

PLAY TWENTY-ONE- The Baptism

(The Barbers)

JOHANNES Almighty God and Lord *verray, (*in truth)
Full wonderful is man's *lesying, (*lying, delusion)
For if I preach them day by day
And tell them, Lord, of thy coming,
That all has wrought,
Men are so dull that my preaching
Serves of nought.

When I have, Lord, in the name of thee
Baptised the folk in water clear,
Then have I said that after me
Shall he come that has more power
Than I to taste;
He shall give baptism more entire
In fire and *ghost. (*spirit)

Thus am I come in message right
And be fore-runner in certain,
In witness bearing of that light
The which shall light in *ilka a man (*each)
That is *comand (*coming)
Into this world, now whoso can
May understand.

These folk had *farly of my fare (*astonishment, wonder)
And what I was full fast they *spied. (*i.e. tried to find out)
They asked if I a prophet were,
And I said nay, but soon I *wreyed; (*revealed, perceived)
High apart
I said I was a voice that cried
Here in desert.

Look thou make thee ready, *ay said I, (*ever, always)
Unto our Lord God most of might,
That is that thou be clean holy
In word, in work, *ay ready **dight (*ever) (*prepared)
Against our Lord,
With perfect life that *ilke a **wight (*every, each) (*soul, person)
Be well restored.

For if we be clean in living,
Our bodies are God's temple then

In the which he will make his dwelling;
Therefore be clean, both wife and man.
This is my *reed.
God will make in you holy then
His *wonnyng *stead.

(*advice, teaching)

(*dwelling-place)

And if ye set all your delight
In lust and liking of this life,
Then will he turn from you as *tyte
Because of sin, both of man and *wife,
And from you flee,
For with whom that sin is rife
Will God not be.

(*quickly)

(*woman)

I ANGELUS Thou, John, take (at)tent what I shall say.
I bring thee tidings wonder good:
My Lord Jesus shall come this day
From Galilee unto this flood
Ye Jordan call,
Baptism to take mildly with mood
This day he shall.

John, of his *sande therefore be glad
And thank him heartily, both loud and still.

(*sound, message, mission)

JOHANNES I thank him ever, but I am *radde
I am not able to fulfil
This deed certain.

(*upset, afraid)

II ANGELUS John, thee ought with heart and will
To be full *bayne
To do his bidding, all bidden;
But in his baptism, John, take (at)tent,
The heavens shall be open seen.
The Holy Ghost shall down be sent
To see in sight,
The Father's voice with great talent
Be heard full right,
That shall say thus to him *forthy

(*bound, obedient)

(*therefore)

[SECTION MISSING- UNCLEAR HOW LARGE]

JOHANNES With words few
I will be subject night and day
As me well *awe
To serve my Lord Jesus to pay
In deed and *saw.

(*owe, ought)

(*words)

But well I *wot, baptism is ta'en (*know)
To wash and cleanse man of sin,
And well I *wot that sin is none (*know)
In him, without nor within.
What needs him then
For to be baptised more or *min (*less)
As sinful man?
[SECTION MISSING]

JESUS John, kind of man is frail
To the which that I have me knit,
But I shall show thee skills two
That thou shall know by kindly wit
The cause why I have ordained so,
And one is this:
Mankind may not unbaptised go
To endless bliss.

And *sithen myself have taken mankind (*since)
For men shall me their mirror make
And have my doing in their mind,
And also I do the baptism take.
I will *forthly (*therefore)
Myself be baptised for their sake
Full openly.

Another skill I shall thee tell:
My will is this, that from this day
The virtue of my baptism dwell
In baptism water ever and *ay, (*always, ever)
Mankind to taste,
Through my grace thereto to take away
The Holy Ghost.

JOHANNES All might-full Lord, great is thy grace;
I thank thee of thy great fore-deed.

JESUS Come, baptise me, John, in this place.

JOHANNES Lord, save thy grace that I forbid
That it so be,
For Lord, methinketh it were more need
Thou baptised me.

That place that I yearn most of all,

From thence come thou, Lord, as I guess,
How should I then, that is a thrall,
Give thee baptism, that *right-wise is (*righteous)
And has been ever?
For thou art root of *right-wiseness (*righteousness)
That forfeit never.

What rich man goes from door to door
To beg at him that has right nought?
Lord, thou art rich and I am full poor,
Thou may bliss all, since thou all wrought.
From heaven come all
That helps in earth, if *sooth be sought, (*truth)
From earth but small.

JESUS Thou says full well, John, certainly,
But suffer now for heavenly *mede (*reward)
That *right-wiseness be not only (*righteousness)
Fulfilled in word, but also in deed
Through baptism clear.
Come, baptise me in my manhood
*Appertly here. (*apparently, openly)

First shall I take, since shall I preach,
For so behoves mankind fulfil
All right-wiseness, as **werray ***leech. (*righteousness) (**true) (**healer)

JOHANNES Lord, I am ready at thy will,
And will be *ay (*ever, always)
Thy subject, Lord, both loud and still,
In that I may.

Ah, Lord, I tremble there I stand,
So am I *arow to do that deed, (*afraid)
But save me, Lord, that all ordained,
For thee to touch have I great dread
For doings dark.
Now help me, Lord, through thy Godhead
To do this work.

Jesus, my Lord of mights most,
I baptise thee here in the name
Of the Father and of the Son and Holy Ghost.
But in this deed, Lord, right no blame
This day by me,

And brings all those to thy home
That trusts in thee.

Tunc cantabunt duo angeli *Veni creator spiritus*

[Then two angels sing "Come, creator spirit"]

JESUS John, for man's profit, *wit thou well,
Take I this baptism, certainly;
The dragons power *ilk a dele
Through my baptism destroyed have I,
This is certain,
And saved mankind, soul and body,
From endless pain.

(*know)

(*each part, each work)

What man that trusts and baptised be
Shall saved be and come to bliss.
Whoso trusts not, to pain endless
He shall be damned soon, trust well this.
But wend we now
Where most is need the folk to *wise,
Both I and you.

(*teach)

JOHANNES I love thee, Lord, as sovereign *leech
That come to salve men of their sore;
As thou commands I shall get preach
And learn to every man that lore
That ere was *thrall.
Now, sirs, that bairn that Marie bore,
Be with you all.

(*healer)

(*slave)