

Grundtvig's Palm Sunday 1867 and the Anglo-Saxon *Descent into Hell*.

By S. A. J. Bradley

As the complex and extensive response of N. F. S. Grundtvig to his encounter with Anglo-Saxon literature and culture becomes steadily better known, the likelihood grows that new instances will be noticed of his creative absorption of Old English poetry. The exploration of one such instance in what follows here must be considered rather temerarious, because it addresses an occasion marked by the temporary breakdown of Grundtvig's rational associative processes - though the utterance itself may not in fact seem in the end to be as irrational as prevailing tradition dubs it. The issue in what follows is pretty certainly beyond proof. But perhaps whether I am right or wrong in the particular instance does not absolutely matter: it may nonetheless serve as a means of addressing the typical way in which Grundtvig's creativity of thought and of expression drew upon the repositories of his reading in Anglo-Saxon literature. It may also serve to define for those unfamiliar with it something of the rich spirituality and complex allusiveness of this early 'Northern' Christian poetry in which Grundtvig found a projection of his own spirituality and of his own pastoral mission¹. Though Grundtvig was abundantly capable of distinguished objective scholarship, what we are dealing with here is not an issue of scholarship nor one of narrow literary criticism: the juxtaposing of scriptural and contemporary, of ancient poetry and now-experiencing self-articulation, so typical of Grundtvig, is a creative process, an **assertion** - in the spirit of the original poets themselves - that »then« and »now« are moments of participation in the same abiding truth, within the very same providential dispensation.

Amidst the dramatic events in Vartov Church on the morning of Palm Sunday, the fourteenth of April, 1867², when for some six hours the eighty-three year old Grundtvig in a manic prelude to depression³ preached and celebrated the sacraments of communion and baptism with a great and increasingly agitated

congregation, which included the queen mother, Caroline Amalie, it was no more than some there expected, that their charismatic pastor should be heard in the full flight of his inspiration to speak prophecies. The anniversary was at hand of the trauma three years previously of the Prussians' seizure of Schleswig-Holstein and Sønderjylland. Word had gone forth about at miraculous recovery in Grundtvig's ailing health, and about prophecies he was declaring of an imminent assault by the Prussians upon Copenhagen itself. Against all anticipation, Grundtvig had presented himself at Vartov, apparently brisk of body and spirit, prepared to celebrate the Lord's Supper and to preach. Doubtless, there was that day a rising expectation that the Holy Spirit, whose presence Grundtvig loudly acclaimed as he pronounced an absolution upon the queen mother and through her upon the whole Danish nation, might well accomplish remarkable revelations; and indeed 'the sermon, which was delivered in a mood of exaltation, was the most remarkable mixture of madness and transcendent thoughts.'⁴

Two oracular utterances typifying Grundtvig's strange, disjointed discourse on that day alluded to Jordan and Jerusalem: 'Nu flyder Jordan ud i Øresund' he declared, 'nu rider Herren ind i sin stad' [Now Jordan flows out into the Øresund, now the Lord rides into his city].⁵

That there is in these references at least some rational coherence is plain enough. Allusion to Jerusalem - the earthly city and the City of God - is inescapable in the liturgical setting of Palm Sunday, where the palm-strewn way into Jerusalem, imitatively trodden in traditional liturgical procession, was symbolic of the road which all God's people may and should journey toward the heavenly kingdom, as Grundtvig had proclaimed in his hymn of 1857:

Op dog, Sion! Seer du ej sejrens palmestrøj'de vej til Guds hus i Himmerig! Den er og beredt for dig.	<i>Arise then Sion! don't you see the palm-strewn path of victory leading to God's heavenly home! for you as well it is prepared.</i>
--	---

Moreover, Grundtvig's mind had latterly rested upon the scriptural symbols of Jordan and Jerusalem, as symbols of the

successful momentum of his national spiritual mission: 'For Grundtvig and his friends it was a »spring time« without equal. The large Vartov congregations around the country testified to this, as did the new hymns and the new high schools and free schools that were established in several places. Grundtvig used powerful words to describe the development. In 1866 he could »say with the patriarch [Jacob]: with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become a large company«...It was precisely in the Nordic countries that the apostolic Church should be reborn; the Danish Church was »obviously the last stop on the way to the new Jerusalem«!⁶

Thus, again on that Palm Sunday in 1867, it was Copenhagen, as the heart and head of the Danish nation, that Grundtvig meant when he prophesied that amidst restored rejoicing the walls of the new Jerusalem should imminently be raised. 'And just as there was heard weeping and sighing without end when the walls were broken down about Jerusalem, 'he delared, according to Hammerich, 'so shall there be unending rejoicing and joy now, when they are being built up again'.⁷ So near at hand seemed the Lord's second coming⁸ that, Grundtvig prophesied, the spirit (Aand) hitherto alienated from the Danish heart (Hjærtet) was now coming from the remote east to enter again into the heart (which was resident in the Danish islands).⁹ The way was open from Jordan to Øresund; Jordan's baptismal waters were now flowing from their course across the world to pour their regenerative grace into the Øresund, creating as it were a great baptismal font in the midst of the lands of the High North; and the Danish capital into which the Lord was now riding to cries of 'Hosianna i det Højeste!' was indeed, by that same token, become Jerusalem, 'herrens stad', the City of God.

Traditionally, of course, in liturgical and patristic allusion (which was, incidentally, familiarly known to the Anglo-Saxons), Jerusalem stands also as the type of the soul and of the Church. The entry of Christ into Jerusalem is therefore symbolic of the entry of Christ (or Grundtvig's 'Aand', Spirit) into the heart (Grundtvig's 'Hjærte') and soul of the faithful individual and into the community of his Church. Again, in traditional scriptural

exegesis, it also recalls the Psalmist's prophetic acclamation of the entry of the King of Glory (*Ps. 23: Attollite, portæ, capita vestra, et elevamini, portæ æternales, et introibit rex gloriæ*) into his citadel - a text which historically belongs within the liturgy of Palm Sunday and which anticipates Christ's breaching of the gates of Hell and liberation of the captive souls there, the liturgical commemoration of which event lies ahead at the end of the same week, in the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday.

It is of further significance, at least to any Anglo-Saxonist, that Jordan and Jerusalem come together in the Anglo-Saxon poem *The Descent into Hell* in the Exeter Book, in a context of striking relevance to that of Grundtvig's Palm Sunday prophecies. The conjunction occurs towards the end of the poem, when the patriarchs imprisoned in Hell glorify the prophesied Messiah and Redeemer in the hour of his appearance at Hell's gates between his crucifixion and his resurrection:

...Eala Hierusalem in Iudeum,
 huþu in þære stowe stille gewunadest!
 Ne mostan þe geondferan foldbuende
 ealle lifgende, þa þe lof singað.
 Eala Iordane in Iudeum,
 hu þu in þære stowe stille gewunadest!
 Nales þu geondflowan foldbuende,
 mostan hy þynes wætres wynnum brucan.¹⁰

[Ah, Jerusalem in Judea, fixed indeed you have remained in that place! Not all those inhabitants of earth who sing you praise will be able in their lifetimes to walk about you. Ah, Jordan in Judea, fixed indeed you have remained in that place! Neither will you flow around the inhabitants of earth, nor they be able to make joyous use of your water.]

This poem Grundtvig read when he studied and transcribed from the Exeter Book during his visits to England (1829 - 31) and later when he had access to Benjamin Thorpe's edition of the Exeter Book (1842).¹¹ It is one of a considerable number of Anglo-Saxon poems which are related to the liturgy and liturgical seasons of the Church. It is in effect a highly dramatic poetic meditation upon two liturgical items from Lauds of Easter Day: the *Benedictus* antiphon and the *Benedictus* canticle itself. It

construes these texts in terms of the two great narratives of the Easter Vigil and Easter Day - namely, Christ's harrowing of Hell and the revelation of Christ's resurrection to the women at the sepulchre - and in terms of the sacrament of baptism so prominently associated with the liturgy of the Easter Vigil.

The poem is, textually, a *tour-de-force* of movement contrasted with *stasis*. The movement is that of the spirit, and it is a two-directional movement: the spirit that yearns towards God, even though fixed in the stasis of sin and temporally and spatially confined in this material world, will find that Christ comes to seek it out.

The poet's point of departure is the journey of the women to the sepulchre; this occupies the prelude which corresponds with the antiphon to the *Benedictus*: *Et valde mane una sabbatorum, veniunt ad monumentum, orto jam sole* [Mark 16:2 - And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun]. The mood of this opening dramatically shifts from grief to triumphant joy; thus reflecting both the liturgical pattern of Holy Week and Easter, and the prophecies of the Psalmist,¹² »In the evening weeping shall have place: and in the morning gladness« and »They that sow in tears shall reap in joy«. This pattern of reversal is, by the same token of Easter, the essential pattern of all human history itself, providentially viewed. And sure enough - though the attuned audience or reader hardly need external verification of the poet's intent here - Bede, following Gregory the Great, understands the women journeying to the sepulchre to represent *all* Christian souls in their faithful pilgrimage through this world's vicissitudes towards the heavenly Jerusalem: they shall find that angels come to meet them.¹³

Similarly, the poet perceives the journeyings of Christ himself as tokens of this truth, that grace will come to meet the world's yearnings and needs: his entry into the world through Mary's womb, his meeting with John at the Jordan river, his journey to crucifixion in Jerusalem, his descent into hell, and his second coming to gather his people to himself. Meanwhile, many of the faithful sing the praise of the earthly Jerusalem and yearn to walk there in the footsteps of Jesus, but, constrained in time and space, cannot hope to get there; many yearn to be baptized in

the waters of Jordan where John baptized Jesus, but the waters of Jordan will not run from their banks and flow all across the world wherever the faithful are;¹⁴ and yet, the poem implies, those who yearn for such grace, grace will come to meet. By grace, the Jordan flows in the sacramental water of every baptismal font. And by grace a new Jerusalem may be built in each regenerated heart within the community of Christ's Church, until the time of the Lord's second coming, to gather his own to himself. Thus the poem ends in a prayer (once more invoking Jerusalem and Jordan) for regeneration of all fallen humankind through that baptism which Christ made a sacrament in Jordan and left to his Church:

Swylce ic þe halsige, hælend user,
 ...fore Hierusalem in Iudeum,
 ...ond for Iordane in Iudeum.
 ...Oferwurpe þu mid þy wætre, weoroda dryhten,
 bliþe mode ealle burgwaran,
 swylce git Iohannis in Iordane
 mid þy fullwihte fægre onbryrdon
 ealne þisne middangeard. Sie þæs symle meotude þonc!¹⁵

[Likewise I beseech you, our Saviour...by Jerusalem in Judea...and by Jordan in Judea. Overpour with that water, Lord of hosts, in gracious spirit all these citizens, even as you and John, by that baptism in Jordan, justly inspired the whole of this world. For that be ever thanks to God!]

In *The Descent into Hell*, then, allusions to Jerusalem and to Jordan are conjoined in a context of movement and stasis, of scriptural historicity and universal symbolism, of penitential confession and jubilant optimism in salvation, of Holy Week and baptism.

Anglo-Saxon religious (probably largely monastic) poetry and art share with the catholic tradition of liturgical observance, in which the liturgy of the Anglo-Saxon Church itself stands four-square, a disposition of belief, that liturgical worship is more than an act of commemorative imitation. Their disposition presumes faith in a kind of *anamnesis*, 'by which the person or event commemorated is actually made present, is brought into the realm of the here and now.'¹⁶ Thus the *Advent Lyrics (Christ*

I) - also copied by Grundtvig from The Exeter Book - speak in the voice of a we-persona out of a 'now'. That is, they articulate the devotions of the present audience or congregation of the faithful. But they speak of the advent of Christ, just as do the liturgical antiphons for Advent on which they are based, as though it still lies ahead - as indeed it does, in terms of the *liturgical seasons*. In vivid image-language drawn from the Messianic prophecies of the Scriptures, they pray with the souls imprisoned in Hell before the Harrowing: 'Come now, high King of heaven in your own person. Bring salvation, life, to us weary thralls to torment, overcome by weeping, by bitter salt tears.'¹⁷ Such powerful and poetic use of the word, to invoke the mystery of Christ's perpetual advent into the hearts of the faithful, will not have been lost on Grundtvig the priest who in his own Easter sermon just a few years later could preach of 'the *perpetual recurrence* of [Christ's] victorious struggle with death'¹⁸ and of whom it has been observed 'how Grundtvig dramatically relives in his worship the great moments of Christian faith'.¹⁹

These poems, then, found by Grundtvig in the Exeter Book, are not mere acts of scriptural recall, not mere commemoration of historic advent; for they play their part in preparing the hearts of the faithful in the here-and-now of their declamation to receive the newborn or the risen Christ in a mystical but 'real' sense at Christmas or at Easter. They are poetically crafted to have here-and-now consequences for the heart. For this is essentially poetry of the heart: not sentimental or romantic, but devotional poetry plainly intended to move its participants to *compunctio cordis*, compunction of the heart. Compunction is a piercing of the worldly-calloused sensibilities of the heart by grace-revealed insight into divine truth; it is an intense and vivid realisation of the truth within the heart, seat of thought and feeling, the meeting-place of spiritual insight and of those human affections which shape the will, for better and for worse. A characteristic outward expression of the heart pierced by compunction is tears, first of remorse, then of joy and yearning for heaven. As an aspect of spirituality, cultivated through the formal liturgy, through meditational devotions, through the exercise of penitential discipline, and even, Bede says, through

contemplation of religious art,²⁰ compunction is a blest state because it moves the spirit from despair over the oppression of sin and mortality, through fear and remorse, into the joy of insight into the sacrifice of the Redeemer and the forgiveness of the Father and the assurance received of a heavenly home prepared for those steadfast in truth.

Just as meditation upon the words of Scripture or upon religious art were explicitly held to help move the heart to compunction, so implicitly, one may think, was the experiencing of vernacular religious poetry, particularly that which dwelt meditatively upon the great emotive episodes of sacred history - such as the reproaches of Christ in *Christ III* or the hour of the soul's judgement before God in *Judgement Day*.²¹ It is of course not necessary to know that the individual Anglo-Saxon (or, indeed, Grundtvig) had such a consciousness of the concept and working of *compunctio cordis* before one may believe they could respond to it: anyone sensitive to poetic technique will register, for example, the drama of the guilt-wounded, remorse-purged and grace-healed heart in *The Dream of the Rood*.²² It works its effect of vicarious involvement in the willing self-sacrifice of Christ on the cross at Calvary even upon an audience untutored in monastic theory of *compunctio cordis*. The emotive force of the form and lexis, the structure, the powerful use of the I-persona, all can make their technical, emotional and intellectual effect upon the audience, to the extent that the experiencing of a poem about religious experiencing may well become itself a religious experience - an experience akin to (even, as in the case of *The Advent Lyrics* and *The Descent into Hell* among others, directly connected with) the liturgical experiencing proper to a particular season.

Such poetry as so powerfully uses the vernacular language and its own native poetic tradition to gain access to the heart of its audience, in order to speak to it of matters of the heart (in this religious sense) will have stirred a special response in the Grundtvig who said: 'The human heart is the most wonderful thing God has created, for it is so small that it can be contained within the human breast and yet so big that it can contain all heaven, all hell and usually something of both';²³ in the preacher who could weep as he preached²⁴ and whose address to the

confirmands at a confirmation attended by a distinguished congregation 'was so engrossing that all of them without exception were powerfully moved; he had to ask them to calm themselves and stop their tears';²⁵ and in the critic who disdained a Schiller-like doctrine of the objective observer and advocated the absolute involvement of the reader even unto tears, as the only way of transcending the limitations of the material world and contemplating eternity; and in the poet who held poetry to be the spiritual activity of the heart.²⁶ 'One of the key terms alike in [Grundtvig's] hymns and in his sermons, is the word »heart«, writes A. M. Allchin, 'This is a word which holds a considerable place in the teaching of Old and New Testament, and is essential for understanding the patristic view of human nature. It speaks of a centre in men where feeling and thought, intuition and will are fused together in one...The heart of man is made to receive and respond to the love which comes from the heart of God'.²⁷ Significantly enough, in his own antithetical pairing of weeping over the destruction of Jerusalem and joy over its rebuilding, Grundtvig is appealing to that very scripturally-founded pattern of reversal of the heart's mood which characterises the process of *compunctio cordis* and which also happens to be the essential spiritual progression informing *The Descent into Hell*. Here certainly is extensive common ground between Grundtvig and the religious literature of the Anglo-Saxons.

Perhaps in all this we are merely observing two similar responses, in an Anglo-Saxon poet and in Grundtvig, to the same liturgical season: and thereby recognising an underlying catholicity grounded, in part at least, in that crucially and providentially located catholicity of the church of the Anglo-Saxons, that participation in the ancient and universal church which, among the rest, informs so much Anglo-Saxon poetry; and here an observation of A.P. Thyssen and C. Thodberg upon Grundtvig's *Sang-Værk til den danske Kirke* (1836-37) is apposite: '...the collection contains a large number of Grundtvig's adaptations of hymns from the Church tradition, not only from the Danish and the Lutheran but also from the Anglo-Saxon, the Roman Catholic and the Byzantine Greek Church liturgy. Grundtvig's

hymn collection is thus universal in its design: it is the holy *Universal* church that manifests itself here'.²⁸

It is tempting to think, then, that this collocation of ideas, like many others more clearly attributable, was lodged in Grundtvig's remarkable all-synthesising and re-creative mind from his readings in Anglo-Saxon poetry. How imaginatively impressed he had been by the narrative of the Harrowing of Hell itself, which he encountered in the Anglo-Saxon prose version of *The Gospel of Nicodemus*,²⁹ and in the poem now called *Christ and Satan* in Oxford Bodleian Library MS Junius 11 (once held to be a codex of the poetry of Cædmon), is manifest in his free poetic rendering *I Kvæld blev der banket paa Helvedes Port* [Yestereve came a knock on the portals of Hell] (1837), a vivid cameo of the jubilation of the freed captives and the discomfiture of the devils, apparently narrated from the standpoint of Easter morning, looking back to Holy Saturday night - as it were, to the Vigil of Easter.

*Oferwurpe þu mid þy wætre, weoroda dryhten, bliþe mode ealle burgwaran, swylce git Iohannis in Iordane mid þy fullwihte fægre onbryrdon ealne þisne middangeard. Sie þæs symle meotude þonc!*³⁰ [Overpour with that water, Lord of hosts, in gracious spirit all these citizens, even as you and John, by that baptism in Jordan, justly inspired the whole of this world. For that be ever thanks to God!]. To Grundtvig, in his hyperactive preparations for that Palm Sunday³¹ the scriptural-liturgical proclamation of *The Descent into Hell* could have occurred as a jubilant endorsement of the huge movement of the spirit he felt to be stirring there, transcending, reversing, the threats he feared his country and countrymen imminently faced. How prophetic, how remarkably apt, how quotable, that Old Testament patriarch's plea to Christ from the depths of his faith might have seemed to this latter day patriarch - both when he first discovered the text in an ancient book in Exeter, and if the liturgical context and circumstances of that Palm Sunday prompted its recall.³²

On Palm Sunday 1867, then, Grundtvig may have been living out, as it were, the exhortation of his own sermon for the sixteenth Sunday after Trinity 1823:

Listen to the prophet who cries:

Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities:
 thine eyes shall see Jerusalem.
 a quiet habitation,
 a tabernacle that shall not be taken down,
 whoses stakes shall never be removed
 and whose cords shall never be broken,
 and no inhabitant shall say, I am sick:
 for the people that dwell therein
 have been forgiven their iniquity.³³

And perhaps then the recollected yearnings of the Anglo-Saxon poet of *The Descent into Hell* fortuitously served to articulate Grundtvig's prophetic optimism. Were this so, it might then look less like the rambling of a mind unhinged and more like learning and wisdom, albeit fragmentary and snatched associatively from the crammed chambers of Grundtvig's prodigious memory. Had he afterwards happened to remember and comment upon this recall of Anglo-Saxon poetry on that Palm Sunday, he might typically have regarded it as an instance of providential convergence - of inspired text with inspired occasion.³⁴

Notes

- 1 On this subject see further S.A.J. Bradley, »'The first new-European Literature': N.F.S. Grundtvig's Reception of Anglo-Saxon Literature' in *Heritage and Prophecy, Grundtvig and the English-speaking World* (Aarhus, 1993).
- 2 An eye-witness source is the submission made to the Church Ministry by Frederik Helweg, *Indberetning til Kultusministeriet angaaende Grundtvigs Gudstjeneste Palmesøndag 1867*. Helweg, priest and author, was persuaded to assist Grundtvig at the altar with his friend Frederik Hammerich, Professor of Church History in the University of Copenhagen, though both did so with misgivings. Hammerich had been a disciple and admirer of Grundtvig since the eithteen-thirties though he was critical of Grundtvigianism as a political tendency. His account, from *Et Levneløb, II* (1882), is in Steen Johansen and Henning Høirup (eds), *Grundtvigs Erindringer og Erindringer om Grundtvig* (Copenhagen, 1948), pp. 238-43. Other accounts of the occasion, by H.P.B. Barfod in his 'Minder fra et langt Liv', vol. I, 1915) are also in Johansen and Høirup (pp. 243-50 and 250-54). I have benefitted much from discussion of this episode, as indeed of Grundtvig matters in general, with the Reverend Canon Dr A.M. Allchin of Oxford, and with Dr Jens Holger

Schjørring of Aarhus, for whose friendship and collegial generosity I gladly record my gratitude.

- 3 So it is usual now to describe Grundtvig's condition: for example, Niels Lyhne Jensen (ed. and tr.) and Edward Broadbridge (tr.), *A Grundtvig Anthology: Selections from the Writings of N. F. S. Grundtvig (1783-1872)* (Cambridge and Viby, 1984), p. 18, refer to 'Grundtvig's inbred manic-depressive disposition' and enter the biographical note for 1867: 'An outbreak of G.'s mental illness becomes evident during the service on Palm Sunday'. Ebbe Kløvedal Reich, *Frederik: En Folkebog om Grundtvigs Tid og Liv* (Copenhagen, 1972), p. 8, in the spirit of R. D. Laing, takes vigorous exception to this label of 'madness', declaring: 'Jeg tror, at det, som Grundtvigs og troens fjender kalder »sindssyge«, var de afgørende øjeblikke i kampen [I believe that what the enemies of Grundtvig and of the faith call »madness« were the decisive moments in the struggle']. The struggle in question was Grundtvig's lifelong battle against the religious and social oppressions and hypocrisies of society's overclass and their symptoms in himself.
- 4 Hammerich, *Et Levnetsløb, II* (1882); Johansen and Høirup, *op. cit.* (note 2), p. 239. Helweg, *op. cit.* (note 2), reports that he asked himself at the time: 'Er det, som her er skeet og skeer, ligefrem Sindssygdøm, eller er det en Herrens Gjerning, som er bleven endog Grundtvig for stærk til, at han kan bære den...' [Is this which has happened and is happening here straightforward madness, or it is an act of the Lord which has however become too powerful for Grundtvig to be able to bear it ...].
- 5 Hammerich, *loc. cit.* (note 2). Helweg, *op. cit.* (note 2) reports Grundtvig as having said that 'Vejen var aaben fra Jordan til Øresund' [the way was open from Jordan to Øresund] but the slightly different imagery is no less amenable to the following interpretation and speculation.
- 6 Anders Pontoppidan Thyssen, 'Grundtvig's Ideas on the Church and the People, 1848-72' in Christian Thodberg and Anders Pontoppidan Thyssen (eds). *N.F.S. Grundtvig: Tradition and Renewal. Grundtvig's Vision of Man and People, Education and the Church, in Relation to World Issues Today* (Copenhagen 1983), p. 369.
- 7 Hammerich, *Et Levnetsløb, II* (1882) in Johansen and Høirup, *op. cit.* (note 2), p. 239: 'Og lige som der lød gråd og sukke uden ende, da murene brødes ned om Jerusalem, så skal der være uendelig jubel og glæde nu, da de bygges op igen'.
- 8 Barfod, 'Minder fra et langt Liv' (1928); Johansen and Høirup, *op. cit.* (note 2), p. 246; 'I sin prædiken talte Grundtvig om Herrens Genkomst, som han troede ikke var fjærm, og han sluttede med en varm og inderlig Bøn for Kirken, Landet og Folket' [In his sermon Grundtvig spoke of the Second

Coming of the Lord, which he believed was not far off, and he ended with a warm and sincere prayer for the Church, the country and the people.]

- ⁹ Hammerich, *Et Levnetsløb, II* (1882); Johansen and Høirup, *op.cit.* (note 2), p. 239: 'Der havde været mange hindringer for Herrens komme, ti ånden og hjertet var skilte ad. Ånden havde Gud plantet i øster på synernes høj, og hjertet her på de danske øer. Nu er de dog endelig blevne forenede, og nu flyder Jordan ud i Øresund, nu rider Herren ind i sin stad' [There had been many obstacles in the way of the Lord's coming, because the spirit and the heart were divorced. The spirit God had planted in the east upon the mountain of the seers, and the heart here in the Danish islands. But now at last they have been reunited and now the Jordan flows out into Øresund, now the Lord rides into his city]. Helweg, *op.cit.* (note 2), reports almost identically.
- ¹⁰ *The Descent into Hell*, 99 - 106; ed. G. P. Krapp and E. V. K. Dobbie, *The Exeter Book (The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records: A Collective Edition, vol. III; New York and London, 1936)*, pp. 221 - 22; tr. S. A. J. Bradley, *Anglo-Saxon Poetry: An Anthology of Old English Poems in Prose Translation with Introduction and Headnotes* (London, 1982), pp. 390-395.
- ¹¹ Grundtvig's transcriptions of the poems of the Exeter Book, together with later annotations from Thorpe's edition are in Grundtvig Arkivet Fasc. 316, nos. 1-8.
- ¹² *Ps. 30:5 (Vulgate): Ad vesperum demorabitur fletus: et ad matutinum laetitia; Ps. 126:5 (Vulgate): Qui semiant in lacrymis, in exultatione metent;* tr. *The Holy Bible translated from the Latin Vulgate etc.*, (London, 1914).
- ¹³ Bede, *In Marci Evangelium Expositio IV*, D. M. Hurst, [*Bedaes Venerabilis Opera Exegetica, Pars II, 3*, in *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina CXX* (Turnholti, 1960), pp. 639-40. *Hebrews 12:22* 'But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels.'
- ¹⁴ There are of course many scriptural references to the waters of Jordan - not least as the eastern border of the Promised Land (*Numbers 34:12*), exegetically interpreted as the boundary between this mortal existence and the heavenly home. Twice Jordan has stood still (permitting an alternative translation of 'stille gewunadest'): once when the ark of the covenant was carried across into the land of Jordan (*Joshua 3:8-17*) and once when, according to the apocryphal Latin *Vita Adae et Euae*, Adam sought to do penance for the Fall by standing in its waters for forty days and bade the river and its creatures mourn for him, and 'At once all the living beings came and surrounded him and the water of Jordan stood, its current not moving, from that hour' [*Life of Adam and Eve*, tr. M. D. Johnson (Charlesworth, 1985) vol. 2, pp. 249-95]. It may be that the allusion in *The Descent*

embraces all of these references, but the dominant signification in the context of the poem's theme of journeying and stasis and its topic of baptism still seems to me to be the one I have outlined.

- ¹⁵ *The Descent into Hell*, 118, 128 - 37; Krapp and Dobbie, *op. cit.* (note 10), pp. 222 - 23.
- ¹⁶ W. Jardine Grisbrooke, 'Anaphora', in *A New Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*, ed. J. G. Davies (London, 1986), p. 18: 'A Greek word expressing a Semitic concept, *anamnesis* is all but untranslatable into English. Memorial, commemoration, remembrance - all these suggest that the person or deed commemorated is past and absent, whereas *anamnesis* signifies exactly the opposite: it is 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.' An influential thesis demonstrating an analogous disposition in medieval western literature is in E. Auerbach, *Mimesis* (Princeton, 1953).
- ¹⁷ *Advent Lyric 6*, 149 - 52: 'Nu þu sylfa cum/ heofones heahcýning. Bring us hælolif,/ werigum witepeowum, woþe forcymenum/ bitrum brynetearum'; Krapp and Dobbie, *op. cit.* (note 10), p. 7.
- ¹⁸ C. Thodberg (ed.), *N. F. S. Grundtvigs Prædikener 1822-26 og 1832-39, Vol. X: 1836-37* (Copenhagen, 1985), p. 172.
- ¹⁹ Jensen, *op. cit.* (note 3), p. 25.
- ²⁰ Bede, *De Templo Libri II, Liber II*, lines 809-33; C. W. Jones, *Bedae Venerabilis Opera Exegetica in Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* 118 A (II, 1) (Turnholti, 1967).
- ²¹ On this interpretation of these poems, see Bradley, *op. cit.* (note 10), p. 229 (*Christ III*), pp. 528-29 (*Judgement Day II*), and in contrast pp. 358-59 (*Soul and Body II*).
- ²² The text is in the Vercelli Book. Grundtvig's transcription, from a printed edition, is in Grundtvig Arkivet, Fasc. 317. On *The Dream of the Rood* and compunction, see Bradley, *op. cit.* (note 10), pp. 158-60.
- ²³ Morten Eskesen, *Minder og Udsigter fra 40 Aars Skoleliv* (1881), cited in Johansen and Høirup, *op. cit.* (note 2), p. 229: 'Menneskehjærtet er det vidunderligste, Gud har skabt; thi det er saa lidet, at det kan rummes i et Menneskebryst og dog saa stort, at det kan rumme hele Himlen, hele Helvede og sædvanlig noget af begge!'

- 24 N.W.T. Bondesen, *Minde om Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvigs Præstegjerning i Aaret 1821* (1874), cited in Johansen and Høirup, *op.cit.* (note 2): 'Hans Prædikener vare levende og gribende, og selv var han da ofte meget heftig bevæget, saa at Taarene randt ned ad hans Kinder' [His sermons were vivid and gripping, and he himself was often very greatly moved, so that the tears would run down his cheeks].
- 25 Bondesen, *Minde* (1874); Johansen and Høirup, *op. cit.* (note 2), p. 127.
- 26 These ideas, inspired by lectures of the romantic philosopher Henrich Steffens in Copenhagen (1802-03), are discussed by Flemming Lundgreen-Nielsen in 'Grundtvig and Romanticism' in Thodberg and Thyssen, *op. cit.* (note 6), pp. 20-23.
- 27 A. M. Allchin, 'N. F. S. Grundtvig: the Spirit as Life-giver' in *The Kingdom of Love and Knowledge: The Encounter between Orthodoxy and the West* (London, 1979), pp. 72, 77.
- 28 Thodberg and Thyssen, *op. cit.* (note 6), p. 14.
- 29 Grundtvig Arkivet, Fasc. 322, 3.
- 30 *Descent into Hell*, 133-137.
- 31 Barfod, *op. cit.* (note 2), p. 243: 'I Fredags ... hans Aand var i en uafbrudt Bevægelse fra Morgen tidlig til Aften silde ... Han talte uafbrudt hele Dagen om Vorherre Jesus og om den Kamp, der vel snart forestaar vort lille Fædreland ... For hver, der kom, begyndte han forfra igen med at forklare Skriften og spaa om kommende Tider' [On Friday ... his spirit was in an incessant movement from first thing in the morning to last thing in the evening ... He talked incessantly the whole day about Our Lord Jesus and about the battle which would apparently soon face our little Fatherland... For everyone who visited, he started all over again with explaining Scripture and prophesying about the times ahead].
- 32 But above all, precisely in this context of the contemplated triumph of the Word in the North, how right it might have seemed to utter words of invocation and prophecy in the Anglo-Saxon tongue. Ebbe Kløvedal Reich, in his colourful retelling of the episode writes (*op. cit.* (note 3), p. 342): 'Og da han pludselig slog over i et fremmed tungemål, som nogle mente var hebraisk, var der faktisk flere, der besvimed' [And when he suddenly changed over into an alien tongue, which some thought was Hebrew, there were in fact several who fainted']. It would have been a triumph to have been able to claim that Grundtvig was actually quoting Anglo-Saxon poetry at this moment: regrettably I have not been able to find the authority for this detail of Reich's narrative.

- 33 C. Thodberg, 'Grundtvig the Preacher - the Poet in the Pulpit', in Thodberg and Thyssen, *op. cit.* (note 6), p. 150.
- 34 Hammerich, *op. cit.* (note 2), p. 239: 'endnu kom et par ord, inden prædiken begyndte: »i går var jeg syg til døden,« sagde han, »og alligevel fik jeg en ganske ordenlig prædiken af Vor Herre. Men hvor skal jeg holde den? sagde jeg. Lad mig være om det, svarede han, og nu i dag er jeg da kommen så vidt«' [A couple of words more were forthcoming, before the sermon began: »Yesterday I was sick unto death,« he said, »and all the same I got a quite decent sermon from Our Lord. But how shall I be able to give it? I said. Let me look after that, he answered, and now today I have got this far«'.