The Middle-English
Harrowing of Hell
AND
Gospel of Nicodemus.

NOW FIRST EDITED FROM ALL THE KNOWN MANUSCRIPTS,
WITH INTRODUCTION AND GLOSSARY,

BY

WILLIAM HENRY HULME, Ph.D.,
Professor in Western Reserve University, U.S.A.

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The Harrowing of Hell.

Digby MS. Text O.

Hou ihsu crist herowede helles
Of harde gates ich wilte telle.
Eue frend, nou bep stille,
Lestey pat ich tellen wille
On ihsu fader him bipoute
And adam hout of helle brouthe.

In helles was adam and eue
Pat veron ihsu crist wel love,
And seint iohan pe baptist
Pat was nowou ihsu crist,
Dauit pe prophete and abraham,
For pe sunnes of adam;
And moni oper holi mon
Mo pen ich ou tellen con;

The Harrowing of Hell.

Harley MS. Text L.

Alle herkipp to me nou! [text 15, 63, 518]
a stiff wolfe y telien ou
of ihsus ant of sathis,
po ihsus wes to helle ygan
flerte vanehe penne hys,
ant bringan hem to paray.
pou devel heuedes so mucho pouste
pat alle mosten to helle te;
nas non so holy prophete
sejpo Adam & eue pen appel ete,
ant he were at pe worakes wyn,
pat he no moste to helle pyne;
ne shulde he never penne come
nere ihsus crist godes soke.
vor pat wes said to Adam ant eue,
pot were ihsus crist so leue;
ant so wes seyd to habraham,
pot wes nothfast holy man;
and[1] so wes said to danyd pe kyg,
pot wes of cristes owne ofspring;
ant to Iohan [c:] baptist,
pot folowede ihsus crist;
ant to Moses pe holy whyt,
pot heuedes pe lawe to jene ryht;

Auchinleck MS. Text E.

Abbreviations. — Br = Bodleian; C = Collar; H = Halliwell; M = Hall; L = Lea; Var = Varnsingen.
1. Line 1-2 in red ink; do in herowede above line; Var.
herowede.
2. (Hal. = Wright-Halliwell, Relig. Antiq. i. 255.) Hal. M.
Varn. = corow.
3. Hal. neanen.
"When Christ came to hell he spoke the following words:

DIGEST.

Til these fede none flye and blod
Of pe maiden marie god,
And suffren was don ful muchel some,
Boundes and beten and maked ful lome
Tille pe gode frie day at non;
Denn he we on rode idon,
His honden from his body wonden,
Mit here mithe hoe him shenen.
To helle sone he nom gate
Adam and eve hout to take;
Pe he to helle cam
Sucche wordes he bigan:

"Harde gates haue gon,
Sorewen soffred moni hon,
Prusti winter and half prudde jar
Hauie ben wond alendo her;
Almen so muchel hit is agen
Suffren pat i bicom fust mon;
Suffren haroi pole and west
Bope cheole, hounger and purst;
Men duden me so muchel same,
Wip woundes strenge makede me lome;

I have suffered many pains during the thirty-three and a half years of my sojourn on earth."

HAILEY.

ant to mony oper holy mon
mo pen ich talle con,
pat weren all in more wo
pen y con ou talles fro.
Ihesu criste arow hem sore
ant seide he wolde vacche hem pore;
he lyhte of ys hege tour
into ysnte Marie bour;
he was borne for oure nede
in pis world in pore wode,
In ysnte world he wes doct
forte losen vs from pe qued;
pe ihesu huade shed ys blod
for oure neede wolpen vs rod,
In godhald toke he pen way
pat to helle gates lay;
pe he com per pe seide he,
asse y shal noupe talles pe.

AUCHINLECK.

1 Vntil criste loked paim vnto, [last 39]
as man aste to prisonous do;
he listed out of his hege tour
Into seyns mari bour;
he was born for our missede
In pis world in pouer wode,
In pis world he suffered dede,
forto daluer ous fraem pe qued;
pe ihesu haddes spilt his blod
for oure sanne on pe rode,
he nam him pe rihte way
vnto helle for sope to say;
pe he com per pe seyns he,
as y shal now teke pe.

dominvs ait.

Hard gates haue y gon
& suffred pines mani on;
pirsti winter & prude halfe nere
haue y wond in lond her;
almen is so muchel agen
sepphe y bycme furt mon;
Ich haue sepphe polede ant wyet
hot, colde, honger ant purst;
Mon haph do me shome ynoh
wyf wordant dede in heore wole;

25. M. men... man (Mall often alters e before nasal of MS. to a, but he shows no consistency in making this change).
26. M. mon... M. i.; H. i.
27. M. men.
29. M. men.
30. M. men.
32. M. men.
33. M. men.
34. M. men.
35. M. men.
36. M. men.
37. M. men.
38. M. men.
40. M. men.
41. M. men.
42. M. men.
43. M. men.
44. M. men.
45. M. men.
46. M. men.
47. M. men.
49. M. men.
50. M. men.
51. M. men.
52. M. men.
53. M. men.
54. M. men.
55. M. men.
56. M. men.

1 Initial letters of lines always touched with red.
2 a is the contraction always used for and.
"They bound my hands behind my back and beat me till I ran with blood."

DIOGY.

Hi nomen me wipouten sake,
Boonden min honden to mi bake,
Hi beten me pat I ran shode,
And suppen me duden one pe rode;
for adam sunful, Iwis,
A1 hau poled pis.

Adam, pu hauest about hit sore,
And I ne mai soffen hit na more;
Hit wille pe bringen of halle pine,
pe, adam, and alle pine."

"Wo is pat ich here pere?"
No ne ich him spaken na more,
He may nou so mache do,
pat he sal ous comen to
To ben holes fere
And witen how we playej here."
"Stille bo pu, lording,
pat ich here groden pere;
Ich rede pat jou ne spake na more,
Jou mist wel wikon bi mi play
pat i wis hauen mino away;
Wost pu noener wat ioh am?
More jan, xxy, winter hit is agone
pat pu hauest fonden me

50. pat: s above line.
56. o in jou above line.

When Satan threatens Christ unless he keeps still, the latter tells who he is and why he has come.

EARLEY.

bounden ant busten yron of blode,
demeden me to depe on rode;
for adames sunne fol ywis
Ich haue poled al pis.
Adam, pou hauest aboht sore,
Inul soffe pat na more;
Adam, pou hast duere aboht,
pat pou loudest me noht;
y shal je bringe of halle pyne
ant wy jep pe alle myne.
Sathan ait.

Whio pou yd pat ych here pere?"
Ich him rede speke na more,
for he may so mucho do
pat he shal vs come to
fente buen oure fare
ant fonden hou we playen here.

Dominus ait.

You mith wyten in by lay
pat mine well y hauve away;
wost pou neuer whet ych am?
amost ya pritit wynter gan
pat pou hast fonden me

53. B. omit this line and interpolate three lines which are a patch-work partly from version C, partly from E: He nomen me wipouten sake / Boonden min hondun to mi bake / He beten me, pat I ran on blode (B. pat y ron); for consistency M. should have nomen and honden.
54 (B. M. 66), M. demeden; C. dothe.
55 (B. M. 67), H. Peru; M. surne, fut.
57 (B. M. 69), B. adak hit; M. dit.
58 (B. M. 68, M. 62), H. Ant fonde; M. And

AUCHINLEEK.

jai toke me wipouten sake,
jai bond min honden biiinde mi bac,
jal bete me till y ran on blode,
jal dempti me to hong on rode;
alle for adames sunne ywis,
jan haue y poled pis.
adam, pus dere haue y bous3,
& jou no loudest me neuer nou3t; 60
adam, y haue bous3 ful sare
& i wil suffre it na mare;
to-day y schal bring of pine
adam, je & alle pine.

satasus dixit.

W. ho is pat ich here pere?"
y rede pat he spak na mare,
for he may so micho do
pat he schal comen ous unto
foro ben our fare
& loke hou we playen here.

dominus ait.

You may wele wite mi play
pat min wil y hauve awain;
wele pou west wet ich am,
More jan pritiit winter is gan
pat pou hast frained me.

55. Laing toke.
56. Varn. We.
75. Laing frained.

53. M. (68) ou (always).
67. M. (68) to be.
68. C. spake; M. (70) fonden.
59. M. brackets this line and 70 (i.e., 71, 72), raising, jou mith wel tose bi mi plot; while B. transfers them almost to the end of this speech (77, 78 B.). B. reads for 69, and jou shal wyte wet to-day.
70. M. (72) wilt have awain; B. wolde.
71. M. (75) what.
72. M. (74) almost pe pritit winter is gyn; B. wynter ya.
73. M. (75) hast foned.
"The apple you gave Adam was mine, as well as the apple tree, and you had no right to dispose of them."

**HARLEY.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>forte knowe wet y be;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Sunne fond jou neuer non</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>In me as in anoper mon;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>jou miest wile wilen ye bi jou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>pat ih more pen ani mon;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>jou salt wile wilen ye to-day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>pat ich wyle hauen mine away;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>penne jou lestet ye alone;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>penne jou miest grusten and grone;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>penne apak him satanas,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>Maister-fend in helhe he was:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>&quot;Par ma fay! ich holde mine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>Alle po pat her ben hine;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>Wip reason willy tellen pe;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>pen ayin ne miest jou nout be;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Whose buyp any pynge;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>hit is hys ant hys ofsprynge;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Adam hungry com me to,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Monrados dude y him me do;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>for on appel ich sif hym</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>he is myn ant al hys kum.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**AUCHENRECK.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>forte wite what y be;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>seppen fondestow neuer nan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>wip me as wip anoper man,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>&amp; jou wost wale for pan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>pat ih am more pan ani man;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>jou salt wile wilen ye to-day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>pat ich wyle hauen mine away;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>penne jou lestet ye alone;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>penne jou miest grusten and grone;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>In sorwe among hine fere.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SATANAS DIXIT.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Par ma fay! ich halde mine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>al pas ben herinne;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>wip reason wil y telle po</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>pat po againn may po nought be;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>for whose bigge spilning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>it ove to ben his wipouten lesing;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>for an appel pat y sif him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>he is min &amp; al his kyn.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DOMINUS ALT.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>S satanas, he sayd, it was min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>pe appel pat y sif him,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>pe appel &amp; pe appelle;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>hope was waked peurch me;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>hou may jou on ani wise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>sophem monnes ping makem marchnandis?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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63. e in you above line.
"As you bought Adam with my property, he is mine and I will have him again."

DIGBY.

Seppen pou bouteest him wip min, 88
Wip risoun wil ich haunen him."

"Ithes, welcomen pou be, 88
pat ful sore rewep me; 88
pou art loured ouer al; 92
pou haust pat pou habbe shal; 92
Heuene en erpe wellest pou pe, 96
pou soules in helo let pou be; 96
pat ich haue let me helde, 96
pou haust wel mote pou welde."

"S
thille, stille, satanas! 96
pe is fallen sunbese.
Wenest pou i were ded for nout? 100
fow mi dep was monkun boust; 100
Hy pat habbep serued me
Sulen wip me in bleue be;
pe pat holde on me bieleen 104
Sulen wip pe hole bieleen;
pe salt haunen more pino
pen alle pe pat hor ban ine." 108

"May mon me so wom do
bene I haue avid hiderto? 108
Ich am pole so muchel wo
pat I me recche weden I go;
If pou bireust me of mina,
I sal bireuen pe of pino; 112
I shal gon from mon to mon
And bireuen pe moni anna." 116

"God hit wot, I shal spoken pe wip,
pou wel shalton holde grip; 116

92. shal: the h of sh appears to have been inserted by a later hand wherever it occurs in this MS. 100. Apparently an attempt was made to change s of hosei to h. 108. M. (99) efhen (always). 109. G. resoun; M. (100) wile. 108. M. (105) Houene. 104. M. (106) be soules. 106. B.M. (107) substitute corrupt form of this line from B: Let me haueen (M. have) pat ich helde. 108. M. ambes ar.

SATAN THREATENS TO ROB CHRIST OF MANY MEN UNLESS HE LETS THE PATRIARCHS REMAIN IN HADES.

AUCHANTHOLK.

Seppen pou bouteest him wip min, 104
wip resoun wolde ich haunen hym.
Sathanas.
Ihesu, wel y knawe pe, 100
pat ful sore rewep me;
pou art loured ouer al,
wo ys him pat pe knawe ne shal!
Soules in heuene arte erpe to pe,
pe soules in helo lat pou be;
Lat me haue pat ich helde,
pou haust wel mote pou welde. 112
Dominus.
Stille be pou, Satanasses!
pe ys fallen ambeasees.
Wenest pou i were ded for noht?
pourh my dep monkun bohte;
jey pat haue serued me,
wyp me he shulen in heuene be; 112
pou shalt buen in more pyne
jen eny pat jep is hereyne.
Sathanas.
Ne may non me worse do
pen ich haue haad hiderto? 116
Ich haue had so mucho wo
pat jen recoche whyder y go;
jet pou reuest me of myne,
y shal reue pe of lyne; 120
I shal gon from mon to mon
ant reue pe of mony on.
Dominus.
God wot y shal speke pe wyp
ant do pe to holde gyht; 124

Christ puts the porter to flight, breaks down the gates of hell and
binds Satan.

**Harley.**

So fast shall ye bind me,
Lutel shall ye rue me;
Ye shall be in bonds ay
O pat come domesday;
Ye shall never out wende
Monkonne forto shonde;
For were ye among men,
Ye woldest me reuen moni of hem;
Ye smale devils ye bep neuet stronge,
He shulen among men yonge;
Pikel ye nullep ayyn hem stonde;
Ichulle he habben hem in honde.
Helle gates ye come non to
Ant ye wol pae hoo vndo;
Wer ye non pis tasteward
Me pondelep he is a coward.

**Auchinleck.**

Were ye vnbounde among men,
Al pou west binim me hem;
Ye smale devils pat er vnergryng,
Pai schal among mankin gang,
& al schul pat haue pain
Pat wil noug st stonde hem osain.
Helle gates, y com ye sou,
Now ich wil pat 3e vndo;
Where is he pat sateward?
Ich hold him for a coward.

**Innator ait.**

Ich hauu herd wordes hard
Whi y no may be no steward;
Y lette hem stonde & run away,
Lete hem zeme whose may.

**Dominus ait.**

Helle gatez, here y pou felle,
& seppen wil ich herwe helle;
Lucifer, here y pe binde,
Scholowe neuer heffen winde.

131. M. (129) emasa for.
133. M. (122) yonge. 134. C. ayyn;
M. (135–136) For to haugen alle hem / pat hem se vớien stonden ayen.
137. B. (136) where; M. (137) where; C. gate.
139. M. (140) pate where. 140. M. (142) stonde... mest.
Fare so jou euere fare,
No salt jou neuer do mon kare.”

"Welcome, louerd god in londe,
Godes sone and godes sone;
Welcome, louerd, wel jou be,
full longe hauep ous pouf after pe;
full welcomen art ous ous,
Jou bring ous out of pis lope hous.

Welcome, louerd, ich sm adam
bat jou makcedes of erpe mon;
These crist, hide I pe
bat mine sunnen forsyf jou pe.

"Welcome, louerd, ich sm ovo,
Adam and I piat weren so love,
pou yeye ous leud to loken partis,
And we hit loken al amis;
We pi comunement forlichen
po we of pen appel eten;
So longe hauen we ben herinne,

And confess to him their guilt for eating the fruit of the forbidden tree.

Harley.

Adam.
Welcome, louerd god in londe,
godes sone ant godes sone;
welcome, louerd, mote jou be,
pat pou wolt vs com & se. 152
Louerd, nou jou art com to ous,
bring ous of pis lope hous;
byng vs of pis lope lond,
louerd, hemme into jyn hond; 156
louerd, wost jou wel yeh am?
pou me shupst of corpo Adam;
for y jyn beste hueld noth,
dure ich habbe hit her aboth; 160

haue merci of vs, godes sone,
let ons no more her wone;
sile pat heryme be
forre hauep 3yrned after pe; 164
we hoppe wel pouth y spronyng
of oure sunnes hauen froryng.

Eua.
Know me, louerd, ich am eue,
Ich ant Adam pe were so leue; 188
pou laddset ous to parays, (text to be)
we hit forgulien ase rywyys;
we pin hestas dude forsten,
pou we jen appel eten; 172
So longe we haup pe heryme,

Auchinleck.

Welcom, lord god in lond,
godes sone & godes sone,
welcom, lord, mot jou be,
long haupe ous pouf after pe; 160
lord, seppen jou art comen to ous,
pou bring ous out of pis hous;
lord, pou wot what ich am
jou me shope of erpe mon;
for y jyn beste haued noth,
dure ich habbe hit her aboth;

haue merci of, godes sone,
let ons no more her wone;
sile pat heryme be
forre haup 3yrned after pe;
we hoppe wel pouth y spronyng
of our sunnes hauen froryng.

Knavs me, lord, ich am eue,
adam & ich waren pe so leue,
pou saue ous to sesame paradis,
we it tymed as wynwys;
when we pi comandment forleste,
when we of pat appel eten;
so longe hau we ben herinne,

Notes:
149. A before ous has been erased.
155. louerd : d above line.
164. C. Zere : 3yrned; M. haued jerned.
165. A 2nd me marked for erasure in MS. Laing omits this line.
166. houses : Varn. (173) houses.
167. M. often inconsistent in using a for o, here londe-sonde.
168. M. introduces a line patched together from other MSS. Longe hauep... jyn after pe.
169. M. comen; H. vs.
167-168. B.M. omit both these lines from the text.
170. M. taed. 160. M. Derve... have it.
161. M. ous.