

PLAY SEVENTEEN- The Purification

(The Hatmakers, Laborers and Masons)

PRISBETER Almighty God in heaven so high,
The maker of all heaven and earth,
He ordained here all things evenly,
For man he meant to mend his mirth.

In number, weight, and measure fine
God create here all thing, I say.
His laws he bade men should not *tyne,
But keep his commandments away.

(*harm, lose)

In the mount of Sinai full fair
And in two *tables to you to tell,
His laws to Moses took God there
To give to the *childer of Israel,

(*tablets)

(*children)

That Moses shall them guide away
And learn them *lely to know God's will,
And that he should not it deny
But keep his laws stable and still.

(*loyally)

For pain that he had put therefore,
To stone all them that keeps it not
Utterly to death, both less and more,
There should no mercy for them be sought.

Therefore keep well God's commandment
And lead your life after his laws,
Or else surely ye *mon be **shent
Both less and more, *yolkone on rows.

(*must) (**destroyed)
(*each/everyone in order)

This is his will after Moses' law:
That ye should bring your beasts good
And offer them here your God to know,
And from your sins to turn your mood.

Such beasts as God has marked here,
Unto Moses he spake as I you tell,
And bade him boldly with good cheer
To say to the childer of Israel

That after diverse sickness *seer
And after that diverse sins also,

(*severe, separate, diverse)

Go bring your beasts to the priest even here
To offer them up in God's sight, loo(k).

The woman that has borne her child,
She shall come hither at the forty day
To be purified where she was (de)filed
And bring with her a lamb, I say,

And two dove birds for her *offerand (*offering)
And take them to the priest of *lay (*law)
To offer them up with his holy hand.
There should no man to this say nay.

The lamb is offered for God's honour
In sacrifice all only *dight, (*prepared)
And the priest's prayer purchase secure
For the woman that was (de)filed in God's sight.

And if so be that she be poor
And have no lamb to offer, then
Two turtle doves to God's honour
To bring with her for her *offerand. (*offering)

Loo(k), here am I, priest present alway
To receive all offerings that hither is brought,
And for the people to God to pray
That health and life to them be wrought.

ANNA PROPHETISSA Here in this holy place, I say,
Is my full purpose to abide
To serve my God both night and day
With prayer and fasting in ever *ilke a tide. (*each)

For I have been a widow this *threescore year (*sixty)
And four year too, the truth to tell;
And here I have tarried with full good cheer
For the redemption of Israel.

And so for my holy conversation
Great grace to me has now God sent
To tell by prophecy for man's redemption
What shall befall by God's intent.

I tell you all here in this place
By God's virtue in prophecy
That one is born to our solace

Here to be present securely
Within short space,
Of his own mother, a maiden free;
Of all virgins most chaste *soothly,
The well of meekness, blessed might she be,
Most full of grace.

(*truly)

And Simeon, that *senior
That is so *seemly in God's sight,
He shall him see and do honour
And in his arms he shall him *plight,
That worthy *leyd.
Of the Holy Ghost he shall *smoothly
Take strength and answer when he shall hie
Forth to this Temple and place holy
To do that deed.

(*forefather, elder)
(*handsome, noble)

(*promise, pledge allegiance)
(*man, lad)
(*truly)

SYMEON Ah, blessed God, thou be my *beylde
And beat my *bale both night and day.
In heaviness my heart is held
Unto myself, loo(k) thus I say.
For I am weak and all *unwield,
My wealth *ay wanes and passes away
Whereso I fair in *firth or field
I fall *ay down for feeble, in **fay.

(*shelter, comfort)
(*torment)

(*clumsy)
(*ever, always)
(*woods/forest)
(*always) (**truth)

In *fay I fall whereso I fare,
In hair and hue and hide I say;
Out of this world I would I were.
Thus wax I worse and worse alway
And my mischief grows in all that may.
But though mighty Lord my morning mar,
Mar ye, for it should me well pay,
So happy to see him if I *warr.

(*truth)

(*i.e. if I was worse off)

Now *certis then should my game begin
*And I might see him, of him to tell,
That one is born without sin
And for man's kind, man's mirth to *mell;
Born of a woman and maiden free,
As witness David and Daniel,
Without sin or villainy,
As said also Ezekiel.

(*surely, certainly)
(*If)

(*appoint, tell)

And Melachiel that prophet *snell
Has told us of that babe so bright

(*eager)

That he should come with us to dwell
In our Temple as (g)leam of light;
And other prophets prophesieth
And of this blessed babe did *mell (*talk)
And of his mother, a maiden bright,
In prophecy the truth *gan tell. (*did)

That he should come and harrow hell
As a giant *grathly to glide (*prepared, ready)
And fiercely the fiend's malice to fell
And put their powers all on side.
The worthiest *wight in this world so wide (*soul, person)
His virtues *seer no tongue can tell, (*diverse, great)
He sends all succour in *ilke tide (*each, every)
As redemption of Israel.
Thus say they all,
The patriarchs and the prophets clear:
"A babe is born to be our *fere, (*companion)
Knit in our kind for all our cheer
To great and small."

Aye, well were me for ever and *ay (*ever, always)
If I might see that babe so bright
Ere I were buried here in clay;
Then would my corpse here mend in might
Right faithfully.
Now Lord, thou grant to me thy grace
To live here in this world a space
That I might see that babe in his face
Here ere I die.

Ah, Lord God, I think may I endure,
*Trowe we that babe shall find me here. (*Trust)
Now *certis with age I am so poor (*certainly, surely)
That ever it abates my cheer.

Yet if kind fail for age in me,
God yet may length my life *soothly (*truly)
(Un)til I that babe and food so free
Have seen in sight.
For truly, if I *wist release (*knew, wished)
There should nothing my heart dis-ease.
Lord, lend me grace if that thou please
And make me light.

When will thou come, babe, let see, have done.

Nay, come on *tyte and tarry not, (*quickly)
For *certis my life days are near done, (*certainly, surely)
For age to me great woe has wrought.

Great woe is wrought unto man's heart
When he must want that he would have.
I keep no longer to have *quarte (*health, safety)
For I have seen that I for crave.

Ah, *trowes thou these two eyes shall see (*trusts)
That blisded babe ere they be out?
Yea, I pray God so might it be:
Then were I put all out of doubt.

ANGELUS Old Simeon, God's servant right,
*Bod-word to thee I bring, I say, (*bidding, promise)
For the Holy Ghost most of might,
He says thou shall not die away
Til thou have seen
Jesu the babe that Mary bare
For all mankind to slake their care.
He shall do comfort to less and more,
Both morn and even.

SYMEON Ah, Lord, *gramercy now I say (*grant mercy)
That thou this grace has to me *hight (*told)
Ere I be buried here in clay
To see that *seemly beam so bright. (*handsome, noble)

No man of *mould may have more happ(iness) (*earth)
To my solace and mirth alway(s),
Than for to see in Mary's lap
Jesu my joy and Saviour *ay. (*ever, always)
Blessed be his name.
Loo(k), now *mon I see, the truth to tell, (*may)
The redemption of Israel,
Jesu my Lord Emanuel,
Withouten blame.

MARY Joseph, my husband and my *fere, (*fellow, partner)
Ye take to me *grathely intent, (*prepared, ready)
I will you show in this manner
What I will do, thus have I meant:
Full forty days is come and went
Since that my babe Jesu was born;
Therefore I would he were present

As Moses laws says has before,

Here in this Temple before God's sight
As other women does in *feer,
So me think good skill and right
The same to do now with good cheer,
After God's *saw.

(*Fear? Fellowship?)

(*saying, command)

JOSEPH Mary, my spouse and maiden clean,
This matter that thou moves to me
Is for all these women bidden
That has conceived with sin fleshly
To bear a child.
The law is (al)ledged for them right plain
That they must be purified again,
For in man's pleasure for certain
Before were they (de)filed.

But Mary, bird, thou need not so
For this cause to be purified, lo(ok),
In God's Temple;
For *certis thou art a clean virgin
For any thought thy heart within
Nor never wrought no fleshly sin
Nor never ill.

(*certainly, surely)

MARY That I my maidenhead has kept still
It is only through God's will,
That be ye bold;
Yet to fulfil the law *iwis
That God almighty gone express
And for a (ex)sample of meekness,
Offer I would.

(*in certainty, entirely)

JOSEPH Ah, Mary, blessed be thou *ay;
Thou thinks to do after God's will;
As thou has said, Mary, I say,
I will heartily consent *theretill
Without doubt.
Wherefore we dress us forth our way
And make offering to God this day,
Even likewise as thyself gone say
With hearts devout.

(*ever, always)

(*thereto)

MARIA Thereto am I full ready *dight.
But one thing, Joseph, I would you move.

(*prepared)

JOSEPH Mary, my spouse and maiden bright,
Tell on heartily, what is your grief?

MARIA Both beast and fowl us must needs have,
As a lamb and two dove birds also.
Lamb have we none nor none we crave;
Therefore, Joseph, what shall we do,
What is your *rede?
And we do not as custom is,
We are worth to be blamed *iwis;
I would we did nothing amiss,
As God me speed.

(*advice)

(*surely)

JOSEPH Ah, good Mary, the law is this:
To rich to offer both the lamb and the bird,
And the poor two turtles iwis.
Our two dove birds shall not be *fyrd
For our *offerand,
And, Mary, we have dove birds two
As falls for us, therefore we go.
They are here in a pannier, loo(k),
Ready at hand.

(*rejected)

(*offering)

And if we have not both in *feer,
The lamb, the bird, as rich men have,
Think that us must present here
Our babe Jesus, as we vouchsafe
Before God's sight.
He is our lamb, Mary, care thee not,
For rich and power none better sought.
Full well thou has him hither brought,
This our offering *dight.

(*together)

(*prepared, ready)

He is the lamb of God, I say,
That all our sins shall take away
Of this world here.
He is the lamb of God *verray
That must us (de)fend from all our fray,
Born of thy womb, all for our *pay
And for our cheer.

(*truly)

(*ransom)

MARIA Joseph, my spouse, ye say full true,
Then let us dress us forth our way.

JOSEPH Go we then, Mary, and do our due

And make meekly offering this day.
Lo, here is the Temple on this hill
And also priest ordained by skill,
Power having.
And Mary, go we thither forthy,
And let us both kneel devoutly
And offer we up to God meekly
Our due offering.

MARIA Unto my God highest in heaven
And to this priest ordained by skill,
Jesu my babe I offer him
Here with my heart and my good will
Right heartily.
Thou pray for us to God on height,
Thou priest, present here in his might,
At this deed may be in his sight,
Accept goodly.

JOSEPH Loo(k), sir, and two dove birds are here.
Receive them with your holy hands,
We are no better of power,
For we have neither rents nor lands
Truly.
But good sir, pray to God of might
To accept this (th)at we have *dight
That we have offered as we are *hight
Here heartily.

(*prepared)
(*told)

PRESBITER O God and granter of all grace,
Blessed be thy name both night and day,
Accept their offering in this place
That be here present to thee always(s).
Ah, blessed Lord, say never nay,
But let thy offering be *boot and **beylde
To all such folk living in *clay
That thus to thee meekly will *heyld.

(*profit) (**shelter)
(i.e. on earth)
(*yield, incline)

That this babe, Lord, present in thy sight,
Born of a maiden's womb un(de)filed,
Accept for their special gift
Given to mankind, both man and child,
So specially,
And this babe born and here present
May *beylde us that we be not **shent,
But ever ready his grace to *hent

(*shield, shelter) (**destroyed)
(*seize, grasp)

Here *verily.

(*truly)

Ah, blessed babe, welcome thou be,
Born of a maiden in chastity,
Thou art our *beylde, babe, our game and our glee
Ever *soothly.
Welcome our wit and our wisdom,
Welcome our joy all and some,
Welcome *redemptour omnium*
To us heartily.

(*shield, shelter)
(*truly)

[Redeemer of all]

ANNA PROPHETISSA Welcome blessed Mary and maiden *ay, (*always, ever)
Welcome most meek in thine array,
Welcome bright star that shineth bright as day,
All for our bliss;
Welcome, the blessed beam so bright,
Welcome the (g)leam of all our light,
Welcome that all pleasure has *plight
To man and wife.

(*pledged, promised)

Welcome thou blessed babe so free,
Welcome our welfare *wyelly
And welcome all our *seal, **soothly,
To great and small.
Babe, welcome to thy *beyldly bower,
Babb, welcome now for our succour,
And babe, welcome with all honour
Here in this hall.

(*joyfully?)
(*health, bliss) (**truly)

(*sheltered)

ANGELUS Old Simeon, I say to thee,
Dress thee forth in thine array,
Come to the Temple, there shall thou see
Jesus that babe that Mary bore,
That be thou bold.

SYMEON Ah, Lord, I thank thee ever and *ay,
Now am I light as leaf on tree;
My age is went, I feel no fray,
Methink for this that is told me
I am not old.

(*ever)

Now will I to yon Temple go
To see the babe that Mary bare;
He is my health in well and woe
And helps me ever from great care,
Hail blessed babe that Mary bare,

And blessed be thy mother, Mary mild,
Whose womb that yielded fresh and fair
And she a clean virgin *ay un(de)filed. (*ever)

Hail, babe, the Father of heaven own child,
Chosen to cheer us for our mischance;
No earthly tongue can tell filled
What thy might is in every chance.
Hail, the most worthy to enhance,
Boldly thou *beylde from all ill, (*shelter, protect)
Without thy *beylde we get grievance (*shelter, protection)
And for our deeds here should we *spill. (*be destroyed, killed)

Hail *floscampy and flower virginal, (*meadow flower)
The odour of thy goodness *reflars to us all; (*rises)
Hail, most happy to great and to small
For our *weal. (*welfare, prosperity)
Hail royal rose, most ruddy of hue,
Hail flower unfading, both fresh *ay and new, (*ever, always)
Hail the kindest in comfort that ever man knew
For great *heyll. (*health)

And meekly I beseech thee here where I kneel
To suffer thy servant to take thee in hand,
And in my arms for to heave thee here for my *weal, (*prosperity)
And where I bound am in *bale to *bait all my bands. (*prison) (*break) (*bonds)

Now come to me, Lorde of all lands,
Come mightiest by sea and by sands,
Come mirth by street and by strands
On *mould. (*earth)
Come *halse me, the babe that is best born, (*embrace)
Come halse me, the mirth of our morn,
Come halse me, for else I am *lorne (*lost)
For old.

I thank the Lord God of thy great grace
That thus has spared me a space,
This babe in my arms for to embrace
As the prophecy tells.
I thank thee that me my life lent,
I thank thee that me thus *seyll sent, (*happiness)
That this sweet babe, that I in arms *hent (*grasp, hold)
With mirth my might always *melles. (*tells, speaks)

*Melled are my minds *ay with mirth, (*Mixed, mingled) (**ever)

Full fresh now I feel is my force,
Of thy grace thou gave me this *gyrth
Thus *comely to catch here thy cor(p)se
Most *seemly in sight.
Of help thus thy friend never fails,
Thy mercy as every man avails
Both by downs and by dales;
Thus marvelous and much is thy might.

(*peace)
(*suitably, nobly)
(*handsome)

Ah, babe, be thou blessed for *ay,
For thou art my Saviour, I say,
And thou here rules me in fay
In all my life.
Now blessed be thy name,
For thou saves us from shame,
And here thou *beyld us from blame
And from all strife.

(*ever)

(*shelters, protects)

Now care I no more for my life
Since I have seen here this royal so *rife,
My strength and my stinter of strife,
I you say.
In peace, Lord, now leave thy servant,
For mine eyes have seen that is ordained,
The health for all men that be *levand
Here for *ay.

(*remarkable)

(*living)
(*always, ever)

That health, Lord, has thou ordained, I say,
Here before the face of thy people,
And thy light has thou shined this day
To be know of thy folk that was feeble
For evermore.
And thy glory for the childer of Israel
That with thee in thy kingdom shall dwell
When the damned shall be driven to hell
Than with great care.

JOSEPH Mary, my spouse and maiden mild,
In heart I marvel here greatly
How these folk speaks of our child.
They say and tells of great mastery
That he shall do.

MARIA Yea *certes, Joseph, I marvel also,
But I shall bear it full still in mind.

(*certainly, surely)

JOSEPH God give him grace here well to do,
For he is come of gentle kind.

SYMEON Hark, Mary, I shall tell thee the truth ere I go.
This was put here to wield us from woe,
In redemption of many and recover also,
I thee say.

And the sword of sorrow thy heart shall thrill
When thou shall see *soothly thy Son suffer ill (*truly)
For the *weal of all wretches, that shall be his will (*welfare)
Here in *fay. (*faith)

But to be comfort again right well thou may,
And in heart to be *fayne, the **sooth I thee say, (*happy) (**truth)
For his might is so much there can no tongue say nay
Here to his will.

For this babe as a giant full *grathly shall glide (*ready, prepared)
And the mightiest master shall move on *ilke side, (*each)
To all the *wights that **wons in this world wide, (*souls, people) (**dwell)
For good or for ill.

Therefore babe, *beylde us that we here not **spill (*shelter) (**be killed)
And farewell the former of all at thy will,
Farewell star stablest by loud and by still,
In *soothfastness. (*truthfulness)

Farewell the royalist rose that is reigning,
Farewell the babe best in thy bearing,
Farewell God Son, thou grant us thy blessing
To *fyne our distress. (*end, finish)