muddling all
 Should be hanged on the cross for certain 572
 To show to the world His sonship divine
 As king of Jews an olive branch huge
 In His hand, He was led in pomp
 As if denying Tiberius Caesar his tribute 576
 For defying him so mighty and great
 He deserved to be scourged at the pillar
 And so that in this man with hands bound
 The people may see and know Jesus 580

A mere loin cloth they clad Him with
 Loosed a hand and on His shoulder placed
 A log to crucify Him on Golgotha
 And caused Him, between two thieves, pace. 584

Screaming and shouting slogans most terrific
 Led by the Centurian Keethokornan
 Straight through the golden gate of the city
 He, the hill ascended with the rest. 588

Not to forestall the law enforced then
 He was made to walk up to His cross
 And to make it obvious to all
 That He, suspended between two out-laws 592

They decided His name to be inscribed
 Jesus of Nazareth, King of Jews
 In the tongues Greek, Latin and Hebrew
 The three languages then in use. 596

In order that without distinction all
 May grasp these facts entire without fail
 And if any should feign the least revolt
 He, all his wealth should at once forfeit 600

And suffer death at the hands of Caesar of Rome.
 That the verdict was passed by Rome in Hebrew
 In five thousand, two hundred and thirty years
 Three, since the birth of the golden world. 604

"On Friday, the twenty - fifth day of March
 This firm decision we make for sooth
 By order, in the Roman Emperor's name
 The justly reputed Governor of Galilee
 We, Pontius Pilate attest the same. 609



VIII

(The theme of this canto is a description of the passion of our Lord. Christ's cheerful acceptance of the cross, His being led to the summit of the Mount Calvary, Simon being enjoined to help him bear the Cross, our Blessed Mother and St. John bearing witness to the painful journey and the Crucifixion of our Lord on reaching Calvary are picturesquely and widely described in this Section. The canto concludes with the enumerating of the Seven Sacred Utterances of Jesus on the Cross)

My God, my Love, my Master oh, was it
 Your thirst unsatiable to redeem mankind
 That urged you to hear this sentence, unjust,
 And spare me hearing the verdict so justly mine 4

In an irate voice my hideous sins
 Condemning! O Loving God in my stead
 You did choose to hear this sentence
 These terrific words of judgement! 8

The instance the proclamation aloud was done
 The Jews in intense rage showed you the Cross
 And you, in earnest hope of serving man
 In your heart did utter these words 12

O Cross, Beloved, open your arms wide.
 And in your loving embrace quickly close me
 Let me present before my Father Beloved
 The sons of men, the loved ones of the world. 16

From atop your altars let me offer
 Myself as a gift of love and reparation
 O how long have I been waiting in love
 With zeal have I tarried, oh, how long 20

To rest in peace, in perfect comfort and love
 From Heaven's abode, my heart did wish,
 You the aim of my descent from above
 For this did I accept, my sorry flesh 24

You, my sure means, victory to gain
 You, the key to open heaven's gate
 You the fittest offering for human redemption
 Where man from dire poverty, shall riches attain 28

The shame, the disgrace, the roughness and rigour
 Through you, the essence of sweetness shall we attain
 The means to save the children of mankind you are
 Like me, my followers, the Faithfull shall embrace you 32

Along the path opened by you, my people
 Sure will race after you in earnest search
 You, my loving Father God Eternal
 You the creator of all the sky and earth ! 36

Hearing your command, I made pliant my heart
 That my sons may attain sure salvation
 Behold, the fire wood I offer for the Holocaust,
 To you my Sire, for the Sons of men, my kinsmen 40

Slaves no more but your Sons henceforth
 Through my merit, the heirs of all the wealth
 Shall gather day by day in your presence
 Treading paces ten and five to praise you 44

Heaving the heavy burden on your shoulder
 You stepped forth unto the streets; your mother
 Her visage blue with pain, fell prostrate
 And so did the angel train guarding her 48

The sorrow-ridden Virgin and John
 Yea, all fell prostrate adoring the Saviour
 O Woe, bitter woe, all for my sake !
 Had my sins been fewer, less severe, 52

The burden of the Cross had been lighter !
 If irresponsibly I had n't piled
 Sin upon Sin, O my god your pain
 Had been less ! aye fall ignorant 56

And forgetful of your plight, O pity,
 Feigning lack of awareness or denying it,
 Fearing danger to admit, many a crime
 Did I, to place that cross on your shoulder 60

My blessed Father with the cross your march
 Flanged on either hand by trains of cruel toes
 Rude, belted soldiers pacing ahead and after
 Pulling and dragging you helter-skelter 64

On rough rocks you stumbled many a time
 My beloved Lord, my Father your blood smeared
 Sacred forehead, pressed with a thorny crown
 Blood shining bright rivulets like streamed 68

Me, a sinner, thirsted to drink of it
 Alack, charming maidens daughters of Sion
 See your loving spouse, behold Him
 Who through love, the great King Solomon 72

He crowned, The crown he wore, a mark of love
 And leading his beloved one, the perfect bride
 He journeyed forth for His nuptials towards
 The Rostrum decorated on Calvary's peak. 76

With loud acclamations of exuberant joy
 He's dragged in haste. To see the progress
 Brave sweet maiden came forth
 And looked intently on her beloved's neck 80

To see the garland invisible to the eye;
 Oh how picturesque his bracelets
 Invisible even to celestial dignified Lords,
 The crown of your handsome bridegroom ! 84

Sweet limbed maid, watch with intense love
 For the love of you alone was it wrought
 Not another sovereign on earth does wear
 Such a crown, no, not e'en the grandest 88

Not one who is now alive on earth, oh sure
 And the priceless gems affixed on it
 Unseen in foreign climes, fine, peerless
 Long, bent, sharp-tipped thin and delicate 92

Hook - shaped some, but all glitt'ring bright
 And the beads suspended lightly around it
 Long, lending radiance to forehead and ears
 And on the wedding garment deftly strung 96

O, they hang skirting the path to the pandal
 Many would indeed wish to own just one
 Holy Spouse, it all befits you well
 And so the thing held by you, the weapon 100

The sheen of the sword hanging on you, how sharp
 The comrades twain walking by your side
 Full quaintly were they gathered to you
 A mighty crowd, to see the rarest sight 104

The blessed Bridegroom, His mother follows him
 My master, my Lord, my King, I follow too
 Your Blood does soak the path through my sin
 I, the cause of your death would follow you 108

Through my sins, though unworthy I be !
 Thus while my master His mighty cross bearing
 Full joyously made the journey forth
 Like a hefty stalwart rushed his path 112

In this journey, so willed by the Father
 By the stark rudeness of the cruel cross
 His lacerated shoulder; He, sorely fatigued
 Was by His mother watched and wept. 116

She prayed that some relief He may find
 Lo, her Son did hear His mother's plaint
 Softened, a wee bit His foes, they pressed
 Simon a way-farer who passed that way 120

To lend his hand to bear the burden behind
 And now the mother longing once again
 To see the face of her Beloved Son, may haps
 To grant the wish caused His path diverted 124

And the soldiers brought Him face to face
 With the mother ! O, the pain how to paint !
 Yet urged by love, eager to speak
 She approached ah, but in vain 128

The careless Villains denying leave interwened
 And He, the second Isaac went forth resolute
 To Calvary, Roughly they stripped Him of His clothes !
 To witness this forthwith, reach the mother 132

And John, with Marys three to pay Him homage
 Reverently the mother to the Heavenly Sire offered
 To redeem mankind, His brethren, her son divine
 And as was the custom they gave Him drink 136

Bitter it was by His kismen made with poison
 Observing the mother in tears to drink it forbade
 For her dear Love's sake. He obeyed
 Yet to prove that fear forbade Him not 140

He sipped it as though the bitter beverage he relished
 The cruel men with unbridled ire
 Tore off His bleeding flesh, the robe His mother
 Did weave in one piece from head to foot. 144

As they slid it His crown shook and its thorns
 Running deep into the scalp, stuck there fast
 Broken tips stung Him alas ! His cloak
 They stripped then mercilessly apart 148

They bound Him tight to a granite column
 And a royal cloak on him they cast
 So to pronounce on Him His verdict of death
 Oh, suff'ring similar the world has witnessed not 152

A cool gentle breeze now blew a blessing !
 The cloak with which His mother had clad His
 Soft body in His infancy to cover His shame
 Now the cruel men then callously plucked 156

How magnanimously you forgave the outrage !
 Yet in due regard to your mother's behest
 You permitted not to be stripped full naked
 And now they made haste to nail you to the cross 160

He, commending His mother to the sire in Heaven
 His disciples too and those predestined to be
 Of His flock, aye the sinners entire
 E'en they whom duty compelled to crucify Him 164

He devoutly prayed and in the moment tense
 His mother like-wise prayed. Indeed the Lord's
 Ever reputed great love its very cause !
 The men now ordered Him to stretch His arms 168

Along the arms of the Cross in humble submission
 And love intense He stretched forth His arms
 But they in sport carelessly marked, then bored
 Holes to drive in nails through His palms, 172

But alas, were the holes too wide apart.
 The mother now fondly approached Her Son
 His shapely hands she tenderly kissed
 The Band of enemies observed this as well 176

They stopped her not to augment His pain
 But full callously pulled an arm to the slot
 Try, as they could, they could not reach the next
 So tied a rope and tugged with all their might 180

Until the palm it reached the cruel hole
 Thus they with utter cruelty pinned Him fast
 By His arms and so His Sacred Feet
 Now, to bend their tips and hold them secure 184

They wished to turn the cross upside down
 The onlookers sympathetic to the core, clamoured
 To rail against the cruel move; hearing it
 With pain unbearable, His fond mother 188

Raising her eyes to the Father in Heav'n
 She prayed that the persecutors spare His eyes
 And not drag them athwart the granite stone
 His loving daughters' woeful lament he heard 192

He ordered His liegemen to grant her will
 Forthwith, they hasten to station beneath the cross
 So invisible that they believed in sooth
 The cross though in mid-air was firm on the ground 196

Hitting hard they held the nails secure
 To plant the cross in the hole they had dug
 Now they laboured with their sinews to lift
 But their insufficient strength, sorely failing 200

With poles and spears and such implements
 They hooked by the Lord's arm pits twain
 With mighty force they fixed his palms to the cross
 With sharp weapons, they tore his flesh all over 204

So they could deftly lift Him up and plant
 His body with the cross in the pit with might
 Vexed and angry they threw Him harshly down
 Ah ! groans were heard from the crowd around 208

In diverse ways cries of pity arose
 Some mourned for the just man
 Others grateful, they expressed their grief
 Those of Israel raved foul words of insult 212

Men who hailed from afar and had n'er seen
 The Lord for once, were bewildered and stunned
 A few cursed, the inactive loitering around
 Some could measure not this penalty unjust 216

Cruelty ! be the victim vicious or just
 He stood suspended ! To support His Body
 His veins ruptured by the heavy load
 Awful the sight - all apiece a bleeding mass 220

The prophecy of Isiah thus came true
 "The redeemer's birth would ensure salvation
 The carelessness of mortals and their faith
 Would bring in man's sure redemption 224

Perceiving the self-love in mankind she implored
 The Father that effacing it many may believe
 Seing it shown in the Son's tragic end
 The Father, His daughter's supplication granted 228

Instantly the Sun hid his brilliant light
 The Earth trembled to proclaim the agony sore
 The Temple curtain was rent straight in twain
 And He lay suspended on the cross. 232

With unslaked He pleaded with His Father
 "Forgive them, Sire, they know not what They do !"
 And benignly the Father granted the sublime prayer
 Hearing this the thief hanging on his Right 236

The good Thief meekly prayed from his Cross
 "Lord, when you reach your kingdom great
 Remember me a gross sinner, I pray!"
 The Lord made reply, "Today you shall be" 240

"Safe with me in Paradise" and then He turned
 To His mother "Woman, behold your Son!"
 To His disciple, "Son behold your mother!"
 If with doubt unholy shook the devil's mind 244

By utterances three O Father, forgive them
 For they know not what they do! "This day
 With me, you will be in Paradise" mark you,
 This Lady, sure will crush your head. 248

Now the Conviction dawned: This was the Christ!
 This the Lady who would crush his head
 "Lord, why have you forsaken me!"
 The fifth "I thirst!" All is consummated" 252

The Sixth, "Father, to You I Commend my Soul"
 The last, forthwith fell like thunder curst
 Fell Lucifer and his train to their fate 255

IX

[The events that followed the Crucifixion of our Lord form the theme of this Canto. After describing how on breaking the legs of the thieves suspended on the Crosses with Him, the blind Centurian Longinus thrust his lance right through the heart of Jesus; and then how His sacred Body was borne down and laid in the lap of His blessed Mother and afterwards placed in the sepulcher. The hymn of thanks giving sung by Longinus, whose vision was miraculously recovered; and the lament of the Blessed Mother over the Corpse of her son placed in her lap – the Mother of sorrow who held her lip sealed in silence; she being consoled by Peter, the repentant disciple, add to the signal charm of this Canto.]

(Tetra - syllabic lines)

Thus the Lord, breathed His last,
 And around the Cross the Marys stood
 Their hearts full sore with grief untold
 Strong and bold, their feelings controlled 4

Quickly to bear down His sacred Body
 That stiffly hung on the cross of wood
 And place in the sepulchre safe-
 How best to do the task, they mused 8

As she, filled with maternal love, reflected
 And with the angel train sat consulting;
 From down the mountain valley emerged
 An army bearing weapons varied 12

The captains broke the legs of the twain
 Hanging on either side of Him
 As was then enforced by custom
 But, finding our Lord already dead 16

They left His body intact, albeit
 Their wish to smash his bones as well
 One of them, Longinus by name
 Who from his birth was stark blind 20
 He raised his spear aloft and thrust
 It through his heart and lo! there rushed
 Blood and water forth! The Mother
 Prayed to her son with love and compassion 24
 "Lord, deign to trun your justice
 Unto pity and look on him with mercy!"
 And a drop splashed in to his eyes
 As if to her prayer, in response 28
 And lo! the mist was gone
 His eyes and heart at once opened.
 Prostrate he fell and blessed the Lord.
 Sabbath dawned; His body blessed 32
 Was from the cross to be removed
 But how? Who will pull the nails
 Off His limbs? Helpless they gaze
 And to the Father in Heaven, they pray. 36

(Iambic penta - metre)

The Lord heard the plaints of the Virgin
 And in His mercy sent her friendly men
 From down the mountain valley she saw them come
 In swelling numbers; She sat in doubt and pain 40
 Who be these, what brings them fast?
 Would these like the former cruelties repeat?
 They come with weapons clad, who knows for what?
 Care filled her mind as in pain she sat 44
 Then came the loved disciple John
 Observed them shrewdly and surmised
 Softly quelled her fears with words of comfort:
 "Mother, friends they are" he said, "Fear not!" 48

"They come desirous of learning your pleasure
 And dismount Jesus adown the cross
 With perfumed myrrh to lave His corpse
 And to wrap in a shroud his sacred form." 52
 As was written, Nicodemus and his friend
 And their serving men, the best of them
 Stood at the Lady's feet, steeped in grief
 With sincere sympathy and great concern 56
 Unbounded sorrow the mother's heart did fill
 With awe and grief they stood gazing at her
 Wrought with pain they stood silent and still
 When she brushed off her grief; They greeted her 60
 With love and devotion they both approached her
 They placed the ladder on the cross with care
 While one climbed it and pulled out the nails
 Joseph made speech to the Virgin Mother: 64
 "Mother benign, be pleased to move aside
 And rest your dainty feet, I pray, for a while
 They knew the might of Joseph's words so wise
 Of the noble Signor, benevolent, upright 68
 Of how with rude fingers the wicked men
 Tore and disfigured the sweet sacred face
 Of the Lord of the Triple world, who called to being
 The Stars unnumbered and birds that fly the air 72
 Dealt numerous blows and tortures severe
 Borne with the patience and meekness of a lamb
 Smoth'ring even a note of plaint or sob
 Your Son bore it all, while mute I stood 76
 Torturers you are not but friends in sooth
 You came not to kill or to inflict woe
 And while you a deed of mercy do perform
 I stay inert, yet one with you in sorrow 80
 Sans all qualm of mind I stand
 While you pluck the nails and hold up his hand
 You nail them not afresh to the wood!
 With steadiness, arms descend from above 84

Mother, I your Son through thoughts unwholesome
 Did press a thorny crown on the crown of creation
 Hold it fast in your sacred hand with devotion
 Save me from Sin of birth' – grant me salvation 88
 Then on her knees reverently held out her hands
 On the throne of grace her lap, piously received it
 And pressing it to her face in tears drenched it
 Pressed her lips on it, in contemplation deep 92
 Her disciple and Son in one, the symbol of Love
 The Marys three and the rest with tender grace
 Kissed it, aye, washed it in tears
 While the mother the Seat of love, adored him 96
 The sacred task of dismantling the corpse being done
 The Mother now prepared to receive it with love
 She stretched forth her arms across her lap
 With reverence she spread the shroud apace 100
 Arresting her tears flowing profusely, She fixed
 Her gaze at him; reverently she knelt beneath
 The cross; and held out her arms ready and firm
 Adoring, She pressed her eager lips on him 104
 Nicodemus helped; They bore Him down the cross
 Mary of Magdala in grief held His legs
 The loving disciple holding steady His head
 Placed Him reverently on The Mother's lap 108
 No ostentatious grief on her face;
 But the strain of holding back brought blood
 Unto her eyes; sense fails describing it
 I narrate but this much only for a prize 112
 All bonds undoing the son's corpse she laid
 In her lap, hard fastened to her heart
 Pressed her loving lips on his wounds entire
 Laid in her arms they kissed Him one and all 116
 The devoted, beloved disciple and Joseph observing
 The sun's rays fade and disappear
 Approached the Lady and reverently addressed her :
 "The sun has set, Mother, your son's revered 120

Radiant Body needs be buried soon
 Grant us the sweet accord of your will!"
 Hearing this, though alarmed she did hasten
 To lave his Body with fragrant myrrh 124
 Befittingly laid on the horse and Joseph
 And Nicodemus and John her beloved son
 With Centurian Cornelius and other men
 Carried it in state as the head of the clan 128
 That the redeemer's corpse be befittingly buried
 As decreed by the sovereign Lord
 Angels bright from the heavens descended
 With Mary on a side and the troop on the other 132
 They marched the corpse to a garden in state
 And in a sepulchre for Joseph new built
 Granted to the Lord as a privilege rare
 The holy temple, His body, they laid in it 136
 And ere placing the lid on the grave secure
 The son's sacred face that brought into being
 All things created, her final kiss to impress
 She drew with devotion with the veil for His head 140
 With caution the face-cloth she raised Just a little
 And on her knees she fell to kiss His Face
 Others eagerly looked on and adored
 The Feet that brought them all Eternal Salvation 144
 Closing the coffin with the stone lid fast & secure
 Mary their mistress addressed the angel train
 She set them to guard the Treasure from every danger
 Until dusk, she asked them to sing in praise 148
 And then all the assembly moved towards the hill
 To all the Faithful who were drawn to Mother
 She lovingly gathered them all and moved to the cross
 Together they adored the cross and with those
 Already assembled there the mother Blessed,
 Marched towards Sion her quiet abode. 154

THE MOTHER'S GRIEF

The virgin mother gave her blessing to all
 For the help and solace they gave in full
 Went hence with the loved disciple calm and peaceful
 The other pious women, she joined them all. 4

John, the disciple beloved reached her forthwith
 Shaking off his diffidence he came forth
 "For sighing and weeping mother," said he
 How pale and weak with fatigue you be! 8

Alas from all food and rest you abstained
 With some victual now sustain your strength! "
 Sighing deep in gratitude, she gently replied
 John's words touched her heart to its depth 12

Are you not loved Son, my nourishment
 My greater hope, my Son's resurrection
 Hie to your sisters they need encouragement
 Let me await my Son to rise from the dead 16

Give them all befitting help you can
 With gentle concern seek what good you can
 Only be gracious to give me shelter, my son
 That I may, your handmaid, in retirement rest. 20

With these words she withdrew to her retreat
 She spent the night alone with her sorrow
 As the chief of an army after a deadly fight
 To nurse his wounds at times seek reprieve 24

In his tent, and probe each wound to gauge
 Observe his feet, arms, neck and stomach
 Nay his form entire for sounds each stroke
 Then will his wounds smart afresh, I ask? 28

Beyond my might, me a sinner, to describe
 The pains the mother endured in her heart so mild
 As on that night she sat revolving in mind!
 Yet, through my desire, I long to delineate 32

When thus the mother her allotted room entered
 She saw the bright lamp from the roof suspended
 The foregone sad vision she remembered
 In tears from her eyes afresh her sorrow rushed. 36

"Oh! was not my Son the light, of my life,
 My love, my life for whom my heart did live
 Could a corpse be intact, severed from life
 Was not His sacred love the life of my life?" 40

With desire have I languished your sweet face to see
 Long have I wished, nay longed to your presence to rush
 While in your mother's womb with love you did rest
 Aye, at your Feet my supplications hourly did I press 44

Which inside the temple I sat in loving prayer
 Relentless, each passing moment your advent I did await
 Aware, to save the world from sin you would arrive
 A woman, future queen of the world, conceive and nurse
 you 48

'I would then be her humble handmaid; the Child
 I would bow before Him, adore and kiss His Feet
 Thus did I desire and long for the day to arrive
 When you looked upon the humility of your slave 52

Your messenger Gabriel you did despatch and send
 He saw me and "Blessed among women", he hailed
 Behold abject of the abject today I wail
 My Son, how do I lock my eyelids, sore today? 56

All the nine months I bore you in my womb not a day
 Did I refrain from praying with tearful eye
 And when your foster-father set out for Bethlehem
 that day
 I, with the utmost care, packed for him his attire 60

The blossoms that my holy spouse did deck you with
 I deftly removed and clad you in your garment own
 Though mountainous was our path, your clean attire
 With meticulous care I bore with me to Bethlehem 64

Your pure little body so much dearly loved, to cover
 I waited Oh! how long with what desire
 And today, where is my Son's immaculate body oh? where
 Woe be to me, from it, I am so far away. 68

For nine months, with tenderness I bore you in my womb
 You pained me never since I saw your lovely form
 You preserved all the suffering for tonight my love my Son
 Ah 'tis well for me your holy will be done 72

On that night on seeing you, your feet I did kiss
 I owned gratefully that you are my Saviour indeed
 Of kingly glory the highest rank you possess
 And royal love grew great in me for you, my Child 76

I pressed my lips in your eyes, Oh, when next
 Shall I see your lovely face my Son beloved
 On the octave of your birth the High Priest
 Circumcising you, with certainty proclaimed 80

"You are his mother shield yourself from the sight
 Keep away from this pain entrust Him to the Priest"
 Then to him, my desire, I firmly professed
 He his consent gave and I witnessed the deed 84

Describe unto me the dread scenes of yesterday entire
 That my eyes all the day long did witness
 Sadly separated from my kith and kin
 And e'en my holy spouse and from you, my Son 88

When I to the temple took you on the fortieth day
 A fond offering of you to God on high, to make
 The High Priest's dismal words of your predicted fate
 That a sharp - pointed sword will run deep into my heart 92

That secrets sev'ral would then come to light
 Besides, you'd cause many to fall and rise
 My Son, you'd be the stone over which many would stumble
 Disclose my son, what these words do signify 96

Be gracious now to dispel the doubt of Israel !
 The day we left the cowshed where I saw you born
 So that the holy spot, no creature would molest
 A mighty sentinel at the entrance did I post 100

Where shall I seek you, now, my Son, once adored
 By the angels bright in Heaven above I remember
 How on that day, as was our wont, me and my holy spouse
 While performing a nine - day devotion in the temple your
 messenger 104

From High your loving father apprised of the evil plot
 Lifting you in my arms in the dead of night
 My beautiful child, you, from the enemies' hands to save
 Nestling you in my arms, I trod my weary way 108

Where be you my Son, on this dreary night
 My eyes, alas, are not blessed with your sight
 In Egypt where our people sojourned, when in Heliopol
 we dwelt 112

An apparid did I weave, your fragile form to deck
 My son the cloth I, your mother wove with my hands
 Your body little form to adorn I had packed
 With an underwear and a lovely garment -
 You loved it and it grew with your growth 116

Until the time when asunder the soldiers for it
 It served a dress for you, till off they plucked it
 And in your presence rudely did share it.
 The dainty foot - wear from the time, to walk you started 120

I made for you, with satisfaction, a sooks of wool.
 Your words to your handmaid at thirty you did fulfil
 When you gathered around you sons of men
 Well, may it happen, as is your holy will 124

When as you had purposed you trod apace
 Woods and valleys across stones and burning sand
 With your delicate feet unheeded you did brave
 The reason behold, the sins unnumbered of your
 handmaid 128

Annihilate, I pray by the merits of your Feet
 Wandering in an alien soil without your help
 My deadly pain then no one can state !
 Again, while plodding my weary way in Naz'reth 132

It is still deeply writ in my mind how once
 For three long days at the age of twelve
 You were as lost to us disappearing in the crowd
 Leaving us in agonising pain untold, swore 136

My Son beloved, you know I sought your perpetual presence
 And when the time for your Baptism did come
 You locked me in a loving embrace to your bosom
 And tonight you are far, unbearable, your absence 140

You came, my son, you my only help and stay
 You came again with your loving disciples five
 You came, to see me, unto my dwelling place
 And your hand-maid with love did kiss your Feet. 144
 (Tetra - syllabic lines)

You cleansed me from sin at birth
 Showed your measureless love and strength
 Revealed yourself to your hand-maid
 Saved me through your own worth 148

"Behold my daughter" the Almighty said
 I chose her through my mercy
 "My mother, my choice," the son said
 "I chose her from the many" 152

With purity, love, eternal life, a gift
 You raised me above all creation
 How could you now from me depart
 Be it for your work of salvation? 156

To help you save all, I follow you
 Knew your will and willingly came
 All my will I offer you
 With my life, I'll do the same 160

'Tis injustice, I am aware
 On three courts I followed you
 By their leave I cooked for you
 Ah, today you have left me forlorn 164

What lack of gratitude
 Did you see in me, my love,
 Yester - night Eucharist you founded
 To stay with us for aye! 168

Yet all did desert you, alas!
 May haps through fear of death
 And the unkindest one Judas
 Sold you for thirty silver bits 172
 (Iambic Hexa metre)

Surprising it is, he did not sell your humble hand maid
 When thus he sold you precious for than diamond
 And all the precious gems to boot! Your learned words
 Had enriched him even more, the ungrateful! 176

*What stopped him from it? Did he deem you a foe
 And posing a friend he betrayed you with a kiss.
 Mother beloved, for thirty silver chips he sold your son
 And I loveless, piteous, oft sold Him for less 180

Came you for this my friend? - Was this his sole penalty
 Yet in your mercy, if to you he had turned
 Willingly you would have granted him full pardon
 This was the only regret that pained you my mother 184

The sharp-tipped sword that pierced your heart
 in spirit, I saw
 Impossible for my tongue to recount such dolours sore
 The duller of the dull, I could narrate those pains
 no more
 Hence I withhold my pen and draw to you for succor. 188

Grant me but the grace to alert my mind. On Saturday
 John your beloved son before the sun rose at dawn
 Rose up and receiving your blessing O mother of the
 noble son

Hastened to Peter, the prince of the deciple train 192

At the benign Lady's behest, he set forth to seek.
 And he found Peter, not far away at day break
 Battered, squatting on the ground, the whole night
 to weep

When he met his chieftain, in sympathy and
 love he spake 196

Our Mother has sent this message to you, "Your
 sorrow cast aside
 Be not broken, mourn you not, Our mother seat of
 mercy!"

Thus he spoke with warm feelings of love, yet sad!
 Hearing these words Peter, all his pain, he banished 200

Slowly he walked with his comrade his head bent
 in shame

Oh! how could he, his loving mother face
 After her kind and loving son he did forsake
 And boldly he had boasted of his constancy great 204

* The poet's words to our Lady

The Lord, then through His power divine
 Invested it with rare gifts
 Of deathlessness and light and might
 And granted these to man as well 24

To perform such a miracle He gave
 The power to certain of his Saints
 With this power it was, they could
 To heaven ascend as bright as the Sun 28

Along with the celestial train they came
 To the mother who awaited them
 At the sight of the Sacred Face
 Humbly, she fell prostrate 32

The beloved son then approached her
 With love intense, close he held her
 Had he not then grace imparted
 No strength she had to bear it all 36

Now they heard a voice mysterious,
 "My Love ascend now to the skies"
 Graced by power divine she saw
 The godly scene and so rejoiced 40

After gazing thus for a while
 Whatever gifts could be given to men
 Were showered on her betide
 On His blessed mother divine 44

After this the Lady with her forefathers
 Her virtuous spouse and the Baptist
 And the holy souls quite blessed
 Sought leave to celebrate the event 48

Recognized at sight all her clan
 Rejoiced on seeing Anna and Joachim
 Her loving spouse Joseph as well
 And the Baptist she lovingly tended 52

At the meeting all rejoiced
 As much as they liked; time
 There was of forty days and then
 He would ascend into heaven 56

Those who died during this time
 So that they could meet the Lord
 They stayed in the Sion Hall
 After reparation of faults. 60

Even they, who strangers, were
 Through the holy mother's prayer
 By Him absolved from their sin
 Became worthy of beatific vision 64

And once at the mother's oratory
 They saw a wondrous brilliant light
 The heavenly Father and the Spirit
 And the word incarnate the Trinity 68

Since the Son's ascension was near
 The mother came there to prepare
 Seeing the wondrous vision bright
 In humility she fell prostrate 72

With awe she knelt and hid her face
 She adored in solemn devotion
 Then the heavenly sire ordered
 To lead her to the throne 76

And a signal voice she heard:
 "My Love, ascend to the skies!"
 The Father then approached her
 And lovingly said, "My daughter, 80

Your Son, my beloved Son, the
 Church founded on earth by Him
 It has so grown in number
 I entrust it to your care" 84

The holy Spirit on her bestowed
 Virtues great of wisdom and knowledge
 The loving Father then entrusted
 The Church to the Mother's care and pledge 88

Forthwith the angels with a display of music
 Bowed to her and hailed her the Queen
 The domain of Creation* of the Church forever
 The mother for aye the solace of the Sinner 92

* Adding members to the church

Such offices of honour the Father
 Gave her and yet again on His
 Day of the glorious ascension unto Heaven
 As His mother and thousands of His faithful 96

Looked on with His disciples eleven and
 Followers several, Mary, Martha,
 Lazar and other pious women
 Had in Sion Hall assembled, 100

He, with His mother dear to His heart
 Set out in a group; at their heels
 The Holy Fathers and the Angel train
 With the Holy Elect two hundred 104

Along the Streets of Jerusalem,
 For they dared not go unguarded
 A squadron of soldiers walked ahead
 And a crowd of good ones followed 108

Lastly came the Church Militant,
 And amidst them walked the Lord
 His queen mother and reached the mount
 Of Olives, she fell at His feet. 112

After the final blessing of the Lord
 The remaining crowd joined them
 And their humble greetings done
 The Lord in approval blessed them 116

His foot prints on the pavement impressed
 He of His own might then slowly arose
 O the salvation that came to us all
 Impossible for my tongue to relate 120

The mother remembered how John
 On Tabor at His feet adored
 Now as decreed by the Almighty
 She made the faithful dwell in Sion 124

For ten days in prayer awaited
 To welcome the "Paraclete"
 And the gifts He graciously gave
 And powers the peter received 128

To narrate these, helpless my tongue,
 To do justice to them in truth.
 Thus increased the numbers, now,
 To three thousand and then a five 132

Day by day it went on swelling
 When a sad thing came to pass
 In that tumult, Stephen the apostle
 Died a great martyr, the First 136

From the consequences dire
 Wicked Lucifer for profit tried
 But the Lady the flock of her son
 Tended with care, with fervour prayed 140

In those days Saul full proud
 Of his birth and learning great
 And of his* master whose disciple he was
 With a letter and army to boot 144

To the faithful in Damascus he turned
 From fallacies in faith to save them
 Either to punish or to bind them
 On horse back he rode to them in haste 148

Wicked Lucifer and his comrades
 Followed unseen, him to aid
 The Mother too observing this
 Prayed that evil may turn to good 152

The loving Son heard her prayers
 Assured her, he'd grant it
 From the sky a bolt came
 That made saul give up his scheme 156

Then when all matters he learned
 Deeply grieved he then became
 Hearing of Mother's deep grief
 He felt he could not face her again 160

* Gamaliel

Saul thus sat overcome with grief
 The mother sent to him an angle
 Who consoled and baptised him
 Counsell'd him and prayed with him 164

To help her children, the mother sent him
 Praying that all ill may turn to good
 After Peter the disciple died
 The thirteenth month in the year of Christ 168

.....*

A firm believer in the Trinity he turned
 Lucifer foreseeing the fall of his might
 In his hell a conclave summoned 172

"I find my reign is losing its grip
 Find out at once the cause of it all
 To the world I will at once speed
 With my Comrades great and small 176

Thus resolved, he to the mid-air
 Heaved to view the beauteous city
 Of Jerusalem; he wet with ire
 His tottering throne to see! 180

He knew the events that caused his ruin
 From the disciples of Jesus came
 Whom he contrived to be murdered
 Through Herod and the priestly clan 184

With malice, he brought in misery
 Insults and fetters to the Just
 Hence the Lord inspired the Lady
 To shift the Church to Ephesus 188

Humbly the mother informed the Disciple
 Obediently he gave his consent;
 While John made preparation
 The Saviour appeared and said: 192

"Before going to Ephesus, To Spain
 You will go, and from there to Syracuse
 James, the disciple to meet there
 Thither you must turn your steps 196

Go to Jerusalem city and there suffer
 Your head to be severed for my sake
 Hearing this, to fulfil his Command
 With reverence the mother did prepare 200

Immediately, the angels her guardians
 Seated Heaven's queen in a Chariot
 And in the midst of heavenly music-
 A sight, as never before was seen 204

At cyracuse she met the Apostle;
 When he was told of the Lord's will
 A beautiful likeness in the Court-yard
 He miraculously installed 208

Later a beautiful Church was built
 And to her honour dedicated
 She was fifty years and four
 And three months at that time 212

The citizens of Jerusalem
 Seing a bright cloud they looked
 John her Son immediately came
 And ordered to set forth to Ephesus 216

The faithful who heard brought their gifts
 And they got ready to set out
 The mother to poverty vowed refused
 All except a poor vehicle 220*

The ship's crew not knowing why
 Though to see a person so great,
 These creatures resolutely
 Intercepted their path onwards 236

Seing this John her son
 With grateful joy came to her side
 "Mother, see for joy at seing you
 They rush to get your benison 240

* Lines 169, 221 - 232 Omitted.

You must at once oblige them
 Or from you they'll never part
 The creatures of the sea with might
 Push us to stop our onward path 244

 The Lady then lifted her hand
 Gave her blessing to all in the crowd
 Then together they raised their heads
 And soon, as if to obey they bowed 248

 Joyously to return to their places
 They in an orderly way dispersed
 And they quickly reached Ephesus
 Who bade fare well to Jerusalem 252

 The people knew and joyously came
 Offering her with zeal a home
 The mother who sought but humility
 Accepted a poor little abode. 256

 One little house for John her son
 And another one for her own use
 She took. In these days came James
 The son of Zebede to see them 260

 As he paid homage to the Lady
 He told her how through her son's grace
 How he laboured for his brethren
 In Spain, through God's holy will 264

 The mother kindly called him near
 And told him of the will of God
 On hearing which he fell at her feet
 And promised help to carry it out 268

 "You must help me, give me courage
 At the hour of my death, help me,"
 He begged, weeping; the mother then
 Consol'd him and blessed him. 272

 And forthwith he left for Jerusalem
 Where, he was captured by Herod's men
 He was bound and in prison Cast
 Just to humour the Jewish clan. 276

Cruel Agrippa sentenced him
 To be beheaded; to persecution
 James was led. The saviour
 A messenger to Ephesus sent 280

 And gave her word of the apostles' death
 The mother was on clouds the borne
 As commanded by the Lord;
 To console the apostle she was brought 284

 At his death she strength imparted
 After he died, his soul she bore
 To the presence of her son blessed.
 To protect the corpse from the foes 288

 She asked the disciples to guard it
 In March forty-eight the year of the Lord
 In the seventh month after he left
 Jerusalem as she had wished 292

 The First to come by the crown of Glory
 The first to bear witness to all
 Yet it was clear that the evil spirit
 His prominence had boldly established there 296

 The mother fervently prayed that the devil
 Be from the skies, Cast into the pit
 Again to Ephesus where her son
 Remained unseen she then hied 300

 In these days to humour the Jews
 Herod captured Peter and bound him
 The mother heard this and sent her angel
 To release him from the prison 304

 In those days in the city of 'Ephos'
 A huge temple of Diana stood
 Women, her devotees sev'ral
 Calling upon her name they prayed 308

 They called themselves celebrates
 But their hearts held no God
 Seeing this, the lady deeply grieved
 With devotion, she to her Son appealed 312

The Lord responded and decreed
 That their might should be swept off
 The mother sent one of her angels
 Who of a night, turned the tide 316

 The unchaste women fully subdued
 Turned virtuous and innocent
 They gathered soon around our Lady
 And with affection embraced them 320

 Of these maidens fourteen she chose
 And by herself she tutored them
 Thus seventy three of those
 True Virgins they became 324

 She with her own hand wrote out
 A book of rules for them to obey
 In those days in Jerusalem city
 The disciples assembled for a cause 328

 When about to enter discussion
 They wanted the Lady the prime, to join
 The chief of the group Peter then
 Wrote to the Lady for information 332

 The letter they began as of old
 The words initial were the same
 "To Mary, our Mother Mother of God
 We write this for a good cause 336

 Your Servant, the apostle of Christ
 The slave of your servants, Simon Peter
 Our Lady some doubts have arisen in us
 Some new doubts in your servants 340

 So, the apostles have assembled
 In Jerusalem, the chief of cities
 Our mistress, if you are not with us
 The new decision will not please 344

 Hence if you come to us now
 Many a rare gift, will be ours
 When this letter reached her
 The Blessed Lady knelt down 348

And with reverence kissed it
 And handing it over to John
 Asked him to tear it open
 And tell her the worthy contents 352

 On hearing it she said to John
 Tell me what's best to be done
 It is to be obeyed as from the chief
 This directive, the mother informed 356

 "It's imminent we should go"
 She said, "make preparations"
 She to the nunnery went in haste
 And warned the chief to run it well 360

 Of these a nun at her baptism
 She had given her own name
 To the Lady she was devoted
 To her care the place was entrusted 364

 After staying for two months in Ephos
 To the city of Jerusalem, she came
 And when she was about to board the ship
 The angels came as soldiers in uniform 368

 She warned them of battles ahead
 For certain she knew and told them so
 When the ship was launched in sea
 Entered the waters a legion of devils 372

 In their midst came a dragon
 Large enough to churn the ocean
 Deep he dived into the caves of the sea
 Disturbing the waters into a storm 376

 The ships rose high and was lashed
 By the waves, the crew became scared
 For never before had they seen such
 Whirl winds, so violent a tempest 380

 Their strokes threatened to shatter the ships
 If to prevent, the angel raised it not
 Efforts they made to bring it down—
 Failing, they changed their mode of attack 384

Assuming horrible forms, Satan
 Raised loud frightful sounds
 The implements and objects they
 Picked up in their hands 388

The crew then tried to save themselves
 But were frightened of the sea
 While the mother lost in prayer
 Sat within the cabin and watched 392

She prayed for the sailors devoutly
 Filled with compassion she sat
 Frightful fourteen days she passed
 Tired of it all, John went in 396

He told the mother "Pray to your son
 Fervently now, or else we perish
 Hearing this, She looked at John
 And lovingly said, "Fear not my son. 400

Know you, this is the time of struggle
 You have to put up a bold fight
 For your master; but be assured
 None will be lost, He will aid 404

Just then arrived the Lord
 At the spot and cheered his mother
 He commanded the mother to control
 The waves and the devils as well 408

The mother obeyed and all was calm
 The ship then to Jerusalem came
 It was voyage of just six days
 But twice sixteen it seemed in pain 412

XI

[This cantò treats of events that took place after
 Our Lady recovers from her initial strain of be-
 reavement of her Son. She makes the First Way
 of the Cross. Then she consoles and helps the
 dear disciples. The strict life of abnegation she
 leads, her parting message, her submission to Peter,
 the Vicar of the Church, and the counsels she imparts
 to him are poetically and elaborately delineated.]

The holy Virgin to Jerusalem came
 Filled with yearning to touch the Soil
 Sanctified by His precious blood
 But more by her obedience prompted 4

She made her way to Peter in haste
 And humbly before him she knelt
 Kissed with awe his revered hand.
 He in turn his benediction gave. 8

Then in mercy she prayed for strength
 That she be permitted to set-forth
 And trace the places hallowed, from Olives
 By his Feet from 'Gethsemane' in faith 12

In heaven her loving Son perceived
 The light that shone from his mother
 For her son's emulation on earth
 Her submission to His Vicar. 16

He said, "Mother, men shall learn
 This obedience you showed for certain"
 As He vanished, the mother turned
 With her dear disciples to Sion. 20

For ten days they sat, wrapt
 In contemplation for Heaven's light
 To learn His will; doubts dispelled
 They dispersed, faith to spread. 24

All her care she spent on them
 Oft visited to render help
 With the same maternal love
 She wished to embrace them. 28

With her fingers, yarn she spun
 Aided by her angels from high
 With even care made clothes for them
 And sent them to wherever they sped. 32

Thus she ever succored them all
 To Peter, she gave special care
 For that, He was the Head of all
 Once, while in Rome he prayed 36

In pain, the mother knew the cause
 To show him grace to him she hied
 In secret so to strengthen him
 And mysterious facts she revealed. 40

In such a conference he decided
 To fix certain days for celebrity
 His Birth and "Pasch" and Eucharist
 Easter and Ascension holy. 44

Sundays were to be festal days
 And so they've been until this day
 Then the mother to Jerusalem repaired
 And Rome was by foes tortured 48

Again Peter sought her help
 Her kinsmen she to him despatched
 By miracle brought him near
 And him again she fortified. 52

With promise of prayers she braced him.
 Duly strengthened he rose to leave
 Thus the mother the infant Church
 Served, though seated far away. 56

Constantly she held in mind
 The passion and suff'ring of her son
 His agony, pillar and scourge
 And the sharp crown of thorns 60

The mother not alone remembered
 But felt at heart the intense pain
 On the cross, he suffered; indeed,
 No cross, no salvation ! 64

His agony, ever before her
 Her ears hear the words of abuse
 Her arms she stretches as on the cross
 Folds her feet and bends her knees 68

Prostrate, she prays in pain
 'Gethsemane' makes her sweat
 And shed tears of blood that wet the ground
 The sharp point of the spear 72

Pierces the heart and opens the wound
 Powerless she falls unable to stand
 When thus she relives the agony
 Sure the Son would go beside her 76

Steady His mother; her heart's wound
 Heal by His might and augment her strength
 Thus besides honouring these places
 Get solace out of them. 80

On Thursdays to the Oratory
 With intense pain she'd repair
 Until Sundays dawn contemplate
 She on her blessed son. 84

To conduct all the work then
 An angel she'd become sure
 Thus on three days preparation
 Receive her Son in Sacrament. 88

Besides this preparation
 She'd often lie prostrate
 And to the angels implore
 Help to overcome her tepidity 92

When the son's arrival nears
 Thrice would the mother bow
 She'd repeat the same after
 And lying prostrate, adore Him 96

"It's my God who's coming to me"
 "He has arrived in my soul"
 Thus she'd sigh before and after
 Great indeed her humility ! 100

 But alas, we so sinful yet
 How poor our preparation
 When the Virgin receives her Son
 John has seen her face shine 104

 Not this alone. Through piety
 The Sacred Vestments used for mass
 She with her own hands washed
 And that on her knees she did 108

 She accomplished with devotion
 All that the altar needed herself
 Her imperfect mode of doing
 She perfected with her skill 112

 Then there came to see the mother
 Four great men, fabulously rich
 Wealth in plenty they offered her
 Precious diamonds and gems of worth 116

 Wealth and riches she detested
 But not to merit the men's hatred
 Using the crudest beads she made
 Clothes well adorned with taste 120

 And sacred vestments she stitched
 Using her sense and artist's gift
 The materials left over she sold
 The good and noble poor to help. 124

 Thus up to her sixtieth year
 Laboriously she stretched her days
 With water and dry crumbs to sustain her
 Sleep and repose even less 128

 At times she ate a little fish
 All, methinks, her son to please
 He, her constant companion sat
 That he may also eat a morsel. 132

She tended him with care
 And he, for aye her words heeded
 Like a mother she did feed and tend him
 And not for a moment from her parted 136

 In those days with solemnity
 The Lord Himself descended to Cheer her
 At times the angels on luminous clouds
 Would lift her to the regions above 140

 On Sunday, her contemplation over
 She was by Order to Heaven admitted
 Celestial beings His wish accomplished
 He would welcome her at heaven's gate 144

 Unto His bosom, He would clasp her
 As the Angles their chorus strike
 "Glory to Heaven alleluiah!"
 Thus they would full gaily sing 148

 In her last days with zest
 As a privilege she'd receive
 Him in Sacrament: Thus one day
 John celebrated the Eucharist 152

 Albeit her end was drawing near,
 To sustain in us a lasting relish
 The Lord through an angel bade John
 To serve the Eucharist daily to her 156

 As ordered by the supreme God head
 John came while many stood watching by
 And apprised her of God's bidding
 Of how the Sacrament he should give her. 160

 He hied to her and told her of
 Heaven's holy will in sooth
 That she may partake every day
 Of the Lord's Sacred Body 164

 "Your Son, my Master has made known His Will
 And I'm on duty bound to obey"
 The mother watched him and bade him speak
 What then was in his mind. 168

John pondered for a while and said
 "If such be His expressed Will,
 Sure are we bound to obey it!"
 And His hand-maid bowed in accord. 172

With joy he now revealed to her
 How to him the Lord had appeared
 And bade him accomplish His Will
 And he'd spent his days in prayer 176

The presentation in the temple
 Her holy birth free from sin
 Her Nuptials with her chaste spouse
 Her Immaculate Conception 180

On all such days important
 With the utmost devotion she gave
 Thanks for boons resplendent
 And praised the Almighty with grace. 184

The grace bestowed on her through virtue
 Its magnitude and high merit
 Though born on earth as man
 Though from Eternity the Father's Son 188

Though as man he took upon Him
 The full human nature, all
 Except the original stain of sin
 A grace to match it, there was none 192

Meditating intently on these
 And adoring her sacred Son
 Thus at midnight falling prostrate
 Gave thanks for the gifts received 196

And lo! one day as she stood praying
 With her angels, her son appeared
 Into a chariot lifted her
 Unto the bosom of the Father 200

The mother now fell prostrate
 And adored God the Father
 The Son to the angels gave command
 To seat her by His left Hand. 204

The Great God rend'ring her IMMACULATE
 Raised her for begetting Him
 For the grace, she gratefully offered thanks
 With her Son, Holy Trinity she praised. 208

God Immovable in Heaven's region
 Established firmly, irrevocably
 She was born sinless; to her Son
 The same privilege was given. 212

Mother mine, supreme among women
 The Stain of Sin was never in you.
 When the Trivne God pronounced you His own
 And loved you from your very birth 216

With resounding words, he joyed His Mother
 And said, "You my lovely queen
 Full pure you are, all bright
 You alone, untainted by sin" 220

Hearing this, the Court of Heaven
 Praised God and acclaimed with glee
 All angels clapped their hands
 With harps and timbrels thus sang 224

"Mary Mother immense born holy
 Fair without stain of sin"
 Then she the holy people sees
 In Heaven, all look akin 228

With grandeur she would hereafter
 Her heavenly birth celebrate
 On the twenty-fifth of March
 After a trideum of devout prayer 232

Fasting she would spend days nine
 Contemplating on her son
 On the sixth day with devotion
 Reflect on World's glorious creation 236

So for three days the sky would be decked
 With beauteous gifts of various hues
 On the final day a vision granted
 The glory of God to manifest in full 240

To augment her hearts joy
 All the souls in purgatory free
 And set Heaven's gates ajar
 Through the merit of her son's love 244

On her Feast, She, the queen
 With her son and angels all
 Would to the cenacle go; St. John
 Would offer mass, while angels Sing 248

In the mother's oratory the son
 With His angels he would greet
 And after receiving Him in Sacrament
 Would seat herself on His right 252

To heaven she would rise in bliss
 By virtue of the Sacrament
 Then again for four days
 In His honour, her fast resume 256

On such days with devotion
 She would for sinners, pray to her son
 To save them all from damnation
 Her love would stem their destruction 260

Thus from the Day of Conception
 Without a single moment's loss
 Till she was sixty-seven
 When overcome with zeal 264

To be with her Son divine,
 Knowing this, to receive His Mother
 Sent His messenger Gabriel
 In glory to convey her thither 268

He the foremost led the throng
 In glowing white garment clad
 A crown quite distinguished he wore
 And held an olive branch in his hand 272

To the Mother he told the tidings bright
 With the self same greeting he hailed
 "Your Son has decreed your life to be curtailed
 On Earth, this valley of tears, he said 276

"In this vale of tears, three days
 Still, you will sojourn
 Then to Heaven you'll speed!"
 Her response to this, a humble "fiat" 280

Behold the hand-maid of the Lord
 Be it done as he wills.
 Let us thank Him who ever does well
 Let us together thank and bless Him 284

For't is meet and just to extole Him
 And for that your help, I need!"
 At these words, all Heaven in Unison
 Offered Him praise with the queen 288

For a short while they thus praised
 The angels then messages bore
 To all the apostles who were scattered
 Across the Earth either far or near 292

Letters she sent to every clime
 Those staying behind with advice
 She strengthened; taught them sound
 Truths, as her loving son desired 296

Her son John was torn with grief
 That his mother soon would go
 And the faithful also sore
 Felt the pang of parting deep 300

In those days through devotion great
 The mother's face looked brighter still
 When she wished to hasten to the spot
 Where her son had shed His blood 304

Thus while the Lady for the journey prepared
 From places near Palestine and around
 Faithful in numbers came to mourn
 Elsewhere in the world no such found 308

Besides the grief of Palestine
 E'en the stars and planets, signs
 Of sorrow showed; the birds
 Of the air moaned in pain 312

Ever since she left her home
 The fauna flew round about
 And in chorus they sang aloud
 To the earth descending low 316
 "Alas! our queen has for ever left us!"
 The pain momentarily hurt their heart
 For her blessing sweet they longed
 For it long they fondly waited 320
 And lo! wild beasts, from caves
 On the mighty hills and mounts
 And abysses deep like comrades came
 Long before her day of demise 324
 Gathered around in several groups
 These mountain dwellers many
 Moved by deepest pain those tigers
 And beasts of prey for sweet queen Mary 328
 Some bent low in rev'rence deep
 Bowing their heads stood the wolves
 They in pain loudly roared
 Weeping for her in utter grief 332
 The Mother of the creator of all
 When man by his grievous fall
 Annulled his greatness entire
 Retrieved by her birth so pure 336
 Previous to her journey home
 Virtue for the pilgrims devout
 That frequent His scenes of pain
 She many an indulgence set. 340
 To be determined by her son
 Resolved she to pray with fervour
 And then by leave of John
 With his friend and angels a thousand 344
 Mount Calvary top she ascended
 Hallowed spots she devoutly adored
 Reflected deep on the agony endured
 And the august duty He performed 348

She fell on her knees and prayed
 Her loving Son then appeared
 Standing where she courted death
 And endearingly to His mother said 352
 Mother sweet, my beautiful dove
 Because of love my will in all
 Even my work of Redemption
 Through your bounteous love was done 356
 "I knew full well, your unbounded thirst,
 Heard your words of like intent,
 It was clear to me and I
 Decreed that you should quietly rest. 360
 "Now and forever hear you'd sojourn
 On these you'd meditate often
 And I with my Blood would pardon
 All the sins, by my faithful done 364
 "And once you have entered Heaven
 To absolve these from stain of sin,
 And be the succor of men who sin
 Your duty would be to pray for them 368
 At this spot, He made the promise
 Laid the covenant and sealed it
 Then she fell low at His Feet
 Adored them thus cheering His Heart 372
 The Lord blessed anew the spots
 Sanctified by His Blood
 He blessed His mother as well
 And soon to the "Senacle" sped 376
 On the right hand of the Father she sat
 But first She kissed the earth and said
 Blessed Earth cleansed by His Blood
 And hallowed too by the God-man 380
 "I shall see you again from Heaven"
 And the angels who the spot guarded
 He addressed and said thus:
 "You celestial beings disembodied 384

Help them who come here to pray
Guard them always for their good
And besides, free the spot
From those who come to desecrate 388

Guard the plain and protect it"
He said, she to the oratory went
And prayed for the Mother Church
To her son her request sent 392

Hearing her plea he did grant
With great love, her request and said,—
It was also a solemn adieu—
"You the joy of the blessed world 396

"Co-redemptriX of man on earth
I, of the holy Church, the Head
And you, its benign mistress who sealed
Her holiness by my Blood 400

"Of the Mother Church on earth
I, of the Holy Church the Head
Let me now bid fare well and go"
The mother in accents sweet replied 404

The fullness of time shall see this
Hailed the 'Roman Catholic Church'
*You, forsooth my Mother, my Haven
My glory and prize, by you I'll reach 408

You, their solace in joy and pain
Your chief my Head shall be
All my wealth shall your Treasure
Be—This for certain we shall see 412

Through you, promises shall be fulfilled
You shall with power invest me
Thus the worth of the Mother Church
Her blessed Son then established 416

* You—The Holy Mother, the Church — Her chief the Holy Father shall be identified with Christ the head. All His 'richess' shall be bequeathed to her-(the Church).

Then to seal the covenant of her journey
She prayed to her son for constancy
So that he may listen with care
And attest it with His holy will 420

Now the Lady in the Oratory
Raised her heart and prayed
That she the mother, His spouse at one
Gladden the whole court of Heaven. 424

The Blessed Trinity then appeared
The mother at once fell prostrate
The words from His Presence Great
Came down and was heard 428

"My beloved Queen, my Spouse
My friend, your wish is all granted"
God the Father proclaimed in joy!
"My daughter through my love 432

Granted are your prayers now
And your will shall be done
Hereafter" — The Father, Son
And the spirit affirm the same 436

Now the mother declared the power
Of the Covenant humbly bowing,
"Father, to whom is due all praise
Behold me, a worthless being 440

Lord, your hand-maid with all
My might and faith, I now adore
As inseparable Trio, Father,
Son and Spirit, Triune God 444

To you be glory entire of one
Mind, creation, providential care
And annihilation of your regime
You the author of life, your will 448

Rules the earth sky and water
Me, you nurture in your mercy
Though little do I deserve; the earths
Supports me and ever does please 452

Can I, your slave, thank you enough
For this grace? Behold your hand-maid
For my brethren, the dwellers of the Earth
Plead for them yet, I pray! 456

That they may love you as you deserve
They, my brethren, human kind,
That they may know you as their God
And their gratitude express. 460

Bear patiently all things unpleasant
Turn each woe and pain into joy
Remember each boon you granted
A treasure for gaining heaven to employ 464

Two cloaks I've worn of yore
The one with which I myself cover
To John, my beloved I would bestow
Who has helped me much his mother 468

The moment my soul, my body leaves
To the Earth the common mother of man
My body shall pass and my soul
To God for whom it longs, shall go 472

This noble "Will", the mother fixed
Her Holy Son, the mediator
As the august Trinity wished
And with blessing established 476

So as to grant rare graces in love
The Church's Regime she took to herself
To praise His Holy name for aye
His will to do on High as well 480

This World shall not change until
All on earth proclaim your worth
The Truth that is 'you' in the world
Hence, your mercy protect it, I pray 484

After she had made this Covenant,
This will by her Son's mediation
And approved and blessed by
God, the Trinity benign. 488

XII

[This section deals with the death and assumption of the Virgin Mother. Knowing that her death is near she visits Peter the Head of the Church and seeks his apostolic blessing. After describing the Assumption of our Lady, the poet moved by genuine devotion to her seeks her blessings.]

Holy mother giving her testament
In fullness of love prayed to her son
"I wish to see, ere my end
The apostles, your beloved ones. 4

Grant my prayer if it pleases you
Your will my joy and fortune
The son compliant to His mother's mind
Moved thus to address her then: 8

"Mother beloved! no hesitance
All your wishes shall be fulfilled.
Those near about will soon arrive
Others brought down by messengers." 12

The mother was pleased to hear this
And humbly to her son appealed
Between the bright golden Cherubim
Built by Solomon, King of Israel, 16

Wished to place the ark,* so
The Blessed Son the God of glory
Wishing to raise His Mother divine
Fixed a royal progress hence 20

Three days ere the fixed one
All the disciples of the Sun**
While she with Peter sojourned
Who lived in Rome, the city of cities. 24

* The ark of the covenant - As Solomon placed the ark in a sacred place after a solemn procession Our Lord decided to raise His mother to a special place of honour in Heaven.

** Sun - Here refers to the Son of God

The holy angel, the news conveyed
 To Peter and his comrades as well.
 Forthwith to her as she knew it
 Received the great Vicar of Christ. 28

Kneeling at the entrance there
 Praying aloud, she said :
 In His mercy the glorious God
 Has looked upon His hand-maid 32

To help her go to heaven above
 Sent the Master, Hail to Him
 The divine mother bowed her head
 For Peter's blessing begged. 36

In return for her benediction
 Obeisance he paid to her in turn
 Thus with the disciples and followers
 Entered the Holy Kingdom's bourne. 40

And then around the blessed mother
 Stood in state and welcomed her
 The Lady greeting them in turn
 Spoke to her son's beloved ones. 44

And to her kinsmen as well, who came :
 "Cool your fatigue and get refreshed"
 They did it without a moment's delay
 Along with James, Jesus' brother. 48

In and around Jerusalem city
 Hearing the tidings on the happy day
 Followers gathered as willed by God
 Seeing the crowd, Simon the *Rock 52

Gave the reason for his arrival,
 Addressed the gathering in faith and joy
 His brothers, the disciples of Christ
 He mentioned of all, the foremost. 56

* The name given to Peter by the Lord. (Mat: 16 / 18)

"Loving sons, christians, keep
 In love and reverence his dear command
 Spread abroad his living word
 In diverse parts of the wide world 60

From the place where we lived and worked
 He brought us here, the Christ our Lord
 He's power divine by miracles proved
 And brought several to his fold. 64

Listen my brothers, this our Mother
 Who gave us all our worth and virtue
 Shall soon by Him to Heaven be borne
 There to be by the Father received. 68

God our Father has willed to take her
 To His abode His beloved spouse
 Who, henceforth shall brush our tears
 Which fount of mercy guard us? 72

Still let's pray for what time is left
 From her abode she sure will hear us
 His voice choked then melted in the air
 And his tears, stream like flowed. 76

The disciples all in great sorrow
 Dumb-founded stood in pangs
 Being the chief, Peter mustered
 Strength and spoke to the crowd. 80

Let us be seated at our Mother's Feet
 To pray for her final benediction
 Forthwith all the crowd came forth
 At her abode sat with Peter 84

At the Priedieu, knelt the Lady
 Deep in silent ecstatic prayer
 Her face shone as by lightening
 From the sky. The minist'ring angels 88

In clusters of thousands came
 And stood in array before her
 Holy Mother looked at Peter,
 In all humility she said: 92

"Dearly beloved Sons of mine
The service you deserve, shall I render
But kindly permit me to proffer
This prayer of mine to the gath'ring"

96

John and Peter hastened to her
"At your mercy we are!" they said
Then Peter politely bade
The mother to be seated with them

100

She came at once, at the request
And with reverence knelt before him
For he was the Head of the church
Tears of devotion, stream like flowed

104

Master you are of this crowd,
The supreme Head of the Church, our Mother
Accept along with them, this slave
I humbly seek your blessing, I beg

108

All my life stands replete
With imperfections, forgive
And grant me leave to enter Heaven
With all your hearts, my friends, I pray.

112

To her dearly loved Son, John
The mother entrusted her tunics both
The cloth that I give you now
Give to the maids who served me

116

"Give it, if so you deem"
And then with John her loving son
She kissed the Feet of Peter
And she turned to John to kiss his

120

She then knelt down and prayed
My son, while hanging on the cross
Gave me as mother to disciple John
And John to me, to be my son

124

With a mother's love, I served
Him not; but from him received ample
Loving service, my son for this
Forgive me, I do beg

128

Then to the gath'ring she spoke:
As Christ my son has taught me
I love you; Love each other—
For in love is our joy and salvation

132

I'll remember you sure
In that Kingdom of Love. At this
Over come with grief all fell on earth
Weeping profusely, kissed the ground

136

Some oppressed and choked with grief
Mother bade them pray that all be saved
Raising their hearts to God almighty
The Lady prayed with tear-dimmed eyes

140

For the whole world and then
There appeared the son in effulgence
Surpassing the Sun's glory amidst
A throng of angels bright from Heaven

144

Encircled by souls, liberated
The Sun of Heaven and Sion Shone
As bright as Heaven's bourne
And Mary at the feet of her Son

148

Fell prostrate at this sight
All humble kissed His Feet
And the multitude stood stunned
Before the Son, amidst the sky

152

They fell in adoration, bewildered
As His mother wished, he gave
His blessing and thus said:
"Mother most loving your womb

156

"You did lend me for my stay
My Father now awaits you
On my Right is your Throne
From the land of Death, pass to life Eternal ! 160

"Come, Eternity to enjoy; on earth
Free from iniquity you lived
In my Land dwell immortal
You shall, the mother equal to her son 164

"If to pass through death your desire
So the Father shall grant your will
Or be with your son at once in Heaven."
To this the mother thus responded 168

Gazing at His lovely form
"My Son, beloved my Lord my God
I, your mother, am Adam's child
A worthless worm your hand maid 172

Let me be given the common end.
You my God became man
Passed through pain and passion
Less worthy I am than that 176

It's lawful that I tread the common path"
Hearing these words, the Son at once
To His mother's wish conceded
To grant her wish, he forthwith willed 180

Shaped his mind to suit his mother's
He gave orders to the angel train
The beautiful spirits a choir started
In tune with the hymn of the Spirit 184

The angle chorus echoed the song
In abounding joy they sang
"This is the word: Arise my friends !"
Maidens hurried to embalm it 188

For former service to the Lady
Praised and honoured the Spirits were
Replete with joy they hied to the place
Where her body lay at rest. 192

O for a wonder a blinding light
Enveloped the body and hid it from sight
Nothing save the light was seen
Surprised they stood, dumb-founded, still 196

Peter the chief heard it and came
Saw the wonder and marvelled at it
The sacred tabernacle of the body
E'en to touch they felt unworthy 200

Wrapt in prayer, John and Peter
Entered the house as if in a trance
Joyous praise the angels sang
"Hailed by God, full of Grace ! " 204

"The Lord of goodness is with you !
The distinguished stood singing
All who came sang in joy
A virgin before and after conception 208

"Chaste at the conception and
Chaste for ever" so acclaimed
Aloud the Faith of the Infant Church
With John, Peter and disciples all 212

Prayed for the will of God to discern.
A voice then came from Heaven above
"This relic will disappear soon"
Amazed at each other they gazed 216

To the sanctified, homage paid,
Wrapped it in a spotless shroud
With reverence they raised it
Holding by the cloth now sacred 220

Uplifted from the holy bed
 Placed it in a chariot-decked
 A flash of light across it passed
 And ev'ry trace of death erased. 224

Remembrance the same whether
 First or last to come; Sinless
 At birth, hence no sign of decay
 Showed; Disciples and the devout 228

Worthy many to protect it
 Guardians to guide it forth
 Numberless at the start from home
 Celestial bodies the progress to lead 232

The Sun of the Sky, the mother's parents
 Ancestors ancient, prophets great
 Her loving spouse, And the Baptist
 Several others led to heaven 236

True love, not mere condescension
 Brought them to the scene; as the
 Corpse came by, evil spirits fled
 Pain and suff'ring disappeared 240

Sickness left, health revived
 Men of all creeds acclaimed
 "Behold, the Saviour's mother" they said
 And prepared her for her final journey 244

She was duly bathed, as prayers
 Were recited aloud for the Lady
 As the angels stood singing
 The mother bowed her head 248

"My love, Sweet my dove, come forth !
 Winter's gone and summer's here
 In my land have blossoms bloomed !"
 The mother then gazed at her son 252

"Your hand has touched me to life !"
 She said and closed her eyes at once
 Forthwith she breathed her last
 No reason else for her death 256

Her love divine, the cause of illness
 And death - both she turned to nectar
 The whole place was steeped in light
 A fragrance sweet spread all over 260

Like her son in a coffin new
 The disciples soon placed her
 Her body pure wrapped in a shroud
 Fresh woven by an angel 264

Like her son's with a plank they closed
 And then in a chariot placed
 Lifting it reverently by the cloth
 Peter and his loved friends 268

It is proper this beauteous form
 Does not touch the foul dust.
 All agreed and after the rites
 The Disciples sad to the "cenacle" repaired 272

Though the angels to Heaven returned
 Thousands remained at the Sepulchre
 To guard the treasure, music solemn
 Stream-like flowed from Sion Oratory 276

The Sweet perfume from the body rising
 Spread the land of Jerusalem
 Giving joy to the people around
 When the Lord assumed her unto Heaven 280

In full glory he did it and
 To the Throne of Almighty he led her
 "The greatest of all our creation !
 She to perfection performed our Will 284

All the work of redemption, She
 In truth did share with me
 From the common bane of man kind
 Untained was she from her birth 288

Engaged in this common task
 With me an even mead should obtain"
 Hearing the Son's decree the Father
 And the Holy spirit rejoiced 292

On His right a throne he placed
 For ever to seat the mother of God;
 Thus after three days had passed
 The mother divine joined the Son. 296

On an Easter Sunday, the day of glory
 The Son in exultation arrived
 With a tuneful train of spirits attending
 At the bright sacred sepulchre 300

While the sepulchre still was sealed
 By virtue of a boon she'd received
 The virgin soul from the tomb
 Rose in brightness of a thousand Suns. 304

For a witness the cloak she wore
 With the shroud that wrapped her sacred body
 After she had left the tomb
 Full bright, shone in the tomb. 308

The Trivne God highly pleased.
 The Father the chief of the Trinity
 A sound proclamation made
 For angles and celestial beings to hear 312

Behold the foremost of our creation
 This my daughter, know ye for certain
 Henceforth unto eternity shall reign
 A spotless Virgin crowned as Queen ! 316

XIII

THE LAST CANTO

(This Canto describes the internment of the Blessed
 Mother and certain graces the Poet had obtained.
 There are references to the efficaciousness of our
 Lady's intercessory prayer)

From the time the Mother was born on earth
 Twenty-one days ere she completed here
 Her Seventieth year, her loving Son apprised
 The Lady, of the date and hour of her death 4

And, right at the moment escorted by Him
 She journeyed forth to dwell the Land of Life
 Behold, the Sun bedimmed his face through woe
 This he did on the day the Son chose to die 8

The fauna of the air besides flew hither and thither
 Clamouring aloud displaying their woe to all
 And near the place of her death, then, were seen
 A man and a couple of women who had earlier died 12

They approached the Lord their fate to learn, for
 No mercy they could hope, for in sin they'd died
 The Mother benign in sympathy interceded
 To forgive them and the prayer was at once granted 16

The Mother's prayer caused the verdict to be changed
 And back to the world they went, where through sorrow
 Forgiveness they found and on their death salvation !
 The sick who came to the cennacle, were granted health 20

And absolution from sin, each and everyone.
 And the virtuous ones who were yet in purgatory
 Cleansed of their stains, the mother raised to bless
 These and other benefits, oh, indescribable 24

All these were granted so that the mother would be pleased
 But the chief of the benefits to *Maria Agratha came
 To whom the Mother declared that whoever implored
 To her at death's drear moment would through her 28
 Voluntary acceptance of death, would be granted
 A Happy Death; and she would strive and plead
 With her divine Son, a judgement favourable
 This she would deem her bounden duty. 32
 My prayers entire she would answer
 She did avow with her own tongue
 All in return for her graceful acceptance of death
 And the disciples the sacred body of the queen 36
 To anoint as was the custom of the Jews
 Ere burying her lovely body, just as
 The sacred body of the Son was laved in oil
 Costly, sweet scented oil was purchased 40
 Oh, you, the mother of mankind and my mother
 Thy Son our King, and you our august queen
 The God, the Spirit, in my sorrows my solace
 His loving spouse, oh you, forever my queen. 44
 The Trivne God severally uttered these words
 And crowned her with the bright diadem of glory
 Now came the loud acclamation from the realm
 Of Heaven, to affirm this honour, eternal, 48
 Our mistress beloved, queen of all the world
 Queen of us all, elevated above all, supreme
 Joyously reign over all, for all eternity
 Rule over us forever this greatness hold!
 Singled out, the prime from among mankind
 Your duty performed aright to attain the fold 54

* The author of the reputed book "THE CITY OF GOD"

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER

[Here the poet prays for our Lady's grace and blessing to obtain solace from the attacks of the evil one]

O Virgin Mother, behold me your Servant
 For recounting in little your sacred life on earth
 With my tongue impure, to me your slave
 Grant that your tongue speak a word of hope. 4
 For writing with my hand this your life
 Forgive my sins, that I may look upon your face
 To fold my hands before your loving son
 Grant me your grace my mother divine, my queen 8
 My soul alas with several sins is rife
 To leave this world behind and attain your feet
 No hope have I save you my mistress benign
 In your merciful hands I place my trust 12
 When remembrance of death awakens in me
 Between two doubts I am sadly torn
 When the dismal curtain of death falls on me
 Show me, I pray your gracious face divine. 16
 When after my death I stand before your son
 Awaiting my judgement, a severe one I fear
 Beset with terror, my heart would be sore my Lady
 Grant me your mercy then, oh fill me with solace 20
 Increasing shame would then be mine alas,
 Grant me then your kind consolation
 Like unto the Sun your mercy forth shall shine
 Day by day men receive this blessing 24

Besides by virtue of the might granted by your son
 The regal right bestowed by the Trinity
 This singular strength declared your own
 That men may avidly, ever your favour seek. 28

With you all things are possible for me
 All deeds done as they should be my mother
 As by your loving Son decreed they happen
 Oh how very fortunate that it should be so. 32

Now my mistress, kind mother of my Lord
 You shall decree the manner, day and moment
 Of my own death; may your will and pleasure
 Be accomplished wholly in me your son. 36

But if by chance you see me in capable
 Of accepting His decree, for you know full well
 The cruel scheming machinations of my foe
 Invincible, indeed you are fully convinced 40

Aye, for long has he been awaiting his time
 His cruel ire unabated growing apace
 And if he sees your gaze rests on me
 Sure, he would then begin to show his might. 44

If only he sees your mercy shining on me
 The mighty power of darkness his sword would lift
 Your love for me indeed would cause him woe
 But for me your holy name would be a strength 48

Though my foe is angered, I'm your servant
 Yet to approach me he'll never dare
 But try he would as much as he could
 For my soul alas is smeared with stain 52

Your servant has confessed to you all his sins
 And by your mercy all stains are cleansed
 Yet penalty remains now and for aye.
 But mother through your benign might 56

Bariash; and your beloved Son and your
 Spouse, my father, virtuous in the same measure
 And when the time draws near to step out
 Come to me and lovingly bless and help me 60

At the time grant that your name I repeat
 Your sacred name, my mother, with gratitude
 The patron, illustrious of my source of salvation
 The Church, as well as my good angel guardian 64

At death's moment, by which my life I surmount
 The life, me, a sinner lived in this blessed house
 At the feet of hosts of sons who followed the Lord
 With purpose steadfast, oh mother grant 68

That calling upon your holy name, I may
 Entrust my soul unto the hands of your Son
 When my eyes are closed upon the whole world
 Grant O Lady. I may see the face of your Son 72

Pour forth your benison on me your lowly servant
 That I may live in joy and love and grace
 O benign mistress succor me, I pray
 At the hour of my death, save me with care 76

DIRGE

(MARANAVEETIL PADUVANULLA PANA)

Translated by

Rev. Sr. Sheila cmc

DIRGE

['A DIRGE' is intended by the poet to be sung when the corpse is placed in the coffin for public homage. The articles of faith related to the death of a man are enumerated and beautifully illustrated with stories or incidents, the poet has heard or read. That good deeds or "virtues" are the only reliable thing that would befriend man once he meets with his death, is the central idea of this poem - for after one's death one becomes helpless and is left to the mercy of others. Hence our duty to pray for the repose of the Souls in Purgatory.]

The day you die is better far *
Than the day you were born on earth
A funeral function more refreshing
Than a wedding feast in sooth
This is nothing new to us
Ages back Kohlas the wise
And noble prince has sung thus
For you my good people to hear
So my friends it was good today
That you have come to bid good bye 10

We enjoyed each other's company
But today, alas, I am far from you
When we as friends rejoiced together
My gratitude have I never expressed
But today, you see, I've lost my gifts
Of hearing as well as of sight
Yet, to you who gaze at my corpse
I would wish to speak a little:
When we were happy and gay 20

* Ecclesiastes 7/2-3

Yesterday, I was as you are now
 And you'll be like me tomorrow
 The destiny that is mine today
 I can never share with you
 But the same fate awaits you
 Bear you, this, always in mind
 Friends are many, when We are alive
 When you die, all will leave
 Companions several had I
 But who will now befriend me?

30

O how much I loved them,
 Three of them, I bound close to me
 Of the three I preferred one
 I held him dear, as my heart
 Wheresoever even I happened to go
 Whatever be the work I did
 My thoughts were intent elsewhere but
 My heart was aflame with love of him
 All bodily deeds and beauties
 All my desires he would control

40

When sad over some disgrace
 My love would suffice to honour you
 In which ever place I remain
 There, all honour surely shall be.
 In times of misfortune, to help you
 No one shall be able but I
 All will hasten to me to come by
 The honour they eagerly wish to get
 Thoughts like these, I retained in mind
 And that made me happy for aye

50

I was glad to hear this counsel
 But my mind's eye was blind
 Hence I thought, this my love
 Was beneficial and good
 Then I found another friend
 Not distinct from the first
 About him I was anxious ever

And regretfully rejected him
 Accepting the loss as a God-sent one
 I overlooked all norms of justice

60

Oblivious even of my soul
 I tortured myself severely
 Yet a third friend had I
 Ever from me inseparable
 Ever and anon he stayed with me
 In times of joy and of pain
 He was with me wherever I went
 But now, he is no more so
 He was with me for good and evil
 He always walked the evil way

70

I knew this fact quite early
 But now the consequence I see
 Beside these, a friend had I
 One, more intimate than all
 And him I trusted even more
 Than all others of mine
 To all these I was enslaved
 With avidity I served them
 In utter weariness of mind
 To a fourth one I turned

80

Yet the former forsook me not
 But with steadfast love he loved me
 While thus I sped my days
 The great Emperor, my King
 For some reason unknown
 Caused me to be beheaded
 When the news spread abroad
 I mourned deep o'er my fate
 If before the judge I pleaded
 My cause without a fear

90

Sure the sentence would be revoked
 But a friend must argue my case
 A powerful friend, I did have
 A great, so called, bosom friend

No one else could plead for me
 He would surely help, I thought
 On his former words of love
 I banked; and with a woeful look
 I turned my eager steps to him
 And reached that day his honoured home

100

News of me had reached him early
 And so at the very sight of me
 Before I could speak to him
 Feigning sorrow he said to me
 "Please, I pray let no one know
 That I was once your friend
 And to save you from this fate
 Impossible it is, I swear
 Give not the least suspicion
 That formerly you were my friend

110

For then the infamy of yours
 Will cast its shade on me
 Hence make haste, and leave the place
 Let no one know you had come!"
 Sad and shocked on hearing this
 The ungrateful man I left
 Not a kind word nor gesture
 Of friendliness did he show.
 "I have yet another friend
 I would tell him my woe"

120

So I thought and hastened thither
 With a heart agog I walked.
 And on seeing me approach him
 At once he ran to me and said:
 "Sad indeed, the news made me
 I sought the means to save you
 Helpless, I am, the punishment
 To ward off, I cannot, my friend!
 Your grief certainly, I do share
 To remove the cause, O, helpless I am!"

130

But, go with you, pain, I shall
 With all my heart befriend you!
 So saying up to his gate
 He walked with me and bade good bye.
 A third friend I had with a mind
 To help me, but means he had none
 He would not desert me
 To bear my sorrow all alone.
 Even to the gallows he would follow
 And befriend me to my death

140

When in sorrow I sought his help
 Like a friend he ran up to me
 Seeing sorrow writ on my face
 In sympathy, me he did embrace.
 "How comes my friend your fortunes have sunk
 Your countenance so sad?
 Whatever be your sorrow, behold
 To remove the cause I am bent
 Remember I am your loving friend
 Little you know of my strength

150

Of all the woes that beset man
 There's none so bitter as death
 I am He who death overcame
 No foe did ever subdue me
 All your sorrows and pains I'll chase
 Shake off your sadness, with me you're safe
 If with the King your foes have prevailed
 And callously sought your death,
 Ministers and Councillors,
 Nay, all his friends, my servants are

160

It they but know you are my friend
 For certain, your slaves they'll turn
 Even if law demands your death
 They will turn it to a mandate of love.
 All powerful am I, stay with me
 Be not disturbed, recover your joy

To the royal presence together let's go
 These very words do permit us so."
 In this vein, he did speak
 He made my joy rise to a peak 170

What did then happen to me
 The same will once befall you!
 Now let's reflect on these friends
 Who the most ungrateful of them
 Never, never forget for a trice
 How the fourth one behaved
 Who was the first, let us see
 The foremost, none but the world
 'One can never serve two masters
 At the same time' said the Lord. 180

The second friend is my kinsman
 Privations I suffered for him
 Every chore for him I bore
 And even staked the safety of my soul
 The third one, none but yourself
 Inseparable for good or bad
 These three the cause of my woe
 The fourth, methinks my sole 'Virtue'*
 Since a little love I showed Him
 With Love He'll hold me fast to him 190

This fourth my true friend
 He reminded me of my end.
 His voice sounded welcome to my ear
 And I listened to it with care
 He told me words of wisdom sweet
 And day after day to me it was meat
 And if those I would often repeat
 Great good fortune will be my mead
 And the honour of victory over death
 You'd surely attain for sooth 200

* Strength

Since I observed his advice in faith
 This good fortune I did attain
 The pain I did bear aided me then
 My mortal verdict thus to change
 So keep in mind, all your days
 'DEATH, JUDGEMENT and HEAVEN'
 For you to recollect and pray always
 Of this my end reminds you well.
 My people you are, my friends
 I keep this ever in my mind 210

Hence it's that you in patience
 Abide listening to my words.
 But yesterday my pain you felt
 Deep in your heart, you bore with me.
 Laboured hard my agony to allay,
 Efforts numberless you did make.
 When you saw me sore athirst,
 With drinks numerous you refreshed
 Fanned me cool when heat oppressed
 With blankets warm, of chill relieved. 220

Such tending each passing moment
 Without fail you rendered me
 Now when you see me lie in peace
 My foregone pain you cannot guess
 You see, for nothing more, I need
 And hence you rest without heed
 But listen to the travails I bear
 Which I shall recount without fear
 To enter Heaven's portals, it seems
 No one is found quite worthy. 230

The holy ones, while on earth they lived
 All the days in humble contrition
 They cleansed themselves of every stain
 Through penance and mortification
 As gold is purified in the furnace
 So by suffering does virtue shine
 Yet in the blessed sight of God

It does n't turn to pure gold
With a hammer it is beaten hard
While it's red - hot and thus purified 240

Thus by repeated temp'ring in fire
The souls on earth are made pure
Yet to the Lord they can hardly compare
So to purgatory they are decreed
There in the hottest fire they are cast
To lie, and burn for failures past
Without such purgation no soul does reach
However great the mead of Heaven
Listen now to a dismal tale
To illustrate this I shall narrate 250

A virtuous old dame in poverty lived
She fell sick and lay in bed
Daughters she had, just two of them
All the world besides disliked her
They lived at home avowed to chastity
Today their mother lay, about to die
In those days there happened to come
A living saint, the old dame to see
When she to the poverty - stricken hut
Arrived - a wondrous sight she saw. 260

The Virgin Mother of the King of Kings
With several virgins surrounding her
And numberless celestial beings
With St. Peter of Heaven, the Porter.
He was busy driving afar
Wicked devils from her door
The mother of God at her head
Wiping away drops of sweat
Several nuns stood around her cot
As guards of honour serving her 270

Amidst these celebrations grand
The soul of the dame did depart
The Mother grasped her by the hand
And suddenly disappeared

Despite their sorrow the virgins rejoiced
Seing that beautiful vision
They said with satisfaction great,
Their mother heaven had reached
And the Saint and the virgins twain 280
For her soul, they no more prayed

Several days passed and the nun
One day, stood praying on her knees
And alack, in the midst of flames
In a fiery attire she was seen
Heaving sighs in sore despair
Uttering doleful cries a woman
Upset with fear she asked, "Tell me
Who you are and why you weep
"I am your friend", she replied 290
In utter misery, suffering much

You my friend and my daughters own
Utterly, me, have forgotten
If not for you they would have done
Something to bring my soul relief
You did render me no help
And other help from me with held
The holy nun hearing these words
Much bewildered asked her,
"My Sister, when you died 300
The love and joy shown to you

By the loving Mother of God
Made me feel that your soul
To Heaven, with the queen of heaven
Instantly would be lifted
The vision to your daughters I told
As I saw it! It was my folly
Oh how pure one must be
To be worthy of going to Heav'n
The smallest stain will prevent us
From reaching our celestial home. 310

Through the mercy of God's dear mother
 Was I saved from almighty's wrath
 Still as in a hot burning furnace
 Through my venial sins I burn
 Forget me not you my loved ones
 Make haste and pray to relieve me soon
 If you but just pray to the Lord
 He for certain would pardon grant
 None but you can prevail on him
 To temper his justice with sweet mercy 320

My day is past, I can work no more
 No one hears my piteous lament
 If you but pray for me now
 Sure, He will mercy bestow
 Immediately on hearing these words
 The saint with honest effort prayed
 They prayed with zest, the Virgins and Saint
 Her sorrow ceased and she heaven attained
 All my people, my loving brethren
 Let your mercy be shown to me 330

Amazing scenes such as these
 Although they happened at her death
 To wash the stain of sin is hard
 Once we die and to purgatory we go
 But remember how great it would be
 Only to get to purgatory my friends
 None but truly holy souls
 Would deserve such a place to get
 Behold am I a soul thus saved
 By the precious blood of the Lord 340

It is by our hope in this Blood
 That makes our life there bearable
 So my friends with charity
 Your help you must render me
 When you saw my intense pain
 You readily helped me much
 When you saw me sweat in the heat

You fretted to make me cool
 To pacify my pain you strained 350
 To fetch me remedies you hastened

My suffering, you do see
 And in turn, yours as well
 You did suffer for my sake
 But today the occasion is past
 Remember this, I tell you plainly
 Of myself, for you to see
 My suff'ring today is not
 As it was yesterday you note
 Can the heat suffice for gold 360
 As is given for lead to melt

To destroy the dross in man on earth
 This fire was made by God in truth
 To purge the stains of sin off the soul
 And to render it rich in glory
 To cleanse it as befits His justice
 He made the flames of Purgatory
 No tongue could aptly describe
 The way the effects of evil it destroys
 The Christian Soul who goes thither 370
 And returns is a perfect ascetic

On his sick-bed for long he lay
 A lacerated piece of flesh his body
 Without sleep, he suffered as though
 Days as well as nights are the same
 Once he had a vision bright
 Of the blessed Lord to whom he said;
 "Lord, merciful God, my Master
 With pity, look upon your servant poor
 Release the bonds that bind me here 380
 And take me to your abode pure.

While he thus with effort prayed
 The guardian spirit to him appeared
 Of the will of God he informed,
 The wise decree of God relayed;

From now to the world you must go
 And with your body bear your woe
 Or else full strenuous pain undergo
 For three days more, with patience utmost
 One of these you may choose
 And God and your will you may please

390

Readily he said; "It is best I bore
 Intense pain for just three days
 Better far methinks, than this
 Bitter agony suffered here!
 When those three woeful days are past
 To heaven's felicity repair, I shall"
 To grant him that grace and none else
 Fervently, then he prayed
 And ready for death as the angel bade
 For death's moment he did wait

400

He died; and forthwith his soul
 Departed and was cast in fire
 When the Sun had sunk the angel
 To the purgatory, he came
 "Lighter this pain in this pit
 Than you suffered on earth?" he asked
 With biting rage the man listened
 And with fury, thus replied;
 Suffer this heat for three days
 Sure you'll then heaven attain

410

With like promise, me you deceived
 And dumped me in this terrific place
 Days and days, since then have passed
 Now you come to me, at last
 No! you are not the angel of God
 For certain I feel and you so false!
 "My brother, through deadly pain
 Your wit is impaired and your sense.
 I am the same good angel of God
 Doubt you not, my integrity

420

One day has not yet passed
 Since you died and reached this place
 Your corpse is still lying exposed
 The time of burial is yet to arrive
 It lies on the self-same cot
 Your body lifeless and still
 Longer seemed the wee bit time
 Through your suff'ring, know it well.
 You felt it so in your mind
 Hence you said so; 'tis not true

430

On hearing this, still in pain
 Begging pardon he asked again
 "I shall bear with calm patience
 All the ills decreed by God
 Not for one but several years
 Without fail - with fortitude
 But this terrific heat to endure
 It's impossible, e'en for a minute more
 With God's leave the angel then
 Put his Soul into his body

440

His brethren who sat waiting
 Lo! they saw the body moving
 And were about to run away
 Stopped them and began to explain
 "As soon as I died, the angel
 In answer to my fervent prayer
 Cast me in a pool of fire
 In Purgatory to make me pure
 He left me there and departed
 And there I lay for many years

450

One day by the grace of God
 The Guardian Spirit again appeared
 When I saw the vision bright
 In severe pain I shouted aloud
 "Me, for certain you have deceived"
 "Not I, but your own unjust mind

By the severe pain you bear
One day seems years several
It's a coinage of your brain
You still remain where you lay

460

Since your time is yet to come
You are lying where you were
God in His mercy may change
Your destiny yet, my brother,
Three more days still remain
That you should stay in this place
Else you will have to suffer
The pains of the disease as before
When he heard these words
Without hesitation he begged:

470

Not once but twice over I shall
Yea, with cheerful patience suffer
Hence the angel pieced together
At once, my body and my soul
Henceforth to the will of God.
To submit myself, I resolve
My cousins who see me today
For cleansing your souls, the world is best
Know ye for certain, and quickly perform
Acts of penance, this very day

480

Saying thus, St. Francis,
The ascetic he emulated in life
Dear Brethren who listen to me
In the same predicament am I
If you deign to help me now
The same help you will receive
'As man sows his seeds' in truth
So will he later reap the saying goes.

490

Blessed are they who mercy show
For they will be shown mercy
Respecting these words of the Lord
Render me your help now

When you come to the same strait
As I am now, help you'll meet
My brothers who weep so o'er my fate
Because you care so much for me
What profit is there to weep
But your vitality so to spend

500

As you weep over my demise
How unbearable your hearts sorrow
Yet you do not weep with a full
Knowledge of my pain intense
How much my people've loved me
So unwieldy their sorrow now
When the true cause of my pain
Is revealed, oh how much more you'll grieve
But it is better for you and for me
Of the truth of the matter to know

510

Hence I tell you the plain truth
Narrate clear, the root cause
Do not be troubled over it
On hearing, be offended not
'Tis true, the same will befall you
So it is good to know it well.
Now listen to the cause of woe
Without fear I do say it all
A bullock, who is an adept in ploughing
Is tended well, on healthy food

520

But he that is feeble and sickly
Indeed, is not so eagerly fed
No more is it of service capable
Hence of what use it is to us
We have enjoyed its service for long
We have fattened ourselves on it
The ass our beast of burden
Through excess of weight has fallen

530

In our cart we rode daily
With our dear little ones

We huddled in together; lovingly
 He dragged along the burden
 Though a stupid ass he was
 His speed indeed, was never the less.
 Even the excellence and strength
 Of the hefty buffalo who
 With ease on his sturdy neck did pull
 Is now no more; he's frail

540

The family chief, who raced with his burden
 Has gone at last to the region of death
 The body that he nourished with care
 Has swooned, alas, all in a shiver
 Without thinking with propriety
 Of things like these you foolishly waste
 Futile thoughts on other things.
 This the main cause of your woe
 I shall now tell you an event
 Yes, with diligence narrate.

550

Once there lived a virtuous king
 John by name in the land of Elion
 While he was happy with his queen
 All on a sudden he met with his death
 The queen then filled with love
 Offered to the poor many a gift
 And being aware of the power of Masses
 Caused many a mass to be offered
 After her husband's funeral
 To the monastery she went

560

A true recluse she soon turned
 And with fervour prayed to the Virgin
 To take her Lord quickly to Heaven,
 She performed penance and prayer
 And several fastings to boot,
 One night, while she prayed
 Her husband's soul appeared to her
 In the midst of flame he stood
 His body and his limbs as well
 In a sad voice he gently spoke:

570

"My dear, my loving Margerie
 All your deeds I have seen
 Yet for the multitude of sins
 I lie burning, woeful indeed.
 Forget not your love for me
 Pray that I may pardoned be!"

So saying he vanished from sight
 Leaving her in sorrow and fear
 Forty days from that moment
 In full fasting she remained

580

Besides several deeds of charity
 For the repose of his soul she did
 To Saint Stephen's Shrine she went
 Offering her royal mantle and gold
 For her husband she prayed full-fervent
 Thus for forty days she prayed
 With sorrow and fervour she prayed
 Gifts she offered for her Lord
 On the fortieth day, a Saturday
 Brighter far than the Sun in glory

590

He came to his Lady and with joy he said,
 "To the bright Heaven I have gone
 Your prayers so fervent and true have found
 Response from heaven, I have no doubt
 Sad and noisy wailings and cries
 Are useless there, nothing but loss
 The intense heat and the fire with all
 I cannot for a moment bear it all
 Know you the truth, I reveal today
 With diligence and care listen to me

600

A few monks friends they were
 They lived in peace and loved each other
 One of them fell ill one day
 He knew his end was near
 The just God, kind almighty
 Through an angel sent a message
 When you die, your soul to purge
 Of its stains to purgat'ry you'll go

But there you'll be just for a time
Until a mass is offered for you ! "

Although in purgatory you will burn
You'll soon be cleansed Heaven attain
On hearing this with joy supreme
To his brother the news he proclaimed
The good monk with readiness took up
The duty of relieving his friend
And on the very same day
The monk peacefully breathed his last
With his fingers he gently pressed
His eye-lids close and left, to pray

A mass he offered with great devotion
The monks came and stood around
The corpse of the poor dead monk
Then there came the rest to pray
On that day to a certain brother
With severe looks the dead monk came
While at meditation he knelt
And all the rest had left.
"Is this how you'd love your friend
Do not to any else the same repeat.

Had you made proper amends
I had reached heaven my friends
Sad and heavy this disappointment
And for a time he remained stunned
He looked aghast at the monk
Who had reached heaven, he said :
"My friend, before you left this body
I prepared you for your journey
When I saw your pupils turning
I closed your eye-lids myself

'Sacrifice', I offered, as I did promise
Praised the Lord, for what I could
What, now, is the harm I did ?
Your companions have not yet left
Around your corpse they stand and wait

610

620

630

640

And they still have not dispersed:
My friend now think how much you did
Suffer from the heat of fire:
Half an hour seemed thousand years:
I have just begun here.

650

So, do penance with diligence
While still on earth, I say
This is my time just now
Mind you, the same will befall you.
My soul here all the time
In burning flame remains.
Remember you have several means
To lift me from this sad state
If me your friend you forget
Mind you the same will be your lot

660

The reputed Virgin Monica
In the convent when she stayed
On the souls in Purgatory
She reflected quite a lot
Directed all her prayers and merits
To ameliorate their sinful deeds
How numerous were the souls
Through the prayers of the virgin
That, day after day, fled to Heaven
So many, it was hard to count

670

One day while so she lived
Her dear father in a sad plight
To his beloved daughter appeared
As would break any heart
He from the fire with pain unabated
Dolefully lamented, aloud and long
"My daughter you've forgotten me
How it happened I cannot see
The great benefit, others come by
Through you, I see, and am sad

680

Several there are that receive your bounty
Not a bit do I receive

How much I suffered to bring you up
 It is unjust you now forget me"
 The virgin felt her father's rebuke
 Fully just and by her deserved
 The cause of it she could not divine
 "On hearing of your death" she said,
 "I have never ceased to pray
 And with the utmost zeal I did pray 690

To lift you from the fire so hot
 I, a sinner did strain a lot
 To pray for you at once, I did
 Repaired to my Oratory
 Alas, all resolve would then weaken
 My mind to other matters turn
 I know not why from day to day
 I could hardly concentrate.
 Yet from this day onwards
 With an agonised heart I'll pray" 700

The parent rejoicing at the promise
 With purest joy, said this:
 "My beloved daughter, it was
 What I deserved for my deeds
 All my life here on earth.
 The souls that depart from the world
 I have never in prayer remembered
 Negligent and tepid I had been
 Yet you my daughter forget not
 To help me with your prayer" 710*
 720

And with intense fervour she prayed
 "My brothers, who listen to me now,
 If today you help me with your prayer,
 In ev'ry woe that befalls you,
 † Virtue I'll find to help you
 Listen, now to another event:

* 10 lines are repeated

† Strength

A Superior once paid a visit
 With proper zeal to a sick man
 It was near dusk; to minister
 To him the Last Sacrament, his aim 730

While walking by a cymetry
 From within the walls he heard
 The rattling sound of clashing bones
 After a time he heard again
 A voice he had heard before
 "Friends let us go at once
 A moment of crisis has come for our friend
 To help him who helped us once
 Now we must go in haste to him
 Together we must go forthwith" 740

These word he heard but nothing saw
 When he turned round at the sound
 Then soon to the sick man he came
 Greeting him: 'Water' he sprinkled
 And while he gave the *Viaticum
 With wrapt attention to the man
 Several spirits he saw around him;
 In bright shining attire they stood
 With reverence around the good soul
 And at a distance the devils in rage. 750

Twisting their tails in biting anger
 Helter-skelter they raced around
 On seeing the scene the truth of it all
 Was to the priest at once revealed
 That sick man all his life
 Oft and oft with devotion true
 Offered his prayers and pious deeds
 These unhappy souls to succor.
 And many a soul through his efforts
 Had reached heaven's bourn 760

‡ Holy water

* Eucharistic bread given to the sick man

Those grateful souls they were
 Who had come to help him now.
 My dear brothers who hear me now
 Such a moment will come to you.
 Think how laborious it'd be
 To cross the vast sea of death:
 If you, a help like this do give
 In that agony you'll wind peace
 And how effectively you'll defeat
 The viles and plans of your mighty foe.

770

If the soul is rescued from him
 Bitter sure would be his loss
 Knowing this he would fight with might
 To keep his spoil in the bitter fray
 Every man has to make this journey
 Fatal and full of risk and danger
 Walk across a valley of thorns
 Pits and stones and filthy dross
 The path never before trodden
 Is filled with threatening shades and forms

780

And in the centre is a lake
 Frightful and aye beset with storm
 Swirling whirlwind gushing awry
 And dangers full many there are
 To help you in that awful journey
 Seek for aid good friends quite early
 There are yet other fatal perils
 These good souls will guide you through
 The tiniest help you render them
 Never, never will they forget.

790

And if you rudely despise them
 Sorrows several will you meet
 They are the faithful friends of God
 This sure is a truth solemn
 Many and many means of help
 The Holy Church holds for us
 For tiny prayers, indulgences

Numerous are fixed, a privilege rare
 Now listen, I shall enumerate
 All their 'nice' distinctions

800

Prayers that hold indulgences
 After confession they are to be said
 When we are in the grace of God
 It's time best to offer gifts
 Stipulated by the priest for sins
 This law has been relaxed
 By our Holy Mother the Church
 If for the Souls in Purgatory
 Less holy things may suffice
 Yet, they ward off all our ills

810

Be convinced of this and help us
 With gratitude to Gods benevolence
 A Christian of the Northern clime
 Lived with his wife in true accord
 In those days there came a man
 Like a brother he behaved
 Brother-like he showed his love
 But in fact, his wife he wooed
 A woman chaste, she seemed to all
 And except her Lord she no one loved

820

The foolish man, he knew it well
 But verbose he was and crafty in all.
 The loving husband felt it was
 A faultless love on either side
 'Suspicion baseless, to jealousy would grow
 And jealousy bitter would to calamity lead
 This saying said by ancients
 He grasped not for his good
 Because of her love for his friend
 Her husband sorely suffered.

820*

'Stolen pleasures would result
 In none but evil, he pointed out

* This should be line '830'—but the numbering in the text is followed

And as his sense and skill did permit
Straight to her, he spoke of it.
How could a feathery little leaf
Stifly resist a stone-lefing storm
Oblivious of all such facts
To the depth he sank, the foolish man
And the so-called virtuous lady
Felt not the smallest qu'alm.

830

Yet his bold desire unabated
The man sank deeper and deeper in sin
And the wife all her wit did ply
To brush all doubts from her husband's mind.
Now the husband grew suspicious
Devised a plan to prove the truth
In a cottage in Kottapuram
With his wife he settled down
To live in ease and comfort, he said
And to help him there a spy employed

840

While thus with his wife he lived
Once, he called her gently and said
"To night my husband on some errant
Has left our home and gone elsewhere
With a heart imbued with love
I quite eager, for you await.
Up a ladder, placed at the window
If you climb, meet me; you could-
When once you get inside my room
Guard you I shall from every ill"

850

"In your 'hand', the words transcribe
On a paper and to me hand over
If the words, e'en the smallest you alter
I will instantly cut off your head!"
These words he spat out in anger
The lady in fear at once obeyed.
He took the letter and on the errant
He despatched his faithful servant
With every care his master's behest
He full faithfully carried out

860

Fulfilling his mission aright
The man to his master returned
As the running deer is hit by the
Correct aim of the hinter's arrow
The lusty heart of the diseased fool
Was struck, as sung by the wise king *
Solomon; and it was evident
That the man was truly a fool
And the cruel man did to perfection
All that was needed for the fell deed

870

A sharp sword and a loaded gun
Ready for the deed, he kept in stock
After the sun had set, in haste
The bold lover started his ride
Decked his horse with equipments grand
And buckled a dagger to his belt
On his way he happend to see
A criminal sentenced to death by the king
Left dead and still hanging
From the gallows for people to see.

880

It was decreed that he should hang
For several days in this way
It was this condemned body
Of a murderer that he saw
At the foot of the gallows he paused
And looked closely at the corpse
He felt it was for his own crime
That the criminal was there suspended
Yet, to cleanse him from his sin
To purgatory he must go for certain.

890

O, how terrible would be his distress
In that mauling fire he mused.
He should do what best he could
To palliate for him his pain
He, from his steed at once alighted
Down, on his knees he knelt to pray

* Book of wisdom

For mercy he cried, to Virgin Mary
 With devotion sincere he begged
 The five decades of the Rosary
 With steadfast mind he recited

900

Then he rose from the spot, to resume
 His journey onwards, he set about
 While he was about his horse to mount
 He happened to hear an indistinct sound
 Bewildered not knowing whence.
 He staggered and instantly turned
 Oh, for certain, it was from atop
 The gallows that the sound had emerged
 Once again, the voice hailed
 Warning him of his trap ahead

910

He then returned to the hanging corpse
 Who urged him the rope to unclasp
 When the dead man from bondage he released
 In clear audible words he spoke:
 "Go not forth, my friend" he said
 You'll forgo your life, if you go
 But if go, you must in good faith
 I'll follow you like a friend to death!"
 And conversing they together sat
 Near a wall, like life-long chums.

920

When he was told of the ladder aslant
 By the window, in the letter
 The dead man told his friend, "Beware!
 Listen, there is danger here.
 Give me your clothes, if you would see
 The after-math, let's go" And they
 Exchanged their dress and went on their way.
 The ladder he climbed as the letter directed
 And lo! mistaken for the foe,
 Chopped into bits, to the ground he fell.

930

His trunk from his head, neatly severed.
 Our friend in shame and fear, he shivered

The dead man becoming whole once more
 Addressed his friend and thus he said:
 "The dismal outcome of your sin
 You saw, now beware of such my friend"
 "Mother of God, to you, I prayed
 From retribution, I was saved
 So obtain for me salvation of soul
 And let you spirit fare full well!"

940

And when his friend had left him
 Straight he mounted his steed
 His house and family, kith and kin
 And all his earthly love forsook
 To a monastery in the city
 He then fled in all haste
 And to the abbot who ruled, requested
 To accept him as a candidate
 Through the holy Virgin's grace
 He led a life good and pious

950

Dear, my brothers who hear me now
 Bear this in mind and live!
 The promises you make at his death
 Remember and be true to them
 Many Christians renounce their faith
 All because of this, you learn;
 Even in this world are shown
 The chastisement of their sin
 Because of this has happened
 Many a travail in such families.

960

All evils sorrows and insults
 Happen to many like wise
 Once a rich man when he died
 His horse to his nephew entrusted
 This fine horse give without delay
 To the care of the priest, he said.
 Very soon his uncle died
 And he kept the horse all for himself
 The punishment that came to him
 Made him do as he was told.

970

A procurator in a monast'ry
 A little stingy he happened to be
 It was a custom in the house
 That when a monk died therein
 The entire savings of the day
 Should, to the beggars, be given away,
 At that time in this place
 An epidemic, fatal spread
 Calamities, severe, took place
 In the Monastery as well.

980

Expenditure rose beyond limit
 And when he added up the list
 It came to a very large amount.
 To spend that much was unjust, he thought.
 On his own, to curtail the amount
 That was on charity spent
 Two weeks later on a certain night
 While awake at work without rest
 And thence on his way to his cell
 Where every night he slept,

990

As he crossed the council room
 There several monks he saw
 In a serious conclave seated
 And he enquired the reason why
 On no account could he explain
 This, at such a time of night
 So thinking, the wick of the lamp
 Placed in the room, he raised
 He then looked carefully around.
 Dead men they were, he then found

1000

While alarmed and trembling he stood.
 Said one, "Come we'll teach you justice"
 And all of them on hearing it
 Ran up to him and around him stood.
 "In your miserliness, you need not
 Be of this monastery the Bursar.
 Because of you, how much we bear
 Broiling in the heat of the fire

A few days hence you'll be there
 The fire we bear at present, to share.

1010

Where we in company await to be cleansed
 There you'll be with us to be sure.
 Now as a surety for the gift
 You'll come by in the place of fire
 As a sign of the pain you caused us
 Receive this, as your reward."
 So saying upon him they closed,
 Smashed his bones without remorse
 When they left him like a corpse
 In his bed—the Prior came

1020

Though bereft of wits to speak
 He narrated to him his story
 The wounds on his body they saw
 Caused by the Staff they thrashed him with.
 After getting his wounds tended
 He then got his soul mended
 Thus all that happened to his friends
 The same then did happen to him
 How many faithful have thus found
 Their sworn friends their direct foe.

1030

Besides these many another evil
 To punish us, will to us befall
 Without knowing for what on earth
 When we burn and melt with fear
 Know ye that e'en to count them
 Will be hard beyond measure.
 A wealthy Lord of a city great
 Once ordered a mansion to be built
 But after he died his beloved offspring
 Could not, on that mansion stay

1040

Night after night horrid sounds
 Conflagrations, unearthly light
 Fearful sounds of clanging chains
 And shaking fetters gave them fright

Finding it uninhabitable
 Those who stayed instantly left
 A good Christian aware of it
 Bought the mansion and sat in vigil
 As he watched there came a man
 A man of fire, a fearful sight.

1050

Bound in chains of fire, he came
 Circled around by fire and flame
 When in the monastery chapel
 Bells began to chime aloud
 The man who came turned around
 And in a rich coffin hid
 It was the rich man's soul, he knew
 He performed rites the curse to remove
 No more noises disturbed him
 He lived at ease the whole year through

1060

How numerous these things that happen
 By virtuous deeds well-being attain
 Hold in the communion of saints
 A deep solemn faith I advise
 The Church triumphant, the Church militant
 And the Church in travail of souls
 Suffering in the Purgatory
 Are the triple wings of the church
 By helping one another in virtue
 Mutual benefit we'll attain

1070

Hence by rendering mutual help
 Through this joy, you'll be well
 To help each other in this way
 A trim means I'll suggest
 All these paths they lead asight
 To the same effect we are aware
 By prayer, penance and giving of alms
 All will come to victory sure

Yet the intention's we keep
 Have much to do for good or bad.

1080

So, in whatever deed we do
 Let our aim be salutary
 Whether we eat drink or sleep
 The smallest deed can a virtue be
 Let us do it all in union
 Ever, with our blessed Saviour
 Impossible then to rate
 Our virtue in such a mode
 Whatever be the sorrows we face
 Or our unworthy selves do

1090

For your real joy and peace
 Listen to this that now I say
 When you a sick man visit
 Remember who he is in fact
 When I was sick, lay in bed
 You came to me and cheered me
 If such words, to hear you wish
 Do the same now, I advise you
 When you render help to the sick
 It is for the Lord you are doing

1100

It is the Lord, whether high or low
 Reckon not the difference in rank
 If you care to remember this
 Gratification in all you'll have
 The stink that comes from a sick man
 Through love will turn to fragrance
 Several saints in times of yore
 Have licked the sores of the sick
 In eagerness they scrubbed in love
 And washed them clean for holiness

1110

The saints began their virtuous deeds
 In this way quite long ago.
 "Do as I do", said the Lord,
 "A model perfect, I leave for you"
 With a jug of water in his hand
 And a towel round his waist
 Plucking apart his mantle
 And binding his waist with a towel
 Humbly before each one he knelt
 The son of God, from Peter to Judas 1120

Washing their feet he dried them
 With His sacred Hands and said
 "Behold, I, your Lord and Master
 Give you a model for you to learn
 When this you see, think how much
 More you are bound to serve each other
 These sacred words of the Saviour
 Stuck deep in the hearts of the Elect
 They raced along and heaven entered
 In their wake you follow them 1130

Tend the sick with genuine joy
 At the moment of their death do like wise
 The Lady after her Son's demise
 With John and the pious women remained
 Remember this and stay with me
 Without dullness guard me well
 And again when this stinking flesh
 As is proper, within the earth
 To bury in the grave you carry
 Remember this I pray today. 1140

Friendless he was on this earth;
 But human respect they had not
 The wealthy Lords Joseph and Nicodemus
 And the grief-stricken son

The Centurian; of the officers the chief
 Who Became a believer in the Lord,
 The four bearing on them the corpe
 With reverence they bore him forth
 Mary Anna's daughter the flower
 Who begot Christ and the other Mary's 1150

With reverence they followed Him
 Remember all this, while you live
 They placed Him in a new sepulchre
 But the mother's heart was bound to the grave
 As though it was enclosed therein
 For three days she sat in wait
 Bear these facts which I now narrate
 In your heart. Then, oh how great
 A progress in virtue you'll attain
 Then on the glorious final day
 If now for the sick you render aid
 How noble the reward you'll gain! 1162

ANASTHASIA'S MARTYRDOM

Translated by
Rev. Sr. Sergius c m c

ANASTHASIA'S MARTYRDOM

Living at a time when the stability of the church of Kerala was disturbed by the stress and strain of Schisms and dissensions, in order to instil religious zeal and fortitude in the faithful, the poet composed this beautiful poem. It is written in simple language and set to the rhythm of a boat song (Vanchi-ppattu) popular in Kerala and was intended to be committed to memory and sung by the people.

The events treated in the poem are placed in the 3rd century A. D. when Emperor Valerian ruled the Roman Empire. He insisted on the Christians under his regime on giving up their faith and burning incense at the shrine of 'Jove'. In those days a nun named Sophia was the superior of the convent. Anastasia, a beautiful maiden was a member of this convent. How one of the imperial consuls, attracted by her charm summons her to his presence and tempting her with gold and pleasures compels her to renounce her faith and her Virginity and adore the pagan deity, how on her refusing to obey him, she is brutally persecuted and finally sentenced to death and how she bravely faced indescribable sufferings and death and merits a glorious martyrdom form the theme of this narrative.

The translated verse is cast in the ballad metre in a number of quartrams and so the numbering of the lines is different from the original although the ideas are strictly adhered to.

Abbess Sophy, nun of fame,
 The joy of the Lord and the shining star,
 Lived in love in the convent of Rome
 The town of glory and of fame
 There came a pretty, lovely girl
 Of birth and rank so high
 Anastasia longed to live
 A life of service filled with love.
 There she came to join them,
 The brides of Christ, the king of kings.

10

Sister Sophy, the Mother,
 Welcomed her with warmth and joy
 She brought her up with tender heart
 Care and concern, love and joy
 She trained her well; she taught her all
 She let her walk the path so right
 Her parents, lords of famous land,
 Faithful men who lived in Christ
 They lived in Rome, the holy place.
 Where ruled Valerian, famous king

20

Despot of the country vast
 Nation glorious all the world
 The emperor issued orders cruel,
 'Destroy the christians ruthlessly
 Then rushed the soldiers through the streets
 To do the will of king so dear
 They sped along the paths of Rome.
 In search of Christian, men of faith
 The King of Rome, the world by King.
 Unknown to virtue, riches pure

30

He fell for beauty rarely seen
 The beauty of nun so young and lean
 Enchanting beauty, marvellous
 Blinded the King and men of rank

There came out instant orders now
 Destroy the faithful in the land
 Proba, the wile Minister soon
 Gave the King counsel, rare and sure
 Fetch the virgin Anastasia.
 Convent to court her journey be—

40

Soldiers ran and rushed forth then
 To the convent doors now barred —
 Proud of the glory of the King
 Put down they the guard and wall
 Called out Hallo to the nuns
 Send with us Anastasia
 The beauty of the convent here
 The King welcomes her in his court.
 Holy Sophy heard, this news
 Held her daughter close and said

50

Daughter dear, your blessed groom,
 Calls you with a longing love
 Go, be quick.
 Recall your former days of joy
 Days your king stretched out His arms.
 To clasp you close to Him with love.
 The Lord who climbed the cliffs and hills
 The Lord who crowned his head with nails
 The Lord who offered life and love
 It is the Lord, your holy groom

60

Show his glory, show his might
 The Lord you love so dear and well
 Oh! He your constant friend for'ever
 Men of earth shall never possess
 Your heart and body pure and fine
 She kissed her with love and
 Filled her with valour
 She walked along the streets of Rome.

With joyful smiling lips sublime
The holy nun, the pretty nun, 70

Stood in royal court so grand.
Enchanting beauty of the nun.
It held him captive for a while
He viewed her with his eyes impure
He addressed her with love untrue-
He told her, 'speak your name aloud
'My parents called me Anastasia-
A christian name, a simple name
As he heard the guiltless nun,
Guilt and anger rose in him 80

The callous king saw virgin pure
He said with cunning, on the spot,
You're nobly born and neatly dressed
Your beauty pure, your virtue high.
Are spoilt by your christian name
Reject your faith, it suits you not
Recall my words of promise sure
I speak to you with filial love
Listen to me now, nun sublime.
Gratify your thirst for love, 90

Come to me with open arms.
The house of Jove is set ready
He is the Lord of power and might
He stays in shrine marvellous
Bedecked of gold and silver fine.
Adore him now with humble bow
Accept his blessings now, my child.
All luck and bliss shall greet you then
Reject my words, refuse my wish.
Torments and pain shall fall on you. 100

Your ears so keen, your body soft
Need no time to fumble and fall.

Heard the holy nun this word
Lifted her eyes and said these words
Jesus my only Lord, my God,
My saviour kind and Lord supreme
Christian is a term of joy
A term of glory in my life.
Virgin am I, bride of Christ
Jesus is my Lord and groom. 110

No more longing for the world -
The lustre that the world can give
Neither frightened by the torments
That you threaten, inflict me.
Power and strength, he showers on me
He, the mighty, source of power.
To reject your offer, forgive you
To love you as He loves so dear
Proba knew so clear and well
Longing of his heart in vain 120

He seemed so cruel reddened his eyes.
His face turned rough and rude in rage
It clouded like a rainy day
He turned so wild like angry lion
And struck the virgin on her face
He opened his heart, the ugly heart
That longed to own the virgin pure
Drops of blood now smeared her face
He put her in such hefty chains
And placed the guards alert and keen 130

She was joyful, she was lovely
Bondage outside, freedom inward.
Freedom that the world can't give
Freedom that the world can't take
Anger untold ate him hard
He fetched her now to court of Rome.
Tools of torture tore her body.

Earth was wet with pools of blood
 Filled with fury, Proba ordered
 Burn her wounds with chunks of fire 140

Joyful smiling Anastasia,
 Stood she, in the midst of torture
 Callous Proba added torments
 The virgin's teeth as white as silver
 Forced down by the power of hammer
 He plucked her nails of hand and feet
 O! what a cruelty! what a rudeness!
 Childhood days he foresook now
 Days he sucked his mummy's milk.
 He gave the orders 'cut - off breast' 150

The virgin died not on the spot
 Confessed he the power of God.
 The callous ruler cared not feelings
 Doubled the degree of pains and torture
 The nun showed off no pain, no grief
 She praised the name of God almighty
 The wounded body, injured part
 Healed so soon, she smiled with joy
 They saw her healed and told him thus
 The nun condemned our Jove and gods 160

Lifeless statues, made of bronze,
 Evil forms of stone and wood
 Let God almighty, praised for'er
 Heard this Proba, evil man.
 On the spot he ordered them
 Angry like a swine of rage.
 'Pluck the tongue of holy nun'
 Soldiers ran with news so harsh
 She got the news and praised her God
 She sang a song so sweet and soft, again or 170

She used her worthy tongue once more
 To praise the glorious name of God
 Then came the callous soldiers rough
 They plucked her tongue with ruthless heart
 There flowed now blood from mouth so pure
 It gushed like river and drenched the earth
 The nun so bold, the virgin so pure
 Bright with godly beauty so fine.
 Got the knowledge; got the guts.
 To search for medicine, strong at hand 180

She called the christian Chirillose,
 Who stood beside her hopefully
 She moved her eyes, and called him close
 She asked him drink to quench her thirst
 He gave her water joyfully
 She drank the water, praised the Lord
 And prayed for him with bleeding mouth
 The gift of faith, to die for Christ
 She knew her death so close and dear
 Death that opens door to life 190

She knew her journey closing soon
 She raised her hands and thanked her God
 God who gave up life for us
 God who save us sinners so.
 Lend me grace to give myself
 My life, a holocaust for you.
 Her hands and feet so active still
 Despite the intense torture hard,
 The ruler ordered 'cut them off
 Take off her head and put to death 200

She gave her life to Christ the Lord
 With joy, with valour and with hope
 She longed to do the will of God
 She did His will, and breathed her last.

She prayed for him, her christian friend
 The gift of grace to die for Christ
 Quick he got this blessing pure
 He bent his head and died for Christ
 The sword pierced him, took his life
 He got the glory, got the crown

210

The words of Lord so clear and sure
 That if you give a little water
 In His name, He gives His share,
 The share of glory, life eternal
 Chirillos, the saintly youth,
 Gained the chance to help the nun
 He won his glory, won his life
 The Lord received him joyfully
 The nun offered her life to Lord
 With glory virtuous, marvel true.

220

Though her body torn to pieces
 Her soul so bright, so marvellous
 The crown of glory placed on her
 The crown so lovely, joy unfading
 Christ the King, her lovely groom
 Welcomed her into bliss with Him
 Jewels of marvel, pearls of price
 All heaped on her by Lord divine
 He held her in His close embrace
 She loved him deep with warmth sublime.

230

Abbess Sophy brought her body
 She got buried with honour due.