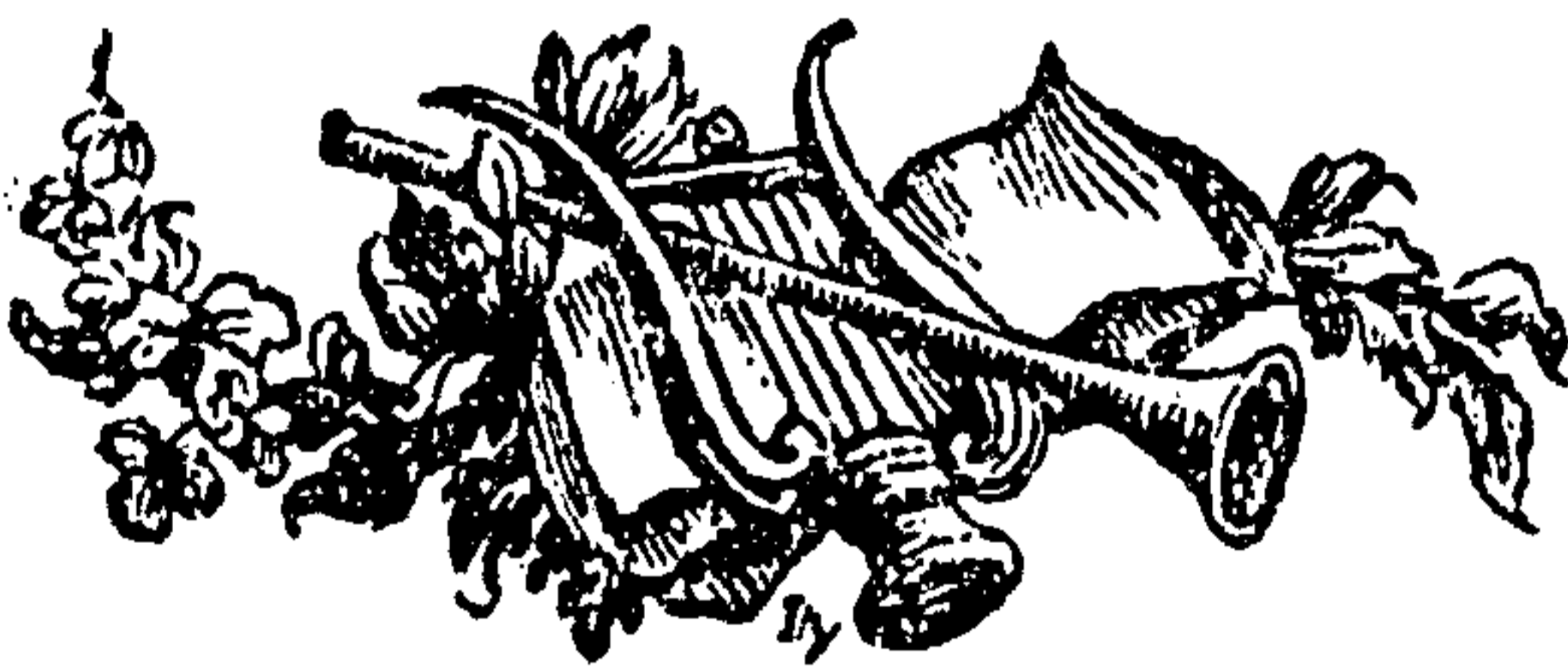


THE
GROANS
OF THE
CREATION:

A POEM.

By W. COWPER.



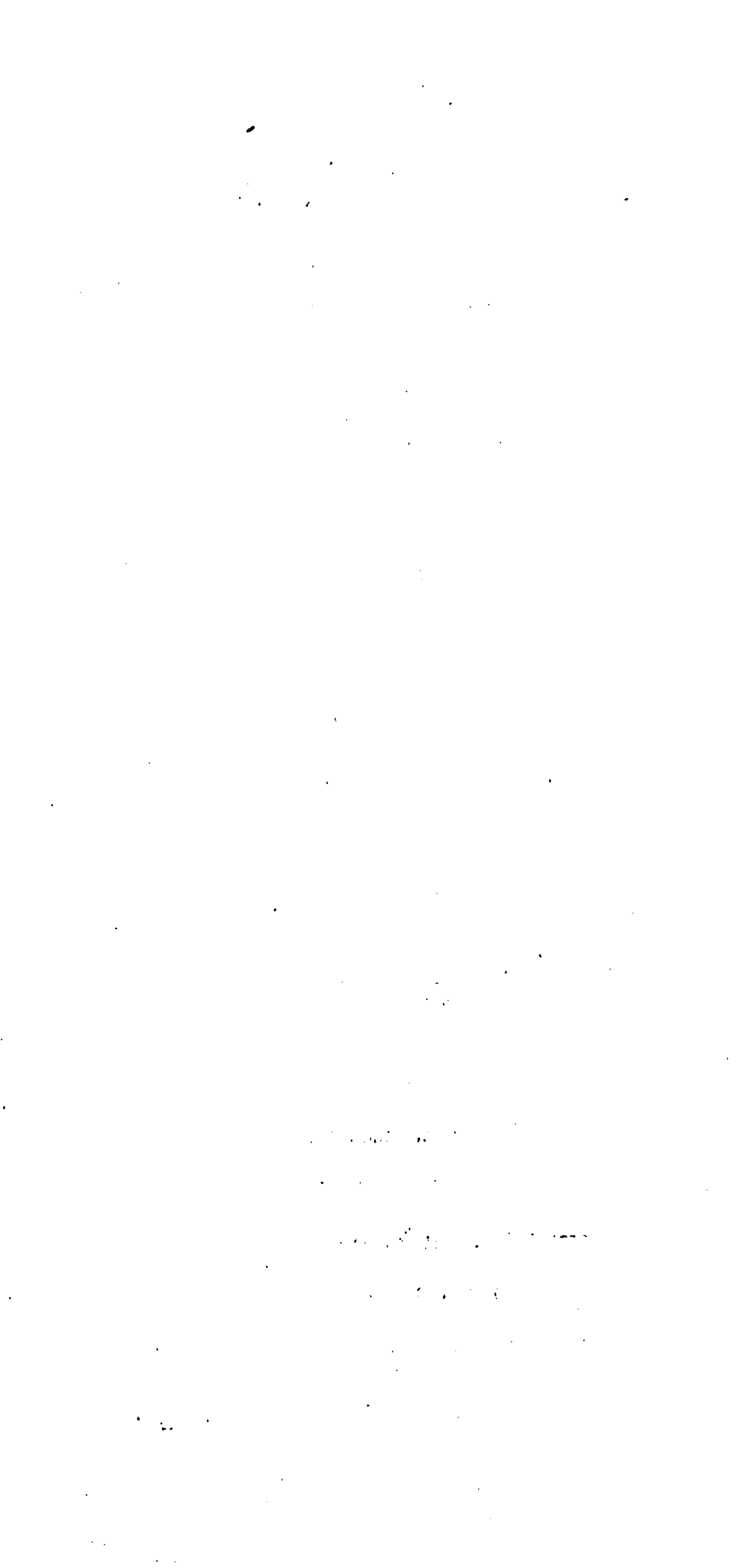
The whole Creation groaneth and travaileth in Pain:
together until now, Rom. viii. 22.

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THE
GROANS OF THE CREATION,

Ec. Ec. Ec.

A View taken of the Restoration of all Things.—An Invocation
and an Invitation of HIM who shall bring it to pass.

THE groans of nature in this nether world,
Which Heaven has heard for ages, have an end.
Foretold by Prophets, and by Poets sung,
Whose fire was kindled at the Prophet's lamp,
The time of Rest, the promis'd Sabbath comes.
Six thousand years of sorrow have well-nigh
Fulfill'd their tardy and disastrous course
Over a sinful world; and what remains
Of this tempestuous state of human things,
Is merely as the working of a sea
Before a calm, that rocks itself to rest:
For He whose ear the winds are, and the clouds,
The dust that waits upon his sultry march,
When sin hath mov'd him, and his wrath is hot,
Shall visit earth in mercy; shall descend
Propitious, in his chariot pav'd with love,
And what his storms have blasted and defac'd
For man's revolt, shall with a smile repair.

Sweet is the harp of prophecy ; too sweet
 Not to be wrong'd by a mere mortal touch :
 Nor can the wonders it records be sung
 To meaner music, and not suffer loss.
 But when a poet, or when one like me,
 Happy to rove among poetic flowers,
 Though poor in skill to rear them, lights at last
 On some fair theme, some theme divinely fair,
 Such is the impulse and the spur he feels
 To give it praise proportion'd to its worth,
 That not to attempt it, arduous as he deems
 The labour, were a task more arduous still.

Oh scenes surpassing fable, and yet true,
 Scenes of accomplish'd bliss ! which who can
 see,
 Though but in distant prospect, and not feel
 His soul refresh'd with foretaste of the joy ?
 Rivers of gladness water all the earth,
 And clothe all climes with beauty ; the reproach
 Of barrenness is past. The fruitful field
 Laughs with abundance, and the land, once lean,
 Or fertile only in its own disgrace,
 Exults to see its thirsty curse repeal'd.
 The various seasons woven into one,
 And that one season an eternal spring,
 The garden fears no blight, and needs no fence,
 For there is none to covet, all are full.

The

The lion, and the libbard, and the bear;
 Graze with the fearless flocks ; all bask at noon
 Together, or all gambol in the shade
 Of the same grove, and drink one common
 stream,
 Antipathies are none. No foe to man
 Lurks in the serpent now : the mother sees,
 And smiles to see her infant's playful hand
 Stretch'd forth to dally with the crested worm,
 To stroke his azure neck, or to receive
 The lambent homage of his arrowy tongue.

All creatures worship man, and all mankind
 One Lord, one Father. Error has no place :
 That creeping pestilence is driv'n away ;
 The breath of heaven has chas'd it. In the heart
 No passion touches a discordant string,
 But all is harmony and love. Disease
 Is not : the pure and uncontaminate blood
 Holds its due course, nor fears the frost of age.
 One song employs all nations ; and all cry,
 " Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us !"
 The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks
 Shout to each other, and the mountain tops
 From distant mountains catch the flying joy,
 Till nation after nation taught the strain,
 Earth rolls the rapturous Hosanna round.

Behold the measure of the promise fill'd ;
 See Salem built, the labour of a God
 Bright as a sun the sacred City shines ;
 All kingdoms and all princes of the earth
 Flock to that light ; the glory of all lands
 Flows into her ; unbounded is her joy,
 And endless her increase. Thy rams are there
 * Nebaioth, and the flocks of Kedar there ;
 The looms of Ormus, and the mines of Ind,
 And Saba's spicy groves, pay tribute there.
 Praise is in all her gates : upon her walls,
 And in her streets, and in her spacious courts,
 Is heard Salvation. Eastern Java there
 Kneels with the native of the farthest West,
 And Ethiopia spreads abroad the hand
 And worships. Her report has travell'd forth
 Into all lands. From every clime they come
 To see thy beauty and to share thy joy,
 O Sion ! an assembly such as earth
 Saw never, such as heaven stoops down to see.

Thus heaven-ward all things tend. For all
 were once
 Perfect, and all must be at length restor'd.

* Nebaioth and Kedar, the sons of Ishmael, and progenitors of the Arabs, in the prophetic Scripture here alluded to, may be reasonably considered as representatives of the Gentiles at large.

So GOD has greatly purpos'd ; who would else
 In his dishonour'd works himself endure
 Dishonour, and be wrong'd without redress.
 Haste then, and wheel away a shatter'd world,
 Ye slow-revolving seasons ! We would see,
 (A sight to which our eyes are strangers yet)
 A world that does not dread and hate his laws,
 And suffer for its crime ; would learn how fair
 The creature is that God pronounces good,
 How pleasant in itself what pleases him.
 Here every drop of honey hides a sting,
 Worms wind themselves into our sweetest
 flowers,

And even the joy that haply some poor heart
 Derives from heaven, pure as the fountain,
 Is sullied in the stream ; taking a taint
 From touch of human lips, at best impure.
 Oh for a world in principle as chaste
 As this is gross and selfish ! over which
 Custom and prejudice shall bear no sway,
 That govern all things here, should'ring aside
 The meek and modest truth, and forcing her
 To seek a refuge from the tongue of strife
 In nooks obscure, far from the ways of men :
 Where violence shall never lift the sword,
 Nor cunning justify the proud man's wrong,
 Leaving the poor no remedy but tears

Where

Where he that fills an office, shall esteem:
 The occasion it presents of doing good,
 More than the perquisite: Where law shall
 speak

Seldom, and never but as wisdom prompts
 And equity; not jealous more to guard
 A worthless form, than to decide aright:
 Where fashion shall not sanctify abuse,
 Nor smooth good-breeding (supplemental grace)
 With lean performance ape the work of Love.

Come then, and, added to thy many crowns,
 Receive yet one, the Crown of all the Earth,
 Thou who alone art worthy! it was thine
 By antient covenant, ere nature's birth,
 And thou hast made it thine by purchase since,
 And overpaid its value with thy blood.
 Thy saints proclaim thee KING; and in their
 hearts.

Thy title is engraven with a pen,
 Dipt in the Fountain of eternal Love.
 Thy saints proclaim thee KING; and thy delay
 Gives courage to their foes, who, could they
 see

The dawn of thy last advent, long-desir'd,
 Would creep into the bowels of the hills,
 And flee for safety to the falling rocks.

The

The very spirit of the world is tir'd
 Of its own taunting question, ask'd so long,
 "Where is the promise of your LORD's
 approach?"

The infidel has shot his bolts away,
 Till his exhausted quiver yielding none,
 He gleans the blunted shafts that have recoil'd,
 And aims them at the shield of Truth again.
 The veil is rent, rent too by priestly hands,
 That hides divinity from mortal eyes,
 And all the mysteries to faith propos'd,
 Insulted and traduc'd, are cast aside
 As useless, to the moles and to the bats.
 They now are deem'd the faithful, and are
 prais'd,
 Who, constant only in rejecting thee,
 Deny thy Godhead with a martyr's zeal,
 And quit their office for their error's sake.
 Blind, and in love with darkness! yet ev'n these
 Worthy, compar'd with sycophants, who knee
 Thy name, adoring, and then preach thee man.
 So fares thy church. But how thy church may fare
 The world takes little thought; who will may
 preach,
 And what they will: All pastors are alike
 To wandering sheep, resolv'd to follow none.

Two Gods divide them all, Pleasure and Gain :
 For these they live, they sacrifice to these,
 And in their service wage perpetual war
 With Conscience and with Thee. Lust in their
 hearts

And mischief in their hands, they roam the earth
 To prey upon each other ; stubborn, fierce,
 High-minded, foaming out their own disgrace.
 Thy prophets speak of such ; and noting down
 The features of the last degenerate times,
 Exhibit every lineament of these.

Come, then, and added to thy many Crowns
 Receive yet One, as radiant as the rest,
 Due to thy last and most effectual work,
 Thy Word fulfill'd,

The CONQUEST of a WORLD !

End of the Poem.

Though the following Hymn is pretty well known, yet the striking similarity of sentiment it bears to the foregoing little Poem, has determined the Editor to give it a place here; and hopes, that ere long, the blessed doctrine it holds forth, will have its full accomplishment in renewed and glorified Nature.



A HYMN.

ALL glory to God in the sky,
And peace upon earth, be restor'd!

O Jesus, exalted on high,

Appear our omnipotent Lord!
Who meanly in Bethlehem born,
Didst stoop to redeem a lost race,
Once more to thy creature return,
And reign in thy kingdom of grace.

When thou in our flesh didst appear,

All nature acknowledg'd thy birth;
Arose the acceptable year,

And heaven was open'd on earth;
Receiving its Lord from above,

The world was united to bless,
The giver of concord and love,

The Prince and the Author of Peace.

O would'st

O would'st thou again be made known,
 Again, in thy Spirit descend,
 And set up in each of thine own,
 A kingdom that never shall end !
 Thou only art able to bless,
 And make the glad nations obey,
 And bid the dire enmity cease,
 And bow the whole world to thy sway.

Come then to thy servants again,
 Who long thy appearing to know,
 Thy quiet and peaceable reign
 In mercy establish below :
 All sorrow before thee shall fly,
 And anger and hatred be o'er,
 And envy and malice shall die,
 And discord afflict us no more.

No horrid alarum of war,
 Shall break our eternal repose,
 No sound of the trumpet is there,
 Where Jesus's spirit o'erflows :
 Appeas'd by the charms of thy grace,
 We all shall in amity join,
 And kindly each other embrace,
 And love with a passion like thine.

FINIS.