



The St Albans Psalter (12th century, English), p. 49. Now owned by the church of St Godhard, Hildesheim, in the care of the Domsbibliothek, Hildesheim. This image (© St Godhard Hildesheim) was generously provided by, and is reproduced by kind permission of, the Domsbibliothek.

Grundtvig's *I Kveld* : Reflections of an Anglo-Saxonist

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For the first volume of his *Sang-Værk til den Danske Kirke* (1837) Grundtvig composed a number of poetic texts which drew upon the topics, thought, images and diction of English poets of the Anglo-Saxon Church. By this inclusion of the voice of Anglo-Saxon Christendom, he was implementing his purpose of illustrating the historical catholicity or universality of the Christian Church and furnishing the Danish Church with a treasury of sacred song to give voice to this catholic identity within which it had its own authentic place. Three of these Anglo-Saxon source-texts and the use Grundtvig made of them are here commented upon, from the viewpoint of an Anglo-Saxonist, with the aim of identifying and evaluating some of the locations at which Grundtvig appears to be drawing (from early Church sources) inspiration and congregational instruction relevant to his own day; or, alternatively, where he asserts a markedly divergent standpoint in accord with his own distinctive contemporary polemic. The three Danish texts inspired by the Anglo-Saxon poets are: *I Kveld blev der banket paa Helvedes Port*; *Kommer Sjæle, dyrekiøbte*; and *Himmel-Farten saae i Løn / Salomon, Kong Davids Søn*. A new metrical, unrhymed English translation of *I Kveld* has been presented above, together with annotations upon the text which also make reference to Grundtvig's relationship to the ultimate literary source of narratives of Christ's Descent into Hell, namely the apocryphal *Gospel of Nicodemus*. Several of the more substantial critical issues arising are discussed separately and more amply, including Grundtvig's treatment of Eve and his emphatic and to some extent contro-

versial assertion of the importance of linking the narratives of the Descent into Hell and the Ascension.

*Hæc nox est, in qua, destructis vinculis mortis,
Christus ab inferis victor ascendit.*¹

Introduction

For the first volume of his *Sang-Værk til den Danske Kirke* (1837) Grundtvig composed a number of hymns or songs which purposefully drew upon the topics, thought, images and diction of English poets of the Anglo-Saxon Church.² As a companion-piece to Professor Bugge's article above,³ there follows here, from the viewpoint of an Anglo-Saxonist, a discussion of three of the items based, according to Grundtvig's own indication, upon Anglo-Saxon poetic sources. They are: *I Kvæld blev der banket paa Helvedes Port* [This night came a knocking on Hell's fortress-gate] (nr. 243 in *Sang-Værk* 1837), *Kommer Sjæle, dyrekiøbte* [Come you souls, so dearly purchased] (244) and *Himmel-Farten saae i Løn / Salomon, Kong Davids Søn* [Solomon, King David's son, / Christ's Ascension saw, foreshown] (245).

The first treats of Christ's Descent into Hell in the period between crucifixion and resurrection, to visit the dead who as yet lay in Satan's power.

¹ This is the night when Christ broke the prison-bars of death, and rose victorious from the underworld. (The *Exsultet*. Latin text and translation, *The Roman Missal*, 3rd ed., 2011). All translations in this article are the author's own unless otherwise specified.

² It is appropriate here to mention Bent Noack's very useful article, "Den oldengelske digtning og Grundtvig" [Old English poetry and Grundtvig] (Noack 1989). Wide-ranging, yet providing detailed evidence of Grundtvig's adoption of specific idiom and imagery from the sources, insightful in its final assessment of the Anglo-Saxon element in Grundtvig's legacy, it also has particular relevance to discussion of the poems under consideration in this present article.

³ I have gained much from friendship and collaboration with Professor Bugge, for which I take this opportunity to record my sincere gratitude.

The second, though essentially an Ascension hymn, sustains the topic of the Descent into Hell by reference, particularly in verse 3, to the overthrow of the devils and the rescue of human souls from captivity there. The third celebrates Christ's Ascension forty days after the resurrection, as a long-foreshadowed pledge to all the faithful that they will finally ascend from this temporal condition into heavenly eternity.

Grundtvig's footnotes in the *Sang-Værk* state that the first was composed "Efter Angel-Sachseren hos Cædmon" [After the Anglo-Saxon in Cædmon]; that the second was derived "Af den Angelsachsiske Messiade i Exeter-Bogen" [From the Anglo-Saxon Messiade in the Exeter Book]; and that the third was "Af Messiaden i Exeter-Bogen, med Hensyn paa Høisangens 2det" [From the Messiade in the Exeter Book with reference to The Song of Solomon 2].⁴

The primary purpose of this companion-piece to Professor K. E. Bugge's article "The Genesis of a Poem," which precedes this article, is to contribute some notes on Grundtvig's relationship to these Anglo-Saxon sources. The notes relate chiefly to his treatment of the *topos* of Christ's Descent into Hell (the *Descensus ad inferos*) as it was understood and poetically treated by Grundtvig in form of a narrative (*I Kveld blev der banket*) to be congregationally sung. However, it proves desirable to touch upon all three of the above-cited texts.

One reason for this is that they clearly form a set, in terms of their combined coverage of a certain view of salvation history. This was a view which Grundtvig evidently set out to represent within the catholic – Christendom-wide – range of source materials gathered into his collection of songs for the Danish Church. Their positioning has liturgical implications.

Another reason is that together they also reflect an orthodoxy of the Anglo-Saxon Church which was embodied in those scriptural-exegetical poems in Old English transcribed and studied by Grundtvig. Thus they are illustrative of that immersion in the *oldkirkelige* (that which relates to

⁴ Bent Noack (Noack 1981-82, 83-99) suggests that Grundtvig, in his notes on poems indebted in some degree to his Anglo-Saxon poetic sources, uses a differentiating terminology of ascription (such as "frit oversat," freely translated, and "efter," after) which constitutes a rising scale of degrees of closeness to the original sources. Noack does concede, however, that though the term "af" ["from"] in principle designates the closest relationship to the source, the degree of fidelity in such instances is by no means equal from case to case.

the Early Church) which was Grundtvig's experience as he delved into Anglo-Saxon literature and culture after 1815.⁵

A third and most compelling reason is that Grundtvig explicitly held the two articles of belief concerning the Descent and the Ascension, as professed in the Apostles' Creed,⁶ to be theologically interdependent and inseparable, and he used sermon as well as hymn to communicate to his congregation the conjoint significance of these articles.

These Anglo-Saxon source-citations call for some initial clarification; certain lingering misconceptions as to the form of the Anglo-Saxon sources named by Grundtvig need to be corrected. But more importantly, attention to the broader textual contexts within which Grundtvig found those Anglo-Saxon narrative episodes of Descent and Ascension can sharpen substantially our awareness of the broader theological framework within which he understood those episodes in the Christian story to be providentially located. It is a reasonable initial assumption that Grundtvig's understanding of this broader theological framework would influence his poetic reworking of the topics of Descent and Ascension as he encountered them in his Anglo-Saxon sources.

Grundtvig and Oxford Bodleian Library MS Junius 11⁷

In the ascription "Efter *Angel-Sachseren* hos Cædmon" [After the Anglo-Saxon [person, poet] in Cædmon], Grundtvig's phrase "hos Cædmon" appears to make shorthand reference to the *edition* in which his source-text appeared, and in which he most probably made his first encounter with the work. This was *Caedmonis monachi Paraphrasis poetica: Genesisios*

⁵ See further Bradley 2004, 234-54.

⁶ "... suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father" – Church of England, *Common Worship* 2000; ["...pint under Pontius Pilatus, korsfæstet, død og begravet, nedfaret til dødsriget, på tredje dag opstanden fra de døde, opfaret til himmels, siddende ved Gud Faders, den Almægtiges, højre hånd" – *Den Danske Salmebog*, authorised 2002].

⁷ The edition of MS Junius 11 used here is that of Krapp 1931: and the edition of the Exeter Book is that of Krapp and Dobbie 1936.

*ac praecipuarum sacrae paginae historiarum abhinc annos M.LXX. Anglo-Saxonice conscripta, et nunc primum edita.*⁸ This is the edition, published 1655 in Amsterdam by Franciscus Junius,⁹ of the unique manuscript codex of Anglo-Saxon poetry now known as Oxford Bodleian Library MS Junius 11. No author's name appears in the Anglo-Saxon manuscript; but under the influence of Bede's moving account of the miraculous gift of poesy granted to Cædmon, the unlettered lay-brother taking his turn as night-watchman over the cattle-shed in the abbey at Whitby – then called Streoneshealh and ruled at that time by the Abbess Hilda¹⁰ – Junius presented this codex as the inspired compositions of Cædmon. This ascription was always uncertain, and today is no longer regarded as tenable. Thus, Grundtvig's phrasing here, "After the Anglo-Saxon poet in [Junius's] *Cædmon*," may seem to express his own prudent reservation (which he had held from the time of his first explorations in Anglo-Saxon literature) about making unqualified attribution of the work to Cædmon.

Whether or not the so-called *Cædmon's poetic Paraphrase* was actually the work Cædmon himself created or an attribution laid to him by a later generation was no matter of great concern to Grundtvig; but he did not doubt Bede's testimony to Cædmon's existence and to his emergence as the first Christian poet of the English in Northumbria. It is worth quoting the opinion Grundtvig expressed in 1836 in the 'Middle Ages' section of his survey of world history. It serves to give an indication of the great importance he attached to Anglo-Saxon Christian poetry in the whole history of Christian poesy in the early-medieval North. With reference to Bede's account of the miraculous gift of poetry to Cædmon, Grundtvig wrote:

⁸ "Cædmon the monk's poetic paraphrase of Genesis and of principal narratives of the sacred pages, written in Anglo-Saxon 1070 years since, and now edited for the first time." Since Cædmon's miracle occurred during the abbacy of Hilda who died in 680, the calculation of 1070 years is in error.

⁹ François du Jon the Younger (born 1591, died in Oxford 1677), son of the Protestant scholar, pastor, philologist and scriptural exegete also named Franciscus Junius (1545-1602), spent much of his life living in England, partly as librarian to Thomas Howard, earl of Arundel. He published major works particularly on ancient and mainly scripture-related Gothic, Anglo-Saxon, German and Dutch texts.

¹⁰ Bede, Bk. IV, ch. 24.

This remarkable occurrence, which took place about the time of Bede's birth (for Mother Hilda died in 680) is certainly no state event, but it is Northern poesy's resurrection in Christian dress after its burial in baptism, which was in every respect of such great and immeasurable consequences for the development of the world of new nations that in no way can it be passed over in the new Book of Creation which the history of the Middle Ages is. Whether, on the other hand, the so-called "Cædmon's Paraphrase" [that is, the collection of poems preserved in MS Junius 11], which we still have, is authentic or not authentic is merely a side-issue in literary history itself, since its influence was just the same; and here it can only be noted in passing that time has certainly left us fragments of Cædmon's Hymn (...).¹¹

Grundtvig knew intimately the contents of MS Junius 11, and his immersion in these ancient poems was at the same time an immersion in the ancient patristic-exegetical tradition of the early Church – in the *oldkirkelige*. It was through the edition of Franciscus Junius in the Royal Library in Copenhagen that he first explored the poetry of 'Cædmon', long before he made his first three study-visits to England (1829-31). Later, he purchased and closely studied the modern edition of the manuscript published by Benjamin Thorpe in 1832 (Thorpe 1832); and he consulted the original manuscript in the Bodleian Library in Oxford. On the basis of these studies he prepared a transcription of the manuscript as though for ultimate publication, though this aim was never brought to completion.

¹¹ "Denne mærkelige Tildragelse, som fandt Sted ved Bedas Fødsels-Tid, (thi Moder Hilde døde 680) er vel ingen Stats-Begivenhed, men det er den Nordiske Poesies Opstandelse i Christen-Tøiet efter dens Begravelse i Daaben, som i alle Retninger var af saa store, uberegnelige Følger for Udviklingen i den ny Folke-Verden, at den ingenlunde kan forbigaaes i den ny Skabelses-Bog, som Middel-Alderens Historie er. Om derimod den saakaldte "*Cædmons Paraphras*" vi endnu har, er ægte eller uægte, det er selv i Bog-Historien kun en Bisag, da Virkningen blev den samme, og her kan det kun bemærkes i Forbigaaende, at Tiden sikkert har levnet os Brud-Stykker af *Kædmunds Høi-Sang* (...)." (Grundtvig 1836, 16). The 9-line fragment ("*Kædmunds Høi-Sang*") now commonly known as *Cædmon's Hymn* is historically associated with Bede's narrative of the miracle, and is preserved in no fewer than seventeen ancient manuscripts, the oldest being a manuscript of Bede's *History* dating from ca. 737.

His transcription is now Fascicule 320 in the Grundtvig Archive [Grundtvig-Arkivet] in the Royal Library, Copenhagen.

Grundtvig's source for *I Kveld*, then, is not the work of Cædmon; nor is his source some free-standing Anglo-Saxon *sang* (Dahn 1968, 158) or discrete poem on the Harrowing of Hell,¹² comparable in length and scope to *I Kveld*. Nor does Grundtvig attempt to reproduce the distinctive poetic characteristics of his source, which extends over almost 150 lines (*Christ and Satan*, 365-511), and is composed in a non-stanzaic narrative form using internal head-rhyme (alliteration). *I Kveld*, in contrast, is comprised of 20 four-lined stanzas, with a fixed rhyme-scheme, structured on a pattern of end-rhymes.¹³

There is also significant difference of style and tone between 'Cædmon' and Grundtvig. The Junius poet's account of Christ's confrontation of Satan in Hell is no suspense-filled action narrative couched in heroic battle-idiom like that of Beowulf's struggle with Grendel. In marked contrast, likewise, to Grundtvig's narrative, which is filled with dramatic event and action, the Anglo-Saxon episode deals only briefly and economically with specific actions. Instead of direct narration of action, such as determines the dramatic impetus of *I Kveld* as a free-standing text amenable to being sung, the Anglo-Saxon poet chose to depend upon a high proportion of speech in a more epic vein. It is largely through this speech – particularly by the fallen angels and by Eve – that events and the protagonists' responses to events are conveyed. Similarly, it is largely through speech assigned to the characters (rather than through comment made in the poet's "own" voice) that the poem's audience is guided to perception of God's unthwart-

¹² This is the title by which the narrative of Christ's Descent into Hell is commonly known in English tradition. The noun "harrowing" derives from the Old English verb *hergian* [to attack in warlike manner, to harry, ravage, plunder]; as in the adjectival form preserved in the Modern English phrase "a harrowing experience" (that is, an experience which ravages the emotions). The Old English verb is cognate with the intransitive Danish verb *hæрге* "fare frem paa krigersk vis, især med røven, plyndren, ødelæggelse osv.; husere; rase"). In both languages the verb is related to the noun for "army" (OE *here*, Dan. *hær*).

¹³ When Grundtvig did have a shot at writing pseudo-Old English verse, broadly observing the conventions of alliterative poetry, his pastiches were moderately successful. His Danish rendition of the lengthy narrative of *Beowulf* (*Bjowulfs Drape*, 1820), however, was composed in a variety of poetic forms not derived from the original.

able plan unfolding in the temporal world and pointing towards eternity. In summary, Grundtvig's treatment of his source diverges from it so markedly in poetic form and dramatic technique that we might better use the ascription "Inspired by" rather than "Based upon."

Strikingly, neither the Anglo-Saxon poet nor Grundtvig makes use of the magnificent prefigurative rhetoric of Psalm 24 – a thrilling rhetoric which few other poets, playwrights and commentators dealing with the *Descensus*-narrative have been willing to forgo. That Grundtvig was perfectly familiar with the Scriptural text on his own account can be taken for granted; and that he was fully responsive to its majestic imagery is demonstrated in his hymn 255 in *Sang-Værk* vol. 1, *Vor Frelser opstod fra de Døde*:

From the dead has Our Saviour uprisen,
Our Lord up to heaven ascends,
Destroyed is the home of corruption,
Reborn is the fruit-bearing earth.¹⁴

There he is inspired by Charles Wesley's hymn *Our Lord is risen from the dead! / Our Jesus is gone up on high!*, where "angels chant the solemn lay: / Lift up your heads, ye heavenly gates" (Wesley, v.2), as Christ re-enters his heavenly kingdom after harrowing Hell. Furthermore, on Palm Sunday 1867, in the introduction to his sermon in Vartov Kirke (Brandt 1880, 50) Grundtvig quoted Psalm 24:7-10; and about the same time wrote a short hymn based upon the text:

*Op nu med Portene vide paa Gavl
Høvdinger alle i Aandernes Rige.*¹⁵

In the Anglo-Saxon source, nevertheless, the humiliation and defeat of Satan are to the fore from the outset. For the audience of the poem, knowing

¹⁴ *Vor Frelser opstod fra de Døde, / Vor Herre til Himmels opfoer, / Fordærvælsens Hjem er lagt øde, / Gienfødt er den frugtbare Jord!*

¹⁵ *Open the portals now, wide in the gable, / All of you lords of the realm of the spirits.* Quoted by Henning Høirup (1951, 48). This information was kindly communicated by Professor Bugge.

the outcome in advance, the prevailing mood is increasingly triumphant; and this exultant tone Grundtvig – true, one commentator has suggested, to his “nordiske natur” – manifestly brings over, decidedly amplified, from his sources. From a passage of Anglo-Saxon Christian epic narrative Grundtvig has elicited what this same commentator has called a Danish “kæmpevisé” [heroic poem].¹⁶ If, however, one wishes to be open-minded about the cultural sources and affiliations involved here, one must also take into account the heroic-militaristic idiom of mainline Christian and Scriptural tradition – for example the idiom, so potent and fertile in literature and art throughout the Christian centuries, of Paul’s letter to the faithful in Ephesus. Put on the full armour of God, he urges – the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit. Take your stand, struggle, stand your ground, stand firm, extinguish all the flaming arrows of the Evil One.¹⁷ In short, be a soldier of Christ. Certainly, for their part, in their diverse writings, the Anglo-Saxons were well familiar with the *topoi* not only of the *miles Christi*, warrior of Christ, but also of *Christus miles*, Christ the warrior – as, for example, in *The Dream of the Rood*.¹⁸

¹⁶ Grundtvigs nordiske natur blev tiltrukket af det kristendomssyn, der i Kristus så helten som triumferede over sine fjender (...) Hos angelsachserne fandt han den sang, som gav ham den storslåede kæmpevisé “I kvæld...” [Grundtvig’s nordic nature was attracted by that view of Christianity which saw in Christ the hero who triumphed over his foes (...)] Among the Anglo-Saxons he found the song which gave him that magnificent heroic poem “*I Kvæld...*” (Dahn 1968, 158).

¹⁷ Extracted from Ephesians 6:10-17 (NIV).

¹⁸ In the late-10th century Anglo-Saxon codex of poetry and prose known as the Vercelli Book. The poem is framed as a dream-vision of the Cross which speaks to the dreamer and recalls its experiences. The lines “Weop eal gesceaft, cwiðdon cyninges fyll: / Crist wæs on rode” [All creation wept, lamented the death of the King: Christ was on the Cross] was taken by some early scholars as evidence of the influence of Nordic myth (the weeping of all things living and dead for the death of Baldr) (55-56). That, however, is to ignore the anciently established Christian images of the Sun and Moon weeping above the crucified Christ – an iconography familiar to the Anglo-Saxons and appearing in their manuscript illustrations. Some of the poetic idiom of *Rood* is conventionally “heroic” and reminiscent of more secular poetry such as *Beowulf*; but the poem is one of the most authentically devotional and affective Christian-religious poems in the English language. The text is edited in Krapp 1932; translated into prose and discussed in Bradley 1982; and discussed in Noack 1996.

One should add that even the dragons in Grundtvig's Hell may derive as well from the "Christian" dragons familiar to the Anglo-Saxons in art and literature of early medieval Christian western Europe, as from Nordic pre-Christian myth. They are present in Grundtvig's Anglo-Saxon source: *Æce æt helle duru dracan eardigað, / hate on reðre; heo us helpan ne magon* [Ever at Hell's doors dragons dwell, hot at their heart; they cannot help us], laments Satan (97-8).

When this Anglo-Saxon Satan speaks, dragon-like sparks of fire and venom fly from his mouth (78-9 and 161-62): this may be "Ilddrage-Spyttet" – "the fire-dragon spit" which Grundtvig mentions in v. 5. In the fine drawing of the Harrowing of Hell in the 11th-century Anglo-Saxon psalter from Winchester, a dragon lies vanquished beneath the foot of Christ, together with Satan bound.¹⁹ By this date, such imagery, to be found in Anglo-Saxon drawings and sculpture, is conventional within western Christian art at large, as is that of Michael the Archangel defeating Satan in form of a dragon. It derives largely from apocryphal sources.

Indisputably, Grundtvig relished the heroic tradition of the Nordic world, and purposefully brought over Nordic mythological motifs and *billedsprog* [metaphorical language] into Christian contexts, such as the Hel-cock (v. 6). *Hel-Hanen* imports from *Völuspá* in the Old Icelandic *Poetic Edda* an allusion to the warning of the approach of Ragnarök – here applicable to the doom facing the devils. Nevertheless, it would be to misrepresent the breadth and depth of Grundtvig's reception of universal Christian tradition to ascribe the warrior and the conflict in *I Kvæld* solely, or even primarily, to his Nordic proclivities.

¹⁹ London British Library MS Cotton Tiberius C vi (The Cotton Psalter, The Tiberius Psalter), f.14. A useful online survey of the iconography of the Descent into Hell, with illustrations of the motif in various media (including the Tiberius Psalter, f.14), is Ivanova 2010, especially the section *Die Darstellungen von "Descensus ad inferos" in der westeuropäischen Tradition*. Danish churches mentioned by Ivanova as preserving "frescoes" associated with the Descensus topic include Kirkerup (c. 1350); Hjembæk (1475); Estruplund (1542); Gerlev (1425), Overdraaby (1470) and Undløse (1460).



London British Library MS Cotton Tiberius C vi (*The Tiberius Psalter*), folio 14.
Winchester c.1050. Copyright permission by courtesy of the British Library

Waiting, watching, and the reward of the vigilant soul

Grundtvig does not fully clarify what it was, for which the captives in Hell watched and waited by day and by night, in v. 5 of *I Kvæld*. His Anglo-Saxon and Latin sources, however, also refer to long watching and waiting – and give explanations which are, in fact, important didactic elements in the narrative of the Descent.

It should first be noted that this watching and waiting is surely not (in terms of the liturgical use traditionally made of the concept) a casual and circumstantial detail of the scene-setting. Rather, it asserts the advocated disposition of the whole Church throughout the ages – as symbolically expressed through the calendar of the Church's liturgical year.

Traditionally, in certain seasons, through the language of the liturgy, the faithful place themselves devotionally, with some intensity, *in the presence* of what is, in scriptural-historical terms, a past event or situation. In Advent, the Church watches and waits for the coming of Christ into the world; through Holy Week and especially on Holy Saturday the Church watches and waits for the hour of the overthrow of Sin and Death and the Resurrection of Christ; and, indeed, throughout all worldly time the Church watches and waits for the Final Judgement upon the world. This disposition the Scriptures (and Scripture-based hymnody) explicitly urge: “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour” (Matthew 25:13; NIV); “Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out” (John 5:28, 29; NIV); “Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme” (Philipp, 1599). In some artistic depictions of the Harrowing of Hell the concept of watching and waiting is expressed through the inclusion of a symbolic figure, given prominence alongside Adam and Eve. Sometimes it is clearly envisaged to be John the Baptist. Sometimes, as in the Anglo-Saxon manuscript illustration accompanying this article (London British Library MS Cotton Tiberius C.vi), there is a figure without obvious features of identification – in this case, a figure popping up between Adam and Eve – which might be interpreted as the artist's symbolic representation of the concept of watching and waiting – now rewarded with the fulfilment of God's providential plan, in the liberation of the captives of Hell. Grundtvig may not have encountered this particular illustration, but there can be little doubt that he was alert to the doctrinal implications of “watching and

waiting” of God’s people – in faith and in trust. It is a kind of redeeming virtue in Hell’s captives that they continue amidst horrors and assaults by the ancient foe to watch and wait.

In Grundtvig’s Anglo-Saxon source, *Christ and Satan*, Christ, speaking among the rejoicings of the liberated souls, speaking as “God’s Son from the beginning” (468) and therefore speaking as God, sums up the history of the creation and the fall of “Adam and the noble woman.” The “hideous being” Satan, “foisted evil ideas upon you both” (486). When they died they went into the imprisonment of Hell. But (487-501) “then I repented that the work of my hand [that is, his human creation] suffered the bondage of this prison.” Only God the Saviour who had ordained their punishment could help them. So God came into the world in human form and “through the person of a woman” and “atoned for you when men pierced me on the tree” (510). “I kept in remembrance that the multitude in this evil dwelling-place was longing that I should lead them home out of their shackles up to their own land, so that they should enjoy the splendours of the Lord and the glory of the heavenly host” (502 ff).

On top of this general human “longing” of which God was ever aware, there was also specific reason for hope of imminent help. Eve tells that “three days ago” news was brought to Hell “that God himself would come down to the tenants of Hell” (424 ff). The mention of three days may point to the Crucifixion as the source of this hope, but there is no explicit reference to that event. As a result of this news, “Each one rose up and propped himself on his arm and leaned on his hands. Though the horror of hell seemed terrible, they all rejoiced at this among their sufferings, that their noble Lord meant to visit Hell in their aid.” This piece of the Anglo-Saxon narrative, purposefully setting immediate events in the context of God’s whole redemptive purpose for fallen humanity, seems to lie behind Grundtvig’s v. 5:

At once on their elbows each captive sat up –
 here in Hell had they never yet listened,
 but waited and watched both by day and by night,
 nor heeded the fire-dragons’ venom!

In the anonymous Anglo-Saxon poem *The Descent into Hell* in the Exeter Book, the cause of their hopeful expectation is much clearer. John

the Baptist, beheaded at Salome's behest, resumes in Hell his former role on earth, which was to preach the coming of the Messiah: "Our Saviour promised me, when he willed to send me on this journey, that he, Lord of all the people, would seek me out after six months. Now that time is fled away. I most surely expect and truly believe that today the Lord himself, God's victorious Son, will seek us out" (lines 26-32).

Such, up to the Reformation, remained the popular identification of those who proclaimed a promise of hope in Hell, prior to the Redeemer's triumph over sin and death. For example, in the so-called Mystery Plays or Corpus Christi Plays performed in the city of York in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, John the Baptist gives thanks to Christ at the Harrowing, thus:

A, Lorde, I love thee inwardly
 That me wolde make thi messengere
 Thy comyng in erth for to crye
 And teche thi faith to folke in feere,
 And sithen before thee for to dye
 And bringe boodworde to thame here
 How thai schulde have thyne helpe in hye.²⁰

[Ah Lord, I love you in my heart, who would make me your messenger to proclaim your coming into the world and to teach your faith to folk in fear; and then to die before you, and to bring a message to those here, how they should have your help indeed.]

It is in the Latin *Gospel of Nicodemus*, ch.3, that the most significant of causes for hope among the dead is expounded. Adam and Seth have nursed – for 5,500 years – the promise that after this span of time the Son of God would raise the body of Adam and the bodies of the dead; then, with the oil of mercy he would anoint all who believe in him. This promise was given to Seth by Michael the Archangel when Seth made his way back to the gates of Paradise in the hope of getting such an oil to anoint the body of Adam who lay mortally sick. This legend of the oil of mercy was popular in medieval writings, and it served well to assert that it

²⁰ Davidson, *The Harrowing of Hell*, 361-7.

was always in God's purpose, from the Fall onwards, to grant humankind redemption from the consequences of their disobedience; but Grundtvig, for his part, evidently preferred a cause of hopeful expectation nearer to the canonical Scriptures. Eve has nursed through the ages the optimistic interpretation of God's curse upon the serpent (Genesis 3:15): "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (KJV).

Men est Du den Sæd, mig blev lovet til Bod,
 Undfanget og født af en Kvinde,
 Da falder ei Moder omsonst Dig til Fod,
 Forlades ei grusom herinde!

[But be you that curative Seed promised me,
 Conceived and brought forth of a woman,
 Not in vain shall your Mother now fall at your feet
 Not, fear-sick, be left here abandoned!] [v.14]

This is essentially a variant of the concept of the *felix culpa* – the "happy fault" as Augustine of Hippo defined it, and as it is celebrated in the Easter *Exsultet* (on which, see further below): *O felix culpa quae talem et tantum meruit habere redemptorem* [O happy fault which deserved to have so great a redeemer]. It is "the happy end" which John Milton, for one, carried over into Protestant tradition, in *Paradise Lost*, Bk XII. There, before their expulsion from Paradise, Adam is angelically informed, and is instructed to inform Eve of "The great deliverance by her seed to come / (...) That ye may live, which will be many days, / Both in one faith unanimous though sad, / With cause for evils past, yet much more cheered / With meditation on the happy end." This well represents the tradition that Adam and Eve had specific cause to wait and hope for a blessed termination of their exile on earth and in Hell.

Skjøn Eva, som angred sin Brøde: Grundtvig's treatment of Eve

The observation was made above that Grundtvig, rather than faithfully replicating the matter and mind-set of his Anglo-Saxon source, uses his

redaction of the ancient material as a means of engaging with issues of his own day, issues of relevance and didactic usefulness to his contemporary congregation. As an example of this, it may prove worth examining the specimen case of Eve's exoneration.

Eve, who has so prominent a role in the Scriptural source-narratives and who, over centuries of theology relating to the Fall, has borne such a burden of blame, has no role to play in the primary Greek source-narrative of the Harrowing of Hell – the apocryphal work widely known as *The Gospel of Nicodemus*.²¹ It is in one of the later Latin recensions of *Nicodemus* (Cowper 1897, 372-388) that an episode involving Eve is introduced into the narrative.

When Christ has committed Satan into the depth of the abyss, he graciously salutes Adam and speaks a blessing upon him. Adam falls at his feet and kisses Christ's hands, weeping passionately and saying: "Behold the hands which formed me." Adam then testifies to all the assembled company, acknowledging that the Christ has come, as King of Glory, to gather all the delivered souls to his eternal kingdom (*op. cit.*, p.385).

Then also "our mother Eve" falls at Christ's feet, rises again and kisses his hands, passionately weeping and saying: "Behold the hands which fashioned me." Then she too testifies to all the gathered multitude (*loc.cit.*).

²¹ The Apocryphal Gospels were little studied in the post-Reformation period until the pioneering work of John Albert Fabricius – *Codex Apocryphus Noui Testamenti* – was published in Hamburg between 1703 and (2nd rev. ed.) 1719. Two copies of the 1719 edition were in Grundtvig's library (Catalogue nr. 491-92; information from Professor K. E. Bugge, who also notes that in 1829 Grundtvig bought Thomas Warton's *History of English Poetry* (1821), the third volume of which contains an account of the influence of this apocryphal gospel upon English literature). In *The Gospel of Nicodemus*, also known as *The Acts of Pilate*, Christ's Descent into Hell is narrated in the section purporting to be the testimony of Karinus and Leucius, sons of that Simeon who prophesied over the infant Jesus at his presentation in the Temple. These two had died and joined all the other souls in Hell's keeping. They were therefore present as witnesses of Christ's victory. Christ then restored them to life and sent them into Galilee to bear witness; and thence they were summoned to testify to the council of chief priests and rulers of the synagogue in Jerusalem. An accessible modern English translation of the Latin text is in Elliott 2005. A study of the Anglo-Saxon translation from the Latin is in Cross 1996.

Taking this development further, Grundtvig's Anglo-Saxon source, for its part, culminates in a touching version of the popular medieval concept that Mary was a second Eve,²² just as Christ was a second Adam. The Anglo-Saxon poet tells that upon the overthrow of Satan "the blessed souls, Adam's kin" (405) are forthwith allowed passage out of Hell: but not Eve. Eve could not yet look upon heaven before she recalled aloud her act of disobedience in Eden: "Once I provoked you, everlasting Lord" (408-9). She could not pass before her Lord and out through the shattered gates of Hell before she had expressed her remorse. So Eve formally repents her part in the Fall, and reaches out with her hands and prays for mercy, pleading the all-compensatory virtues of "my daughter," Mary:

ræhte þa mid handum to heofencynninge,
 bæd meotod miltse þurh Marian had:
 "Hwæt, þu fram minre dohtor, drihten, onwoce
 in middangeard mannum to helpe.
 Nu is gesene þæt ðu eart sylfa god
 and ece ordfruma ealra gesceafta"
 (*Christ and Satan*, 435-40).

[Then she stretched out her hands to the Heaven-king and begged grace of the Lord by virtue of Mary's standing: "Lo, Lord, by my daughter you were born into this world, to men's succour. Now it is manifest that you are God's own self and the eternal author of all things created."]

First when this act of contrition has been performed is Eve allowed to "ascend from here with my family." (422-23).

For the Anglo-Saxon poet – whose English Church was distinguished (certainly in the tenth and eleventh centuries) by its devotion to Mary for the active and central role she played from the Incarnation through to the Ascension, and would continue to play until the end of time – this scene represented one of the great junctures in salvation history.

²² Encapsulated in the 15th-century English/Latin carol refrain: *Nova! Nova! Ave fit ex Eva!* [News! News! "Ave" is shaped from "Eva"!].

Though the Latin text of *Nicodemus* was certainly known to Grundtvig, it is the Anglo-Saxon text which he appears to have followed here, where Eve is envisaged as voluntarily assuming blame for the Fall and its consequences, before receiving a kind of absolution from Christ. This version Grundtvig follows – but makes the most of the episode of Eve’s reconciliation found there: indeed, giving strikingly enhanced prominence to Eve’s role in that dramatic moment of confrontation and reconciliation between fallen humankind and their Redeemer.

What could have seemed a harsh and humiliating imposition of the world’s blame upon the woman, Grundtvig renders as a remarkably tender and moving cameo (vv. 11-16). In his version, when Christ calls out, “*Adam, hvor er du?*” [v. 10. Adam, where are you?] (deliberately establishing a symmetry with God’s call to Adam in the Garden of Eden) it is not Adam who answers, but Eve. Unsummoned (that is, voluntarily) she approaches the Saviour, addresses him as “My son and my Lord” (v. 11) and with much dignity takes the blame upon herself for the dreadful plight they had all been suffering in Hell.

In the Anglo-Saxon source, she “reached out with her hands to the heaven King” (435), but in Grundtvig’s narrative the action is boldly and movingly reversed:

Saa kyssed sin Moder Guds Herligheds Glands,
 Til Under for alle de Døde,
 Og op stod, som Dronning, med Regnbue-Krands
 Skiøn Eva, som angred sin Brøde (v. 16).

[God’s Majesty’s glory his Mother then kissed –
 The dead all looked on in great wonder –
 And up, like a queen, with a rainbow-wreath, stood
 Lovely Eve, who repented her error.]

Not only is Eve’s forgiveness granted the seal of a holy kiss from the Redeemer himself, but when she rises, with tears of remorse upon her cheeks, a rainbow halo shimmers about her. Now Eve, like Mary and all the saints, has an aureole: Joakim Skovgaard prominently recorded the detail in his Grundtvig-influenced painting *Christus i de dødes Rige* [Christ in the realm of the dead] (1894).

It is tempting to believe that in this moving scene of Eve's absolution Grundtvig is expressing a sentiment concerning the status of women in the Christian story that he had encountered elsewhere in Anglo-Saxon poetry he had read, and indeed transcribed – in fact, in several copies – namely in the Exeter Book.²³

The Exeter Book anthology of poems (described more fully below) opens with a set of lyrics based upon the so-called “O”-antiphons sung in Western Christian Church tradition at Vespers (or Evensong), one on each of the seven or eight last days of Advent. In Grundtvig's day these Anglo-Saxon lyrics were perceived as one continuous text, which was generally regarded as the first part of a tripartite *Messiede* and which therefore acquired the title *Christ I*. A portion of *Christ I* – lines 71-103, now more usually known as *Advent Lyric 4* – is a free rendition in Old English of the Latin Advent antiphon *O virgo virginum*. In this antiphon, Mary responds to the wonderment of the daughters of Jerusalem over the “divine mystery” whereby a virgin could conceive a child. In her reply (to the sons as well as the daughters of Jerusalem), Mary declares:

Christ revealed in David's dear kinswoman [Mary] that the sin of Eve is entirely set aside and the curse averted and the lowlier sex is glorified. Hope is now conceived that a blessing may now and always rest upon both alike, men and women, henceforth to eternity (*Christ I*, 95-101).

The wondrous symmetry by which Eve's calamitous disobedience is made good by Mary's obedience to the Father's will has been celebrated in many forms throughout Christian culture since the early Christian centuries – for example, through the concept of the *felix culpa* according as that “happy fault” – the Fall – is hailed in the *Exsultet* of Easter Eve (mentioned above and discussed more fully below).

²³ Now in the Grundtvig Archive Fascicule 316, nr. 1 (1r–7v), nrs 2–7 and nr. 8. An analysis of contents can be consulted in Bradley 1998. These transcriptions are evidently those made available by Grundtvig to his friend and disciple Ludvig Christian Müller as the (gratefully acknowledged) basis of the edited text which Müller published in his *Collectanea Anglo-Saxonica* (Copenhagen, 1835).

Less commonly encountered is the absolution of Eve through Mary's compensatory act hailed (as here in this Anglo-Saxon poem) as establishing some kind of parity of blessedness among women and men alike.

In this respect of Eve's absolution and salvation, the Anglo-Saxon poet and Grundtvig were certainly more liberal of mind than many of Grundtvig's more pietistic contemporaries in Denmark and Norway. Henry Larsen (Larsen 1903, 42-44) cites a letter he received in July 1899 from the distinguished Norwegian, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson (1832-1910; Nobel Prize-winner for Literature 1903). Larsen had written to Bjørnson, asking him to clarify his opinions on Grundtvig's *I Kveld*. The suggestion had been made that the poem had played some part in Bjørnson's much-discussed loss of faith. In his reply, Bjørnson confirmed that this was so – though in an indirect way which imputed no blame to the poem but only to those who took offence at the poem. The story is worth recalling here, for the glimpse it gives of the contemporary reception of Grundtvig's Anglo-Saxon sources and the use he made of them.

Bjørnson tells Larsen that at one Sunday evening gathering Christoffer Bruun, principal of Vonheim (a Norwegian folk high school after the Danish model), read aloud “Kædmonskvædet” – the “Cædmon-poem,” that is, Grundtvig's *I Kveld* – which, Bjørnson says, “I knew and loved from many years back.” At the next Sunday evening gathering, Bruun admitted to them that “many had taken offence at Eve receiving remission of sins” [mange hadde tat forargelse av, at Eva fik syndsforladelse]. Bruun (Bjørnson continues) had half supported the objectors. The following week Bruun reported that the objectors had not been satisfied with his previous explanation of his position, so now he went further with his support for their viewpoint. This shocked me, Bjørnson says. “A god who demanded everlasting punishment was naturally not even as up to scratch as an honest mortal” [En gud, som krævet evig straf, var naturligvis ikke engang såpas som et retskaffent menneske]. So, he says, his doubt welled up about Hell as a whole. It ended with me, he writes, rediscovering in that notion ancient gruesome ideas of revenge, unworthy of the mindset of modern folk as a whole. You see, Bjørnson concludes, that Cædmon's wonderful poem had no part in this – “other than that of revealing to me the deep flaws in dogmatics and the consequences of these in our spiritual life” [annen å åpenbare for mig dogmelærens dype brøst og følgerne av disse i vort sjæleliv].

Here, Larsen also recalls the bitter disputes over Grundtvig's poem which had divided communities of the faithful in Jylland a score of years previously. "Did Eve in the realm of the dead undergo a conversion to salvation? The ancient Church, Cædmon, Grundtvig, Bjørnson held so, others did not really dare to believe it, others were straightforwardly scandalised at the idea."

It is to be understood that the scandal some found in Cædmon's and Grundtvig's espousal of the idea that Eve confessed and received pardon in Hell was not plain and simple anti-feminism. There was a very serious issue of doctrine here: Could a person die guilty of sin and unrepentant and then get another chance – in Hell – to reconsider and get exculpation? If so, Christ's limitless mercy would seem to undermine the endeavours of his ministers to bring people to repentance and a godly life before death ended their chance to do so.

All in all, as an extension of the conventional theology of Fall and Redemption, the kiss which the unrisen Christ gives to "his Mother", the Hell-incarcerated Eve, is surely to be seen as quite challengingly polemical. As for Grundtvig – his handling of his sources and the traditional narrative at this point seems to be an important signpost along the road to his *Kvinde-Evangeliet* [The Women's Gospel] (1842) and lends some substantiation to the words of Uffe Jonas:

Thus in Grundtvig's thinking all human progress and enlightenment, in fact the entire development of humanity itself, stands under the living, breeding and life-bringing sign of a warmhearted womanhood. As poet, philosopher and theologian, and through his (relative to any contemporary perspective) unusually high estimation of "the *hjertelige* [heart-led] gender" Grundtvig has devised a great corpus of symbolisations in which the feminine virtues are most highly valued, even to the extent of a complementary and equal valuation of the sexes (Jonas 2007, Summary).

Grundtvig's sources for the Ascension: The Exeter Book

The Exeter Book or *Codex Exoniensis* is a unique codex of Anglo-Saxon texts, chiefly poetry, many of them religious or ethical. It was probably

compiled in the late tenth century. It was bequeathed to the monastic community at Exeter by Leofric, first Bishop of Exeter, in 1072 and there it still remains, in the possession of the Dean and Chapter of Exeter, under the designation Exeter Cathedral Library MS 3501.

Armed with his knowledge of the pioneering work of J. J. Conybeare, Professor of Poetry and of Anglo-Saxon in the University of Oxford (whose excerpts from the Exeter Book and appreciation of the quality and significance of the poetry had been published in 1814 and posthumously in 1826) Grundtvig paid £3 for a seat in the four-inside coach from London to Exeter on 19th July 1830 and spent some days in the cathedral there, reading and transcribing passages from the ancient manuscript. By the time he returned to England in the summer of 1831 the manuscript had been borrowed from Exeter by the British Museum and so Grundtvig was able to continue his transcriptions there in London.

The poetry of the Exeter Book, like that of MS Junius 11, features pronounced liturgical associations. In encountering these collections, Grundtvig had come across the most ancient northern poetry known to him which served the objectives of Christian liturgical (re)enactment – such liturgical development as characterised the revitalised Anglo-Saxon Church of the tenth and eleventh centuries.

The poems anthologised in MS Junius 11 are not merely poetically ornamented translations of the scriptural narratives, but rather interpretative or exegetical treatments of sacred history intended (for example) to teach that the Flood prefigured – not by chance but by divine purpose – the sacrament of Baptism by water.

Junius 11 is fairly certainly a monastic book. It is possible that its contents were composed to be read (whether in community or privately) as a variant of the *lectio divina*. The codex also appears to have been compiled for the liturgical season of Lent, since its poetic narratives are closely associated with the serial selection of Scriptural texts traditionally read within the liturgy of Holy Saturday and Easter Eve – which similarly revealed and rehearsed the great providential purposes of God towards his creation throughout scripturally recorded history.²⁴

²⁴ The connection was recognized by James Bright (1912, 97-103). J. R. Hall (1976, 185-208) argued against the precise association whilst nevertheless characterizing the poems as together constituting an epic of salvation history.

The last of the poems in the codex, *Christ and Satan*, deals with the theme triumphantly celebrated in this Lenten and Eastertide liturgy: the victories of Christ over Satan culminating in the Harrowing of Hell and Christ's Resurrection.

The whole gathering of poems might seem to be inspired and informed by the First Letter of Peter:

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. After being made alive, he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits – to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also [...] It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him (1 Peter 3:18-22; NIV).

Fertile ground, one might think, for a mind open to the universal patterns of history; and so Grundtvig himself declared in his *Bibliotheca Anglo-Saxonica* (1831) where he wrote, "The literary relics of this people form some of the most invaluable documents and records we possess for the Universal History of mankind" (Grundtvig 1831, 5).²⁵ One could wish that circumstances had encouraged him to spend more time and thought on this particular, poetically articulated *oldkirkelige* treasury.

Similarly, in the opening poetry of the Exeter Book, which treats of Christ's Advent, the Advent is explicitly perceived as the prelude to the Harrowing of Hell. Throughout the Advent Lyrics of the Exeter Book, there runs the suggestion that the condition of fallen humanity in this world before the scriptural-historical Advent was describable in terms of that captivity in Hell under Satan's bondage which Christ overturned at the Harrowing. Annually, liturgically, over the season of Advent, the

²⁵ This prospectus was Grundtvig's bid to raise funding for publication of the Anglo-Saxon literary corpus under his general editorship. Circumstances leading to its abortive outcome are narrated and discussed in Toldberg 1947, Bradley 1993 (45-46), 2000 (147 ff.) and 2011 (awaiting publication).

Anglo-Saxon Church dwelt upon this parallel between the first coming of the Redeemer to earth to redeem fallen humankind, and the Redeemer's momentous entry into Hell to free Satan's prisoners there, as episodes in sacred history and in the liturgical progression from the season of Advent into the season of the Nativity.²⁶

Annually, therefore, the faithful envisaged themselves in that state of captivity to Satan, and prayed for the Redeemer to come to save them from that bondage. The poet's words in Advent Lyric 6, for example, could just as readily have formed part of a poem on the Harrowing of Hell and on that ascent of the liberated souls into heaven which Grundtvig celebrates in his hymns:

Nu þu sylfa cum,
heofones heahcyning. Bring us hælolif,
wergigum witeþeowum, wope forcymenum,
bitrum brynetearum. (...)

Hæftas hygegeomre hider (...) es;
ne læt þe behindan, þonne þu heonan cyrre,
mænigo þus micle, ac þu miltse on us
gecyð cynelice, Crist nergende,
wuldres æþeling, ne læt awyrgde ofer us
onwald agan
(*Advent Lyric 6*, in *Christ I*, 149-52, 154-59).

[Come now, High King of heaven, in your own person. Bring salvation, life, to us weary thralls in torment, overcome by weeping, by bitter salt tears (...) *Seek out* us melancholy captives here, and when you return hence do not leave behind you a multitude so great, but in kingly manner show mercy upon us, Saviour Christ, Prince of heaven, and do not let accursed devils have dominion over us.]

²⁶ Interestingly, Professor Bugge notes that in the Danish liturgy of the first day of Advent the reading of Psalm 24 (*Løft jeres hoveder, I porte, / løft jer, I aldgamle døre, / så ærens konge kan drage ind*) is prescribed as it also was in Grundtvig's day. Here then the Danish Church apparently preserves a traditional linkage of these two great events (Advent and Harrowing of Hell) in the liturgically-celebrated history of redemption, as did the Anglo-Saxon Church.

Yet more explicitly, the same Lyric recalls ancient prophecies going back to the days of Melchisedech, that (in the words which Grundtvig read and transcribed from the Exeter Book):²⁷

...him gehaten wæs
 þætte sunu meotudes sylfa wolde
 gefælsian foldan mægðe,
 swylce grundas eac gæstes mægne
 siþe gesecan
 (*Christ I*, 142-46).

[It was promised them that the Lord's Son himself would purge the people of earth and likewise also, by the power of the Spirit, would journey to visit the depths.]

The redemption of the world and the harrowing of Hell are two parts of the one great purpose. Christ's Ascension marks the final accomplishment of both.

In his *Sang-Værk*, Grundtvig was providing texts for the successive liturgical seasons of the Danish Church. Both during and before his impressive undertaking, it is most likely that his mind was well open to such complex liturgical linkage between season and season as these Anglo-Saxon poems so skilfully contrived to suggest; and that he carried over this material with this perceived liturgical potential into the *Sang-Værk* through his reworkings of the Anglo-Saxon material.²⁸

²⁷ The fact that the transcript of *Christ I* (*The Advent Lyrics*) exists in several copies in Grundtvig Archive Fascicule 316, 1-8, most probably indicates the attention Grundtvig and his young collaborator Ludvig Christian Müller gave to the text in preparation of Müller's publication (Müller 1835), which incorporated it.

²⁸ Noack 1989 presents examples of Grundtvig's use of direct translations of specific words and phrases from the original texts. From 1815 onwards, Grundtvig made occasional small compilations of Anglo-Saxon words of particular interest to him, drawn from various texts, glossing them in Danish or Latin. For example, in the Grundtvig Archive, Fascicule 328, item 6, p. 8r, occurs a list of some twenty words and phrases, with page and line references, from "Caedmon" – that is, from the poems contained in Oxford Bodleian Library MS Junius 11. For further documentation see Bradley 1996 and Bradley 1998.

The two Ascension-related poems to which Grundtvig was inspired by his studies in the Exeter Book are *Kommer Sjæle, dyrekiøbte* (244) and *Himmel-Farten saae i Løn / Salomon, Kong Davids Søn* (245). Both of these songs or hymns do indeed move on from Easter in the liturgical-seasonal sequence in which this part of his *Sang-Værk* is organised, and refer to the *Ascensio Iesu*²⁹ – but Grundtvig has not yet finished, thematically, with the *Descensus* and the Harrowing of Hell.

Kommer, Sjæle in fact serves precisely the purpose of binding together in celebratory congregational song these two cosmic events – the Descent and the Ascension – which form part of the greater Paschal Mystery (Passion, Descent, Resurrection, Ascension). More than this, Grundtvig also made the dynamic association of Descent with Ascension through his sermons. Such, for example, is the theme of his sermon for Ascension Day (*Christi Himmelfarts-Dag*) 1836. This sermon was composed at the very time he was preparing to publish his *Sang-Værk* containing the tripos of poems on the *Descensus* and the *Ascensio* inspired by Anglo-Saxon poets.

Though no one on earth, he says in this sermon, could have validated by their own eye-witness the assertion that Christ ascended into Heaven to sit at the right hand of God the Father, any more than they could have borne eye-witness to the Descent into Hell, yet each is

. . . a Christian article of belief, ordained by the Lord himself and communicated to the congregation by the apostles without further explanation exactly as they received it from the Lord. (...) Therefore, my friends, believe and confess that Jesus Christ descended into Hell and ascended into Heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father, this we must all do, for all must confess this who desire to be baptised with that baptism with which we were baptised (...) our Gamaliel himself, the apostle Paul, simply makes us aware that belief in Christ's Descent [into Hell] as well as his Ascension, far from being unfruitful, can and must bear a great deal of fruit in the Christian life, as source of our participation in the Redeemer's glory (...) From this we specifically learn that the Descent and the Ascension are not merely equally indispensable as two clauses of our Creed, but also that intrinsically

²⁹ This Latin designation is taken from the title over Acts 1:9-11 in the Latin Vulgate Bible.

these very two are inseparably linked, and that the Ascension has its foundation in the Descent (...).³⁰

And this is how Grundtvig found them in the poetry of the Exeter Book.

In Cynewulf's poem (*Christ II*) Grundtvig found the sparse allusions to Christ's Ascension in Mark 16: 14-20, Luke 24: 50-53 and The Acts of the Apostles 1: 9-11 turned into a triumphant proclamation of Christ's completion of the great task begun in Hell.

Ðæt is wel cweden, swa gewritu secgað,
 þæt him albeorhte englas togeanes
 in þa halgan tid heapum cwoman,
 sigan on swegle. Ða wæs symbla mæst
 geworden in wuldre. (...)

“Hafað nu se halga helle bireafod
 ealles þæs gafoles þe hi geardagum
 in þæt orlege unryhte swealg.
 Nu sind forcumene ond in cwicsusle
 gehynde ond gehæfte, in helle grund
 dugupum bidæled, deofla cempan. (...)

³⁰ “. . . en christelig *Troes-Artikel*, forordnet af Herren selv, og Menigheden overantvordet af Apostlerne uden videre Forklaring, ligesom de annammede det af Herren (...) Altsaa, mine Venner! troe og bekiende at Jesus Christus nedfoer til Helved og opfoer til Himmels og sidder ved Gud Faders høire Haand, det maae vi alle, thi det maa alle bekiende, som vil døbes med den Daab, vi døbdes med (...).” (Thodberg 1985, IX, 213). “(...) selv vor Gamaliel, Apostolen *Paulus* gjør os blot opmærksomme paa, at Troen saavel paa Christi Nedfart som paa hans Opfart, langt fra at være ufrugtbar, kan og skal bære saare megen Frugt i det christelige Liv, som Kilden til vor Deelagtighed i Frelserens Herlighed. (...) Heraf lære vi nemlig, at Nedfarten og Opfarten ikke blot som to Ledd af vor Troes-Bekieendelse er lige uundværlige, men ogsaa at de To netop indbyrdes er uopløselig forbundne, og at Opfarten netop har sin Grund i Nedfarten (...)” (Thodberg 1985, IX, 214). Gamaliel was an eminent Pharisee and doctor of the law who tutored Paul and defended the Apostles against the high priest (Acts 5:34-41).

þær he of hæfte ahlod huþa mæste
 of feonda byrig, folces unrim,
 þisne ilcan þreat þe ge her on stariað”
 (*Christ II*, 547-551, 558-63; 568-70).

[Well is it declared, as the writings tell, that in that holy hour resplendent angels came in throngs to meet him, descending in the sky. Then there was the greatest celebration in heaven (...) Now has the Holy One robbed Hell of all the spoil which it wrongfully swallowed up during the strife in days of old. Now the devils' champions are overcome and humiliated and enchained in living torment, stripped of blessings in the abyss of Hell (...) there from the fortress of the fiends [Christ] has delivered out of bondage the most enormous booty, a countless tally of people – this same throng on whom you are gazing here.]

Christ approaches the gates of Heaven as head of this legion of souls. The command that rings out is the one which had previously burst open the gates of Hell, echoing the prophetic words of the Psalmist (Ps. 24:7-10):

Geatu, ontynað!
 Wile in to eow ealles waldend,
 cyning on ceastre corðre ne lytle,
 fyrnweorca fruma, folc gelæden
 in dreama dream, ðe he on deofflum genom
 þurh his sylfes sygor
 (*Christ II*, 576-81).

[Open, O gates! The Ruler of all will enter into you, King into his citadel, the Author of things long since created, leading into the joy of joys the folk whom he seized from devils through the victory of himself alone.]

The theological proposition resting upon this special linkage of Harrowing and Ascension is conveniently stated by another heavyweight of the pre-Reformation Church known in some degree to Grundtvig, who evidently used his work as a source for item 242 in the *Sang-Værk – Kæmpe-Skridt, som ingen Anden* [A giant stride, unlike all other] – that is, in the song

immediately preceding the three texts *I Kveld* (243), *Kommer, Sjæle* (244) and *Himmel-Farten saa in Løn* (245). This author was Notker of St Gall (c. 840-912) who composed a Latin Ascension sequence *Summi triumphum Regis prosequamur laude* [With praise let us honour the triumph of the supreme King], which achieved wide currency in the medieval Church.

The imagery used by Notker goes back to The Song of Solomon.³¹ There “the Beloved” (accepted by Notker as a prefiguration of Christ) comes leaping across the mountains – that is, “leaping” from one high point of his incarnate life to another.

Finally, on this day [of the Ascension], with the highest of leaps, He transcended the clouds of heav'n (...) Therefore this feast is celebrated by His faithful people, whose poor mortal flesh (...) God's very Son carried with Him in His body to the highest celestial throne of God (Carver 2010).

Though Christ ascends alone, he embodies in his ascending human form the divine assurance that by virtue of his triumph over sin and death the way to heaven is reopened to all believers, as it was first to those liberated from Hell and as it is now to the present congregation and shall be to all future generations.

This is the orthodoxy which Grundtvig offers for the Danish Church to sing, in *Kæmpe-Skridt, som ingen Anden*:

Kæmpe-Skridt, som ingen Anden,	A giant stride, unlike all other,
Tager Christus, Guddoms-Manden,	Christus takes, the God made human.
Alle Bjerger som paa Vinger	Mountains all, as on wings flying
Drabelig Han overspringer,	sturdily he overleaps them.
Evig deraf bærer Spor	Ever since, these bear His trace:
Himmel, Helvede og Jord!	Heaven, nether Hell, and Earth.

[...]

Saa Han sprang fra Blomster-Tuen	Thus he leapt from earth-in-blossom
Dristig ned i Mørke-Stuen,	boldly down to den of darkness.

³¹ So Grundtvig himself indicated: “Af den *Latinske* “Summi triumphum Regis prosequamur” med Hensyn paa *Høisangens* 2det.” [From the Latin ... with reference to The Song of Solomon, ch.2].

Brød ei Hals, ei Been og Arme,	Neck, nor leg, nor arm he fractured,
Kom til Hel med Liv og Varme,	life and warmth he brought to Hades.
Det med Suk selv Djævle tit	Even devils sighing often
Kalde maae et Kæmpe-Skridt!	must call this a giant stride!

and, in a later recension of the last verse:

Med vort Legem foer Han op	With our body went he up
Over Himmel-Bjergets Top,	over Heaven-Mountain's top,
Fylder saa Guld-Thronen;	so besits the Throne of Gold:
Saa og vi med Aanden hans	so too, in his Spirit, we
Stige skal fra Glands til Glands,	glory to glory shall ascend
Til vi naae Guld-Kronen!	till we gain the golden crown.

(GSV I, 470-71)

In the Exeter Book, in the third part of the tripos of *Christ*-poems, the obligation resting upon all posterity for having been symbolically freed from Hell at the Harrowing is invoked at the Judgement Throne itself. There, Christ is envisaged reproaching those who, by evil-doing, had shamefully blemished the body which he had freed from the fiends' grasp "and then forbade it sin." It is a powerfully written sequence:

Nu is swærra mid mec þinra synna rod
 þe ic unwillum on beom gefæstnad,
 þonne seo oþer wæs þe ic ær gestag,
 willum minum, þa mec þin wea swiþast
 æt heortan gehreaw, þa ic þec from helle ateah,
 þær þu hit wolde sylfa siþþan gehealdan
 (*Christ III*, 1489-1494).

[Now the cross of your sins on which I am unwillingly fastened is more painful to me than was that other [Cross] which once I mounted of my own will, when your woe most greatly moved me at heart, when I led you out of Hell, provided that you yourself would keep it so thereafter.]

This text, too, Grundtvig had read and transcribed.

Liturgical dimensions

Grundtvig's congregational bidding, therefore – “Kommer, Sjæle dyre-købte! (...) Lad os med Guds Engle-Skare / Og med Ham til Himmels fare” – has the same liturgical function as the bidding in the popular Nativity hymn: “Adeste fideles, laete triumphantes! Venite, venite in Bethlehem! Natum videte Regem Angelorum!”; or in Grundtvig's “Og lad os gaa med stille Sind / som Hyrderne til Barnet ind.”³² Let us here and now actually *participate* in an event which happened centuries ago.

The same liturgical function is surely also Grundtvig's intention in opening his poem on the Descent into Hell with the words: “I Kveld blev der banket paa Helvedes Port.” *This night* Christ burst open the gates of Hell. It is close in both formula and liturgical function to the ancient *Exsultet* of the Easter Vigil: *Hæc nox est, in qua, destructis vinculis mortis, Christus ab inferis victor ascendit* [This is the night when Christ broke the prison-bars of death, and rose victorious from the underworld].³³

This very night: the intense *present* recall – reliving – of a *past* event in sacred history is a move towards what the Church has traditionally understood by *anamnesis* – “remembrance, commemoration, memorial, representation in the sense of “making present” once again in the here and now” (*NCE* 2003); “an objective act, in and by which the person or event commemorated is actually made present, is brought into the realm of the here and now” (Davies 1986, 18).³⁴ Implicit is the notion that particular

³² Come, you souls, you dearly purchased! (...) Let us, with God's angel-throng and with Him, journey to heaven (*Kommer, Sjæle*, v.1, lines 4-5); O come, you faithful, joyfully triumphant; come, come to Bethlehem; look upon Him, born King of the Angels!; And let us go in quiet mind, as do the shepherds, in to the Child (from *Det kimer nu til Jule-Fest*, after Martin Luther 1535).

³³ See footnote 2.

³⁴ The term is particularly associated with the Eucharist but also serves a wider usage in liturgical parlance. It has a crucial bearing on the closely related concept of the “omnitemporal,” as it was influentially discussed by Erich Auerbach (Auerbach 2003). Bizarre though the context may seem, it is interesting to note that, in the rambling address Grundtvig made during his breakdown in Vartov Kirke on Palm Sunday 1867, it is the mystical *simultaneity or concurrency between past and present* that carries him passionately away when (reportedly) he proclaims that Christ is even now on this Palm Sunday 1867 riding into his city (Jerusalem/

spiritual benefit is conferred upon those who enter into the “presence” of these past events of sacred history.³⁵

This disposition is integral, in a greater or lesser degree, to any liturgical form which is in its character “imitative” of an event in sacred history. That Grundtvig, as preacher and as poet, from an early stage in his pastoral career understood particularly well the phenomenon of such *affective* response in his congregation, and could seek to achieve it through the distinctive poetic rhetoric of special sermons, is a claim well established by Christian Thodberg in his masterly essays in *Tradition and Renewal*.

Thodberg draws attention, for example, to “the amazing sermon” for the First Sunday in Advent 1812: “In most of the sermon it is *I*, that is, Jesus, who is speaking. It is nearly all a prose-poem: for the first time this style is completely dominant (...) The whole sermon is reminiscent of the Roman Church’s *improperia* in the Good Friday liturgy” (Thodberg 1983a, 128-29).³⁶ Further on, Thodberg discusses the “prose-poems” Grundtvig preached during his ministry at Præstø (1821-22) when he was concerned with a “recurrent problem: the question of Christ’s *presence*” (Thodberg’s emphasis, 1983a, 135). The congregation can look back through time to scriptural events in the past, and forward to the ultimate rewards of faith and hope in eternity, but how might they experience the presence of

Copenhagen) and even now on this Palm Sunday 1867 the baptismal waters of Jordan are flowing hitherwards (into the Øresund).

³⁵ Professor Bugge adds: “In his excellent book *Grundtvig og de græske salmer* (1960) Jørgen Elbek finds a concurrence between the Byzantine hymns and those of Grundtvig: ‘Den egentlige inspiration bag den byzantinske hymnografi kommer ikke fra det afnavede historiske stof, men fra den nutidige oplevelse. Dens dybeste ejendommelighed er, at skellet mellem fortidigt og aktuelt er nedbrudt, at det kristelige samtidighedsproblem er overvundet’” (55). [The real inspiration behind Byzantine hymnography does not come from the over-grazed historical material, but from the contemporary experiencing. Its most profound distinctiveness is that the boundary between the past and the present is broken down, that the Christian problem of concurrency is overcome]. Undoubtedly, Grundtvig met in the Byzantine hymns the same effects of a shared patristic heritage that he encountered in Anglo-Saxon religious poetry.

³⁶ The *Improperia* are the “I-voice” reproaches to “my people” uttered by Christ from the cross, which historically form part of the liturgy of Good Friday, sometimes spoken by the officiating priest, sometimes chanted by a choir, with penitent responses by the congregation.

Christ in the here and now? Grundtvig, says Thodberg, “comes closest to Christ through imagery (...) For the image is not only a historical picture to whose time we must return and whose future realization we are awaiting. Already in the Præstø period the imagery is close to becoming an expression of the here and now” (*ibid*).

In his *Sang-Værk*, as in these texts under consideration here, Grundtvig, as poet and preacher, offers a means to gain such deepened spiritual experiencing to the whole Danish Church.

Christ II: the oldkirkelige encounter

Notker's inspiration was the same as that which inspired Grundtvig's immediate source, Cynewulf's poem *Christ II*: namely Homily XXIX of the *Homilia in Evangelia* of Gregory the Great, Apostle of the English. Here, in engaging with this Anglo-Saxon poem, Grundtvig is making one of his excursions, albeit at second-hand, into the patristic legacy which informed much Anglo-Saxon literature. In this homily, Gregory takes as a motif The Song of Solomon [Salomos Højsang] 2:8 – “Listen! My beloved! Look! Here he comes, leaping across the mountains, bounding over the hills” (NIV). Gregory lists six “leaps” taken by the Beloved – that is, Christ – namely his assumption of human form in the Virgin's womb, his lowly birth in Bethlehem, his ascent of the Cross, his deposition from the Cross, the Harrowing of Hell and the Ascension. Grundtvig chooses to deal with, and link firmly together, Cynewulf's (and Gregory's) fifth and sixth leaps, when he weaves the theme of the Harrowing of Hell into the theme of the Ascension.

(...) Wæs se fifta hlyp
 þa he hellwarena heap forbygde
 (...) Wæs se siexta hlyp,
 halges hyhtplega, þa he to heofonum astag
 on his ealdcyððe. Þa wæs engla þreat
 on þa halgan tid hleahre bliþe
 wynnum geworden
 (*Christ II*, 730-31; 736-40).

[... The fifth leap was when he humiliated the gang of Hell's inhabitants (...) The sixth leap was the Holy One's hope-giving move when he ascended to the heavens into his home of old. Then in that holy hour the throng of angels became enraptured with happy jubilation.]

In short, Grundtvig not only looks back to the *oldkirkelige* tradition and sources for his emphasis on the status of the Harrowing of Hell in the narrative of Christ's ultimate victory culminating in the Ascension, but having found them he renews their currency, revises their devotional, theological and didactic applicability and sets them before his congregation in newly-fashioned contemporary hymn and topical sermon.³⁷

I Kveld – Grundtvig's Exsultet?

Hæc nox est, in qua, destructis vinculis mortis, Christus ab inferis victor ascendit. Hæc nox est, de qua scriptum est: Et nox sicut dies illuminabitur: et nox illuminatio mea in deliciis meis.

O vere beata nox, quæ sola meruit scire tempus et horam, in qua Christus ab inferis resurrexit!

[This is the night when Christ broke the prison-bars of death, and rose victorious from the underworld. This is the night of which it is written: The night shall be as bright as day, dazzling is the night for me, and full of gladness.

O truly blessed night, worthy alone to know the time and hour when Christ rose from the underworld!]

If, in the opening and the closing of *I Kveld*, Grundtvig's triumphant narrative of the Harrowing of Hell, we catch an echo of these jubilant verses from the *Exsultet*, they do not come amiss. The ancient text and Grundtvig's verses share an affinity of purpose and liturgical potential.

³⁷ The motif of Christ's "leaps" seems to have contributed to another of Grundtvig's hymns: *Lyslevende fra Himmerig*, [Large as life from heaven-realm], *DDS* 66. Key stages in Christ's mission to humankind are celebrated in separate stanzas, of which the third declares the triumph of his Descent into Hell.

A sweeping overview of humankind's fall and fallen status is conveyed. The redemptive mind and will of the Father through all this time is revealed. Rhetoric is marshalled to create a dramatic sense of the immediacy of a past event. Vividly, portals are thrown open, light floods into darkness and overwhelms it, shackles are burst asunder, devils are routed, sin and death are overcome, Christ crucified rises in his human body from the abode of the dead, the bliss of renewed hope is delivered to the world, heaven's portals are re-opened to remain for ever open.

Those in the congregation who are susceptible to such affective appeal will feel rising in themselves that “*delicia*” and that “*Salighed*” now bestowed upon the world, of which the *Exsultet* and Grundtvig sing.

Wide apart though they are in their rhetorical formulation, *I Kveld*, like the *Exsultet*, serves well – as does the Anglo-Saxon poetry which inspired it – to move its congregation in ancient affective style to involvement in the commemoration of this cosmic turning-point in their sacred history, in the Vigil of Easter.

So, at any rate, an Anglo-Saxonist with knowledge of the liturgy of the Anglo-Saxon Church might see it. However, the Danish Church of Grundtvig's day had long since excluded Holy Saturday (*Sabbatum sanctum*)³⁸ from the calendar of holy days. Furthermore, in the Danish Church “the various Easter festivals are marked by the choice of readings and not, as for instance in Catholic countries, by imitating and dramatising the Gospel stories in the liturgy. The festivals celebrated are Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday and Easter Monday.”³⁹

A contemporary voice from out of Grundtvig circles, referring to “this somewhat overlooked day in the church year,”⁴⁰ notes that “for this special day Grundtvig has written two very significant hymns”⁴¹ One of them

³⁸ Sometimes referred to as “Easter Saturday” (Danish “påskelørdag”), though formally speaking Easter Saturday is the Saturday of Easter Week which follows on from the day of Resurrection, Easter Sunday.

³⁹ <http://denmark.dk/en/meet-the-danes/traditions/easter> – retrieved 11 November 2015.

⁴⁰ “denne lidt upåagtede dag i kirkeåret” – retrieved 11 November 2015 from Grundtvigsk Forum's website, www.grundtvig.dk.

⁴¹ “Til denne specielle dag har Grundtvig skrevet to meget betydningsfulde salmer”.

is no. 214 in *DDS: Hør vor helligaftens bøn!* (Hear our holy-evening's prayer!).⁴²

The other great Easter Saturday hymn I am thinking of is his reworking of the ancient Cædmon-poem from before 680, *I kvæld blev der banket på Helvedes port* (...) The poem/hymn becomes a profession of faith in Christ who, by his descent into the realm of the dead achieves victory over the Devil's might and thereby the triumph of life over death! Hereafter one cannot name the place where God, in the person of his son, Jesus Christ, has not been first – even in the realms of the dead!⁴³

An earlier commentator on the hymns included in *DDS* (1953), Helge Dahn, pastor in Borup, east Sjælland, did not discuss Grundtvig's *I Kvæld* because it was not included in that issue of the authorised Hymnal. However, he drew attention to three hymns in that collection⁴⁴ which belong to Easter Saturday [*recte* Holy Saturday], which could actually be held holy with greater justification than Christmas Eve. "The quiet Sabbath" is the right day for calling to mind the Lord's sealed tomb and his descent to the realm of the dead. So one could sooner dispense with the services in the morning of Skærtorsdag [fifth day of Holy Week; English: Holy Thursday, Maundy Thursday, Sheer Thursday] which do not have any particular commemorations.⁴⁵

⁴² *DDS* 214. It is essentially a thanksgiving for the Resurrection, with no explicit allusion to the Descent into Hell.

⁴³ Den anden, store Påskelørdagssalme af Grundtvig, jeg tænker på, er hans gen-digtning af det gamle Kædmon-digt fra før 680, *I kvæld blev der banket på Helvedes port*. (...) Digtet/salmen bliver forkyndelsen af troen på Kristus, der ved sin nedfart til dødsriget besejrer Djævelens magt og derved livets triumf over døden! Herefter kan man ikke nævne det sted, hvor Gud, i skikkelse af sin søn, Jesus Kristus, ikke har været først – selv i dødsriget!

⁴⁴ 187. *Dag til hvile, dag til glæde* (now, in *DDS* 2003, 215); 188. *Hør vor helligaftens bøn* (now 214); and 189. *Min Jesus, lad mit hjerte få* (now 217).

⁴⁵ Dahn 1968, 138: "hører hjemme på påske-lørdag, der egentlig kunne holdes hellig med større grund end juleaften. "Den stille sabbat" er den rette dag til at mindes Herrens forseglede grav og hans nedfart til Dødsriget. Så kunne man snarere stryge gudstjenesterne Skærtorsdag formiddag, der jo ikke har nogen særlige minder."

“This day, which does not belong among the official holy days in Denmark, is nevertheless celebrated in a number of places within the established [Danish] church” reports the Grundtvigsk Forum website⁴⁶ – though not, apparently, in Dahn’s old church.

Grundtvig’s dramatic poetic narration of the harrowing of Hell, newly imported into the Danish Hymnal (*DDS* 2003), stands by, offering its link back to the earliest Christian poetry of the North and to the early Northern Church which inspired it.

Abbreviations

- DDS* *Den Danske Salmebog* [The Danish Hymnal] (2003), København, Det Kongelige Vajsenhus. The fifteenth authorised Danish hymnal since the Reformation; it replaced the previously authorised hymnal (of the same title), issued in 1953. The Hymnal is online (with sound-files of melodies): <http://www.dendanskesalmebogonline.dk>.
- GSV* Grundtvig, N.F.S. (1837), *Sang-Værk til den Danske Kirke samlet og læmpet af N.F.S. Grundtvig*, Copenhagen, Den Wahlske Boghandel.
- KJV* *The Holy Bible*, King James Version (the Authorized Version; first published 1611).
- NCE* *The New Catholic Encyclopedia* (2003, online). Retrieved 19 October 2014.
- NIV* *Holy Bible*, New International Version (Biblica, formerly International Bible Society, 1978, revised 1984, 2011).
- PS I-IX* Grundtvig, Svend and Christensen, Georg (ed.) (1880-1930), *N.F.S. Grundtvigs poetiske Skrifter*, I-IX, Copenhagen, Gyldendal.
- US I-X* Begtrup, Holger (ed.) (1904-09), *N.F.S. Grundtvigs Udvalgte Skrifter*, vol. I-X, Copenhagen, Gyldendal.

⁴⁶ www.grundtvig.dk, retrieved 11 November 2015: “Denne dag, der ikke hører til de officielle helligdage i Danmark, fejres dog en del steder i folkekirken.” The Church of England’s *Common Worship* provides texts and ritual directives for the Easter Vigil for the night of Holy Saturday. However, reference to the harrowing of Hell survives here only in the singing of the *Exsultet*: “This is the night when Jesus Christ vanquished hell, broke the chains of death and rose triumphant from the grave.”

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