OLD ENGLISH SERIES · VOLUME 9

The Consolation of Philosophy

King Alfred

Boeties boc on englisc

The Consolation of Philosophy

King Alfred's Old English Boethius

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with a word-for-word interlinear English translation

preserving the original word order



CANES NOBILES · MMXXVI

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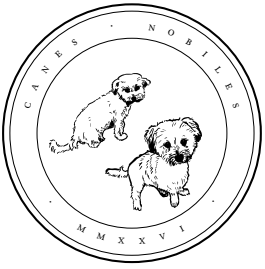

Volume 9 of the Canes Nobiles Old English interlinear texts

The Old English text follows Walter John Sedgefield's text,
King Alfred's Old English Version of Boethius
De Consolatione Philosophiae (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899)

Translated and composed with AI, edited by Christopher Hench
Artwork by Esther Steves

The text keeps the manuscripts' spelling and accents, and Sedgefield's ꝛ and þ, their signs for ond and þæt; a stroke over a letter is the manuscripts' sign for a following m or n, not a mark of length. The edition's italics and brackets, which mark what the Bodleian manuscript supplies where the burnt Cotton manuscript is lost, are not reproduced. The margin gives the page and line of Sedgefield's edition at which each paragraph begins.

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The preface states that King Alfred translated this book from Latin into English, sometimes word for word and sometimes sense for sense, as clearly as he could amid the many cares of his kingdoms. Having turned it into English prose, he then worked it again into verse. He asks every reader to pray for him and not to blame him if they understand it better than he did, since each man can speak only by the measure of his understanding and his leisure.

Ælfred Kuning wæs wealhstod ðisse bec, ȝ hie of boclædene 1.1
Alfred King was interpreter of-this book and it from book-Latin
on englisc wende, swa hio nu is gedon. Hwilum he sette word
into English turned as it now is done At-times he set word
be worde, hwilum andgit of andgite, swa swa he hit þa
by word at-times sense from sense so as he it then
sweotolost ȝ andgitfullicast gereccan mihte for þam mistlicū
most-clearly and most-intelligibly to-render could for the various
ȝ manigfealdum weoruldbisgum þe hine oft ægðer ge on
and manifold worldly-cares which him often each both in
mode ge on lichoman bisgodan. Ða bisgu us sint swiþe
mind and in body busied Those cares to-us are very
earfoþrime þe on his dagum on þa ricu becoman þe he
hard-to-number which in his days upon the kingdoms came which he
underfangen hæfde, ȝ þeah ða þas boc hæfde geleornode ȝ
undertaken had and yet when this book (he)-had learned and
of lædene to engliscū spelle gewende, ȝ geworhte hi eft to
from Latin into English discourse turned and wrought it again into
leoðe, swa swa heo nu gedon is; ȝ nu bit ȝ for Godes naman
verse so as it now done is and now prays and for of-God name
he halsað ælcne þara þe þas boc rædan lyste, þ he for hine
he beseeches each of-those whom this book to-read it-pleases that he for him
gebidde, ȝ him ne wite gif he hit rihtlicor ongite þonne he
pray and him not blame if he it more-rightly understand than he

mihte; forþamþe ælc mon sceal be his andgites mæðe ⁊ be
could because each man shall by of-his understanding measure and by
his ærnettan sprecan þ he sprecð, ⁊ don þ þæt he deþ.
of-his leisure speak what he speaks and do that which he does

HEADINGS OF CHAPTERS

The Bodleian manuscript opens with a table of its forty-two chapters, each heading a sentence saying what the chapter holds: how the Goths took Rome and Theodoric imprisoned Boethius, how Wisdom came to comfort him, the arguments about fortune, wealth, power, and fame, the search for the highest good, the fable of Ulysses and his men turned into beasts, and the questions of providence and fate. The heading of chapter IX breaks off unfinished.

3.1 I. Ærest hu Gotan gewunnon Romana rice, ⁊ hu Boetius
One First how Goths won of-Romans empire and how Boethius
hi wolde eft berædan, ⁊ Ðeodric þa þ anfunde, ⁊
them would again dispossess and Theodoric then that discovered and
hine het on carcerne gebringan.
him commanded into prison to-bring

3.4 II. Hu Boetius on þam carcerne his sar seofiende wæs.
Two How Boethius in the prison his sorrow lamenting was

3.5 III. Hu se Wisdom com to Boetie ærest inne on þā
Three How — Wisdom came to Boethius first in into the
carcerne, ⁊ hine ongan frefrian.
prison and him began to-comfort

3.7 IV. Hu Boetius hine singende gebæd, ⁊ his earfoðu to
Four How Boethius himself singing prayed and his hardships to
Gode mænde.
God bewailed

V. Hu se Wisdom hine eft rete ȝ rihte mid his 3.9
Five How — Wisdom him again cheered and corrected with his
andsworum.
answers
VI. Hu he him rehte bispell bi þære sunnan ȝ bi 3.10
Six How he him told an-example about the sun and about
oðrum tunglum ȝ be wolcnum.
other stars and about clouds
VII. Hu se Wisdom sæde þā Mode þ him naht swiðor 3.12
Seven How — Wisdom said to-the Mind that to-it nothing more
nære þonne hit forloren hæfde þa woruldsælða þe hit ær to
were than-(that) it lost had the worldly-felicities which it before to
gewunod hæfde; ȝ sæde him bispell hu he hit macian sceolde
accustomed had and told to-him an-example how he it manage should
gif he heora þegen beon sceolde; ȝ be þæs scipes segele, ȝ
if he their servant be should and about of-the ship sail and
hu his gôdena weorca ealra wolde her on worulde habban lean.
how of-his good works all (he)-would here in world have reward
VIII. Hu þ Mod andsworede þære Gesceadwisnesse, ȝ sæde 3.17
Eight How the Mind answered — Reason and said
þ hit hit æghwonan ongeate scyldig; eac sæde þ hit wære
that it itself everywhere perceived guilty also said that it were
ofseten mid ðæs laþes sare, þ hit ne mihte him geandsworian.
oppressed with of-the harm sorrow that it not could him answer
Þa cwæð se Wisdom: þ is nu git þinre unrihtwisnesse þ
Then said — Wisdom that is now yet of-thy unrighteousness that
ðu eart fulneah forþoht; tele nu þa gesælþa wið þam sorgum.
thou art nearly despairing reckon now the felicities against the sorrows

3.22 IX. Đa ongan se Wisdom eft secgan bispell be þære
Nine Then began — Wisdom again to-tell an-example about the
sunnan, hu heo oferliht ealle oþre steoran, ⁊ geþiostraþ
sun how it outshines all other stars and darkens
mid hire leohte; ⁊ hu þone smyltan sæ þæs windes yst…
with its light and how the calm sea of-the wind storm
4.1 X. Hu Boetius sæde hu swytole ongiten hæfde þ hit eall
Ten How Boethius said how clearly (he)-perceived had that it all
soð wære þæt se Wisdom sæde; ⁊ seo orsorhnes, ⁊ þa sælða
true were that — Wisdom said and the security and the felicities
þe he ær wende þæt gesælða beon sceoldan, nauhtas næran;
which he before thought that felicities be should nothing were
⁊ hu se Wisdom sæde þ he ne mihte gereccan þ he
and how — Wisdom said that he not could prove that he
ungesælig wære; sæde þ his ancor wære þa git fæst on eorþan.
unhappy were said that his anchor were then still fast in earth
4.6 XI. Hu seo Gesceadwisnes him andsworede ⁊ cwæþ þ
Eleven How — Reason him answered and said that
heo wende þæt heo hine hwæthwegnunges ûp ahafen hæfde
she thought that she him somewhat up lifted had
⁊ fulneah gebroht æt þam ilcan weorþscipe þe he ær
and nearly brought to the same honor which he before
hæfde; ⁊ acsode hine hwa hafde eall þ he wolde on
had and asked him who had all that he wished in
þisse worulde; sume habbað æþelo ⁊ nabbaþ are.
this world some have noble-birth and have-not property
4.11 XII. Hu se Wisdom hine lærde, gif he fæst hus timbrian
Twelve How — Wisdom him taught if he firm house build
wolde, þ he hit ne sette up on þone hehstan cnoll.
would that he it not set up on the highest hilltop

XIII. Hu se Wisdom sæde þ hie meahtan ða smealicor 4.13
Thirteen How — Wisdom said that they might then more-deeply
sprecan, forþamþe seo lar hwæthwegnunges eode on his
speak because the teaching somewhat went into his
andgit.
understanding

XIV. Hu þ Mod cwæð hwi him ne sceolde lician fæger 4.16
Fourteen How the Mind said why him not should please fair
land; ȝ hu se Wisdom ahsode hwæt him belūpe to hira
land and how — Wisdom asked what to-him belonged to their
fægernesse.
fairness

XV. Hu seo Gesceadwisnes sæde hu gesælig seo forme eld 4.19
Fifteen How — Reason said how happy the first age
wæs.
was

XVI. Hu se Wisdom sæde þ hi hi woldon ahebban 4.21
Sixteen How — Wisdom said that they themselves would exalt
for þam anweald oð ðone heofen; ȝ be Ðeodrices
for the power up-to the heaven and about of-Theodoric
anwealde ȝ Nerones.
power and of-Nero

XVII. Hu þ Mod sæde þ him næfre seo mægþ ȝ seo 4.24
Seventeen How the Mind said that him never the ambition and the
gitsung forwel ne licode, buton to laþe he tilade.
avarice greatly — pleased except tools which he strove

XVIII, XIX. Be hlisan. Be hlisan. 4.26
Eighteen Nineteen About repute About repute

XX. Be þære wiðerweardan wyrde, ȝ be þære orsorgan. 4.27
Twenty About the adverse fate and about the prosperous

4.28 XXI. Be þæs ælmihtigan Godes anwealde; hu he welt
Twenty-one About of-the almighty God power how he rules
eallū his gesceaftū.
all his creatures

4.30 XXII. Hu se Wisdom ⁊ seo Gesceadwisnes hæfdon
Twenty-two How — Wisdom and — Reason had
þ Mod aret ægþer ge mid smealicre spræce ge mid
the Mind cheered each both with deep speech and with
wynsuman sange.
delightful song

4.33 XXIII. Hu se Wisdom lærde þone þe he wolde wæstmbære
Twenty-three How — Wisdom taught him who he would fruitful
land sawan, þ he atuhge of ærest þa þornas, ⁊ þa
land sow that he pull out first the thorns and the
fyrsas, ⁊ þa unnyttan weod; ⁊ hu he sæde gif hwa
furze and the useless weeds and how he said if anyone
biteres hwes onberede, þ him þuhte beobread þi swetre.
of-bitter something tasted that him seemed bee-bread the sweeter

5.1 XXIV. Hu menn willniað þurh ungelice gearnunga cuman
Twenty-four How men desire through unlike deserts to-come
to anre eadignesse.
to one blessedness

5.3 XXV. Hu God welt ealra gesceafta mid þam bridlū his
Twenty-five How God rules all creatures with the bridles of-his
anwealdes, ⁊ hu ælc gesceaft wrigað wið hire gecyndes,
power and how each creature strives toward its nature
⁊ wilnað þ hit cume þider ðonan þe hit ær com.
and desires that it come thither whence — it before came

5.6 XXVI. Hu se Wisdom sæde þ men mihton be Gode
Twenty-six How — Wisdom said that men might about God
swelce hi mæte; ⁊ hwæþer se wela mihte þone mon
as them it-dreamed and whether the wealth could the man

gedon swa weline þ he maran ne þorfte; ⁊ hwæþer
make so wealthy that he more not needed and whether
Boetie eall his woruld licode þa he gesælgost wæs.
to-Boethius all his world pleased when he happiest was
XXVII. Hu se weorðscipe mæg gedon tu ðing: ðone 5.10
Twenty-seven How the honor can make two things the
dysegan þam oðrū dysegū weorþne; ⁊ hu Nonius wæs
foolish to-the other foolish-ones worthy and how Nonius was
forcweden for þam gyldenan scridwæne; ⁊ hu ælces monnes
cursed for the golden chariot and how of-each man
yfel bið þy openre gif he anwald hæfð.
evil is the more-open if he power has
XXVIII. Be Nerone ðam casere. 5.14
Twenty-eight About Nero the emperor
XXIX. Hwæðer þæs cyninges neawest ⁊ his freondscipe 5.15
Twenty-nine Whether of-the king nearness and his friendship
mæge ænigne mon weligne ⁊ waldendne gedon; ⁊ hu þa oðre
can any man wealthy and powerful make and how the other
friend cumað mid þā welan, ⁊ eft mid þam welan gewitað.
friends come with the wealth and again with the wealth depart
XXX. Hu se scop sang þ ma manna fægnodon dysiges 5.19
Thirty How the poet sang that more of-men rejoiced of-foolish
folces gedwolan þonne hie fægnedon soþra spella, þ is
people error than they rejoiced of-true tidings that is
þ hi wendon his beteran þonne he wære; þonne fægniað
that they thought him better than he were then rejoice
hi þæs þe hi sceamian sceolde.
they in-that which they be-ashamed should
XXXI. Hu se sceal fela nearanessa geþolian þe þæs 5.23
Thirty-one How he shall many straits endure who of-the
lichoman lustas forlætan nele; ⁊ hu mon mæg ðy ilcan
body lusts forsake will-not and how one can by-the same

weorce cweþan þ netenu send gesælige, gif man cwið þ
token say that beasts are happy if one says that
þa men sen gesælige þa heora lichoman lustum fulgað.
the men are happy who of-their body lusts follow
5.27 XXXII. Hu þes anwearda wela merð þa men þe beoþ atihte
Thirty-two How this present wealth hinders the men who are drawn
to þā soðum gesælðum; ȝ hu se wisdom is an anlipe cræft
to the true felicities and how the wisdom is a single virtue
þære sawle, ȝ is þeah betera ðonne ealle þæs lichoman
of-the soul and is yet better than all of-the body
cræftas; ȝ þeah hwa gegaderie ealle þas andweardan god,
virtues and though anyone gather all these present goods
þonne ne mæg he no þe raðor beon swa welig swa he
then not can he — the sooner be so wealthy as he
wolde, ne he eft him næfð þ þæt he ær wende.
would nor he again him has that which he before thought
5.33 XXXIII. Hu se Wisdom hæfde getæht þā Mode þa
Thirty-three How — Wisdom had shown to-the Mind the
anlicnessa þara soðena sælþa; wolde hi þa selfe getæcan,
likenesses of-the true felicities would them then selves teach
ȝ be bam fif gesælðum: þ is wela ȝ anweald ȝ
and about the five felicities that is wealth and power and
weorðscipe ȝ foremærnes ȝ willa.
honor and renown and pleasure
6.1 XXXIV. Hu se Wisdom hæfde gereht hwæt þ hehste god
Thirty-four How — Wisdom had shown what the highest good
wæs; wolde him þa gereccan hwær hit wæs, ȝ hu of
was would him then show where it was and how from
þam mycelan gode cumað þa læssan.
the great good come the lesser

XXXV. Hu se Wisdom lærde þæt Mod þ hit sohte oninnan 6.4
Thirty-five How — Wisdom taught the Mind that it sought within
him þ hit ær ymbutan hit sohte, ⁊ forlæte unnytte
itself what it before outside itself sought and forsook useless
ymbhogan swa he swiðost mihte; ⁊ hu God wealt ealra
cares as he most could and how God rules all
gesceafta ⁊ eallra goda mid þā steorroðre his godnesse.
creatures and all goods with the rudder of-his goodness
XXXVI. Hu þ Mod sæde þā Wisdome þ hit ongeate 6.8
Thirty-six How the Mind said — to-Wisdom that it perceived
þ him God reahte þurh hine þæt þ he rehte; ⁊
that to-it God told through him that which he told and
forhwy se goda God læte ænig yfel beon; ⁊ hu seo
why the good God let any evil be and how —
Gesceadwisnes bæd þ Mod þ hit sæte on hire scridwæne,
Reason bade the Mind that it sat in her chariot
⁊ heo sceolde beon his ladteaw; ⁊ hu heo sæde þ tu
and she should be its guide and how she said that two
ðing wæren, willa ⁊ anweald; gif hwam þara auþres wana
things were will and power if to-anyone of-the either lacking
wære, þ heora ne mihte naðer buton oþrum nauht don.
were that of-them not could either without other aught do
XXXVII. Be þam ofermodan rican ⁊ unryhtwisan, ⁊ hu 6.15
Thirty-seven About the proud powerful-man and unrighteous and how
mon hehþ þone heafodbeah æt þæs ærneweges ende, ⁊ hu mon
one hangs the crown at of-the race-course end and how one
sceolde ælcne mon hatan be þam deore þe he gelicost wære.
should each man call by the beast which he likest were

6.18 XXXVIII. Be Troia gewinne; hu Eulixes se cyning hæfde
Thirty-eight About of-Troy war how Ulysses the king had
twa ðeoda under þam casere, ȝ hu his þegnas wurdan
two peoples under the emperor and how his thanes were
forsceapene to wildeorū.
transformed into wild-beasts

6.21 XXXIX. Be ryhtre fiounge ȝ be unrihtre, ȝ be ryhtum
Thirty-nine About right hatred and about wrong and about right
eadleane, ȝ hu mistlicu witu ȝ manigfeald earfoðu
reward and how various punishments and manifold hardships
oft cumað to þam godū swa hi to þam yfelū sceoldan;
often come to the good as they to the evil should
ȝ be þære foreteohunga Godes ȝ be þære wyrde.
and about the predestination of-God and about the fate

6.25 XL. Hu ælc wyrd beoð god, sam heo mannū god þince,
Forty How each fate is good whether it to-men good seem
sam heo him yfel þince.
or it to-them evil seem

6.27 XLI. Hu Omerus se goda sceop herede þa sunnan, ȝ
Forty-one How Homer the good poet praised the sun and
be þā freodome.
about the freedom

6.29 XLII. Hu we sceoldan eallon mægne spyrian æfter Gode,
Forty-two How we should with-all strength seek after God
ælc be his andgites mæþe.
each by of-his understanding measure

The Goths under Radagaisus and Alaric storm Rome and take all Italy, and Theodoric the Amal, a Christian of the Arian error, succeeds them. He promises the Romans their old rights, breaks his word, and has Pope John killed. Boethius, a consul learned in books, plots to restore the kingdom to righteous rulers and writes secretly to the emperor at Constantinople. Theodoric learns of it and throws him into prison, where he falls to the floor in despair and begins to weep and sing.

On ðære tide ðe Gotan of Sciððiu mægðe wið Romana 7.1
In the time when Goths from Scythia country against of-Romans
rice gewin up ahofon, ȝ mid heora cyningū, Rædgota ȝ
empire war up raised and with their kings Radagaisus and
Eallerica wæron hatne, Romane burig abræcon, ȝ eall Italia
Alaric were named Roman city stormed and all of-Italy
rice þ is betwux þam muntū ȝ Sicilia þam ealonde in
kingdom that is between the mountains and Sicily the island into
anwald gerehton, ȝ þa æfter þā foresprecenan cyningū Þeodric
power brought and then after the aforesaid kings Theodoric
feng to þam ilcan rice. Se Ðeodric wæs Amulinga; he
succeeded to the same kingdom That Theodoric was of-the-Amals he
was cristen, þeah he on þā arrianiscan gedwolan þurhwunode.
was Christian though he in the Arian error persisted
He gehet Romanū his freondscipe, swa þ hi mostan heora
He promised to-Romans his friendship so that they might of-their
ealdrihta wyrðe beon. Ac he þa gehat swiðe yfele gelæste,
old-rights worthy be But he the promises very evilly fulfilled
ȝ swiðe wraðe geendode mia manegū mane. Þ wæs to
and very grievously ended with many crimes That was in
eacan oðrū unarimedū yflū þ he Iohannes þone papan
addition-to other countless evils that he John the pope
het ofslean. Þa wæs sum consul, þ we heretoha
commanded to-slay Then was a-certain consul whom we leader

hatað, Boetius wæs gehaten; se wæs in boccræftū ⁊ on
call Boethius was named who was in book-learning and in
woruldþeawum se rihtwisesta. Se þa ongeat þa manigfealdan
worldly-ways the most-righteous He then perceived the manifold
yfel þe se cyning Ðeodric wið þā cristenandome ⁊ wið
evils which the king Theodoric against the Christendom and against
þā romaniscū witum dyde. He þa gemunde þara eðnessa
the Roman councilors did He then remembered the comforts
⁊ þara ealdrihta þe hi under þā caserū hæfdon heora
and the old-rights which they under the emperors had their
ealdhlafordū. Þa ongan he smeagan ⁊ leornigan on him
old-lords Then began he to-ponder and to-study in him
selfū hu he þ rice þā unrihtwisan cyninge aferran mihte,
self how he the kingdom from-the unrighteous king remove might
⁊ on ryhtgeleaffulra ⁊ on rihtwisra anwealde gebringan.
and into of-the-orthodox and into of-the-righteous power bring
7.19 Sende þa digellice ærendgewritu to þā kasere to
(He)-sent then secretly letters to the emperor at
Constentinopolim, þær is Creca heahburg ⁊ heora cynestol,
Constantinople where is of-Greeks chief-city and their royal-seat
forþā se kasere wæs heora ealdhlafordcynnes; bædon hine þæt
because the emperor was of-their old-lord-kin (they)-bade him that
he him to heora cristendome ⁊ to heora ealdrihtū gefultumede.
he them to their Christianity and to their old-rights helped
Þa þ ongeat se wælhreowa cyning Ðeodric, þa het he
When that perceived the cruel king Theodoric then commanded he
hine gebringan on carcerne ⁊ þærinne belucan. Þa hit ða
him to-bring into prison and therein to-lock When it then
gelomp þ se arwyrða wæs on swa micelre nearanesse becom,
happened that the honorable man in so great distress came
þa wæs he swa micle swiðor on his mode gedrefed swa his
then was he so much more in his mind troubled as his

mod ær swiðor to þā woruldsælþū gewunod wæs; ⁊ he þa
mind before more to the worldly-felicities accustomed was and he then
nanre frofre beinnan þā carcerne ne gemunde; ac he gefeoll
no comfort within the prison — remembered but he fell
niwol ofdune on þa flor, ⁊ hine astrehte swiðe unrot,
prostrate down on the floor and himself stretched very sad
⁊ ormod hine selfne ongan wepan ⁊ þus singend cwæð:
and despairing him self began to-weep and thus singing said

II · THE LAMENT OF BOETHIUS

Boethius mourns that the songs he once sang with joy he must now sing in grief, and that he can no longer find fit words. The faithless goods of the world have blinded him and left him in this dark hole, turning their backs on him just when he trusted them most. He asks why his friends ever called him happy, since no one can be happy whose happiness cannot last.

Ða lioð þe ic wrecca geo lustbærlice song ic sceal nu 8.6
The songs which I wretch formerly joyfully sang I shall now
heofiende singan, ⁊ mid swiþe ungeradū wordū gesettan,
lamenting sing and with very unapt words set
þeah ic geo hwilū gecoplice funde; ac ic nu wepende
though I formerly at-times fitly composed but I now weeping
⁊ gisciende ofgeradra worda misfo. Me ablendan þas
and sobbing of-apt words miss Me blinded these
ungetreowan woruldsælþa, ⁊ me þa forletan swa blindne
faithless worldly-felicities and me then forsook so blind
on þis dimme hol ⁊ me þa bereafodon ælcere lustbærnesse
in this dim hole and me then robbed of-every joy
þa ða ic hī æfre betst truwode; þa wendon hi me heora
then when I them ever best trusted then turned they me their

bæc to, ȝ me mid ealle from gewitan. To hwon sceoldan
back to and me with all from departed To what should
la mine friend seggan þ ic gesælig mon wære? Hu mæg se
lo my friends say that I happy man were How can he
beon gesælig se þe on þā gesælþū þurhwunian ne mot?
be happy the-one who in the felicities persist not may

III · WISDOM COMES TO THE PRISON

As Boethius finishes his song, heavenly Wisdom enters, greets his grieving mind, and says he must have forgotten the weapons Wisdom once gave him. Wisdom drives off the worldly cares, dries the Mind's eyes, and is recognized as its old foster-mother, whose teaching foolish men have torn apart. In a short song Wisdom grieves that the Mind toils in a bottomless pit of worldly cares, then promises to lead it to heaven if it will be ashamed of its error. The Mind complains that the righteous are oppressed while the wicked prosper, and turns to God in song.

8.15 Þa ic þa þis leoð, cwæð Boetius, geomriende asungen
When I then this song said Boethius mourning sung
hæfde, þa com þær gan in to me heofencund Wisdom, ȝ þ
had then came there going in to me heavenly Wisdom and the
min murnende mod mid his wordū gegrette, ȝ þus cwæð:
my mourning mind with his words greeted and thus said
Hu ne eart ðu se mon þe on minre scole wære afed ȝ
How not art thou the man who in my school wert nourished and
gelæred? Ac hwonon wurde þu mid þissū woruldsorgū þus
taught But whence becamest thou with these worldly-cares thus
swiðe geswenced? buton ic wat þ þu hæfst þara wæpna
greatly afflicted except I know that thou hast of-the weapons
to hraðe forgiten þe ic þe ær sealde. Ða clipode se
too quickly forgotten which I to-thee before gave Then called —

Wisdom ȝ cwæð: Gewitaþ nu awirgede woruldsorga of
Wisdom and said Depart now accursed worldly-cares from
mines þegenes mode, forþā ge sind þa mæstan sceaþan.
of-my servant mind because ye are the greatest harmers
Lætaþ hine eft hweorfan to minū larū. Ða eode se
Let him again turn to my teachings Then went —
Wisdō near, cwæð Boetius, minū hreowsiendū geþohte, ȝ
Wisdom nearer said Boethius to-my grieving thought and
hit swa niowul þa hwæthwega up arærde; adrigde þa
it so prostrate then somewhat up raised dried then
mines modes eagan, ȝ hit fran bliþū wordū hwæðer hit
of-my mind eyes and it asked with-blithe words whether it
oncneowe his fostermodor. Mid þā þe ða þ Mod wið his
recognized its foster-mother With that that then the Mind toward him
bewende, þa gecneow hit swiðe sweotele his agne modor;
turned then knew it very clearly its own mother
þ wæs se Wisdom ðe hit lange ær tyde ȝ lærde. Ac
that was — Wisdom who it long before trained and taught But
hit ongeat his lare swiðe totorenne ȝ swiðe tobrocene
it perceived his teaching very torn and very broken
mid dysigra hondū, ȝ hine þa fran hu þ gewurde.
with of-foolish-men hands and him then asked how that happened
Ða andwyrde se Wisdom hī ȝ sæde þ his gingran 9.4
Then answered — Wisdom him and said that his disciples
hæfdon hine swa totorenne, þær þær hi teohhodon þ hi
had him so torn there where they intended that they
hine eallne habban sceoldon; ac hi gegaderiað monifeald
him whole have should but they gather manifold
dysig on ðære fortruwunga ȝ on þā gilpe, butan heora
folly in the presumption and in the vainglory unless of-them
hwelc eft to hyre bote gecirre.
any again to its amendment turn

9.9 Đa ongan se Wisdom hreowsian for þæs Modes tydernesse,
Then began — Wisdom to-grieve for of-the Mind weakness
ȝ ongan þa giddian ȝ þus cwæð: Eala on hu grundleasum
and began then to-sing and thus said Alas in how bottomless
seaðe þ mod drigð, þōn hit bestyrmað þisse worulde
pit the mind toils when it storm-assail of-this world
ungeþwærnessa. Gif hit þōn forget his ahgen leoht, þ is ece
discords If it then forgets its own light that is eternal
gefea, ȝ ðringð on þa frēdan þistro, þ sind woruldsorga, swa
joy and presses into the alien darkness that are worldly-cares so
swa ðis Mod nu deð, nu hit nauht elles nat butan gnornunga.
as this Mind now does now it nothing else knows but sorrows
9.15 Þa se Wisdō þa ȝ seo Gesceadwisnes þis leoð asungen
When — Wisdom then and — Reason this song sung
hæfdō, þa ongan he eft sprecan ȝ cwæð to þan Mode:
had then began he again to-speak and said to the Mind
Ic geseo þ þe is nu frofres mare þearf þōn unrotnesse.
I see that to-thee is now of-comfort more need than of-sadness
9.18 Forþā gif þu þe ofsceamian wilt þines gedwolan, þōn
Therefore if thou thyself be-ashamed wilt of-thy error then
onginne ic þe sona beran ȝ bringe mid me to heofonū. Þa
begin I thee at-once to-bear and bring with me to heavens Then
andsworode him þ unrote Mod ȝ cwæð: Hwæt la hwæt,
answered him the sad Mind and said What lo what
sint þis nu þa gōd ȝ þa edlean þe þu ealne weg gehete
are these now the goods and the rewards which thou all the-way promised
þā monnū þe þe heorsumian woldan? Is þis nu se cwide
to-the men who thee obey would Is this now the saying
þe þu me geo sædest þ se wisa Plato cwæde, þ was
which thou to-me formerly saidst that the wise Plato said that was
þ nan anweald nære riht butan rihtū þeawū? Gesihst þu nu
that no power were right without right ways Seest thou now

þ þa rihtwisan sint laðe ⁊ forþrycte, forþā hi þinū willan
that the righteous are hated and oppressed because they thy will
woldan fulgân, ⁊ þa unryhtwisan seondan up ahafene þurh
would follow and the unrighteous are up lifted through
heora won dæda ⁊ þurh heora selflice? Þ hi ðy eð
their wicked deeds and through their self-love That they the more-easily
mægen heora unriht gewill forðbringan hi sind mid gifū
may their wrong desire bring-forth they are with gifts
⁊ mid gestreonū gefyrðrode. Forþā ic nu wille geornlice to
and with treasures furthered Therefore I now will diligently to
Gode cleopian. Ongan ða giddien, ⁊ þus singende cwæð:
God cry (He)-began then to-sing and thus singing said

IV · BOETHIUS PRAYS TO THE CREATOR

Boethius praises the creator who turns the heavens, rules the sun, the moon, and the stars, and orders the seasons, and whom every creature obeys except man. He asks why God lets fate turn as it does, punishing the innocent while the wicked sit on high seats and false oaths go unpunished. He begs the Lord to look mercifully on the wretched earth, since all mankind is tossed on the waves of this world.

Eala þu scippend heofones ⁊ eorþan, þu þe on þā ecan setle 10.1
O thou creator of-heaven and of-earth thou who on the eternal seat
ricsast, þu þe on hrædū færelde þone heofon ymbhweorfest,
reignest thou who in swift course the heaven turnest-about
⁊ þa tunglu þu gedest þe gehyrsume, ⁊ þa sunnan þu
and the stars thou makest to-thee obedient and the sun thou
gedest þ heo mid heore beorhtan sciman þa þeostro adwæscð
makest that it with its bright beams the darkness quenches
þære sweartan nihte. Swa deð eac se mona mid his blacan
of-the swart night So does also the moon with its pale

leohte þ þa beorhtan steorran dunniað on þā heofone, ge eac
light that the bright stars grow-dim in the heaven and also
hwilum þa sunnan heore leohtes bereafaþ, þonne he betwux
at-times the sun of-its light bereaves when it between
us ȝ hire wyrð; ge eac hwilū þone beorhtan steorran þe
us and it comes and also at-times the bright star which
we hatað morgensteorra, þone ilcan we hatað oðre naman
we call morning-star the same we call by-other name
æfensteorra. Þu þe ðam winterdagū selest scorte tida ȝ þæs
evening-star Thou who to-the winter-days givest short hours and of-the
sumeres dahū langran; þu þe þa treowu þurh þone stearcan
summer days longer thou who the trees through the strong
wind norþan ȝ eastan on hærfesttîd heora leafa bereafast,
wind from-north and from-east in harvest-time of-their leaves bereavest
ȝ eft on lencten oþru leaf sellest þurh þone smyltan
and again in spring other leaves givest through the mild
suðanwesternan wind. Hwæt, þe ealle gesceafta heorsumiað,
south-western wind Lo thee all creatures obey
ȝ þa gesetnessa binra beboda healdað, butan men anū;
and the ordinances of-thy commands keep except man alone
se þe oferheorð. Eala þu ælmihtiga scippend ȝ rihtend
he who disobeys O thou almighty creator and ruler
eallra gesceafta, help nu þinū earmum moncynne. Hwy þu
of-all creatures help now thy wretched mankind Why thou
la Drihten æfre woldest þ seo wyrd swa hwyrfan sceolde?
lo Lord ever wishedst that the fate so turn should
heo þreat þa unscildigan ȝ nauht ne ðreaþ þam scildigū.
it oppresses the innocent and not-at-all — oppresses the guilty
10.19 Sittað manfulle on heahsetlū, ȝ halige under heora fotū
Sit wicked on high-seats and holy under their feet
þrycað; sticiað gehydde beorhte cræftas, ȝ þa unrihtwisan
(they)-press lie hidden bright virtues and the unrighteous

tælað þa rihtwisan. Nauht ne deregað monnū mane aþas, ne
blame the righteous Not-at-all — harm to-men false oaths nor
þ lease lot þe beoð mid þā wrencū bewrigen. Forþā went
the false deceit which are with the tricks covered Therefore turns
nu fulneah eall moncyn on tweonunga, gif seo wyrd swa
now nearly all mankind to doubt if the fate so
hweorfan mot on yfelra manna gewill, ȝ þu heore nelt
turn may at of-evil men will and thou it wilt-not
stiran. Eala min Drihten, þu þe ealle gesceafta ofersihst,
restrain O my Lord thou who all creatures overseest
hawa nu mildelice on þas earman eorþan, ȝ eac on eall
look now mercifully on this wretched earth and also on all
moncyn, forþā hit nu eall winð on þā yðum þisse worulde.
mankind because it now all struggles on the waves of-this world

V · THE MIND'S SICKNESS

Wisdom tells the Mind that it strayed from its homeland, Wisdom's teaching, when it came to believe that fate turns the world without God. No one led it astray but its own negligence, and it should remember that it is a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem. Wisdom cannot answer until the time comes, for it is folly to sow in August heat or press wine at midwinter. The Mind still holds that God rules his own work, but cannot say what end all things seek or what it is beyond a living, rational, and mortal man. Its belief in God's governance is the spark from which its health may be kindled.

Þa þ Mod þa þillic sar cweðende wæs, ȝ þis leoð 10.28
When the Mind then such sorrow uttering was and this song
singende wæs, se Wisdom þa ȝ seo Gesceadwisnes him
singing was — Wisdom then and — Reason him
bliðum eahum on locodon; ȝ he for þæs Modes geomerunge
with-blithe eyes on looked and he for of-the Mind lamentation

næs nauht gedrefed, ac cwæð to þā Mode: Sona swa
was-not at-all troubled but said to the Mind As-soon as
ic þe ærest on þisse unrotnesse geseah þus murciende ic
I thee first in this sadness saw thus complaining I
ongeat þ þu wære ut afaren of þines fæder eðele, þ
perceived that thou wert out gone from of-thy father homeland that
is for minum larum. Þær ðu him fore of þa þu þine
is from my teachings There thou it wentest from when thou thy
fæstrædnesse forlete, ȝ wendest þ seo weord þas woruld
steadfastness forsookest and thoughtest that the fate this world
wende heore agenes ðonces buton Godes geþeahte ȝ his
turned of-its own will without of-God counsel and his
þafunge ȝ monna gewyrhtū. Ic wiste þ þu ut afaren
consent and of-men deeds I knew that thou out gone
wære, ac ic nysste hu feor, ær ðu þe self hit me
wert but I knew-not how far before thou thee thyself it to-me
gerehtest mid þinū sarcwidū. Ac þeah þu nu fyr seo ðōn
toldest with thy sorrow-sayings But though thou now farther be than
þu wære, ne eart þu þeah ealles of þā earde adrifen, ðeah
thou wert not art thou yet altogether from the country driven though
þu þæron gedwolode. Ne gebrohte þe eac nan oðer man on
thou therein erred Not brought thee also any other man into
þā gedwolan butan þe sylfum þurh þine agene gemeleste.
the error except thee self through thine own negligence
Ne sceolde þe eac nan man swelces to gelefan þær þu
Nor should thee also any man of-such to believe if thou
gemunan woldest hwylcra gebyrda þu wære ȝ hwylcra
remember wouldst of-what birth thou wert and of-what
burgwara for worulde; oððe eft gastlice hwilces geferscipes
citizens for world or again spiritually of-what fellowship
þu wære on þinū mode, ȝ on ðinre gesceadwisnesse; þ
thou wert in thy mind and in thy reason that

is þ þu eart an þara rihtwisena ȝ þara ryhtwillendra;
is that thou art one of-the righteous and of-the right-willing
þa beoð þære heofencundan Ierusalem burgware.
who are of-the heavenly Jerusalem citizens
Of ðære næfre nan, buta he self wolde, ne wearð adrifen, 11.18
From which never any unless he himself would — was driven
þ is of his godan willan; wære þer he wære, simle he
that is from his good will were where he were ever he
hæfde þone mid him; þōn he ðone mid him hæfde, wære þær
had it with him when he it with him had were where
he wære, þōn wære he mid his agnū cynne ȝ mid his agnū
he were then were he with his own kin and with his own
burgwarū on his agnū earde þōn he wæs on ðara ryhtwisena
citizens in his own country when he was in of-the righteous
gemanan. Swa hwa þōn swa þæs wyrðe bið þ he on heora
fellowship So who then so of-that worthy is that he in their
þeowdome beon mot, þōn bið he on ðam hehstan freodome.
service be may then is he in the highest freedom
Ne onscunige ic no þæs neoþeran ȝ þæs unclænan stowe gif
Not shun I — of-the lower and of-the unclean place if
ic þe geradne gemete; ne me na ne lyst mid glase geworhtra
I thee wise find nor to-me — — it-pleases with glass wrought
waga ne heahsetla mid golde ȝ mid gimmū gerenodra, ne
of-walls nor of-high-seats with gold and with gems adorned nor
boca mid golde awritenra me swa swiðe ne lyst swa me
of-books with gold written to-me so much — it-pleases as to-me
lyst on þe rihtes willan. Ne sece ic no her þa bec, ac
it-pleases in thee of-right will Not seek I — here the books but
þ ðæt þa bec forstent, ðæt is, þin gewit. Swiðe rihte
that which the books avails that is thy understanding Very rightly
þu seofodest þa wôon wyrd ægþer ge on ðara unrihtwisra
thou lamentedst the perverse fate each both in of-the unrighteous

anwalda heanesse ge on minre unweorþnesse ⁊ forsewennesse
rulers exaltation and in my dishonor and contempt
ge on þara manfulra forðforlætnesse on ðas weoruldspeda.
and in of-the wicked license in these worldly-goods
12.3 Ac forþon þe þe is swa micel unrotnes nu get getenge
But because that to-thee is so great sadness now still pressing
ge of þinum irre ge of þinre gnornunga, ic þe ne mæg
both from thy anger and from thy sorrow I thee not can
nu giet geandwyrdan ærþon ðæs tiid wyrð; forðon eall þ
now yet answer before of-it time comes because all that
mon untiidlice ongynð næfð hit no æltæwne ende.
one untimely begins has-not it — perfect end
12.7 Þonne ðære sunnan scima on Agustes monðe hatost scinð
When of-the sun beam in of-August month hottest shines
ðonne dysegað se ðe þonne wile hwelc sæd oðfæstan þæm
then acts-foolishly he who then will any seed entrust to-the
drygū furum. Swa deð eac se ðe wintregum wederum wile
dry furrows So does also he who in-wintry weathers will
blostman secan. Ne meaht þu win wringan on midewinter,
blossoms seek Not canst thou wine wring in midwinter
þeah ðe wel lyste wearmes mustes.
though to-thee much it-please of-warm new-wine
12.12 Ða clipode se Wisdom ⁊ cwæð: Mot ic nu cunnian hwon
Then called — Wisdom and said May I now test a-little
þinre fæstrædnesse, þ ic þonan ongietan mæge hwonon ic þin
of-thy steadfastness that I thence perceive may whence I thee
tilian scyle ⁊ hu? Ða andwyrde þ Mod ⁊ cwæð: Cunna
cure should and how Then answered the Mind and said Test
swa þu wille. Ða cwæð seo Sceadwisnes: Gelefst ðu þ sio
as thou wilt Then said — Reason Believest thou that the
wyrd wealde þisse worulde, oððe auht godes swa geweorðan
fate rules this world or aught of-good so come-about

mæge butan þæm wyrhtan? Đa andwyrde þ Mod ȝ cwæð:
may without the maker Then answered the Mind and said
Ne gelyfe ic no þ hit geweorþan meahte swa endebyrdlice,
Not believe I — that it come-about might so orderly
ac to soðum ic wat ðætte God rihtere is his agenes weorces,
but for truth I know that God ruler is of-his own work
ȝ ic no ne wearð of þam soðan geleafan. Đa andwyrde se
and I not — went from the true faith Then answered —
Wisdom eft ȝ cwæð: Ymb þ ilce þu giddodest nu hwene
Wisdom again and said About the same thou sangest now a-little
ær ȝ cwæde þ ælc wuht from Gode wisse his rihttiman ȝ
before and saidst that each creature from God knew its right-time and
his rihtgesetnesse fuleode, butan men anum. Forðǣ ic wundrige
its right-ordinance followed except man alone Therefore I wonder
swiðe ungemetlice hwæt þe sy oððe hwæt þu mæne nu
very immoderately what to-thee be or what thou lament now
þu ðone geleafan hæfst. Ac wit sculon þeah giet dioplicor
thou the faith hast But we-two shall however yet more-deeply
ymb ðæt bion. Ic nat ful geare ymb hwæt þu giet tweost;
about that be I not-know full well about what thou still doubtest
gesege me, nu þu cwist þ ðu noht ne tweoge þte God
tell to-me now thou sayest that thou not-at-all — doubt that God
þisse worulde rihtwisige, hu he þonne wolde þ heo wære.
this world directs how he then wished that it were
Đa andwyrde þ Mod ȝ cwæþ: Uneaþe ic mæg forstandan 12.29
Then answered the Mind and said Hardly I can understand
þine acsunga, ȝ cwyst þeah þ ic þe andwyrdan scyle. Se
thy questions and sayest yet that I thee answer should —
Wisdom þa cwæð: Wenstu þ ic nyte þone dem þinre
Wisdom then said Thinkest-thou that I know-not the harm of-thy
gedræfednesse þe þu mid ymbfangen eart? ac sæge me
trouble which thou with encompassed art but tell me

hwelces endes ælc angin wilnige. Ða andwirde ðæt Mod ⁊
of-what end each beginning desire Then answered the Mind and
cwæð: Ic hit gemunde gio, ac me hæfð þios gnornung ðære
said I it remembered formerly but me has this sorrow of-the
gemynde benumen. Ða cwæð se Wisdom: Wast þu hwonan
memory bereft Then said — Wisdom Knowest thou whence
ælc wuht cume? Ða andwyrde þ Mod ⁊ cwæð: Ic wat
each creature come Then answered the Mind and said I know
þ ælc wuht from Gode com. Ða cwæð se Wisdom: Hu
that each creature from God came Then said — Wisdom How
mæg þæt bion, nu þu ðæt angin wast, þæt ðu eac ðone
can that be now thou the beginning knowest that thou also the
ende nyte; forðæm sio gedrefednes mæg þ mod onstyrian,
end know-not because the trouble can the mind stir
ac hio hit ne mæg his gewittes bereafian. Ac ic wolde
but it it not can of-its wits bereave But I wished
þæt þu me sædest hwæþer ðu wisse hwæt þu self wære.
that thou to-me saidst whether thou knewest what thou thyself wert
Hit þa andwyrde ⁊ cwæð: Ic wat þ ic on libbendum
It then answered and said I know that I in living
men ⁊ on gesceadwisum eom ⁊ þeah on deadlicum. Ða
man and in rational am and yet in mortal Then
andwyrde se Wisdom ⁊ cwæð: Wastu auht oþres bi
answered — Wisdom and said Knowest-thou aught else about
þe selfum to secganne buton þ þu nu sædest?
thee self to say except what thou now saidst
13.15 Ða cwæð þ Mod: Nat ic nauht oðres. Ða cwæð se
Then said the Mind Not-know I at-all else Then said —
Wisdom: Nu ic hæbbe ongiten þine ormodnesse, nu ðu self
Wisdom Now I have perceived thy despair now thou thyself
nast hwæt þu self eart, ac ic wat hu þin man tilian
not-knowest what thou thyself art but I know how thee one cure

sceal. Forþam þu sædest þ þu wræccea wære ⁊ bereafod
shall Therefore thou saidst that thou exile wert and bereft
ælces godes forðon þu nestes hwæt þu wære. Þa þu
of-every good because thou knewest-not what thou wert Then thou
cyddest þ ðu nystes hwelces endes ælc angin wilnode, þa
showedst that thou knewest-not of-what end each beginning desired when
ðu wendest ðætte stiorlease men ⁊ recelease wæren gesælie
thou thoughtest that ungoverned men and reckless were happy
⁊ wealdendas þisse worulde; ⁊ ðær þu cyddest eac þ þu
and rulers of-this world and there thou showedst also that thou
nystes mid hwelcere gerece God wilt ðisse worulde, oðþe
knewest-not with what governance God rules this world or
hu he wolde þ hio wære, þa ðu sædest þ ðu wende þ
how he wished that it were when thou saidst that thou thoughtest that
þios sliðne wyrd ðas woruld wende buton Godes geþeahte.
this cruel fate this world turned without of-God counsel
Eac þ wæs swiðe micel pleoh þ ðu swa wenan sceoldes;
Also that was very great peril that thou so think shouldst
næs hit no þ an þ þu on ungemetlicum ungesælðum
Was-not it — that alone that thou in immoderate misfortunes
wære, ac eac þ þu fulneah mid ealle forwurde. Ðonca
wert but also that thou nearly with all perished Thank
nu Gode þ he ðe gefultumade þ ic þin gewit mid
now God that he thee helped that I thy understanding with
ealle ne forlet. We habbað nu giet þone mæstan dæl þære
all not forsook We have now still the greatest part of-the
tyndran þinre hæle, nu ðu geliefæst þ sio wyrd þurh hie
tinder of-thy health now thou believest that the fate through it
selfe butan Godes geþeahte þas weoruld wendan ne mæge.
self without of-God counsel this world turn not can

13.32 Nu ðu ne þearft þe nauht ondrædan, forðæmþe of ðæm
Now thou not needest for-thyself at-all dread because from the
lytlan spearcan þe þu mid ðære tyndran gefenge lifes leoht
little spark which thou with the tinder caughtest of-life light
þe onlyhte. Ac hit nis giet se tima þ ic þe healicor mæge
thee enlightened But it not-is yet the time that I thee more-highly may
onbryrdan, forðæm hit is ælces modes wise þte sona swa
inspire because it is of-each mind way that as-soon as
hit forlæt soðcwidas, swa folgaþ hit leasspellunga. Of ðæm
it forsakes true-sayings so follows it false-tales From that
ðonne onginnað weaxan þa mistas ðe þ mod gedrefað, ⁊
then begin to-grow the mists which the mind trouble and
mid ealle fordwilmað ða soðan gesihðe swelce mistas swelce
with all confound the true sight such mists as
nu on þinum mode sindon. Ac ic hi sceal æræst geþinnian,
now in thy mind are But I them shall first thin
þ ic siððan ðy eð mæge þ soþe leoht on þe gebringan.
that I afterward the more-easily may the true light into thee bring

VI · CLOUDS, STORM, AND STONE

Wisdom compares the troubled mind to stars hidden behind dark clouds, to a clear sea stirred by the south wind, and to a brook turned from its course by a fallen stone. To see the true light, a man must put away both the joys and the fears of this world, neither growing proud in prosperity nor despairing in adversity, since either one binds the mind.

14.9 Loca nu be þære sunnan ⁊ eac be oðrū tunglū; þōn
Look now at the sun and also at other stars when
sweartan wolcnu him beforan gað ne mahon hi þōn
swart clouds them before go not can they then

heora leoht sellan. Swa eac se suðerna wind hwilū mid
their light give So also the southern wind at-times with
miclum storme gedrefeð þa sæ þe ær wæs smylte wedere
great storm troubles the sea which before was in-calm weather
glæshlutru on to seonne. Þōn heo þōn swa gemenged
glass-clear on to see When it then so stirred
wyrð mid ðan yþum, þōn wyrð heo swiðe hraðe ungladu,
becomes with the waves then becomes it very quickly dull
þeah heo ær gladu wære on to locienne. Hwæt, eac se
though it before bright were on to look Lo also the
broc, þeah he swife of his rihtryne, ðōn þær micel stan
brook though it wander from its right-course when there great stone
wealwiende of þā heohan munte oninnan fealð ȝ hine
rolling from the high mountain into falls and it
todælð ȝ hī his rihtrynes wiðstent. Swa doð nu ða þeostro
divides and it of-its right-course withstands So do now the darknesses
þinre gedrefed nesse wiðstandan minū leohtū larū. Ac gif
of-thy trouble — withstand my light teachings But if
ðu wilnige on rihtū geleafan þ soðe leoht oncnawan, afyr
thou desire in right faith the true light to-know remove
frā þe ða yfelan sælþa ȝ þa unnettan, ȝ eac ða unnettan
from thee the evil felicities and the vain and also the vain
ungesælþa ȝ þone yflan ege þisse worulde, þ is þæt þu
misfortunes and the evil fear of-this world that is that thou
þe ne anhebbe on ofermetto on þinre gesundfulnesse ȝ on
thyself not lift-up in pride in thy prosperity and in
ðinre orsorgnesse, ne eft þe ne geortrywe nanes godes on
thy security nor again thyself — despair of-any good in
nanre wiðerweardnesse. Forðam þ mod siemle bið gebunden
any adversity Because the mind ever is bound
mid gedrefednesse, þær þissa twega yfela auðer ricsað.
with trouble where of-these two evils either reigns

Wisdom says the Mind grieves for lost worldly goods, though their nature is to flatter and then desert, and no one who serves them can complain when they change. Those goods were only lent. True wealth and honor are Wisdom's own servants, and the heavens, the year, and the sea keep their ways while men's avarice has robbed Wisdom alone of its ways and its name. Wisdom once saved Croesus from the fire. Riches as many as the grains of sand cannot satisfy a miser, and the goods themselves accuse the Mind of deceiving them.

14.26 Đa geswigode se Wisdom ane lytle hwile oð þ he ongeat
Then was-silent — Wisdom a little while until that he perceived
þæs Modes ingeþoncas. Đa he hi þa ongieten hæfde, þa
of-the Mind thoughts When he them then perceived had then
cwæð he: Gif ic þine unrotnesse on riht ongieten hæbbe,
said he If I thy sadness in right perceived have
þonne nis þe noht swiðor þonne ðæt þ þu forloren
then not-is to-thee at-all more than that that thou lost
hæfst þa woruldsælða þe þu ær hæfdest, ⁊ geomrast
hast the worldly-felicities which thou before hadst and mournest
nu forðæm þe hio onhwyrfed is. Ic ongiete genoh sweotule
now because that it changed is I perceive enough clearly
þ þa woruldsælða mid swiðe monigre swetnesse swiðe
that the worldly-felicities with very much sweetness very
lytelice oleccað þæm modū ða hie on last willað swiþost
craftily flatter the minds which they at last will most
beswican; ⁊ þonne æt nihstan, þonne hy læst wenað, hi
deceive and then at last when they least expect them
on ormodnesse forlætað on þæm mæstan sare. Gif þu nu
in despair abandon in the greatest sorrow If thou now
witan wilt hwonan hi cumað, þonne meaht þu ongietan þ
know wilt whence they come then canst thou perceive that

hi cumað of woruldgidsunga. Gif þu þonne heora þeawas
they come from worldly-avarice If thou then their ways
witan wilt, þonne meaht þu ongietan þ hie ne beoð nanū
know wilt then canst thou perceive that they not are to-any
men getreowe. Be þæm þu meaht ongietan ðæt þu þær nane
man faithful By that thou canst perceive that thou there no
myrhðe on næfdest ða þa þu hie hæfdest, ne eft nane
mirth in hadst then when thou them hadst nor again any
ne forlure þa ða þu hi forlure. Ic wende þ ic þe geo
— lostest then when thou them lostest I thought that I thee formerly
gelæred hæfde þ þu hi oncnawan cuðe, ȝ ic wisse þ þu
taught had that thou them know couldst and I knew that thou
hi onscunedest ða ða þu hi hæfdest, ðeah þu hiora bruce.
them shunnedst then when thou them hadst though thou them enjoyedst
Ic wisse þæt ðu mine cwidas wið hiora willan oft 15.15
I knew that thou my sayings against their will often
sædest, ac ic wat þ nan gewuna ne mæg nanum men
saidst but I know that no habit — can to-any man
bion onwended þ þ mod ne sy be sumū dæle onstyred.
be changed that the mind not be by some part stirred
Forðæm þu eart eac nu of þinre stilnesse ahworfen.
Therefore thou art also now from thy calm turned
Eala Mod, hwæt bewearp þe on ðas care ȝ on þas 15.20
O Mind what cast thee into this care and into this
gnornunga? Wenst þu þ hit hwæt niwes sie oþþe hwæthwugu
sorrow Thinkest thou that it aught of-new be or something
ungewunelices þ þe on becumen is, swelce oþrum monnū
of-unaccustomed that thee upon come is as-if to-other men
ær þ ilce ne eglede? Gif þu þonne wenst þ hit on þe
before the same not ailed If thou then thinkest that it on thee
gelong sie þ ða woruldsælða on ðe swa onwenda sint,
dependent be that the worldly-felicities toward thee so changed are

þonne eart ðu on gedwolan, ac swylce hiora þeawas sint; hi
then art thou in error but such their ways are they
beheoldon on ðe hiora agen gecynd, ⁊ on hiora wandlunga
kept toward thee their own nature and in their changing
hy gecyðdon hiora unfæstrædnesse. Swylce hi wæron rihte ða
they showed their unsteadfastness Such they were exactly when
hi ðe mæst geolectan swilce hi nu sindon, þeah ðe hi ðe
they thee most flattered such they now are though that they thee
liolcen on þa leasan sælða. Nu ðu hæfst ongiten ða wanclan
enticed into the false felicities Now thou hast perceived the fickle
truwa þæs blindan lustes. Þa triowa þe þe nu sindon
faith of-the blind pleasure The faith which to-thee now are
opene hi sindon git mid manegū oðrū behelede. Nu þu wast
open they are still from many others concealed Now thou knowest
hwelce þeawas þa woruldsælða habbað ⁊ hu hi hwearfiað. Gif
what ways the worldly-felicities have and how they turn If
þu þōn heora þegen beon wilt ⁊ þe heora þeawas liciað,
thou then their servant be wilt and to-thee their ways please
to hwon myrnst þu swa swiðe? Hwi ne hwearfost þu eac mid
to what mournest thou so much Why not turnest thou also with
him? Gif þu þonne heora untriowa onscunige, oferhoga hi
them If thou then their faithlessness shun despise them
þonne ⁊ adrif hi frā þe; hi spanað þe to þinre unðearefe.
then and drive them from thee they entice thee to thy harm
16.7 Ða ilcan þe þe gedydon nu þas gnornunga forðæm þe þu
The same which to-thee made now this sorrow because that thou
hi hæfdest, þa ilcan þe wæren on stilnesse gif þu hi na
them hadst the same to-thee would-be in peace if thou them never
ne underfenge. Ða ilcan þe habbað nu heora agnes ðonces
— receivedst The same thee have now of-their own will
forlæten, nales ðines, ða ðe næfre nanne mon buton sorge
forsaken not-at-all of-thine those which never any man without sorrow

ne forlætað. Þyncað þe nu swiðe diore ȝ swiðe leofe ða
— forsake Seem to-thee now very dear and very beloved the
ðing ða ðe nawðer ne sint ne getrewe to habbanne, ne eac
things which — neither — are — faithful to have nor also
ieðe to forlætanne? ac ðonne hi hwæm frō hweorfende bioð he
easy to forsake but when they anyone from turning are he
hi sceal mid ðæm mæstan sare his modes forlætan? Nu ðu
them shall with the greatest sorrow of-his mind forsake Now thou
hi ðonne æfter þinum willan þe getrewe habban ne meaht,
them then after thy will to-thee faithful have not canst
ȝ hy þe willað on murcunga gebringan þōn hie þe fram
and they thee will into complaint bring when they thee from
hweorfað, to hwæm cumað hi þōn elles butan to tacnunge
turn to what come they then else but to token
sorges ȝ anfealdes sares? Ne sindon þa woruldsælþa ana ymb
of-sorrow and of-unmixed pain Not are the worldly-felicities alone about
to þencenne þe mon þōn hæfð, ac ælc gleaw mod behealt
to think which one then has but each wise mind beholds
hwelcne ende hi habbað, ȝ hit gewarenað ægðer ge wið
what end they have and itself guards each both against
heora þreaunga ge wið olecunga. Ac gif þu wilt beon heora
their threats and against flatteries But if thou wilt be their
þegn þonne scealt þu georne geðolian gehwæt þæs þe to
servant then shalt thou eagerly endure everything of-that which to
heora þenungū ȝ to hiora þeawū ȝ to heora willan belīpet.
their service and to their ways and to their will belongs
Gif þu þōn wilnast þ hi for þinū ðingū oþre ðeawas nimen 16.24
If thou then desirest that they for thy sake other ways take
oðer hiora willa ȝ heora gewuna is, hu ne unweorþast
than their will and their habit is how not dishonorest
þu þōn ðe selfne, þ ðu winsð wið þā hlafordscipe þe
thou then thee self that thou strivest against the lordship which

ðu self gecure, ⁊ swaðeah ne meaht hiora sidu ⁊ hiora
thou thyself chosest and yet not canst their custom and their
gecynd onwendan. Hwæt, þu wast gif þu þines scipes segl
nature change Lo thou knowest if thou of-thy ship sail
ongean þone wind tobrædest, þ þu þonne lætæst eall eower
against the wind spreadest that thou then leavest all your
færeld to ðæs windes dome. Swa eac gif þu þe selfne to
course to of-the wind judgment So also if thou thee self to
anwalde þæm woruldsælðum gesealdest hit is riht þæt þu
power to-the worldly-felicities gavest it is right that thou
eac hiora þeawū fulgonge. Wenst þu þ ðu þ hwerfende
also their ways follow Thinkest thou that thou the turning
hweol þonne hit on ryne wyrð mæge oncerran? Ne miht
wheel when it in running becomes can turn-back Not canst
þu þon ma þara woruldsælða hwearfunga onwendan.
thou the more of-the worldly-felicities turnings change

17.3 Ic wolde nu giet ðæt wit ma spræcen emb ða woruldsælða.
I wished now yet that we-two more spoke about the worldly-felicities
To hwæm ætwite ðu me ær þ þu hi for minum ðingū
For what reproachedst thou me before that thou them for my sake
forlure? Hwi murcnast ðu wið min, swelce þu for minū
lostest Why complainest thou against me as-if thou for my
ðingū sie ðines agnes benumen, ægþer ge þinra welona ge
sake be of-thine own deprived each both of-thy riches and
þines weorþscipes? ægþer þara þe com ær from me þa hi
of-thy honor each of-those which came before from me when they
þe onlænde wæron. Ute nu tellan beforan swilcum deman
to-thee lent were Let-us now plead before such judge
swilce þu wille; gif ðu geseþan miht þ ænig deaðlic man
as thou wilt if thou prove canst that any mortal man
swelces hwæt agnes ahte, ic hit þe eft eal agife þ þu
of-such aught own owned I it to-thee back all will-give that thou

gereccan miht þ þines agnes wære. Dysine ȝ ungelæredne
prove canst that of-thine own were Foolish and untaught
ic þe underfeng þa þu ærest to monnū become, ȝ þa þe
I thee received when thou first to men camest and then thee
getydde ȝ gelærde, ȝ þe þa snyttro on gebrohte, þe þu
trained and taught and to-thee the sagacity in brought which thou
þa woruldare mid begeate, þe þu nu sorgiende anforlete. Þu
the worldly-honor with gottest which thou now sorrowing forsookest Thou
meaht þæs habban þanc þæt þu minra gifa wel bruce. Ne
canst of-this have thanks that thou of-my gifts well enjoyedst Not
miht þu no gereccan þ þu þines auht forlure. Hwæt siofast
canst thou — prove that thou of-thine aught lostest What lamentest
þu wið me? Habbe ic þe awer benumen þinra gifena þara
thou against me Have I thee anywhere deprived of-thy gifts of-those
ðe from me comon? Ælc soþ wela ȝ soþ weorþscipe sindan
which from me came Each true wealth and true honor are
mine agne þeowas, ȝ swa hwær swa ic beo hie bioð mid me.
my own servants and so where so I be they are with me
Wite þu for soð, gif þ þine agne welan wæron þe þu 17.20
Know thou for truth if that thine own riches were which thou
mændest þ þu forlure, ne meahtest þu hi na forleosan.
bewailedst that thou lostest not couldst thou them — lose
Eala, hu yfele me doð mænige weoruldmenn mid þǣ þ ic
Alas how evilly to-me do many worldly-men with that that I
ne mot wealdan minra agenra þeawa. Se heofen mot brengan
not may wield of-my own ways The heaven may bring
leohte dagas ȝ eft þ leoht mid þeostrum behelian; þ gear
light days and again the light with darkness cover the year
mot brengan blostman ȝ þy ilcan geare eft geniman; seo
may bring blossoms and in-the same year again take the
sæ mot brucan smyltra yþa, ȝ ealle gesceafta motan hiora
sea may enjoy of-calm waves and all creatures may their

gewunan ⁊ heora willan bewitigan, butan me anum. Ic
custom and their will observe except me alone I
ana eom benumen minra þeawa ⁊ eom getogen to fremdū
alone am deprived of-my ways and am drawn to strange
þeawū þurh þa ungefylledan gitsunge woruldmonna. Þurh
ways through the unfilled avarice of-worldly-men Through
ða gidsunga hi me habbað benumen mines naman þe ic
the avarice they me have deprived of-my name which I
mid rihte habban sceolde. Þone naman ic scolde mid rihte
with right have should The name I should with right
habban þ ic wære wela ⁊ weorðscipe, ac hy hine habbað
have that I were wealth and honor but they it have
on me genumen, ⁊ hi me habbað gesealdne hiora wlencū
from me taken and they me have given to-their pride
⁊ getehhod to heora leasū welū, þ ic ne mot mid minum
and assigned to their false riches that I not may with my
ðeowum minra þenunga fulgangan swa ealla oþra gesceafta
servants of-my services perform as all other creatures
moton. Ða mine þeowas sindon wisdomas ⁊ cræftas ⁊ soðe
may The my servants are wisdoms and virtues and true
welan; mid þæm þeowum wæs on symbel min plega; mid
riches With the servants was for ever my sport with
þæm þeowū ic eom ealne þone hefon ymbhweorfende, ⁊
the servants I am all the heaven encircling and
þa niðemystan ic gebringe æt þæm hehstan, ⁊ þa hehstan
the lowest I bring to the highest and the highest
æt ðæm niðemæstan; ðæt is þ ic gebringe eadmodnesse
to the lowest that is that I bring humility
on heofonum, ⁊ ða hefonlican god æt þæm eaðmodū.
to heavens and the heavenly goods to the humble

Ac þonne ic up gefere mid minum þeowū þonne forseo we 18.11
But when I up go with my servants then despise we
þas styrmendan woruld swa se earn ðonne he up gewit bufan
this stormy world as the eagle when he up goes above
ða wolcnu styrmendū wedrū, þ him þa stormas derigan ne
the clouds in-stormy weathers that him the storms harm not
mægen. Swa ic wolde, la Mod, þ þu þe fore up to us gif
may So I wished lo Mind that thou thyself go up to us if
þe lyste, on þa gerad þ þu eft mid us þa eorðan secan
to-thee it-please on the condition that thou again with us the earth seek
wille for godra manna þearfe. Hu ne wastu mine þeawas,
wilt for of-good men need How not knowest-thou my ways
hu georne ic symle wæs ymbe godra manna þearfe? Wast þu
how eagerly I ever was about of-good men need Knowest thou
hu ic gewand ymb Croeses þearfe Creca cyninges, þa þa
how I turned about of-Croesus need of-Greeks king then when
hine Cirus Pærsa cyning gefangen hæfde ⁊ hine forbærnan
him Cyrus of-Persians king captured had and him burn
wolde? Ða hine mon on þæt fyr wearp þa alysde ic hine
would When him one into the fire threw then released I him
mid heofonlicon rene. Ac þu ðe fortruwudest for þinre
with heavenly rain But thou thyself presumedst for thy
rihtwisnesse ⁊ for þinum godan willan; wendest þæt þe
righteousness and for thy good will thoughtest that thee
nanwuht unrihtlices on becuman ne meahte, swelce þu wolde
nothing of-unrighteous upon come — could as-if thou wouldst
þa lean eal þinra godena weorca on þisse weoruld habban.
the reward all of-thy good works in this world have
Hu meahtest þu sittan on middū gemænū rice þ ðu ne
How couldst thou sit in midst common kingdom that thou not

sceolde þ ilce geþolian þ oðre men? Hu meahtes þu bion
should the same endure as other men How couldst thou be
on midre þisse hwearfunga þ ðu eac mid ne hwearfode?
in midst of-this changing that thou also with not turned
18.28 Hwæt singað þa leoðwyrhtan oðres be ðisse woruld buton
What sing the poets else about this world but
mislica hwearfunga þisse worulde? Hwæt is þe ðonne þ
various changes of-this world What is to-thee then that
þu þærmid ne hwearfie? Hwæt recstu hu ge hwearfigen
thou therewith not turn What reckest-thou how ye turn
nu ic siemle mid þe beo? ðe wæs þios hwearfung betere
now I ever with thee be to-thee was this change better
forðæm þ ðe ðissa woruldsælða to wel ne lyste, ȝ
so that to-thee of-these worldly-felicities too well not it-pleased and
þæt ðu þe eac betre na gelefde.
that thou thyself also better not believed
19.1 ðeah þǣ feohgitsere cume swa fela welena swa þara
Though to-the money-miser come so many riches as of-the
sondcorna bið be þisum sæclifum oþþe þara steorrena ðe
sand-grains is by these sea-cliffs or of-the stars which
þiostrū nihtum scinað, ne forlæt he þeah no ða seofunga þ
in-dark nights shine not forsakes he yet — the lamentings that
he ne seofige his ermða. Þeah nu God gefylle þara weligra
he — lament of-his miseries Though now God fill of-the wealthy
monna willan ge mid golde ge mid seolfre ge mid eallū
men will both with gold and with silver and with all
deorwyrðnessum, swaðeah him ne beoð se ðurst gefylled
precious-things yet to-them not is the thirst filled
hiora gitsunga, ac sio grundlease swelgend hæfð swiðe mænegu
of-their avarice but the bottomless gulf has very many

westu holu on to gadrianne. Hwa mæg þæm wedendan gietsere
empty holes in to gather Who can to-the raging miser
genoh forgifan? Swa him mon mare selð, swa hine ma lyst.
enough give So to-him one more gives so him more it-pleases
Hu wilt þu nu andwyrdan þæm woruldsælðū gif hi cweðað 19.11
How wilt thou now answer the worldly-felicities if they say
to þe: Hwæt witst þu, la Mod, us? Hwi yrsast þu wið us?
to thee What blamest thou lo Mind us Why ragest thou against us
On hwæm abulgon we þe? Hwæt, þe ongan lystan ure,
In what offended we thee Lo to-thee began it-to-please of-us
nales us þin; þu settest us on þ setl ðines sceoppendes
not-at-all us of-thee thou settest us on the seat of-thy creator
þa ðu wilnodest to us þæs godes ðe ðu to him sceoldes.
when thou desiredst from us of-the good which thou from him shouldst
Þu cwist ðæt we hæbban þe beswicenne, ac we magan
Thou sayest that we have thee deceived but we can
cweþan ma þæt þu hæbbe us beswicene, nu us ðurh þine
say rather that thou have us deceived now us through thy
lust ⁊ þurh þine gitsunga onscunian sceal ealra gesceafta
lust and through thy avarice shun shall of-all creatures
sceppend. Nu þu eart scyldigra þonne we, ægþer ge for þinū
creator Now thou art guiltier than we each both for thy
agnū unrihtlustum ge eac forðæmþe we ne moton for ðe
own wrong-lusts and also because we not may for thee
fulgan ures sceppendes willan; forðæmðe he ure ðe onlænde
follow of-our creator will because he us to-thee lent
æfter his bebodū to brucanne, nallas þinre unrihtgitsunga
after his commandments to enjoy not-at-all of-thy wrong-avarice
gewill to fulfremmanne. Andwyrde unc nu, cwæð se
desire to fulfill Answer us-two now said —
Wisdom, swa swa þu wille; wit geanbidiað þinre ondswore.
Wisdom so as thou wilt we-two await thy answer

The Mind confesses its guilt but says it is too weighed down by sorrow to answer. Wisdom urges it to be ashamed rather than despair, and to recall the honors and joys it has enjoyed since birth, for Wisdom took it young, taught it, and furthered it until it was chosen as a judge. If worldly joys have passed, so will its sorrows, for nothing in a human mind is steadfast, and even what endures a while death takes away. Wisdom asks whether it is better to despise such goods freely or to wait until they leave.

19.26 Ða cwæð þ Mod: Ic me ongite æghwonan scyldigne, ac ic
Then said the Mind I myself perceive everywhere guilty but I
eom mid þæs laðes sare swa swiðe ofðrycced þæt ic inc
am with of-the harm sorrow so greatly oppressed that I you-two
geandwyrdan ne mæg. Þa cwæð se Wisdom eft: Þ is nu
answer not can Then said — Wisdom again That is now
giet þinre unrihtwisnesse þ ðu eart fulneah forþoht. Ac ic
yet of-thy unrighteousness that thou art nearly despairing But I
nolde þ þu þe forþohte, ac ic wolde þ ðe sceamode
wished-not that thou thyself despaired but I wished that thee it-shamed
swelces gedwolan; forðæm se se ðe hine forþencð se bið
of-such error because he the-one who himself despairs he is
ormod, ac se se ðe hine sceamað se bið on hreowsunga.
hopeless but he the-one who him it-shames he is in repentance
Gif þu nu gemunan wilt ealra ðara arwyrðnessa þe ðu for
If thou now remember wilt all the honors which thou for
þisse weorulde hæfdest siððan ðu ærest geboren wære oð
this world hadst since thou first born wert until
ðisne dæg: gif þu nu atelan wilt ealle þa bliþnessa wið þā
this day if thou now count wilt all the joys against the
unrotnessū, ne meaht ðu fuleaþe cweðan þ þu earm sie
sadnesses not canst thou full-easily say that thou wretched be

ȝ ungesælig; forþam ic ðe geongne underfeng untydne ȝ
and unhappy because I thee young received untrained and
unlæredne, ȝ me to bearne genom, ȝ to minum tyhtū
untaught and to-me as child took and to my disciplines
getyde. Hwa mæg þonne auht oðres cweðan butan þ þu
trained Who can then aught else say but that thou
wære se gesælgesta, þa þu me wære ær leof þōnne cuþ,
wert the happiest when thou to-me wert sooner dear than known
ȝ ær þon þa ðu cuðe minne tyht ȝ mine þeawas,
and before that when thou knewest my discipline and my ways
ȝ ic þe giongne gelærde swylce snytro swelc manegum
and I thee young taught such sagacity as from-many
oðrum eldran gewittum oftogen is, ȝ ic þe gefyrðrede
other older wits withheld is and I thee furthered
mid minum larum to ðon þ þe mon to domere geceas?
with my teachings to that that thee one as judge chose
Gif þu nu forðæm cwist þ þu gesælig ne sie þe þu 20.13
If thou now therefore sayest that thou happy not be because thou
nu næfst ða hwilendlican awyrðnessa ȝ ða bliþnessa þe
now hast-not the transitory honors and the joys which
þu ær hæfdest, þonne neart ðu þeah ungesælig, forðæmðe
thou before hadst then not-art thou yet unhappy because
þa unrotnessa þe þu nu on eart swa ilce ofergað swa ðu
the sadnesses which thou now in art so same pass-away as thou
cwist ðæt þa blissa ær dydon. Wenstu nu þ þe anum
sayest that the joys before did Thinkest-thou now that to-thee alone
þellecu hwearfung ȝ þillecu unrotnes on become ȝ nanū
such change and such sadness upon came and to-no
oðrū mode swelc ne on become, ne ær þe ne æfter þe?
other mind such — upon came either before thee or after thee
Oþþe wenst þu þte on ænegū menniscū mode mæge auht
Or thinkest thou that in any human mind can aught

fæstrædlices bion buton hwearfunga? Oððe gif hit on ænegum
of-steadfast be without changes Or if it in any
ænige hwile fæstlice wunað, se deaþ hit huru aferreð þ hit
any while firmly dwells the death it at-least removes that it
bion ne mæg þær hit ær wæs. Hwæt syndon ða woruldsælða
be not can where it before was What are the worldly-felicities
oðres buton deaðes tacnung? Forþam se deað ne cymð to nanū
else but of-death token Because the death not comes for any
oðrū ðingu butan þ he þ lif afyrre; swa eac þa woruldsælða
other thing but that he the life remove so also the worldly-felicities
cumað to ðǣ mode to þā þ hi hit benimen þæs ðe him
come to the mind for that that they it deprive of-that which to-it
leofast bið ðisse weorulde; þæt bið þonne þonne hie him
dearest is of-this world that is then when they it
fram gewitað. Gesege, la Mod, hwæðer þe betere þince, nu
from depart Say lo Mind whether to-thee better seem now
nanwuht woruldlices fæstes ȝ unhwearfiendes bion ne mæg?
nothing of-worldly steadfast and unchanging be — can
Hwæðer ðe ðu hi forseo, ȝ þines agnes þonces hi forlete
Whether that thou them despise and of-thine own will them forsake
buton sare, þe þu gebide hwonne hi ðe sorgiendne forlæten?
without sorrow or thou await when they thee sorrowing forsake

IX · NOTHING STANDS FIRM

In a short song Wisdom observes that the stars are dimmed when the sun shines, that the south-west wind brings flowers whose beauty the north-east wind soon destroys, and that the north wind's storm stirs up a calm sea. Nothing built in this world abides forever.

Ða ongan se Wisdom singan ⁊ giddode þus: Þōn seo sunne 21.1
Then began — Wisdom to-sing and sang thus When the sun
on hadrū heofone beorhtost scineð, þōn aþeostriað ealle steorran,
in clear heaven brightest shines then grow-dark all stars
forþāþe heora beorhtnes ne beoð nan beorhtnes for hire. Þōn
because their brightness not is any brightness for it When
smylte blaweð suþanwestan wind, þōn weaxað swiðe hraðe
mild blows south-west wind then grow very quickly
feldes blosman; ac þōn se stearca wind cymð norðaneastan, þōn
of-field blossoms but when the strong wind comes from-north-east then
toweorpð he swiðe hraþe þære rosan wlite; swa oft þone to
casts-down it very quickly of-the rose beauty so often the too
smylton sæ þæs norðāwindes yst onstyreð. Eala þ nanwuht
calm sea of-the north-wind storm stirs Alas that nothing
nis fæste stondendes weorces a wuniende on worulde.
is of-firmly standing work ever abiding in world

X · THE ANCHORS THAT STILL HOLD

Boethius grants that his lost goods were no true felicity, but says the worst misery is to have been happy and then become unhappy. Wisdom answers that he still has the best part of his goods: his father-in-law Symmachus alive and sorrowing for him, his faithful wife who lives only for him, and two sons, already chiefs and counselors, who show their father's and grandfather's virtues. His anchors still hold, and the Mind wishes they were as firm as Wisdom says.

Þa cwæð Boetius: Eala, Wisdom, þu þe eart modor eallra 21.10
Then said Boethius O Wisdom thou who art mother of-all
mægena, ne mæg ic na wiðcweðan ne andsacigan þ þe
virtues not can I — gainsay nor deny that which
þu me ær sædest. forþonþe hit is eall soð; forþā ic nu
thou to-me before saidst because it is all true because I now

hæbbe ongiten þ ða mine sælða ⁊ sio orsorgnes, þe
have perceived that the my felicities and the security which
ic ær wende þ gesælða beon sceoldan, nane sælða ne
I before thought that felicities be should no felicities —
sint, forðam hi swa rædlice gewitaþ. Ac þ me hæfð eallra
are because they so quickly depart But that me has of-all
swiðost gedrefed þōn ic ymbe swelc smealicost þence, þ ic
most troubled when I about such most-deeply think that I
nu sweotole ongiten hæbbe þ þæt is seo mæste unsælð
now clearly perceived have that that is the greatest unhappiness
on þys andweardan life þ mon ærest weorðe gesælig, ⁊
in this present life that one first become happy and
æfter þā ungesælig. Þa andsworede se Wisdom ⁊ sio
after that unhappy Then answered — Wisdom and —
Gesceadwisnes, ⁊ cwæð: Ne meaht þu no mid soðe getælan
Reason and said Not canst thou — with truth blame
þine wyrd ⁊ þine gesælða, swa swa þu wenst, for þā leasū
thy fate and thy felicities so as thou thinkest for the false
ungesælþū þe þu ðrowast. Hit is leasung þ þu wenst ðæt
misfortunes which thou sufferest It is falsehood that thou thinkest that
ðu sie ungesælig. Ac gif þe nu þ swa swiðe gedrefed ⁊
thou be unhappy But if thee now that so greatly troubled and
geunrotsad hæfð þte þu forlure þa leasan gesælþa, þonn̄ mæg
saddened has that thou lostest the false felicities then can
ic þe openlice gereccan þ ðu swutole ongitsð þte þu giet
I to-thee openly show that thou clearly perceivest that thou still
hæfst ðone mæstan dæl þara gesælða þe þu ær hæfdest.
hast the greatest part of-the felicities which thou before hadst
21.26 Saga me nu hwæðer þu mid rihte mæge siofian þina
Tell me now whether thou with right can bewail thy
unsælða, swelce ðu eallunga hæbbe forloren þina gesælða; ac
misfortunes as-if thou entirely have lost thy felicities but

ðu hæfst get gesund gehealden eall þ deorwyrðoste ðætte
thou hast still sound kept all the most-precious that
þu ðe besorgost hæfdes. Hu meaht þu þonne mænan þ
thou to-thee most-cared-for hadst How canst thou then bewail the
wyrse ȝ þ laðre nu ðu ðæt leofre hæfst gehealden?
worse and the more-hateful now thou the dearer hast kept
Hwæt, þu wast þ sio duguð ealles moncynnes ȝ ðe se
Lo thou knowest that the glory of-all mankind and to-thee the
mæsta weorðscipe get leofað, þ is Simachus ðin swior.
greatest honor still lives that is Symmachus thy father-in-law
Hwæt, he is giet hal ȝ gesund, ȝ hæfð ælces godes genog;
Lo he is still hale and sound and has of-every good enough
forðon ðe ic wat þ ðu auht ne forslawode þte þu þin agen
because that I know that thou at-all not delayed that thou thy own
feorh for hine ne sealdest gif þu hine gesawe on hwelcum
life for him — gavest if thou him sawest in any
earfoðū, forðæm se wer is domes ȝ cræfta full, ȝ genog
hardships because the man is of-judgment and of-virtues full and enough
orsorg nu get ælces eorðlices eges. Se is swiðe sarig for
free-from-care now still of-every earthly fear He is very sorrowful for
ðinū earfoðum ȝ for ðinū wræcsiðe. Hu ne liofað þin wif
thy hardships and for thy exile How not lives thy wife
eac, þæs ilcan Simaches dohtor? ȝ sio is swiðe wel gerad
also of-the same Symmachus daughter and she is very well prudent
ȝ swiðe gemetfæst; sio hæfð eall oþru wif oferðungen mid
and very moderate she has all other women excelled with
clænnesse. Eall hire god ic þe mæg mid feam wordum
chastity All her good I to-thee can with few words
areccan; þæt is ðæt hio is on ealū þeawū hiere fæder gelic.
recount that is that she is in all ways to-her father like

22.16 Sio liofað nu þe, þe anum, forðæmðe hio nanwuht elles
She lives now for-thee for-thee alone because she nothing else
ne lufað buton þe. Ælces godes hio hæfþ genoh on ðys
— loves but thee Of-every good she has enough in this
andweardan life, ac heo hit hæfð eall forsawen ofer ðe anne;
present life but she it has all despised beyond thee alone
eall heo hit onscunað, forðæmþe heo þe ænne næfð; þæs anes
all she it shuns because she thee alone has-not of-that alone
hire is nu wana. For þinre æfweardnesse hire þincð eall noht
to-her is now lack For thy absence to-her seems all naught
þ hio hæfð, forðæm hio is for þinum lufum ormod ȝ fulneah
that she has therefore she is for thy love despairing and nearly
dead for tearum ȝ for unrotnesse. Hwæt wille we cweðan
dead for tears and for sadness What will we say
be þinum twam sunū? ða sint ealdormen ȝ geðeahteras;
about thy two sons who are chiefs and counselors
on þæm is swiotol sio gifu ȝ ealla ða duguþa heora fæder
in whom is manifest the gift and all the virtues of-their father
ȝ heora eldran fæder, swa swa geonge men magon gelicoste
and of-their elder father so as young men can likest
beon ealdum monnum. Þy ic wundrige hwi ðu ne mæge
be to-old men Therefore I wonder why thou not can
ongietan þ ðu eart nu git swiðe gesælig, nu ðu git liofost
perceive that thou art now still very happy now thou still livest
ȝ eart hal. Hwæt, þ is sio meste ar deaðlicra monna þ
and art hale Lo that is the greatest honor of-mortal men that
hie libban ȝ sien hale; ȝ þu hæfst nu giet to eacan eall
they live and be hale and thou hast now still in addition all
þ ic ðe ær tealde. Hwæt, ic wat þ þ is giet diorwyrþre
that I to-thee before told Lo I know that that is yet more-precious

þonne monnes lif, forðæm mænegum men is leofre þæt he
than of-man life because to-many a-man is dearer that he
ær self swelte ær he gesio his wif ȝ his bearn sweltende.
sooner himself die before he see his wife and his children dying
Ac hwi tilast þu þōn to wepanne buton andweorce? Ne meaht 23.1
But why strivest thou then to weep without cause Not canst
ðu nu giet þinre wyrde nauht oðwitan ne þin lif no getælan,
thou now yet thy fate at-all reproach nor thy life — blame
ne eart þu no eallunga to nauhte gedon swa swa þu wenst.
nor art thou — entirely to naught brought so as thou thinkest
Nis þe nu git nan unaberendlic broc getenge, forðon
Not-is to-thee now yet any unbearable affliction pressing because
ðin ancer is giet on eorðan fæst; þ sint ða ealdormen þe
thy anchor is still in earth fast that are the chiefs whom
we ær ymb spræcon. Þa ðe ne lætað geortrewan be þys
we before about spoke They thee not let despair about this
andweardan life; ȝ eft þin agna treowa ȝ seo godcunde
present life and again thy own faith and the divine
lufu ȝ se tohopa, þa ðreo þe ne lætað geortrewan be
love and the hope the three thee not let despair about
þam ecan life. Ða andsworode þæt unrote Mod ȝ cwæð:
the eternal life Then answered the sad Mind and said
Eala, wæran þa ancras swa trume ȝ swa ðurhwuniende, ge
O were the anchors so firm and so lasting both
for Gode ge for worulde, swa swa þu segst; þonne mihte
for God and for world so as thou sayest then might
we micle þy eð geþolian swa hwæt earfoþnessa swa us on
we much the easier endure so what of-hardships so us upon
become. Eall hie us þyncað þy leohtran ða hwile þe þa
came All they to-us seem the lighter the while that the

oncras fæste bioð. Ac þu miht þeah ongitan hu þa mina
anchors fast are But thou canst yet perceive how the my
sælða ⁊ se min weorðscipe her for worulde is oncerred.
felicities and the my honor here for world is changed

XI · NO MAN IS WHOLLY CONTENT

Wisdom says no one has ever lived without something against his will: some of the wealthy lack noble birth, some of the noble are poor, and others lack a good wife or children, or have children who are sickly or die young. The happiest man is troubled by trifles, and Boethius, whose place of exile is another man's home, would seem blessed to many. True felicity lies within, in reason that cannot be lost, while a rich man either does not know his wealth will leave him or dreads that it will, and the martyrs chose torment for eternal life.

23.17 Ða andswarode se Wisdom ⁊ seo Gesceadwisnes, ⁊
Then answered — Wisdom and — Reason and
cwæð: Ic wene þeah þ ic hwæthwugununges þe up ahofe
said I think yet that I somewhat thee up raised
of þære unrotnesse ⁊ fulneah gebrohte æt þam ilcan
from the sadness and nearly brought to the same
weorðscipe þe þu ær hæfdes, buton þu git to ful sy
honor which thou before hadst unless thou still too full be
þæs þe þe læfed is, þ þe forðy wlatige. Ac ic ne
of-that which to-thee left is that thee therefore it-loathe But I not
mæg adreohan þine seofunga for þam lytlan þe þu forlure;
can endure thy lamentings for the little which thou lostest
forþā þu simle mid wope ⁊ mid unrotnesse mænst gif
because thou ever with weeping and with sadness complainest if
þe ænies willan wana bið, þeah hit lytles hwæt sie. Hwa
to-thee of-any desire lack is though it of-little aught be Who

wæs æfre on þis andweardan life, oððe hwa wyrð get æfter
was ever in this present life or who becomes yet after
us on þisse worulde, þ him nanwuht wið his willan
us in this world that to-him nothing against his will
ne sie, ne lytles ne miceles? Swiðe nearewe sent ȝ swiðe
— be either of-little or of-much Very narrow are and very
heanlice þa menniscan gesælþa, forþam oþer twega oððe hie
mean the human felicities because one of-two either they
næfre to nanū men ne becumaþ, oððe hi ðær næfre fæstlice
never to any man — come or they there never firmly
ne ðurhwuniað swelca swelce hi ær to coman. Þæt ic
— abide such as they before to came That I
wille her beæftan sweotolor gereccan. We witon þ monige
will here after more-clearly show We know that many
habbað ælces woruldwelan genog, ac hi habbað sceame þæs
have of-every worldly-wealth enough but they have shame of-the
welan gif hi ne beoð swa æþele on gebyrdū swa hi woldon.
wealth if they not are so noble in births as they would
Sume beoð swiðe æþele ȝ widcuðe on heora gebyrdū, ac 24.3
Some are very noble and widely-known in their births but
hi beoþ mid wædle ȝ mid henðe ofþrycte ȝ geunrotsode,
they are with poverty and with humiliation oppressed and saddened
þ hī wære leofre þæt hie wæran unæþele þōn swa earme,
that to-them were dearer that they were ignoble than so poor
gif hit on heora anwealde wære. Manege beoð þeah ægðer
if it in their power were Many are though each
ge full æðele ge full welige, ȝ beoð þeah full unrote, þōn
both full noble and full wealthy and are yet full sad when
hi oðer twega oððe wif habbað him gemæc, oððe him
they one of-two either wife have to-them suitable or to-them
gemede nabbað. Manige habbað genog gesælilice gewifod,
agreeable have-not Many have enough happily wived

ac for bearnleste eallne þone welan þe hi gegaderigað
but for childlessness all the wealth which they gather
hi lætað fræmdū to brucanne, ⁊ hi beoþ forþam unrote.
they let to-strangers to enjoy and they are therefore sad
Sume habbað bearn genoge, ac þa beoþ hwilū unhale oððe
Some have children enough but they are at-times unhealthy or
yfele ⁊ unweorþe, oððe hraðe gefarað, þ þa eldran forðam
evil and unworthy or quickly depart that the parents therefore
gnorniað ealle heora worulde. Forþā ne mæg nan man on
mourn all their life Therefore not can any man in
þys andweardan life eallunga gerad beon wið his wyrd.
this present life entirely agreed be with his fate
Þeah he nu nanwuht elles næbbe ymbe to sorgienne, þ
Though he now nothing else have about to sorrow that
him mæg to sorge þæt he nat hwæt him toweard bið,
to-him can-(be) for sorrow that he not-knows what to-him coming is
hwæðer þe god þe yfel, ðon ma þe þu wistest; ⁊ eac þæt
whether — good or evil the more than thou knewest and also that
þ he þōn gesællice brycð he ondræt þ he scyle forlætan.
which he then happily enjoys he dreads that he should forsake
24.19 Getæc me nu sumne mann þara ðe þe gesælegost þince
Show me now some man of-those who to-thee happiest seem
⁊ on his selfwille sy swiðost gewiten; ic þe gerecce
and in his self-will be most gone I to-thee will-show
swiðe hraþe þ ðu ongitst þ he bið for swiðe lytlum
very quickly that thou perceivest that he is for very little
þingū oft swiðe ungemetlice gedrefed, gif him ænig wuht
things often very immoderately troubled if to-him any thing
bið wið his willan oððe wið his gewunan, þeah hit nu
is against his will or against his habit though it now
lytles hwæt sie, buton he to ælcum men mæge gebecnan
of-little aught be unless he to each man can beckon

þ he irne on his willan. Wundrum lytel mæg gedon þone
that he run at his will Wondrously little can make the
ealra gesælgostan mon her on worulde þ he wenð ðæt his
of-all happiest man here in world that he thinks that his
gesælða sien oððe swiðe gewanode oððe mid ealle forlorena.
felicities be either greatly diminished or with all lost
Þu wensð nu þ þu seo swiðe ungesælig, ⁊ ic wat ðæt
Thou thinkest now that thou be very unhappy and I know that
monegū men þuhte þ he wære to hefonum ahæfen gif he
to-many a-man it-seemed that he were to heavens lifted if he
ænigne dæl hæfde þara þinra gesælða þe þu nu giet hæfst.
any part had of-the thy felicities which thou now still hast
Ge furðum sio stow þe ðu nu on gehæft eart ⁊ þu
Yea even the place which thou now in held art and thou
cwist ðæt þin wræcstow sie, hio is þæm monnum eþel þe
sayest that thy exile-place be it is to-the men homeland who
ðæron geborene wæron, ⁊ eac þam þe hiora willum þæron
therein born were and also to-those who by-their wills therein
eardiað. Ne nanwuht ne bið yfel ær mon wene þ hit
dwell Not anything — is evil before one think that it
yfel sie, ⁊ þeah hit nu hefig sie ⁊ wiðerweard, þeah hit
evil be and though it now heavy be and adverse yet it
bið gesælð gif hit mon lustlice deð ⁊ geþyldelice aræfneð.
is felicity if it one gladly does and patiently endures
Feawe sint to þæm gesceadwise, gif he wyrð on 25.5
Few are to that-(degree) rational if he becomes in
ungeðylde, þ he ne wilnige þ his sælða weorðen onwende.
impatience that he not desire that his felicities become changed
Wið swiðe monige biternesse is gemenged sio swetnes þisse
With very much bitterness is mingled the sweetness of-this
worulde; ðeah hio hwæm wynsumu ðynce, ne mæg he
world though it to-anyone pleasant seem not can he

hi no gehabban gif hio hine flion onginð. Hu ne is hit
it — hold if it him flee begins How not is it
þær swiðe swiotol hu werelica þas woruldsælða sint, nu
there very clear how paltry these worldly-felicities are now
hi ne magon þone earman gefyllan, forþæm he symle
they not can the wretched satisfy because he ever
wilnað hwæshwugu þæs ðe he þonne næfð; ne hi þæm
desires something of-that which he then has-not nor they with-the
geþyldegum ⁊ þæm gemetfæstum symle ne wuniað.
patient and the moderate ever — dwell
25.14 Hwy sece ge þonn̄ ymbutan eow þa gesælða þe ge oninnan
Why seek ye then outside you the felicities which ye within
iow habbað þurh þa godcundan mieht geset? Ac ge nyton
you have through the divine might set But ye know-not
hwæt ge doð; ge sint on gedwolan. Ac ic eow mæg mid
what ye do ye are in error But I to-you can with
feawum wordum gereccan hwæt se hrof is ealra gesælða; wið
few words show what the roof is of-all felicities toward
þas ic wat þu wilt higian þon ær þe ðu hine ongitest; þ
this I know thou wilt hasten then before that thou it perceivest that
is þonne good. Meaht þu nu ongitan hwæðer þu auht þe
is then good Canst thou now perceive whether thou aught to-thee
deorwyrðre hæbbe þonne þe selfne? Ic wene þeah þ ðu wille
more-precious have than thee self I think yet that thou wilt
cweþan þ þu nauht deorwyrðre næbbe. Ic wat, gif þu nu
say that thou nothing more-precious have I know if thou now
hæfde fulne anweald þines selfes, þōn hæfde þu hwæthwugu
hadst full power of-thy self then hadst thou something
on ðe selfum þæs ðe þu næfre þinum willū alætan noldes,
in thee self of-that which thou never by-thy wills let-go wouldst
ne sio wyrd þe on geniman ne meahte. Forðæm ic ðe
nor the fate thee from take — could Therefore I thee

mindgige þ þu ongite þte nan gesælð nis on þis andweardan
remind that thou perceive that no felicity is in this present
life ðonne seo gesceadwisnes, forðæm hio þurh nan þing ne
life than — reason because it through no thing —
mæg þæm men losian; forðy is betere þæt feoh þte næfre
can from-the man be-lost therefore is better that treasure which never
losian ne mæg ðonne þte mæg ⁊ sceal. Hu ne is þe nu
be-lost — can than that-which can and shall How not is to-thee now
genoh sweotole gesæd þ sio wyrd þe ne mæg nane gesælða
enough clearly said that the fate thee not can any felicities
sellan? forþæmþe ægþer is unfæst, ge seo wyrd ge seo gesælð;
give because each is unsteady both the fate and the felicity
forþam sint swiðe tedre ⁊ swiðre hreosende þas gesælþa.
therefore are very frail and very falling these felicities
Hwæt, ælc þara þe þas woruldgesælþa hæfð oþer twega oððe 26.1
Lo each of-those who these worldly-felicities has one of-two either
he wat þ hi him fromwearde beoð, oððe he hit þōn
he knows that they from-him departing are or he it then
nat. Gif he hit þōn nat, hwelce gesælþa hæfð he æt þā
not-knows If he it then not-knows what felicities has he in the
welan gif he bið swa dysig ⁊ swa ungewiss þ he þæt witan
wealth if he is so foolish and so ignorant that he that know
ne mæg? Gif he hit þōn wat, þonne ondræt he him þ hi
not can If he it then knows then dreads he for-himself that they
losien, ⁊ eac geara wat þ he hi alætan sceal. Se singala
be-lost and also well knows that he them let-go shall The continual
ege ne læt nonne mon gesælinne bion. Gif þonne hwa ne
fear not lets any man happy be If then anyone not
recð hwæðer he þa gesælþa hæbbe þe næbbe þe he þonne
cares whether he the felicities have or have-not which he then
hæfð, hwæt, þ þonne beoð for lytla sælða oþþe nane, þæt
has lo that then are very little felicities or none which

mon swa eaðe forlætan mæg. Ic wene nu þ ic þe hæfde
one so easily forsake can I think now that I to-thee had
ær genog sweotole gereaht be monegum tacnum þte monna
before enough clearly shown by many tokens that of-men
sawla sint undeadlica ȝ ece, ȝ þis is genog sweotol þte
souls are immortal and eternal and this is enough clear that
nænne mon þæs tweogan ne þearf þte ealle men geendiað on
no man of-that to-doubt — needs that all men end in
þam deaðe, ȝ eac heora welan. Þi ic wundrige hwi men
the death and also their riches Therefore I wonder why men
sien swa ungesceadwise þ hi wenen þæt te þis andwearde
be so irrational that they think that — this present
lif mæge þone monnan don gesæligne þa hwile þe he
life can the man make happy the while that he
leofað, þonne hit hine ne mæg æfter þys life earmne gedon.
lives when it him not can after this life wretched make
26.17 Hwæt, we gewislice witon unrim ðara monna þe þa ecan
Lo we certainly know countless of-the men who the eternal
gesælða sohton nalles þurh þ an þ hi wilnodon ðæs
felicities sought not-at-all through that alone that they desired the
lichomlican deaðes, ac eac manegra sarlicra wita hi gewilnodon
bodily death but also many painful torments they desired
wið þæm ecan life; þæt wæron ealle þa halgan martiras.
for the eternal life that were all the holy martyrs

Wisdom sings that a man who wants a firm house must not build it on a high hill, where the wind strikes, or on sinking sand, which swallows the rain. So wisdom cannot be built on pride or avarice. The wise man builds the house of his mind on the rock of humility, since Christ dwells in the valley of humility, and God keeps him in steady joy whatever winds of hardship and care blow.

Þa ongan se Wisdom gliowian ⁊ geoddode þus; ecte þæt 26.22
Then began — Wisdom to-make-melody and sang thus increased the
spell mid leoðe þ he ær sæde, ⁊ cwæð: Se þe wille fæst
discourse with song that he before said and said He who will firm
hus timbrian ne sceal he hit no settan up on ðone hehstan
house build not shall he it — set up on the highest
cnoll, ⁊ se ðe wille godcundne wisdom secan ne mæg he
hilltop and he who will divine wisdom seek not can he
hine wið ofermetta; ⁊ eft se þe wille fæst hus timbrian ne
it with pride and again he who will firm house build not
sette he hit on sondbeorhas. Swa eac gif þu wisdom timbrian
let-set he it on sand-hills So also if thou wisdom build
wille, ne sete þu hine on uppan þa gitsunga, forþā swa swa
wilt not set thou it on upon the avarice because so as
sigende sond þone ren swylgð, swa swylgð seo gitsung þa
sinking sand the rain swallows so swallows the avarice the
dreosendan welan þisses middangeardes, forþā hio hiora simle
perishing riches of-this middle-earth because it for-them ever
bið þurstegu. Ne mæg hus naht lange standan on þā hean
is thirsty Not can house at-all long stand on the high
munte gif hit full ungemetlic wind gestent; næfð þæt þte
mountain if it full immoderate wind assails nor-again that which
on ðam sigendā sonde stent for swiðlicū rene. Swa eac þ
on the sinking sand stands for violent rain So also the

mennisce mod bið undereten ⁊ aweged of his stede þōn hit
human mind is undermined and moved from its place when it
se wind strongra geswinca astyrað oððe se ren ungemetlices
the wind of-strong toils stirs or the rain of-immoderate
ymbhogan. Ac se þe wille habban þa ecan gesælða he sceal
concern But he who will have the eternal felicities he shall
fleon þone frecnan wlite þises middaneardes ⁊ timbrian þ hus
flee the dangerous beauty of-this middle-earth and build the house
his modes on þam fæstā stane eaðmetta, forþāðe Crist eardað
of-his mind on the firm stone of-humility because Christ dwells
on þære dene eadmodnesse ⁊ on þā gemynde wisdomes.
in the valley of-humility and in the memory of-wisdom
27.8 Forþam simle se wisa mon eall his lif læt on gefean
Therefore ever the wise man all his life leads in joy
unonwendendlice ⁊ orsorg, þōn he forsihþ ægðer ge þas
unchangeably and free-from-care when he despises each both these
eorðlican gôd ge eac þa yflu, ⁊ hopað to þā toweardā; þ
earthly goods and also the evils and hopes for the future that
sint þa ecan. Forþāþe God hine gehelt æghwonan singallice
are the eternal Because God him keeps on-every-side continually
wuniendne on his modes gesælðum, ðeah þe se wind þara
dwelling in of-his mind felicities though that the wind of-the
earfoþa ⁊ seo singale gemen þissa woruldsælða him on blawe.
hardships and the continual care of-these worldly-felicities him upon blow

Wisdom asks what in wealth truly belongs to a man, observing that riches bring more renown when given than when hoarded, while a good name fills every ear and loses nothing. Wealth gathered to one man makes paupers of all the rest, while divided as fine as dust it satisfies no one and leaves the giver a pauper, and the beauty of gems belongs to the gems, not to their owner. Men wrong themselves by loving what is beneath them more than themselves or the God who made them.

Đa se Wisdom þa ⁊ seo Gesceadwisnes þis leoð asungen 27.14
When — Wisdom then and — Reason this song sung
hæfde, þa ongon he eft secgean spel ⁊ þus cwæð: Me
had then began he again to-tell discourse and thus said To-me
þincð nu þ wit mægen smealicor sprecan ⁊ diogolran
seems now that we-two may more-deeply speak and in-more-secret
wordum, forþam ic ongite þ min lar hwæthwugu in
words because I perceive that my teaching somewhat in
gæð on þin ondgit ⁊ þu genoh wel understenst þ
goes into thy understanding and thou enough well understandest what
ic þe to sprece. Geþenc nu hwæt þines agnes sie ealra
I thee to speak Think now what of-thine own be of-all
ðissa woruldæhta ⁊ welena, oððe hwæt þu þæron age
these worldly-possessions and riches or what thou therein own
unandergildes, gif þu him sceadwislice æfter spyrest. Hwæt
of-unrecompensed if thou them rationally after inquirest What
hæfst þu æt þam gifū þe þu cwyst þ seo wyrd eow
hast thou from the gifts which thou sayest that the fate to-you
gife, ⁊ æt ðæm welan, þeah hy nu ece wæron? Sæge
give and from the riches though they now eternal were Tell
me nu hwæðer se þin wela þines ðances swa diore seo, þe
me now whether the thy wealth of-thy will so dear be or
for his agenre gecynde. Hwæðer ic þe secge þeah ðæt hit
for its own nature Yet I to-thee say though that it

is of his agenre gecynde, næs of þinre. Gif hit þōn his
is of its own nature not-at-all of thine If it then of-its
agenre gecynde is, nas of þinre, hwi eart þu þonne a
own nature is not-at-all of thine why art thou then ever
þy betera for his gode? Sege me nu hwæt his þe deorast
the better for its good Tell to-me now what of-it to-thee dearest
þince, hwæðer þe gold þe hwæt. Ic wat þeah gold. Ac þeah
seem whether — gold or what I know yet gold But though
hit nu god sie ⁊ diore, ðeah bið hliseadigra ⁊ leofwendra
it now good be and dear yet is more-famous and more-beloved
se ðe hit selð þōn se ðe hit gaderað ⁊ on oðrū reafað.
he who it gives than he who it gathers and from others robs
28.1 Ge eac þa welan bioð hliseadigran ⁊ leoftælran þonne
Yea also the riches are more-famous and more-pleasing then
þonne hi mon selð þonne hi bion ðonne hi mon gadrað
when them one gives than they are when them one gathers
⁊ hilt. Hwæt, sio gitsung gedeð heore gitseras laðe ægþer
and holds Lo the avarice makes its misers hateful each
ge Gode ge monnū, ⁊ þa cysta gedoð þa simle leoftæle
both to-God and to-men and the bounties make them ever beloved
⁊ hliseadige ⁊ weorðe ægþer ge Gode ge monnum ðe hie
and famous and worthy each both to-God and to-men who them
lufiað. Nu þ feoh þōn ægþer ne mæg beon ge mid þā þe
love Now the money then each not can be both with those who
hit selð ge mid þam þe hit mon selð, nu is forþā ælc feoh
it gives and with those whom it one gives now is therefore each money
betere ⁊ deorwyrðre geseald þōn gehealden. Gif nu eall þises
better and more-precious given than kept If now all of-this
middaneardes wela come to anū men, hu ne wæren þonne
middle-earth wealth came to one man how not were then
ealle oþre men wædlan buton him anum? Genoh sweotol þ
all other men paupers except him alone Enough clear that

is þætte god word ⁊ god hlisa ælces monnes bið betra ⁊
is that good word and good repute of-every man is better and
deorra þōn ænig wela; hwæt, þæt word gefylð ælces þara
dearer than any wealth lo the word fills of-each of-those
earan þe hit geherð, ⁊ ne bið þeah na þy læsse mid þæm
ears who it hears and not is yet — the less with him
þe hit sprico. His heortan diegelnesse hit geopenað, ⁊
who it speaks Of-his heart secrecy it opens and
þæs oðres heortan belocena hit þurhfærð, ⁊ on þā færelde
of-the other heart locked it passes-through and on the journey
þærbetwyx ne bið hit no gewanod; ne mæg hit mon mid
therebetween not is it — diminished nor can it one with
sweorde ofslean ne mid rape gebindan, ne hit næfre ne acwylð.
sword slay nor with rope bind nor it ever — dies
Ac þa eowre welan, þeah hi ealne weg mid eow sien, ne 28.18
But the your riches though they all the-way with you be not
þincð eow no þy hraðor hiora genoh; ⁊ ðeah ge hi þonne
seems to-you — the sooner of-them enough and though ye them then
oþrum monnum sellen, ne magon ge no þe ma mid þæm hiora
to-other men give not can ye — the more with them their
wædle ⁊ heora gitsunge gefyllan. Þeah ðu hi smale todæle
poverty and their avarice fill Though thou them small divide
swa dust, ne miht þu ðeah ealle men emnlice mid gehealdan;
as dust not canst thou yet all men evenly with keep
⁊ þōn þu ealle gedælde hæfst þōn bist þu ðe self wædla.
and when thou all divided hast then art thou thee thyself pauper
Sint þ werilice welan þisses middangeardes, þōn hi nan
Are those paltry riches of-this middle-earth when them no
mon fullice habban ne mæg, ne hie nanne mon gewelegian
man fully have — can nor they any man enrich
ne magon, buton hie oðerne gedon to wædlan. Hwæþer nu
— can unless they another make into pauper Whether now

gimma wlite eowre eagan to him getio hiora to wundriganne?
of-gems beauty your eyes to it draw them to admire
Swa ic wat þ hi doð. Hwæt, sio duguð þonne þæs wlites
So I know that they do Lo the excellence then of-the beauty
þe on þæm gimmum bið, bið heora, næs eower. Þy
which in the gems is is of-them not-at-all of-yours Therefore
ic eom swiðe ungemetlice ofwundrod hwi eow þince þære
I am very immoderately amazed why to-you seem of-the
ungesceadwisan gesceafte godweb betere þonne eower agen god;
irrational creature fine-fabric better than your own good
hwi ge swa ungemetlice wundrigen þara gimma oþþe æniges
why ye so immoderately wonder at-the gems or at-any
þara deadlicena ðinga þe gesceadwisnesse næfð; forðæm hi
of-the mortal things which reason has-not because they
mid nanū ryhte ne magon gearnigan þ ge heora wundrien.
with no right — can earn that ye at-them wonder
29.3 Þeah hi Godes gesceaftes sien, ne sint hi no wið eow to
Though they of-God creatures be not are they — against you to
metanne, forðæm þe oþer twega oððe hit nân gôd nis for eow
measure because that one of-two either it no good is for you
selfe, oððe þeah forlytel god wið eow to metane. To swiðe we
selves or yet very-little good against you to measure Too much we
herwað us selfe þonne we þ ma lufiað þte under us is on
despise us selves when we that more love which under us is in
ussum anwalde, þonne us selfe oððe þone drihten þe us gesceop,
our power than us selves or the lord who us created
ȝ us eall ða god forgeaf. Hwæþer þe nu licien fægru lond?
and to-us all the goods gave Whether thee now please fair lands

The Mind asks why it should not delight in fair land, sun, moon, and stars, and Wisdom replies that the Mind made none of them and should boast of God. Nature needs little: food, drink, clothing, and the tools of one's craft, and excess harms. Fine clothes honor their maker, God, and a loyal servant's good is his own. Men have something divine in understanding, memory, and will, yet rank themselves below their possessions and, not knowing what they are, fall below the beasts. A traveler carrying gold fears thieves, while one with nothing may go singing.

Ða andsworode þ Mod þære Gesceadwisnesse ȝ cwæð: Hwi 29.11
Then answered the Mind — to-Reason and said Why
ne sceolde me lician fæger lond? Hu ne is þæt se fægeresta
not should me please fair land How not is that the fairest
dæl Godes gesceafta? Ge, ful oft we fageniað smyltre sæ,
part of-God creatures Yea full often we rejoice-in calm sea
ȝ eac wundriað þæs wlites þære sunnan ȝ þæs monan
and also wonder-at the beauty of-the sun and of-the moon
ȝ ealra þara steorrena. ða andswarode se Wisdom ȝ seo
and of-all the stars then answered — Wisdom and —
Gesceadwisnes þæm Mode ȝ þus cwæð: Hwæt belimpð
Reason the Mind and thus said What belongs
þe to hiora fægernessa? Hwæðer þu dyrre gilpan þæt
to-thee to their fairness Whether thou dare boast that
hiora fægernes þin sie? Nese, nese. Hu ne wast þu þ ðu
their fairness thine be No no How not knowest thou that thou
hiora nan ne worhtest? Ac gif þu gilpan wille, gilp Godes.
of-them none — madest But if thou boast wilt boast of-God
Hwæðer þu nu fægerra blostmæna fægnige on eastran, swelce
Whether thou now of-fair blossoms rejoice at Easter as-if
þu hie gescope? Hwæðer ðu nu swelces auht wyrcan mæge,
thou them created Whether thou now of-such aught make can

oððe geworhtes habbe? Nese, nese. Ne do þu swa. Hwæþer
or made have No no Not do thou so Whether
hit nu þines gewealdes se þ se hærfest sie swa welig on
it now of-thy power be that the harvest be so rich in
wæstmū? Hu ne wat ic þ hit nis no þines gewealdes? Hwi
fruits How not know I that it not-is — of-thy power Why
eart þu þonne onæled mid swa idele gefean, oððe hwi lufast
art thou then kindled with so idle joy or why lovest
þu ða fremdan god swa ungemetlice, swelce hi sen þine get
thou the alien goods so immoderately as-if they be thine still
nu? Wenst þu mæge seo wyrd þe gedon þ þa þing þin
now Thinkest thou can the fate to-thee make that the things thy
agnu sen þa ðe heora agene gecynd þe gedon fremde?
own be which — their own nature to-thee made alien
29.29 Nese, nese. Nis hit no þe gecynde þte þu hi age; ne him
No no Not-is it — to-thee natural that thou them own nor to-them
nis gebyrde þ hi ðe folgien. Ac þa hefoncundan þing ðe
is fitting that they thee follow But the heavenly things to-thee
sint gecynde, næs þæs eorðlican. Þas eorðlican wæstmas
are natural not-at-all the earthly These earthly fruits
sint gesceapene netenum to andlifene; ȝ þa woruldwelan sint
are created for-beasts as sustenance and the worldly-riches are
gesceapene to biswice þā monnū þe bioð neatum gelice, þ
created to deception to-the men who are to-beasts like that
beoð unrihtwise ȝ ungemetfæste. To þæm hi eac becumað
are unrighteous and immoderate To them they also come
oftost. Gif þu þonne þæt gemet habban wille, ȝ þa nydþearfe
oftenest If thou then the measure have wilt and the need
witan wille, þōn is þæt mete and drync ȝ claðas ȝ tôl to
know wilt then is that food and drink and clothes and tools for
swelcū cræfte swelce þu cunne þ þe is gecynde ȝ þ
such skill as thou know which to-thee is natural and which

þe is riht to habbenne. Hwilc fremu is þe þ þæt þu
to-thee is right to have What profit is to-thee that that thou
wilnige þissa andweardena gesælþa ofer gemet, þōn hie naþer
desire of-these present felicities beyond measure when they neither
ne magon ne þin gehelpan, ne heora selfra? On swiðe lytlon
— can — thee help nor them selves In very little
hiera hæfð seo gecynd genog; on swa miclū hio hæfð genog
of-them has the nature enough in so much it has enough
swa we ær spræcon. Gif ðu heore mare selest, oþer twega
as we before spoke If thou of-them more givest one of-two
oððe hit þe derað, oððe hit ðe þeah unwynsū bið, oððe
either it thee harms or it to-thee yet unpleasant is or
ungetæse, oððe frecenlic, eall þ þu nu ofer gemet dest.
inconvenient or dangerous all that thou now beyond measure dost
Gif ðu nu ofer gemet itst, oððe drincst, oððe claða þe ma 30.17
If thou now beyond measure eatest or drinkest or of-clothes thee more
on hehst þonne þu þurfe, seo oferinc þe wyrð oððe to sare,
on hangest than thou need the excess to-thee becomes either to pain
oððe to wlættan, oþþe to ungerisenū, oððe to plio. Gif þu nu
or to loathing or to unseemliness or to peril If thou now
wenst þte wundorlice gegerela hwelc weorðmynd sie, þonne
thinkest that wonderful apparel any honor be then
telle ic þa weorðmynde þā wyrhtan þe hi worhte, nealles
reckon I the honor to-the maker who them made not-at-all
þe. Se wyrhta is God; þæs cræft ic þær herige on. Wenst
to-thee The maker is God whose skill I there praise in Thinkest
þu þ sio menigo ðinra monna þe mæge don gesæligne? Nese
thou that the multitude of-thy men thee can make happy No
nese. Ac gif hi yfele sint ȝ lytige þonne sint hi þe pliolicran
no But if they evil are and crafty then are they the more-perilous
ȝ geswincfulran hæfd ðonne næfd; forþæm yfele þegnas bioð
and more-troublesome had than had-not because evil servants are

simle heora hlafordes fiend. Gif hi þonne gode beoð ⁊ hlaford
ever of-their lord enemies If they then good are and to-lord
holde ⁊ untwifealde, hu ne beoð þ þōn heora godes, næs
loyal and single-minded how not is that then of-their good not-at-all
þines? Hu miht þu þōn þe agnian heora god? Gif þu nu
of-thine How canst thou then to-thee claim their good If thou now
þæs gilpst, hu ne gilpst þu þōn heora godes, næs þines?
of-that boastest how not boastest thou then of-their good not-at-all of-thine
30.31 Nu þe is genoh openlice gecyþed þætte nan þara goda þin
Now to-thee is enough openly shown that none of-the goods thine
nis, þe we ær ymb spræcon, ⁊ þu teohhodest þ hi
is which we before about spoke and thou supposedst that they
ðine bion sceolden. Gif ðonne þisse worulde wlites ⁊ wela
thine be should If then of-this world beauty and wealth
to wilnienne nis, hwæt murcnast þu þōn æfter þā þe þu
to desire not-is what complainest thou then after that which thou
forlure, oððe to hwon fagnast þu þæs þe ðu ær hæfdest?
lostest or to what rejoicest thou in-that which thou before hadst
Gif hit fæger is, þ is of hiora agnū gecynde, næs of
If it fair is that is from their own nature not-at-all from
þinum; hiora fæger hit is, nas þin. Hwæt fægnast þu
thine their fairness it is not-at-all thine Why rejoicest thou
þōn heora fægres? Hwæt belimpð his to þe? Ne þu hit ne
then in-their fairness What belongs of-it to thee Neither thou it —
gesceope, ne hi þine agene ne sent. Gif hi nu gode sint ⁊
createdst nor they thine own — are If they now good are and
fægere, þōn wæron hi swa gesceapene; ⁊ swælce hi woldan
fair then were they so created and such they would
bion, þeah þu hi næfre nahtest. Wenst þu þ hi a ðy
be though thou them never ownedst Thinkest thou that they ever the
deorwyrðran seon þe hi to þinre note gelænde wæran? Ac
more-precious be because they for thy use lent were But

forþæmþe heora dysige men wafiað ȝ hi him þincað deore,
because them foolish men marvel-at and they to-them seem dear
forþā þu hi gaderast ȝ helst on þinū horde. Hwæt wilnast
therefore thou them gatherest and hidest in thy hoard What desirest
þu þōn þ þu hæbbe æt swelcere gelicnesse? Gelef me, nu
thou then that thou have from such liking Believe me now
ic hit þe secge: næfst þu þær nauht æt, buton þ þu tilast
I it to-thee say hast-not thou there at-all from but that thou strivest
wædle to flionne, ȝ forþy gæderast mare þōn þu ðurfe.
poverty to flee and therefore gatherest more than thou need
Ac ic wat þeah swiðe geara þte eall þ ic her sprece is wið 31.16
But I know yet very well that all that I here speak is against
þinū willan. Ac eowra gesælða ne sint no þ ge wenað þæt
thy will But your felicities not are — what ye think that
hi sen, forþā se þe micel innierfe ȝ mislic agan wile,
they be because he who much household-goods and various own will
he beðearf eac miceles fultumes. Se ealda cwide is swiðe
he needs also of-much help The old saying is very
soð þe mon gefyrn cwæð, þætte þa micles beðurfon þe
true which one long-ago said that those of-much need who
micel agan willað, ȝ þa þurfon swiþe lytles þe maran ne
much own will and those need very little who more not
wilniað þōn genoges. Butan hi wilnien mid oferinge hiora
desire than enough Unless they desire with excess their
gitsunga gefyllan, þ hi næfre ne gedoð. Ic wat þ ge
avarice fill which they never — do I know that ye
wenað þæt ge nan gecundlic god ne gesælþa oninnan eow
think that ye no natural good nor felicities within you
selfū næbben, forðæm ge hi secað butan eow to fremdū
selves have because ye them seek outside you in alien
gesceaftū. Swa hit is mishweorfed þ þæm men þincð, þeah
creatures So it is perverted that to-the man seems though

he se godcundlice gesceadwis, þ he on him selfū næbbe
he be divinely rational that he in him self have-not
sælþa genoge, buton he mare gegaderige þara ungesceadwisene
felicities enough unless he more gather of-the irrational
gesceafta þonne he beþurfe oððe him gemetlicre sie; ȝ
creatures than he need or to-him more-fitting be and
þa ungesceadwisan neotena ne wilniað nanes oðres feos,
the irrational beasts not desire any other property
ac þincð him genog on þā þe hi binnan heora ægenre
but seems to-them enough in that which they within their own
hyde habbað to eacan þā fodre þe him gecyndelic bið.
hide have in addition-to the fodder which to-them natural is
32.1 Hwæt, ge þōn þeah hwæthwega godcundlices on eowerre saule
Lo ye then yet something of-divine in your soul
habbað, þ is andgit ȝ gemynd, ȝ se gesceadwislica willa
have that is understanding and memory and the rational will
þ hine þara twega lyste. Se þe þōn þas ðreo hæfð, þonne
that it of-the two it-pleases He who then these three has then
hæfð he his sceoppendes onlicnesse swa forð swa swa ænegu
has he of-his creator likeness so far so as any
gesceaft fyrmest mæg hiere sceppendes onlicnesse habban. Ac ge
creature most can of-its creator likeness have But ye
secað þære hean gecynde gesælþa ȝ heore weorðscipe to ðæm
seek of-the high nature felicities and its honor in the
niþerlicum ȝ to þā hreosendlicum þingū. Ac ge ne ongitað
lowly and in the perishable things But ye not perceive
hu micelne teonan ge doð Gode eowrū scippende, forþāþe he
how great injury ye do to-God your creator because he
wolde þte ealle men wæran ealra oþerra gesceafta wealdendas;
wished that all men were of-all other creatures rulers
ac ge underþeodað eowre hehstan medemnesse under þa
but ye subject your highest dignity under the

eallra nyðemestan gesceafta; mid þā ge habbað gecyðed þ
of-all lowest creatures With that ye have shown that
æfter eowrū agnum dome ge doð eow selfe wyrsan þonne
after your own judgment ye make you selves worse than
eowra agne æhta, nu ge wenað þ eowre nauht welan send
your own possessions now ye think that your worthless riches are
eowre gesælþa, ȝ teohhiað þæt eall eowre woruldgod sien
your felicities and suppose that all your worldly-goods be
dierran ðonne ge selfe. Swa hit eac wyrð þōn ge swa willað.
dearer than ye yourselves So it also becomes when ye so will
Þæs menniscan lifes gecynd is þ hi þy anan seon 32.18
Of-the human life nature is that they by-this alone be
beforan eallū oðrū gesceaftum þy hi hie selfe ongiton hwæt
before all other creatures that they them selves perceive what
hie send ȝ hwonan hi send; ȝ þi hi send wyrsan þōn
they are and whence they are and by-this they are worse than
nytenu, þy hi nellað witan hwæt hi sint, oððe hwonan hi
beasts that they will-not know what they are or whence they
sint. Þā neatū is gecynde þ hi nyton hwæt hie send; ac
are To-the beasts is natural that they know-not what they are but
þ is þara monna unðeaw þæt hi niton hwæt hie sen. Nu
that is of-the men vice that they know-not what they be Now
þe is swiþe sweotol þæt ge beoþ on gedwolan, þonne ge
to-thee is very clear that ye are in error when ye
wenað þ ænig mæg mid fremdū welū beon geweorþod. Gif
think that anyone can with alien riches be honored If
hwa nu bið mid hwelcū welū geweorþod ȝ mid hwelcū
anyone now is with any riches honored and with any
deorwyrþū æhtū gegyrewod, hu ne belimpð se weorðscipe
precious possessions adorned how not belongs the honor
þōn to þā þe hine geweorðað? Þæt is to herianne hwene
then to that which him honors That is to praise somewhat

rihtlicor. Ne þæt ne beoþ no ðy fægerre þ mid elleshwā
more-rightly Nor that — is — the fairer which with something-else
gerenod bið, þeah þa gerenu fægru sien þe hit mid gerenod
adorned is though the ornaments fair be which it with adorned
bið. Gif hit ær scandlic wæs, ne bið hit no ðy fægerre.
is If it before shameful was not is it — the fairer
Wite þu for soð þ nan god ne dereð þæm þe hit ah.
Know thou for truth that no good — harms him who it owns
Hwæt, þu wast nu þ ic þe ne leoge, ȝ eac wast þæt
Lo thou knowest now that I to-thee not lie and also knowest that
þa welan oft deriað þam þe hi agon on manegum þingū,
the riches often harm those who them own in many things
ȝ on ðæm swiðost þ te men weorðað swa upahæfene for
and in that most that — men become so exalted for
ðæm welan þæt oft se ealra wyrresta ȝ se ealra unweorðesta
the wealth that often the of-all worst and the of-all unworthiest
mon wenð þ he sie ealles þæs welan wyrðe þe on þisse
man thinks that he be of-all the wealth worthy which in this
worulde is, gif he wisse hu he him to cuman meahte.
world is if he knew how he it to come could
33.6 Se ðe micelne welan hæfð, he him ondræt monige feond; gif
He who much wealth has he for-himself dreads many enemies if
he nane æhta næfde, ne þorfte he him nænne ondrædan.
he no possessions had not needed he for-himself any dread
Gif þu nu wære wegferend ȝ hæfdest micel gold on ðe, ȝ
If thou now were wayfarer and hadst much gold on thee and
þu þonne become on þiofscole, þonne ne wendes þu þe
thou then camest into band-of-thieves then not hopedst thou for-thyself
þines feores, þonne gif ðu þonne swelces nanwuht næfde,
of-thy life then if thou then of-such nothing hadst
þonne ne ðorftes þu ðe nanwuht ondrædan, ac meahtes
then not neededst thou for-thyself anything dread but couldst

þe gan singende þone ealdan cwide þe mon gefyrn sang, þ
thyself go singing the old saying which one long-ago sang that
se nacoda wegferend him nanwuht ne ondrede. Þonne þu
the naked wayfarer for-himself nothing — dreads When thou
þonne orsorg wære, ⁊ þa þeofas þe from gewiten wæron,
then free-from-care were and the thieves thee from departed were
þonne meahtes þu bismrian þæs andweardan welan, ⁊ meahtes
then couldst thou mock the present wealth and couldst
cweþan: Eala þ hit is god ⁊ wynsum þ mon micelne welan
say O that it is good and pleasant that one much wealth
hæbbe, nu se næfre ne wyrð orsorg þe hine underfehð.
have now he never — becomes free-from-care who it receives

XV · THE FIRST AGE

Reason sings of the first age of the world, when men were content with the earth's fruits, ate once a day, drank spring water, slept under trees, and knew nothing of trade, war, or bloodshed. Now avarice burns like the fires of Etna in Sicily, and she laments the first miser who dug gold and gems out of the earth.

Þa seo Gesceadwisnes þa þis spell asæd hæfde, þa ongan 33.20
When — Reason then this discourse told had then began
heo singan ⁊ þus cwæð: Eala, hu gesælig seo forme eld
she to-sing and thus said O how happy the first age
was þises midangeardes, ða ælcum men þuhte genog on
was of-this middle-earth when to-each man seemed enough in
þære eorþan wæstmū. Næron þa welige hamas, ne mistlice
of-the earth fruits Not-were then wealthy homes nor various
swotmettas, ne drincas, ne diorwyrðra hrægla hi ne girndan,
dainties nor drinks nor of-precious garments they — desired
forþam hi þa git næran, ne hio nanwuht ne gesawon, ne
because they then yet were-not nor they anything — saw nor

ne geherdon. Ne gemdon hie nanes fyrenlustes, buton swiðe
— heard Nor cared they for-any sinful-lust but very
gemetlice þa gecynd beeodan; ealne weg hi æton æne on
moderately the nature observed all the-way they ate once in
dæg, ⁊ þ was to æfennes. Treowa wæstmas hi æton ⁊
day and that was at evening Of-trees fruits they ate and
wyrta, nalles scir win hi ne druncan, ne nanne wætan hi
herbs not-at-all clear wine they — drank nor any liquid they
ne cuþon wið hunige mengan; ne seolocenra hrægla mid
— knew with honey to-mix nor of-silken garments with
mistlicū bleowū hi ne gimdon. Ealne weg hi slepon ute on
various colors they — cared All way they slept outside in
triowa sceadū; hluterra wella wæter hi druncon. Ne geseah
of-trees shadows of-clear springs water they drank Not saw
nan cepa ealand ne weroð, ne geherde non mon þa get
any merchant island nor shore nor heard any man then yet
nanne sciphere, ne furþon ymbe nan gefeoht sprecan. Ne seo
any fleet nor even about any fight speak Nor the
eorðe þâ get besmiten mid ofslægenes monnes blode, ne mon
earth then yet defiled with of-slain man blood nor man
furðum gewundod; ne monn ne geseah þa git yfelwillende
even wounded nor one — saw then yet evil-willing
men; nænne weorðscipe næfdon, ne hi non mon ne lufude.
men no honor had nor them any man — loved
34.6 Eala þ ure tida nu ne mihtan weorþan swilce. Ac nu
Alas that our times now not could become such But now
manna gitsung is swa byrnende swa þ fyr on þære helle,
of-men avarice is so burning as the fire in the hell
seo is on þā munte þe Ætne hatte, on þam ieglande
which is in the mountain which Etna is-called in the island
þe Sicilia hatte; se munt bið simle swefle birnende,
which Sicily is-called the mountain is ever with-brimstone burning

ȝ ealla þa neahstowa þærymbutan forbærnð. Æala, hwæt
and all the neighboring-places thereabout burns Alas what
se forma gitsere wære, þe ærest þa eorþan ongan delfan
the first miser was who first the earth began to-dig
æfter golde, ȝ æfter gimmū, ȝ þa frecnan deorwyrðnesse
after gold and after gems and the dangerous preciousness
funde þe ær behyd wæs ȝ behelod mid ðære eorþan.
found which before hidden was and covered with the earth

XVI · POWER AND ITS HOLDERS

Wisdom says power is no good in itself, since it comes to the worst men, as it did to Theodoric and Nero, and ravages kingdoms like fire. A good man makes power good, while power only reveals the evil of a bad one. No tyrant can harm the rational mind, as Liberius showed, and the harm a man does to others can be done to him, as Busiris and Regulus found. Wealth cannot fill a miser nor power make its holder master of himself. Wisdom ends by singing of Nero's crimes and the heavy yoke he laid on the world.

Þa se Wisdom þa þis leoð asungen hæfde, þa ongan he 34.14
When — Wisdom then this song sung had then began he
eft spellian ȝ þus cwæþ: Hwæt mæg ic þy mare secgan be
again to-discourse and thus said What can I the more say about
þæm weorðscipe ȝ be þæm anwealde þisse worulde? For
the honor and about the power of-this world For
ðæm anwealde ge eow woldon âhebban up oð ðone heofen,
the power ye yourselves would lift up to the heaven
gif ge meahten. Þ is forðæmþe ge ne gemunon ne eac ne
if ye could That is because ye not remember nor also —
ongitað þone heofoncundan anweald ȝ þone weorðscipe; se
perceive the heavenly power and the honor which

is eower agen, ȝ þonan ge comon. Hwæt, se eower wela
is your own and thence ye came Lo the your wealth
þonne ȝ se eower anweald, þe ge nu weorðscipe hatað, gif
then and the your power which ye now honor call if
he becymð to þā eallra wyrrestan men, ȝ to þā þe his eallra
it comes to the of-all worst man and to him who of-it of-all
unweorðost bið, swa he nu dyde to þis ilcan Þeodrice, ȝ
unworthiest is as it now did to this same Theodoric and
iu ær to Nerone þæm casere, ȝ oft eac to mænegum
formerly before to Nero the emperor and often also to many
hiora gelicum, hu ne wile he ðonn̄ don swa hi dydon ȝ
of-their likes how not will it then do as they did and
get doð, ealle ða ricu þe him under bioð oððe awer
still do all the kingdoms which it under are or anywhere
on neaweste, forslean ȝ forheregian, swæ swa fyres leg deð
in nearness destroy and ravage so as of-fire flame does
drigne hæðfeld, oððe eft se byrnenda swefel ðone munt
dry heath or again the burning brimstone the mountain
bærnð þe we hatað Etne, se is on Sicilia ðæm ealonde;
burns which we call Etna which is in Sicily the island
swiðe onlic ðæm miclan flode ðe giu on Noes dagum wæs.
very like the great flood which formerly in of-Noah days was
34.30 Ic wene ðæt þu mæge gemunan ðætte eowre eldran gio
I think that thou can remember that your elders formerly
Romana witan on Torcwines dagum þæs ofermodan cyninges
of-Romans councilors in of-Tarquin days of-the proud king
for his ofermettum þone cynelican naman of Romebyrig
for his pride the royal name from Rome
æresð adydon. Ond eft swa ilce þa heretogan ðe hine ær
first put-away And again so same the leaders who him before
ut adrifon hi wolden eft ut adrifan for hiora ofermettū; ac
out drove they would again out drive for their pride but

hi ne meahton, forðæmþe se æftera anweald þara heretogena
they not could because the later power of-the leaders
þæm romaniscum witum get wyrs licode þōn se ærra þara
to-the Roman councilors yet worse pleased than the earlier of-the
cyninga. Gif hit þonne æfre gewirð, swa hit swiðe seldon
kings If it then ever happens as it very seldom
gewyrð, þæt se anweald ⁊ se weorðscipe becume to godum
happens that the power and the honor come to good
men ⁊ to wisum, hwæt bið þær þonne licwyrðes buton
man and to wise what is there then of-praiseworthy but
his god ⁊ his weorðscipe, þæs godan cyninges, næs þæs
his good and his honor of-the good king not-at-all of-the
anwealdes? Forþāþe se anwald næfre ne bið good buton se
power Because the power never — is good unless he
god sie þe hine hæbbe; ðy hit bið þæs monnes god næs
good be who it have therefore it is of-the man good not-at-all
þæs anwealdes, gif se anweald god bið. Forþā hit bið þætte
of-the power if the power good is Therefore it is that
nan man for his rice ne cymð to cræftum ⁊ to medemnesse,
no man for his rule — comes to virtues and to worthiness
ac for his cræftum ⁊ for his medūnesse he cymð to rice ⁊
but for his virtues and for his worthiness he comes to rule and
to anwealde. Þi ne bið nan man for his anwealde na þe
to power Therefore not is any man for his power — the
betera, ac for his cræftū he beoð good, gif he god bið, ⁊ for
better but for his virtues he is good if he good is and for
his cræftum he bið anwealdes weorðe, gif he his weorðe bið.
his virtues he is of-power worthy if he of-it worthy is
Leorniað forðæm wisdom, ⁊ þonne ge hine geleornod hæbben, 35.18
Learn therefore wisdom and when ye it learned have
ne forhycgað hine þonne. Þonne secge ic eow buton ælcum
not despise it then Then say I to-you without any

tweon þ ge magon þurh hine becuman to anwealde, þeah
doubt that ye can through it come to power though
ge no þæs anwealdes ne wilnigan. Ne þurfon ge no hogian
ye not of-the power — desire Not need ye — care
on þam anwealde, ne him æfter þringan. Gif ge wise beoð ⁊
for the power nor it after press If ye wise are and
gode, he wile folgian eow, þeah ge his no ne wilnigen. Ac
good it will follow you though ye of-it not — desire But
sege me nu hwæt eower deorwyrðesta wela ⁊ anwald sie,
tell to-me now what your most-precious wealth and power be
þe ge swiðost girnaþ. Ic wat þeah þ hit is þis andwearde
which ye most yearn-for I know yet that it is this present
lif ⁊ ðes brosnienda wela ðe we ær ymbe spræcon.
life and this perishing wealth which we before about spoke
35.28 Eala, hwæðer ge netenlican men ongiten hwilc se wela sie, ⁊
O whether ye beastly men perceive what the wealth be and
se anwald, ⁊ ða woruldsælða? Þa sint eowere hlafordas ⁊
the power and the worldly-felicities They are your lords and
eowere waldendas, næs ge heora. Gif ge nu gesawan hwelce
your rulers not-at-all ye theirs If ye now saw any
mus þ wære hlaford ofer oðre mys, ⁊ sette him domas, ⁊
mouse that were lord over other mice and set them laws and
nedde hie æfter gafole, hu wunderlic wolde eow ðæt þincan;
compelled them after tribute how wonderful would to-you that seem
hwelce cehhettunge ge woldan þæs habban, ⁊ mid hwelce
what jeering ye would at-that have and with what
hleahtre ge woldon bion astered. Hu micle mare is ðonne
laughter ye would be stirred How much more is then
þæs monnes lichoma to metenne wið þ mod þonne seo
of-the man body to measure against the mind than the
mus wið ðone mon. Hwæt, ge þonne magon eaðe geþencan,
mouse against the man Lo ye then can easily think

gif ge hit georne ymbe smeagan willað ⁊ æfter spyrigan, þ
if ye it eagerly about consider will and after inquire that
nanre wuhte lichoma ne beoð þōn tederra þōn þæs monnes.
of-no creature body — is the frailer than of-the man
Þæm magon derian þa læstan fleogan, ge ða gnættas mid
To-him can harm the least flies yea the gnats with
swyðe lytlum sticelum him deriað, ⁊ eac ða smalan wyrmas
very little stings him harm and also the small worms
ðe ðone mon ægðer ge innan ge utan wyrdað, ⁊ hwilum
which the man each both within and without injure and at-times
fulneah deadne gedoð; ge furðum þios lytle loppe hine
nearly dead make yea even this little flea him
deadne gedeð. Swilca wuhta him derigað ægðer ge innan ge
dead makes Such creatures him harm each both within and
utan. On hwæm mæg ænig mon oðrum derian buton on his
without In what can any man another harm but in his
lichoman, oððe eft on hiora welum, þe ge hatað gesælða?
body or again in their riches which ye call felicities
Ne nan mon ne mæg ðæm gesceadwisan mode gederian, ne 36.14
Nor any man — can the rational mind harm nor
him gedon þ hit sie ðæt ðæt hit ne bið. Ðæt is swiðe
it make that it be that which it not is That is very
sweotol to ongitanne be sumum romaniscum æþelinge, se wæs
clear to perceive by a-certain Roman nobleman who was
haten Liberius; se wæs to manegum witū geworht, forðæmþe
called Liberius who was to many torments made because
he nolde meldian on his geferan þe mid him siredon ymb
he would-not inform against his companions who with him plotted about
ðone cyning þe hie ær mid unrihte gewunnen hæfdon. Þa
the king whom they before with wrong won had When
he ða beforan ðone graman cyning gelæd wæs, ⁊ he hine
he then before the fierce king led was and he him

het secgan hwæt his geferan wæron ðe mid him ymbe
commanded to-say who his companions were who with him about
sieredon, þa forceaw he his tungan ⁊ wearp hine mid ðære
plotted then bit-off he his tongue and threw him with the
tungan on þæt neb foran. Forðæm hit gewearð þ ðæm wisan
tongue in the face in-front Therefore it happened that to-the wise
men com to lofe ⁊ to wyrðscipe þ se unrihtwisa cyning
man came to praise and to honor what the unrighteous king
him tiohhode to wite. Hwæt is þ demma ðæt ænig mon
to-him intended for punishment What is the harm that any man
mæge oðrum don, þ he ne mæge him don ðæt ilce? Gif
can to-another do that he not can him do the same If
he ne mæg, oðer mon mæg. We leornodon eac be ðæm
he not can another man can We learned also about the
wælreowan Bosiridem, se wæs on Egyptum. Ðæs leodhatan
cruel Busiris who was in Egypt Of-the tyrant
gewuna wæs þ he wolde ælcne cuman swiðe arlice underfoon
habit was that he would each stranger very honorably receive
⁊ swiðe swæslice wið gebæran, ðonne he æresð him to com.
and very kindly toward behave when he first him to came
36.32 Ac eft, ær he him from cerde, he sceolde bion ofslægen.
But again before he him from turned he should be slain
Ond ða geberede hit ðæt Erculus Iobes sunu com to him. Þa
And then happened it that Hercules of-Jove son came to him Then
wolde he don ymbe hine swa swa he ymbe manigne cuman
would he do about him so as he about many strangers
ær dyde; wolde hine adrencan on þære ea ðe Nilus hatte.
before did (be)-would him drown in the river which Nile is-called
Ða wearð he strengra, ⁊ adrencte hine swiðe rihte be Godes
Then became he stronger and drowned him very rightly by of-God
dome, swa swa he manigne oðerne ær dyde. Hwæt, eac
judgment so as he many another before did Lo also

Regulus, se foremæra heretoga, þa he feaht wið Africanas, he
Regulus the renowned leader when he fought against Africans he
hæfde fulneah unasecgendlicne sige ofer þa Africanas; þa he
had nearly unspeakable victory over the Africans when he
hi þa swiðost forslagen hæfde, ða het he hi bindan ⁊
them then most slaughtered had then commanded he them to-bind and
on balcan lecgan. Đa gebyrede hit swiðe hraðe þ he wearð
in heaps to-lay Then happened it very quickly that he was
gebunden mid hira racentum. Hwæt wenst þu þōn hwæt godes
bound with their chains What thinkest thou then what of-good
se anweald sie, þōn he on nane wisan his agenes cræftes ne
the power be when he in no way of-his own strength —
mæg forbugan þ he ðæt ilce yfel ne geðafige oðrum monnū
can avoid that he the same evil — suffer from-other men
þ he ær oðrū dyde? Hu ne is se anweald þōn þær nauht?
that he before to-others did How not is the power then there naught
Hwæt wenst þu? gif se weorðscipe ⁊ se anweald his agnes 37.14
What thinkest thou if the honor and the power of-its own
þonces god wære ⁊ his selfes anweald hæfde, hwæðer
will good were and of-its self power had whether
he wolde þā forcuðestū monnū folgian swa he nu hwilum
it would the most-wicked men follow as it now at-times
deð? Hu ne wast þu þ hit nis nauht gecynde ne nauht
does How not knowest thou that it not-is at-all natural nor at-all
gewunelic þ ænig wiðerweard þing bion gemenged wið oðrū
usual that any contrary thing be mingled with other
wiðerweardū, oððe ænige geferrædenne wið habban? Ac seo
contrary or any fellowship with have But the
gecynd hit onscunað þæt hi ne magon weorðan togædere
nature it shuns that they not can become together
gemenged, þe ma ðe þ good ⁊ ðæt yfel magon ætgædere
mingled the more than the good and the evil can together

bion. Nu þe is swiðe openlice gecyðed þ þis andwearde
be Now to-thee is very openly shown that this present
rice ȝ þas weoruldgesælþa ȝ þes anweald of heora agnū
rule and these worldly-felicities and this power from their own
gecynde ȝ heora agnes gewealdes nauht gode ne sient, ne
nature and of-their own control not-at-all good — are nor
heora selfra nanne anwald nabbað, nu hi willað clifian on
of-them selves any power have now they will cleave to
þam wyrrestan monnum, ȝ him geþafiað þæt hi bioð hiora
the worst men and them allow that they are their
hlafordas. Nis ðæs nu nan tweo ðæt oft þa eallra forcuþestan
lords Not-is of-that now any doubt that often the of-all most-wicked
men cumað to þam anwealde ȝ to þam weorðscipe. Gif se
men come to the power and to the honor If the
anweald ðonne of his agenre gecynde ȝ his agnes gewealdes
power then from its own nature and of-its own control
god wære, ne underfenge he næfre þa yfelan ac þa godan.
good were not would-receive it ever the evil but the good
37.30 Þæs ilcan is to wenanne to eallū ðæm gesælþum þe seo
Of-the same is to expect of all the felicities which the
wyrd brengð þisses andweardan lifes ge on cræftum ge on
fate brings of-this present life both in skills and in
æhtū; forþæmþe hi hwilum becumað to þā forcuðestum.
possessions because they at-times come to the most-wicked
Hwæt, we genog georne witon ðæt nanne mon þæs ne tweoð
Lo we enough surely know that no man of-that — doubts
þ se sie strong on his mægene þe mon gesihð þ stronglic
that he be strong in his might who one sees that strong
weorc wyrcð; ne þōn ma, gif he hwæt bið, ne tweoð nænne
work works nor the more if he swift is — doubts any
mon þ he hwæt ne sie. Her endað sio forme boc Boetius ȝ
man that he swift — be Here ends the first book of-Boethius and

onginneð sio æftere. Swa mæg eac se dreamcræft ðæt se mon
begins the second So can also the music-art that the man
bið dreamere, ȝ se læcecræft þ he bið læce, ȝ seo racu
is musician and the medicine that he is physician and the rhetoric
deð þæt he bið reccere. Swa deð eac se gecynda cræft ælcum
makes that he is orator So does also the natural power to-each
men ðæt þ god ne mæg beon wið ðæt yfel gemenged, ne
man that the good not can be with the evil mingled nor
þ yfel wið þ god; þeah hie buta on anum men sien, þeah
the evil with the good though they both in one man be yet
bið ægðer him onsundran. Þ gecynd nyle næfre nanwuht
is each itself apart The nature will-not ever anything
wiðerweardes lætan gemengan, forðæm heora ægðer onscunað
of-contrary let mingle because of-them each shuns
oðer, ȝ ægðer wile bion þ ðæt hit bið. Ne mæg se wela
other and each will be that which it is Not can the wealth
gedon þ se gitsere ne sie gitsere, ne ða grundleasan gitsunga
make that the miser not be miser nor the bottomless avarice
gefyllan; ne se anweald ne mæg gedon his waldend wealdendne.
fill nor the power — can make its wielder powerful
Nu þonne nu ælc gesceaft onscunað ðæt ðæt hire wiðerweard 38.16
Now then now each creature shuns that which to-it contrary
bið, ȝ swiðe georne tiolað þ hit him þ from ascufe,
is and very eagerly strives that it itself that from push
hwylce twa sint þonne wiðerweardran betwuh him þonne
what two are then more-contrary between themselves than
god ȝ yfel? Ne weorþað hi næfre tosomne gefeged. Be
good and evil Not become they ever together joined By
þæm þu meaht ongitan, gif þa gesælþa ðises andweardan
that thou canst perceive if the felicities of-this present
lifes þurh hie selfe heora selfra geweald ahton, ȝ of heora
life through them selves of-their selves control had and from their

agnū gecynde gode wæron, þōn woldon hi simle on þā
own nature good were then would they ever to those
clifian þe him god mid worhte, nalæs yfel. Ac ðær ðær hi
cleave who them good with wrought not-at-all evil But there where they
gode beoð, þōn beoð hi þurh þæs godan monnes god gode
good are then are they through of-the good man good good
þe him god mid wyrcð, ⁊ se bið þurh God god. Gif hine
who them good with works and he is through God good If it
þonne yfel mon hæfð, þōn bið he yfel þurh þæs monnes
then evil man has then is it evil through of-the man
yfel þe him yfel mid deð, ⁊ þurh dioful. Hwæt godes is
evil who it evil with does and through devil What of-good is
se wela ðonne, ðonne he ne mæg þa grundleasan gitsunga
the wealth then when it not can the bottomless avarice
afyllan þæs gitseres; oððe se anweald, ðonne he ne mæg
fill of-the miser or the power when it not can
his waldend waldendne gedon? Ac hine gebindað þa won
its wielder powerful make But him bind the wicked
welnunga mid hiora unabindendlicum racentum. Đeah mon
desires with their unbindable chains Though one
nu yfelū men anwald selle, ne gedeð se anwald hine godne
now to-evil man power give not makes the power him good
ne medomne, gif he ær næs, ac geopenað his yfel, gif he
nor worthy if he before was-not but opens his evil if he
ær yfel wæs, ⁊ gedeð hit ðonne sweotol, gif hit ær næs.
before evil was and makes it then manifest if it before was-not
39.2 Forðæm þeah he ær yfel wolde, þōn nysste he hu he hit swa
Because though he before evil wished then knew-not he how he it so
fullice acyðde, ær he fullne anweald hæfde. Þæt gewyrð for
fully made-known before he full power had That happens for
þam dysige þe ge fægniað þæt ge moton sceppan þone naman,
the folly that ye rejoice that ye may create the name

hatan þ sælþa þ nane ne beoð, ⁊ þæt medumnes þ
call that felicities which none — are and that worthiness which
nan medomnes ne beoð; forþā hi gecyðað on heora endunge,
no worthiness — is because they show in their ending
þōn hie endiað, þ hie nauðer ne bioð, forþæm nawðer ne se
when they end that they neither — are because neither — the
wela ne se anweald ne se weorðscipe ne beoð to wenanne þ
wealth nor the power nor the honor — are to think that
hit seo soþe gesælð sie. Swa hit is nu hraðost to secganne
it the true felicity be So it is now soonest to say
be eallum þā woruldgesælðum þe seo wyrd brengð, þ nan
about all the worldly-felicities which the fate brings that no
wuht on nis ðæs þær to wilnianne seo, forþāðe þær nan wuht
whit in is of-that there to desire be because there no whit
gecyndelices godes on nis þæs ðe of him cume. Þ is on
of-natural good in is of-that which from them come That is in
ðæm sweotol þ hi hi symle to ðæm godū ne ðeodað, ne
that manifest that they themselves ever to the good not join nor
ða yfelan gode ne gedoð þe hi hie oftosð to geþiodað.
the evil good — make whom they themselves oftenest to join
Ða se Wisdom ða þis spell ðus areaht hæfde, ða 39.15
When — Wisdom then this discourse thus told had then
ongan he eft giddian ⁊ þus cwæð: Hwæt, we witon
began he again to-sing and thus said Lo we know
hwelce wælriownessa ⁊ hwilce hryras ⁊ unryhthæmedu
what cruelties and what ruins and adulteries
⁊ hwilc man ⁊ hwilce arleasnesse se unrihtwisa kasere
and what crime and what impiety the unrighteous emperor
Neron weorhte. Se het æt sumum cyrre forbærnan ealle
Nero wrought He commanded at a-certain time to-burn all
Romeburg on anne sið æfter þære bisene þe gio Trogiaburg
Rome at one time after the example that formerly Troy

barn. Hine lyste eac geseon hu seo burne, hu lange, ⁊ hu
burned Him it-pleased also to-see how it burned how long and how
leohte be þære oðerre; ⁊ eft he het ofslean ealle þa
bright beside the other and again he commanded to-slay all the
wisestan witan Romana, ge furðon his agene modor, ⁊ his
wisest councilors of-Romans yea even his own mother and his
agene broðor; ge furðō his agen wif he ofslog mid sweorde;
own brother yea even his own wife he slew with sword
⁊ for ðyllecū næs he nanwuht geunrotsod, ac wæs þy
and for such was-not he at-all saddened but was the
bliþra ⁊ fagenode þæs. Ond þeah betwuh þyllecum unrihtū
blither and rejoiced in-that And yet amid such wrongs
wæs him no þy læs underþeod eall þes middangeard from
was to-him not the less subject all this middle-earth from
eastweardū oþ westeweardne, ⁊ eft from suðeweardū oð
east to west and again from south to
norðeweardne; eall he was on his anwealde. Wenst ðu þ
north all it was in his power Thinkest thou that
se godcunda anweald ne mihte afŷrran þone ânweald þā
the divine power not could remove the power from-the
unrihtwîsan kâsere, ⁊ him þære wûhhunge gestêoran, gif
unrighteous emperor and him of-the madness restrain if
he wolde? Gise, la, gese; îc wat þæt he mihte, gif he wolde.
he would Yes lo yes I know that he could if he would
39.31 Eala, eaw, hu hefig gêoc hê beslêpte on eallæ þâ þæ on
Alas alas how heavy yoke he laid on all those who in
his tidū libbende wæron on eorðan; ⁊ hu oft his sweord
his times living were on earth and how often his swords
wæron besyled on unscyldegū blode. Hu ne was þær genog
were sullied in innocent blood How not was there enough

sweotol þ se anweald his agenes ðonces god næs, þa
clear that the power of-its own will good was-not when
se god næs þe he to cō?
he good was-not whom it to came

XVII · THE TOOLS OF KINGSHIP

The Mind protests that it never loved power for its own sake, but only wanted the tools and material for the work entrusted to it. Every craft needs tools, and a king's are a well-peopled land with men who pray, men who fight, and men who work, whom he must sustain with land, gifts, weapons, food, ale, and clothing. Without wisdom every skill and power is soon forgotten, and it wished to live worthily while it lived and to leave behind a memory of good works.

Ða se Wisdom ða þis leoð asungen hæfde, ða gesugode 40.5
When — Wisdom then this song sung had then was-silent
he; ȝ þa andswarode þæt Mod ȝ þus cwæð: Eala,
he and then answered the Mind and thus said O
Gesceadwisnes, hwæt, þu wast þ me næfre seo gitsung ȝ
Reason lo thou knowest that me never the avarice and
seo gemægð þisses eorðlican anwealdes forwel ne licode, ne ic
the ambition of-this earthly power greatly — pleased nor I
ealles forswiðe ne girnde þisses eorðlican rices, buton tola ic
altogether too-greatly — yearned-for this earthly rule but tools I
wilnode þeah ȝ andweorces to þā weorce þe me beboden
desired yet and material for the work which to-me commanded
was to wyrcanne; þ was þ ic unfracodlice ȝ gerisenlice
was to work that was that I not-shamefully and fittingly
mihte steoran ȝ reccan þone anwald þe me befæst wæs.
might steer and rule the power which to-me committed was
Hwæt, þu wast þ nan mon ne mæg nænne cræft cyðan ne
Lo thou knowest that no man — can any skill show nor

nænne anweald reccan ne stioran butū tolū ⁊ andweorce.
any power rule nor steer without tools and material
Þ bið ælces cræftes andweorc þ mon þone cræft buton
That is of-every skill material which one the skill without
wyrcan ne mæg. Þ bið þonne cyninges andweorc ⁊ his
work not can That is then of-king material and his
tol mid to ricsianne, þ he hæbbe his lond fullmonnad; he
tools with to reign that he have his land fully-manned he
sceal habban gebedmen ⁊ fyrdmen ⁊ weorcmen. Hwæt, þu
shall have praying-men and fighting-men and working-men Lo thou
wast þætte butan þissan tolan nan cyning his cræft ne mæg
knowest that without these tools no king his skill — can
cyðan. Þ is eac his ondweorc, þ he habban sceal to ðæm
show That is also his material that he have shall for the
tolū þā þrim geferscipū biwiste. Þ is þōn heora biwist:
tools the three fellowships sustenance That is then their sustenance
land to bugianne, ⁊ gifta, ⁊ wæpnu, ⁊ mete, ⁊ ealo,
land to dwell-in and gifts and weapons and food and ale
⁊ claþas, ⁊ gehwæt þæs ðe þa þre geferscipas behofiað.
and clothes and everything of-that which the three fellowships need
40.23 Ne mæg he butan þisū þas tol gehealdan, ne buton þisū tolū
Not can he without these these tools hold nor without these tools
nan þara þinga wyrcan þe him beboden is to wyrcenne. Forþy
any of-the things work which to-him commanded is to work Therefore
ic wilnode andweorces þone anweald mid to reccenne, þ mine
I desired material the power with to rule that my
cræftas ⁊ anweald ne wurden forgitene ⁊ forholene. Forþā ælc
skills and power not became forgotten and concealed Because each
cræft ⁊ ælc anweald bið sona forealdod ⁊ forsugod, gif
skill and each power is soon grown-old and passed-over-in-silence if
he bið buton wisdome; forðæm ne mæg non mon nænne cræft
it is without wisdom because not can any man any skill

bringan buton wisdome; forðæmþe swa hwæt swa þurh dysig
bring-forth without wisdom because so what so through folly
gedon bið, e mæg hit mon næfre to cræfte gerecan. Þ is nu
done is not can it one ever to skill reckon That is now
hraðost to secganne, þ ic wilnode weorðfullice to libbanne þa
soonest to say that I desired worthily to live the
hwile þe ic lifde, ⁊ æfter minū life þæm monnum to læfanne
while that I lived and after my life to-the men to leave
þe æfter me wæren min gemyndig on godum weorcum.
who after me were of-me mindful in good works

XVIII · THE NARROW ROOM OF FAME

Reason warns that the desire for fame and power tempts even noble minds. The earth is a mere point against the heavens, and Ptolemy showed that men inhabit less than a quarter of it. Its many peoples and tongues mean no name can spread far, and even Rome's was unknown beyond the Caucasus in Cicero's day. Fame shrinks to nothing against eternity. A man who boasted that he was a philosopher lost that name when he could not bear a wise man's taunts in silence, and the soul, once freed, cares nothing for earthly praise.

Ða ðis þa gesprecen was, þa gesugode þ Mod, ⁊ seo 41.7
When this then spoken was then was-silent the Mind and —
Gesceadwisnes ongon sprecan ⁊ þus cwæþ: Eala, Mod, eala;
Reason began to-speak and thus said O Mind alas
an yfel is swiðe to anscunianne; þ is þ þte swiðe singallice
one evil is very to shun that is that which very continually
⁊ swiðe hefiglice beswicð ealra þara monna mod þe beoð on
and very heavily deceives of-all the men mind who are in
heora gecynde gecorene, ⁊ þeah ne beoð to þā hrofe þōn git
their nature chosen and yet not are to the roof then yet

cumen fulfremedra mægena; þ is þōn wilnung leases gilpes
come of-perfect virtues that is then desire of-false vainglory
ȝ unryhtes anwealdes ȝ ungemetlices hlisan godra weorca
and of-wrong power and of-immoderate repute of-good works
ofer eall folc. Forþam wilnigað monige men anwealdes þe
over all people Therefore desire many men power because
hie woldon habban godne hlisan, þeah hi his unwyrðe sien;
they would have good repute though they of-it unworthy be
ge furðum se ealra forcuþesta wilnað þæs ilcan. Ac se þe wile
yea even the of-all most-wicked desires the same But he who will
wislice ȝ geornlice æfter þam hlisan spyrian, þōn ongit he
wisely and diligently after the repute inquire then perceives he
swiðe hræðe hu lytel he bið, ȝ hu læne, ȝ hu tedre, ȝ
very quickly how little it is and how transitory and how frail and
hu bedæled ælces godes. Gif þu nu geornlice smeagan wilt ȝ
how bereft of-every good If thou now diligently consider wilt and
witan wilt ymb ealræ þisse eorðan ymbhwyrft from easteweardan
know wilt about of-all this earth circuit from east
ðisses middangeardes oð westeweardne, ȝ from suðeweardum
of-this middle-earth to west and from south
oð norðeweardne, swa swa þu liornodest on þære bec þe
to north so as thou learnedst in the book which
Astralogium hatte, ðonne meaht þu ongetan þ he is eal
Astrologium is-called then canst thou perceive that it is all
wið þone heofon to metanne swilce an lytlu price on bradum
against the heaven to measure as a little point on broad
brede, oðþe rondbeag on scelde, æfter wisra monna dome.
board or boss on shield after of-wise men judgment
41.26 Hu ne wast þu þ ðu leornodest on Ptolomeus bocū, se
How not knowest thou what thou learnedst in of-Ptolemy books who
towrat ealles þises middangeardes gemêt on anre bêc? Þær
wrote-out of-all this middle-earth measure in one book There

þu miht on geseon þ eall moncynn ȝ ealle netenu ne
thou canst in see that all mankind and all beasts not
notigað nawer neah feorðan dæles þisse eorðan ðæs þe men
use anywhere near of-fourth part of-this earth of-that which men
gefaran magan, forþæmþe hy hit ne magon eall gebugian,
travel can because they it not can all inhabit
sum for hâto, sum for cile; ȝ þone mæstan dæl his hæfð
some for heat some for cold and the greatest part of-it has
sæ oferseten. Do nu of ðam feorðan dæle an þinū mode
sea occupied Take now from the fourth part in thy mind
eall þ seo sæ his ofseten hæfð, ȝ eal þa sceard þe hio
all that the sea of-it occupied has and all the gaps which it
him on genumen hæfð, ȝ eall þ his fennas ȝ moras
it from taken has and all that of-it fens and moors
genumen habbað, ȝ eall þ on eallum þiodum westes ligeð,
taken have and all that in all nations waste lies
þonne meaht þu ongitan þte þæs ealles nis monnum þonne
then canst thou perceive that of-that all not-is to-men then
mare læfed to bugianne, buton swelce on lytel cauertun. Is
more left to inhabit but as in little courtyard Is
þ þonne fordyslic geswinc þ ge winnað eowre woruld to
that then very-foolish toil that ye labor your life to
ðon þæt ge wilniað eowerne hlisan ungemetlice to brædanne
that that ye desire your repute immoderately to spread
ofer swelcne cauertun; swelce þ is ðætte men bugiað þisse
over such courtyard as that is which men inhabit of-this
worulde fulneah swilce an prica for þæt oðer. Ac hwæt
world nearly as a point beside the other But what
rumedlices oððe micellices oððe weorðfullices hæfð se eower
of-spacious or of-great or of-worthy has the your

gilp þe ge þær bogiað on þā fiftan dæle healfū londes ⁊
vainglory which ye there dwell in the fifth part half of-land and
unlondes, mid sæ, mid fænne, mid ealle, swa hit is generwed.
of-unland with sea with fen with all so it is narrowed
42.17 To hwon wilnige ge þonne to ungemetlice þ ge eowerne
To what desire ye then too immoderately that ye your
naman tobrædan ofer þone teoðan dæl, nu his mare nis
name spread over the tenth part now of-it more not-is
mid sæ, mid fænne, mid ealle?
with sea with fen with all
42.21 Geðencað eac þ on ðisum lytlan pearroce þe we ær
Consider also that in this little enclosure which we before
ymb spræcon bugiað swiðe manega þeoda ⁊ swiðe mislica,
about spoke dwell very many peoples and very various
⁊ swiðe ungelica ægþer ge on spræce ge on þeawum ge
and very unlike each both in speech and in ways and
on eallum sidum, ealra þara þeoda þe ge nu wilniað swiðe
in all customs of-all the peoples which ye now desire very
ungemetlice þ ge scylon eowerne naman ofer tobrædan. Þ
immoderately that ye shall your name over spread That
ge næfre gedon ne magon, forðon hiora spræc is todæled on
ye never do — can because their speech is divided into
twa ⁊ on hundseofontig, ⁊ ælc þara spræca is todæled on
two and into seventy and each of-the speeches is divided into
manega þioda, ⁊ þa sint tolegena ⁊ todælda mid sæ ⁊ mid
many peoples and they are separated and divided by sea and by
wudum ⁊ mid muntum ⁊ mid fennum, ⁊ mid manegum
woods and by mountains and by fens and by many
⁊ mid mislicum westenum ⁊ ungeferum londum, þ hit
and by various wastes and impassable lands that it
furðū cepemen ne gefarað. Ac hu mag ðær þonne synderlice
even merchants not travel But how can there then separately

anes rices monnes nama cuman, þonne þær mon furðum þære
of-one powerful man name come when there one even of-the
burge naman ne geherð ne þære þeode þe he on hāfæst bið?
city name not hears nor of-the people which he in home-fast is
Þy ic nat for hwilcon dysige ge girnað þ ge woldon
Therefore I not-know for what folly ye yearn that ye would
eowerne naman tobrædan geond ealle eorþan; þ ge næfre
your name spread throughout all earth which ye never
gedon ne magon, ne furðum nawer neah. Hwæt, þu wast hu
do — can nor even anywhere near Lo thou knowest how
micel Romana rice wæs on Marcuses dagū þæs heretogan;
great of-Romans empire was in of-Marcus days of-the leader
se wæs oðre naman haten Tullius, ȝ þriddan Cicero.
who was by-other name called Tullius and by-third Cicero
Hwæt, he cyðde on sumre his boca ðætte þa get Romana 43.8
Lo he declared in one of-his books that then yet of-Romans
nama ne come ofer þa muntas, þa we hatað Caucaseas, ne
name not came over the mountains which we call Caucasus nor
ða Sciððeas þe on oðre healfe þara munta bugiað furðum
the Scythians who on other side of-the mountains dwell even
þære burge naman ne þæs folces ne geherdon, ac þa he
of-the city name nor of-the people — heard but then it
com ærest to Parðum, ȝ wæs þær swiðe niwe; ac he wæs
came first to Parthians and was there very new but it was
þeah þærymbutan manegum folce swiðe egeful. Hu ne ongite
yet thereabout to-many people very terrible How not perceive
ge nu hu nearo se eower hlisa bion wile þe ge þær ymb
ye now how narrow the your repute be will which ye there about
swincað ȝ unrihtlice tioliað to gebrædanne? Hwæt wenstu
toil and wrongfully strive to spread What thinkest-thou
hu micelne hlisan ȝ hu micelne weorðscipe an romanisc
how much repute and how much honor a Roman

man mæge habban on þā lande þær mon furðum ðære
man can have in the land where one even of-the
burge naman ne geherde, ne ealles ðæs folces hlisa ne com?
city name not heard nor at-all of-the people repute — came
Þeah nu hwelc mon ungemetlice ⁊ ungedafenlice wilnige
Though now any man immoderately and unfittingly desire
þ he scyle his hlisan tobrædan ofer ealle eorþan, he ne
that he should his repute spread over all earth he not
mæg þ forðbringan, forþamþe þara ðeoda þeawas sint swiðe
can that bring-about because of-the peoples ways are very
ungelice, ⁊ hiora gesetenessa swiðe mislica, swa ðætte þ
unlike and their institutions very various so that that
on oðrum lande betst licað þte þ bið hwilum on ðæm
in one land best pleases that that is at-times in the
oðrum tælwyrðlicosð, ⁊ eac micles wites wyrðe. Forðæm
other most-blameworthy and also of-much punishment worthy Therefore
ne mæg nan mon habban gelic lof on ælcum londe,
not can any man have like praise in each land
forþonðe on ælcum londe ne licað þ on oðrum licað.
because in each land not pleases what in other pleases
43.27 Forðy sceolde ælc mon bion on ðæm wel gehealden þ he
Therefore should each man be in that well content that he
on his agnum earde licode. Þeah he nu maran wilnige, he ne
in his own country pleased Though he now more desire he not
mæg furðum þ forðbringan, forþæmþe seldhwonne bið þte
can even that bring-about because seldom is (it)-that
auht monegum monnum anes hwæt licige; forþy wyrð oft
at-all to-many men one thing please therefore becomes often
godes monnes lof alegen inne on þære ilcan þeode þe he
of-good man praise suppressed inside in the same people which he
on hamfæst bið, ⁊ eac forþāþe hit oft swiðe sarlice gebyrede
in home-fast is and also because it often very sorely happened

þurh þa heardsælþa þara writera ðæt hi for heora slæwðe
through the hard-fortunes of-the writers that they for their sloth
ȝ for gimeleste ȝ eac for recceleste forleton unwriten þara
and for negligence and also for carelessness left unwritten of-the
monna ðeawas ȝ hiora dæda, þe on hiora dagum formæroste
men ways and their deeds who in their days most-renowned
ȝ weorðgeornuste wæron. ȝ þeah hi nu eall hiora lif ȝ
and most-honor-eager were and though they now all their life and
hira dæda awriten hæfdon, swa swa hi sceoldon gif hi dohton,
their deeds written had so as they should if they were-good
hu ne forealdodon þa gewritu þeah ȝ losodon þonecan þe
how not grew-old the writings yet and perished whenever that
hit wære, swa some swa þa writeras dydon, ȝ eac þa ðe
it were so same as the writers did and also those whom
hi ymb writon. ȝ eow þincð þeah þ ge hæbben ece
they about wrote and to-you seems yet that ye have eternal
are gif ge mægen on ealre eowerre worulde geearnigan þ
honor if ye can in all your life earn that
ge hæbben godne hlisan æfter eowrum dagum. Gif þu nu
ye have good repute after your days If thou now
getelest þa hwila þisses andweardan lifes ȝ þisses hwilendlican
reckonest the times of-this present life and of-this transitory
wið þæs ungeendodan lifes hwila, hwæt bið hit þonne?
against of-the unending life times what is it then
Tele nu þa lengu þære hwile þe þu þin eage on beprewan 44.13
Reckon now the length of-the while which thou thy eye in wink
mæge wið ten ðusend wintra; þonne habbað þa hwila
can against ten thousand winters then have the times
hwæthwugu onlices, þeah hit lytel sie; þ is þōn þ heora
something of-like though it little be that is then that of-them
ægþer hæfð ende. Tele nu þon þ ten þusend geara, ge þeah
each has end Reckon now then the ten thousand years yea though

þu ma wille, wið þ ece ⁊ þæt ungeendode lif; þōn ne
thou more will against the eternal and the unending life then not
finst þu þær nauht angelices, forðam þ ten ðusend geara,
findest thou there aught of-like because the ten thousand years
þeah hit lang ðince, ascortaþ, ⁊ þæs oðres næfre ne cymð
though it long seem runs-short and of-the other never — comes
nan ende. Forþæm hit nis no to metanne þ geendodlice
any end Therefore it not-is — to measure the finite
wið ðæt ungeendodlice. Þeah þu nu telle from þises
against the infinite Though thou now reckon from of-this
middangeardes fruman oð ðone ende, ⁊ mete þonne þa gear
middle-earth beginning to the end and measure then the years
wið þ ðe nænne ende næfð, þonne ne bið þær nauht
against that which no end has then not is there aught
anlices. Swa bið eac se hlisa þara foremærena monna; þeah
of-like So is also the repute of-the renowned men though
he hwilum lang sie, ⁊ fela geara þurhwunige, he bið þeah
it at-times long be and many years endure it is yet
swiðe scort to metanne wið ðone þe næfre ne geendað.
very short to measure against that which never — ends
44.28 ⁊ ge ne reccað ðeah hweðer ge auht to gode don wið ænegū
and ye not care yet whether ye aught of good do for any
oþrū þingum buton wið þam lytlan lofe þæs folces, ⁊ wið
other things but for the little praise of-the people and for
þæm scortan hlisan þe we ær ymb spræcon. Earniað þæs,
the short repute which we before about spoke (Ye)-earn that
⁊ forsioð þa cræftas eoweres ingeðonces ⁊ eowres andgietes
and despise the virtues of-your mind and of-your understanding
⁊ eowre gesceadwisnesse, ⁊ woldon habban eowerra godena
and of-your reason and would have of-your good
weorca mede æt fremdra monna cwiddunge. Wilnigað þærto
works reward from of-strange men talk (Ye)-desire thereto

þære mede þe ge to Gode sceolden. Hwæt, þu gehyrdest
the reward which ye from God should Lo thou heardest
þætte gio dagū gelomp þ an swiðe wis mon ȝ swiðe
that in-former days happened that a very wise man and very
rice ongan fandigan anes uðwitan ȝ hine bismrode, forðæm
powerful began to-test a philosopher and him mocked because
he hine swa orgellice up ahof, ȝ bodode þæs þ he uðwita
he himself so arrogantly up raised and proclaimed that that he philosopher
wære; ne cyðde he hit mid nænum cræftū, ac mid leasum
were not showed he it with any virtues but with false
ȝ ofermodlicū gelpe. Þa wolde se wisa mon his fandian,
and proud vainglory Then would the wise man him test
hwæðer he swa wis wære swa he self wende þ he wære.
whether he so wise were as he himself thought that he were
Ongon hine þa hyspan, ȝ hearmcwidian. Þa geherde se
Began him then to-mock and to-revile Then heard the
uðwita swiðe geþyldelice þæs wisan monnes word sume hwile;
philosopher very patiently of-the wise man words some while
ac siððan he his hispinge gehered hæfde, þa scylde he ongean
but after he his mockery heard had then defended he back
swiðe ungeþyldelice, þeah he ær licette þ he uðwita wære.
very impatiently though he before pretended that he philosopher were
Ahsode hine þa eft hwæðer him þuhte þ he uþwita 45.14
(He)-asked him then again whether to-him it-seemed that he philosopher
wære þe nære. ða andswarode se wisa mon him ȝ cwæð:
were or not-were then answered the wise man him and said
Ic wolde cweþan þ þu uðwita wære, gif þu geðyldig wære
I would say that thou philosopher wert if thou patient wert
ȝ gesugian meahte. Hu langsum wæs him se hlisa, þa he
and be-silent couldst How lasting was to-him the repute which he
ær mid leasungum wilnode. Hu ne forbærst he þa þærrihte
before with lies desired How not burst he then straightway

for ðæm anum andwyrde. Hwæt forstod þonne þæm betstum
for the one answer What availed then to-the best
monnum þe ær us wæron þ hi swa swiðe wilnodon
men who before us were that they so greatly desired
þæs idelan gilpes ȝ þæs hlisan æfter heora deaþe? oððe
the idle boasting and the repute after their death or
hwæt forstent hit þæm þe nu sindon? Þy wære ælcum
what avails it to-those who now are Therefore were to-each
men mare þearf þ he wilnode godra cræfta þōn leases
man more need that he desired good virtues than false
hlisan. Hwæt hæfð he æt þā hlisan æfter þæs lichoman
repute What has he from the repute after of-the body
gedale ȝ þære sawle? Hu ne witon we þ ealle men
parting and of-the soul How not know we that all men
lichomlice sweltað, ȝ þeah sio sawl bið libbende? Ac sio
bodily die and yet the soul is living But the
sawl færð swiðe friolice to hefonum, siððan hio ontiged bið,
soul goes very freely to heavens after it untied is
ȝ for þæm carcerne þæs lichoman onlesed bið. Heo forsihð
and from the prison of-the body released is It despises
þonne eall ðas eorðlican þing, ȝ fægnað þæs þ hio mot
then all these earthly things and rejoices in-that that it may
brucan þæs heofonlican, siððan hio bið abrogden from ðæm
enjoy the heavenly after it is withdrawn from the
eorðlican. Þonne þ mod him selfum gewita bið Godes willan.
earthly Then the mind to-it self witness is of-God will

Wisdom sings that anyone who craves fame should consider how vast the heavens are and how narrow the earth. Death levels rich and poor alike. Wisdom asks where the bones of the wise smith Weland are now, and where Brutus and Cato are, whose names survive in a few letters while many great men are wholly forgotten, and warns of the second death that holds men forever.

Ða se Wisdom þa þis spel areaht hæfde, ða ongan 46.1
When — Wisdom then this discourse told had then began
he gyddian ȝ ðus singende cwæð: Swa hwa swa wilnige
he to-sing and thus singing said So who so desire
to habbenne þone idelan hlisan ȝ þone unnyttan gilp,
to have the idle repute and the useless vainglory
behealde he on feower healfe his hu widgille þæs heofones
let-behold he on four sides of-him how wide of-the heaven
hwealfa bið, ȝ hu neara þære eorðan stede is, þeah heo
vaults is and how narrow of-the earth place is though it
us rum þince. Þōn mæg hine scamigan þære brædinge his
to-us roomy seem Then may him it-shame of-the spreading of-his
hlisan, forþam he hine ne mæg furðum tobrædan ofer þa
repute because he it not can even spread over the
nearwan eorðan ane. Æala, ofermodan, hwi ge wilnigen þ
narrow earth alone O proud-ones why ye desire that
ge underlutan mid eowrū swiran þ deaðlice geoc? oððe hwi
ye stoop with your necks the deadly yoke or why
ge seon on swa idelan geswince þ ge woldon eowerne
ye be in so idle toil that ye would your
hlisan tobrædan ofer swa manega þeoda? Þeah hit nu
repute spread over so many peoples Though it now
gebyrige þ ða utemestan ðioda eowerne naman up ahebban,
happen that the outermost peoples your name up raise

ȝ on manig þeodisc eow herigen, ȝ þeah hwa wexe mid
and in many tongue you praise and though anyone grow with
micelre æþelcundnesse his gebyrda, ȝ þeo on eallū welū
great nobility of-his birth and thrive in all riches
ȝ on eallū wlencū, ne se deaþ þeah swelces ne recð. Ac
and in all splendors not the death yet of-such — cares But
he forsiehð þa æþelo, ȝ þone rican gelice ȝ þone heanan
it despises the nobility and the powerful alike and the humble
ofswelgð, ȝ swa geemnet þa rican ȝ þa heanan. Hwæt synt
swallows and so levels the powerful and the humble What are
nu þæs foremeran ȝ þæs wisan goldsmiðes ban Welondes?
now of-the renowned and of-the wise goldsmith bones of-Weland
46.17 Forþi ic cwæð þæs wisan forþy þā cræftegan ne mæg
Therefore I said of-the wise because to-the skilled not can
næfre his cræft losigan, ne hine mon ne mæg þōn eð
ever his skill be-lost nor it one — can the more-easily
on him geniman ðe mon mæg þa sunnan awendan of
from him take than one can the sun turn from
hiere stede. Hwær synt nu þæs Welondes ban, oððe hwa
its place Where are now of-the Weland bones or who
wat nu hwær hi wæron? Oððe hwær is nu se foremæra ȝ
knows now where they were Or where is now the renowned and
se ræda Romwara heretoga, se wæs haten Brutus, oðre
the resolute of-Romans leader who was called Brutus by-other
naman Cassius? Oððe se wisa ȝ fæstræda Cato, se wæs eac
name Cassius Or the wise and steadfast Cato who was also
Romana heretoga; se wæs openlice uðwita. Hu ne wæran
of-Romans leader who was openly philosopher How not were
þas gefyrn forðgewitene? ȝ nan mon nat hwær hi nu
these long-ago departed and no man knows where they now
sint. Hwæt is heora nu to lafe, butan se lytla hlisa ȝ se
are What is of-them now as remnant but the little repute and the

nama mid feaum stafū awriten? ⁊ þæt git wyrse is, þ we
name with few letters written and that yet worse is that we
witon manige foremære ⁊ gemyndwyrþe weras forðgewitene
know many renowned and memorable men departed
þe swiðe feawa manna a ongit. Ac manige licggað deade
whom very few of-men ever know But many lie dead
mid ealle forgitene, þ se hlisa hie furðū cuþe ne gedeð.
with all forgotten that the repute them even known not makes
Þeah ge nu wenen ⁊ wilnian þ ge lange libban scylan
Though ye now think and desire that ye long live shall
her on worulde, hwæt bið eow þōn þy bet? Hu ne cymð
here in world what is to-you then the better How not comes
se deað þeah, þeah he late cume, ⁊ adeð eow of ðisse
the death yet though it late come and puts you from this
worulde? ⁊ hwæt forstent eow þōn se gilp, huru þā
world and what avails you then the vainglory at-least to-those
þe se æfterra deað gegripð ⁊ on ecnesse gehæfð?
whom the second death seizes and in eternity holds

XX · THE USE OF ADVERSITY

Wisdom says that adverse fortune serves men better than prosperity. Prosperity lies and binds the minds that enjoy it with its pretense of being good, while adversity is steadfast, frees the mind, and draws men to true felicity as a hook draws a fish. Boethius' losses have shown him who his true friends are, and such friends are the most precious treasure of all.

Ða se Wisdom þa þis leoð asungen hæfde, ða ongan he 47.3
When — Wisdom then this song sung had then began he
spillian ⁊ ðus cwæð: Ne wen ðu no þ ic to anwillice
to-discourse and thus said Not think thou — that I too obstinately

winne wið ða wyrd; forðæm ic hit no self nauht ne ondræde,
strive against the fate because I it not myself at-all — dread
forþā hit oft gebyreð þ sio lease wyrd nauþer ne mæg þæm
because it often happens that the false fate neither — can to-the
men don ne fultum ne eac nænne dē. Forþā hio nis nanes
man do — help nor also any harm Because it not-is of-any
lofes wyrðe, forþā hio hire self gecyð þ heo nanwuht ne
praise worthy because it it itself shows that it nothing —
bið; ac heo onwrihð hire ælwelm þonne heo geopenað hiore
is but it uncovers its source when it opens its
þeawas. Ic wene ðeah þ ðu ne forstande nu get hwæt ic þe
ways I think yet that thou not understand now yet what I thee
to cweðe; forþam hit is wundorlic þæt ic secgan wille, ⁊ ic
to say because it is wonderful that I say will and I
hit mæg uneaðe mid wordum areccan swa swa ic wolde; þ
it can hardly with words set-forth so as I would that
is ðæt ic wat ðætte sio wiðerwearde wyrd bið ælcum men
is that I know that the adverse fate is to-every man
nytwyrðre þōn sio orsorge. Forðæm seo orsorge simle lihð
more-useful than the prosperous Because the prosperous ever lies
⁊ licet þ mon scyle wenan þ hio is sio soðe gesælð;
and pretends that one should think that it is the true felicity
ac sio wiðerwearde is sio soðe gesælþ, þeah hwæm swa ne
but the adverse is the true felicity though to-anyone so not
þynce, forðæm heo is fæstræd ⁊ gehæt simle þte soð bið.
seem because it is steadfast and promises ever what true is
47.18 Sio oðru is leas ⁊ beswicð ealle hire geferan, forðæm
The other is false and deceives all its companions because
hio hit gecyð self mid hire hwurfulnesse þ hio bið swiðe
it it shows itself with its changeableness that it is very
wancol; ac sio wiðerwearde gebet ⁊ gelæreð ælcne þara
fickle but the adverse amends and teaches each of-those

þe hio hi to geþiet. Sio oðru gebinð ælc ðara moda ðe
whom it itself to joins The other binds each of-the minds which
hire brycð mid ðære hiwunga þe hio licet þ hio sie god;
of-it enjoys with the pretense that it feigns that it be good
sio wiðerwearde þōn onbinð ⁊ gefreoð ælc þara þe hio
the adverse then unbinds and frees each of-those whom it
to geðiet, mid ðæm þe hio him geopenað hu tiedre þæs
to joins with that that it to-them reveals how frail the
andweardan gesælða sint. Ac seo orsorhnes gæð scyrmælū
present felicities are But the prosperity goes by-fits
swæðer windes pyf; sio wiðerweardnes þōn bið simle untælu
as of-wind puff the adversity then is ever blameless
⁊ wæru, ascirped mid þære styringe hire agenre frecennesse.
and wary sharpened with the stirring of-its own peril
Ac sio lease gesælð hio tihð on last neadinga þa þe
But the false felicity it draws at last forcibly those who
hiere to geðeodað from þæm soðū gesælðum mid hiere
it to join from the true felicities with its
oliccunge; sio wiðerweardnes þōn ful oft ealle ða ðe hiere
flattery the adversity then full often all those who to-it
underþeodde bioð neadinga getyhð to ðam soðum gesælðum,
subjected are forcibly draws to the true felicities
swa swa mid angle fisc gefangen bið. Ðincð ðe nu þ lytel
so as with hook fish caught is Seems to-thee now that little
gestreon ⁊ lytel eaca þinra gesælða þætte ðeos reðe ⁊
gain and little increase of-thy felicities that this fierce and
þios egeslice wiðerweardnes þe bringð? þ is þ hio swiðe
this terrible adversity to-thee brings that is that it very
hraðe ða mod þe geopenað þinra getreowra freonda ⁊
quickly the minds to-thee opens of-thy true friends and
eac þinra fionda, þ þu hi miht swiðe sweotole tocnawan?
also of-thy enemies that thou them canst very clearly distinguish

48.10 Ac þæs leasan gesælða, þonne hi ðe from gewitað, þonne
But the false felicities when they thee from depart then
nimað hi hiora men mid him, ⁊ lætað þine feawan getreowan
take they their men with them and leave thy few faithful
mid ðe. Hu woldes ðu nu gebycggan þa þu gesælegost wære
with thee How wouldst thou now buy when thou happiest wert
⁊ þe þuhte þ seo wyrd swiðost on þinne willan wode? mid
and to-thee seemed that the fate most at thy will went with
hu micelan feo woldest þu þa habban geboht þ ðu switole
how much money wouldst thou then have bought that thou clearly
mihtest tocnawan þine frind ⁊ ðine fynd? Ic wat ðeah þ ðu
couldst distinguish thy friends and thy enemies I know yet that thou
hit woldest habban mid miclan feo geboht þ ðu hi cuðest
it wouldst have with much money bought that thou them couldst
wel toscadan. Þeah þe nu þince þ ðu deorwyrðe feoh
well separate Though to-thee now seem that thou precious money
forloren habbe, þu hæfst þeah micle diorwyrðre mid geboht;
lost have thou hast yet much more-precious with bought
þ sint getreowe friend; þa ðu miht nu tocnawan, ⁊ wast
that are true friends whom thou canst now distinguish and knowest
hwæt þu hiora hæfst. Hwæt, þ is þ eallra deorweorðoste fioh.
what thou of-them hast Lo that is the of-all most-precious treasure

Wisdom sings that one creator rules all things, visible and invisible, and holds his creatures in check with his bridle. Fire, water, earth, and sea, though opposed, keep peace with each other, and the seasons, the sun, and the moon follow their order. If God let go the reins, all would fall apart. He joins friends and married couples in love, and mankind would be happy if its mind were as well ordered as the rest of creation. Book Two ends here.

Đa se Wisdom þa ðis spell asæd hæfde, þa ongan he 48.21
When — Wisdom then this discourse told had then began he
giddigan ȝ þus singende cwæð: An sceppend is buton
to-sing and thus singing said One creator is without
ælcum tweon, ȝ se is eac wealdend heofones ȝ eorðan ȝ
any doubt and he is also ruler of-heaven and of-earth and
ealra gesceafta, gesewenlicra ȝ eac ungesewenlicra; þ is God
of-all creatures visible and also invisible that is God
ælmihtig. Þā ðeowiað ealle þa þe ðeowiað, ge ða þe cunnon
almighty Him serve all those who serve both those who know
ge þa þe ne cunnon, ge þa ðe hit witon þ hie him
and those who not know both those who it know that they him
ðeowiað ge þa ðe hit nyton. Se ilca gesette unawendendlicne
serve and those who it know-not The same set unchangeable
sido ȝ þeawas ȝ eac gecyndelice sibbe eallū his gesceaftū,
custom and ways and also natural peace for-all his creatures
ða þa he wolde, ȝ swa swa he wolde, ȝ swa lange swa
then when he would and so as he would and so long as
he wolde; þa nu sculon standan to worulde. Đara unstillena
he would which now shall stand to eternity Of-the unquiet
gesceafta styring ne mæg no weorðan gestilled, ne eac
creatures motion not can — become stilled nor also
onwend of þam ryne ȝ of þære endebyrdnesse þe him
turned from the course and from the order which to-them

geset is; ac se anwealda hæfð ealle his gesceafta swa mid his
set is but the ruler has all his creatures so with his
bridle befangene ȝ getogene ȝ gemanode swa þ hi nauþer
bridle encompassed and drawn and admonished so that they neither
ne gestillan ne moton, ne eac swiðor styrian þōn he him
— be-still — may nor also more stir than he them
þæt gerū his wealdleðeres to forlæt. Swa hæfð se ælmihtiga
the space of-his bridle-rein to lets So has the almighty
God geheaðorade ealle his gescefta mid his anwealde þæt
God restrained all his creatures with his power that
heora ælc winð wið oðer, ȝ þeah wræðeð oðer, þ hie
of-them each strives against other and yet supports other that they
ne moton toslupan, ac bioð gehwerfde eft to þā ilcan
not may slip-apart but are turned again to the same
ryne þe hie ær urnon, ȝ swa weorðað eft geedniwade.
course which they before ran and so become again renewed
49.9 Swa hi hit fagiað þ þa wiðerweardan gesceafta ægðer ge
So they it vary that the contrary creatures each both
hie betwux hī winnað, ge eac fæste sibbe betwux him
they between themselves strive and also firm peace between themselves
healdað. Swa nu fyr deð, ȝ wæter ȝ sæ ȝ eorðe, ȝ
keep So now fire does and water and sea and earth and
manega oðra gesceafta þe beoð a swa ungeðwæra betwux
many other creatures which are ever so discordant between
him swa swa hi beoð; ȝ þeah hi beoð swa geþwæra
themselves so as they are and yet they are so concordant
þætte no þ an þæt hi magon geferan beon, ac þy furðor
that not that alone that they can companions be but the further
þ heora furðum nan buton oðrū beon ne mæg. Ac a sceal
that of-them even none without other be — can But ever shall
þ wiðerwearde þ oðer wiðerwearde gemetgian. Swa nu hæfð
the contrary the other contrary moderate So now has

se ælmihtega God swiðe gesceadwislice ⁊ swiðe limplice geset
the almighty God very rationally and very fittingly set
þ gewrixle eallū his gesceaftū. Swa nu lencten ⁊ hærfest:
the alternation for-all his creatures So now spring and autumn
on lencten hit grewð, ⁊ on hærfest hit wealwað. ⁊ eft
in spring it grows and in autumn it withers and again
sumer ⁊ winter: on sumera hit bið wearm, ⁊ on wintra
summer and winter in summer it is warm and in winter
ceald. Swa eac sio sunne bringð leohte dagas, ⁊ se mona
cold So also the sun brings light days and the moon
liht on niht, þurh þæs ilcan Godes miht. Se ilca forwyrnð
shines at night through of-the same God might The same forbids
þæræ sæ þ heo ne mot þone þeorscwold oferstæppan þære
the sea that it not may the threshold overstep of-the
eorþan. Ac he hæfð heora mearce swa gesette þ hie ne
earth But he has their boundaries so set that it not
mot heore mearce gebrædan ofer þa stillan eorþan.
may its boundaries spread over the still earth
Mid þā ilcan gerece is gereaht swiðe anlic gewrixle þæs 49.25
With the same governance is directed very like alternation of-the
flodes ⁊ þæs ebban. Þa gesetennesse þa he læt standan
flood and of-the ebb The ordinances them he lets stand
þa hwile þe he wile. Ac þonne ær þe he þ gewealdleðer
the while that he will But when ever that he the bridle-rein
forlæt þara bridla þe he ða gesceafta nu mid gebridlode
lets-go of-the bridles which he the creatures now with bridled
hæfð: þ is seo wiðerweardnes þe we ær ymbe spræcon:
has that is the contrariety which we before about spoke
gif he þa læt toslupan, þōn forlætað hi þa sibbe ðe hi
if he them lets slip-apart then forsake they the peace which they
nu healdað, ⁊ winð heora ælc on oðer æfter his agenū
now keep and strives of-them each against other after its own

willan, ȝ forlætað heora geferrædenne, ȝ fordoð ealne ðysne
will and forsake their fellowship and destroy all this
middaneard, ȝ weorðað him selfe to nauhte. Se ilca God
middle-earth and become them selves to naught The same God
gefegð mid freondrædenne folc togædere, ȝ sinhigscipas
joins with friendship peoples together and marriages
gesamnað mid clænlicre lufe. He gegæderað frind ȝ geferan
unites with pure love He gathers friends and companions
þ hie getreowlice heora sibbe ȝ heora freondrædenne
that they faithfully their peace and their friendship
healdað. Eala þte þis moncyn wære gesælig, gif heora mod
keep O that this mankind were happy if their mind
wære swa riht ȝ swa gestaðelod ȝ swa geendebyrd swa
were so right and so established and so ordered so
swa þa oðre gesceafta sindon. Her endað nu seo æftre
as the other creatures are Here ends now the second
froferboc Boeties, ȝ onginð sio þridde. Se Boetius wæs
comfort-book of-Boethius and begins the third — Boethius was
oðre naman haten Seuerinus; se wæs heretoga Romana.
by-other name called Severinus who was leader of-Romans

XXII · THE BITTER MEDICINE

Enchanted by the song, Boethius says he is now ready to bear his misfortune and asks for more of Wisdom's remedy. Wisdom answers that the medicine tastes bitter at first but grows sweet within. When the Mind asks where it is to be led, Reason answers that she will lead it to true felicity, first teaching it by an example, so that by its likeness it may know true felicity and forsake the false.

Đa se Wisdom þa ðis lioð asungen hæfde, þa hæfde he 50.8
When — Wisdom then this song sung had then had he
me gebundenne mid þære wynsumnesse his sanges, þ ic
me bound with the delight of-his song that I
his wæs swiðe wafiende ȝ swiðe lustbære hine to geheranne
at-it was very marveling and very eager it to hear
mid innewearde mode, ȝ þa fulhræde ðæs ic cleopode
with inward mind and then full-quickly after-that I called
to him ȝ þus cwæð: Eala, Wisdom, þu ðe eart sio hehste
to him and thus said O Wisdom thou who art the highest
frofer ealra werigra moda; hu þu me hæfst afrefredne ægþer
comfort of-all weary minds how thou me hast comforted each
ge mid þinre smealican spræce, ge mid þinre wynsumnesse
both with thy deep speech and with thy delight
þines sanges. To þæm þu me hæfst nu aretne ȝ
of-thy song To that-(degree) thou me hast now cheered and
ofercumene mid þinre gesceadwisnesse, þ me nu ðincð
overcome with thy reason that to-me now seems
ðætte no þ an þ ic ðas unwyrd araefnan mæg ðe me
that not that alone that I this misfortune endure can which me
on becumen is, ac þeah me giet mare frecenes on becume,
upon come is but though me yet more peril upon come
ne cwiðe ic næfre ma þ hit butan gewyrhtū sie; forðæm
not say I ever more that it without deserts be because
ic wat þ ic maran ȝ hefigran wyrðe wære. Ac ic wolde
I know that I greater and heavier worthy were But I would
ymbe þone læcedom þara þinra lara hwene mare geheran.
about the medicine of-the thy teachings somewhat more hear
Þeah þu nu hwene ær sæde þ þu wende þ hi woldon
Though thou now a-little before saidst that thou thoughtest that they would
me swiðe bitere þincan, ne ondræde ic hi me nu
to-me very bitter seem not dread I them for-myself now

nauht, ac ic heora eom swiðe gifre ægðer ge to geheranne
at-all but I for-them am very greedy each both to hear
ge eac to gehealdenne, ⁊ þe swiðe georne bidde þ þu
and also to keep and thee very eagerly pray that thou
hi me gelæste, swa swa ðu me nu lytle ær gehete.
them to-me perform so as thou to-me now a-little before promisedst
50.26 Þa cwæð se Wisdom: Ic ongeat sona þa ðu swa wel
Then said — Wisdom I perceived at-once when thou so well
geswugodes ⁊ swa lustlice geherdest mina lara, þ þu woldest
wert-silent and so gladly heardest my teachings that thou wouldst
mid innewearde mode hi ongiton ⁊ smeagean. Forðæm ic
with inward mind them perceive and consider Therefore I
geanbidode swiðe wel oþ ic wisse hwæt þu woldest ⁊ hu þu
waited very well until I knew what thou wouldst and how thou
hit understandan woldest, ⁊ eac þy furður ic tiolode swiðe
it understand wouldst and also the further I strove very
geornfullice þ þu hit forstandan meahte. Ac ic þe nu wille
diligently that thou it understand mightest But I to-thee now will
secgan hwilc se læcecræft is minre lare þe þu me nu bitst.
say what the medicine is of-my teaching which thou me now askest
He is swiðe biter on muðe, ⁊ he þe tirð on ða þrotan þōn
It is very bitter in mouth and it thee irritates in the throat when
ðu his ærast fandast; ac he weredað siððan he innan bið ⁊
thou it first tastest but it sweetens after it within is and
swiðe liðe on ðæm innoðe, ⁊ swiðe swiðe swete to bealcetenne.
very mild in the stomach and very very sweet to belch
51.6 Ac þær ðu ongeate hwider ic ðe nu tiohige to lædenne, ic
But if thou perceivedst whither I thee now intend to lead I
wat ðæt þu woldest swiðe georne þider fundian ⁊ swiðe
know that thou wouldst very eagerly thither hasten and very
swiðlice beon onæled mid þære gitsunge, forþā ic geherde þ
greatly be kindled with the longing because I heard that

ðu ær sædest þ þu swiðe geornfull wære hit to gehyranne.
thou before saidst that thou very eager wert it to hear
Ða cwæð þ Mod: Hwider wilt ðu me nu swiðost lædan?
Then said the Mind Whither wilt thou me now most lead
Ða andwyrde sio Gesceadwisnes ⁊ cwæð: To þæm soðum
Then answered — Reason and said To the true
gesælðum ic tiohige ðæt ic þe læde, þær þin mod oft ymb
felicities I intend that I thee lead where thy mind often about
ræsweð ⁊ eac mæt; ⁊ þu ne meahtes gyt ful rihtne weg
thinks and also dreams and thou not couldst yet full right way
aredian to ðæm soðum gesælðum, forðon þin mod wæs
find to the true felicities because thy mind was
abisgod mid ðære ansene þissa leasena gesælða. Ða cwæð þ
busied with the sight of-these false felicities Then said the
Mod: Ic þe healsige þ þu me oðewe butan ælcū tweon
Mind I thee beseech that thou to-me show without any doubt
hwæt sio soðe gesælð sie. Ða cwæð sio Gesceadwisnes:
what the true felicity be Then said — Reason
Ic wille forlustlice for ðinum lufum; ac ic sceal be sumre
I will very-gladly for thy love but I shall by some
bysene sume anlicnesse þære wisan ðe getæcan, oð ðe
example some likeness of-the matter thee teach until to-thee
þæt þing cuðre sie, to ðæm þ þu þa bisne sweotole
the thing more-known be to that that thou the example clearly
gesceawige, ⁊ þonne be þære anlicnesse þara soðena gesælþa
observe and then by the likeness of-the true felicities
ðu mæge ongitan þa soðan gesælða, ⁊ forlætan þætte
thou can perceive the true felicities and forsake that-which
him wiðerweard bið; þ sint þa leasan gesælða; ⁊ þonne
to-them contrary is that are the false felicities and then

mid ealles modes geornfullan ingeðonce higie þ þu mæge
with of-all mind eager intent strive that thou can
becuman to þā gesælðum þe ece þurhwuniað.
come to the felicities which eternal endure

XXIII · WEEDS BEFORE THE HARVEST

Wisdom sings that a farmer must clear thorns and weeds before sowing, just as honey tastes sweeter after something bitter, fair weather is more welcome after storms, and day after night. So true felicity is sweeter after the miseries of this life, and it is found more easily once false felicity has been rooted out of the mind.

51.27 Đa se Wisdom ða ðis spell aræd hæfde, þa ongan he eft
When — Wisdom then this discourse told had then began he again
giddian, ȝ ðus cwæð: Swa hwa swa wille sawan westmbære
to-sing and thus said So who so will sow fruitful
land, atio ærest of ða þornas ȝ þa fyrsas ȝ þ fearn ȝ
land let-pull first out the thorns and the furze and the fern and
ealle þa weod þe he gesio þ þā ærcerū derigen, þ se
all the weeds which he sees that to-the fields harm that the
hwæte mæge þy bet weaxan. Eac is ðeos bisen to geðencenne,
wheat may the better grow Also is this example to consider
þ is þ ælcū men þincð huniges biobread þy weorodra
that is that to-every man seems of-honey bee-bread the sweeter
gif he hwene ær biteres onbirigð. ȝ eft smylte weder
if he a-little before of-bitter tastes and again calm weather
bið þy þancwyrðre gif hit hwene ær bið stearce stormas
is the more-welcome if it a-little before is strong storms
ȝ norðanwindas ȝ micle renas ȝ snawas. ȝ þancwyrðre
and north-winds and great rains and snows and more-welcome
bið eac þas dæges leoht for þære egeslican þiostro þære
is also of-the day light for the terrible darkness of-the

nihte, þōn hit wære gif nan niht nære. Swa bið eac micle
night than it were if no night were So is also much
þe winsumre sio soðe gesælð to habbenne efter þā eormðum
the pleasanter the true felicity to have after the miseries
bisses andweardan lifes. ⁊ eac micle ði eð þu miht þa
of-this present life and also much the easier thou canst the
soðan gesælða gecnawan ⁊ to hiora cyððe becuman, gif ðu
true felicities know and to their knowledge come if thou
ærest awyrtwalast of þinū mode ða leasan gesælða, ⁊ hi
first uprootest from thy mind the false felicities and them
of atiht oð ðone grund. Siððan þu hi þōn gecnawan miht,
out pullest to the ground After thou them then know canst
ðonne wat ic þ ðu ne wilnast nanes oðres þinges ofer þa.
then know I that thou not desirest of-any other thing beyond them

XXIV · THE HIGHEST GOOD

Wisdom says all men seek one end, the highest good, which is God, but through different paths. Some seek it in wealth, power, fame, pleasure, or a wife and children, and faithful friends are the best of these goods, given by God rather than by fate. Every such good is a false likeness of true felicity, and men, like drunkards who cannot find their way home, cannot find the path to the good they seek.

Þa he þa þis leoð asungen hæfde, þa forlet he þone sang, 52.14
When he then this song sung had then left-off he the singing
⁊ geswugode ane hwile, ⁊ ongann smealice þencan on his
and was-silent a while and began deeply to-think in of-his
modes ingeþance, ⁊ ða cwæð: Ælc deaðlic man swencð hine
mind thought and then said Each mortal man troubles him
selfne mid mistlicum ⁊ mænigfealdum ymbhogum, ⁊ þeah
self with various and manifold concerns and yet

wilniað ealle ðurh mistlice paðas cuman to anū ende; þ is þ
desire all through various paths to-come to one end that is that
hi wilniað þurh ungelice earnunga cuman to anre eadignesse;
they desire through unlike deserts to-come to one blessedness
þ is þonne God; se is fruma ⁊ ende ælces goodes, ⁊ he
that is then God who is beginning and end of-every good and he
is sio hehste gesælð. Ða cwæð ðæt Mod: Ðæt me ðincð sie
is the highest felicity Then said the Mind That to-me seems be
þ hehste good, þætte mon ne ðurfe nanes oðres godes, ne
the highest good that one not need of-any other good nor
eac ne recce ofer þ, siððan he þ hæbbe þ is hrof eallra
also — care beyond that after he that have which is roof of-all
oðerra gooda; forþā hit eall oðru god utan befehð, ⁊ eall
other goods because it all other goods outside encompasses and all
oninnan him hæfð. Nære hit no þ hehste god gif him ænig
within itself has Not-were it — the highest good if it any
butan wære, forþæm hit þonne hæfde to wilnianne sumes
outside were because it then had to desire some
goodes þe hit self næfde. Þa andswarode sio Gesceadwisnes
good which it itself had-not Then answered — Reason
⁊ cwæð: Ðæt is swiðe sweotol þ ðæt is sio hehste
and said That is very clear that that is the highest
gesælð, forðæm hit is ægðer ge hrof ge flor ealles goodes.
felicity because it is each both roof and floor of-all good
52.30 Hwæt is ðæt þōn buton sio seleste gesælð, þe ða oðra gesælða
What is that then but the best felicity which the other felicities
ealla oninnan him gegaderað, ⁊ hi utan ymbhæfð, ⁊
all within itself gathers and them outside surrounds and
oninnan him gehelt, ⁊ him nanes ne bið wana, ne he nanes
within itself holds and to-it of-nothing — is lack nor it any
nedþearfe næfð, ac hi cumað eall of him, ⁊ eft eall to him,
need has but they come all from it and again all to it

swa swa eall wætru cumað of ðære sæ, ⁊ eft cumað ealle
so as all waters come from the sea and again come all
to ðære sæ? Nis nan to ðæs lytel æwylm þ he þa sæ ne
to the sea Not-is any to that-(degree) little spring that it the sea not
gesece; ⁊ eft of ðære sæ he gelent in on þa eorðan, ⁊ swa
seek and again from the sea it goes in into the earth and so
he bið smugende geond þa eorðan oð he eft cymð to ðæm
it is creeping through the earth until it again comes to the
ilcan æwelme þe he ær ut fleow, ⁊ swa eft to þære sæ.
same spring which it before out flowed and so again to the sea
Ðis is nu bysen þara soþena gesælða; þara wilniað ealle 53.9
This is now example of-the true felicities which desire all
deaðlice men to begitanne, þeah hi ðurh mislice wegas
mortal men to obtain though they through various ways
ðencan to cumanne. Forþā æghwelc man hæfð gecyndelic
intend to come Because every man has natural
god on him selfum, forþā ælc mod wilnað soðes godes to
good in him self therefore each mind desires true good to
begitanne; ac hit bið amerred mid þā lænum godum, forðæm
obtain but it is hindered with the transitory goods because
hit bið ofdælre ðærto. Forðā sume menn wenað þæt þ se
it is more-downhill thereto Therefore some men think that that be
seo seleste gesælð þ mon seo swa welig þ he nanes ðinges
the best felicity that one be so wealthy that he of-no thing
maran ne ðurfe, ⁊ wilniað hiora woruld æfter þā. Sume men
more — need and desire their life after that Some men
wenað þ þ sie þæt hehte god þ he sie his geferū his
think that that be the highest good that he be to-his companions of-his
geferena weorðost, ⁊ eallon mægene ðæs tiolað. Sume wenað
companions most-honored and with-all strength for-that strive Some think
þ ðæt hehste good sie on þā hehstan anwalde; þa wilniað
that the highest good be in the highest power they desire

oðer twega, oððe him selfe ricsian, oððe hi to ðæra ricena
one of-two either them selves reign or themselves to of-the powerful
freondscipe geþiodan. Sume þonne tiohiað þ ðæt betst sie þ
friendship join Some then suppose that that best be that
mon sie foremære ⁊ widmære, ⁊ hæbbe godne hlisan; tiliað
one be renowned and widely-famed and have good repute strive
þonne þæs ægðer ge on sibbe ge on gewinne. Manege tellað
then for-that each both in peace and in war Many reckon
þ to mæstum goode ⁊ to mæstere gesælðe þ mon sie
that as greatest good and as greatest felicity that one be
simle bliðe on þis andweardan life, ⁊ fulga eallum his lustū.
ever blithe in this present life and follow all his lusts
53.25 Sume þonne þa þe ðas welan wilniað, hi his wilniað
Some then those who these riches desire they it desire
forþā þæt hi woldean ðy maran anweald habban, þ he
because that they would the more power have that he
mihte þy orsorglicor ðissa woruldlusta brucan, ⁊ eac þas
might the more-securely of-these worldly-lusts enjoy and also these
welan. Manega sint þara þe forþi wilniað anwaldes þe
riches Many are of-those who therefore desire power because
hie woldon ormæte feoh gegaderian; oððe eft þone hlisan
they would immense money gather or again the repute
heora naman hi wilniað þ hi gebrædan.
of-their name they desire that they spread
54.1 On swilcum ⁊ on oðrum swelcū lænum ⁊ hreosendū
In such and in other such transitory and perishing
weorðscipū ælces mennisces modes ingeþanc bið geswenced
honors of-each human mind thought is troubled
mid ðære geornfulnesse ⁊ mid ðære tiluncga; wenð þōn þ
with the eagerness and with the striving thinks then that
hit hæbbe sum healic god gestryned þonne hit hæfð genumen
it have some lofty good gained when it has taken

þæs folces olecunga; ⁊ me þincð þ hit hæbbe geboht sume
of-the people flatteries and to-me seems that it have bought a-certain
swiðe leaslice mærðe. Sume tiliað mid micelre geornfulnesse
very false glory Some strive with great eagerness
wifa, forðæm þ he þurh ðæt mæge mæst bearna begitan,
of-wives so that he through that may most of-children get
⁊ eac wynsumlice libban. Ða getriewan friend þonne ic
and also pleasantly live The faithful friends then I
secgge sie ðæt deorwyrðeste ðing ealra þissa weoruldgesælða;
say be the most-precious thing of-all these worldly-felicities
þa ne sint furðum to woruldgodū to tellanne, ac to
they not are even among worldly-goods to reckon but among
godcundum; forþā seo lease wyrd hi na forð ne bringð, ac se
divine because the false fate them not forth — brings but —
God þe hi gecyndelice gesceop to gemagū. Forþamðe ælces
God who them naturally created as kinsmen Because of-each
oðres þinges on þisse worulde mon wilnað, oððe forþāþe he
other thing in this world one desires either because he
mæg þurh þ to anwealde cuman, oððe to sumū woruldluste,
can through that to power come or to some worldly-lust
butan þæs getreowan freondes; þone mon lufað hwilū for lufū
except the faithful friend whom one loves at-times for love
⁊ for triowum, þeah he him nanra oðerra læna ne wene.
and for faith though he from-him no other rewards — expect
Þ gecynd gefægð ⁊ gelimð þa friend togadre mid swiðe
The nature joins and cements the friends together with very
untodeledlicre lufe. Ac mid þissū woruldgesælðum ⁊ mid
indivisible love But with these worldly-felicities and with
þis andweardan welan mon wyrcð oftor fiond ðonne freond.
this present wealth one makes oftener enemy than friend

54.20 Be ðisan ȝ be mænegum þillicum mæg beon eallū monnum
By these and by many such can be to-all men
cuð ðætte ealle þa licumlican good bioð forcuðran ðonne
known that all the bodily goods are baser than
ðære sawle cræftas. Hwæt, we wenað ðæt mon bio þy strencra
of-the soul virtues Lo we think that one be the stronger
þe he bið micel on his lichoman. Seo fægernes ðonne ȝ
that he is great in his body The fairness then and
sio hwætnes þæs lichoman geblissað ðone mon ȝ aret, ȝ
the swiftness of-the body gladdens the man and cheers and
sio hælo hine gedeð lusðbærne. On eallum ðissum licumlicū
the health him makes joyful In all these bodily
gesælignessū men secað anfealde eadignesse ðæs ðe him
happinesses men seek single blessedness as-far as to-them
ðincð, forþā þe æghwelc man swa hwæt swa he ofer ealle
seems because that every man so what so he above all
oðre þing swiðost lufað, þ he teohhað þ him sie betst,
other things most loves that he supposes that to-him be best
ȝ þæt bið his hehste god; þōn he þæt ðōn begiten hæfð,
and that is his highest good when he that then obtained has
þōn tihhað he þ he mæge beon swiðe gesælig. Ne onsace
then supposes he that he can be very happy Not deny
ic nauht þ ða gesælða ȝ seo eadignes sie þæt hehste god
I at-all that the felicities and the blessedness be the highest good
þises andweardan lifes; forþā ðe æghwilc mon tiohhað þ
of-this present life because that every man supposes that
þ ðing betst sie þ he swiðust ofer oðre þing lufað; ȝ
the thing best be which he most above other things loves and
þonne he tiohhað þ he sie swiðe gesælig gif he þæt begitan
then he supposes that he be very happy if he that obtain
mæg ðæt he þonne swiþust willnað. Hu ne is þ nu genoh
can which he then most desires How not is that now enough

openlice geeowad þara leasena gesælða anlicnes, þ is þonne
openly shown of-the false felicities likeness that is then
æhta ȝ weorðscipe ȝ anweald ȝ gielp ȝ woruldlust?
possessions and honor and power and vainglory and worldly-lust
Be þā woruldluste Epeccurus se uðwita sæde, þa he ymb 55.8
About the worldly-lust Epicurus the philosopher said when he about
ealle þas oðra gesælða smeade þe we ær nemdon; þa
all these other felicities considered which we before named then
sæde he þ se lust wære þ hehste good, forðæm ealle þa
said he that the lust were the highest good because all the
oðru good þe we ær nemdon oleccað þā mode ȝ hit
other goods which we before named flatter the mind and it
retað; se lust ðonne ana olecð ðæm lichoman anū swiðost.
cheer the lust then alone flatters the body alone most
Ac we willað nu giet sprecan ymbe manna gecynd ȝ ymbe 55.14
But we will now yet speak about of-men nature and about
heora tilunga. Þa nu þeah heora mod ȝ heora gecynd sie
their strivings They now though their mind and their nature be
adimmad, ȝ hi sien on þ ofdæle asigen to yfele ȝ þider
dimmed and they be on the downhill sunk to evil and thither
healde, þeah hi wilniað þæs ðe hi cunnon ȝ magon þæs
inclined yet they desire as-far as they know and can the
hehstan godes. Swa swa oferdruncen man wat þ he sceolde
highest good So as drunk man knows that he should
to his huse ȝ to his ræste, ȝ ne mæg þeah ðider aredian,
to his house and to his rest and not can yet thither find-way
swa bið eac þā mode þōn hit bið ahefigad mid ðæm
so is also to-the mind when it is weighed-down with the
ymhogū þisse worulde; hit bið mid þā hwilū oferdrenced
concerns of-this world it is with them at-times intoxicated
ȝ gedwelod to þā þ hit ne mæge full rihte aredian to
and led-astray to that that it not can full rightly find-way to

gode. Ne þincð þeah þǣ monnū þ hi auht mearrigen þe
good Not seems yet to-the men that they aught err who
þæs wilniað to begitanne, þ hi maran ne ðurfon tilian;
that desire to obtain that they more not need to-strive
ac wenað þ hi mægen ealle þas good gegadrian togædere,
but think that they can all these goods gather together
þætte nan butan þære gesomnunga ne sie. Nyton þonne nan
that none outside the collection — be Know-not then any
herre good þōn eallra þara deorwyrðestena ðinga gegadrunga
higher good than of-all the most-precious things gathering
to hiora anwealde ðæt he nanes ðinges buton þæm ne
to their power that he of-no thing but that —
þyrfe. Ac ðæt nis nan man þte sumes eacan ne ðyrfe,
need But that not-is any man who of-some increase not need
buton Gode anum; he hæfð on his agenū genog, ne ðearf
but God alone he has in his own enough not needs
he nanes þinges buton ðæs þe he on him selfū hæfð.
he of-any thing but of-that which he in him self has
55.31 Wenst þu nu þ ða dysegian þe wenað þte þ ðing sie ælces
Thinkest thou now that they are-foolish who think that the thing be of-every
weorðscipes betst wyrðe þte hi medemast ongiton magon?
honor best worthy which they worthiest perceive can
Nese, nese. Ic wat þ hit nis no to forseone. Hu mæg þ
No no I know that it not-is — to despise How can that
yfel beon þte ælces monnes ingeþanc wenð þte good sie, ȝ
evil be which of-every man thought thinks that good be and
æfter higað, ȝ wilnað to begitanne? Nese, nis hit na yfel;
after strives and desires to obtain No not-is it — evil
þ is þ hehste good. Hwi nis nu anweald to tellanne to
that is the highest good Why not-is now power to reckon among
sumū þara hehstena goda þisses andweardan lifes? Hwæðer þ
some of-the highest goods of-this present life Whether that

nu sie to talianne waclic ȝ unnyt ðætte nytwyrðost is eallra
now be to reckon mean and useless which most-useful is of-all
þissa woruldþinga, þ is anweald? Hwæðer nu good hlisa ȝ
these worldly-things that is power Whether now good repute and
foremærnes seo for nauht to tellenne? Nese, nese; nis hit
renown be for naught to reckon No no not-is it
nan cyn þ mon ðæt for nauht telle, forðæmðe ælc mon
any fitting that one that for naught reckon because each man
wenð þ þ betst sie þ he swiðost lufað. Hu ne witon
thinks that that best be which he most loves How not know
we þ nan nearones ne nan earforðu ne nan unrotnes ne
we that no distress nor any hardship nor any sadness nor
nan sar ne nan hefignes nis nan gesælð? Hwæt þurfon we
any sorrow nor any heaviness is any felicity What need we
nu ma ymbe þa gesælða sprecan? Hu ne wat ælc mon hwæt
now more about the felicities speak How not knows each man what
ða bioð, ȝ eac wat þ hi bioð þ hehste good? ȝ þeah
they are and also knows that they are the highest good and yet
secð fulneah ælc mon on swiðe lytlum þingum ða selestan
seeks nearly each man in very little things the best
gesælða; forþæm he wenð þ he hi þonne ealle hæbbe,
felicities because he thinks that he them then all have
gif he hæfð þ þ he þōn swiðost wilnað to begitanne.
if he has that which he then most desires to obtain
Þ is ðōn þ hi swiðost wilniað to begitanne: wela ȝ 56.19
That is then what they most desire to obtain wealth and
weorðscipe ȝ rice ȝ þisse worulde wuldor ȝ gilp ȝ
honor and rule and of-this world glory and vainglory and
woruldlust. Ðisses ealles hi wilniað, forþāþe hi wenað þ hie
worldly-lust This all they desire because they think that they
þurh þa þing scylon begitan þ him ne seo nanes willan wana,
through those things shall obtain that to-them not be of-any desire lack

naðer ne weorðscipes ne anwealdes ne foremærnesse ne blisse.
either — of-honor — of-power — of-renown or of-bliss
Ðæs ealles hi wilniað, ⁊ wel doþ þ hi þæs wilniað, þeah hi
That all they desire and well do that they that desire though they
mistlice his wilnigen. Be þā þingum mon mæg sweotole ongitan
variously it desire By the things one can clearly perceive
þ ælc mon þæs wilnað þ he mæge þ hehste god begitan þær
that each man that desires that he can the highest good obtain if
hi hit gecnawan meahtan, oððe on riht secan cuðen; ac hi
they it know could or in right seek knew but they
hit ne secað on þone rihtestan weg; hit nis on þisse worulde.
it not seek in the rightest way it not-is in this world

XXV · EVERY CREATURE SEEKS ITS NATURE

Wisdom sings that God holds every creature bound to its nature, except men and some angels, who at times depart from theirs. A tamed lion that tastes blood turns on its keeper, tamed wood-birds that reach the woods scorn their teachers, a bent bough springs back, and the setting sun climbs again to its height. Every creature turns like a wheel back to where it came from, seeking rest and security, and that rest is God.

57.1 Ða se Wisdom þa ðis spel asæd hæfde, þa ongan he
When — Wisdom then this discourse told had then began he
eft singan ⁊ þus cwæð: Ic wille nu mid giddū gecyðan
again to-sing and thus said I will now with songs make-known
hu wundorlice Drihten welt eallra gesceafta mid þā bridlū
how wondrously Lord rules all creatures with the bridles
his anwealdes, ⁊ mid hwilcere endebyrdnesse he gestaðolað
of-his power and with what order he establishes
⁊ gemetgað ealle gesceafta; ⁊ hu he hi hæfð geheaðorade
and moderates all creatures and how he them has restrained

ȝ gehæfte mid his unanbindendlicū racentū, þ ælc gesceaft
and bound with his unbindable chains that each creature
bið healdon locen wið hire gecynde, þære gecynde þe heo
is held locked toward its nature the nature which it
to gesceapen wes, buton monnū ȝ sumū englū; þa weorðað
to created was except men and some angels who become
hwilū of hiora gecynde. Hwæt, seo leo, þeah hio wel tam se,
at-times from their nature Lo the lion though she well tame be
ȝ fæste racentan habbe ȝ hire magister swiðe lufige ȝ eac
and firm chains have and her master greatly love and also
ondræde, gif hit æfre gebyreð þæt heo blodes onbirigð, heo
dread if it ever happens that she of-blood tastes she
forgit sona hire niwan taman, ȝ gemonð þæs wildan gewunan
forgets at-once her new tameness and remembers the wild habit
hire eldrana. Onginð þōn ryn ȝ hire racentan brecan, ȝ
of-her parents Begins then to-roar and her chains to-break and
abit ærest hire ladteow, ȝ siððan æghwæt þæs þe heo
bites first her keeper and afterward everything of-that which she
gefon mæg, ge monna ge neata. Swa doð eac wudufuglas;
catch can both of-men and of-beasts So do also wood-birds
þeah hi beon wel atemede, gif hi on þam wuda weorðað,
though they be well tamed if they in the wood become
hi forseoð heora lareowas ȝ wuniað on heora gecynde.
they despise their teachers and dwell in their nature
Þeah heora lareowas him þōn biodan þa ilcan mettas þe hi 57.17
Though their teachers them then offer the same foods which they
ær tame mid gewenedon, ðōn ne reccað hi þara metta, gif
before tame with accustomed then not care they of-the foods if
hi þæs wuda benugon; ac þincð him wynsūre þ him se
they of-the wood enjoy but seems to-them pleasanter that to-them the
weald oncweðe ȝ hi gehiran oðerra fugla stemne. Swa bið
forest answer and they hear of-other birds voice So is

eac þā treowū þe him gecynde bið up heah to standanne.
also to-the trees which to-them natural is up high to stand
Þeah þu teo hwelcne boh ofdune to þære eorðan swelce
Though thou draw any bough down to the earth as-far
þu began mæge, swa þu hine alætst, swa sprincð he up
thou bend can as-soon-as thou it lettest-go so springs it up
ȝ wrigað wið his gecyndes. Swa deð eac seo sunne; þeah
and strives toward its nature So does also the sun though
heo ofer midne dæg onsige ȝ lute to þære eorþan, eft heo
it after mid day sink and bow to the earth again it
secð hire gecynde ȝ stigð on þa dæglan wegas wið hire
seeks its nature and climbs on the secret ways toward its
uprynæs, ȝ swa hie ufor ȝ ufor oððe hio cymð swa up
rising and so hastens higher and higher until it comes so up
swa hire yfemest gecynde bið. Swa deð ælc gesceaft; wrigað
as to-it highest natural is So does each creature strives
wið his gecyndes, ȝ gefagen bið gif hit æfre to cuman
toward its nature and glad is if it ever to come
mæg. Nis nan gesceaft gesceapen ðara þe ne wilnige þ
can Not-is any creature created of-those which not desire that
hit þider cuman mæge þonan þe hit ær com, þ is to ræste
it thither come may whence — it before came that is to rest
ȝ to orsorgnesse. Seo ræst is mid Gode, ȝ þæt is God.
and to security The rest is with God and that is God
57.31 Ac ælc gesceaft hwearfað on hire selfre swa swa hweol; ȝ to
But each creature turns on it self so as wheel and to
þā heo swa hwearfað þ heo eft cume þær heo ær wæs, ȝ
that it so turns that it again come where it before was and
beo þ ilce þ heo ær wæs, ðonecan ðe heo utan behwerfed
be the same that it before was whenever that it outside turned-about
sie þ þ hio ær wæs, ȝ do þ þ heo ær dyde.
be that which it before was and do that which it before did

Wisdom asks whether riches can make a man so happy that he needs nothing more, and Boethius admits that even at his wealthiest he was never free from worry. Riches must be guarded, so the rich need help and must flatter more men the more they have, while wealth never satisfies the endless needs of hunger, thirst, and cold. Wisdom sings that a miser who plows with a thousand plows and rules the whole world takes no more out of it than he brought.

Ða se Wisdom ða ðis leoð asungen hæfde, þa ongan 58.4
When — Wisdom then this song sung had then began
he eft spellian ⁊ þus cwæð: Eala, hwæt, ge eorðlican
he again to-discourse and thus said O lo ye earthly
men, ðeah ge eow selfe nu don neatum gelice for eowre
men though ye you selves now make to-beasts like for your
dysige, hwæt, ge þeah magon hwæthwugu ongitan swelce
folly lo ye yet can something perceive as
eow mæte be eowrum frumsceafte, þ is God; ðone
to-you it-dreamed about your origin that is God the
soðan fruman ⁊ þone soðan ende ælcre gesælðe ge ongitað,
true beginning and the true end of-every felicity ye perceive
þeah ge hine fullice ne oncnawen; ⁊ swaðeah sio gecynd
though ye him fully not know and yet the nature
eow tihð to ðæm andgite, ac eow teohð swiðe manigfeald
you draws to the understanding but you draws very manifold
gedwola of þā andgite. Geðencað nu hwæðer men mægen
error from the understanding Consider now whether men can
cuman to þā soþum gesælðum þurh þa andweardan gesælða;
come to the true felicities through the present felicities
forþāðe fullneah ealle men cweðað þ se seo se gesælgosta se
because nearly all men say that he be the happiest he
þe þas eorðlican gesælða ealla hæfð. Hwæðer nu micel feoh
who these earthly felicities all has Whether now much money

oððe weorðscipe oððe eall þes andwearda wela mæge ænigne
or honor or all this present wealth can any
mon don swa gesæligne þ he nanes þinges maran ne þyrfe?
man make so happy that be of-no thing more — need
Nese, nese; ic wat þæt þ hi ne magon. Hwy nis hit þōn
No no I know that that they not can Why not-is it then
on þy swiðe sweotol þ þas andweardan good ne sint no þa
in this very clear that these present goods not are — the
soðan god, forðæmþe hi ne magon sellan þæt hi gehatað?
true goods because they not can give what they promise
58.21 Ac licettað þ hi gelæstan ne magon, þōn hi gehatað þǣ
But pretend what they perform not can when they promise to-those
þe hi lufian willað ða soðan gesælþa; ⁊ aleogaþ him þeah ma
who them love will the true felicities and lie-to them yet more
ðonne hi him gelæsten, forðæmðe hi heora nabbaþ ma þōn
than they them perform because they of-them have-not more than
hi heora hæbben. Geþenc þu nu be ðe selfum, la, Boetius,
they of-them have Think thou now about thee self lo Boethius
hwæðer þu æfre auht unrot wære þa þa þu gesælegost wære,
whether thou ever at-all sad wert then when thou happiest wert
oððe hwæðer þe æfre æniges welan wana wære þa ðu
or whether to-thee ever of-any wealth lack were when thou
mæstne welan hæfdest, oððe hwæðer þin woruld þa eall wære
most wealth hadst or whether thy world then all were
æfter þinū willan? Þa andsworode Boetius ⁊ cwæð: Nese, la,
after thy will Then answered Boethius and said No lo
nese; næs ic næfre git nane hwile swa emnes modes, þæs þe
no was-not I ever yet any while so of-even mind as-far as
ic gemunan mæge, þ ic eallunga wære orsorg, þ ic swa
I remember can that I entirely were free-from-care that I so
orsorg wære þ ic nane gedrefednesse næfde; ne me næfre
free-from-care were that I no trouble had nor me ever

git ne licode eall þ ic wisste, ne me næfre næs ealles swa
yet — pleased all that I knew nor to-me ever was altogether as
ic wolde, þeah ic his miðe. Ða andsworode se Wisdom ⁊
I would though I it concealed Then answered — Wisdom and
cwæð: Hwi nære ðu ðonne genog earm ⁊ genog unhydig,
said Why wert-not thou then enough poor and enough discontented
þeah þe ðuhte þ ðu welig wære, þonne ðu oðer twega,
though to-thee seemed that thou wealthy wert when thou one of-two
oððe hæfdest þ ðu noldes oððe næfdest þ ðu woldest?
either hadst what thou wouldst-not or hadst-not what thou wouldst
Ða andswarode Boetius ⁊ cwæð: Eall me wæs swa swa 59.7
Then answered Boethius and said All to-me was so as
ðu sædest. Ða cwæð se Wisdom: hu ne bið ælc mon genog
thou saidst Then said — Wisdom how not is each man enough
earm þæs ðe he næfð, þōn hit hine lyst habban? Þ is
poor of-that which he has-not when it him it-pleases to-have That is
soð, cwæð Boetius. Þa cwæð se Wisdom: Gif he þōn earm
true said Boethius Then said — Wisdom If he then poor
bið, ne he þōn ne bið eadig; forði he eac wilnað þ he
is not he then — is blessed therefore he also desires that he
habbe þ he næfð, þy he wolde genog habban. Þa cwæð
have what he has-not because he would enough have Then said
Boetius: Þ is eall soð þ ðu segst. Ða cwæð se Wisdom:
Boethius That is all true that thou sayest Then said — Wisdom
Hu ne hæfdest þu þōn þa yrmðe, ða ða ðu welgost wære?
How not hadst thou then the misery then when thou wealthiest wert
Ða andswarode ic ⁊ cwæð: Ic wat þ þu soð segst, þ ic
Then answered I and said I know that thou truth sayest that I
hi hæfde. Ða cwæð se Wisdō: Hu ne þincð me ðonne nu
it had Then said — Wisdom How not seems to-me then now
þ ealle þa welan þisses middaneardes ne mægon gedon ænne
that all the riches of-this middle-earth not can make one

mon weligne, swa weligne þ he genog hæbbe ȝ no maran
man wealthy so wealthy that he enough have and not more
ne ðyrfe? ȝ swaðeah hi hit gehatað ælcum ðara þe hi
— need and yet they it promise to-each of-those who them
hæfð. Þa cwæð ic: Nis nan þing soðre þōn þ ðu segst.
has Then said I Not-is any thing truer than what thou sayest
59.22 Þa cwæð se Wisdō: Ac hwi ne eart þu þōn his geðafa?
Then said — Wisdom But why not art thou then of-it consenting
Hu ne miht þu geseon ælce dæg þ ða strengran nimað
How not canst thou see each day that the stronger take
þa welan of þā unstrengū? Hwi bið elles ælce dæg swelc
the riches from the weaker Why is else each day such
seofung ȝ swelce geflitu ȝ gemot ȝ domas, buton þ
lamenting and such strifes and assemblies and judgments but that
ælc bit þæs reaflaces þe him on genumen bið, oððe eft
each asks-back the plunder which him from taken is or again
oðres gitsað? Þa andswarode ic ȝ cwæð: Genoh ryhte þu
of-another covets Then answered I and said Enough rightly thou
spyrast; swa hit is swa þu segst. Þa cwæð he: For ðisū
inquirest so it is as thou sayest Then said he For these
þingū beðearf ælc mon fultumes to eacan him selfū, þæt he
things needs each man of-help in addition-to him self that he
mæge gehealdan his welan. Ða cwæð ic: Hwa oðsæcð þæs?
can hold his wealth Then said I Who denies that
Ða cwæð he: Gif he nauht næfde þæs ðe he ondrede þ
Then said he If he nothing had of-that which he dreaded that
he forleosan þorfte, þōn ne ðorfte he no maran fultomes þōn
he lose needed then not needed he — more help than
his selfes. Ða cwæð ic: Soð þu segst. Ða onsac se Wisdom
his self Then said I True thou sayest Then protested — Wisdom
sarlice ȝ cwæð: Eala, þ me þyncð wiðerweard þing ælces
sorely and said Alas that to-me seems contrary thing of-each

monnes gewunan ⁊ ælces monnes willan, þe ic nu secgan
man habit and of-each man will which I now say
wille; þ is þte þonan þe hi tiohhiað þ hi scylan eadigran
will that is that whence — they intend that they shall more-blessed
weorðan, þ hi weorðað þonan earmran ⁊ eargran.
become that they become thence poorer and more-cowardly
Forðæm gif hi lytles hwæt habbað, þonne beþurfon hi þ 60.4
Because if they of-little aught have then need they that
hi oleccen þæm æfter friðe þe ænigre wuhte mare habbað;
they flatter those for protection who of-any thing more have
sam hi þyrfen, sam hi ne þurfon, hi willað þeah. Hwær
whether they need or they not need they will yet Where
is þōn seo gemetgung, oððe hwa hæfð hi, oððe hwonne
is then the moderation or who has it or when
cymð heo, þ heo mæge adrifan þa yrmða from ðæm
comes it that it can drive the miseries from the
welegum eallunga? Swa he mare hæfð, swa he ma monna
wealthy entirely So he more has so he more of-men
oleccan sceal. Hwæðer þa welegan nu næfre ne hingrige,
flatter shall Whether the wealthy now never — hunger
ne ne þyrste, ne ne cale? Ic wene þeah þ þu wille nu
nor — thirst nor — be-cold I think yet that thou wilt now
cweðan þ ða welgan hæbben mid hwā hi mægen þæt eall
say that the wealthy have with what they can that all
gebetan. Ac þeah ðu nu swa cwæde, hit ne magon ða welan
amend But though thou now so say it not can the riches
ellunga gebetan, þeah hi sume hwile mægen. Forðæmþe hi
entirely amend though they some while can Because they
sculon ælce dæg ycan þ mon ælce dæg wanað; forþamþe
shall each day increase what one each day diminishes because
sio mennisce wædl ðe næfre gefylled ne bið wilnað ælce
the human poverty which never filled — is desires each

dæg hwæshwugu þysses woruldwelan, ægðer ge hrægles ge
day something of-this worldly-wealth each both of-clothing and
metes ge drynces ge monegra þinga to eacan þā. Forðæm
of-food and of-drink and of-many things in addition-to those Therefore
nis nan mon swa welig þ he maran ne þyrfe. Ac sio
not-is any man so wealthy that he more not need But the
gitsung ne con gemet, ne næfre ne bið gehealden on ðære
avarice not knows measure nor ever — is held in the
nedðearfe, ac wilnað symle maran þonne he þurfe.
need but desires ever more than he need
60.22 Ic nat hwi ge fultruwiað ðæm hreosendan welan, nu
I not-know why ye fully-trust the perishing wealth now
hy ne magon eowre wædle eow from adon; ac ge ecað
they not can your poverty you from put but ye increase
eowre wædle mid ðæm ðe hi eow to cumað.
your poverty with that that they you to come
60.26 Ða se Wisdom ða þis spel asæd hæfde, þa ongan
When — Wisdom then this discourse told had then began
he eft giddian, ⁊ þus singende cwæð: Hwelc fremu byð
he again to-sing and thus singing said What profit is
þā welgan gitsere þ he gegaderige ungerī þissa welena
to-the wealthy miser that he gather countless of-these riches
⁊ ælces gimcynnes genog begite? ⁊ þeah he erige his
and of-every gem-kind enough get and though he plow his
land mid þusend sula, ⁊ þeah eall ðes middaneard sie
land with thousand plows and though all this middle-earth be
his anwealde underðeoded, ne læt he his nanwuht of þis
to-his power subjected not takes he of-it anything from this
middanearde mid him mare þōn he brohte hider.
middle-earth with him more than he brought hither

Wisdom says that power and honor do not make a fool worthy, but reveal his vices, as when Catullus spat on Nonius for sitting in a decorated chariot. Boethius himself lost office because he would not bend to Theodoric's wicked will. Every virtue brings its own honor, and wisdom holds four virtues within it: prudence, moderation, courage, and justice. Wealth and power, which have no natural good of their own, cannot make their owners worthy abroad or even at home.

Đa se Wisdom ða ðis lioð âsungen hæfde, ða ongan he 61.1
When — Wisdom then this song sung had then began he
eft spellian ȝ cwæð: Tu þing mæg se weorðscipe ȝ se
again to-discourse and said Two things can the honor and the
anwald gedon, gif he becymð to þæm dysgan; he mæg hine
power do if it comes to the foolish it can him
gedon weorðne ȝ andrysne oðrum dysegum. Ac þonecan þe
make worthy and venerable to-other fools But whenever that
he ðone anwald forlæt, oððe se anweald hine, þōn ne bið
he the power leaves or the power him then not is
he nauðer þā dysegan ne weorð ne andrysne. Hwæðer nu
he either to-the foolish — worthy or venerable Whether now
se anwald hæbbe þone þeaw ðæt he astificige unðeawas ȝ
the power have the way that it eradicate vices and
awyrtwalige of ricra monna mode, ȝ plantige ðær cræftas
uproot from of-powerful men mind and plant there virtues
on? Ic wat ðeah þ se eorðlica anweald næfre ne sæwð þa
in I know yet that the earthly power never — sows the
cræftas, ac lisð ȝ gadrað unðeawas; ȝ þonne hi gegadrad
virtues but gleans and gathers vices and when them gathered
hæfð, þōn eowað he hi, nallas ne hilð; forþā ðara ricra
has then shows it them not-at-all — hides because of-the powerful
monna unðeawas manige men geseoð, forþāðe hi manige
men vices many men see because them many

cunnon, ȝ manege him mid beoð. Forðæm we symle seofiað
know and many them with are Therefore we ever lament
ymbe ðone anwald ȝ hine eac forseoð, þonne we geseoð þ
about the power and it also despise when we see that
he cymð to þā wyrrestum ȝ to þā þe us unweorþoste
it comes to the worst and to those who to-us unworthiest
bioð. For ðæm þingū wæs gio þæt se wisa Catulus hine
are For those things was formerly that the wise Catullus himself
gebealg ȝ swa ungefræglice forcwæð Noniū þone rican,
angered and so unprecedentedly cursed Nonius the powerful
forðæm he hine gemette sittan on gerenedum scridwæne;
because he him found sitting in adorned chariot
forðæm hit wæs ða swiðe micel sido mid Romwarum þ
because it was then very great custom among Romans that
þær nane oðre an ne sæton buton þa weorðestan.
there no others in — sat but the worthiest
61.21 Þa forseah se Catulus hine, forðy he þæran sittan sceolde;
Then despised — Catullus him because he therein sit should
forðæm he hine wiste swiðe ungesceadwisne ȝ swiðe
because he him knew very irrational and very
ungemetfæstne. Þa ongan se Catulus him spigettan on;
immoderate Then began — Catullus him to-spit on
se Catulus wæs heretoga on Rome, swiðe gesceadwis mon.
— Catullus was leader in Rome very rational man
Ne forsawe he no þone oðerne swa swiðe gif he nan
Not would-despise he — the other so greatly if he no
rice ne nænne anwald næfde.
rule nor any power had
61.27 Hwæþer þu nu mæge ongitan hu micelne unweorðscipe
Whether thou now can perceive how great dishonor
se anwald brengð þā unmedeman gif he hine underfehð?
the power brings to-the unworthy if he it receives

forðæm ælces monnes yfel bið þy openre gif he anwald
because of-each man evil is the more-open if he power
hæfð. Ac gesege me nu, ic ascige ðe, þu Boetius, hwi
has But tell to-me now I ask thee thou Boethius why
þu swa manigfeald yfel hæfde ⁊ swa micele uneðnesse on
thou so manifold evil hadst and so great discomfort in
þam rice, þa hwile þe ðu hit hæfdest, oððe forhwy þu hit
the office the while that thou it hadst or why thou it
eft þinum unwillum forlete? Hu ne wasð þu þ hit
afterward against-thy will leftest How not knowest thou that it
næs for nanū oðrum ðingum buton forðæmþe þu noldest
was-not for any other things but because thou wouldst-not
on eallum ðingum bion geþwære þæs unrihtwisan cyninges
in all things be agreeing of-the unrighteous king
willan Þiodrices? forðæmðe ðu hine ongeate on eallum þingū
will of-Theodoric because thou him perceivedst in all things
unwyrðne þæs anwealdes, swiðe sceamleasne ⁊ ungeþwærne,
unworthy of-the power very shameless and discordant
buton ælcū godū þeawe. Forþā we ne magon nauht eaðe
without any good way Therefore we not can at-all easily
secgan þ þa yfelan sien gode, þeah hi anweald habban. Ne
say that the evil be good though they power have Not
wurde þu ðeah na adrifen from Ðeodrice, ne he ðe na ne
wouldst-be thou yet — driven from Theodoric nor he thee — —
forsawe, gif þe licode his dysig ⁊ his unrihtwisnes swa wel
despise if thee pleased his folly and his unrighteousness so well
swa his dysegū deorlingum dyde. Gif þu nu gesawe sumne
as his foolish favorites did If thou now saw some
swiðe wisne man þe hæfde swiðe gooda oferhyda, ⁊ wære
very wise man who had very good high-mindedness and were

þeah swiðe earm ⁊ swiðe ungesælig, hwæðer ðu wolde
yet very poor and very unhappy whether thou wouldst
cweðan þ he wære unwyrðe anwealdes ⁊ weorðscipes?
say that he were unworthy of-power and of-honor
62.18 Ða andswarode Boetius ⁊ cwæð: Nese, la, nese; gif ic hine
Then answered Boethius and said No lo no if I him
swilcne gemete ne cwæðe ic næfre ðæt he sie unweorðe
such find not would-say I ever that he be unworthy
anwaldes ⁊ weorðscipes, ac ælces me ðincð þ he sie
of-power and of-honor but of-each to-me seems that he be
wyrðe þe on þisse worulde is. Ða cwæð se Wisdom: Ælc
worthy which in this world is Then said — Wisdom Each
cræft hæfð his sundorgife, ⁊ þa gife ⁊ þone weorðscipe
virtue has its special-gift and the gift and the honor
þe he hæfð he forgifð swiðe hræðe þæm þe hine lufað.
which it has it gives very quickly to-him who it loves
Swa swa wisdom is se hehsta cræft, ⁊ se hæfð on him
So as wisdom is the highest virtue and it has in itself
feower oðre cræftas; ðara is an wærscipe, oðer gemetgung,
four other virtues of-which is one prudence second moderation
ðridde is ellen, feorðe rihtwisnes. Se Wisdom gedeð his
third is courage fourth righteousness — Wisdom makes his
lufiendas wise ⁊ weorðe ⁊ gemetfæste ⁊ geþyldige ⁊
lovers wise and worthy and moderate and patient and
rihtwise, ⁊ ælces godes þeawes he gefyllð þone þe hine
righteous and with-every good virtue he fills him who him
lufað. Þæt ne magon don þa ðe þone anweald habbað þisse
loves That not can do those who the power have of-this
worulde; ne magon hi nanne cræft forgifan þā ðe hine
world not can they any virtue give to-those who it
lufiað of hiora welan, gif hi hine on heora gecynde nabbað.
love from their wealth if they it in their nature have-not

Be þæm is swiðe sweotol þ ða rican on þæm woruldwelan
By that is very clear that the powerful in the worldly-wealth
nabbað nænne sundorcræft; ac him bið se wela utane
have-not any special-virtue but to-them is the wealth from-outside
cumen, ⁊ he ne mæg utane nauht agnes habban.
come and he not can from-outside aught of-own have
Geðenc nu hwæðer ænig mon bio a ðe unweorðra þe hine 63.1
Think now whether any man be ever the less-worthy that him
manige men forseon; gif þonne ænig mon â þe unweorðra bið,
many men despise if then any man ever the less-worthy is
þonne bið ælc dysig man þy unweorðra þe he mare rice hæfð
then is each foolish man the less-worthy the he more power has
ælcum wisū men. Be þæm is genoh sweotol þ se anweald ⁊
to-each wise man By that is enough clear that the power and
se wela ne mæg his wealdend gedon no ðy weorðran, ac he hine
the wealth not can its wielder make — the worthier but it him
gedeð ðy unweorðran þe he him to cymð, gif he ær ne dohte.
makes the less-worthy the it him to comes if he before not was-good
Swa bið eac se wela ⁊ se anwald þi wyrsa, gif se ne deah þe
So is also the wealth and the power the worse if he not is-good who
hine ah; ægðer hiora bið þy forcuðra gif hi hi gemetað.
it owns each of-them is the baser if they each-other meet
Ac ic þe mæg eaþe gereccan be sumere bisne, þ ðu miht 63.11
But I to-thee can easily show by some example that thou canst
genoh sweotole ongiton þ ðis andwearde lif is swiðe anlic
enough clearly perceive that this present life is very like
sceade, ⁊ on þære sceade nan mon ne mæg begitan þa
shadow and in the shadow no man — can obtain the
soðan gesælða. Hu wenst ðu nu? gif hwelc swiðe rice mon
true felicities How thinkest thou now if any very powerful man
wyrð adrifen of his earde oððe on his hlafordes ærende
becomes driven from his country or on of-his lord errand

færð, cymð þonne on ælðeodig folc þær þær hine nan man
goes comes then among foreign people there where him no man
ne can ne he ne ænne mon, ne furðū þ geðeode ne can,
— knows nor he — any man nor even the language — knows
wenstu mæge his rice hine þær on londe wyrðne gedon?
thinkest-thou can his power him there in land worthy make
Ac ic wat þ he ne mæg. Gif þōn se weorðscipe þæm welan
But I know that it not can If then the honor to-the wealth
gecynde wære, ȝ he his agen wære, oððe eft se wela ðæs
natural were and it its own were or again the wealth of-the
welegan agen wære, þonne ne meahte he hine no forlætan.
wealthy own were then not could it him — forsake
Wære se mon on swelcum lande swelce he wære þe hi
Were the man in such land as he were who them
ahte, ðonne wære his wela ȝ his weorðscipe mid him. Ac
owned then were his wealth and his honor with him But
forþæmþe se wela ȝ se anwald his agene ne bioð, forðy hi
because the wealth and the power his own not are therefore they
hine forlætað; ȝ forðyþe hi nan gecyndelic good on him
him forsake and because they no natural good in them
selfum nabbað, forðy hi losiað swa swa sceadu oððe smec.
selves have therefore they perish so as shadow or smoke
63.27 Þeah se leasa wena ȝ sio rædelse þara dysigena monna tiohhige
Though the false opinion and the conjecture of-the foolish men suppose
þ se anwald ȝ se wela sie þ hehste good, ac hit bið eall
that the power and the wealth be the highest good yet it is all
oðer. Þōn þa rican beoð oðer twega, oððe on ælðeode oððe on
other When the powerful are one of-two either in foreign-land or in
hiora agenre gecyððe mid gesceadwisū monnū, þōn bið ægðer
their own country among rational men then is each
ge þā wisan ge þā ælðeodegan his wela for nauht, siððan
both to-the wise and to-the foreigners his wealth for naught after

hi ongitað þ hi næron for nanū cræfte gecorene, buton
they perceive that they not-were for any virtue chosen but
for dysges folces heringe. Ac þær hi ænige wuht agnes oððe
for of-foolish people praise But if they any whit of-own or
gecyndelices godes an heora anwealde hæfdon, þōn hæfden hi
of-natural good in their power had then would-have they
þ mid him, þeah hi þæt rice forleten; ne forleton hi no þ
that with them though they the rule forsook not would-forsake they — the
gecyndelice good, ac simle him wolde þ fylgean ⁊ hi symle
natural good but ever them would that follow and them ever
weorðe gedon, wæron hi on swelcum lande swylce hi wæron.
worthy make were they in such land as they were
Nu ðu meaht ongitan þ se wela ⁊ se anwald nænne mon 64.8
Now thou canst perceive that the wealth and the power no man
ne magon on ellende weorðne gedon. Ic nat þeah ðu
— can in foreign-land worthy make I not-know whether thou
wene þæt hi on hiora agenre cyðde ealneweg mægen; ac
think that they in their own country always can but
ðeah þu his wene, ic wat þ hi ne magon. Hit wæs gio
though thou it think I know that they not can It was formerly
giond ealle Romana mearce þ heretogan ⁊ domeras, ⁊ þa
throughout all of-Romans territory that leaders and judges and the
maðmhirdas þe þ fioh hioldon þe mon þam ferdmonnum
treasurers who the money kept which one to-the soldiers
on geare sellan sceolde, ⁊ þa wisestan witan, hæfdon mæstne
in year give should and the wisest councilors had most
weorðscipe; nu þonne oðer twega, oðde þara nan nis, oðde
honor now then one of-two either of-them none is or
hi nænne weorþscipe nabbað, gif hiora ænig is. Swa hit bið
they no honor have if of-them any is So it is
be ælcum þara þinga ðe agen god ⁊ gecyndelic nabbað
with each of-the things which own good and natural have-not

on him selfū; oðre hwile hit bið to tælenne, oðre hwile hit
in them selves one while it is to blame other while it
bið to heriganne. Ac hwæt þincð þe þōn on þā welan
is to praise But what seems to-thee then in the wealth
ȝ on anwealde wynsumes oððe nytwyrþes, nu hi nanes
and in power of-pleasant or of-useful now they of-no
ðinges genog nabbaþ, ne hi nauht agnes goodes nabbað,
thing enough have nor they aught of-own good have
ne nauht þurhwunigendes hiora wealdendū sellan na magon?
nor aught of-lasting to-their wielders give — can

XXVIII · NERO'S FAVORITES

Wisdom sings that though Nero wore the finest robes and jewels, every wise man found him hateful and full of vice, and though he honored his favorites with great riches, no sensible man could think them any the worthier for it.

64.23 Ða se Wisdom þa ðis spell asæd hæfde, ða ongan he eft
When — Wisdom then this discourse told had then began he again
giddigan ȝ þus cwæð: Ðeah nu se unrihtwisa cynig Neron
to-sing and thus said Though now the unrighteous king Nero
hine gescyrpte mid eallū þam wlitegestū wædū ȝ mid ælces
himself clothed with all the fairest garments and with of-every
cynnes gimmū geglengde, hu ne wes he þeah ælcū witū
kind gems adorned how not was he yet to-every wise-man
lað ȝ unweorð, ȝ ælces unðeawes ȝ firenlustes full?
hateful and unworthy and of-every vice and of-sinful-lust full
Hwæt, he þeah weorðode his deorlingas mid miclū welū;
Lo he yet honored his favorites with great riches

ac hwæt was him ðy bet? Hwelc gesceadwis mon mihte
but what was to-them the better What rational man could
cweþan þ he a ðy weorðra wære þeah he hine weorðode?
say that he ever the worthier were though he him honored

XXIX · THE FAVOR OF KINGS

Wisdom asks whether a king's fellowship and gifts can make a man rich or powerful, and reminds Boethius that many a king has lost power and wealth and become a pauper. A king's power brings fear and care, like the sword a usurper said hung by a thread over his head. Nero had his teacher Seneca killed, and Antoninus his favorite Papinian. Friends won by wealth leave with it. Wisdom sings that true power is mastery over one's own mind, without which a man ruling the whole world has no more power.

Ða se Wisdom þa þis leoð asungen hæfde, þa ongan he eft 65.1
When — Wisdom then this song sung had then began he again
spelligan ⁊ þus cwæð: Hweðer þu nu wene þ þæs cyninges
to-discourse and thus said Whether thou now think that of-the king
geferræden ⁊ se wela ⁊ se anweald þe he gifð his
fellowship and the wealth and the power which he gives to-his
deorlingū mæge ænigne mon gedon weligne oððe wealdendne?
favorites can any man make wealthy or powerful
Ða andsworede ic ⁊ cwæt: Forhwi ne magon hi? Hwæt
Then answered I and said Why not can they What
is on ðis andweardan life wynsūre ⁊ betere þonne þæs
is in this present life pleasanter and better than of-the
cyninges folgað ⁊ his neawest, ⁊ siððan wela ⁊ anweald?
king service and his nearness and then wealth and power
Ða andswarode se Wisdō ⁊ cwæð: Sege me nu hwæðer
Then answered — Wisdom and said Tell to-me now whether

þu æfre gehyrdest þ he ængum ðara þe ær us wære
thou ever heardest that it with-any of-those who before us were
eallunga þurhwunode; oððe wenstu hwæðer hine ænig þara
entirely remained or thinkest-thou whether it any of-those
ealne weg habban mæge þe hine nu hæfð? Hu ne wasð ðu
all the-way have can who it now has How not knowest thou
þte ealle bec sind fulla þara biesena þara monna þe ær us
that all books are full of-the examples of-the men who before us
wæren? ⁊ ælc mon wat þara þe nu leofað ðætte manegū
were and each man knows of-those who now live that from-many
cyninge onhwearf se anweald ⁊ se wela oð ðæt he eft wearð
a-king turned-away the power and the wealth until that he again became
wædla. Eala ea, is þ þonne forweorðfullic wela þ nauþer
pauper Alas alas is that then very-worthy wealth which neither
ne mæg ne hine selfne gehealdan ne his hlaford, to þon þ
— can — it self hold nor its lord to that that
he ne þyrfe maran fultumes, oððe hi bioð begen forhealden?
he not need more help or they are both lost
65.18 Hu ne is þæt þeah sio eowru hehste gesælð þara cyninga
How not is that yet the your highest felicity of-the kings
anweald? ⁊ þeah gif þā cyninge æniges willan wana bið,
power and yet if to-the king of-any desire lack is
þonne lytlað ðæt his anweald, ⁊ ecð his ermða; forðy bioð
then lessens that his power and increases his miseries therefore are
simle þa eowra gesælða on sumum þingum unsælða. Hwæt,
ever the your felicities in some things unhappinesses Lo
þa cyningas, þeah hi mænig ger þioda wealden, ne wealdað
the kings though they many years peoples rule not rule
hi þeah ealra þara þe hi wealdan woldan, ac bioð forðæm
they yet all of-those whom they rule would but are therefore
swiðe earme on hiora mode forðy hi nabbað sume þara þe
very wretched in their mind because they have-not some of-those which

hi habban wolden; forðæm ic wat þ se cyning þe gitsere
they have would therefore I know that the king who miser
bið, þ he hæfð maran ermðe þonne anwald. Forðam cwæð
is that he has more misery than power Therefore said
gio sum cyning þe unrihtlice feng to rice: Eala, hwæt
formerly a-certain king who wrongfully succeeded to kingdom Alas what
ðæt bið gesælig mon þe him ealne weg ne hangað nacod
that is happy man who to-him all the-way not hangs naked
sweord ofer ðā̄ heafde be smale þræde, swa swa me git
sword over the head by slender thread so as to-me still
symle dyde? Hu þincð þe nu, hu þe se wela ⁊ se anwald
ever did How seems to-thee now how thee the wealth and the power
licige, nu hi næfre ne bioð buton ege ⁊ earfoðū ⁊ sorgum?
please now they never — are without fear and hardships and sorrows
Hwæt, þu wæst þ ælc cyninc wolde bion butan þissum,
Lo thou knowest that each king would be without these
⁊ habban þeah anwald gif he meahte; ac ic wat þ he ne
and have yet power if he could but I know that he not
mæg; þy ic wundrige forhwy hi gilpen swelces anwaldes.
can therefore I wonder why they boast of-such power
Hwæðer þe nu þince þ se mon micelne anwald hæbbe ⁊ 66.6
Whether to-thee now seem that the man great power have and
sie swiðe gesælig þe simle willnað þæs þe he begitan ne
be very happy who ever desires that which he obtain not
mæg? Oððe wenstu þ se sie swiðe gesælig þe symle mid
can Or thinkest-thou that he be very happy who ever with
micle werede færð, oððe eft se ðe ægðer ondræd ge þone þe
great troop goes or again he who each dreads both him who
hine ondræt ge þone þe hine no ne ondræt? Hwæðer þe
him dreads and him who him not — dreads Whether to-thee
nu þince þ se mon micelne anwald hæbbe þe him selfum
now seem that the man great power have who to-him self

ðincð þ he nænne næbbe, swa swa nu manegū men ðincð,
seems that he none have so as now to-many a-man seems
þ he nænne næbbe buton he hæbbe mænigne man þe him
that he none have unless he have many a-man who him
here? Hwæt wille we ma nu sprecan be ðæm cininge ȝ be
obey What will we more now speak about the king and about
his folgerum, butan þ ælc gesceadwis man mæg witan þ
his followers but that each rational man can know that
hi bioð full earme ȝ ful unmihtige? Hu magon þa cyningas
they are full wretched and full powerless How can the kings
oðsacan oððe forhelan heora unmeahte, þonne hi ne magon
deny or conceal their weakness when they not can
nænne weorðscipe forðbrengan buton hiora þegna fultume?
any honor bring-forth without of-their thanes help
66.20 Hwæt wille we nu elles secggean be ðæm þegnum buton
What will we now else say about the thanes but
þ þ ðær oft gebyreð þ hi weorðað bereafode ælcre are,
that which there often happens that they become bereft of-every honor
ge furðum þæs feores, from hiora leasan cyninge? Hwæt,
yea even of-the life from their false king Lo
we witon þ se unrihtwisa cyning Neron wolde hatan his
we know that the unrighteous king Nero would command his
agenne magister ȝ his fostorfæder âcwellan, þæs nama wæs
own master and his foster-father to-kill whose name was
Seneca; se wæs uðwita. Þa he þa onfunde þ he dead
Seneca who was philosopher When he then discovered that he dead
bion sceolde, þa bead he ealla his æhta wið his feore; þa
be should then offered he all his possessions for his life then
nolde se cyning þæs onfon, ne him his feores geunnan.
would-not the king that accept nor to-him his life grant
Ða he þa þ ongeat, þa geceas he hī þone deað ðæt
When he then that perceived then chose he for-himself the death that

hine mon oflete blodes on ðæm earme; ⁊ ða dyde mon
him one let of-blood in the arm and then did one
swa. Hwæt, we eac geherdon þæt Papinianus wæs Antoniose
so Lo we also heard that Papinian was to-Antoninus
ðæm casere ealra his dyrlinga besorgost, ⁊ ealles his folces
the emperor of-all his favorites dearest and of-all his people
mæstne anwald hæfde; ac he hine het gebindan ⁊
most power had but he him commanded to-bind and
siððan ofslean. Hwæt, ealle men witan þæt se Seneca wæs
afterward to-slay Lo all men know that — Seneca was
Nerone ⁊ Papinianus Antonie þa weorðestan ⁊ þa leofostan,
to-Nero and Papinian to-Antoninus the worthiest and the dearest
⁊ mæstne anwald hæfdon ge on hiora hirede ge buton, ⁊
and most power had both in their household and outside and
þeah buton ælcre scylde wurdon fordone. Hwæt, hi wilnedon
yet without any guilt were destroyed Lo they desired
begen eallon mægene þ ða hlafordas naman swa hwæt
both with-all strength that the lords took so what
swa hi hæfden, ⁊ leten hi libban; ac hi ne meahten þ
so they had and let them live but they not could that
begitan, forðæm þara cyninga wælhreownes wæs to ðæm
obtain because of-the kings cruelty was to that-(degree)
heard þ hiora eaðmetto ne meahton nauht forstandan, ne
hard that their humility not could at-all avail nor
huru heora ofermetto dydon; swa hwæðer swa hi dydon ne
indeed their pride did so whether so they did not
dohte him ða nawðer, þeah hi scoldon þ feorh ælætan.
availed to-them then either yet they must the life let-go
Forðæm se ðe his ær tide ne tiolað, þonne bið his on 67.11
Because he who for-it before time not provides then is it in
tid untilad. Hu licað þe nu se anwald ⁊ se wela, nu ðu
time unprovided How pleases thee now the power and the wealth now thou

gehered hæfst þ hine mon nawðer ne butan ege habban ne
heard hast that it one neither — without fear have —
mæg ne forlætan ne mot, þeah he wille? Oððe hwæt forstod
can nor forsake — may though he will Or what availed
seo menigu þara freonda þā deorlingū þara cyninga? oððe
the multitude of-the friends to-the favorites of-the kings or
hwæt forstent hio ænegū men? Forðon þa frend cumað mid
what avails it to-any man Because the friends come with
þæm welum ȝ eft mid ðæm welan gewitað buton swiðe
the riches and again with the wealth depart except very
feawa. Ac ða frend þe hine ær for ðæm welan lufiað
few But the friends who him before for the wealth love
þa gewitað eft mid þæm welan, ȝ weorðað ðonne to
they depart again with the wealth and become then to
feondum, buton þa feawan ðe hine ær for lufum ȝ for
enemies but the few who him before for love and for
treowum lufedon; þa hine woldon þeah lufian ðeah he earm
faith loved those him would yet love though he poor
wære; þa him wuniað. Hwylc is wirsa wol oððe ænegum
were they with-him remain What is worse plague or to-any
men mare daru þonne he hæbbe on his geferrædenne ȝ
man greater harm than he have in his fellowship and
on his neaweste feond ȝ freondes anlicnesse?
in his nearness enemy in of-friend likeness
67.25 Ða se Wisdom ða ðis spell areaht hæfde, þa ongan he
When — Wisdom then this discourse told had then began he
eft singan ȝ þus cwæð: Se þe wille fullice anweald agan,
again to-sing and thus said He who will fully power own
he sceal tiligan ærest þ he hæbbe anweald his agenes
he shall strive first that he have power of-his own
modes, ȝ ne sie to ungerisenlice underðeod his unþeawū,
mind and not be too unseemly subjected to-his vices

ȝ ado of his mode ungerisenlice ymbhogan, ȝ forlæte
and put from his mind unseemly concerns and forsake
þa seofunga his earmþa. Þeah he nu ricsige ofer eallne
the lamentings of-his miseries Though he now reign over all
middangeard from easteweardū oð westeweardne, frō Indeū,
middle-earth from east to west from India
þ is se suðeastende þisses middaneardes, oð ðæt iland þe
that is the south-east-end of-this middle-earth to the island which
we hatað Tyle, þ is on þā norðwestende þisses middaneardes,
we call Thule that is at the north-west-end of-this middle-earth
þær ne bið nawþer ne on sumera niht, ne on wintra dæg:
where not is either — in summer night or in winter day
þeah he nu þæs ealles wealde, næfð he no þe maran
though he now of-that all rule has-not he — the more
anweald gif he his ingeþances anweald næfð ȝ gif he hine
power if he of-his thought power has-not and if he himself
ne warenað wið þa unþeawas þe we ær ymb spræcon.
not guards against the vices which we before about spoke

XXX · GLORY AND NOBLE BIRTH

Wisdom quotes a poet who called the world's glory false, since most men win it from the opinion of fools rather than their deserts, and fame spreads in one land but not in the next. Noble birth is no ground for pride, for all men come from one father and one mother, and another man's virtue does not make anyone better. The one good in noble birth is that it shames a man into living up to his ancestors. Wisdom sings that God made all men equally noble, and true nobility lies in the mind.

Ða se Wisdom þa þas fitte asungen hæfde, þa ongon he 68.6
When — Wisdom then this fitt sung had then began he
eft seggan spell ȝ cwæð: Is þ ungerisenlic wuldor þisse
again to-tell discourse and said Is the unseemly glory of-this

worulde ȝ swiðe leas; be ðæm wæs gio singende sum
world and very false about that was formerly singing a-certain
sceop. Þa he forseah þis andwearde lif, ða cwæð he: Eala,
poet When he despised this present life then said he O
wuldur þisse weorulde, ea, forhwy þe haten dysige men mid
glory of-this world alas why thee call foolish men with
leasre stemne wuldor, nu ðu nane neart? Forðæmðe ma manna
false voice glory now thou none art Because more of-men
hæfð micelne gielp ȝ micel wuldor ȝ micelne weorðscipe
has great vainglory and great glory and great honor
for dysiges folces wenan, þonne he hæbbe for his gewyrhtum.
for of-foolish people opinion than he have for his deserts
Ac sege me nu hwæt ungerisenlicre sie ðonne þ, oððe forhwy
But tell to-me now what more-unseemly be than that or why
hi ne mægen hiora ma scamian þonne fægnian, þonne hi
they not can themselves rather be-ashamed than rejoice when they
geherað þ him man on lihð? Þeah mon nu hwone godra
hear that them one about lies Though one now anyone of-good
mid rihte herige ȝ soð an segge, ne sceal he na þe hræþor
with right praise and truth about say not shall he — the sooner
to ungemetlice fægnian ðæs folces worda; ac þæs he sceal
too immoderately rejoice of-the people words but in-that he shall
fægnian ðæt hi him soð an seggað. Þeah he nu þæs fægnige
rejoice that they him truth about say Though he now in-that rejoice
þ hi his naman bræden, ne bið he no þy hræðor swa brad
that they his name spread not is he — the sooner so broad
swa hi tihhað, forðæm hi hine ne magon tobrædan geond
as they suppose because they it not can spread throughout
ealle eorðan, þeah hi on sumū lande mægen; forðæm þeah
all earth though they in some land can because though

he sie anum gehered, þonne bið he oðrum unhered; þeah
he be by-one praised then is he by-another unpraised though
he on þam lande sie mære, þonne bið he on oðrum unmære.
he in the land be famous then is he in other unfamous
Forðæm is þæs folces hlisa ælcum men for nauht to habbanne 68.25
Therefore is of-the people repute to-each man for naught to have
forðæm he to ælcum men ne cymð be his gewyrhtum, ne
because it to each man not comes by his deserts nor
huru nanum ealne weg ne wunað. Geþenc nu ærest be
indeed to-any all the-way — abides Think now first about
þæm gebyrdum, gif hwa þæs gilpð, hu idel ȝ hu unnet
the births if anyone of-that boasts how idle and how useless
se gylp bið; forðā þe ælc mon wat þ ealle men of
the vainglory is because that each man knows that all men from
anum fæder comon ȝ of anre meder. Oððe eft be þæs
one father came and from one mother Or again about of-the
folces hlisan ȝ be hiora heringe; ic nat hwæs we þær
people repute and about their praise I not-know in-what we there
fægniað. Þeah ða nu foremære sien þe folcisce men heriað,
rejoice Though they now renowned be whom common men praise
þeah bioð þa foremærran ȝ rihtlicran to herianne þa þe
yet are the more-renowned and more-rightly to praise those who
bioð mid cræftum geweorðode; forðæmþe nan mon ne bið
are with virtues honored because no man — is
mid rihte for oðres gode ne for his cræftū no þy mærra
with right for of-another good nor for his virtues — the greater
ne no þy geheredra, gif he hine self næfð. Hwæðer þu
nor — the more-praised if he it himself has-not Whether thou
beo a þy fægerra for oðres mannes fægere? Bið men
be ever the fairer for of-another man fairness Is to-a-man
ful lytle þy bet þeah he godne fæder hæbbe, gif he self
full little the better though he good father have if he himself

to nauhte ne mæg. Forþā ic lære þ ðu fægenige oðerra
to naught — avails Therefore I advise that thou rejoice of-other
monna goodes ȝ heora æðelo to þon swiðe þ þu
men good and their nobility to that-(degree) much that thou
ne tilige ðe selfum agnes, forðæmþe ælces monnes god
not strive for-thee self own because of-each man good
ȝ his æþelo bioð ma on þā mode þōn on þæm flæsce.
and his nobility are more in the mind than in the flesh
69.11 Þ an ic wat þeah godes on þa æðelo, þ mænigne mon
That one I know yet of-good in the nobility that many a-man
sceamaþ þ he wiorðe wyrsa þonne his eldran wæron, ȝ
it-shames that he become worse than his elders were and
forðæm higað eallon mægne ðæt he wolde þara betstena
therefore strives with-all strength that he would of-the best
sumes þeawas ȝ his cræftas gefon.
of-one ways and his virtues take
69.16 Þa se Wisdom ða þis spell areaht hæfde, þa ongan he
When — Wisdom then this discourse told had then began he
singan ymb þ ilce ȝ cwæð: Hwæt, ealle men hæfdon gelicne
to-sing about the same and said Lo all men had like
fruman, forþā hi ealle coman of anū fæder ȝ of anre
beginning because they all came from one father and from one
meder, ȝ ealle hi beoð git gelice acennede. Nis þ nan
mother and all they are still alike born Not-is that any
wundor, forþāþe an God is fæder eallra gesceafta forþā he hi
wonder because one God is father of-all creatures because he them
ealle gesceop ȝ ealra welt. Se selð þære sunnan leoht, ȝ þā
all created and all rules He gives to-the sun light and to-the
monan, ȝ ealle tungl a geset. He gesceop men on eorþan;
moon and all stars ever set He created men on earth
gegaderode þa saula ȝ þone lichoman mid his þā anwealde,
joined the souls and the body with his the power

ȝ ealle menn gesceop emnæþele on þære fruman gecynde.
and all men created equally-noble in the first nature
Hwi ofermodige ge þōn ofer oðre men for eowrū gebyrdū
Why grow-proud ye then over other men for your births
buton anweorce, nu ge nanne ne magon metan unæþelne? ac
without cause now ye none — can find ignoble but
ealle sint emnæþele, gif ge willað þone fruman sceaft geþencan,
all are equally-noble if ye will the first creation consider
ȝ þone scippend, ȝ siððan eoweres ælces acennednesse. Ac
and the creator and then of-your each birth But
þa ryhtæþelo bið on þā mode, næs on þam flæsce, swa
the true-nobility is in the mind not-at-all in the flesh so
swa we ær sædon. Ac ælc mon þe allunga underþeoded bið
as we before said But each man who entirely subjected is
unþeawū forlæt his sceppend ȝ his fruman sceaft ȝ his
to-vices forsakes his creator and his first creation and his
æðelo, ȝ þonan wyrð anæþelad oð ðæt he wyrð unæþele.
nobility and thence becomes degraded until that he becomes ignoble

XXXI · THE PLEASURES OF THE FLESH

Wisdom says the pleasures of the flesh lead to sickness, sleeplessness, sorrow, and worse after death, just as a woman suffers in childbirth after her pleasure. If pleasure made men happy, beasts would be happy too. Wife and children bring joy but also grief, from death in childbirth to children who plot against their father, and Euripides said a childless man is sometimes better off. Wisdom sings that adultery destroys the soul, as a bee dies after it stings, unless the man turns to good.

Ða se Wisdom þa þis lioð âsungen hæfde, þa ongan he eft 70.1
When — Wisdom then this song sung had then began he again
seggan spell ȝ þus cwæð: Hwæt godes magon we seggan
to-tell discourse and thus said What of-good can we say

on þa flæsclican unþeawas? Forþā swa hwa swa hi forlætan
of the fleshly vices Because so who so them forsake
wile, he sceal geþolian micle nearanesse ⁊ manige gearfoðu;
will he shall endure great distress and many hardships
forþā seo oferfyll simle fet unþeawas, ⁊ þa unþeawas habbað
because the gluttony ever feeds vices and the vices have
oferðearfe hreowsunga, ⁊ seo hreowsung ne beoð na butan
great-need of-repentance and the repentance not is — without
sorge ⁊ butan nearonesse. Eala, eaw, hu manega adla ⁊
sorrow and without distress Alas alas how many diseases and
hu micel sar ⁊ hu micele wæccan ⁊ hu micle unrotnesse
how great pain and how many wakings and how great sadness
se hæfð þe ðone won willan hæfð on þisse worulde. ⁊ hu
he has who the wicked will has in this world and how
micele ma wenst ðu þ hi scylon habban æfter þisse worulde
much more thinkest thou that they shall have after this world
edlean hiora earnunga; swa swa bearneacen wif acenð bearn
reward of-their deserts so as pregnant woman bears child
⁊ ðrowað micel earfoðu, æfter þā þe hio ær micelne lust
and suffers great hardships after that that she before great pleasure
þurhteah. Forþy ic nat hwæt þa woruldlustas myrges bringað
carried-out Therefore I not-know what the worldly-lusts of-mirth bring
hiora lufigendū. Gif nu hwa cwið þ se sie gesælig se þe his
to-their lovers If now anyone says that he be happy he who his
woruldlustum eallu fulgæð, hwi nele he cweðan eac þ ða
worldly-lusts all follows why will-not he say also that the
netenu seon gesælegu, forðæmðe hiora willa to nanum oðrum
beasts be happy because their will to no other
ðingum nis aþenod buton to gifernesse ⁊ to wrænnesse?
things is directed but to gluttony and to lust

Swiðe gewynsum hit bið þæt mon wif hæbbe ⁊ bearn; ac 70.18
Very pleasant it is that one wife have and children but
ðeah manige bearn bioð gestrined to hiora eldrena forwirde,
yet many children are begotten to of-their parents ruin
forðæmþe manig wif forswilt for hire bearne ær heo hit
because many woman dies for her child before she it
brengan mæge. ⁊ we leornodon eac þæt hwilum geberede
bring-forth can and we learned also that at-times happened
swiðe ungewunelic ⁊ ungecyndelic yfel, þ ða bearn
very unusual and unnatural evil that the children
getreowedon betwuh him ⁊ sieredon ymbe þone fæder; ge
conspired between themselves and plotted about the father yea
furðon þ wyrse wæs, we geheordon geo geara on ealdū spellū
even what worse was we heard of-old of-yore in old stories
þ sū sunu ofsloge his fæder; ic nat humeta, buton we
that a-certain son slew his father I not-know how but we
witon þ hit unmennisclic dæd wæs. Hwæt, ælc mon mæg
know that it inhuman deed was Lo each man can
witan hu hefig sorg men beoð seo gemen his bearna; ne
know how heavy sorrow to-a-man is the care of-his children not
þearf ic þe þeah þ secgan, forðæm þu hit hæfst afunden
need I to-thee yet that tell because thou it hast found
be þe selfum. Be þære hæfegan gemenne his bearna cwæð
by thee self About the heavy care of-his children said
min mægister Eurupides þ hwilū gebyrede þā heardsælgan
my master Euripides that at-times befell to-the unfortunate
þ him wære betere þ he bearn næfde þōn he hæfde.
that to-him were better that he children had-not than he had
Þa se Wisdom ða þis spel areht hæfde, þa ongan he 71.3
When — Wisdom then this discourse told had then began he
eft giddian ⁊ þus singende cwæð: Hwæt, se yfela willa
again to-sing and thus singing said Lo the evil desire

unrihthæmedes gedrefð fulneah ælces libbendes monnes mod.
of-adultery troubles nearly of-every living man mind
Swa swa seo beo sceal losian þōn heo hwæt irringa stingð,
So as the bee shall perish when she anything angrily stings
swa sceal ælc sawl forweorðan æfter þā unrihthæmede, buton
so shall each soul perish after the adultery unless
se mon hweorfe to gode.
the man turn to good

XXXII · WEALTH IS NOT THE WAY

Wisdom says every worldly good hinders those who seek true happiness: wealth must be taken from others, honor won by flattery, and power is never secure. Even a body stronger than a lion's and fairer than any man's is nothing beside a single virtue of the soul, and Alcibiades himself would not seem so fair within as without to eyes as keen as the lynx's. Wisdom sings that men know where to look for gold, gems, and fish, but are too blind to know where true felicity is hidden.

71.9 Ða se Wisdom þa þis leoð asungen hæfde, þa ongan he
When — Wisdom then this song sung had then began he
eft spellian ⁊ þus cwæð: Forðæm nis nan tweo þ þes
again to-discourse and thus said Therefore not-is any doubt that this
andwearda wela myrð ⁊ let þa men þe bioð atehte to
present wealth hinders and hampers the men who are drawn to
þam soðum gesælðum; ⁊ he nænne ne mæg gebringan þær
the true felicities and it none — can bring where
he him gehet, þ is æt þæm hehstan goode. Ac ic þe mæg
it them promised that is to the highest good But I to-thee can
mid feaum wordū gesecgan hu manegra yfela þa welan sint
with few words say how of-many evils the riches are
gefylde. Hwæt þu þonne mæne mid þære gidsunge þæs feos,
filled What thou then mean with the avarice of-the money

nu þu hit nahu elles begitan ne miht buton þu hit forstele
now thou it nowhere else obtain — canst unless thou it steal
oððe gereafige oððe abeþecige, ȝ þær þær hit þe wexð,
or rob or beg and there where it to-thee grows
þonne wanað hit oþrum? Ðu woldest nu bion foremære
then lessens it to-another Thou wouldst now be renowned
on weorðscipe; ac gif þu þ habban wilt, þonne scealt ðu
in honor but if thou that have wilt then shalt thou
oleccan swiðe earmlice ȝ swiþe eadmodlice þæm ðe þe to
flatter very wretchedly and very humbly him who thee to
þæm gefulteman mæge. Gif þu þe wilt don manegra beteran
that help can If thou thyself wilt make than-many better
ȝ weorðran, þonne scealt þu þe lætan anes wyrsan. Hu
and worthier then shalt thou thyself hold than-one worse How
ne is þ þonne sum dæl yrmða þ mon swa werelice scyle
not is that then some part of-miseries that one so wretchedly should
culpian to þæm þe him gifan scyle? Anwaldes ðu wilnast?
cringe to him who to-him give should Power thou desirest
Ac þu hine næfre orsorgne ne begitst for ælðeodegum ȝ 71.25
But thou it never secure — obtainest for foreigners and
git ma for ðinum agnum monnum ȝ mægum. Gilpes þu
yet more for thy own men and kinsmen Vainglory thou
girnst? Ac þu hine ne meaht habban orsorgne, forþā ðu
yearnest-for But thou it not canst have secure because thou
scealt habban simle hwæthweg wiðerweardes ȝ ungetæses.
shalt have ever something of-adverse and of-troublesome
Þu woldest nu brucan ungemetlicre wrænnesse? Ac ðe
Thou wouldst now enjoy immoderate lust But thee
willað þonne forsion goode Godes þeowas, forðæmþe þin
will then despise good of-God servants because thy
werie flæsc hafað þin anwald, nales þu his. Hu mæg
wretched flesh has of-thee power not-at-all thou of-it How can

mon earmlicor gebæron þonne mon hine underðiede his
one more-wretchedly behave than one himself subject to-his
weregan flæsce, ⁊ nelle his gesceadwisan saule? Hwæþer
wretched flesh and will-not to-his rational soul Whether
ge nu sien maran on eowrū lichoman þonne elpend, oððe
ye now be greater in your body than elephant or
strengran þōn leo oððe fear, oððe swiftran þonne tigris?
stronger than lion or bull or swifter than tiger
Þeah ðu nu wære mara þonne elpend ⁊ strengra þonne leo
Though thou now were greater than elephant and stronger than lion
oððe fear and swiftra ðonne tigris þ deor, ⁊ þeah þu wære
or bull and swifter than tiger the beast and though thou were
eallra manna fægrost on wlite, ⁊ þōn woldest geornlice
of-all men fairest in beauty and then wouldst diligently
æfter wisdome spyrian oððæt þu fullice riht ongeate, þonne
after wisdom inquire until thou fully aright perceivedst then
meahtes ðu sweotole ongiton ðæt ealle þa mægno ⁊ þa
couldst thou clearly perceive that all the powers and the
cræftas þe we ær ymb spræcon ne sint to metanne wið
virtues which we before about spoke not are to measure against
þære sawle cræfta ænne. Hwæt nu, wisdom is an anlepe
of-the soul of-virtues one Lo now wisdom is a single
cræft þære sawle, ⁊ þeah we witon ealle þ he is betera
virtue of-the soul and yet we know all that it is better
ðonne ealle þa oðre cræftas þe we ær ymbe spræcon.
than all the other virtues which we before about spoke
72.16 Behealdað nu þa widgielnesse ⁊ fæstnesse ⁊ þa hrædfernesse
Behold now the spaciousness and firmness and the swiftness
þisses heofenes; ðonne magon ge ongitan þ he is ealles
of-this heaven then can ye perceive that it is altogether
nauht wið his sceppend to metanne ⁊ wið his wealdend.
naught against its creator to measure and against its ruler

Ac hwi ne læte ge eow þōn aþreotan þ ge ne wundrigen
But why not let ye you then weary that ye not admire
ȝ ne herigen þte unnyttre is, þ is þes eorðlica wela?
and not praise that-which more-useless is that is this earthly wealth
Swa swa se heofon is betera ȝ healicra ȝ fægerra þonne
So as the heaven is better and loftier and fairer than
eall his innung buton monnum anum, swa is þæs monnes
all its content except men alone so is of-the man
lichoma betera ȝ deorwyrðra þonne ealle his æhta. Ac
body better and more-precious than all his possessions But
hu micele þincð þe þonne sio sawl betere ȝ deorwyrðre
how much seems to-thee then the soul better and more-precious
þonne se lichoma? Ælc gesceaft is to arianne be hire andefne,
than the body Each creature is to honor by its measure
ȝ symle sio hehste swiðost; forðæm is se godcunda anwald
and ever the highest most therefore is the divine power
to arianne ȝ to wyndrianne ȝ to weorðianne ofer ealla
to honor and to admire and to worship above all
oðra gesceafta. Se wlite þæs lichoman is swiðe flionde ȝ
other creatures The beauty of-the body is very fleeting and
swiðe tedre ȝ swiðe anlic eorðan blostmum. Ðeah nu hwa
very frail and very like of-earth blossoms Though now anyone
sie swa fæger swa swa Alcibiadis se æþelincg wæs; gif hwa
be so fair so as Alcibiades the prince was if anyone
bið swa scearpsiene þ he mæge hine þurhsion, swa swa
is so sharp-sighted that he can him see-through so as
Aristotelis se uðwita sæde þ an dior wære ðe meahte ælc
Aristotle the philosopher said that a beast were which could each
wuht þurhsion ge treowu ge furðum stanas: þ dior we
thing see-through both trees and even stones that beast we
hatað lox: gif þonne hwa wære swa scearpsiene þ he mihte
call lynx if then anyone were so sharp-sighted that he could

þone cniht þurhsion þe we ær ymbe spræcon, þonne ne
the youth see-through whom we before about spoke then not
ðuhte he him no innon swa fæger swa he utan þuhte.
would-seem he to-him — within so fair as he without seemed
73.6 Þeah þu nu hwæm fæger ðince, ne bið hit no þy hræðor
Though thou now to-anyone fair seem not is it — the sooner
swa; ac sio ungesceadwisnes hiora eagena hi myrð þ hi ne
so but the irrationality of-their eyes them hinders that they not
magon ongiton þ hi ðe sceawiað utan, næs innan. Ac
can perceive that they thee look-at outside not-at-all within But
geþencað nu swiðe geornlice, ⁊ gesceadwislice smeagð hwelc
consider now very diligently and rationally ponder what
þæs flæslican good sien, ⁊ þa gesælða þe ge nu ungemetlice
the fleshly goods be and the felicities which ye now immoderately
wilniað; þonne magan ge sweotole ongeotan þ þæs lichoman
desire then can ye clearly perceive that of-the body
fæger ⁊ his strengo þa magon beon afyrred mid þreora daga
fairness and its strength they can be removed with of-three days
fefre. Forðæm ic þe recce eall þ ic þe ær reahte forðæm
fever Therefore I to-thee tell all that I to-thee before told because
ic ðe wolde openlice gereccan on ðæm ende þisses capitulan
I to-thee would openly show at the end of-this chapter
þte eall þas andweardan good ne magon gelæstan hiora
that all these present goods not can perform to-their
lufiendum þ hi him gehatað; þ is þ hehste good þ hi
lovers what they them promise that is the highest good which they
him gehatað. Þeah hi nu gegaderien ealle þas andweardan
them promise Though they now gather all these present
good, nabbað hi no ðy hraþor fulfremed good on ðæm, ne hi
goods have-not they — the sooner perfect good in them nor they
ne magon gedon hiora lufiendas swa welige swa swa hi woldon.
— can make their lovers so wealthy so as they would

Ða se Wisdom ða þis spell areaht hæfde, þa ongon he 73.21
When — Wisdom then this discourse told had then began he
eft gieddigan ⁊ þus singinde cwæð: Eala wa, hu hefig ⁊
again to-sing and thus singing said Alas woe how heavy and
hu frecendlic þ dysig is þe ða earman men gedwelað ⁊
how perilous the folly is which the wretched men leads-astray and
alæt of þā rihtan wege. Se weg is God. Hwæðer ge nu secan
leads from the right way The way is God Whether ye now seek
gold on treowū? ic wat þeah þ ge hit þær ne secað, ne finde
gold on trees I know yet that ye it there not seek nor find
ge hit no, forþāðe ealle men witon þæt hit þær ne weaxð þe
ye it — because all men know that it there not grows the
ma ðe gimmas weaxað on wingeardū. Hwæðer ge nu settan
more than gems grow in vineyards Whether ye now set
eower nett on þa hehstan dune, þōn ge fiscian willað? Ic wat
your net on the highest hill when ye fish will I know
þeah þ ge hit þær ne settað. Hwæðer ge nu eower hundas
yet that ye it there not set Whether ye now your hounds
⁊ eower net ut on þa sæ lædon, þōn ge huntian willað?
and your net out on the sea lead when ye hunt will
Ic wene þeah þ ge hi þōn setton up on dunū ⁊ innon
I think yet that ye them then set up on hills and within
wudum. Hwæt, þ is wundorlic þ geornfulle men witon þ
woods Lo that is wonderful that eager men know that
hi sculon secan be sæwaroðe ⁊ be æaofrū ægðer ge hwite
they shall seek by seashore and by river-banks each both white
gimmas ge reade ⁊ ælces cynnes gimcyn; ⁊ hi witon eac
gems and red and of-every kind gem-kind and they know also
on hwelcū wæterū ⁊ on æghwelcra ea muþū hi sculon
in which waters and in of-every river mouths they shall

secan fiscas; ⁊ ealne þisne andweardan welan hi witon
seek fish and all this present wealth they know
hwær hi secan sculon, ⁊ þone swiðe unaðrotenlice secað.
where they seek shall and it very untiringly seek
74.5 Ac hit is swiðe earmlic þing þ ða dysegan men sint ælces
But it is very wretched thing that the foolish men are of-every
domes swa blinde þ hi nyton hwær þa soðan gesælþa
judgment so blind that they know-not where the true felicities
sint gehydde, ne furðū nane lustbærnesse nabbað hi to
are hidden nor even any pleasure have they to
secanne; ac wenað þ hi mægon on þissū lænan ⁊ on
seek but think that they can in these transitory and in
ðisū deadlicū þingū findan þa soðan gesælða, þ is God. Ic
these mortal things find the true felicities that is God I
nat nu hu ic mæge heora dysig eall swa sweotole areccan
not-know now how I can their folly all so clearly set-forth
⁊ swa swiðe getælan swa ic wolde, forþā hi sint earmran
and so greatly blame as I would because they are more-wretched
⁊ dysigran ⁊ ungesæligran þōn ic hit arecan mæge. Welan
and more-foolish and more-unhappy than I it set-forth can Wealth
⁊ weorðscipes hi willniað, ⁊ þōn hi hine habbað þōn
and honor they desire and when they it have then
wenað hi swa ungewitfulle þ hi habban þa soðan gesælða.
think they so witless that they have the true felicities

Boethius agrees that no worldly good gives full happiness. Wisdom explains that power, sufficiency, honor, renown, and bliss are one thing when united, and that thing is God, whom foolish men divide into parts. Since no one holds all five fully in this life, Wisdom asks whether they should pray for divine help, as Plato said. Boethius says they should pray to the Father of all things, and Wisdom sings a prayer to God, who made and orders the four elements and the threefold soul, asking that the mist be cleared from the mind's eyes.

Þa se Wisdom þa þis leoð asungen hæfde, ða ongan he 74.15
When — Wisdom then this song sung had then began he
eft spellian ⁊ þus cwæð: Genog ic þe hæbbe nu gereaht
again to-discourse and thus said Enough I to-thee have now told
ymb ða anlicnessa ⁊ emb ða sceaduwa þære soðan gesælðe.
about the likenesses and about the shadows of-the true felicity
Ac gif þu nu sweotole gecnawan meaht þa anlicnesse
But if thou now clearly know canst the likeness
þære soðan gesælðe þonne is siððan ðearf þ ic þe
of-the true felicity then is afterward need that I to-thee
hi selfe getæce. Þa andwyrde ic ⁊ cwæð: Nu ic ongite
it self show Then answered I and said Now I perceive
genog openlice ðætte ælces goodes genog nis on ðissum
enough openly that of-every good enough not-is in these
woruldwelum, ne æltæwe anwald nis on nanū weoruldrice,
worldly-riches nor perfect power is in any worldly-kingdom
ne se soða weorðscipe nis on þisse weorulde, ne þa mæstan
nor the true honor is in this world nor the greatest
mærða ne sint on ðysse woruldgylpe, ne sio hehste blis nis
glories — are in this worldly-vainglory nor the highest bliss is
on þā flæsclicū lustū. Ða andsworede se Wisdom ⁊ cwæð:
in the fleshly lusts Then answered — Wisdom and said

Hwæþer þu nu fullice ongite forhwy hit þonne swa sie? Ða
Whether thou now fully perceive why it then so be Then
andswarede ic ȝ cwæð: Þeah ic his nu hwæthwugu ongite,
answered I and said Though I it now somewhat perceive
ic wolde hit þeah fullicor ȝ openlicor of ðe ongitan. Ða
I would it yet more-fully and more-openly from thee learn Then
andsworode se Wisdom ȝ cwæð: Genog sweotol hit is þte
answered — Wisdom and said Enough clear it is that
God is anfeald ȝ untodælendlic, þeah hine dysige men
God is single and indivisible though him foolish men
on mænig todælen, þonne hi dwoliende secað þ hehste
into many divide when they erring seek the highest
god on ða sæmran gesceafta.
good in the worse creatures

75.1 Hwæþer þu nu wene þ se nauhtes maran ne þyrfe se þe
Whether thou now think that he of-nothing more — need he who
mæstne anwald hæfð þisse worulde? Þa andsworede ic eft ȝ
most power has of-this world Then answered I again and
cwæð: Ne secge ic no þ he nauhtes maran ne ðyrfe, forðæm
said Not say I — that he of-nothing more — need because
ic wat þ nan nis þæs welig þ he sumes eacan ne þyrfe. Ða
I know that none is so wealthy that he of-some increase not need Then
andswarode se Wisdom ȝ cwæð: Genog rihte þu sægst; þeah
answered — Wisdom and said Enough rightly thou sayest though
hwa anwald hæbbe, gif oðer hæfð maran, þonne beþearf se
anyone power have if another has more then needs the
unstrengra þæs strengran fultumes. Ða cwæð ic: Eall hit is
weaker of-the stronger help Then said I All it is
swa þu sægst. Ða cwæð se Wisdom: Þeah mon nu anweald
as thou sayest Then said — Wisdom Though one now power
ȝ genyht to twæm þingū nemne, þeah hit is an. Þa cwæð
and sufficiency as two things name yet it is one Then said

ic: Swa me þincð. Ða he cwæð: Wenstu nu þ se anwald
I So to-me it-seems Then he said Thinkest-thou now that the power
ȝ þ geniht sie to forseonne oððe eft swiðor to weorðianne
and the sufficiency be to despise or again more to honor
þōn oðre good? Þa cwæð ic: Ne mæg nænne mon þæs
than other goods Then said I Not can any man of-that
tweogan þte anwald ȝ genyht is to weorðianne. Ða cwæð he:
doubt that power and sufficiency is to honor Then said he
Uton nu, gif ðe swa þince, ecan þone anwald ȝ þ geniht,
Let-us now if to-thee so seem increase the power and the sufficiency
don þær weorðscipe to, ȝ gereccan þonne þa þreo to anum.
put there honor to and reckon then the three as one
Ða andswarode ic ȝ cwæð: Uton þæs, forðæm hit is soð.
Then answered I and said Let-us that because it is true
Ða cwæð he: Hweþer þe þonne þince unweorð ȝ 75.18
Then said he Whether to-thee then seem unworthy and
unmærlic sio gegaderunc þara ðriora þinga þonne þa þrio
inglorious the gathering of-the three things when the three
bioð to anum gedon, oððe hwæðer hit þe eft þince eallra
are into one put or whether it to-thee again seem of-all
þinga weorþlicosð ȝ mærlicost? Gif þu nu ænigne mon cuðe
things worthiest and most-glorious If thou now any man knew
þara þe hæfde ælces þinces anwald ȝ ælcne weorðscipe
of-those who had of-every thing power and every honor
hæfde, swa forð þ he na maran ne ðorfte, geþenc nu hu
had so far that he no more — needed think now how
weorðlic ȝ hu foremærlic þe wolde se man þincan; ȝ
worthy and how illustrious to-thee would the man seem and
þeah he nu þa þreo hæfde, gif he nære hliseadig, þōn wære
though he now the three had if he not-were renowned then were
him þeah sumes weorðscipes wana. Þa cwæð ic: Ne mæg
to-him yet of-some honor lack Then said I Not can

ic þæs oðsacan. Þa cwæð he: Hu ne is þ ðonne genog
I that deny Then said he How not is that then enough
sweotol þ we sculon don þa hliseadignesse to þæm þrim,
clear that we shall put the renown to the three
ȝ don þa feower to anum? Ða cwæð ic: þ is cyn. Þa
and make the four into one Then said I that is fitting Then
cwæð he: Hwæþer þu nu wene þ se auht bliðe sie ðe ealle
said he Whether thou now think that he at-all blithe be who all
þas feower hæfð? Fifte bið seo blis, ȝ mæg don eall þæt he
these four has Fifth is the bliss and can do all that he
wile, ȝ nanes þinges maran ne beþearf þōn he hæfð. Ða
will and of-no thing more — needs than he has Then
cwæð ic: Ne mæg ic næfre geþencan, gif he swylc wære ȝ
said I Not can I ever conceive if he such were and
þ eall hæfde, hwonan him ænig unrotnes cuman sceolde.
that all had whence to-him any sadness come should
76.1 Ða cwæð he: Swaþeah is to geþencanne þ ða fif þing
Then said he Yet is to consider that the five things
þe we ær ymb spræcon, þeah hi tonemde sien mid
which we before about spoke though they separately-named be with
wordum, þ hit is eall an þing, þonne hi gegaderede bioð;
words that it is all one thing when they gathered are
þ is anwald ȝ genyht ȝ foremærnes ȝ weorðscipe ȝ
that is power and sufficiency and renown and honor and
blis. Þa fif ðing, þonne hi ealle gegaderade bioð, þonne bið
bliss The five things when they all gathered are then is
þ God; forðæm þa fif eall nan mennisc man fullice habban
that God because the five all no human man fully have
ne mæg ða hwile þe he on þisse worulde bið. Ac þonne þa
— can the while that he in this world is But when the
fif þing, swa we ær cwædon, eall gegadorede bioð, þonne
five things as we before said all gathered are then

bið hit eall an þing, ⁊ þ an ðing bið God; ⁊ he bið
is it all one thing and that one thing is God and he is
anfeald untodæled, þeah he ær on mænig tonemned wære.
single undivided though he before into many named were
Ða andsworede ic ⁊ cwæð: Þisses ic eom ealles geþafa.
Then answered I and said Of-this I am altogether consenting
Þa cwæð he: Þeah nu God anfeald sie ⁊ untodæled, swa 76.12
Then said he Though now God single be and undivided so
swa he is, se mennisca gedwola hine todæleð on mænig mid
as he is the human error him divides into many with
heora unnyttum wordum. Ælc mon tiohhað him þ to
their useless words Each man supposes to-himself that as
selestum goode ðæt þ he swiðust lufað; þonne lufað sum
best good that which he most loves then loves one
ðæt, sum elles hwæt. Þ bið þonne his god þ he þær
this another else what That is then his good which he there
swiðost lufað. Þonne hi þonne heora God on swa monige
most loves When they then their God into so many
dælas todælað, þōn metað hi nauþer ne God selfne ne þone
parts divide then find they neither — God himself nor the
dæl gôdes ðe hi swiðor lufiað. Þonne hi hine selfne don
part of-good which they more love When they him self put
ealne ætgædere, nabbað þonne nauðer ne hine ealne ne þone
all together have-not then either — him all or the
dæl þe hi þærôf dydon. Forðy ne fint ælc mon þ he
part which they thereof made Therefore not finds each man what he
secð forðy he hit on riht ne secð. Ge secað þ ge findan
seeks because he it in right not seeks Ye seek what ye find
ne magon, þonne ge secað eal good on anum goode. Ða
not can when ye seek all good in one good Then
cwæð ic: Þ is soð. Ða cwæð he: Þonne se mon wædla bið
said I That is true Then said he When the man pauper is

ne wilnað he nanes anwealdes, ac he wilnað welan ⁊ flihð
not desires he any power but he desires wealth and flees
þa wædle; ne swincð he nauht æfter þæm hu he foremærost
the poverty nor toils he at-all after that how he most-renowned
sie, ne nan man eac ne begit þ he æfꝛ ne swincð.
be nor any man also — obtains what he after not toils
76.27 He þonne winð ealle his weoruld æfter þæm welan, ⁊
He then strives all his life after the wealth and
forlæt mænigne weoruldlust wið þæm þe he þone welan
forsakes many worldly-lust for that that he the wealth
begete ⁊ gehealde, forþæm þe his hine lyst ofer eal
obtain and keep because that of-it him it-pleases above all
oðru þing. Gif he hine þonne beget, þonne þincð him
other things If he it then obtains then seems to-him
þ he næbbe genog buton he hæbbe eac anwald þærto,
that he have-not enough unless he have also power thereto
forþæmþe him þincð þ he ne mæge þone welan buton
because to-him seems that he not can the wealth without
anwalde gehealdan. Ne him eac næfre genog ne þincð ær
power keep Nor to-him also ever enough — seems before
he hæbbe eal þ hine lyst, forðon þe þone welan lyst
he have all that him it-pleases because that the wealth it-pleases
anwaldes, ⁊ þone anwald lyst weorðscipes, ⁊ þone
of-power and the power it-pleases of-honor and the
weorðscipe lyst mærða. Siððan he þæs welan full bið, þōn
honor it-pleases of-glory After he of-the wealth full is then
þincð him þ he hæbbe ælcne willan gif he hæbbe anwald;
seems to-him that he have every desire if he have power
⁊ gesælþ ealne þone welan æfꝛ þæm anwalde, buton he
and gives all the wealth after the power unless he
hine mid læssan begitan mæge; ⁊ forlæt ælcne oðerne
it with less obtain can and forsakes every other

weorðscipe wið ðæm þe he mæge to ðæm anwealde cuman.
honor for that that he can to the power come
ȝ þonne gebyreð oft, þonne he eall wið anwalde geseald
and then happens often when he all for power given
hæfð þ þ he hæfde, þ he næfð nauðer ne þone anwald
has that which he had that he has-not either — the power
ne eac þ þæt he wið sealde, ac wyrð þonne swa earm
or also that which he for gave but becomes then so poor
þ he næfð furþum þa nedþearfe ane; þ is wist ȝ wæda.
that he has-not even the necessity alone that is food and clothing
Wilnað þeah þonne þære nedðearfe, næs þæs anwaldes.
Desires yet then the necessity not-at-all the power
We spræcon ær be þæm fif gesælþum; þ is wela ȝ 77.13
We spoke before about the five felicities that is wealth and
anwald ȝ weorðscipe ȝ formærnes ȝ willa. Nu hæbbe
power and honor and renown and pleasure Now have
we gereaht be welan ȝ be anwalde, ȝ þ ilce we
we told about wealth and about power and the same we
magon reccan be þæm þrim ðe we unareht habbað; þ
can tell about the three which we untold have that
is weorðscipe ȝ foremærnes ȝ willa. Þa þrio þincg, ȝ
is honor and renown and pleasure The three things and
þa tu þe we ær nēdon, þeah hwa wene þ he on hiora
the two which we before named though anyone think that he in of-them
anra hwylcum mæge habban fulla gesælða, ne bið hit no
of-ones any can have full felicities not is it —
ðy hræþor swa, ðeah hi his wilnigen, buton hi þa fif ealle
the sooner so though they it desire unless they the five all
habben. Ða andsworede ic ȝ cwæð: Hwæt sculon we þonne
have Then answered I and said What shall we then
don, nu þu cwist þ we ne mægen on ðara anra hwylcum
do now thou sayest that we not can in of-them of-ones any

þ hehste good habban ⁊ þa fullan gesælða, ne we huru
the highest good have and the full felicities nor we indeed
ne wenað þ ure anra hwelc þa fif eall ætgædre begite? Ða
— think that of-us of-ones any the five all together obtain Then
andsworede he ⁊ cwð: Gif hwa wilnað þ he þa fif eall
answered he and said If anyone desires that he the five all
hæbbe, þonne wilnað he þara hehstena gesælða; ac he ne
have then desires he the highest felicities but he not
mæg ða fullice begitan on ðisse weorulde, forðæm þeah he
can them fully obtain in this world because though he
ealle þa fif gesælða begite, þonne ne bið hit þeah þ hehste
all the five felicities obtain then not is it yet the highest
good ne þa selestan gesælða; forðæm hi ne bioð ece.
good nor the best felicities because they not are eternal
77.29 Þa andswarode ic ⁊ cwæð: Nu ic ongite genog sweotole
Then answered I and said Now I perceive enough clearly
þ ða selestan gesælða ne sint on þisse weorulde. Þa cwæð
that the best felicities not are in this world Then said
he: Ne þearf nan mon on ðys andweardan life spyrian æfter
he Not needs any man in this present life inquire after
þæm soðum gesælðum, ne þæs wenan ðæt he ær mæge
the true felicities nor that expect that he before can
good genog findan. Ða cwæð ic: Soð þu sægst.
good enough find Then said I True thou sayest
78.3 Þa cwæð he: Ic wene nu þ ic þe hæbbe genog gesæd ymb
Then said he I think now that I to-thee have enough said about
ða leasan gesælða, ac ic wolde nu þ ðu wende þin ingeþonc
the false felicities but I wished now that thou turnedst thy thought
frō þæm leasum gesælðum; þonne ongitst þu swiðe hræðe þa
from the false felicities then perceivest thou very quickly the
soðan gesælða þe ic ðe ær gehet þ ic þe eowian wolde.
true felicities which I to-thee before promised that I to-thee show would

Þa cwæþ ic: Ge furðum þa dysegan men ongitað þte fulla
Then said I Yea even the foolish men perceive that full
gesælða sint, þeah hi þær ne sien þær hi heora wenað. Þu
felicities are though they there not be where they them expect Thou
me gehete nu lytle ær þ ðu hi wolde me getæcan; ac
to-me promisedst now a-little before that thou them wouldst to-me show but
þæs me þincð ðæt þ bio sio soðe ȝ sio fulfremede gesælð
so to-me seems that that be the true and the perfect felicity
ðe mæg ælcū hire folgera sellan ðurhwunigendne welan ȝ
which can to-each of-its followers give lasting wealth and
ecne anwald ȝ singalne weorðscipe ȝ ece mærða ȝ fulle
eternal power and continual honor and eternal glories and full
geniht. Ge furðum þ ic cweðe sie sio soðe gesælð þe an
sufficiency Yea even that I say be the true felicity which one
ðissa fifa mæg fullice forgifan, forðæmþe on ælcum anum hi
of-these five can fully give because in each one they
sint eall. Forðæm ic secge þas word ðe forþy ic wille þ ðu
are all Therefore I say these words to-thee because I will that thou
wite ðæt se cwide swiðe fæst is on minum mode, swa fæst
know that the saying very fast is in my mind so fast
þ his me nan mon gedwellan ne mæg. Þa cwæð he: Eala,
that of-it me no man lead-astray — can Then said he O
cniht, þy þu eart gesælig þ þu hit swa ongiten hæfst; ac
disciple by-that thou art happy that thou it so perceived hast but
ic wolde þ wyt spyredon get æfter þæm þe þe wana is.
I wished that we-two inquired yet after that which to-thee lacking is
Ða cwæþ ic: Hwæt is þ ðonne? Þa cwæð he: Wenst ðu 78.20
Then said I What is that then Then said he Thinkest thou
hwæðer ænig þissa andweardana gooda þe mæge sellan fulle
whether any of-these present goods to-thee can give full
gesælða? Ða andswarode ic ȝ cwæð: Nat ic nan wuht on
felicities Then answered I and said Not-know I any thing in

ðys andweardan life þe swilc gifan mæge. Ða cwæð he: Þas
this present life which such give can Then said he These
andweardan good sint anlicnessa þæs ecan goodes, næs ful
present goods are likenesses of-the eternal good not-at-all full
goode, forþā hi ne magon soð good ⁊ ful good forgifan
goods because they not can true good and full good give
hiora folgerum. Þa cwæð ic: Ic eom genog wel geþafa þæs
to-their followers Then said I I am enough well consenting of-that
þe þu sægst. Ða cwæð he: Nu ðu þonne wast hwæt
which thou sayest Then said he Now thou then knowest what
ða leasan gesælða sint ⁊ hwæt þa soþan gesælða sint, nu
the false felicities are and what the true felicities are now
ic wolde þæt þu leornodest hu þu mihtest becuman to þā
I wished that thou learnedst how thou mightest come to the
soþum gesælðum. Ða cwæð ic: Hu ne gehete þu me gefyrn
true felicities Then said I How not promisedst thou to-me long
ær þ ðu hit wolde me getæcan, ⁊ me lyste nu
before that thou it wouldst to-me teach and to-me it-would-please now
þ swiðe georne geheran. Ða cwæð he: Hwæt sculon we nu
that very eagerly hear Then said he What shall we now
don to þon þ we mægen cuman to þæm soðum gesælðum?
do to that that we can come to the true felicities
Hwæþer we scylen biddan þone gôdcundan fultum ægðer ge
Whether we should pray-for the divine help each both
on læssan ge on maran, swa swa ure uðwita sæde, Plato?
in less and in greater so as our philosopher said Plato
79.4 Þa cwæð ic: Ic wene þ we scylen biddan þone fæder ealra
Then said I I think that we should pray-to the father of-all
þinga; forðæm se ðe hine biddan nyle þonne ne gemet he
things because he who him pray will-not then not finds he

hine, ne furþum ryhtne weg wið his ne aredað. Ða cwæð
him nor even right way toward him — finds Then said
he: Swiðe rihte þu sægst; ȝ ongan ða singan ȝ þus cwæð:
he Very rightly thou sayest and began then to-sing and thus said
Eala, Dryhten, hu micel ȝ hu wūderlic þu eart, þu ðe ealle 79.10
O Lord how great and how wonderful thou art thou who all
þine gesceafta gesewenlice ȝ eac ungesewenlice wunderlice
thy creatures visible and also invisible wonderfully
gesceope ȝ gesceadwislice heora weltst; ðu ðe tida frā
createdst and rationally them rulest thou who times from
middaneardes fruman oð ðone ende endebyrdlice gesettest, swa
of-middle-earth beginning to the end orderly settest so
þte hi ægþer ge forð farað ge eft cumað; þu ðe ealle þa
that they each both forth go and again come thou who all the
unstillan gesceafta to þinū willan astyrast, ȝ þu self simle
unquiet creatures to thy will stirrest and thou thyself ever
stille ȝ unawendedlic þurhwunast; forþā ðe nan mihtigra
still and unchangeable abidest because that none mightier
þe nis, ne nan þin gelica, ne þe nan neodþearf ne lærde
than-thee is nor any thy equal nor thee any need — taught
to wyrcanne þ þ ðu worhtest; ac mid þinū agenū willan
to make that which thou madest but with thy own will
ȝ mid þinū agenū anwealde þu ealle þing geworhtest, ðeah
and with thy own power thou all things madest though
ðu heora nanes ne beþorfte. Swiðe wunderlic is þ gecynd
thou of-them none — needed Very wonderful is the nature
þines godes, forþāðe hit is eall an, þu ȝ þin godnes; þ god
of-thy good because it is all one thou and thy goodness the good
na uton cumen to þe, ac hit is ðin agen. Ac eall þ we
not from-outside come to thee but it is thine own But all that we
godes habbað on þisse worulde, þ us is uton cumen; þ
of-good have in this world that to-us is from-outside come that

is from þe. Næfst þu nanne andan to nanum þinge, forþāþe
is from thee Hast-not thou any envy toward any thing because
nan cræftigra nis þonne þu, ne nan þin gelica; forþam ðu
none more-skilled is than thou nor any thy equal because thou
ealle god mid ðines anes geþeahte geþohtest ⁊ geworhtest.
all good with of-thy alone counsel devisedst and madest
79.26 Ne bisnode þe nan man, forþāþe nan ær þe næs þara þe
Not set-example to-thee any man because none before thee was of-those who
auht oððe nauht worhte. Ac þu ealle þing geworhtest swiðe
aught or naught made But thou all things madest very
gode ⁊ swiðe fægere, ⁊ þu self eart þ hehste god ⁊ þ
good and very fair and thou thyself art the highest good and the
fægereste. Swa swa þu self geþohtest þu geworhtest þisne
fairest So as thou thyself devisedst thou madest this
middangeard, ⁊ his weltst swa swa þu wilt, ⁊ þu self
middle-earth and it rulest so as thou wilt and thou thyself
dælst eall god swa swa þu wilt. ⁊ ealle gesceafta þu gesceope
dealest all good so as thou wilt and all creatures thou createdst
him gelice, ⁊ eac on sumū ðingū ungelice. Þeah þu þa
to-each-other like and also in some things unlike Though thou the
ealle gesceafta ane naman genēde, elle þu nemdest togedere
all creatures by-one name named all thou namedst together
⁊ hete woruld; ⁊ þeah þone anne noman þu todældest on
and calledst world and yet the one name thou dividedst into
feower gesceafta; an þæra is eorðe, oðer wæter, ðridde lyft,
four elements one of-which is earth second water third air
feorþe fyr. Ælcū þara þu gesettest his agene sunderstowe,
fourth fire To-each of-them thou settest its own separate-place
⁊ þeah ælc is wið oðre genēned ⁊ sibsūlice gebunden
and yet each is with others combined and peaceably bound
mid þinū bebode, swa þ heora nan oðres mearce ne
with thy command so that of-them none of-another boundary —

ofereode, ⁊ se cile geþrowode wið ða hæto, ⁊ þ wæt wið
overstepped and the cold suffered with the heat and the wet with
þā drygū. Eorðan gecynd ⁊ wæteres is ceald; sie eorðe is
the dry Of-earth nature and of-water is cold the earth is
dryge ⁊ ceald, ⁊ þ wæter wæt ⁊ ceald. Sie lyft þonne
dry and cold and the water wet and cold The air then
is genemned þ hio is ægþer ge ceald ge wæt ge wearm.
is named that it is each both cold and wet and warm
Nis hit nan wunder, forþā ðe hio is gesceapen on þā midle 80.8
Not-is it any wonder because that it is created in the middle
betwux þære drygan ⁊ þære cealdan eorþan ⁊ þā hatā fyre.
between the dry and the cold earth and the hot fire
Þ fyr is yfemest ofer ellū þissū woruldgesceaftū. Þundorlic is
The fire is uppermost over all these world-creatures Wonderful is
þ þin geðeaht, þ ðu hæfst ægþer gedon: ge þa gesceafta
that thy counsel that thou hast each done both the elements
gemærsode betwux him, ge eac gemengde þa drigan eorðan
bounded between themselves and also mingled the dry earth
⁊ þa cealdan under þā cealdan wætere ⁊ þā wætan, þ þæt
and the cold under the cold water and the wet that the
hnesce ⁊ flowende wæter hæbbe flor on þære fæstan eorðan;
soft and flowing water have floor on the firm earth
forþāþe hit ne mæg on him selfū gestandan. Ac seo eorðe hit
because it not can on it self stand But the earth it
helt ⁊ be sumū dæle swilgð, ⁊ for þā sype heo bið geleht
holds and by some part swallows and for the soaking it is moistened
þ hio grewð ⁊ blewð ⁊ westmas bringð; forþā gif þ wæt̃
that it grows and blossoms and fruits brings because if the water
hi ne geðwænde, þōn drugode hio ⁊ wurde todrifen mid þam
it not moistened then would-dry it and would-be scattered with the
winde swa swa dust oððe axe. Ne mihte nanwuht libbendes
wind so as dust or ash Not could anything of-living

þære eorþan brucan ne þæs wæteres, ne on nauðrū eardigan
the earth enjoy nor the water nor in either dwell
for cile, gif þu hi hwæthwegununga wið fir ne gemengdest.
for cold if thou them somewhat with fire not mingledst
Wundorlice cræfte þu hit hæfst gesceapen þæt þ fyr ne
With-wonderful skill thou it hast created that the fire not
forbærnð þ wæter ȝ þa eorþan, nu hit gemenged is wið ægðer;
burns the water and the earth now it mingled is with both
ne eft þæt wæter ȝ seo eorðe eallunga ne adwæsceð þ fyr.
nor again the water and the earth entirely — quenches the fire
80.25 Þæs wæteres agnu cyð is on eorþan, ȝ eac on lyfte, ȝ
Of-the water own home is in earth and also in air and
eft bufan þā rodore. Ac þæs fyres agen stede is ofer eallū
again above the firmament But of-the fire own place is over all
woruldgesceaftū gesewenlicū, ȝ þeah hit is gemenged wið
world-creatures visible and yet it is mingled with
ealle gesceafta; ȝ þeah ne mæg nane þara gesceafta eallunga
all creatures and yet not can any of-the creatures entirely
forcuman, forþamþe hit næfð leafe þæs ælmihtigan. Sio
overcome because it has-not leave of-the almighty The
eorþe þōn is hefigre ȝ þiccre þōn oðra gesceafta, forþā hio
earth then is heavier and thicker than other creatures because it
is nioðor þōn ænig oðru gesceaft buton þā rodore; forþā se
is lower than any other creature except the firmament because the
rodor hine hæfð ælce dæg utane, þeah he hire nawer ne
firmament it has each day outside though it to-it nowhere —
genealæce; on ælcere stowe he is hire emnneah, ge ufan ge
approach in each place it is to-it equally-near both above and
neoðon. Ælc þara gesceafta þe we gefyrn ær ymbe spræcon
below Each of-the elements which we long before about spoke
hæfð his agenne eard onsundron; ȝ þeah is ælc wið oðer
has its own dwelling apart and yet is each with other

gemenged, forðamþe nan ðara gesceafta ne mæg bion buton
mingled because none of-the elements — can be without
oðerre, ðeah hio unsweotol sie on þære oðerre. Swa swa
other though it unclear be in the other So as
nu eorðe is ⁊ wæter sint swiðe earfoðe to geseonne oððe
now earth is and water are very hard to see or
to ongitonne dysgū monnū on fyre, ⁊ swaþeah hi sint
to perceive for-foolish men in fire and yet they are
ðærwið gemengde. Swa is eac þær fyr on ðam stanū ⁊
therewith mingled So is also there fire in the stones and
on ðā wætere, swiðe earfoðhawe, ac hit is þeah þara.
in the water very hard-to-see but it is yet there
Þu gebunde þ fyr mid swiðe unanbindendlicū racentū, þ 81.6
Thou boundest the fire with very unbindable chains that
hit ne mæg cuman to his agenū earde, þ is to þā mæstan
it not can come to its own dwelling that is to the greatest
fyre ðe ofer us is, þylæs hit forlæte þa eorðan; ⁊ ealle
fire which over us is lest it forsake the earth and all
oðre gesceafta aswindað for ungemetlicū cile, gif hit eallunga
other creatures waste-away for immoderate cold if it entirely
from gewite. Ðu gestaðoladest eorðan swiðe wundorlice ⁊
from depart Thou establishedst earth very wonderfully and
fæstlice, þ heo ne helt on nane healfe ne on nanum
firmly that it not inclines to any side nor on any
eorðlicū þinge ne stent; ne nanwuht eorðlices hi ne healt þ
earthly thing — stands nor anything of-earthly it — holds that
hio ne sige, ⁊ nis hire þeah þōn eðre to feallanne ofdune
it not sink and not-is to-it yet the easier to fall down
þōn up. Þu eac þa ðriefealdan sawla on geðwærū limū
than up Thou also the threefold souls in harmonious limbs
styrest, swa þ ðære sawle þy læsse ne bið on ðam læstan
stirrest so that of-the soul the less not is in the least

fingre ðe on eallū þā lichoman. Forþi ic cwæð þæt sio
finger than in all the body Therefore I said that the
sawul wære þreofeald, forþāþe uðwitan secgað þ hio hæbbe
soul were threefold because philosophers say that it have
þrio gecynd. An ðara gecynda is þ heo bið wilnigende, oðer
three natures One of-the natures is that it is desiring second
þ hio bið irsiende, þridde þ hio bið gesceadwis. Twa þara
that it is angry third that it is rational Two of-the
gecynda habbað netenu swa same swa men; oðer þara is
natures have beasts so same as men one of-them is
wilnung, oðer is irsung. Ac se mon ana hæfð gesceadwisnesse,
desire other is anger But the man alone has reason
nalles nan oðru gesceaft; forði he hæfð oferþungen ealle
not-at-all any other creature therefore he has excelled all
þa eorðlican gesceafta mid geðeahte ⁊ mid andgite.
the earthly creatures with counsel and with understanding
81.23 Forþā seo gesceadwisnes sceal wealdan ægðer ge þære
Therefore the reason shall rule each both the
wilnunga ge þæs yrres, forþā hio is synderlic cræft þære
desire and the anger because it is special power of-the
saule. Swa ðu gesceope þa saule þæt hio sceolde ealne weg
soul So thou createdst the soul that it should all the-way
hwearfian on hire selfre, swa swa eall þes rodor hwerfð, oððe
turn on it self so as all this firmament turns or
swa swa hweol onhwerfð, smeagende ymb hire sceoppend,
so as wheel revolves meditating about its creator
oððe ymbe hi selfe, oððe ymbe þas eorðlican gesceafta. Þōn
or about it self or about these earthly creatures When
hio þōn ymbe hire scippend smeað, þōn bið hio ofer hire
it then about its creator meditates then is it above it
selfre; ac þōn hio ymbe hi selfe smeað, þōn bið hio on hire
self but when it about it self meditates then is it in it

selfre; ȝ under hire selfre hio bið þōn ðōn hio lufað þas
self and under it self it is then when it loves these
eorðlican þing, ȝ þara wundrað. Hwæt þu, Drihten, forgeafe
earthly things and at-them wonders Lo thou Lord gavest
þā sawlum eard on hiofonū, ȝ him þær gifst weorðlice
to-the souls dwelling in heavens and to-them there givest worthy
gifa, ælcere be hire geearnunge; ȝ gedest þ hi scinað swiðe
gifts to-each by its desert and makest that they shine very
beorhte, ȝ þeah swiðe mistlice birhtu, sume beorhtor sume
brightly and yet very various brightnesses some brighter some
unbyrhtor, swa swa steorran, ælc be his geearnunga. Hwæt
less-bright so as stars each by its deserts Lo
þu, Drihten, gegæderast þa hiofonlican sawla ȝ þa eorðlican
thou Lord gatherest the heavenly souls and the earthly
lichoman, ȝ hi on ðisse worulde gemengest. Swa swa hi
bodies and them in this world minglest So as they
from þe hider comon, swa hi eac to þe hionan fundiað.
from thee hither came so they also to thee hence hasten
Þu fyldest ðas eorðan mid mistlicū cynrenū netena, ȝ hi 82.5
Thou filledst this earth with various kinds of-beasts and it
siððan aseowe mistlicū sæde treowa ȝ wyrta. Forgif nu,
afterward sowedst with-various seed of-trees and of-herbs Grant now
Drihten, urū modū þ hi moton to þe astigan þurh þas
Lord to-our minds that they may to thee ascend through these
earfoðu þisse worulde, ȝ of þissū bisegū to þe cuman,
hardships of-this world and from these cares to thee come
ȝ openū eagum ures modes we moten geseon þone æþelan
and with-open eyes of-our mind we may see the noble
ælwelm ealra goda; þ eart ðu. Forgif us þōn hale eagan ures
source of-all goods that art thou Grant to-us then whole eyes of-our
modes, þ we hi þōn moton afæstnian on þe; ȝ todrif ðone
mind that we them then may fasten on thee and scatter the

mist þe nu hangað beforan ures modes eagū, ⁊ onliht þa
mist which now hangs before of-our mind eyes and enlighten the
eagan mid ðinū leohte; forþā ðu eart sio birhtu ðæs soðan
eyes with thy light because thou art the brightness of-the true
leohtes, ⁊ þu eart sio sefte ræst soðfæstra, ⁊ ðu gedest þæt
light and thou art the soft rest of-the-righteous and thou makest that
hi ðe gesioð. Þu eart ealra þinga fruma ⁊ ende. Ðu brist
they thee see Thou art of-all things beginning and end Thou bearest
ealle þing buton geswince. Þu eart ægðer ge weg, ge ladþeow,
all things without toil Thou art each both way and guide
ge sio stow ðe se weg to ligð; ðe ealle men to fundiað.
and the place which the way to lies which all men to hasten

XXXIV · GOD IS THE HIGHEST GOOD

Wisdom shows that lesser goods come from the highest good, as brooks from a spring, and that God is that good, whose goodness does not come from outside him. The five goods are not parts of true happiness but one with it. Wisdom sings that gold and gems blind the mind's eyes, and that God's light outshines the sun. All things seek wholeness because they desire to exist: plants seek their proper soil, fire rises, and stones hold together. Boethius grants that God is the highest roof of all goods, and Wisdom calls God the end every creature seeks.

82.18 Ða se Wisdom þa ðis leoð ⁊ þis gebed asungen hæfde,
When — Wisdom then this song and this prayer sung had
þa ongan he eft spellian ⁊ þus cwæð: Ic wene þ hit sie
then began he again to-discourse and thus said I think that it be
nu ærest þearf þ ic ðe gerecce hwær þ hehste good is,
now first need that I to-thee show where the highest good is
nu ic ðe ær hæfde gereaht hwæt hit wæs, oððe hwylc þ
now I to-thee before had shown what it was or which the

medeme good wæs, hwylc þ unmedeme. Ac anes þinges ic
perfect good was which the imperfect But of-one thing I
þe wolde ærest acsian: Hwæðer þu wene þ ænig þing on
thee would first ask Whether thou think that any thing in
þisse worulde swa good sie þ hit ðe mæge forgifan fulla
this world so good be that it to-thee can give full
gesælða? Ðe ic ðe ascige þy ic nolde þ unc beswice
felicities Therefore I thee ask because I wished-not that us-two deceive
ænegu leas anlicnes for soða gesælða. Forðy nan mon ne
any false likeness for true felicities Because no man —
mæg oðsacan þ sum good ne sie þ hehste, swa swa sum
can deny that some good — be the highest so as some
micel æwelm ⁊ diop, ⁊ irnen mænege brocas ⁊ riða of.
great spring and deep and run many brooks and streams from-it
Forðy mon cwið be sumū goode þ hit ne sie ful good,
Therefore one says about some good that it not be full good
forðǣ him bið hwæshwugu wana; ⁊ þeah ne bið ealles
because to-it is something lacking and yet not is altogether
butan, forðæm þe ælc þing wyrð to nauhte gif hit nauht
without because that each thing becomes to naught if it naught
goodes on him næfð. Be þy ðu meaht ongitan þ of þam
of-good in it has By that thou canst perceive that from the
mæstan goode cumað ða læssan god, næs of ðæm læssan
greatest good come the lesser goods not-at-all from the lesser
þ mæste, þon ma þe sio ea mæg weorðan to æwelme.
the greatest the more than the river can become to spring
Ac se æwelm mæg weorðan to ea, ⁊ þeah sio ea cymð eft 83.3
But the spring can become to river and yet the river comes again
to ðæm æwelme; swa cymð ælc good of Gode ⁊ eft to
to the spring so comes each good from God and again to
him, ⁊ he is þ fulle gôd ⁊ þ fullfremede, þ nanes willan
him and he is the full good and the perfect which of-no desire

wana ne bið. Nu þu meaht sweotole ongitan þ þ is good
lacking — is Now thou canst clearly perceive that that is good
self. Hwi ne meaht ðu geþencan, gif nanwuht full nære, þonne
itself Why not canst thou consider if nothing full were then
nære nan wuht wana, ⁊ gif nan wuht wana nære, þonne
not-were any thing lacking and if no thing lacking were then
nære nan wuht full? Forþy bið ænig þing full þe sum bið
not-were any thing full Therefore is any thing full because some is
wana, ⁊ forðy bið ænig þing wana ðe sum bið full; ælc
lacking and therefore is any thing lacking because some is full each
þing bið fullost on his agnum earda. Hwy ne meaht þu þonne
thing is fullest in its own home Why not canst thou then
geðencan, gif on ænegum þissa eorðlicena gooda æniges willan
consider if in any of-these earthly goods of-any desire
⁊ æniges goodes wana is, þonne is sum good full ælces willan,
and of-any good lack is then is some good full of-every desire
⁊ nis nanes goodes wana? Ða andsworede ic ⁊ cwæð:
and not-is of-any good lack Then answered I and said
Swiðe rihtlice ⁊ swiðe gesceadwislice þu hæfst me ofercumen
Very rightly and very rationally thou hast me overcome
⁊ gefangen, þ ic ne mæg no wiðcweðan ne furðum
and caught that I not can — gainsay nor even
ongean ðæt þencan, buton þ hit is eall swa swa þu sægst.
against that think but that it is all so as thou sayest
83.20 Þa cwæð se Wisdom: Nu ic wolde þ ðu ðohte geornlice
Then said — Wisdom Now I wished that thou thought diligently
oð þ ðu ongeate hwær sio fulle gesælð sie. Hu ne wast
until that thou perceivedst where the full felicity be How not knowest
þu nu ðætte eall moncyn is anmodlice geþafa þ God
thou now that all mankind is unanimously consenting that God
is fruma ealra gooda ⁊ waldend ealra gesceafta? He is þ
is beginning of-all goods and ruler of-all creatures He is the

hehste good, ne nænne mon nu þæs ne tweoð; forðǣ þe
highest good nor any man now of-that — doubts because that
hi nauht niton betere, ne furðū nauht emngoodes. Forðæm
they naught know better nor even aught equally-good Therefore
us sægð ælc gesceadwisnes ⁊ ealle men þ ilce andettað þ
to-us tells each reason and all men the same confess that
God sie þ hehste good, forþæmþe hi tacniað þte eall good
God be the highest good because they signify that all good
on him sien; forðæm gif hit swa nære, þonne nære he þ
in him be because if it so not-were then not-were he that
þ he gehaten is; oððe ænig þing ær wære oððe æltæwre,
which he called is or any thing before were or more-perfect
þonne wære þ betere þonne he. Ac forðæmþe nan þing næs
then were that better than he But because no thing was
ær þonne he ne æltæwre þonne he ne diorwyrðre þonne
before than he nor more-perfect than he nor more-precious than
he, forðæm he is fruma ⁊ æwelm ⁊ hrof eallra gooda.
he therefore he is beginning and spring and roof of-all goods
Genog sweotol hit is ðæt þ fulle good wæs ærðæm þe þ
Enough clear it is that the full good was before — the
wana. Þ is to gelefanne þ se hehsta God sie ælces godes
lacking That is to believe that the highest God be of-every good
fullast, þylæs we leng sprecen ymb þonne we ne þyrfen.
fullest lest we longer speak about than we — need
Se ilca God is, swa swa we ær sædon, þ hehste good 84.3
The same God is so as we before said the highest good
⁊ þa selestan gesælða, nu hit is openlice cuð þ ða
and the best felicities now it is openly known that the
selestan gesælða on nanum oðrum gesceaftum ne sint buton
best felicities in no other creatures — are but
on Gode. Þa cwæð ic: Ic eom geþafa.
in God Then said I I am consenting

84.8 Đa cwæð he: Ic þe healsige þ ðu gesceadwislice þ
Then said he I thee beseech that thou rationally that
ongite þte God is full ælcere fullfremednesse ⁊ ælces godes
perceive that God is full of-every perfection and of-every good
⁊ ælcere gesælðe. Đa cwæþ ic: Ic ne mæg fullice ongitan
and of-every felicity Then said I I not can fully perceive
forhwy ðu eft sægst þ ilce þ ðu ær sædest. Þa cwæð
why thou again sayest the same that thou before saidst Then said
he: Forðy ic hit þe secge eft, þy ic nolde þ ðu
he Therefore I it to-thee say again because I wished-not that thou
wende þ se God þe fæder is and fruma eallra gesceafta,
thought that — God who father is and beginning of-all creatures
þ him âhwonan utan come his sio hea goodnes þe he
that to-him from-anywhere outside came his the high goodness which he
full is. Ne ic eac nolde þ ðu wende þte oðer wære his
full is Nor I also wished that thou thought that other were his
god ⁊ his gesælð, oðer he self; forðæm gif ðu wenst þ
good and his felicity other he himself because if thou thinkest that
him ahwonan utan come þa good þe he hæfð, þonne
to-him from-anywhere outside came the goods which he has then
wære þ ðing betre þe hit him frō come þonne he, gif
were the thing better which it it from came than he if
hit swa wære. Ac þ is swiðe dyslic ⁊ swiðe micel syn þ
it so were But that is very foolish and very great sin that
mon þæs wenan scyle be Gode, oððe eft wenan þæt ænig
one that think should about God or again think that any
þing ær him wære oððe betre ðonne he oððe him gelic.
thing before him were or better than he or to-him like
Ac we sculon bion geþafan þte se God sie ealra þinga betst.
But we shall be consenting that — God be of-all things best

Gif þu nu gelyfst þte an God sie, swa swa on monnum 84.22
If thou now believest that in God be so as in men
bið: oðer bið se mon, þ bið saul ⁊ lichoma, oðer bið
is other is the man that is soul and body other is
his godnes; þa gegaderað God ⁊ eft, ætgædre gehelt ⁊
his goodness which gathers God and again together holds and
gemetgað: gif þu þonne gelefst þ hit swa sie on Gode,
moderates if thou then believest that it so be in God
þonne scealt þu nede gelefan þ sum anwald sie mara
then shalt thou of-necessity believe that some power be greater
þonne his, þ þonne his swa gesomnige swa he þone urne
than his which then his so gather as he the ours
deð. Hwæt, ælc þing þe tosceaden bið from oðrum bið oðer,
does Lo each thing which separated is from other is one
oþer þæt þing, þeah hi ætgædre sien; gif þonne hwylc þing
other that thing though they together be if then any thing
tosceaden bið from þæm hehstan goode, þonne ne bið þ
separated is from the highest good then not is that
no þ hehste good. Þ is þeah micel syn to geðencanne be
— the highest good That is yet great sin to think about
Gode, þte ænig god sie buton on him, oððe ænig from him
God that any good be except in him or any from him
adæled, forðæmþe nan wuht nis betere þōn he, ne emngod
divided because no thing is better than he nor equally-good
him. Hwilc þing mæg beon betre þonne his sceppend? Forðǣ
to-him What thing can be better than its creator Therefore
ic secge mid ryhtre gesceadwisnesse þ þ sie þ hehste
I say with right reason that that be the highest
good on his agenre gecynde þte fruma is eallra þinga.
good in its own nature which beginning is of-all things
Ða cwæð ic: Nu þu hæfst me nu swiðe rihte oferreahtne.
Then said I Now thou hast me now very rightly convinced

85.6 Þa cwæð he: Hwæt, ic þonne ær sæde þ þ hehste
Then said he Lo I then before said that the highest
good ⁊ sio hehste gesælð an wære. Ða cwæð ic: Swa hit
good and the highest felicity one were Then said I So it
is. Þa cwæð he: Hwæt, wille we þonne secgan hwæt þ
is Then said he Lo will we then say what that
sie elles buton God? Ða cw̄ ic: Ne mæg ic ðæs oðsacan,
be else but God Then said I Not can I that deny
forðæm þe ic his wæs ær geþafa.
because that I of-it was before consenting

85.11 Ða cwæð he: Hwæðer þu hit a sweotolor ongitan mæge gif
Then said he Whether thou it ever more-clearly perceive can if
ic þe sume bisne get ma secge? Gif nu tu good wæren þe
I to-thee some example yet more say If now two goods were which
ne meahton ætsomne bion, ⁊ wæren þeah buto goode, hu ne
not could together be and were yet both good how not
wære hit þonne genog sweotol þ hiora nære nauðer þ oðer?
were it then enough clear that of-them not-were either the other
forðy ne mæg þ fulle god bion no todæled. Hu mæg hit bion
therefore not can the full good be — divided How can it be
ægþer ge full ge wana? Forðæm we cweðað þ sio fulle gesælð
each both full and lacking Therefore we say that the full felicity
⁊ god þ hi sien an good, ⁊ þ sie þ hehste; þa ne magon
and god that they be one good and that be the highest they not can
næfre weorðan todælede. Hu ne sculon we þonne nede
ever become divided How not shall we then of-necessity
bion geþafan þte sio hehste gesælð ⁊ sio hea godcundnes an
be consenting that the highest felicity and the high divinity one
sie? Þa cwæð ic: Nis nan þing soðre þonne þæt; ne magon
be Then said I Not-is any thing truer than that nor can
we nanwuht findan betere þonne God. Ða cwæð he: Ac ic
we anything find better than God Then said he But I

wolde giet mid sumre bisne þe behwerfan utan þ þu ne
would yet with some example thee turn-about outside that thou not
mihtst nænne weg findan ofer; swa swa uðwitena gewuna is
canst any way find over so as of-philosophers habit is
þ hi willað simle hwæthwugu niwes ȝ seldcuþes eowian,
that they will ever something of-new and of-rare show
þ hi mægen mid þy aweccan þ mod þara geherendra.
that they can with that awaken the mind of-the hearers
Hu ne hæfdon we ær gereaht þ ða gesælþa ȝ sio 85.27
How not had we before shown that the felicities and the
godcundnes an wære? Se þe þonne þa gesælða hæfð, þonne
divinity one were He who then the felicities has then
hæfð he ægþer, se þe þone ægþer hæfð. Hu ne bið se þonne
has he each he who then each has How not is he then
full eadig? Hu ne wast þu nu þ we cweðað þ se bio wis
full blessed How not knowest thou now that we say that he be wise
þe wisdom hæfð, ȝ rihtwis þe rihtwisnesse hæfð? Swa we
who wisdom has and righteous who righteousness has So we
cweðað eac þ þ sie God þe þa godcundnesse hæfð ȝ ða
say also that that be God which the divinity has and the
gesælða, ȝ ælc gesælig mon bið God; ȝ þeah is an God, se
felicities and each happy man is God and yet is one God who
is stemn ȝ staðol eallra goda; of þæm cumað eall good,
is stem and foundation of-all goods from whom come all good
ȝ eft hi fundiað to him, ȝ he welt ealra. Þeah he nu sie
and again they hasten to him and he rules all Though he now be
se fruma ȝ se staðol ealra goodra ȝ ealra gooda, þeah is
the beginning and the foundation of-all good-ones and of-all goods yet is
mænig good þe of him cymð; swa swa ealle steorran weorðað
many good which from him comes so as all stars become
onlihte ȝ gebirhte of þære sunnan, sume þeah beorhtor,
lit and brightened from the sun some yet brighter

sume unbeorhtor. Swa eac se mona, swa miclū he lyht swa
some less-bright So also the moon so much it shines as
sio sunne hine gescinð; þōn hio hine ealne geondscinð, þōn
the sun it shines-on when it it all shines-over then
bið he eall beorht. Ða ic þa þis spell ongeat, þa wearð
is it all bright When I then this discourse perceived then became
ic agælwed ⁊ swiðe âfæred, ⁊ cwæð: Is þis la wundorlic
I amazed and very afraid and said Is this lo wonderful
⁊ wynsum ⁊ gesceadwislic spell þ ðu nu sægst.
and delightful and rational discourse which thou now sayest
86.12 Ða cwæð he: Nis nan wuht wynsūre ne gewisre þonne
Then said he Not-is any thing more-delightful nor more-certain than
þ ðing þ þis spell ymbe is ⁊ we nu embe sprecan
the thing which this discourse about is and we now about speak
willað; forðæm me þincð good þ we hit gemengen to
will because to-me seems good that we it mingle with
ðæm ærran. Ða cwæð ic: Hwæt is þ, la?
the former Then said I What is that lo
86.16 Ða cwæð he: Hwæt, þu wast ðæt ic þe ær sæde þ sio
Then said he Lo thou knowest that I to-thee before said that the
soðe gesælð wære good, ⁊ of þære soðan gesælðe cumað
true felicity were good and from the true felicity come
eall ða oðru good þe we ær embe spræcon, ⁊ eft to;
all the other goods which we before about spoke and again thereto
swa swa of þære sæ cymð þ wæter innon ða eorðan, ⁊
so as from the sea comes the water into the earth and
þær âferscað; cymð þonne up æt þæm æwelme, wyrð þonne
there becomes-fresh comes then up at the spring becomes then
to broce, þonne to ea, þonne andlang ea, oð hit wyrð
to brook then to river then along river until it becomes
eft to sæ. Ac ic wolde þe nu ascian hu þu þis spell
again to sea But I would thee now ask how thou this discourse

understanden hæfdest; hwæþer þu wene þ þa fif god þe
understood hadst whether thou think that the five goods which
we oft ær ymbe spræcan, þ is anwald ⁊ weorðscipe ⁊
we often before about spoke that is power and honor and
foremærnes ⁊ genyht ⁊ blis, ic wolde witan hwæðer þu
renown and sufficiency and bliss I would know whether thou
wende þ þas good wæren limu þære soþan gesælþe, swa
thought that these goods were limbs of-the true felicity so
swa monegu limu beoð on anum men, ⁊ weorðað þeah
as many limbs are in one man and become yet
ealle to anū lichoman; oððe þu wendest þ hwylc an þara
all to one body or thou thoughtest that any one of-the
fif goda worhte þa soðan gesælðe, ⁊ siþþan ða feower good
five goods made the true felicity and then the four goods
wæren hire good; swa swa nu saul ⁊ lichoma wyrcað anne
were its goods so as now soul and body make one
mon, ⁊ se an mon hæfð mænig lim, ⁊ þeah to þæm
man and the one man has many limbs and yet to the
twæm, þ is to þære saule ⁊ to þæm lichoman, belimpað
two that is to the soul and to the body belong
ealle þas þæs monnes good ge gastlicu ge lichomlicu.
all these of-the man goods both spiritual and bodily
Þ is nu þæs lichoman good þ mon sie fæger ⁊ strang 87.3
That is now of-the body good that one be fair and strong
⁊ lang ⁊ brad, ⁊ manegu oþru good to eac þæm; ⁊
and tall and broad and many other goods in addition-to those and
ne bið hit þeah se lichoma self, forðæm þeah he þara gooda
not is it yet the body itself because though it of-the goods
hwylc forleose, þeah he bið þ he æror wæs. Þonne is ðære
any lose yet it is what it before was Then is of-the
saule good wærscipe ⁊ gemetgung ⁊ geþyld ⁊ rihtwisnes
soul good prudence and moderation and patience and righteousness

ȝ wisdom, ȝ manege swelce cræftas; ȝ swaþeah bið oþer
and wisdom and many such virtues and yet is one
sio saul, oðer bioð hire cræftas. Ða cwæð ic: Ic wolde þ
the soul other are its virtues Then said I I wished that
ðu me sædest get sweotolor ymb þa oðru good þe to ðære
thou to-me saidst yet more-clearly about the other goods which to the
soðan gesælðe belimpað. Ða cwæð he: Ne sæde ic þe ær
true felicity belong Then said he Not said I to-thee before
þ sio gesælð good wære? Gyse, cwæð ic, ge þu þ sædest
that the felicity good were Yes said I yea thou that saidst
þ hio þ hehste good wære. Ða cwæð he: Eart þu nu get
that it the highest good were Then said he Art thou now still
geþafa þte anweald ȝ weorðscipe ȝ foremærnes ȝ genyht
consenting that power and honor and renown and sufficiency
ȝ blis ȝ sio eadignes ȝ þ hehste god, þ ða sien eall
and bliss and the blessedness and the highest good that they be all
an, ȝ þ an þōn sie god? Ða cwæð ic: Hu wille ic nu
one and that one then be good Then said I How will I now
þæs oðsacan? Þa cwæð he: Hwæþer þincð þe þonne þ þa
that deny Then said he Whether seems to-thee then that the
þincg sien, ðe ðara soðena gesælða limu, þe sio gesælð self?
things be either of-the true felicities limbs or the felicity itself
87.19 Ða cwæð ic: Ic wat nu hwæt þu woldest witan; ac me
Then said I I know now what thou wouldst know but to-me
lyste bet þ ðu me sæde sume hwile ymb þ, þonne
it-would-please better that thou to-me said some while about that than
þu me ascode. Þa cwæð he: Hu ne meaht þu geðencan?
thou me asked Then said he How not canst thou consider
gif þa good wæron þære soþan gesælðe limu, þonne wæron
if the goods were of-the true felicity limbs then were
hi hwæthwegu todæled; swa swa monnes lichoman limu bioð
they somewhat divided so as of-man body limbs are

hwæthwugu todæled. Ac þara lima gecynd is þ hi gewercað
somewhat divided But of-the limbs nature is that they make
ænne lichoman, ⁊ þeah ne bioð eallunga gelice. Þa cwæð ic:
one body and yet not are entirely alike Then said I
Ne þearft þu ma swincan ymbe þ; genog sweotole ðu hæfst
Not needest thou more toil about that enough clearly thou hast
me gesæd þ ða good ne sint nanwuht todæled from ðære
to-me said that the goods not are at-all divided from the
soðan gesælðe. Þa cwæð he: Genog rihte þu hit ongitst, nu
true felicity Then said he Enough rightly thou it perceivest now
þu ongitst þ þa good ealle sint þ ilce þ gesælð is, ⁊ sio
thou perceivest that the goods all are the same that felicity is and the
gesælð is ðæt hehste good, ⁊ þ hehste good is God, ⁊ se
felicity is the highest good and the highest good is God and —
God is semle on anum untodæled. Ða cwæð ic: Nis þæs nan
God is ever in one undivided Then said I Not-is of-that any
tweo; ac ic wolde nu þ ðu me sædest hwæthwugu uncuðes.
doubt but I wished now that thou to-me saidst something of-unknown
Ða cwæð he: þ is nu sweotol þte eall þa good þe we ær 88.1
Then said he that is now clear that all the goods which we before
ymbe spræcon belimpað to ðǣ hehstan goode, ⁊ þi men
about spoke belong to the highest good and therefore men
secaþ god genog þe hi wenað þ ðæt sie þ hehste good.
seek good enough because they think that that be the highest good
Þy hi secað anwald ⁊ eac eall oðru good þe we ær
Therefore they seek power and also all other goods which we before
ymb spræcon, ðy hi wenaþ þ hit sie þ hehste good. Be
about spoke because they think that it be the highest good By
þy þu meaht witan þ þ hehste good is hrof eallra ðara oðra
that thou canst know that the highest good is roof of-all the other
gooda þe men wilniað ⁊ hi lyst, forðæmþe nænne mon ne
goods which men desire and them it-pleases because no man —

lyst nanes þinges buton goodes oððe hwæshwugu þæs ðe
it-pleases of-any thing but of-good or something of-that which
goode gelic bið. Maniges þinges hi wilniaþ þæs ðe full good
to-good like is Of-many thing they desire which — full good
ne bið, ac hit hæfð þeah hwæthwugu gelices goode. Forðæm
not is but it has yet something of-like to-good Therefore
we cweðað þ þ hehste good sie se hehsta hrof eallra gooda
we say that the highest good be the highest roof of-all goods
ȝ sio hior ðe eall good on hwearfað, ȝ eac ðæt þing þe
and the hinge which all good on turns and also the thing which
mon eall good fore deð; for ðæm þinge men lyst ælces þara
one all good for does for the thing men it-pleases of-each of-the
gooda þe hi lyst. Þ þu meaht swiðe sweotole ongitan be
goods which them it-pleases That thou canst very clearly perceive by
þæm þe nænne mon ne lyst þæs þinges þe hine lyst ne
that that no man — it-pleases of-the thing which him it-pleases nor
þæs þe he deð, ac þæs þe he mid ðæm earnað; forðæmðe
of-that which he does but of-that which he with it earns because
he wenð, gif he þonne lust begite ȝ þ þurhtio þ he
he thinks if he then pleasure obtain and that accomplish which he
þonne getiohhad hæfð, þ he þonne hæbbe fulle gesælða.
then intended has that he then have full felicities
88.18 Hu ne wast þu þ nan mon forðy ne rit þe hine ridan
How not knowest thou that no man for-this — rides that him to-ride
lyst, ac rit for ðy þe he mid ðære rade earnað sume
it-pleases but rides for this that he with the riding earns some
earnunga? Sume mid þære rade earnað sume þ hie sien
deserts Some with the riding earn some that they be
þy halran, sume earniað þ hie sien ðy cafran, sume þ
the healthier some earn that they be the quicker some that
hy woldon cuman to sumre þara stowa þe hi ðonne
they would come to some of-the places which they then

to fundiað. Hu ne is ðe þonne genog sweotol þte men
to hasten How not is to-thee then enough clear that men
nanwuht swiðor ne lufiað þonne hi doð þ hehste god?
nothing more — love than they do the highest good
forðæmþe ælc wuht þæs ðe hi wilniað oððe doð hi doð
because each thing of-that which they desire or do they do
forþyþe hi woldon habban þ hehste good on ðæm. Ac hi
because they would have the highest good in it But they
dwoliað sume on ðæm þe hi wenað ðæt hi mægen habban
err some in that that they think that they can have
full god ȝ fulla gesælða on þisum andweardum godū; ac þa
full good and full felicities in these present goods but the
fullan gesælða ȝ þ hehste good is God self, swa swa we
full felicities and the highest good is God himself so as we
oft ær sædon. Ða cwæð ic: Ne mæg ic no geþencan hu
often before said Then said I Not can I — conceive how
ic þæs oðsacan mæge. Ða cwæð he: Uton lætan þonne bion
I that deny can Then said he Let-us let then be
þa spræce, ȝ bion unc ðæs orsorge, nu ðu swa fullice
the speech and be us-two of-that free-from-care now thou so fully
ongiten hæfst þte God simle bið untodæledlic ȝ full good,
perceived hast that God ever is indivisible and full good
ȝ þ his good ȝ sio his gesælð him nahwonan utane ne
and that his good and the his felicity to-him from-nowhere outside —
com, ac wæs symle on him selfum, ȝ nu is, ȝ a bið.
came but was ever in him self and now is and ever is
Ða se Wisdom þa ðis spell asæd hæfde, þa ongan he eft 89.4
When — Wisdom then this discourse told had then began he again
singan ȝ þus cwæð: Wella, men, wel; ælc þara ðe freo sie
to-sing and thus said Well-lo men well each of-those who free be
fundige to þā goode ȝ to þā gesælðū; ȝ se ðe nu gehæft
let-hasten to the good and to the felicities and he who now bound

sie mid þære unnyttan lufe þisses middaneardes sece him
be with the useless love of-this middle-earth let-seek for-himself
freodom hu he mæge becuman to þā gesælðum, forþam þ is sio
freedom how he can come to the felicities because that is the
an ræst eallra urra geswinca; sio an hyð bið simle smyltu æfter
one rest of-all our toils the one haven is ever calm after
eallū þā ystū ⁊ þā yðum urra geswinca. Þ is seo an friðstow
all the storms and the waves of-our toils That is the one sanctuary
⁊ sio an frofer erminga æfter þā ermðū ðisses andweardan
and the one comfort of-wretches after the miseries of-this present
lifes. Ac þa gyldenan stanas, ⁊ þa seolfrenan, ⁊ ælces cynnes
life But the golden stones and the silver and of-every kind
gimmas, ⁊ eall þes andwearda wela, ne onlihtað hi nauht
gems and all this present wealth not enlighten they at-all
þæs modes eagan, ne heora scearpnesse nauht gebetað to þære
of-the mind eyes nor their sharpness at-all improve for the
sceawunga þære soðan gesælðe; ac get swiðor hi ablendað þæs
contemplation of-the true felicity but yet more they blind of-the
modes eagan þōn hi hi ascirpan. Forþā ealle þa ðing þe her
mind eyes than they them sharpen Because all the things which here
liciað on þisum andweardum life sint eorðlice, forþy hi sint
please in this present life are earthly therefore they are
fleonde. Ac sio wundorlice beorhtnes þe ealle ðing gebirht ⁊
fleeting But the wonderful brightness which all things brightens and
eallū welt, nyle þ ða sawla forweorðan, ac wile hi onlihtan.
all rules will-not that the souls perish but will them enlighten
89.20 Gif þōn hwelc mon mæge gesion þa birhtu þæs heofenlican
If then any man can see the brightness of-the heavenly
leohtes mid hluttrū eagū his modes, þōn wile he cweðan
light with clear eyes of-his mind then will he say

þ sio beorhtnes þære sunnan sciman sie þesternes to
that the brightness of-the sun beam be darkness to
metanne wið ða ecan birhtu Godes.
measure against the eternal brightness of-God
Đa se Wisdom ða ðis leoð asungen hæfde, þa cwæð ic: 89.24
When — Wisdom then this song sung had then said I
Ic eom geþafa þæs þe þu sægst, forðæmþe þu hit hæfst
I am consenting of-that which thou sayest because thou it hast
geseðed mid gesceadwislicere race. Đa cwæð he: Mid hu
proved with rational argument Then said he With how
micle feo woldest þu nu habban geboht þ þu meahte
much money wouldst thou now have bought that thou couldst
ongitan hwæt þ soðe god wære, ⁊ hwylc hit wære. Đa
perceive what the true good were and which it were Then
cwæð ic: Ic wolde fægnian mid swiðe ungemetlice gefean,
said I I would rejoice with very immoderate joy
⁊ ic wolde mid unarimedū feo gebycgan þ ic hit moste
and I would with countless money buy that I it might
gesion. Đa cwæð he: Ic hit þe þonne wille getæcan; ac þ
see Then said he I it to-thee then will teach but that
an ic þe bebiode, þ þu þeah for ðære tæcinge ne forgite þ
one I thee command that thou yet for the teaching not forget that
þ ic ðe ær tæhte. Đa cwæð ic: Nese, ne forgite ic hit no.
which I thee before taught Then said I No not forget I it —
Đa cwæð he: Hu ne sædon we þe ær þ þis andwearde
Then said he How not said we to-thee before that this present
lif þe we her wilniað nære no þ hehste good, forðæm hit
life which we here desire not-were — the highest good because it
wære mislic ⁊ on swa manigfeald todæled, þ hit nan mon
were various and into so manifold divided that it no man
ne mæg eall habban þ him ne sie sumes þinges wana? Ic
— can all have that to-him not be of-some thing lack I

ðe tæhte þa þ þær wære ðæt hehstæ god þær þær þa good
thee taught then that there were the highest good there where the goods
ealle gegadrade bioð, swelce hi sien to anum wegge gegoten.
all gathered are as-if they be into one ingot poured
90.8 Þonne þær bið full good þonne þa good ealle þe we ær
Then there is full good when the goods all which we before
ymb spræcon beoð to anum gode gegadrad; þonne ne biþ
about spoke are into one good gathered then not is
ðær nanes goodes wana; þonne þa good ealle on annesse
there of-any good lack when the goods all in oneness
bioð, ⁊ sio annes bið on ecnesse. Gif hi ôn ecnesse næren,
are and the oneness is in eternity If they in eternity were-not
þonne nære hiora swa swiðe to girnanne. Ða cwæð ic: Þ
then not-were of-them so much to yearn-for Then said I That
is gesæd; ne mæg ic no þæs twiogean. Þa cwæð he: Ær ic
is said not can I — of-that doubt Then said he Before I
þe hæfde gesæd þ þ nære full good þ eall ætgædere
to-thee had said that that not-were full good which all together
nære, forðæm is þ fulle good þ eall ætgædre is untodæled.
not-were therefore is that full good which all together is undivided
Ða cwæð ic: Swæ me ðincð. Ða cwæð he: Wenstu nu þ
Then said I So to-me it-seems Then said he Thinkest-thou now that
eall ða þing ðe gode sint on þisse weorulde forðy goode
all the things which good are in this world therefore good
sien þe hi hæbben hwæthwugu goodes on him? Ða cw̄ð ic:
be because they have something of-good in them Then said I
Hwæs mæg ic elles wenan? hu ne is hit swa? Ða cwæð he:
What can I else think how not is it so Then said he
Þu scealt þeah gelyfan ðæt sio annes ⁊ sio goodnes an ðing
Thou shalt yet believe that the oneness and the goodness one thing
sie. Ða cwæð ic: Ne mæg ic þæs oðsacan. Þa cwæð he: Hu
be Then said I Not can I that deny Then said he How

ne meaht þu geþencan þ ælc þing mæg bion, ge on þisse
not canst thou consider that each thing can be both in this
weorulde ge on þære toweardan, þa hwile þe hit untodæled
world and in the future the while that it undivided
bið? þonne ne bið hit eallunga swa swa hit ær wæs.
is then not is it entirely so as it before was
Þa cwæð ic: Sege me þ sweotolor; ne mæg ic fullice 90.25
Then said I Tell to-me that more-clearly not can I fully
ongitan æfter hwā þu spyrast. Ða cwæð he: Wast þu hwæt
perceive after what thou inquirest Then said he Knowest thou what
mon sie? Ða cwæð ic: Ic wat þ hit bið sawl ⁊ lichoma.
man be Then said I I know that it is soul and body
Ða cwæð he: Hwæt, þu wast þ hit bið mon, þa hwile þe
Then said he Lo thou knowest that it is man the while that
sio saul ⁊ se lichoma untodælde bioð; ne bið hit nan mon
the soul and the body undivided are not is it any man
siððan hi todælde bioð. Swa eac se lichoma bið lichoma þa
after they divided are So also the body is body the
hwile þe he his limu ealle hæfð; gif he þonne hwilc lim
while that it its limbs all has if it then any limb
forlyst, þōn ne bið he eall swa he ær wæs. Þ ilce þu meaht
loses then not is it all as it before was The same thou canst
geþencan be ælcum þinge, þ nan þing ne bið swilce hit
consider about each thing that no thing — is such-as it
wæs siððan hit wanian onginð. Ða cwð ic: Nu ic hit wat. Ða
was after it wane begins Then said I Now I it know Then
cwæð he: Wenst þu hwæðer ænig gesceaft sie þe hire willum
said he Thinkest thou whether any creature be which by-its will
nylle ealne weg bion, ac wille hire agnū willum forweorðan?
will-not all the-way be but will by-its own will perish

91.6 Đa cwæð ic: Ne mæg ic nane cwuce wuht ongitan þara
Then said I Not can I any living thing perceive of-those
þe wite hwæt hit wille, oððe hwæt hit nylle, þe ungened
which know what it will or what it will-not which uncompelled
lyste forweorðan; forðæmþe ælc wuht wolde bion hal ȝ
it-pleases to-perish because each thing would be whole and
libban, þara þe me cwuco ðincð; bute ic nat be
live of-those which to-me living seems but I not-know about
treowum ȝ be wyrtum, ȝ be swelcum gesceaftum swelce
trees and about herbs and about such creatures as
nane sawle nabbað. Đa smearcode he ȝ cwæð: Ne þearft
no soul have Then smiled he and said Not needest
þu no be þæm gesceaftum tweogan þon ma þe be ðæm
thou — about the creatures doubt the more than about the
oðrum. Hu ne meaht þu gesion þ ælc wyrt ȝ ælc wudu
others How not canst thou see that each herb and each wood
wile weaxan on þæm lande selest þe him betst gerist ȝ
will grow in the land best which to-it best suits and
him gecynde bið ȝ gewunlic, ȝ þær þær hit gefret þ hit
to-it natural is and customary and there where it feels that it
hraðost weaxan mæg ȝ latost wealowian? Sumra wyrta oððe
soonest grow can and latest wither Of-some herbs or
sumes wuda eard bið on dunū, sumra on merscum, sumra
of-some wood home is on hills of-some in marshes of-some
on morum, sumra on cludum, sumra on barum sondum.
on moors of-some on rocks of-some on bare sands
Nim ðonne swa wuda swa wyrt, swa hwæðer swa þu wille,
Take then either wood or herb so whichever so thou wilt
of þære stowe þe his eard ȝ æþelo bið on to wexanne,
from the place which its home and native-place is in to grow
ȝ sete on ungecynde stowe him; þonne ne gegrewð hit þær
and set in unnatural place to-it then not grows it there

nauht, ac forsearað; forðæm ælces landes gecynd is þ hit
at-all but withers because of-each land nature is that it
him gelica wyrta ȝ gelicne wudu tydre, ȝ hit swa deð.
to-itself like herbs and like wood nourish and it so does
Friðað ȝ fyrðrað swiðe georne, swa lange swa hiora gecynd 91.24
Protects and furthers very eagerly so long as their nature
bið þ hi growan moton. Hwæt wenst þu, forhwy ælc sæd
is that they grow may What thinkest thou why each seed
creope inon þa eorðan, ȝ to ciðū ȝ to wyrtrumum weorðe
creep into the earth and to shoots and to roots become
on þære eorðan, buton forðy þe hi tiohhiað þ se stemn ȝ
in the earth but because that they intend that the stem and
se helm mote þy fæstor ȝ þe leng stondan? Hwy ne meaht
the crown may the firmer and the longer stand Why not canst
þu ongitan, þeah þu hit gesion ne mæge, þ eall se dæl se
thou perceive though thou it see not can that all the part which
ðe þæs treowes on twelf monðum gewexð, þæt he onginð of
— of-the tree in twelve months grows that it begins from
þæm wyrtrumum ȝ swa upweardes grewð oð ðone stemn,
the roots and so upwards grows to the stem
ȝ siððan andlang þæs piðan, ȝ andlang þære rinde oð ðone
and then along the pith and along the bark to the
helm, ȝ siððan æfter þæm bogum, oððæt hit ut aspringeð
crown and then along the boughs until it out springs
on leafum ȝ on blostmum ȝ on bledum? Hwi ne meaht
in leaves and in blossoms and in fruits Why not canst
þu ongitan þte ælc wuht cwuces bið innanweard hnescost ȝ
thou perceive that each thing of-living is within softest and
unbrocheardost? Hwæt, þu meht gesion hu þ treow bið utan
least-hardy Lo thou canst see how the tree is outside
gescerped ȝ bewæfed mid þære rinde wið ðone winter ȝ
clothed and wrapped with the bark against the winter and

wið ða stearcan stormas ⁊ eac wið þære sunnan hæto on
against the strong storms and also against of-the sun heat in
sumera. Hwa mæg þ he ne wundrie swelcra gesceafta ures
summer Who can that he not wonder at-such creatures of-our
scyppendes, ⁊ huru þæs scyppendes? ⁊ þeah we his nu
creator and indeed at-the creator and though we at-him now
wundrigen, hwilc ure mæg areccan medemlice ures scyppendes
wonder which of-us can set-forth worthily of-our creator
willan ⁊ anwald, hu his gesceafta wexað ⁊ eft waniað,
will and power how his creatures grow and again wane
þonne þæs tima cymð, ⁊ of hiora sæde wiorðað eft
when of-it time comes and from their seed become again
geedniwode, swylce hi þonne weorðen to edsceafte? Hwæt,
renewed as-if they then become to new-creation Lo
hi þonne eft bioð, ⁊ eac hwæthwugu anlice bioð swilce
they then again are and also somewhat alike are as-if
hi â bion, forðæm hi ælce geare weorðað to edsceafte.
they ever be because they each year become to new-creation
92.16 Hwæþer þu giet ongite þ ða uncweðendan gesceafta
Whether thou yet perceive that the speechless creatures
wilnodon to bionne on ecnesse swa ilce swa mē, gif hi
desired to be in eternity so same as men if they
meahten? Hwæðer þu nu ongite forhwy þ fyr fundige up, ⁊
could Whether thou now perceive why the fire hasten up and
sio eorðe ofdune? Forhwy is þ buton forþyðe God gesceop
the earth down Why is that but because God created
his eard up ⁊ hire ofdune; forðy fundiað ælc gesceaft þider
its home up and its down therefore hastens each creature thither
swiðost þider his eard ⁊ his hælo swiðost bioð, ⁊ flihð
most where its home and its safety most are and flees
þte him wiðerweard bið ⁊ ungebyrde ⁊ ungelic. Hwæt,
that-which to-it contrary is and unfitting and unlike Lo

þa stanas, forðæm hi sint stillre gecynde ȝ heardre, bioð
the stones because they are of-still nature and hard are
earfoðe to tedælenne; ȝ eac uneaðe tosomne cumað, gif hi
hard to divide and also not-easily together come if they
todælde weorþað. Gif þu þonne ænne stan toclifst, ne wyrð
divided become If thou then a stone cleavest not becomes
he næfre gegadrod swa he ær wæs; ac þ wæter ȝ sio lyft
it ever gathered as it before was but the water and the air
bioð hwene hnescran gecynde; hi bioð swiðe eðe to tedælenne,
are somewhat of-softer nature they are very easy to divide
ac hi bioð eft sona ætgædre. Þ fyr þonne ne mæg næfre
but they are again soon together The fire then not can ever
weorðan todæled. Ic sæde þeah nu hwene ær þte nanwuht
become divided I said yet now a-little before that nothing
his agenum willum nolde forweorðan; ac ic eom nu ma ymb
by-its own will would perish but I am now more about
þ gecynd þonne yþ̃ þone willan, forðæm hi hwilum willað
the nature than about the will because they at-times will
on tu. Þu meaht witan be manegum þingum þ þ gecynd is
in two Thou canst know by many things that the nature is
swiðe micel; is þ formicel gecynd ðæt urum lichoman cymð
very great is that very-great nature that to-our body comes
eall his mægen of ðæm mete þe we þiggað, ȝ þeah færð
all its strength from the food which we eat and yet goes
se mete ut þurh þone lichoman; ac his swæc ðeah ȝ his
the food out through the body but its savor yet and its
cræft gecymð on ælcre ædre, swa swa mon meolo seft; ðæt
virtue comes into each vein so as one meal sifts the
meolo ðurgcrypð ælc ðyrel, ȝ þa syfeða weorðað asyndred.
meal creeps-through each hole and the bran becomes separated

93.6 Swa eac ure gast bið swiðe wide farende urum unwillum ⁊
So also our spirit is very widely traveling against-our will and
ures ungewealdes for his gecynde, nalles for his willan; þ
without-our control for its nature not-at-all for its will that
bið þonne þonne we slapað. Hwæt, þa nytenu ðonne ⁊ eac
is then when we sleep Lo the beasts then and also
þa oðra gesceafta ma wilniað þæs þe hi wilniað for gecynde
the other creatures more desire that which they desire for nature
ðonne for willan. Ungecyndelic is ælcre wuhte þ hit wilnige
than for will Unnatural is to-each thing that it desire
frecennesse oððe deaðes, ac þeah mænig þing bið to þæm
danger or death but yet many thing is to that
gened þ hit wilnað þara ægðres; forðæm se willa bið þonne
compelled that it desires of-them each because the will is then
strengra þonne þ gecynd. Hwilum bið se willa swiðra þonne
stronger than the nature At-times is the will stronger than
þ gecynd, hwilum þæt gecynd ofercymð þone willan. Swa nu
the nature at-times the nature overcomes the will So now
wrænnes deð; sio bið ælcum men gecynde, ⁊ hwilum þeah
lust does which is to-each man natural and at-times yet
hire bið forwerned hire gecyndes þurh þæs monnes willan. Eall
to-it is denied of-its nature through of-the man will All
sio lufu þæs hæmedþinges bið for gecynde, nallas for willan.
the love of-the intercourse is for nature not-at-all for will
93.20 Be þæm þu meaht openlice witan þ se sceppend ealra gesceafta
By that thou canst openly know that the creator of-all creatures
hæfð forgifen ænne lust ⁊ an gecynd eallum his gesceaftū;
has given one desire and one nature to-all his creatures
þæt is þ hi woldon â bion. Ælcre wuhte is gecynde þ hit
that is that they would ever be To-each thing is natural that it
wilnige þ hit â sie be þæm dæle þe hit his gecynde healdan
desire that it ever be by the part that it its nature keep

mot ⁊ mæg. Ne þearft ðu no tweogan ymbe þ þe þu ær
may and can Not needest thou — doubt about that which thou before
tweodest, þ is be þā gesceaftum þe nane sawle nabbað;
doubtedst that is about the creatures which no soul have
ælc þara gesceafta þe sawle hæfð, ge eac þa þe nabbað,
each of-the creatures which soul has and also those which have-not
willniað simle to bionne. Ða cwæð ic: Nu ic ongite þ ðæt
desire ever to be Then said I Now I perceive that which
ic ær ymbe tweode; þ is ðæt ælc gesceaft wilnað symle to
I before about doubted that is that each creature desires ever to
bionne; þ is swiðe sweotol on ðære tidringe. Þa cwæð he:
be that is very clear in the propagation Then said he
Hwæþer þu þonne ongite þ ælc þara wuhta þe him beon
Whether thou then perceive that each of-the things which itself be
þencð, þ hit þencð ætgædere bion, gehal, untodæled? forðæm
intends that it intends together be whole undivided because
gif hit todæled bið, þonne ne bið hit no hal. Ða cwð ic:
if it divided is then not is it — whole Then said I
Þ is soð. Ða cwæð he: Þ is, eall þing habbaþ þeah ænne
That is true Then said he That is all things have yet one
willan, ðæt is ðæt hi woldon a bion; þurh þone ænne
will that is that they would ever be through the one
willan hi wilniað ðæs anes goodes þe â bið, þ is God.
will they desire the one good which ever is that is God
Ða cwæð ic: Swa hit is swa ðu sægst. Ða cwæð he: Hwæt, 94.5
Then said I So it is as thou sayest Then said he Lo
þu miht openlice ongitan þ ðæt is forinlice good þing þe
thou canst openly perceive that that is exceedingly good thing which
ealra wuhta ⁊ ealle gesceafta wilniað to habbanne. Ða cwæð
of-all things and all creatures desire to have Then said
ic: Ne mæg nan mon soðre secgan, forðæm ic ongite þ
I Not can any man more-truly say because I perceive that

ealla gesceafta toflowen swa swa wæter, ȝ nanne sibbe ne
all creatures would-flow-apart so as water and no peace nor
nane endebyrdnesse ne heolden, ac swiðe ungereclice toslupen
any order — would-keep but very disorderly slip-apart
ȝ to nauhte wurden, swa swa we lange ær sædon on ðisse
and to naught become so as we long before said in this
ilcan bec, gif hi næfdon ænne God þe him eallum stiorde ȝ
same book if they had-not one God who them all steered and
racode ȝ rædde. Ac nu forþāðe we witon þ an wealdend
directed and ruled But now because we know that one ruler
is eallra þinga, we sceolon beon nede geþafan, sam we
is of-all things we shall be of-necessity consenting whether we
willan sā we nyllan, þ he sie se hehsta hrof eallra goda. Ða
will or we will-not that he be the highest roof of-all goods Then
smercode he wið min ȝ cwæð: Eala, min cild, ea; hwæt,
smiled he toward me and said O my child ah lo
þu eart swiðe gesælig, ȝ ic swiðe bliðe, for minū andgite.
thou art very happy and I very blithe for my understanding
Swiðe neah þu ongeate þa þ riht, ȝ þ ilce þ þu ær
Very nearly thou perceivedst then the right and the same which thou before
sædest þ ðu ongiton ne mihtest, þæs þu wære nu geþafa.
saidst that thou perceive not couldst of-that thou wert now consenting
Ða cwæð ic: Hwæt wæs þ þ ic ær sæde þ ic nysste?
Then said I What was that which I before said that I knew-not
94.21 Ða cwæð he: Nu þu sædest þ ðu nystest ælcre gesceafte
Then said he Now thou saidst that thou knewest-not of-each creature
ende; ac wite nu þ þ is ælcre gesceafte ende þ
end but know now that that is of-each creature end which
ðu self ær nemdest, þ is God; to þam fundiað ealle
thou thyself before namedst that is God to whom hasten all

gesceafta. Nabbað hi nan god ofer þ to secanne, ne hi
creatures Have-not they any good beyond that to seek nor they
nanwuht ne magon ne ufor ne utor findan.
anything — can either higher or farther find

XXXV · ORPHEUS IN HELL

Wisdom sings that whoever seeks the truth must look within, where a seed of truth remains, as Plato taught. Wisdom shows that God steers all things by his goodness, as a helmsman a ship, and that nothing can resist him: the fable of the giants whom Jove overthrew is like the true story of Nimrod, whose tower near Babylon God's power cast down unfinished. Evil is nothing, since God cannot do it. Wisdom then sings of the harper Orpheus, who won his wife back from hell and lost her by looking back; the fable warns against returning to old evils.

Ða he þa þis spell asæd hæfde, þa ongan he eft singan 94.26
When he then this discourse told had then began he again to-sing
ȝ þus cwæð: Swa hwa swa wille dioplice spirigan mid
and thus said So who so will deeply inquire with
innewearðan mode æfter ryhte, ȝ nylle þ hine ænig mon
inward mind after right and will-not that him any man
oððe ænig þing mage amerran, onginne þōn secan oninnan
or any thing can hinder let-begin then to-seek within
him selfū, þ he ær ymbuton hine sohte, ȝ forlæte
him self what he before around him sought and let-forsake
unnytte ymbhogan swa he swiðost mæge; ȝ gegæderige to
useless concerns as he most can and let-gather to
þam anum, ȝ gesecge þōn his anū mode þ hit mæg findan
the one and let-say then to-his own mind that it can find
oninnan him selfum ealle þa god þe hit ute secð. Þōn mæg
within it self all the goods which it outside seeks Then can

he swiðe raþe ongitan eall þ yfel ⁊ þ unnet þ he ær
he very quickly perceive all the evil and the useless which he before
on his mode hæfde; swa sweotole swa ðu miht þa sunnan
in his mind had as clearly as thou canst the sun
geseon, ⁊ þu ongitst þin agen ingeþanc, þ hit bið micele
see and thou perceivest thy own thought that it is much
beorhtre ⁊ leohtre þōn seo sunne. Forþā nan hæfignes þæs
brighter and lighter than the sun Because no heaviness of-the
lichoman ne nan unðeaw ne mæg eallunga ation of his mode
body nor any vice — can entirely draw from his mind
þa rihtwisnesse, swa þ he hire hwæthwegu nabbe on his
the righteousness so that he of-it something have-not in his
mode; þeah sio swærnes ðæs lichoman ⁊ þa unþeawas oft
mind though the heaviness of-the body and the vices often
abisegien þ mod mid ofergiotulnesse, ⁊ mid þā gedwolmiste
occupy the mind with forgetfulness and with the mist-of-error
hit fortio þ hit ne mæge swa beorhte scinan swa hit wolde.
it cover that it not can so brightly shine as it would
⁊ þeah bið simle corn þære soðfæstnesse sæd on þære sawle
and yet is ever grain of-the truth seed in the soul
wunigende, þa hwile þe sio sawl ⁊ se lichoma gederode bioð.
dwelling the while that the soul and the body joined are
95.15 Þ corn sceal bion aweht mid ascunga ⁊ mid lare, gif
That grain shall be awakened with questioning and with teaching if
hit growan sceal. Hu mæg þōn ænig man ryhtwislice ⁊
it grow shall How can then any man rightly and
gesceadwislice acsigan, gif he nan grot rihtwisnesse on him
rationally ask if he no particle of-righteousness in him
næfð? Nis nan swa swiðe bedæled ryhtwisnesse þ he nan
has Not-is any so greatly bereft of-righteousness that he no
ryht andwyrde nyte, gif mon acsað. Forþā hit is swiðe ryht
right answer knows if one asks Therefore it is very right

spell þ Plato se uðwita sæde; he cwæð: swa hwa swa
discourse which Plato the philosopher said he said so who so
ungemyndig sie rihtwisnesse, gecerre hine to his gemynde;
unmindful be of-righteousness let-turn him to his memory
þōn finț he þær þa ryhtwisnesse gehydde mid þæs lichoman
then finds he there the righteousness hidden with of-the body
hæfignesse ȝ mid his modes gedrefednesse ȝ bisgunga.
heaviness and with of-his mind trouble and occupations
Đa cwæð ic: Ic eom geðafa þ þ was soð spell þ Plato 95.24
Then said I I am consenting that that was true discourse which Plato
sæde. Hu ne mynegodest þu me eac nu tuwa þære ilcan
said How not remindedst thou me also now twice of-the same
spræce? ærest þu cwæde þ ic hæfde forgiten þ gecyndelice
speech first thou saidst that I had forgotten the natural
god þ ic oninnan me selfū hæfde, for ðæs lichoman
good which I within me self had for of-the body
hefignesse. Æt oðrū cerre þu me sædest þ ðu hæfdest
heaviness At other time thou to-me saidst that thou hadst
ongiten þ me selfū þuhte þ ic hæfde eallunga forloren þ
perceived that to-me self seemed that I had entirely lost the
gecyndelice god þ ic oninnan me selfū sceolde habban, for
natural good which I within me self should have for
þære ungemetlican unrotnesse þe ic hæfde for ðā forlætenan
the immoderate sadness which I had for the lost
welan. Đa cwæð he: Þær þu gemyndest þa word þe ic
wealth Then said he If thou rememberest the words which I
þe sæde on þære forman bec, þōn miht þu be þā wordū
to-thee said in the first book then canst thou by the words
genog sweotole ongitan þ þ ðu ær sædest þ ðu
enough clearly perceive that which thou before saidst that thou
nysstest. Đa cwæð ic: Hwæt was þ, hwæt sæde ic þ ic
knewest-not Then said I What was that what said I that I

nyste? Đa cwæð he: Đu sædest on þære ilcan bec þ ðu
knew-not Then said he Thou saidst in the same book that thou
ongeate þte God weolde þisses middangeardes, ac þu sædest
perceivedst that God ruled this middle-earth but thou saidst
þ þu ne mihte witan humeta he his weolde, oððe hu he
that thou not couldst know in-what-way he it ruled or how he
his weold. Đa cwæð ic: Ic geman genog geara min agen
it ruled Then said I I remember enough well my own
dysig, ȝ ic his wæs ær þe geþafa. ðeah ic hit ða be
folly and I of-it was before to-thee consenting though I it then by
sumum dæle ongeate, ic wolde giet his mare æt þe geheran.
some part perceived I would yet of-it more from thee hear
96.8 Đa cwæð he: Ne ðe nauht ær ne tweode ðætte God rædde
Then said he Not thee at-all before — it-doubted that God guided
ȝ wiolde ealles middangeardes. Đa cwæð ic: Ne me giet nauht
and ruled all middle-earth Then said I Not me yet at-all
ne tweoð, ne nu næfre ne twioð; ic ðe wille eac sona secgan
— it-doubts nor now ever — it-doubts I to-thee will also at-once say
be hwæm ic hit ærest ongeat. Ic ongeat þ ðes middangeard
by what I it first perceived I perceived that this middle-earth
wæs of swiðe manegum ȝ mislicum þingum gegaderod,
was from very many and various things gathered
ȝ swiðe fæste tosomne gelimed ȝ gefangod. Næren ðe hi
and very firmly together cemented and joined Were-not — they
gegaderode ȝ geradode, swa wiðerwearda gesceafta, þonne
gathered and ordered so contrary creatures then
ne wurdon hi næfre ne geworhte ne eac gegaderod; ȝ
not were they ever — made nor also gathered and
gif he hi ne gebunde mid his unanbindendlicum racentū,
if he them not bound with his unbindable chains
ðonne toslupen hi ealla; ȝ nære no swa gewislice ne
then would-slip-apart they all and not-were — so certainly nor

swa endebyrdlice ne swa gemetlice hiora stede ⁊ hiora
so orderly nor so moderately their place and their
ryne funden on hiora stowū ⁊ on hiora tidum, gif an
course found in their places and in their times if one
unanwendendlic God nære þe heora weolde. Þone God, ðæt
unchangeable God not-were who them ruled That God that
þ he is, þ ic hate God, swa swa ealle gesceafta hatað.
which he is that I call God so as all creatures call
Ða cwæð he: Nu ðu þ swa openlice ongiten hæfst, ne ðearfe 96.24
Then said he Now thou that so openly perceived hast not need
ic nu nauht swiðe ymb ðæt swincan þ ic ðe ma be Gode
I now at-all greatly about that toil that I to-thee more about God
recce; forþā þu eart nu fulneah cumen in on ða ceastre þære
tell because thou art now nearly come in into the city of-the
soðan gesælðe, þe þu lange ær ne meahtest aredian. Ac wit
true felicity which thou long before not couldst find But we-two
sculon swaþeah secan þ þ wit ær mynton. Þa cwæð
shall yet seek that which we-two before intended Then said
ic: Hwæt is ðæt? Ða cwæð he: Hu ne tealdon wit ær þte
I What is that Then said he How not reckoned we-two before that
genyht wæren gesælða, ⁊ þa gesælða wæren God? Ða cwæð
sufficiency were felicities and the felicities were God Then said
ic: Swa hit is swa þu sægst. Ða cwæð he: God ne beþearf
I So it is as thou sayest Then said he God not needs
nanes oðres fultomes buton his selfes his gesceafta mid to
any other help but his self his creatures with to
wealdanne, þe ma þe he ær þorfte to þā weorce; forðæm gif
rule the more than he before needed for the work because if
he æniges fultomes on ænegum þingum beðorfte, þonne næfde
he of-any help in any things needed then had-not
he no self genog. Ða cwæð ic: Swa hit is swa ðu segst. Ða
he — himself enough Then said I So it is as thou sayest Then

cwæð he: Þurg hine selfne he gesceop eall ðing ⁊ ealra wylt.
said he Through him self he created all things and all rules
Ða cwæð ic: Ne mæg ic þæs oðsacan. Ða cwæð he: Ær we
Then said I Not can I that deny Then said he Before we
þe hæfdon þ gereaht þ God wære þurh hine selfne good.
to-thee had that shown that God were through him self good
97.8 Ða cwæð ic: Ic geman þ ðu swa sædest. Ða cwæð he:
Then said I I remember that thou so saidst Then said he
Þurg good God gesceop eal ðing, forðæm he wilt þurh hine
Through good God created all things because he rules through him
selfne ealles þæs þe we ær cwædon ðæt good wære; ⁊ he
self all that which we before said that good were and he
is ana staðolfæst wealdend ⁊ stiora ⁊ steorroðer ⁊ helma,
is alone steadfast ruler and steersman and rudder and helm
forðæm he riht ⁊ ræt eallū gesceaftum, swa swa good stiora
because he directs and rules all creatures so as good steersman
anum scipe. Ða cwæð ic: Nu ic ðe andette þ ic hæbbe
a ship Then said I Now I to-thee confess that I have
funden duru þær þær ic ær geseah ane lytle cinan, swa ðæt ic
found door there where I before saw a little chink so that I
uneaðe mihte gesion swiðe lytelne sciman leohtes of þissum
hardly could see very little gleam of-light from this
þiostrum; ⁊ þeah þu me tæhtest ær þa duru, ac ic hire ne
darkness and though thou to-me showedst before the door yet I it not
meahte mare aredian, buton þ ic hire grapode ymbutan þ
could more find but that I it groped around that
þe ic þæt lytle leoht geseah twinclian. Ic þe sæde gefyrn
where I the little light saw twinkle I to-thee said long
ær on þisse ilcan bec þ ic nysse hwæt se fruma wære
before in this same book that I knew-not what the beginning were
ealra gesceafta; þa gerehtest þu me þ hit wæs God. Ða
of-all creatures then showedst thou to-me that it was God Then

nysse ic eft ymb þone ende, ær þu me eft gereahtes þ
knew-not I again about the end before thou to-me again showedst that
ðæt wære eac God. Ða sæde ic þe þ ic nysse hu he ealra
that were also God Then said I to-thee that I knew-not how he all
þara gesceafta wiolde; ac þu hit me hæfst nu swiðe sweotole
the creatures ruled but thou it to-me hast now very clearly
gereht, swylce þu hæbbe þa duru abroden þe ic ær sohte.
shown as-if thou have the door opened which I before sought
Ða andswarode he me ⁊ cwæð: Ic wat þ ic ðe ær 97.25
Then answered he me and said I know that I thee before
myndgode ðære ilcan spræce, ⁊ nu me ðincþ þ þu
reminded of-the same speech and now to-me seems that thou
ongite swa swa leng swa bet ymbe þa soðfæstnesse; ac
perceive so the longer the better about the truth but
ic wolde git þe eowian sume bysne, ac swa sweotole swa
I would yet to-thee show some example but as clear as
sio wæs þe ic þe ær sæde. Ða cwæð ic: Hwæt is sio?
that was which I to-thee before said Then said I What is it
Ða cwæð he: Ne mæg nænne mon þæs twiogean þte ealra 97.30
Then said he Not can any man of-that doubt that of-all
gesceafta agnū willum God ricsað ofer hi, ⁊ eaðmodlice hiora
creatures by-own will God reigns over them and humbly their
willan wendað to his willan. Be þam is swiðe sweotol ðætte
will turn to his will By that is very clear that
God æghwæs wealt mid þæm helman ⁊ mid ðæm stiorroðre
God everything rules with the helm and with the rudder
his goodnesse; forðæmþe ealla gesceafta gecyndelice hiora agnū
of-his goodness because all creatures naturally by-their own
willum fundiað to cumanne to Gode, swa swa we oft ær
will hasten to come to God so as we often before
sædon on ðisse ilcan bec. Ða cwæð ic: Hwi ne mæg ic þæs
said in this same book Then said I Why not can I that

twiogan; forþā Godes anweald nære full eadiglic gif þa gesceafta
doubt because of-God power not-were full blessed if the creatures
hiora unwillū him herden; ȝ eft þa gesceafta næren nanes
against-their will him obeyed and again the creatures were-not of-any
þonces ne nanes weorðscipes wyrðe gif hi hiora unwillum
thanks nor of-any honor worthy if they against-their will
hlaforde herden. Ða cwæð he: Nis nan gesceaft þe tiohhie
to-lord obeyed Then said he Not-is any creature which intend
þ hio scyle winnan wið hire scippendes willan gif hio hire
that it should strive against its creator will if it its
cynd healdan wille. Ða cwæð ic: Nis nan gecynd þe wið
nature keep will Then said I Not-is any nature which against
hire scippendes willan winne buton dysig mon, oððe eft þa
its creator will strive but foolish man or again the
wiðerweardan englas. Ða cwæð he: Hwæt wenst ðu? gif ænegu
rebellious angels Then said he What thinkest thou if any
gesceaft tiohhode þ hio wið his willan sceolde winnan, hwæt
creature intended that it against his will should strive what
hio meahte wið swa mihtigne swa we hine gereahtne habbað?
it could against so mighty as we him shown have
98.16 Ða cwæð ic: Ne magon hi nauht, þeah hi willon. Ða
Then said I Not can they at-all though they will Then
wundrode he ȝ cwæð: Nis nanwuht þe mæge oððe wille
wondered he and said Not-is anything which can or will
swa heaum Gode wiðcweðan. Ða cwæð ic: Ne wene ic þ
so high God gainsay Then said I Not think I that
ænig wuht sie ðe wið winne, buton ðæt wit ær spræcon.
any thing be which against strive but that we-two before spoke
Ða smearcade he ȝ cwæð: Wite geare ðæt ðæt is þ hehste
Then smiled he and said Know well that that is the highest
gôd, ðæt hit eall swa mihtiglice macað ȝ eall ðing gesceop ȝ
good that it all so mightily makes and all things created and

eallū swa gereclice racað ⁊ swa eðelice buton ælcū geswince
all so orderly directs and so easily without any toil
hit eall set. Ða cwæð ic: Wel me licode ðæt þu ær sædes,
it all sets Then said I Well me pleased what thou before saidst
⁊ þises me lyst nu giet bet; ac me sceamað nu ðæt ic hit
and of-this me it-pleases now yet better but me it-shames now that I it
ær ne ongeat. Ða cwæð he: Hwæt, ic wat þ ðu geherdest
before not perceived Then said he Lo I know that thou heardest
oft reccan on ealdum leasū spellum þte Iob Saturnes sunu
often tell in old false stories that Jove of-Saturn son
sceolde bion se hehsta god ofer ealle oðre godu, ⁊ he sceolde
should be the highest god over all other gods and he should
bion þæs heofenes sunu, ⁊ sceolde ricsian on heofenū; ⁊
be of-the heaven son and should reign in heavens and
sceolden gigantes bion eorðan suna, ⁊ ða sceolden ricsian
should giants be of-earth sons and they should reign
ofer eorþan; ⁊ þa sceolden hi bion swelce hi wæren
over earth and then should they be as-if they were
geswysterna bearn, forðæmþe he sceolde beon heofones sunu,
of-sisters children because he should be of-heaven son
⁊ hi eorðan. ⁊ þa sceolde þæm gigantum ofþincan þ he
and they of-earth and then should to-the giants it-grieve that he
hæfde hiera rice; woldon þa tobrecan þone heofon under
had their kingdom (they)-would then break the heaven under
him; þa sceolde he sendan þunras ⁊ ligeta ⁊ windas,
him then should he send thunders and lightnings and winds
⁊ toweorpan eall hira geweorc mid, ⁊ hi selfe ofslean.
and overthrow all their work with and them selves slay
Ðyllica leasunga hi worhton, ⁊ meahton eaðe seggan 99.4
Such lies they made and could easily tell
soðspell, gif him þa leasunga næren swetran, ⁊ þeah
true-stories if to-them the lies were-not sweeter and yet

swiðe gelic ðisum. Hi meahton seggan hwylc dysig Nefrod
very like to-these They could tell what folly Nimrod
se gigant worhte; se Nefrod wæs Chuses sunu; Chus wæs
the giant wrought — Nimrod was of-Cush son Cush was
Chames sunu, Cham Noes. Se Nefrod het wyrcan ænne
of-Ham son Ham of-Noah — Nimrod commanded to-build a
tor on ðæm felda ðe Nensar hatte, ⁊ on ðære þiode
tower on the field which Shinar is-called and in the nation
ðe Deira hatte, swiðe neah þære byrig þe mon nu hæt
which Dura is-called very near the city which one now calls
Babilonia. Þ hi dydon for þā ðingum þe hi woldon witan
Babylon That they did for the things that they would know
hu heah hit wære to ðæm heofone, ⁊ hu ðicce se hefon
how high it were to the heaven and how thick the heaven
wære ⁊ hu fæst, oððe hwæt þærofer wære. Ac hit gebyrede,
were and how firm or what thereover were But it happened
swa hit cynn was, þ se godcunda wald hi tostencte ær
as it fitting was that the divine power them scattered before
hi hit fullwyrcan mosten, ⁊ towearp ðone tor, ⁊ hiora
they it complete might and overthrew the tower and of-them
monigne ofslog, ⁊ hiora spræce todælde ôn tu ⁊ hund
many slew and their speech divided into two and —
seofontig geþioda. Swa gebyreð ælcū þara þe winð wið
seventy languages So befalls to-each of-those who strives against
ðæm godcundan anwalde; ne gewyxð him nan weorðscipe
the divine power not grows to-him any honor
on ðæm, ac wyrð se gewanod þe hi ær hæfdon.
in that but becomes that diminished which they before had
99.21 Ac loca nu hwæðer þu wille ðæt wit giet spyrigen æfꝛ ænigre
But look now whether thou will that we-two yet inquire after any
gesceadwisnesse furður, nu wit ðæt funden habbað þ wit
reasoning further now we-two that found have which we-two

ær sohton. Ic wene þeah, gif wit giet uncru word tosomne
before sought I think yet if we-two yet our words together
sleað, þ ðær âsprunge sum spearca up soðfæstnesse þara þe
strike that there spring some spark up of-truth of-those which
wit ær ne gesawon. Ða cwæð ic: Do swa swa ðu wille. Ða
we-two before not saw Then said I Do so as thou wilt Then
cwæð he: Hwæt, nænne mon nu ne tweoð þ God sie swa
said he Lo no man now — doubts that God be so
mihtig þ he mæge wyrcan þ þ he wille. Ða cwæð ic: Ne
mighty that he can work that which he will Then said I Not
tweoð ðæs nænne mon ðe auht wat. Ða cwæð he: Hwæðer
doubts of-that any man who aught knows Then said he Whether
ænig mon wene þ auht sie þæs þe God don ne mæge. Ða
any man think that aught be of-that which God do not can Then
cwæð ic: Ic hit wat ðæt nauht nis þæs þe he don ne mæge.
said I I it know that naught is of-that which he do not can
Ða cwæð he: Wenstu hwæðer he mæge ænig yfel don? Ða
Then said he Thinkest-thou whether he can any evil do Then
cwæð ic: Ic wat þ he ne mæg. Ða cwæð he: Soð þu sægst,
said I I know that he not can Then said he True thou sayest
forðæm hit is nauht; þær yfel auht wære, þonne meahte hit
because it is naught if evil aught were then could it
God wyrcan; forðy hit is nauht. Ða cwæð ic: Me þincð þ
God work therefore it is naught Then said I To-me seems that
ðu me dwelle ⁊ dydre, swa mon cild deð; lædst me hidres
thou me lead-astray and delude as one child does leadest me hither
⁊ ðidres on swa þicne wudu ðæt ic ne mæg ut aredian.
and thither in so thick wood that I not can out find-way
Forðæm ðu a ymbe sticce fehst eft on ða ilcan spræce 100.7
Because thou ever at times takest again on the same speech
þe þu ær spræce, ⁊ forlætst eft ða ær ðu hi geendod
which thou before spakest and leavest again it before thou it ended

hæbbe, ȝ fehst on uncuðe; þy ic nat nu hwæt þu
have and takest on unknown therefore I not-know now what thou
wilt. Me þincð þ ðu hwerfe ymbeutan sume wundorlice ȝ
wilt To-me seems that thou turn around some wonderful and
seldcuþe spræce ymbe ða anfealdnesse þære godcundnesse. Ic
rare speech about the singleness of-the divinity I
geman þ ðu me ær reahtes sū wundorlic spell be
remember that thou to-me before toldest a-certain wonderful discourse about
ðā þa ðu me reahtes þ hit wære eall an gesælða ȝ þ
that when thou to-me toldest that it were all one felicities and the
hehste god, ȝ cwæde þ ða gesælða wæren on ðæm hehste
highest good and saidst that the felicities were in the highest
goode fæste, ȝ þ hehste good wære God self, ȝ he wære
good fixed and the highest good were God himself and he were
full ælcre gesælðe; ȝ þu cwæde þ ælc gesælig mon wære
full of-every felicity and thou saidst that each happy man were
God. ȝ eft þu sædes þ Godes goodnes ȝ his gesælignes
God and again thou saidst that of-God goodness and his happiness
ȝ he self ðæt ðæt wære eall an, ȝ þ ðonne wære se
and he himself that that were all one and that then were the
hehsta God; ȝ to ðæm gode ealla þa gesceafta fundiað ðe
highest God and to that good all the creatures hasten which
hiora gecynd healdað, ȝ wilniað þ hy to cumon. ȝ eac
their nature keep and desire that they to come and also
þu sædes ðætte God wiolde eallra his gesceafta mid ðæm
thou saidst that God ruled all his creatures with the
stiorroðre his goodnesse; ȝ eac sædes þ ealla gesceafta hiora
rudder of-his goodness and also saidst that all creatures by-their
agnum willum ungenedde him wæren underðiodde. ȝ nu on
own will uncompelled to-him were subjected and now at

last þu sædes þ yfel nære nauht. ȝ eall þis þu gereahtes
last thou saidst that evil not-were aught and all this thou showedst
to soðe swiðe gesceadwislice, buton ælcre leasre rædelsan.
for truth very rationally without any false conjecture
Ða cwæð he: Þu sædes ær þ ic ðe dwealde; ac me ðincð 100.26
Then said he Thou saidst before that I thee led-astray but to-me seems
selfum þ ic þe nauht ne dwelle, ac ðe sæde swiðe lang
self that I thee not-at-all — lead-astray but to-thee said very long
spell ȝ wundorlic, ȝ swiðe gesceadlice be ðæm Gode ðe
discourse and wonderful and very rationally about the God whom
wit unc gefyrn to gebædon; ȝ nu giet ic tiohhie þ ic
we-two us long-ago to prayed and now yet I intend that I
ðe hwæthwugu uncuðes gerecce be ðæm ilcan Gode. Hit
to-thee something of-unknown tell about the same God It
is gecynd þære godcundnesse þ hio mæg bion ungemenged
is nature of-the divinity that it can be unmingled
wið oðre gesceafta buton oðerra gesceafta fultome, swa swa
with other creatures without of-other creatures help so as
nan oðer gesceaft ne mæg. Ne mæg nan oðru gesceaft be him
no other creature — can Nor can any other creature by it
selfum bion, swa swa gio Parmenides se sciop giddode ȝ
self be so as formerly Parmenides the poet sang and
cwð: Se ælmihtega God is eallra þinga reccend, ȝ he ana
said The almighty God is of-all things ruler and he alone
unanwendendlic wunað, ȝ ealra ðara anwendendlicra welt.
unchangeable dwells and all the changeable rules
Forðæm ðu ne þearft nauht swiþe wundrian ðeah we spyrien
Therefore thou not needest at-all greatly wonder though we inquire
æfter ðæm ðe we ongunnon, swa mid læs worda swa mid
after that which we began either with fewer words or with
ma, swæðer we hit gereccan magon. Ðeah we nu scylen
more whichever we it tell can Though we now should

manega ȝ mislica bisna ȝ bispell reccan, ðeah hangað ure
many and various examples and parables tell yet hangs our
mod ealne weg on þæm þe we æfterspyriað. Ne fo we no
mind all the-way on that which we after-inquire Not take we —
on ða bisna ȝ on ða bispel for ðara leasena spella lufan,
up the examples and up the parables for of-the false stories love
ac forðæmðe we woldon mid gebecnan þa soðfæstnesse,
but because we would with-them signify the truth
ȝ woldon ðæt hit wurde to nytte ðam geherendum.
and wished that it become to use to-the hearers

101.13 Ic gemunde nu ryhte þæs wisan Platones lara suma, hu
I remembered now just of-the wise Plato teachings some how
he cwæð ðæt te se mon se ðe bispell secgan wolde, ne
he said that — the man he who parable tell would not
sceolde fon on to ungelic bispell ðære spræce þe he ðonne
should take up too unlike parable to-the speech which he then
sprecan wolde. Ac geher nu geðyldelice hwæt ic nu sprecan
speak would But hear now patiently what I now speak
wille, ðeah hit þe gefyrn ær unnyt þuhte, hwæðer þe
will though it to-thee long before useless seemed whether to-thee
se ende a bet lician wille.
the end ever better please will

101.19 Ongon ða singan ȝ cwæð: Gesælig bið se mon þe mæg
(He)-began then to-sing and said Happy is the man who can
geseon þone hluttran æwellm þæs hehstan godes, ȝ of him
see the clear spring of-the highest good and from him
selfū aweorpan mæg þa þiostro his modes. We sculon get
self cast can the darkness of-his mind We shall yet
of ealdū leasū spellū ðe sū bispell reccan. Hit gelamp
from old false stories to-thee a-certain parable tell It happened
gio ðætte an hearpere wæs on ðære ðiode ðe Ðracia hatte,
formerly that a harper was in the nation which Thrace is-called

sio wæs on Creca rice; se hearpere wæs swiðe ungefræglice
which was in of-Greeks kingdom the harper was very unprecedentedly
good, ðæs nama wæs Orfeus; he hæfde an swiðe ænlic wif, sio
good whose name was Orpheus he had a very peerless wife who
wæs haten Eurudice. Ða ongon mon secgan be ðam hearpere
was called Eurydice Then began one to-say about the harper
þ he meahte hearpian þ se wudu wagode, ȝ þa stanas
that he could harp that the wood moved and the stones
hi styredon for ðy swege, ȝ wildu dior ðær woldon to
themselves stirred for the sound and wild beasts there would to
irnan ȝ stondan swilce hi tamu wæren, swa stille, ðeah him
run and stand as-if they tame were so still though them
men oððe hundas wið eoden, ðæt hi hi na ne onscunedon.
men or hounds against went that they them not — shunned
Ða sædon hi þ ðæs hearperes wif sceolde acwelan, ȝ hire
Then said they that of-the harper wife should die and her
saule mon sceolde lædan to helle. Ða sceolde se hearpere
soul one should lead to hell Then should the harper
weorðan swa sarig þ he ne meahte ongemong oðrum
become so sorrowful that he not could among other
monnum bion, ac teah to wuda, ȝ sæt on ðæm muntum
men be but went to wood and sat on the mountains
ægðer ge dæges ge nihtes; weop ȝ hearpode ðæt ða wudas
each both by-day and by-night wept and harped that the woods
bifedon ȝ þa ea stodon, ȝ nan heort ne onscunode nanne
trembled and the rivers stood and no hart — shunned any
leon, ne nan hara nænne hund, ne nan neat nyste nænne
lion nor any hare any hound nor any beast knew any
andan ne nænne ege to oðrum for ðære mergðe ðæs sones.
enmity nor any fear toward other for the mirth of-the sound

102.9 Ða ðæm hearpere ða ðuhte ðæt hine þa nanes ðinges ne
When to-the harper then seemed that him then of-no thing —
lyste on ðisse worulde, ða ðohte he ðæt he wolde gesecan
it-pleased in this world then thought he that he would seek
helle godu, ⁊ onginnan him oleccan mid his hearpan, ⁊
of-hell gods and begin them to-flatter with his harp and
biddan þ hi him ageafan eft his wif. Þa he ða ðider
ask that they to-him gave back his wife When he then thither
com, ða sceolde cuman ðære helle hund ongean hine, þæs
came then should come of-the hell hound toward him whose
nama wæs Ceruerus, se sceolde habban þrio heafdu; ⁊
name was Cerberus who should have three heads and
ongan onfægnian mid his steorte, ⁊ plegian wið hine for his
began to-fawn with his tail and to-play with him for his
hearpunga. Ða wæs ðær eac swiðe egeslic geatweard, ðæs nama
harping Then was there also very terrible gatekeeper whose name
sceolde bion Caron; se hæfde eac þrio heafdu, ⁊ se wæs
should be Charon who had also three heads and he was
swiðe oreald. Ða ongon se hearpere hine biddan þ he hine
very very-old Then began the harper him to-ask that he him
gemundbyrde ða hwile þe he ðær wære, ⁊ hine gesundne eft
protect the while that he there were and him sound again
ðonan brohte. Ða gehet he him ðæt, forðǣ he wæs oflyst
thence brought Then promised he him that because he was delighted
ðæs seldcuðan sones. Ða eode he furður, oð he gemette ða
with-the rare sound Then went he further until he met the
graman metena ðe folcisce men hatað Parcas, ða hi secgað
fierce fates whom common men call Parcae who they say
ðæt on nanum men nyton nane are, ac ælcū men wrecen be
that on no man know any mercy but each man punish by
his gewyrhtū; þa hi secgað ðæt walden ælces mannes wyrde.
his deeds who they say that rule of-each man fate

Đa ongon he biddan heora blisse; ða ongunnon hi wepan 102.25
Then began he to-ask their favor then began they to-weep
mid him. Đa eode he furður, ȝ him urnon ealle hellwaran
with him Then went he further and him ran all hell-dwellers
ongean, ȝ læddon hine to hiora cininge, ȝ ongunnon ealle
toward and led him to their king and began all
sprecan mid him ȝ biddan þæs ðe he bæd. ȝ þ unstille
to-speak with him and ask that which he asked and the unstill
hweol ðe Ixion wæs to gebunden Leuita cyning for his
wheel which Ixion was to bound of-the-Lapiths king for his
scylde, ðæt oðstod for his hearpunga. ȝ Tantulus se cyning
guilt that stood-still for his harping and Tantalus the king
ðe on ðisse worulde ungemetlice gifre wæs, ȝ him ðær
who in this world immoderately greedy was and him there
ðæt ilce yfel filgde ðære gifernesse, he gestilde. ȝ se ultor
the same evil followed of-the gluttony he stilled and the vulture
sceolde forlætan ðæt he ne slat ða lifre Sticces þæs cyninges
should forbear that he — tore the liver of-Tityus of-the king
ðe hine ær mid ðy witnode. ȝ eall hellwara witu
which him before with that punished and all of-hell-dwellers torments
gestildon ða hwile þe he beforan ðam cyninge hearpode.
were-stilled the while that he before the king harped
Đa he ða longe ȝ longe hearpode, ða cleopode se
When he then long and long harped then called the
hellwara cyning ȝ cwæð: Wutun agifan ðæm esne his wif,
of-hell-dwellers king and said Let-us give-back to-the fellow his wife
forðæm he hi hæfð geearnad mid his hearpunga. Bebead
because he her has earned with his harping (He)-commanded
him ða þ he geare wisse þ he hine næfre underbæc
him then that he well knew that he himself never backward

ne besawe, siððan he ðonanweard wære; ⁊ sæde gif he
— *looked after he thenceward were and said if he*
hine underbæc besawe þ he sceolde forlætan ðæt wif.
himself backward looked that he should lose the wife
103.9 Ac ða lufe mon mæg swiðe uneaðe oððe na forbeodan;
But the love one can very hardly or not forbid
weilawei, hwæt, Orpheus ða lædde his wif mid him oð
alas lo Orpheus then led his wife with him until
he com on þ gemære leohtes ⁊ ðiostro. Þa eode þ wif
he came to the boundary of-light and of-darkness Then went the wife
æfṫ him. Ða he furðum on ðæt leoht com, ða beseah he
after him When he just into the light came then looked he
hine underbæc wið ðæs wifes; ða losade hio him sona.
himself backward toward the wife then was-lost she to-him at-once
Ðas leasan spell lærað gehwylcne mon ðara ðe wilnað helle
These false stories teach every man of-those who desire of-hell
ðiostro to flionne ⁊ to ðæs soðan godes liohte to cumanne,
darkness to flee and to of-the true good light to come
þ he hine ne besio to his ealdan yflum, swa ðæt he hi
that he himself not look to his old evils so that he them
eft swa fullice fullfremme swa he hi ær dyde. Forðæm swa
again so fully perform as he them before did Because so
hwa swa mid fulle willan his mod went to ðǣ yflum ðe
who so with full will his mind turns to the evils which
he ær forlet, ⁊ hi ðonne fullfremeð, ⁊ hi him þonne
he before forsook and them then performs and they to-him then
fullice liciað, ⁊ he hi næfre forlætan ne þenceð, ðonne
fully please and he them never forsake — intends then
forlyst he eall his ærran good, buton he hit eft gebete. Her
loses he all his former good unless he it again amend Here
endað nu sio þridde boc Boeties, ⁊ onginneð sio fiorðe.
ends now the third book of-Boethius and begins the fourth

Boethius asks why a good God lets evil exist, and why the wicked are honored while wisdom lies despised like dung. Wisdom promises to give Boethius' mind wings and sings of a flight above the clouds and the fire, beside the sun among the stars, past icy Saturn and the highest heaven to the one King who holds the reins of heaven and earth. The good always have power and the wicked none, since all men seek the highest good but only the good seek it rightly, as a walker outgoes a man who creeps. The wicked, who forsake goodness, are nothing.

Đa se Wisdom ða ðis leoð swiðe lustbærlice ⁊ gesceadwislice 103.23
When — Wisdom then this song very joyfully and rationally
âsungen hæfde, ða hæfde ic ða giet hwylchwugu gemynd on
sung had then had I then still some memory in
minum mode ðære unrotnesse þe ic ær hæfde, ⁊ cwæð:
my mind of-the sadness which I before had and said
Eala Wisdom, ðu þe eart boda ⁊ forerynel ðæs soðan
O Wisdom thou who art messenger and forerunner of-the true
leohtes, hu wundorlic me ðincð þ ðæt þu me recst;
light how wonderful to-me seems that which thou to-me tellest
forðæm ic ongite þte eall ðæt þu me ær reahtes me reahte
because I perceive that all that thou to-me before toldest to-me told
God þurh ðe, ⁊ ic hit wisse eac ær be sumum dæle; ac
God through thee and I it knew also before by some part but
me hæfde þios unrotnes amerredne, þ ic hit hæfde mid ealle
me had this sadness hindered that I it had with all
forgiten. ⁊ þ is eac minre unrotnesse se mæsta dæl, þ ic
forgotten and that is also of-my sadness the greatest part that I
wundrige forhwy se gooda God lâte ænig yfel bion, oððe gif
wonder why the good God let any evil be or if
hit þeah bion scyle, ⁊ he hit geþafian wille, forhwy he hit
it yet be should and he it allow will why he it

þōn sona ne wrece. Hwæt, þu meaht ðe self ongitan þ ðæt
then at-once not punish Lo thou canst thee self perceive that that
is to wundrianne, ⁊ eac oðer ðincg me ðincð giet mare
is to wonder-at and also other thing to-me seems yet greater
wundor; þ is þte dysig ⁊ unrihtwisnes nu rixsað ofer eallne
wonder that is that folly and unrighteousness now reigns over all
middangeard, ⁊ se wisdom ⁊ eac oðre cræftas nabbað nan
middle-earth and the wisdom and also other virtues have-not any
lof ne nænne weorðscipe on ðisse worulde, ac licgað forsewene
praise nor any honor in this world but lie despised
swa swa miox under feltune; ⁊ yfele men on ælcum lande
so as dung under dunghill and evil men in each land
sindon nu weorþe ⁊ þa goodan habbað manigfeald witu.
are now honored and the good have manifold punishments
104.10 Hwa mæg forberan þ he þ ne siofige ⁊ swelcre wæfðe
Who can forbear that he that — lament and at-such spectacle
ne wundrige, ðæt te æfre swylc yfel geweorðan sceolde
— wonder that — ever such evil happen should
under ðæs ælmihtgan Godes anwalde, nu we witon þ he
under of-the almighty God power now we know that he
hit wat ⁊ ælc good wile?
it knows and each good wills
104.14 Ða cwæð he: Gif hit swa is swa ðu sægst, ðonne is þ
Then said he If it so is as thou sayest then is that
egeslicre ðonne ænig oðer broga, ⁊ is endeleas wundor,
more-terrible than any other horror and is endless wonder
ðæm gelicost ðe on sumes cyninges hirede sien gyldenu fatu
to-that likest as in of-some king household be golden vessels
⁊ selfrenu forsewen, ⁊ treowenu mon weorðige. Nis hit
and silver despised and wooden one honor Not-is it
no swa swa ðu wenst; ac gif ðu eall ðæt gemunan wilt
— so as thou thinkest but if thou all that remember wilt

þ we ær spræcon, mid ðæs Godes fultume ðe we nu
which we before spoke with of-that God help whom we now
embe sprecað, ðonne meaht ðu ongitan þ ða gôdan beoð
about speak then canst thou perceive that the good are
symle waldende, ⁊ þa yfelan nabbað nænne anwald; ⁊ ðæt
ever powerful and the evil have-not any power and that
þa cræftas ne bioð næfre buton heringe ne buton edleane, ne
the virtues not are ever without praise nor without reward nor
þa unðeawas næfre ne bioð unwitnode, ac ða goodan bioð
the vices ever — are unpunished but the good are
symle gesælie, ⁊ þa yfelan ungesælige. Ic ðe mæg eowian
ever happy and the evil unhappy I to-thee can show
ðæs swiðe manega bisena, ða ðe magon getrymian to ðon
of-that very many examples which thee can strengthen to that
ðæt þu nast hwæt þu leng siofige. Ac ic þe wille nu
that thou not-knowest why thou longer lament But I to-thee will now
giet getæcan ðone weg ðe ðe gelæt to þære heofonlican
yet teach the way which thee leads to the heavenly
byrig þe ðu ær of come, siððan ðu ongitst þurh mine
city which thou before from camest after thou perceivest through my
lare hwæt sio soðe gesælð bið, ⁊ hwær hio bið. Ac ic
teaching what the true felicity is and where it is But I
sceal ærest ðin mod gefeðeran, ðæt hit mæge hit ðe yð up
shall first thy mind feather that it can itself the easier up
ahebban ær ðon hit fleogan onginne on ða heanesse, þ hit
raise before that it fly begin into the height that it
mæge hal ⁊ orsorh fleogan to his earde, ⁊ forlætan ælce
can whole and secure fly to its home and forsake each
ðara gedrefednessa ðe hit nu ðrowað. Sitte him on minū
of-the troubles which it now suffers Let-sit itself in my
hrædwæne; ðocrige him on minne weg; ic bio his ladðeow.
chariot let-run itself on my way I am its guide

105.3 Ða se Wisdom ða þis spell areaht hæfde, ða ongon
When — Wisdom then this discourse told had then began
he singan ⁊ cwæð: Ic hæbbe swiðe swifte feþera, þ ic
he to-sing and said I have very swift feathers that I
mæg fliogan ofer þone hean hrof þæs heofones. Ac þær
can fly over the high roof of-the heaven But if
ic nu moste þin mod gefiðerigan mid þā fiðerū, þ ðu
I now might thy mind feather with the feathers that thou
mihtest mid me fliogan, þōn miht þu ofersion ealle þas
couldst with me fly then couldst thou survey all these
eorðlican þing. Gif þu mihtest þe fligon ofer þā rodore,
earthly things If thou couldst thyself fly over the firmament
þōn mihtest þu gesion þa wolcnu under þe, ⁊ mihtest
then couldst thou see the clouds under thee and couldst
þe fliogan ofer þā fyre þe is betwux þā rodore ⁊
thyself fly over the fire which is between the firmament and
þære lyfte; ⁊ mihtest þe feran mid þære sunnan betwyx
the air and couldst thyself go with the sun among
þā tunglū, ⁊ þonon weorþan on þā rodore, ⁊ síððan
the stars and thence come into the firmament and afterward
to þā cealdan stiorran þe we hatað Saturnes steorra. Se is
to the cold star which we call of-Saturn star It is
eall isig; se wandrað ofer oðrū steorrū ufor þōn ænig oðer
all icy it wanders over other stars higher than any other
tungol. Siððon þu þōn forð ofer þone bist aferod, þōn bist
star After thou then forth over that art carried then art
þu bufan þā swiftan rodore, ⁊ lætst þōn behindan þe þone
thou above the swift firmament and leavest then behind thee the
hehstan heofon. Siððan þu miht habban þinne dæl þæs
highest heaven Afterward thou canst have thy share of-the
soðan leohtes. Þær ricsað an cyning; se hæfð anweald eallra
true light There reigns one king who has power of-all

oðra cyninga; se gemetgað þone bridel ⁊ þ gewealdleþer
other kings who moderates the bridle and the bridle-rein
ealles ymbhweorftes hiofenes ⁊ eorþan; se an dema is,
of-all circuit of-heaven and of-earth who one judge is
gestæððig ⁊ beorht; se stiorð þā hrædwæne eallra gesceafta.
steadfast and bright who steers the chariot of-all creatures
Ac gif þu æfre cymst on þone weg ⁊ to þære stowe 105.20
But if thou ever comest onto the way and to the place
þe ðu nu geot forgiten hafst, þōn wilt ðu cweþan: Þis
which thou now still forgotten hast then wilt thou say This
is min riht eðel; hionan ic was ær cumen, ⁊ hionan
is my right homeland hence I was before come and hence
ic was acenned; her ic wille nu standan fæste; nelle ic
I was born here I will now stand fast will-not I
nu næfre hionon. Ic wat þeah, gif þe æfre gewyrð þ
now ever hence I know yet if to-thee ever happens that
ðu wilt oððe most eft fandian þara þiostra þisse worulde,
thou wilt or must again try the darkness of-this world
þōn gesihst þu nu þa unrihtwisan cyningas ⁊ ealle þa
then seest thou now the unrighteous kings and all the
ofermodan rican bion swiðe unmihtige ⁊ swiðe earme
proud powerful be very powerless and very wretched
wreccan, þa ilcan þe þis earme folc nu heardost ondræt.
exiles the same whom this wretched people now hardest dreads
Ða cwæð ic: Eala, Wisdom, micel is ðæt ⁊ wundorlic þ 105.29
Then said I O Wisdom great is that and wonderful which
ðu gehætst, ⁊ ic eac nauht ne tweoge ðæt ðu hit mæge
thou promisest and I also not-at-all — doubt that thou it can
gelæstan. Ac ic þe halsige ðæt ðu me no leng ne lette,
perform But I thee beseech that thou me not longer — hinder
ac getæc me þone weg; forðæm þu meaht ongitan þ me
but teach me the way because thou canst perceive that me

lyst ðæs weges. Ða cwæð he: Þu scealt ærest ongitan þ
it-pleases of-the way Then said he Thou shalt first perceive that
ða goodan habbað symle anweald, ⁊ þa yfelan næfre nanne,
the good have ever power and the evil never any
ne nænne cræft; forðæm hiora nan ne ongit þte good ⁊
nor any virtue because of-them none — perceives that good and
yfel bioð symle gewinnan. Gif ða goodan ðonne sȳle habbað
evil are ever enemies If the good then ever have
anwald, þonne nabbað þa yflan næfre nænne; forðæm þ good
power then have-not the evil ever any because the good
⁊ þ yfel sint swiðe unsamwræde. Ac ic ðe wolde giet be
and the evil are very discordant But I to-thee would yet about
ægðrū ðara hwæthwugu sweotolor gereccan, þ ðu mæge ðy
each of-them somewhat more-clearly tell that thou can the
bet gelefan ðe ic ðe oðre hwile recce be ðæm oðrum,
better believe which I to-thee one while tell about the one
oðre hwile be ðæm oðrū. Twa ðing sindon ðe ælces
other while about the other Two things are which of-each
monnes ingeðonc to fundað, þ is ðonne willa ⁊ anwald; gif
man thought to hastens that is then will and power if
ðonne hwæm ðara twega hwæðres wana bið, þonne ne mæg
then to-anyone of-the two of-either lack is then not can
he mid ðæm oðrū nanwuht fullfremman. Forðæm nan nyle
he with the other anything accomplish Because none will
onginnan þ þ he nyle, buton he nede scyle; ⁊ ðeah
begin that which he will-not unless he of-necessity must and though
he eall wille, he ne mæg, gif he ðæs ðinges anwald næfð.
he all will he not can if he of-the thing power has-not
106.15 Be ðæm ðu meaht sweotole ongitan, gif ðu ænigne mon
By that thou canst clearly perceive if thou any man
gesihst wilnian ðæs ðe he næfð, ðæt þā bið anwaldes wana.
seest desire that which he has-not that to-him is of-power lack

Đa cwæð ic: Þ is soð; ne mæg ic þæs oðsacan. Đa cwæð
Then said I That is true not can I that deny Then said
he: Gif ðu ðonne hwone gesihst ðe mæg don þ þ he don
he If thou then anyone seest who can do that which he do
wile, ne ðe ðonne nauht ne tweoð þ se hæbbe anwald. Đa
will not thee then at-all — it-doubts that he have power Then
cwæð ic: Ne tweoð me ðæs nauht. Đa cwæð he: Ælc mon
said I Not it-doubts me of-that at-all Then said he Each man
bið waldend ðæs ðe he welt; næfð he nanne anweald þæs
is ruler of-that which he rules has-not he any power of-that
ðe he ne welt. Đa cwæð ic: Þæs ic eom geðafa. Đa cwæð
which he not rules Then said I Of-that I am consenting Then said
he: Hwæðer þu nu giet mæge gemunan þ ic ðe ær
he Whether thou now still can remember what I to-thee before
reahte; þ wæs þte ælces monnes ingeðanc wilnað to þære
told that was that of-each man thought desires to the
soðan gesælðe to cumanne, ðeah hi ungelice hiora earnien.
true felicity to come though they differently them earn
Đa cwæð ic: Þ ic geman; genog sweotole me is ðæt gesæd.
Then said I That I remember enough clearly to-me is that said
Đa cwæð he: Gemunst ðu þ ic ðe ær sæde þ hit
Then said he Rememberest thou that I to-thee before said that it
wære eall an good ⁊ gesælða; se þe gesælða secð, he secð
were all one good and felicities he who felicities seeks he seeks
good. Đa cwæð ic: Þ ic hæbbe genog fæste on gemynde.
good Then said I That I have enough fast in memory
Đa cwæð he: Ealle men ge goode ge yfele wilniað to 106.30
Then said he All men both good and evil desire to
cumanne to goode, þeah hi his mislice wilnien. Đa cwæð
come to good though they it variously desire Then said
ic: Þ is soð þ þu sægst. Đa cwæð he: Genog sweotol þ
I That is true that thou sayest Then said he Enough clear that

is ðæt te forðy sint gôde men goode, ðe hi gôd gemetað.
is that — therefore are good men good because they good find
Ða cwæð ic: Genog open hit is. Ða cwæð he: Þa goodan
Then said I Enough open it is Then said he The good
begitað þ good þ hi wilniað. Ða cwæð ic: Swa me ðyncð.
obtain the good which they desire Then said I So to-me it-seems
Ða cwæð he: Þa yfelan næron na yfele gif hi gemetten ðæt
Then said he The evil not-were — evil if they found the
good ðæt hi wilniað; ac forðy hi sint yfle þe hi hit ne
good which they desire but therefore they are evil because they it not
metað, ȝ forðy hi hit ne metað ðe hi hit on riht ne
find and therefore they it not find because they it in right not
secað. Ða cwæð ic: Swa hit is swa ðu sægst. Ða cwæð he:
seek Then said I So it is as thou sayest Then said he
Forðæm hit is nan tweo þ ta goodan beoð sȳle waldende,
Therefore it is no doubt that the good are ever powerful
ȝ þa yflan nabbað nænne anwald; forðy ða goodan ðæt gôd
and the evil have-not any power because the good the good
on riht secað, ȝ ða yflan on woh. Ða cwæð ic: Se ðe
in right seek and the evil in wrong Then said I He who
ne wenð þ ðis soð sie, ðonne ne gelyfð he nanes soðes.
not thinks that this true be then not believes he any truth
107.11 Ða cwæð he: Hwæðer wenstu nu? gif twegen men fundiað
Then said he Whether thinkest-thou now if two men hasten
to anre stowe, ȝ habbað emnmicelne willan to to cumenne,
to one place and have equal will thereto to come
ȝ oðer hæfð his fota anweald þ he mæg gan ðær he wile,
and one has of-his feet power that he can go where he will
swa swa eallum monnum gecynde wære þ hi meahten, oðer
so as to-all men natural were that they could other
næfð his fota geweald þ he mæge gan, ȝ wilnað ðeah to
has-not of-his feet control that he can go and desires yet to

feranne, ⁊ onginð creopan on þone ilcan weg; hwæðer ðara
go and begins to-creep on the same way which of-the
twega þincð ðe mehtigra? Ða cwæð ic: Nis þ gelic;
two seems to-thee mightier Then said I Not-is that alike
se bið mehtigra se ðe gæð þonne se ðe criepð, forðæm he
he is mightier he who goes than he who creeps because he
mæg cuman eð ðider ðe he wile þonne se oðer; saga elles
can come easily thither where he will than the other say else
þ ðu wille, ðæt wat ælc mon. Ða cwæð he: Swa ilce
what thou wilt that knows each man Then said he So same
bið ðæm goodum ⁊ ðæm yflum; ægþer heora wilnað for
is with-the good and with-the evil each of-them desires for
gecynde þ he cume to ðæm hehstan goode. Ac se gooda
nature that he come to the highest good But the good
mæg cuman ðider he wilnað, forðæm he his on riht wilnað,
can come whither he desires because he it in right desires
⁊ se yfla ne mæg cuman to ðæm þe he wilnað, forðæm
and the evil not can come to that which he desires because
hi hit on wog secað. Ic nat ðeah þe elles hwæt ðince.
they it in wrong seek I not-know whether to-thee else what seem
Ða cwæð ic: Ne ðincð me nauht oðres of ðinum spellū.
Then said I Not seems to-me at-all otherwise from thy discourse
Þa cwæð he: Genog rihte ðu hit ongitst, ⁊ þ is eac 107.27
Then said he Enough rightly thou it perceivest and that is also
tacn þinre hælo; swa swa læca gewuna is þ hi cweðað
token of-thy health so as of-physicians habit is that they say
ðonne hi siocne mon gesioð, gif hi hwilc ungefæglic tacn
when they sick man see if they any not-fatal token
on him gesioð. Me ðincð nu þ þin gecynd ⁊ ðin
in him see To-me seems now that thy nature and thy
gewuna flite swiðe swiðlice wið ðæm dysige.
habit strive very vigorously against the folly

107.32 Ic hæbbe nu ongiten þ ðu eart gearo to ongitanne mina lara;
I have now perceived that thou art ready to perceive my teachings
forðy ic ðe wolde gegaderian manigu spell ⁊ manega bisna
therefore I to-thee would gather many discourses and many examples
be ðæm þ ðu meahte ðy eð ongitan hwæt ic secgan wille.
by which that thou couldst the easier perceive what I say will
Ongit nu hu unmehtige þa yflan men bioð, nu hi ne magon
Perceive now how powerless the evil men are now they not can
cuman ðider ðider ða ungewittigan gesceafta wilniað to to
come thither whither the unreasoning creatures desire thereto to
cumanne; ⁊ hu micle unmihtegran hi wæren gif hi his nan
come and how much more-powerless they were if they of-it no
gecynde næfden. Beheald nu mid hu hefigre racentan dysiges
nature had Behold now with how heavy chain of-folly
⁊ ungesælða hi sint gebundene. Hwæt, þa cild, ðonne hi
and of-unhappinesses they are bound Lo the children when they
furðum gan magon, ⁊ eac ða ealdan ceorlas, þa hwile þe hi
just go can and also the old men the while that they
gan magon, wilniað sumes weorðscipes ⁊ sumre mærðe. Ða
go can desire some honor and some glory The
cild ridað on hiora stafum ⁊ manigfealde plegan plegiað
children ride on their sticks and manifold games play
ðær hi hyriað ealdum monnū. ⁊ ða dysegan nanwuht nellað
where they imitate old men and the foolish nothing will
onginnan ðæs ðe hi him awðer mægen to wenan oððe lofes
begin of-that which they it either can from expect or of-praise
oððe leana, ac doð þ wyrse is; irnað hidres ðidres dwoligende
or of-rewards but do what worse is run hither thither erring
under þæm hrofe eallra gesceafta; ⁊ þte ða ungewittegan
under the roof of-all creatures and what the unreasoning
gesceafta witon, þ niton ða dysegan men. Forðy sint þa
creatures know that know-not the foolish men Therefore are the

cræftas beteran ðonne þa unðeawas, forðæmþe ælc mon sceal
virtues better than the vices because each man shall
bion geþafa, sam he wille sam he nylle, þ se sie anwaldegost
be consenting whether he will or he will-not that he be most-powerful
ðe mæg becuman to þā hehstā hrofe eallra gesceafta, þ
who can come to the highest roof of-all creatures that
is God; þā nis nanwuht beufan ne nanwuht benyþan
is God to-whom not-is anything above nor anything beneath
ne ymbutan, ac ealle þing sint binnan him on his anwalde.
nor around but all things are within him in his power
Se God is swiðe to lufianne. Hu ne cwæde þu ær þ se 108.21
— God is greatly to love How not saidst thou before that he
wære an feðe mihtigost se þe meahte gan þeah he wolde
were on foot mightiest he who could go if he would
oð ðisse eorþan ende, swa þte nan dæl þisse eorþan ofer
to of-this earth end so that no part of-this earth beyond
þ nære? þ ilce þu meaht geðencan be Gode, swa swa
that were the same thou canst consider about God so as
we ær cwædon, þ se bið meahtegost þe to him cuman
we before said that he is mightiest who to him come
mæg, forðæm he nohwider ofer þ cuman ne mæg.
can because he nowhither beyond that come — can
Be eallū ðissū racū þu meaht ongitan þ ða goodan bioð 108.27
By all these arguments thou canst perceive that the good are
simle mihtige, ȝ ða yflan beoð ælces mægnes ȝ ælces cræftes
ever mighty and the evil are of-every might and of-every virtue
bedælde. Hwy wenstu ðonne þ hi forlæten ða cræftas ȝ
bereft Why thinkest-thou then that they forsake the virtues and
folgien ðæm unðeawum? Ic wene ðeah þ ðu wille secgan þ
follow the vices I think yet that thou wilt say that
hit sie for dysige þ hi hi ne cunnen tocnawan. Ac hwæt
it be for folly that they them not can distinguish But what

sægst ðu þonne þ sie forcuðre þonne sio ungesceadwisnes?
sayest thou then that be baser than the irrationality
hwy geðafiað hi ðæt hi bioð dysige? hwy nyllað hy spyrian
why consent they that they are foolish why will-not they inquire
æfter cræftum ⁊ æfter wisdome? Ic wat þeah ðæt swongornes
after virtues and after wisdom I know yet that sloth
hi ofsit ⁊ hi mid slæwðe ofercymð, ⁊ gitsung hi
them oppresses and them with sluggishness overcomes and avarice them
ablent. Wit cwædon þeah ær þ nanwuht nære wyrse
blinds We-two said yet before that nothing were worse
þonne ungesceadwisnes. Ac hwæt willað wit nu cweðan,
than irrationality But what will we-two now say
gif þa gesceadwisan habbað unðeawas ⁊ nyllað spyrian æfter
if the rational have vices and will-not inquire after
wisdome ⁊ æfter cræftum? Ic wat þeah þ ðu wilt cweðan
wisdom and after virtues I know yet that thou wilt say
þ wrænnes ⁊ ungemetfæstnes hi ofsitte; ac hwæt is þonne
that lust and immoderation them oppress but what is then
unstrengra ðonne se mon þe bið to ungemetlice oferswiðed
weaker than the man who is too immoderately overcome
mid ðæm tedran flæsce, buton he eft geswice ⁊ winne wið
with the frail flesh unless he again desist and strive against
þa unðeawas swa he swiðost mæge? Ac hwæt wilt ðu þonne
the vices as he most can But what wilt thou then
cweðan, gif hwa nanwuht nyle wið winnan, ac mid fulle willan
say if anyone nothing will against strive but with full will
forlæt ælc good ⁊ fulgæð ðæm yfle, ⁊ bið ðeah gesceadwis?
forsakes each good and follows the evil and is yet rational
109.15 Ic secge sie unmehtig ⁊ eac ealles nauht; forðæm swa
I say (he)-be powerless and also altogether naught because so
hwa swa ðone gemænan God eallra goda forlæt, buton
who so the common God of-all goods forsakes without

tweonne ne bið se nauht. Ac hwa swa willnað þ he cræftig
doubt not is he aught But who so desires that he virtuous
sie, he wilnað þ he wis sie; swa hwa swa ðonne cræftig
be he desires that he wise be so who so then virtuous
bið, he bið wis, ⁊ se ðe wis bið, he bið good; se þe þonne
is he is wise and he who wise is he is good he who then
good bið, se bið gesælig, ⁊ se ðe gesælig bið, se bið eadig,
good is he is happy and he who happy is he is blessed
⁊ se þe eadig bið, se bið god, be ðæm dæle ðe we ær
and he who blessed is he is god by the part which we before
reahton on ðisse ilcan bec. Ac ic wene nu hwonne þ dysige
told in this same book But I expect now when the foolish
men willen wundrian þæs ðe ic ær sæde; ðæt wæs ðætte
men will wonder at-that which I before said that was that
yfle men næren nauhtas, forðæm þe ðara is ma þonne
evil men were-not aught because that of-them is more than
þara oðra. Ac ðeah hi his nu næfre ne gelefen, ðeah hit is
of-the others But though they it now never — believe yet it is
swa; ne magon we næfre gereccan ðone yflan mon clænne
so not can we ever reckon the evil man pure
⁊ untwifealdne, ðon ma ðe we magon hatan oððe habban
and single the more than we can call or hold
deadne mon for cwucone; ne bið se cwuca ðonne nyttra ðe
dead man for living not is the living then more-useful than
se deada, gif him his yfel ne hreowð; ac se þe ungereclice
the dead if to-him his evil not repents but he who disorderly
liofað ⁊ his gecynd nyle healdan, ne bið se nauht.
lives and his nature will-not keep not is he aught
Ic wene þeah þ ðu wille cweðan þ hit ne sie ealles swa 109.32
I think yet that thou wilt say that it not be altogether so
gelic, ðæt se yfla mæge don yfel ðeah he good ne mæge, ⁊
alike that the evil can do evil though he good not can and

se deada ne mæge nauðer don; ac ic ðe secge þ se anwald
the dead not can either do but I to-thee say that the power
ðara yflena ne cymð of nanum cræfte, ac of unðeawum;
of-the evil not comes from any virtue but from vices
ac gif ða yflan symle goode wæren, þonne ne dyden hi nan
but if the evil ever good were then not did they any
yfel. Ne bioð ðæt nane mehta þ mon mæge yfel don, ac
evil Not are those any powers that one can evil do but
bioð unmeahta; gif þ soð is þ we ær gefyrn reahton, þ
are weaknesses if that true is which we before long-ago told that
þ yfel nauht ne sie, ðonne ne wyrcð se nauht, se ðe yfel
the evil naught — be then not works he aught he who evil
wyrcð. Ða cwæð ic: Genog soð þ is þ ðu sægst. Ða
works Then said I Enough true that is which thou sayest Then
cwæð he: Hu ne reahton we ær þ nanwuht nære mehtigra
said he How not told we before that nothing were mightier
ðonne þ hehste good? Ða cwð ic: Swa hit is swa ðu sægst.
than the highest good Then said I So it is as thou sayest
Ða cwæð he: Ne hit þeah ne mæg nan yfel don. Ða cwæð
Then said he Nor it yet — can any evil do Then said
ic: Ðæt is soð. Ða cwð he: Hwæðer æni mon wene þ ænig
I That is true Then said he Whether any man think that any
mon sie swa meahtig þ he mæge don eall ðæt ðæt he wille?
man be so mighty that he can do all that which he will
110.13 Ða cwæð ic: Ne wenð ðæs nan mon þe his gewit hæfð.
Then said I Not thinks that any man who his wits has
Ða cwæð he: Hwæt, yfle men magon ðeah yfel don. Ða
Then said he Lo evil men can yet evil do Then
cwæð ic: Eala, ðær hi ne meahton. Ða cwæð he: Hit is
said I O if they not could Then said he It is
sweotol þ hi magon don yfel, ⁊ ne magon nan good; þ
clear that they can do evil and not can any good that

is forðæmþe þ yfel nis nauht; ac þa goodan, gif hi fulne
is because the evil not-is aught but the good if they full
anwald habbað, hi magon don to goode þ þ hi willað.
power have they can do for good that which they will
Forðy is se fulla anwald to tellanne to ðæm hehstum
Therefore is the full power to reckon among the highest
goodum, forðæm ægþer ge se anwald ge þa oðru good ⁊
goods because each both the power and the other goods and
ða cræftas ðe we longe ær nemdon sindon fæste on ðæm
the virtues which we long before named are fixed in the
hehstan goode. Swa swa ælces huses wah bið fæst ægðer ge
highest good So as of-each house wall is fixed each both
on ðære flore ge on ðæm hrofe, swa bið ælc good on Gode
in the floor and in the roof so is each good in God
fæst; forðæm he is ælces gôdes ægðer ge hrof ge flor. Ðy
fixed because he is of-each good each both roof and floor Therefore
is â to wilnianne þæs anwaldes þ mon mæge good don;
is ever to desire the power that one can good do
forðæm ðæt is se betsta anwald þ mon mæge ⁊ wille wel
because that is the best power that one can and will well
don, swa læssan spedum swa maran, swæðer he hæbbe.
do so with-less means so with-greater whichever he have
Forðæm swa hwa swa wilnað good to donne, he wilnað good 110.28
Because so who so desires good to do he desires good
to habbanne ⁊ mid goode to bionne. Forðy is se Platones
to have and with good to be Therefore is the of-Plato
cwide genog soð þe he cwæð: Ða wisan ane magon don to
saying enough true which he said The wise alone can do for
goode þ hi wilniað; ða yflan magon onginnan þ hi willað.
good what they desire the evil can begin what they will
Ic nat nu ðeah ðu wille cweðan þ þa goodan onginnen
I not-know now whether thou wilt say that the good begin

hwilū þ hi ne magon forðbrengan; ac ic cweðe þ hi hit
at-times what they not can bring-forth but I say that they it
bringað symle forð; ðeah hi ðæt weorc ne mægen fullfremman,
bring ever forth though they the work not can accomplish
hi habbað ðeah fullne willan, ⁊ se untweofealda willa bið to
they have yet full will and the undivided will is to
tellanne for fullfremed weorc. Forðæm he næfre ne forlist ðæm
reckon as accomplished work Because he never — loses the
leanum oððe her oððe ðær oððe ægðer. Þeah willað ða yflan
rewards either here or there or both Though will the evil
wircan þ þ hi lyst, ðeah hit nyt ne sie; ne forleosað
work that which them it-pleases though it useful not be not lose
hi eac ðone willan, ac habbaþ his wite oððe her oððe
they also the will but have its punishment either here or
elleshwær oððe ægðer; se yfla willa to donne hiora welt. Forðy
elsewhere or both the evil will to do them rules Therefore
hi ne magon begitan þ good þ hi wilniað, forðy hi hit
they not can obtain the good which they desire because they it
ðurg ðone willan secað, nales þurg rihtne weg. Se yfla willa
through the will seek not-at-all through right way The evil will
næfð nænne geferscipe wið þa gesælða. Ða se Wisdom ða ðis
has-not any fellowship with the felicities When — Wisdom then this
spell areaht hæfde, ða ongan he eft singan ⁊ þus cwæð:
discourse told had then began he again to-sing and thus said

Wisdom sings of proud kings on high seats among armed thanes, who stripped of their clothes and followers would be very like one of their own thanes, if not baser, and who are captive to their own vices. The good never lack the reward of their goodness, and though only one runner won the crown the Romans hung at a race's end, the highest good is set for all men. The wicked carry their punishment in their wickedness and sink below human nature, so that the greedy man is a wolf, the crafty a fox, and the lustful a swine.

Geher nu an spell be þā ofermodū ȝ þam unrihtwisū 111.12
Hear now a discourse about the proud and the unrighteous
cyningū. Þa we gesioð sittan on þā hehstan heahsetlū; þa
kings Whom we see sit on the highest high-seats who
scinað on manegra cynna hræglū, ȝ beoð uton ymbstandene
shine in of-many kinds garments and are outside surrounded
mid miclon geferscipe hiora þegna; ȝ þa bioð mid fetlum
with great company of-their thanes and they are with belts
ȝ mid gyldenū hyltsweordū ȝ mid manigfealdū heregeatwū
and with golden hilted-swords and with manifold war-gear
gehyrste, ȝ þreatiað eal moncynn mid hiora þrymme. ȝ se
adorned and threaten all mankind with their majesty and he
þe hiora welt ne myrnð nauþer ne friend ne fiend þe ma þe
who them rules not cares either — friends or enemies the more than
wedende hund, ac bioð swiðe ungefræglice up ahafen on his
raging hound but is very extraordinarily up lifted in his
mode for þā ungemetlican anwealde. Ac gif him mon þōn awint
mind for the immoderate power But if him one then strips
of þa claþas, ȝ him oftihð þara þenunga ȝ þæs anwealdes,
off the clothes and him deprives of-the services and of-the power
þōn miht þu geseon þ he bioð swiðe anlic þara his þegna
then canst thou see that he is very like of-the his thanes

sumū þe hī þar þeniað, buton he forcuðra sie. ȝ gif him
to-some who him there serve unless he baser be and if to-him
nu weas gebyreð þ him wyrð sume hwile þara þenunga
now by-chance happens that from-him becomes some while of-the services
oftohen, ȝ þara claþa, ȝ þas anwealdes, þōn þincð him þ
withdrawn and of-the clothes and of-the power then seems to-him that
he sie on carcerne gebroht, oððe on racentū. Forþā of þā
he be into prison brought or into chains Because from the
unmætan ȝ þam ungemetlican gegerelan, of þā swetmettū
excessive and the immoderate apparel from the dainties
ȝ of mistlicū dryncū þæs liþes onwæcnað sio wode þrag
and from various drinks of-the liquor awakens the mad fit
þære wrænnesse, ȝ gedrefð hiora mod swiðe swiðlice.
of-the lust and troubles their mind very violently
111.29 Þōn weaxað eac þa ofermetta ȝ ungeþwærnes; ȝ þōn hi
Then grow also the pride and discord and when they
weorðað gebolgen, þonne wyrð þ mod beswungen mid þā
become angered then becomes the mind scourged with the
welme þære hatheortnesse, oððæt hi weorþað geræpte mid
heat of-the wrath until they become bound with
þære unrotnesse, ȝ swa gehæfte. Siððan þ þōn gedon
the sadness and so captive After that then done
bið, ðonne onginð him leogan se tohopa þære wræce, ȝ
is then begins to-him lie the hope of-the revenge and
swa hwæs swa his irsung wilnað, þōn gehet him þæs his
so of-what so his anger desires then promises him that his
reccelest. Ic þe sæde gefyrn ær on þisse ilcan bec þ
recklessness I to-thee said long before in this same book that
ealle gesceafta willnodon sumes godes for gecynde; ac þa
all creatures desired some good for nature but the
unrihtwisan cyngas ne magon nan god don, forþā ic þe
unrighteous kings not can any good do for-what I to-thee

nu sæde. Nis þ nan wundor, forþā hi hi underþiodað
now said Not-is that any wonder because they themselves subject
eallū þā unþeawum þe ic þe ær nemde. Sceal
to-all the vices which I to-thee before named Shall-(go)
ðonne nede to þara hlaforda dome þe he hine ær
then of-necessity to of-the lords judgment whom he himself before
underþeodde, ȝ þte wyrse is, þ he hī nyle furðū wið
subjected and what worse is that he them will-not even against
winnan. Þær he hit a anginnan wolde, ȝ þōn on þam
strive If he it ever begin would and then in the
gewinne þurhwunian ne mihte, þōn næfde he his nane scylde.
strife persist not could then had-not he of-it any guilt
Ða se Wisdom ða ðis leoð asungen hæfde, þa ongon he 112.12
When — Wisdom then this song sung had then began he
eft spellian ȝ þus cwæð: Gesihst þu nu on hu miclum ȝ
again to-discourse and thus said Seest thou now in how great and
on hu diopum ȝ on hu þiostrum horoseaðe þara unðeawa
in how deep and in how dark filth-pit of-the vices
ða yfelwillendan sticiað, ȝ hu ða goodan scinað beorhtor
the evil-willing stick and how the good shine brighter
þonne sunne? Forðæm þa goodan næfre ne beoð bedælde þara
than sun Because the good never — are deprived of-the
edleana hiora goodes, ne ða yflan næfre þara wita ðe hi
rewards of-their good nor the evil ever of-the punishments which they
geearnigað. Ælc ðing ðe on þisse worulde gedon bið hæfð
earn Each thing which in this world done is has
edlean; wyrce hwa þ ðæt he wyrce, oððe do þ he do,
reward let-work anyone that which he work or let-do what he do
a he hæfð þ þ he geearnað. Nis þ eac nauht unriht;
ever he has that which he earns Not-is that also at-all wrong
swa swa gio Romana þeaw wæs, ȝ giet is on manegum
so as formerly of-Romans custom was and still is among many

þiodum, þ mon hehð ænne heafodbeag gyldenne æt sumes
peoples that one hangs a crown golden at of-some
ærneweges ende; færð ðonne micel folc to, ⁊ yrnað ealle
race-course end goes then great people to and run all
endemes, ða ðe hiora ærninge trewað. ⁊ swa hwelc swa ærest
together those who their running trust and so which so first
to þæm beage cymð, þonne mot se hine habban him. Ælc
to the crown comes then may he it have for-himself Each
wilnað þ he scyle ærest to cuman ⁊ hine habban, ac anum
desires that he should first to come and it have but to-one
he þeah gebyreð. Swa deð eall moncyn on ðis andweardan
it yet falls So does all mankind in this present
life; irnað ⁊ onettað ⁊ wilniað ealle þæs hehstan goodes; ac
life run and hasten and desire all the highest good but
hit nis nanum anum men getiohhod, ac is eallum monnū.
it not-is for-any one man appointed but is for-all men
112.30 Forðæm is ælcū ðearf þ he higie ealle mægene æfter ðære
Therefore is to-each need that he strive with-all strength after the
mede; ðære mede ne wyrð næfre nan good man bedæled.
reward of-the reward not becomes ever any good man deprived
Ne mæg hine mon no mid rihte hatan se gooda, gif he bið
Not can him one — with right call the good if he is
ðæs hehstan goodes bedæled, forðæm nan good ðeaw ne bið
of-the highest good deprived because no good way — is
buton goodū edleanū. Dôn þa yflan þ þ hi don, sȳle bið
without good rewards Let-do the evil that which they do ever is
se beag goodes edleanes ðæm godū gehealden on ecnesse. Ne
the crown of-good reward for-the good kept in eternity Not
mæg þara yflena yfel þa goodan beniman heora goodes ⁊
can of-the evil evil the good deprive of-their good and
hiora wlites; ac gif hi ðæt good buton him selfum hæfden,
of-their beauty but if they the good outside them selves had

ðonne meahte hi mon his beniman, oðer twega, oððe se
then could them one of-it deprive one of-two either he
þe hit ær sealde, oððe oðer mon. Ac ðonne forlyst good
who it before gave or another man But then loses good
man his leanū ðonne he his good forlæt. Ongit nu þte
man his rewards when he his good forsakes Perceive now that
ælcum men his agen good gifð good edlean, þ good þte
to-each man his own good gives good reward that good which
oninnan him selfū bið. Hwa wisra manna wile cweðan þ
within him self is Who of-wise men will say that
ænig god man sie bedæled þæs hehstan goodes, forðæm
any good man be deprived of-the highest good because
he sȳle æfter þæm swincð? Ac gemun ðu sȳle þæs miclan
he ever after it toils But remember thou ever the great
ȝ þæs fægran edleanes, forðæm þ edlean is ofer eal oðru
and the fair reward because that reward is above all other
lean to lufianne; ȝ do ðæs lean to ðæm forsprecenan
rewards to love and add that reward to the aforesaid
goodū þe ic þe ær tealde on þære þriddan bec.
goods which I to-thee before recounted in the third book
Þonne hi þonne gegaderudu bioð, ðonne meaht þu þōn 113.16
When they then gathered are then canst thou then
ongitan þ ða gesælða ȝ þ hehste good bið eall an, ȝ
perceive that the felicities and the highest good is all one and
þ bið God. ȝ þonne þu meaht eac ongitan þ ælc good
that is God and then thou canst also perceive that each good
man bið eadig, ȝ þ ealle gesælige men bioð godas, ȝ
man is blessed and that all happy men are gods and
habbað ecu edlean heora goodes.
have eternal reward of-their good

113.21 Forðæm ne þearf nænne wisne mon tweogan þ ða yflan
Therefore not needs any wise man doubt that the evil
næbben eac ecu edlean hiora yfles; þ bið ece wite.
have also eternal reward of-their evil that is eternal punishment
Þeah ðu nu wene þ hiora hwylc gesælig sie her for
Though thou now think that of-them any happy be here for
weorulde, he hæfð þeah symle his yfel mid him, ȝ eac
world he has yet ever his evil with him and also
þæs yfles edlean ða hwile þe hit hī licað. Nis nu nan
of-the evil reward the while that it him pleases Not-is now any
wis mon þ nyte þte good ȝ yfel bioð sȳle ungeþwære
wise man who knows-not that good and evil are ever discordant
betweox him, ȝ sȳle on tu willað; ȝ swa swa ðæs gôdan
between themselves and ever in two will and so as of-the good
gôdnes bið his agen good, ȝ his agen edlean, swa bið eac
goodness is his own good and his own reward so is also
ðæs yfelan yfel his agen yfel ȝ his edlean ȝ his agen
of-the evil evil his own evil and his reward and his own
wite. Ne tweoð nænne mon, gif he wite hæfð, þ he
punishment Not doubts any man if he punishment has that he
næbbe yfel. Hwæt wenað þa yfelan þ hi bion bedælde ðara
have evil What think the evil that they be deprived of-the
wita, ȝ sint fulle ælces yfles? Nalles no þ an þ hi
punishments and are full of-every evil Not-at-all — that alone that they
bioð afylde, ac forneah to nauhte gedone. Ongit nu be ðæm
are filled but nearly to naught made Perceive now by the
gôdū hu micel wite þa yfelan sȳle habbað; ȝ gehere get
good how great punishment the evil ever have and hear yet
sum bispell, ȝ geheald þa wel þe ic ðe ær sæde.
a-certain example and keep those well which I to-thee before said

Eall þ þte annesse hæfð, þ we secgað þte sie þa hwile
All that which oneness has that we say that be the while
þe hit ætsomne bið; ⁊ þa samwrædnesse we hatað good.
that it together is and the unity we call good
Swa swa an mon bið man þa hwile ðe sio saul ⁊ se lichama 114.4
So as a man is man the while that the soul and the body
ætsomne bioð, þonne hi ðonne gesindrede bioð, þonne ne bið
together are when they then separated are then not is
he ðæt þ he ær wæs. Þ ilce þu meaht geþencan be þæm
he that which he before was The same thou canst consider about the
lichoman ⁊ be his limū; gif þara lima hwylc of bið, þonne
body and about its limbs if of-the limbs any off is then
ne bið hit no full man swa hit ær wæs. Gif eac hwylc good
not is it — full man as it before was If also any good
man from gode gewit, þonne ne bið he þon ma fullice good,
man from good departs then not is he the more fully good
gif he eallunga frō gewit; þonan hit gebereð þ ða yflan
if he entirely from departs thence it befalls that the evil
forlætað þ þ hi ær ða dydon, ⁊ ne beoð þ þ hi
forsake that which they before then did and not are that which they
ær wæron. Ac þonne hi þ good forlætað ⁊ weorðað yfle,
before were But when they the good forsake and become evil
þonne ne bioð hi nauhtas butan anlicnes; þ mon mæg gesion
then not are they aught but likeness that one can see
þ hi gio men wæren, ac hi habbað þæs mennisces þonne
that they formerly men were but they have of-the human then
þone betstan dæl forloren, ⁊ þone forcuþestan gehealden.
the best part lost and the basest kept
Hi forlætað þ gecyndelice good, þ sint mennisclice þeawas;
They forsake the natural good that are human ways
⁊ habbað þeah mannes anlicnesse ða hwile þe hi libbað.
and have yet of-man likeness the while that they live

114.19 Ac swa swa manna goodnes hi âhefð ofer ða menniscan
But so as of-men goodness them lifts over the human
gecynd to ðon þ hi bioð godas genemde, swa eac hiora
nature to that that they are gods named so also their
yfelnes awirpð hi under þa menniscan gecynd to þon þ
evilness casts them under the human nature to that that
hio bioð yfle gehatene; þ we cweðað sie nauht. Forðæm gif
they are evil called which we say be naught Therefore if
ðu swa gewlætne mon metst þ he bið ahwerfed from goode
thou so debased man findest that he is turned from good
to yfle, ne meaht þu hine na mid ryhte nemnan man ac
to evil not canst thou him — with right name man but
neat. Gif þu on hwilcum men ongitst þ he bið gitsere ȝ
beast If thou in any man perceivest that he is miser and
reafere, ne scealt þu hine na hatan mon, ac wulf; ȝ þone
robber not shalt thou him — call man but wolf and the
reðan þe bið þweorteme ðu scealt hatan hund, nalles mon;
fierce who is quarrelsome thou shalt call hound not-at-all man
ȝ þone leasan lytegan þu scealt hatan fox, næs man; ȝ
and the false crafty thou shalt call fox not-at-all man and
þone ungemetlice modgan ȝ yrsiendan þe to micelne andan
the immoderately proud and angry who too much wrath
hæfð þu scealt hatan leo, næs man; ȝ þone sænan þe
has thou shalt call lion not-at-all man and the sluggish who
bið swa slaw þu scealt hatan assa ma þonne man; ȝ þone
is so slow thou shalt call ass rather than man and the
ungemetlice eargan þe him ondræt ma þonne he þyrfe ðu
immoderately cowardly who for-himself dreads more than he need thou
meaht hatan hara ma þonne mon; ȝ þæm ungestæðegan
canst call hare rather than man and to-the unsteady
ȝ þæm galan þu meaht secgan ðæt he bið winde gelicra
and to-the frivolous thou canst say that he is to-wind more-like

oððe unstillū fugelum þonne gemetfæstū monnum; ȝ þæm
or to-restless birds than to-moderate men and to-him
þe ðu ongitst þte ligð on his lichoman lustum, þ he bið
whom thou perceivest that lies in of-his body lusts that he is
anlicost fettum swinū þe sȳle willað licgan on fulum solum,
likest to-fat swine which ever will lie in foul sloughs
ȝ hy næfre nellað aspyligan on hluttrum wætrū; ac þeah hi
and they never will wash in clear waters but though they
seldū hwonne beswemde weorðen, þonne sleað hi eft on ða
seldom when bathed become then dash they again into the
solu ȝ bewealwiað hi þæron. Ða se Wisdom þa ðis
sloughs and wallow themselves therein When — Wisdom then this
spell areaht hæfde, þa ongon he eft singan ȝ þus cwæð:
discourse told had then began he again to-sing and thus said

XXXVIII · ULYSSES AND CIRCE

Wisdom sings the false tale of Ulysses, driven after the Trojan war to Circe's island, where the two loved each other so immoderately that he forsook his kingdom. False men said she turned his men into beasts whose minds stayed human: the mind's vices harm a man more than the body's weakness. The wicked are more wretched for being able to do the evil they desire, the unpunished more than the punished, and some sinners will be cleansed in heavenly fire as silver is. A wrongdoer needs a pleader to bring him to punishment, as the sick need a physician.

Ic ðe mæg reccan of ealdū leasū spellū sum swiðe anlic 115.12
I to-thee can tell from old false stories a-certain very like
spell þære spræce þe wit nu ymbe spræcon. Hit gebyrede
story to-the speech which we-two now about spoke It happened
gio on Troiana gewinne þ þær wæs an cyning þæs nama
formerly in of-Trojans war that there was a king whose name

Aulixes; se hæfde twa þioda under þā kasere. Þa ðioda
Ulysses who had two peoples under the emperor The peoples
wæron hatene Iþacige ⁊ Retie, ⁊ þæs kaseres nama wæs
were called Ithacans and Retians and of-the emperor name was
Agamenon. Ða se Aulixes mid þam kasere to þā gefiohte
Agamemnon When — Ulysses with the emperor to the fight
for, þa hæfde he sume hundred scipa; þa wæron hi sume
went then had he some hundred ships then were they some
ten gear on þā gewinne. Þa se cyning eft hā cerde frō
ten years in the war When the king again home turned from
þā kasere, ⁊ hi þ land hæfdon gewunnen, þa næfde he
the emperor and they the land had won then had-not he
na ma scipa þōn an; þ wæs þeah þrereðre. Ða gestod hine
— more of-ships than one that was yet three-oared Then beset him
heah weder ⁊ stormsæ. Wearð þa fordrifen on an iglond
high weather and storm-sea (He)-was then driven onto an island
ut on ðære Wendelsæ. Þa wæs þær Apollines dohtor Iobes
out in the Mediterranean Then was there of-Apollo daughter of-Jove
suna; se Iob was hiora cyning, ⁊ licette þ he sceolde
son — Jove was their king and pretended that he should
bion se hehsta god; ⁊ þ dysige folc him gelyfde, forþāðe
be the highest god and the foolish people him believed because
he was cynecynnes; ⁊ hi nyston nænne oðerne god on
he was of-royal-kin and they knew-not any other god in
þæne timan, buton hiora cyningas hi weorþodon for godas.
that time but their kings they worshiped as gods
Þa sceolde þæs Iobes fæder bion eac god; þæs nama wæs
Then should — of-Jove father be also god whose name was
Saturnus; ⁊ his suna swa ilce ælcne hi hæfdon for god.
Saturn and his sons so same each they held as god

Þa was hiora an se Apollinus þe we ær ymb spræcon. 116.1
Then was of-them one — Apollo whom we before about spoke
Þæs Apollines dohtor sceolde bion gydene, þære nama wæs
— of-Apollo daughter should be goddess whose name was
Kirke. Sio hi sædon sceolde bion swiðe drycræftigu, ȝ sio
Circe She they said should be very sorcerous and she
wunode on þā iglande þe se cyning on fordrifen wearð, þe
dwelt on the island which the king on driven was whom
we ær ymbe spræcon. Hio hæfde þær swiðe micle werode
we before about spoke She had there very great company
hire ðegna, ȝ eac oðerra mædena. Sona swa hio geseah þone
of-her servants and also of-other maidens As-soon as she saw the
fordrifenan cyning ðe we ær ymb spræcon, þæs nama wæs
driven king whom we before about spoke whose name was
Aulixes, þa ongan hio hine lufian, ȝ hiora ægþer oðerne
Ulysses then began she him to-love and of-them each other
swiðe ungemetlice, swa þte he for hire lufan forlet his rice
very immoderately so that he for her love forsook his kingdom
eall ȝ his cynren, ȝ wunode mid hire oð ðone first þ
all and his kindred and dwelt with her until the time that
his ðegnas him ne mihton leng mid gewunian, ac for hiora
his thanes him not could longer with dwell but for of-their
eardes lufan ȝ for þære wræce tihodon hine to forlætenne.
homeland love and for the exile resolved him to forsake
Ða ongunnon lease men wyrcan spell, ȝ sædon þ hio
Then began false men to-make stories and said that she
sceolde mid hire drycræft þa men forbredan, ȝ weorpan
should with her sorcery the men transform and cast
hi an wildedeora lic, ȝ siððan slean on þa racentan
them into of-wild-beasts bodies and afterward put into the chains

ȝ on cospas. Sume hi sædon þ hio sceolde forsceoppan
and into fetters Some they said that she should transform
to leon, ȝ þōn seo sceolde sprecan, þōn ryde hio.
into lions and when she should speak then roared she
116.17 Sume sceoldan bion eforas, ȝ bōn hi sceoldan hiora
Some should be boars and when they should their
sar siofian, þōn grymetodan hi. Sume wurdon to wulfan;
sorrow lament then grunted they Some became to wolves
þa ðuton, þōn hi sprecan sceoldon. Sume wurdon to þā
they howled when they speak should Some became to the
deorcynne þe mon hat tigris. Swa wearð eall se geferscipe
beast-kind which one calls tiger So was all the company
forhwerfed to mistlicum deorcynnū, ælc to sumū diore, buton
transformed to various beast-kinds each to some beast except
þā cyninge anū. Ælcne mete hi onscunedon þe men etað,
the king alone Each food they shunned which men eat
ȝ wilnodon þara þe deor etaþ. Næfdon hi nane anlicnesse
and desired of-those which beasts eat Had-not they any likeness
manna ne on lichoman ne on stemne, ȝ ælc wisste þeah
of-men either in body or in voice and each knew yet
his gewit swa swa he ær wisste. Þ gewit was
his understanding so as he before knew The understanding was
swiðe sorgiende for þā ermðum ðe hi drogan. Hwæt, þa
very sorrowing for the miseries which they suffered Lo the
menn þe ðisū leasungū gelefdon, þeah wisston þ hio mid
men who these lies believed yet knew that she with
þā drycræfte ne mihte þara monna mod onwendan, þeah
the sorcery not could of-the men mind change though
hio þa lichoman onwende. Eala þ hit is micel cræft þæs
she the bodies changed O that it is great power of-the
modes for þone lichoman. Be swilcū ȝ be swylcū þu miht
mind over the body By such and by such thou canst

ongitan þ se cræft þæs lichoman bið on þā mode, ⁊
perceive that the power of-the body is in the mind and
þte ælcū men ma deriað his modes unþeawas. Ðæs modes
that to-each man more harm of-his mind vices Of-the mind
unþeawas tioð eallne þone lichoman to hī, ⁊ þæs lichoman
vices draw all the body to them and of-the body
mettrumnes ne mæg þ mod eallunga to him getion.
weakness not can the mind entirely to it draw
Ða cwæð ic: Ic eom geþafa þ þ is soð þ ðu ær 117.1
Then said I I am consenting that that is true which thou before
sædest; þ wæs ðæt hit nauht unriht nære þ mon þa
saidst that was that it not-at-all wrong were that one the
yfelwillendan men hete netenu oððe wildior, þeah hi mannes
evil-willing men call beasts or wild-beasts though they of-man
onlicnesse hæbben; ac gif ic hæfde swilcne anwald swilce
likeness have but if I had such power as
se ælmihtiga God hæfð, þonne ne lete ic no ða yfelan
the almighty God has then not would-let I — the evil
derigan þæm goodum swa swiðe swa hi nu doð. Ða cwæð
harm the good so much as they now do Then said
he: Nis hit him no swa longe alefed swa ðe ðincð; ac
he Not-is it to-them — so long allowed as to-thee seems but
ðu meaht ongitan ðæt him bið swiðe hrædlice gestiored
thou canst perceive that to-them is very quickly restrained
hiora orsorgnesse, swa ic þe nu rihte secgan wille, þeah ic
of-their security as I to-thee now right say will though I
get æmettan næbbe for oðre spræce. Þær hi þone unnettan
yet leisure have-not for other speech If they the useless
anwald næfden ðe hi wenað þ hi hæbben, þonne næfden
power had-not which they think that they have then had-not
hi swa micel wite swa hi habban sculon. Ða yflan bioð
they so great punishment as they have shall The evil are

symle ungesæligran þonne þonne hi magon ðurgtion þ yfel
ever unhappier then when they can accomplish the evil
þ hi lyst, ðonne hi þonne bion ðonne hi hit dôn
which them it-pleases than they then be when they it do
ne magon, þeah his dysige men ne gelefen. Hit is swiðe
not can though it foolish men not believe It is very
yfel þ mon yfel wille, ȝ hit is þeah micle wyrse þ hit
evil that one evil will and it is yet much worse that it
mon mæge don; forðæm se yfla willa bið tostenced swaþær
one can do because the evil will is scattered as
rec beforan fyre, gif mon ðæt weorc þurgtion ne mæg.
smoke before fire if one the work accomplish not can
117.18 Ac ða yflan habbað hwilum ðrio unsælða; an is þ hi yfel
But the evil have at-times three unhappinesses one is that they evil
willað, oðer þ þ hi magon, þridde þ hi hit þurgtioð;
will second that that they can third that they it accomplish
forðæmðe God hæfð getiohhod to sellanne witu ȝ ermða
because God has appointed to give punishments and miseries
þā yflum monnū for hiora yflum weorcum. Ða cwæð ic:
to-the evil men for their evil works Then said I
Hit is swa swa ðu sægst; ȝ þeah ic wolde gewyscan, gif
It is so as thou sayest and yet I would wish if
ic meahte, þ hi næfden ða heardsælða þ hi meahten yfel
I could that they had-not the misfortune that they could evil
dôn. Ða cwæð he: Ic wene ðeah þ him losige se anwald
do Then said he I think yet that from-them be-lost the power
ær þonne þu wolde oððe hi wenen; forðæm nanwuht
sooner than thou wouldst or they think because nothing
nis longfæres on ðys andweardan life, þeah monnum ðynce
is of-long-lasting in this present life though to-men seem
þ hit long sie. Ac swiðe oft se micla anwald ðara yflena
that it long be But very often the great power of-the evil

gehrist swiðe færlice, swa swa great beam on wuda wyrcð
falls very suddenly so as great tree in wood makes
hludne dynt þonne men læst wenað; ⁊ for ðæm ege hi
loud crash when men least expect and for the fear they
beoð simle swiðe earme. Gif hi þonne hiora yfel earme
are ever very wretched If them then their evil wretched
gedeð, hu ne bið ðonne semle þ lange yfel wyrse þonne
makes how not is then ever the long evil worse than
ðæt scorte? þeah nu ða yflan næfre ne wurden deade, þeah
the short though now the evil never — became dead yet
ic wolde cweðan þ hi wæren earmoste ⁊ ungesælgoste.
I would say that they were most-wretched and unhappiest
Gif þa yrmða ealla soða sint þe we longe ær ymbe
If the miseries all true are which we long before about
reahton þ ða yflan her on weorulde habban scolden, þonne
told that the evil here in world have should then
is ðæt sweotol þ ða yrmða bioð endelease þe ece bioð.
is it clear that the miseries are endless which eternal are
Ða cwæð ic: Þæt is wundorlic þ ðu sægst, ⁊ swiðe 118.5
Then said I That is wonderful which thou sayest and very
earfoðlic dysegum monnū to ongitanne; ac ic ongite þeah þ
hard for-foolish men to perceive but I perceive yet that
hit belimpð genog wel to ðære spræce ðe wit ær ymbe
it belongs enough well to the speech which we-two before about
spræcon. Ða cwæð he: Ic ne sprece nu no to dysegum
spoke Then said he I not speak now — to foolish
monnum, ac sprece to ðam þe wel wilniað wisdom ongitan;
men but speak to those who well desire wisdom perceive
forðæm þ bið tacn wisdomes þ hine mon welnige geheran
because that is token of-wisdom that it one desire hear
⁊ ongitan. Ac gif dysegra hwone tweoge æniges þara
and perceive But if of-foolish anyone doubt any of-the

spella þe we ær ymb spræcon on þisse ilcan bec, ðonne
discourses which we before about spoke in this same book then
gerecce he gif he mæge oðer twega, oððe þara spella sum
let-show he if he can one of-two either of-the discourses some
leas, oððe ungelic þære spræce þe wit æfterspyriað; oððe
false or unlike to-the speech which we-two inquire-after or
þridde wend, ongite ⁊ gelefe þæt wit on riht spyrigen.
third turn let-perceive and let-believe that we-two in right inquire
Gif he þara nan nyte, þonne nat he hwæt he mænð.
If he of-them none know then not-knows he what he means
118.18 Ac ic þe mæg giet tæcan oðer þing ðe dysegum monnum
But I to-thee can yet teach other thing which to-foolish men
wile ðincan giet ungelefedlicre, ⁊ is þeah genog gelic þam
will seem yet more-incredible and is yet enough like to-the
spelle ðe wit æfterspyriað. Ða cwæð ic: Hwæt is ðæt
discourse which we-two inquire-after Then said I What is that
la ðinga? Ða cwæð he: Hit is þ ðæt þa yflan bioð micle
lo of-things Then said he It is that that the evil are much
gesæligran þe on ðisse weorulde habbað micelne wean ⁊
happier who in this world have much woe and
manigfeald witu for hiora yfelū, ðonne þa sien ðe nane
manifold punishments for their evils than those be who no
wræce nabbað ne nan wite on ðisse worulde for hiora
vengeance have nor any punishment in this world for their
yfle. Ne wene þeah nan mon þ ic for ðæm anum ðyllic
evil Not let-think yet any man that I for that alone such
sprece ðe ic wolde unðeawas tælan ⁊ goode herian ⁊ mid
speak that I would vices blame and good praise and with
ðære bysne men ðreatigan ⁊ tyhtan to gôdū þeawū for
the example men rebuke and urge to good ways for
þæm ege þæs wites; ac for oðrū ðincgum ic hit spræc get
the fear of-the punishment but for other things I it spoke yet

swiðor. Ða cwæð ic: For hwylcum oðrum ðingum woldes
more Then said I For what other things wouldst
þu þ sprecan buton for ðæm þe þu nu sædes? Ða cwæð
thou that speak but for that which thou now saidst Then said
he: Gemanst þu hwæt wit ær spræcon? Þ wæs þæt ða
he Rememberest thou what we-two before spoke That was that the
goodan hæfdon sÿle anwald ⁊ gesælða, ⁊ þa yflan næfden
good had ever power and felicities and the evil had-not
næfre nauðer. Ða cwæð ic: Þ ic geman. Ða cwæð he: Hwæt
ever either Then said I That I remember Then said he What
wenst ðu nu? gif þu gesihst hwylcne swiðe ungesæligne
thinkest thou now if thou seest any very unhappy
mon, ⁊ ongitst ðeah hwæthwugu goodes on him, hwæðer
man and perceivest yet something of-good in him whether
he sie swa ungesælig swa se ðe nanwuht goodes næfð?
he be so unhappy as he who nothing of-good has
Ða cwæð ic: Se me ðincð gesæligra þe hwæthwugu hæfð. 119.4
Then said I He to-me seems happier who something has
Ða cwæð he: Ac hu þincð þe ðonne be ðæm þe
Then said he But how seems to-thee then about him who
nanwuht goodes næfð, gif he hæfð sumne eacan yfeles? se
nothing of-good has if he has some increase of-evil he
þu wilt secgan þonne giet sie ungesæligra þonne se oðer,
thou wilt say then yet be unhappier than the other
for ðæs yfles eacan. Ða cwæð ic: Hwy ne sceolde me
for of-the evil increase Then said I Why not should to-me
swa þyncan? Ða cwæð he: Telo þonne þ ðe swa þincð;
so seem Then said he Rightly then that to-thee so seems
ongit þonne mid innewearde mode þ þ ða yflan habbað
perceive then with inward mind that that the evil have
sÿle hwæthwugu gôdes on gemong hiora yfle; þ is hiora
ever something of-good in among their evil that is their

wite; þ mon mæg swiðe eaðe gereccan mid rihte him
punishment which one can very easily reckon with right to-them
to goode. Ac þa þe him bið unwitnode eall hiora yfel on
for good But those who to-them is unpunished all their evil in
þisse worulde habbað sū yfel hefigre ⁊ frecenlicre þonne
this world have some evil heavier and more-dangerous than
ænig wite swa on þisse worulde; þ þ is þ him bið
any punishment as in this world that that is that to-them is
unwitnod hiora yfel on þisse weorulde, ðæt is þ sweotoloste
unpunished their evil in this world that is the clearest
tacen þæs mæstan yfeles on þisse weorulde, ⁊ þæs wyrrestan
token of-the greatest evil in this world and of-the worst
edleanes æfter þisse worulde. Đa cwæð ic: Ne mæg ic þæs
reward after this world Then said I Not can I that
oðsacan. Đa cwð he: Forðæm sint ungesæligran ða yflan
deny Then said he Therefore are unhappier the evil
forðæm him bið buton gewyrhtū forgifen hiora yfel þonne
because to-them is without deserts forgiven their evil than
ða sien ðe him bið hiora yfel geleanod be hiora gewyrhtum.
those be who to-them is their evil requited by their deserts
119.22 Forðæm hit is riht þ mon þa yflige ða yflan, ⁊ hit is wog
Because it is right that one them punish the evil and it is wrong
þ hi mon læte unwitnode. Đa cwð ic: Hwa oðsæcð þæs?
that them one let unpunished Then said I Who denies that
Đa cwæð he: Ne mæg nan mon oðsacan þ hit ne sie eall
Then said he Not can any man deny that it — be all
good þte riht bið, ⁊ eall yfel þte woh bið. Đa cwæð ic:
good which right is and all evil which wrong is Then said I
Ic eom swiðe gedrefed mid ðisse spræce, ⁊ wundrie forhwy
I am very troubled with this speech and wonder why
swa rihtwis dema ænige unrihte gife wille forgifan. Đa cwð
so righteous judge any wrong gift will give Then said

he: Be hwæm cwest þu þæt? Ða cwæð ic: Forþāðe ðu ær
he About what sayest thou that Then said I Because thou before
cwæde ðæt he unriht dyde þ he lete unwitnod ða yflan.
saidst that he wrong did that he let unpunished the evil
Ða cwæð he: Þ is his weorðscipe þ he swa giful is, ⁊
Then said he That is his honor that he so generous is and
swa rumedlice gifð; ðæt is micel gifo þ he gebit oðþ ða
so bountifully gives that is great gift that he waits until the
yflan ongitað hiora yfel ⁊ gecierrað to goode. Ða cwæð ic:
evil perceive their evil and turn to good Then said I
Nu ic ongite þ hit nis ecu gifu þ he gifð þæm yflum,
Now I perceive that it not-is eternal gift which he gives to-the evil
ac is hwilchwugu eldcung ⁊ andbid þæs hehstan deman.
but is some delay and waiting of-the highest judge
For ðæm andbide ⁊ for ðæm geþylde me ðincð þ he
For the waiting and for the patience to-me seems that he
sie ðe swiðor forsewen; ⁊ þeah me licað þis spell genog
be the more despised and yet to-me pleases this discourse enough
wel, ⁊ ðincð me genog gelic ðæm ðe ðu ær sædes.
well and seems to-me enough like to-that which thou before saidst
Ac ic ðe healsige giet ðæt þu me secge hwæðer ðu wene 120.6
But I thee beseech yet that thou to-me say whether thou think
þ þa yflan habban ænig wite æfter þisse weorulde; oððe
that the evil have any punishment after this world or
þa godan ænig edlean hiora goodes. Ða cwæð he: Hu ne
the good any reward of-their good Then said he How not
sæde ic ðe ær þ ða goodan habbað edlean heora goodes
said I to-thee before that the good have reward of-their good
ægþer ge her ge on ecnesse, ⁊ ða yflan eac habbað edlean
each both here and in eternity and the evil also have reward
hiora yfles, ægþer ge her ge eft on ecnesse. Ac ic wille
of-their evil each both here and again in eternity But I will

dælan þa yflan þā yfelū nu on twua; forðæþe oðer dæl þara
divide the evil the evil now into two because one part of-the
yflena hæfð ece wite, forðæ hi nane mildheortnesse ne
evil has eternal punishment because they no mercy —
geearnodon; oðer dæl sceal beon geclæsnod, ⁊ þa amered
earned other part shall be cleansed and then refined
on ðæm heofonlican fyre, swa her bið seolfor, forðæm he
in the heavenly fire as here is silver because he
hæfð sume geearnungæ sumre mildheortnesse; forðæm he mot
has some desert of-some mercy therefore he may
cuman æfter ðæm earfoðum to ecre are. Giet ic þe meahte
come after the hardships to eternal honor Yet I to-thee could
mare reccan ægðer ge be ðæm goodum ge be þæm yflum,
more tell each both about the good and about the evil
þær ic nu æmettan hæfde. Ac ic ondræde þ ic forlæte þ
if I now leisure had But I dread that I forsake what
wyt ær æfterspyredon; þ wæs þ wit woldon gereccan þ
we-two before inquired-after that was that we-two would show that
þu ongeate ðæt ða yflan næfden nænne anwald ne nænne
thou perceive that the evil had-not any power nor any
weorðscipe ne on þisse weorulde ne on þære toweardan.
honor either in this world or in the future
120.23 Forðæm þe þuhte ær þ eallra ðinga wyrrest þ ðu
Because to-thee seemed before that of-all things worst that thou
wendes þ hi hæfden to micelne; ⁊ ðæt eallneg siofodes þ
thoughtest that they had too much and that always lamentedst that
hi eallneg næron on wite; ⁊ ic ðe sæde eallne weg
they always not-were in punishment and I to-thee said all the-way
þ hi næfre ne bioð buton wite, ðeah þe swa ne þince.
that they never — are without punishment though to-thee so not seem
Ac ic wat þeah þ ðu wilt siofian ðæt hi swa longne fyrst
But I know yet that thou wilt lament that they so long time

habbað leafe yfel to donne; ⁊ ic ðe sæde ealne weg þ
have leave evil to do and I to-thee said all the-way that
se fyrst bið swiðe lytle hwile; ⁊ ic þe secge giet, swa swa
the time is very little while and I to-thee say yet so as
he lengra bið swa hi bioð ungesæligran; þ him wære eallra
it longer is so they are unhappier that to-them were of-all
mæst unsælð þ þ se fyrst wære oð domes dæg. ⁊ ic
greatest unhappiness that that the time were until of-doom day and I
þe sæde eac þ ða wæren ungesæligran þe him unrihtlice
to-thee said also that those were unhappier who to-them unjustly
hiora yfel forboren wære þonne þa wæren þe him heora yfel
their evil forborne were than those were who them their evil
rihtlice on gewrecen wære. Git hit gebyreð þ ðe ðincð ðæt
justly on avenged were Yet it befalls that to-thee seems that
þa orsorgan bioð ungesæligran þonne þonne þa gewitnodan.
the secure are unhappier than then the punished
Ða cwæð ic: Ne þincð me næfre nanwuht swa soðlic swa 121.4
Then said I Not seems to-me ever anything so true as
me þincað þine spell ðæm tidum ðe ic ða gehere. Ac gif
to-me seem thy discourses at-the times when I them hear But if
ic me wende to þises folces dome, þonne nis hit no ðæt
I myself turn to of-this people judgment then not-is it — that
an þ hi nyllað þisse þinre race gelefan, ac hi hit nyllað
alone that they will-not this thy argument believe but they it will-not
furðum geheran. Ða cwæð he: Nis þ nan wundor; hwæt,
even hear Then said he Not-is that any wonder lo
þu wast þ þa men þe habbað unhale eagan ne magon full
thou knowest that the men who have unhealthy eyes not can full
eaðe locian ongean þa sunnan þonne hio beortost scinð, ne
easily look against the sun when it brightest shines nor
furðum on fyr ne on nanwuht beortes hi ne lyst locian,
even on fire nor on anything of-bright them — it-pleases to-look

gif se æppel lef bið. Swa beoð ða synfullan mod ablend mid
if the eyeball weak is So are the sinful minds blinded with
heora yflan willan þ hi ne magon gesion þ leoht þære
their evil will that they not can see the light of-the
beorhtan soðfæstnesse, þ is se hehsta wisdom. Ac him
bright truth that is the highest wisdom But to-them
bið swa þæm fuglum ȝ þæm diorū ðe magon bet locian
is as to-the birds and to-the beasts which can better look
on niht þonne on dæg; se dæg blent ȝ þiostrað heora
at night than by day the day blinds and darkens their
eagan, ȝ þære nihte ðiostro hi onlyhtað. Forðy wenað
eyes and of-the night darkness them enlightens Therefore think
ða ablendan mod þ þæt sie sio mæste gesælð þ men sie
the blinded minds that that be the greatest felicity that to-men be
alefed yfel to donne, ȝ sio dæd hī mote bion unwitnod.
allowed evil to do and the deed to-them may be unpunished
121.19 Forðæm hi ne lyst spyrian æfter ælcre spræce swa longe
Because them not it-pleases inquire after each speech so long
oð hi þ riht witen, ac wenað on hiora unnettan willan
until they the right know but trust in their useless will
ȝ spyriað æfter ðæm. Þe ic nat hu nyt þu me tæhst
and inquire after that Therefore I not-know how useful thou me directest
to ðæm dysegū monnum, þa næfre æfter me ne spyriað; ic
to the foolish men who never after me — inquire I
ne sprece næfre to ðæm, ac ic sprece to þe, forðæm þu
not speak ever to them but I speak to thee because thou
tiohhast þ þu spyrie æfter me, ȝ swiðor swincst on ðæm
intendest that thou inquire after me and more toilest on the
spore þonne hi don. Ne recce ic hwæt hi demen; ic læte
track than they do Not care I what they judge I leave
nu to þinū dome ma þonne to hiora, forðæm hi eall
now to thy judgment more than to theirs because they all

lociað mid bæm eagum on þas eorðlican ðincg, ȝ hi him
look with both eyes on these earthly things and they to-them
liciað eallunga þær, ge on þæs modes eagum ge on þæs
please entirely there both in of-the mind eyes and in of-the
lichoman. Ac þu ana hwilum bescylst mid oðre eagan on
body But thou alone at-times lookest with one eye on
þa heofonlican þincg, mid oðre þu locast nu giet on þas
the heavenly things with other thou lookest now still on these
eorðlican. Forðæm wenað þa dysegan þ ælc mon sie blind
earthly Therefore think the foolish that each man be blind
swa hi sint, ȝ þ nan mon ne mæge gesion þ hi gesion
as they are and that no man — can see what they see
ne magon. Þ dysi is anlicost þe sum cild sie full hal ȝ
not can That folly is likest as-if a-certain child be full whole and
ful æltæwe geboren, ȝ swa fullice ðionde on eallum cystum
full perfect born and so fully thriving in all excellences
ȝ cræftū þa hwile þe hit on cnihthade bið; ȝ swa forð
and skills the while that it in boyhood is and so forth
eallne giogoðhad, oð he wyrð ælces cræftes medeme, ȝ
all youth until he becomes of-every skill worthy and
ðonn̄ lytle ær his midferhðe weorðe bæm eagum blind, ȝ
then a-little before his middle-age become in-both eyes blind and
eac þæs modes eagan weorðan swa ablende þ he nanwuht
also of-the mind eyes become so blinded that he nothing
ne gemune þæs ðe he æfre ær geseah oððe geherde,
— remember of-that which he ever before saw or heard
ȝ wene þeah ðæt he sie ælces þinges swa medeme swa
and think yet that he be of-every thing so worthy as
he æfre medomest wære, ȝ wenð þ ælcum men sie swa
he ever worthiest were and thinks that to-each man be so
swa hī si, ȝ ælcum men ðince swa swa him þincð.
as to-him be and to-each man seem so as to-him seems

122.11 Þeah ðe he þonne swa dysig sie þ he þæs wene, hwæðer
Though — he then so foolish be that he that think whether
we ðonne willen ealle wenan þæs ðe he wenð? Ic wene
we then will all think that which he thinks I think
ðeah þ we nyllen; ac ic wolde witan hu þe þuhte
yet that we will-not but I would know how to-thee seemed
be þæm monnum ðe wit ær cwædon þ unc ðuhte
about the men whom we-two before said that to-us-two seemed
þ wæren wildiorum gelicran þonne monnū, hu micelne
that were to-wild-beasts more-like than to-men how much
wisdom þa hæfden; me þincð þeah ð hi næbben nænne.
wisdom they had to-me seems yet that they have-not any
122.17 Ic ðe wolde giet reccan sume swiðe rihte raca; ac ic wat
I to-thee would yet tell a-certain very right argument but I know
þ þis folc his nele gelyfan; þ is þ ða bioð gesæligran
that this people it will-not believe that is that those are happier
þe mon witnað, þonne þa bion þe hi witniað. Ða
whom one punishes than those be who them punish Then
wundrode ic ðæs ⁊ cwæð: Ic wolde þ þu me gereahte
wondered I at-that and said I wished that thou to-me showedst
hu hit swa bion meahte. Ða cwæð he: Hwæðer þu ongite
how it so be could Then said he Whether thou perceive
þ ælc yfelwillende mon ⁊ yfelwyrcende sie wites
that each evil-willing man and evil-doing be of-punishment
wyrðe? Ða cwæð ic: Genog sweotole ic þ ongite. Ða cwæð
worthy Then said I Enough clearly I that perceive Then said
he: Hu ne is se ðonne yfelwillende ⁊ yfelwyrcende ðe þone
he How not is he then evil-willing and evil-doing who the
unscyldigan witnað? Ða cwð ic: Swa hit is swa ðu sægst.
innocent punishes Then said I So it is as thou sayest
Ða cwæð he: Hwæðer þu wene þ ða sien earme ⁊
Then said he Whether thou think that those be wretched and

ungesælige þe wites wyrðe bioð? Ða cwæð ic: Ne wene
unhappy who of-punishment worthy are Then said I Not think
ic his no, ac wat geare. Ða cwæð he: Gif þu nu deman
I it — but know well Then said he If thou now judge
moste, hwæðerne woldes þu deman wites wyrðran, þe
might which wouldst thou judge of-punishment worthier either
ðone þe ðone unscyldgan witnode, ðe ðone þe þ wite
him who the innocent punished or him who the punishment
þolade? Ða cwæð ic: Nis þ gelic; ic wolde helpan þæs
suffered Then said I Not-is that alike I would help him
ðe ðær unscyldig wære, ⁊ henan þone þe hine yflode.
who there innocent were and humble him who him harmed
Ða cwæð he: Þonne þe ðincð se earmra se þ yfel deð 122.32
Then said he Then to-thee seems he more-wretched who the evil does
ðonne se þe hit þafað. Ða cwæð ic: Þæs ic gelefe þte ælc
than he who it suffers Then said I That I believe that each
unriht witnung sie þæs yfel þe hit deð, næs þæs ðe hit
unjust punishment be his evil who it does not-at-all his who it
ðafæð, forðæm his yfel hine gedeð earmne; ⁊ ic ongite ðæt
suffers because his evil him makes wretched and I perceive that
þis is swiðe riht racu þ þu nu recst, ⁊ swiðe anlic þæm
this is very right argument which thou now tellest and very like to-that
þe þu ær reahtes; ac ic wat þeah þ þis folce swa ne þincð.
which thou before toldest but I know yet that to-this people so not seems
Ða cwæð he: Wel þu hit ongitst; ac ða þingeras þingiað 123.7
Then said he Well thou it perceivest but the advocates plead
nu hwilum þæm þe læssan þearfe ahton; þingiað þæm þe
now at-times for-those who less need had plead for-those whom
þær man yflað, ⁊ ne þingiað þæm þe þ yfel doð. Þǣ
there one harms and not plead for-those who the evil do For-them
wære mare ðearf þe þa oðre unscyidige yflað þ him mon
were more need who the others innocent harm that for-them one

þingode to þæm ricum, ȝ bæde þ him mon dyde swa
pleaded to the powerful and asked that to-them one did so
micel wite swa hi þæm oðrū unscyldgum dydon. Swa swa
much punishment as they to-the other innocent did So as
se sioca ah þearfe þ hine mon læde to þæm læce, þ he his
the sick has need that him one lead to the physician that he him
tilige, swa ah se þe ðæt yfel deð þ hine mon læde to þæm
tend so has he who the evil does that him one lead to the
ricum, þ mon þær mæge sniðan ȝ bærnan his unþeawas.
powerful that one there can cut and burn his vices
Ne cweðe ic na þ þ yfel sie þ mon helpe þæs unscyldgan
Not say I — that that evil be that one help the innocent
ȝ him foreþingie; ac ic cweðe þ hit is betere þ mon
and for-him plead but I say that it is better that one
wrege þone scyldgan; ȝ ic secge þ sio forespræc ne dyge
accuse the guilty and I say that the advocacy not avails
nauðer ne þǣ scyldgan ne ðæm þe him foreþingað, gif hi
either — to-the guilty or to-him who for-him pleads if they
þæs wilniað þ him heora yfel unwrecen sie be ðæs gyltes
that desire that to-them their evil unavenged be by of-the guilt
andefne. Ac ic wat gif ða scyldgan ænigne spearcan wisdomes
measure But I know if the guilty any spark of-wisdom
hæfden ȝ be ænegum dæle ongeaten þ hi meahten heora
had and by any part perceived that they could their
scylda þurg þ wite gebetan, þe him her on weorulde
guilts through the punishment amend which them here in world
on become, þonne noldon hi na cweðan þ hit wære
upon came then would-not they — say that it were
wite, ac woldan cweðan þ hit wære heora clænsung, ȝ
punishment but would say that it were their cleansing and

heora betrung; ⁊ noldon nænne þingere gesecan, ac lustlice
their amendment and would-not any advocate seek but gladly
hi woldon lætan þa rican hi tucian æfter hiora agnum willan.
they would let the powerful them punish after their own will
Forðæm ne scyle nan wis man nænne mannan hatian; ne 123.27
Therefore not should any wise man any man hate nor
hatað nan mon þone gôdan, butan se eallra dysgosta; ne þ
hates any man the good except the of-all most-foolish nor that
nis nan riht þ mon þone yflan hatige, ac hit is rihtre
is any right that one the evil hate but it is more-right
þ him mon miltsige. Þ is þonne hiora mildsung þ mon
that to-him one show-mercy That is then their mercy that one
wrece hiora unðeawas be hiora gewyrhtum. Ne scyle nan mon
punish their vices by their deserts Not should any man
siocne monnan ⁊ gesargodne swencan, ac hine mon scel
sick man and afflicted torment but him one shall
lædan to þæm læce þ he his tilige. Ða se Wisdom þa
lead to the physician that he him tend When — Wisdom then
þis spell areaht hæfde, ða ongan he eft singan ⁊ þus cwð:
this discourse told had then began he again to-sing and thus said

XXXIX · PROVIDENCE AND FATE

Wisdom sings that men should love the good and pity the wicked. Boethius asks why good men suffer and the wicked prosper. Wisdom sings that the unlearned think heaven's rarer wonders chance, likens the question to the nine-headed serpent Hercules burned, and explains providence as God's plan and fate as its working in the world. Creation turns about God as a wheel on its axle, and the best men, like the nave, stay nearest and safest. God, the good physician, knows what each soul needs. Wisdom sings of the stars keeping their courses under God, who rules all creatures with his reins.

124.3 Forhwi drefe ge eowrū mod mid unrihtre fiounge, swa swa
Why trouble ye your mind with wrong hatred so as
yða for winde þa sæ hrerað? oððe forhwy ætwite ge eowerre
waves for wind the sea stir or why reproach ye your
wyrde þ hio nan geweald nah? oððe hwy ne magon ge
fate that it no power has or why not can ye
gebidan gecyndelices deaðes, nu he eow ælce dæg toweardes
await natural death now it you each day toward
onet? Hwi ne magon ge gesion þ he spyrað ælce dæg
hastens Why not can ye see that it tracks each day
æfter fuglum ȝ æfter diorū ȝ æfter monnū, ȝ ne forlæt
after birds and after beasts and after men and not leaves
nan swæð ær he gefehð þ þ he æfterspyreð. Walawa þ
any track before it catches that which it tracks Alas that
ða ungesæligan menn ne magon gebidon hwonne he him to
the unhappy men not can await when it them to
cume, ac forsceotað hine foran, swa swa wilde deor willnað
come but anticipate it beforehand so as wild beasts desire
oðer to acwellenne. Ac hit nære no manna ryht þ hiora
other to kill But it not-were — of-men right that of-them
ænig oðerne fiode; ac þ wære ryht þ hiora ælc gulde
any another hate but that were right that of-them each repaid
oðrū edlean ælces weorces æfter his gewyrhtū, þ is þ
to-other reward of-each work after his deserts that is that
mon lufode þone godan, swa swa riht is þ mon do, ȝ
one loved the good so as right is that one do and
mildsige þam yfelum, swa we ær cwædon; lufie þone man,
have-mercy-on the evil as we before said let-love the man
ȝ hatige his unþeawas; ceorfe him of swa he swiðost mæg.
and let-hate his vices let-cut him off as he most can

Đa he þa þis lioð asungen hæfde, þa geswugode he ane 124.18
When he then this song sung had then was-silent he a
hwile. Đa cwæð ic: Nu ic ongite openlice ðæt sio soðe
while Then said I Now I perceive openly that the true
gesælð stent on godra monna geearnunga, ⁊ sio unsælð
felicity stands in of-good men deserts and the unhappiness
stent on yfelra monna geearnunga. Ac ic secge get þ me
stands in of-evil men deserts But I say yet that to-me
ne þyncð nauht lytel good þisses andweardan lifes gesælða,
not seems at-all little good of-this present life felicities
ne eac nauht lytel yfel his ungesælða; forðæm ic næfre ne
nor also at-all little evil its unhappinesses because I never —
geseah ne geherde nænne wisne mon þe ma wolde bion
saw nor heard any wise man who rather would be
wrecca ⁊ earm ⁊ elðiodig ⁊ forsewen, þonne welig ⁊
exile and poor and foreign and despised than wealthy and
weorð ⁊ rice ⁊ foremære on his agnū earde. Forðæm hi
honored and powerful and renowned in his own country Therefore they
secgað þ hi mægen þe yð hiora wisdome fulgan ⁊
say that they can the more-easily their wisdom follow and
hine gehealdan, gif hiora anwald bið fullice ofer þ folc þe
it keep if their power is fully over the people which
him under bið; ⁊ eac be sumum dæle ofer ða þe him on
them under is and also by some part over those who them in
neaweste bioð ymbutan, forðæm þ hi mægen henan ða yflan
nearness are around so that they can humble the evil
⁊ fyrðran ða goodan. Forðæm se gooda bið sÿle arwyrðe,
and further the good Because the good is ever honorable
ægþer ge on þîs andweardan life ge on þæm toweardan;
each both in this present life and in the future

ȝ se yfela þe mon his yfel gestioran ne mæg bið sȳle
and the evil whom one his evil restrain not can is ever
wites wyrþe, ge on þisse worulde ge on þære toweardan.
of-punishment worthy both in this world and in the future
125.7 Ac ic wundrie swiðe swiðlice forhwi hit swa went swa hit nu
But I wonder very greatly why it so turns as it now
oft deð, þ is þte mislicu witu ȝ mænigfeald earfoðu
often does that is that various punishments and manifold hardships
cumað to þæm gôdū swa hi to ðæm yflum sceoldon, ȝ þa
come to the good as they to the evil should and the
good þe sceoldon beon edlean godū monnū godra weorca
goods which should be reward to-good men of-good works
cumað to yflum monnum. Forðæm ic wolde witan nu æt þe
come to evil men Therefore I would know now from thee
hu ðe licode þ gewrixle. Ic his wundrode micle þy læs, gif
how thee pleased the exchange I at-it wondered much the less if
ic wisse þ hit weas gebyrede buton Godes willan ȝ buton
I knew that it by-chance happened without of-God will and without
his gewitnesse; ac se ælmehtega God hæfð geeced minne ege
his knowledge but the almighty God has increased my fear
ȝ mine wafunga mid ðisū þingum. Forðæm he hwilū selð þa
and my amazement with these things Because he at-times gives the
gesælða þæm goodū, ȝ þæm yflum unsælða, swa hit riht wære
felicities to-the good and to-the evil unhappinesses as it right were
þ he sȳle dyde; hwilum he eft geþafað þ þa goodan habbað
that he ever did at-times he again allows that the good have
unsælða ȝ ungelimp on mænegum þingum, ȝ þa yflan
unhappinesses and mishap in many things and the evil
habbað gesælða, ȝ him limpð oft æfter hiora agnum willan.
have felicities and to-them befalls often after their own will
Þy ic ne mæg nan oþer geþencan buton hit weas swa
Therefore I not can any other think but it by-chance so

gebyrige, buton þu me get þy gesceadlicor oðer gerecce. Ða
happen unless thou to-me yet the more-rationally other show Then
andswarode he ymbe long ⁊ cwæð: Nis hit nan wundor þeah
answered he after long and said Not-is it any wonder though
hwa wene þ swelces gehwæt nu unmyndlinga geberige, ðonne
anyone think that of-such anything now unawares happen when
he ne con ongitan ⁊ gereccan forhwy swylc God geþafað.
he not can perceive and explain why such God allows
Ac ðu ne scealt no twiogan þ swa good sceppend ⁊ waldend 125.26
But thou not shalt — doubt that so good creator and ruler
eallra gesceafta rihtlice gesceop eall þ he gesceop, ⁊ rihte
of-all creatures rightly created all that he created and rightly
demð ⁊ welt ealles, þeah þu nyte forhwy he swa ⁊ swa do.
judges and rules all though thou know-not why he so and so do
Ða he ða þis spell areaht hæfde, þa ongan he singan, ⁊ 125.30
When he then this discourse told had then began he to-sing and
cwæð: Hwa unlæredra ne wundrað þæs roderes færeldes ⁊
said Who of-unlearned not wonders at-the firmament course and
his swiftnesse, hu he ælce dæg uton ymbhwyrfð ealne þisne
its swiftness how it each day outside encircles all this
middangeard? oððe hwa ne wundrað þte sume tunglu habbað
middle-earth or who not wonders that some stars have
scyrtran hwyrft þōn sume habban, swa swa tunglu habbað
shorter circuit than some have so as stars have
þe we hatað wænes ðisla? Forþy hi habbað swa sceortne
which we call of-wain shafts Therefore they have so short
ymbhwyrft forþi hi sint swa neah þā norðende þære eaxe
circuit because they are so near the north-end of-the axle
þe eall þes rodor on hwerfð. Oððe hwa ne wafað þæs,
which all this firmament on turns Or who not marvels at-that
buton þa ane þe hit witon, þæt sume tunglu habbað lengran
but those alone who it know that some stars have longer

ymbhwyrft þōn sume habban, ȝ þa lengestne þe ymb ða
circuit than some have and those longest which about the
eaxe middewearde hwearfað, swa nu Boeties deð, ȝ Saturnus
axle midway turn as now Boötes does and Saturn
se steorra ne cymð þær ær ymb ðritig wintra þær he ær
the star not comes there before after thirty winters where it before
wæs? Oððe hwa ne wundrað ðæs þ sume steorran gewitað
was Or who not wonders at-that that some stars go
under þa sæ, swa swa sume men wenaþ þ sio sunne do
under the sea so as some men think that the sun do
þōn hio to setle gæð? Ac hio ne bið þeah þy near þære sæ
when it to setting goes But it not is yet the nearer the sea
ðe hio bið on midne dæg. Hwa ne wafað þæs þōn se fulla
than it is at mid day Who not marvels at-that when the full
mona wyrð ofertogen mid þiostrum, oððe eft þæt þa steorran
moon becomes covered with darkness or again that the stars
scinað beforan þā monan, ȝ ne scinað beforan þære sunnan?
shine before the moon and not shine before the sun
126.15 Þises hi wundriað ȝ manies þyllices, ȝ ne wundriað na
At-this they wonder and at-many such and not wonder —
þte men ȝ ealle cwuca wuhta habbað singalne ȝ unnytne
that men and all living creatures have continual and useless
andan betwuh him. Oððe hwy ne wundriað hi þæs þ hit
enmity between them Or why not wonder they at-that that it
hwilū þunrað, hwilū na ne onginð, oððe eft gewinnes sæ
at-times thunders at-times not — begins or again at-strife of-sea
ȝ winda ȝ yþa ȝ landes, oððe hwy þ is weorðe ȝ
and of-winds and of-waves and of-land or why the ice becomes and
eft for þære sunnan sciman to his agnum gecynde weorðe?
again for of-the sun beam to its own nature become
Ac þ ungestæððige folc wundrað þæs þe hit seldost
But the unsteady people wonders at-that which it seldomest

gesiehð, þeah hit læsse wundor sie, ⁊ wenað þ þ ne
sees though it less wonder be and think that that not
sie eald gesceaft, ac se weas geworden niwane. Ac þa ðe
be old creation but — by-chance happened newly But those who
firwetgeorne weorþað ⁊ onginnað þōn leornian, gif him
curious become and begin then to-learn if from-them
God abrit of þā mode þ dysig þ hit ær mid oferwrigen
God removes from the mind the folly which it before with covered
was, þōn ne wundriað hi no fela þæs þe hi nu wundriað.
was then not wonder they — much at-that which they now wonder
Ða se Wisdom þa þis leoð asungen hæfde, þa geswugode 126.28
When — Wisdom then this song sung had then was-silent
he ane lytle hwile. Ða cwæð ic: Swa hit is swa þu sægst; ac
he a little while Then said I So it is as thou sayest but
ic wolde get þ þu me hwæthwugu openlicor gereahte be
I wished yet that thou to-me somewhat more-openly showedst about
ðære wisan þe min mod swiðost gedrefed hæfð; þ is þ
the matter which my mind most troubled has that is what
ic ðe ær ymb acsode; forðæm hit wæs sȳle giet þin gewuna
I thee before about asked because it was ever still thy habit
þ þu woldest ælcū mode deglu ðing tæcan ⁊ selðcuð. Ða
that thou wouldst to-each mind secret things teach and rare Then
ongon he smearcian ⁊ cwæð to me: Ðu spænst me on ða
began he to-smile and said to me Thou urgest me into the
mæstan spræce ⁊ on þa earfoðestan to gereccanne. Þa race
greatest discourse and into the hardest to explain The question
sohton ealle uðwiotan, ⁊ swiðe swiðlice ymb swuncon, ⁊
sought all philosophers and very greatly about toiled and
uneaðe ænig com to ende þære spræce; forðæm hit is þeaw
hardly any came to end of-the discourse because it is way
þære spræce ⁊ þære ascungæ þte symle þonne ðær an tweo
of-the discourse and of-the questioning that ever when there one doubt

of adon bið, þonne bið þær unrim astyred; swa swa mon on
off put is then is there countless stirred so as one in
ealdspellum sægð þ an nædre wære þe hæfde nigon heafdu,
old-stories says that a serpent were which had nine heads
ȝ sȳle gif mon anra hwelc of aslog, þonne weoxon þær
and ever if one of-them any off struck then grew there
siofon on ðæm anum heafde. Þa geberede hit þ þær com
seven on the one head Then happened it that there came
se foremæra Erculus to, se wæs Iobes sunu; þa ne meahte
the renowned Hercules to who was of-Jove son then not could
he geþencan hu he hi mid ænige cræfte ofercuman sceolde,
he conceive how he her with any skill overcome should
ær he hi bewæg mid wuda utan ȝ forbærnde þa mid fyre.
until he her surrounded with wood outside and burned then with fire
127.14 Swa is ðisse spræce þe þu me æfter acsast; uneaðe hire
So is with-this discourse which thou me after askest hardly it
cymð ænig mon of, gif he ærest an cemð; ne cymð
comes any man out-of if he once in comes not comes
he næfre to openum ende, buton he hæbbe swa scearp
he ever to open end unless he have as sharp
andgit swaðær fyr. Forðæm se ðe ȳb þ acsian wile, he
understanding as fire Because he who about that ask will he
sceal ærest witan hwæt sie sio anfealde foresceawung Godes,
shall first know what be the single foresight of-God
ȝ hwæt wyrd sie, ȝ hwæt weas gebergie, ȝ hwæt sie
and what fate be and what by-chance happen and what be
godcund andgit ȝ godcund foretiohhung, ȝ hwæt monna
divine understanding and divine predestination and what of-men
freodom sie. Nu ðu miht ongitan hu hefig ȝ hu earfoðe
freedom be Now thou canst perceive how heavy and how hard
þis is eall to gerecanne; ac ic sceal þeah hwæthwugu his
this is all to explain but I shall yet something of-it

onginnan þe to tæcanne, forðæm ic hæbbe ongiten þ hit is
begin thee to teach because I have perceived that it is
swiðe micel læcedom þinre sorge, gif þu þises auht ongitst,
very great medicine for-thy sorrow if thou of-this aught perceivest
þeah hit me lange to læranne sie. Forðæm hit is neah
though it to-me long to teach be Because it is near
þære tide þe ic getiohhod hæfde on oðer weorc to fonne,
the time when I intended had on other work to take
ȝ get næbbe þis gedon; ȝ me þincð eac þ þu sadige
and yet have-not this done and to-me seems also that thou tire
hwæthwugununges, ȝ þe ðyncen to ælenge þas langan
somewhat and to-thee seem too tedious these long
spell, swelce þe nu lyste lioða. Ic wat eac þ þe
discourses as-if to-thee now it-pleased songs I know also that to-thee
hiora lyst, ac ðu scealt þeah geþolian sume hwile; ic ne
of-them it-pleases but thou shalt yet endure some while I not
mæg hit nu swa hraðe asingan, ne æmettan næbbe, forðæm
can it now so quickly sing nor leisure have because
hit is swiðe long spell. Ða cwæð ic: Do swæðer ðu wolde.
it is very long discourse Then said I Do whichever thou wouldst
Þa ongan he sprecan swiðe fiorran ymbutan, swelce he na 127.33
Then began he to-speak very far around as-if he not
þa spræce ne mænde, ȝ tiohhode hit ðeah þiderweardes ȝ
the speech — meant and directed it yet thitherward and
cwæð: Ealla gesceafta, gesewenlica ȝ ungesewenlica, stillu
said All creatures visible and invisible still
ȝ unstillu, onfoð æt þæm stillan ȝ æt þæm gestæððegan
and unstill receive from the still and from the steadfast
ȝ æt þǣ anfealdan Gode endeberdnesse ȝ andwlitan ȝ
and from the single God order and form and
gemetgunge; ȝ forþæm hit swa gesceapen wæs, forðæm he
measure and therefore it so created was because he

wat hwy he gesceop eall þ he gesceop. Nis him nanwiht
knows why he created all that he created Not-is to-him anything
unnyt þæs þe he gesceop. Se God wunað sȳle on þære
useless of-that which he created — God dwells ever in the
hean ceastre his anfaldnesse ⁊ bilewitnesse; þonan he dælð
high city of-his singleness and simplicity thence he deals
manega ⁊ misleca gemetgunga eallum his gesceaftū, ⁊ þonan
many and various measures to-all his creatures and thence
he welt eallra. Ac ðæt ðætte we hatað Godes foreþonc ⁊ his
he rules all But that which we call of-God providence and his
foresceawung, þ bið þa hwile þe hit ðær mid him bið on his
foresight that is the while that it there with him is in his
mode, ærðǣ þe hit gefremed weorðe, þa hwile ðe hit geþoht
mind before — it accomplished become the while that it thought
bið; ac siððan hit fullfremed bið, þonne hatað we hit wyrd. Be
is but after it accomplished is then call we it fate By
þy mæg ælc mon witan þ hit sint ægþer ge twegen naman
that can each man know that they are each both two names
ge twa þincg, foreþonc ⁊ wyrd. Se foreþonc is sio godcunde
and two things providence and fate The providence is the divine
gesceadwisnes; sio is fæst on þæm hean sceppende þe eall
reason which is fixed in the high creator who all
fore wat hu hit geweorðan sceall ær ær hit geweorðe.
beforehand knows how it happen shall earlier before it happen
128.18 Ac þ þ we wyrd hatað, þ bið Godes weorc þ he ælce
But that which we fate call that is of-God work which he each
dæg wyrcð, ægþer ge þæs ðe we gesioð ge þæs þe us
day works each both of-that which we see and of-that which to-us
ungesewenlic bið. Ac se godcunda foreþonc heaðerað ealle
invisible is But the divine providence restrains all
gesceafta, þ hi ne moton toslupan of hiora endebyrdnesse.
creatures that they not may slip-apart from their order

Sio wyrd þonne dælð eallum gesceaftum anwlitan ȝ stowa
The fate then deals to-all creatures forms and places
ȝ tida ȝ gemetgunga; ac sio wyrd cȳð of ðæm gewitte
and times and measures but the fate comes from the mind
ȝ of ðæm foreþonce þæs ælmehtigan Godes. Se wyrcð æfter
and from the providence of-the almighty God He works after
his unasecgendlicum foreþonce þōn swa hwæt swa he wile.
his unspeakable providence then so what so he will
Swa swa ælc cræftega ðencð ȝ mearcað his weorc on his 128.27
So as each craftsman thinks and marks his work in his
mode ær ær he hit wyrce, ȝ wyrcð siððan eall, þios
mind earlier before he it work and works afterward all this
wandriende wyrd þe we wyrd hatað færð æfter his forþonce
wandering fate which we fate call goes after his providence
ȝ æfť his geþeahte, swa swa he tiohhað þ hit sie. Þeah
and after his counsel so as he intends that it be Though
hit us manigfaldlic ðince, sū good, sum yfel, hit is ðeah
it to-us manifold seem some good some evil it is yet
him anfeald good; forðæm he hit eall to gôdum ende
to-him single good because he it all to good end
brengð, ȝ for goode deð eall þ þ he deð. Siððan we
brings and for good does all that which he does Afterward we
hit hatað wyrd siððan hit geworht bið; ær hit wæs Godes
it call fate after it wrought is before it was of-God
foreþanc ȝ his foretiohhung. Ða wyrd he þonne wyrcð
providence and his predestination The fate he then works
oððe þurh ða goodan englas oððe þurh monna sawla, oððe
either through the good angels or through of-men souls or
þurh oðerra gesceafta lif, oððe þurh heofones tungl, oððe
through of-other creatures life or through of-heaven stars or
ðurh þara scuccena mislice lotwrencas; hwilū þurh an ðara,
through of-the devils various tricks at-times through one of-them

hwilū þurh eall ða. Ac þ is openlice cuð þ sio godcunde
at-times through all them But that is openly known that the divine
foretiohhung is anfeald ȝ unandwendlic, ȝ welt ælces
predestination is single and unchangeable and rules each
þinges endebyrdlice, ȝ eall þing gehiwað. Sumu þing þonne
thing orderly and all things forms Some things then
on þisse weorulde sint underðied þære wyrde, sume hire
in this world are subject to-the fate some to-it
nanwuht underðied ne sint; ac sio wyrd ȝ eall ða þing þe
not-at-all subject — are but the fate and all the things which
hire underðied sint, sint underðied ðæm godcundan foreþonce.
to-it subject are are subject to-the divine providence
129.13 Be ðæm ic ðe mæg sum bispell secgan, þ þu meaht
About that I to-thee can a-certain parable tell that thou canst
þy sweotolor ongitan hwilce men bioð underðied þære wyrde,
the more-clearly perceive which men are subject to-the fate
hwylce ne bioð. Eall ðios unstille gesceaft ȝ þios hwearfiende
which not are All this unstill creation and this turning
hwearfað on ðæm stillan Gode, ȝ on ðæm gestæðegan,
turns on the still God and on the steadfast
ȝ on ðæm anfealdan; ȝ he welt eallra gesceafta swa swa
and on the single and he rules all creatures so as
he æt fruman getiohhod hæfde ȝ get hæfð.
he at beginning intended had and still has
129.19 Swa swa on wænes eaxe hwearfiað þa hweol ȝ sio eax stint
So as on of-wain axle turn the wheels and the axle stands
stille ȝ byrð þeah ealne þone wæn, ȝ welt ealles þæs
still and bears yet all the wain and rules all the
færeltes; þ hweol hwerfð ymbutan ȝ sio nafu next þære eaxe
course the wheel turns around and the nave next to-the axle
sio færð micle fæstlicor ȝ orsorglicor þonne ða felgan don,
it goes much more-firmly and more-securely than the felloes do

swelce sio eax sie þ hehste god þe we nemnað God, ⁊ þa
as-if the axle be the highest good which we name God and the
selestan men faren nehste Gode, swa swa sio nafu færð neahst
best men go nearest to-God so as the nave goes nearest
þære eaxe, ⁊ þa midmestan swa swa ða spacan; forðæmþe
to-the axle and the middlemost so as the spokes because
ælces spacan bið oðer ende fæst on ðære nafe, oðer on
of-each spoke is one end fixed in the nave other in
þære felge. Swa bið þæm midlestan monnum; oðre hwile he
the felloe So is with-the middlemost men one while he
smeað on his mode ȳb þis eorðlice lif, oðre hwile ymb ðæt
meditates in his mind about this earthly life other while about the
godcundlice, swilce he locie mid oðre eagan to heofonum, mid
divine as-if he look with one eye to heavens with
oðre to eorþan. Swa swa þa spacan sticiað oðer ende on þære
other to earth So as the spokes stick one end in the
felge oþer on þære nafe, middeweard se spaca bið ægðrum
felloe other in the nave midway the spoke is to-each
emnneah, ðeah oðer ende bio fæst on þære nafe, oðer on þære
equally-near though one end be fixed in the nave other in the
felge; swa bioð þa midmestan men onmiddan þam spacan, ⁊
felloe so are the middlemost men in-the-middle-of the spoke and
þa betran near þære nafe, ⁊ þa mætran near ðæm felgum;
the better nearer to-the nave and the lesser nearer to-the felloes
bioð þeah fæste on ðære nafe, ⁊ se nafa on ðære eaxe.
are yet fixed in the nave and the nave on the axle
Hwæt, þa felga þeah hongiað on þæm spacan, þeah hi 130.5
Lo the felloes yet hang on the spokes though they
eallunga wealowigen on þære eorðan; swa doð þa mætestan
entirely roll on the earth so do the meanest
men on þæm midmestum, ⁊ þa midmestan on þæm betstan,
men on the middlemost and the middlemost on the best

ȝ þa betstan on Gode. Þeah þa mætestan ealle hiora lufe
and the best on God Though the meanest all their love
wenden to ðisse weorulde, hi ne magon þæron wunigan,
turn to this world they not can therein dwell
ne to nauhte ne weorðað, gif hi be nanum dæle ne beoð
nor to aught — come if they by no part — are
gefæstnode to Gode; þon ma þe þæs hweoles felga magon
fastened to God the more than of-the wheel felloes can
bion on ðæm færelte, gif hi ne bioð fæste on þæm spacum,
be in the motion if they not are fast on the spokes
ȝ þa spacan on þære eaxe. Þa felgea bioð fyrrest ðære
and the spokes on the axle The felloes are farthest from-the
eaxe; forðæm hi farað ungeredelicost. Sio nafu færð neaxst
axle therefore they go most-unsteadily The nave goes nearest
þære eaxe; forðy hio færð gesundlicost. Swa doð ða selestan
the axle therefore it goes most-securely So do the best
men; swa hi hiora lufe near Gode lætað, ȝ swiðor þas
men as they their love nearer to-God let and more these
eorðlicon þing forsioð, swa hi beoð orsorgran, ȝ læs reccað
earthly things despise so they are more-carefree and less care
hu sio wyrd wandrige, oððe hwæt hio brenge. Swa swa sio
how the fate wavers or what it brings So as the
nafu bið sȳle swa gesund, hnæppen þa felga on þ ðe hi
nave is ever so sound let-strike the felloes on that which they
hnæppen, ȝ þeah bið sio nafu hwæthwugu todæled from
strike and yet is the nave somewhat separated from
þære eaxe. Be þy þu meaht ongitan þ se wæn bið micle
the axle By that thou canst perceive that the wain is much
leng gesund þe læs bið todæled from þære eaxe; swa bioð
longer sound the less is separated from the axle so are
þa men eallra orsorgestæ ægðer ge þisses andweardan lifes
the men of-all most-carefree each both of-this present life

earfoða, ge þæs toweardan, þa þe fæste bioð on Gode; ac
hardships and of-the future those who fast are in God but
swa hi swiður bioð asyndrede frō Gode, swa hi swiður bioð
as they more are sundered from God so they more are
gedrefde ⁊ geswencte, ægþer ge on mode ge on lichoman.
troubled and afflicted each both in mind and in body
Swylc is þæt þ we wyrd hatað be þæm godcundan 130.28
Such is that which we fate call beside the divine
foreþonce, swylce sio smeaung ⁊ sio gesceadwisnes is to
providence as the reflection and the reason is to
metanne wið þone gearowitan, ⁊ swylce þas lænan þing
be-compared with the intelligence and as these transitory things
bioð to metanne wið ða ecan, ⁊ swilce þ hweol bið to
are to be-compared with the eternal and as the wheel is to
metanne wið ða eaxe; forðæm sio eax welt ealles þæs wænes.
be-compared with the axle because the axle rules all the wain
Swa deð se godcunda foreðonc; he astereð þone rodor
So does the divine providence it moves the firmament
⁊ þa tunglu, ⁊ þa eorðan gedeð stille, ⁊ gemetgað þa
and the stars and the earth makes still and tempers the
feower gesceafta; þ is wæter ⁊ eorðe ⁊ fyr ⁊ lyft.
four elements that is water and earth and fire and air
Ða he geðwærað ⁊ wlitegað, hwilum eft unwlitegað, ⁊
Those it harmonizes and beautifies at-times again deforms and
on oðrū hiwe gebrengð, ⁊ eft geedniwað, ⁊ tidreð ælc
into other form brings and again renews and breeds each
tudor, ⁊ hi eft gehyt ⁊ gehelt þonne hit forealdod bið
offspring and them again hides and keeps when it grown-old is
⁊ forsearod, ⁊ eft geewð ⁊ geedniwað þonne þonne he
and withered and again shows and renews then when it
wile. Sume uðwiotan þeah secgað þ sio wyrd wealde ægþer
will Some philosophers however say that the fate rules each

ge gesælða ge ungesælða ælces monnes. Ic þonne secge, swa
both felicities and unhappinesses of-each man I however say so
swa ealle cristene men secgað, þ sio godcunde foretiohhung
as all Christian men say that the divine predestination
his walde, næs sio wyrd; ⁊ ic wat þ hio demð eall
it ruled not-at-all the fate and I know that it judges all
þing swiðe rihte, þeah ungesceadwisum men swa ne þince.
things very rightly though to-irrational men so not seem
131.13 Hi wenað þ þara ælc sie god þe hiora willan fulgæð; nis
They think that of-those each be good who their will fulfills not-is
hit nan wundor, forðæm hi beoð ablende mid ðæm þiostrum
it any wonder because they are blinded with the darkness
heora scylda. Ac se godcunda foreþonc hit understent eall
of-their sins But the divine providence it understands all
swiðe rihte, þeah us þince for urum dysige þ hit on
very rightly though to-us seem for our folly that it on
woh fare; forðæm we ne cunnon þ riht understandan. He
crooked go because we not can the right understand He
demð þeah eall swiðe rihte, þeah us hwilum swa ne ðince.
judges however all very rightly though to-us at-times so not seem
131.20 Ealle men spiriað æfter þæm hehstan goode, ge goode ge
All men seek after the highest good both good and
yfle; ac forðy ne magon þa yflan cuman to ðæm hean hrofe
evil but therefore not can the evil come to the high roof
eallra gooda, forðæm hi ne spyriað on riht æfter. Ic nat
of-all goods because they not seek on right after I not-know
þeah þu cwæðe nu hwonne to me: hwylc unriht mæg
whether thou say now sometime to me what wrong can
beon mare þonne geþafige þ hit geweorðe, swa hit hwilum
be greater than allow that it happen as it at-times
gewyrð, þ þæm goodum becymð anfeald yfel on þisse
happens that to-the good befalls unmixed evil in this

weorulde, ⁊ þæm yflum anfeald god, ⁊ oðre hwile ægðer
world and to-the evil unmixed good and other while each
gemenged, ægþer ge ðā goodum ge þæm yflum? Ac ic þe
mixed each both to-the good and to-the evil But I thee
acsige hwæðer þu wene þ ænig mon sie swa andgitfull þ
ask whether thou think that any man be so discerning that
he mæge ongitan ælcne mon on ryht hwylc he sie, þ he
he can perceive each man on right what he be that he
nawðer ne sie ne betra ne wyrsa þonne he his wene. Ic
neither — be — better nor worse than he of-him think I
wat þeah þ hi ne magan. Ac wyrð swiðe oft on won se
know however that they not can But becomes very often on wrong the
sido þe sume men secgað þ sie mede wyrðe, sume men
habit which some men say that be of-reward worthy some men
secgað þ he sie wites wyrðe. Þeah hwa mæge ongitan
say that it be of-punishment worthy Though one can perceive
hwæt oðer do, he ne mæg witan hwæt he þencð; þeah he
what other do he not can know what he thinks though he
mæge sume his willan ongitan, þonne ne mæg he eallne.
can some-of his will perceive then not can he all
Ic þe mæg eac reccan sum bispell be þæm þ þu hit meaht 132.4
I thee can also tell a parable by that that thou it canst
þe sweotolor ongitan, ðeah hit ungesceadwise men ongitan
the more-clearly perceive though it irrational men perceive
ne mægen; þ is forhwi se gooda læce selle þam halū men
not can that is why the good physician give to-the healthy man
seftne drenc ⁊ swetne, ⁊ oðrū halum biterne ⁊ strangne;
mild drink and sweet and to-another healthy bitter and strong
⁊ hwilū eft þam unhalum, sumū liðne, sumū strangne,
and at-times again to-the sick to-some gentle to-some strong
sumum swetne, sumum biterne. Ic wat þ ælc þara þe þone
to-some sweet to-some bitter I know that each of-those who the

cræft ne can wile þæs wundrian forhwy hi swa don. Ac his
skill not knows will at-that wonder why they so do But at-it
ne wundriað þa læcas nauht, forðæm hi witon þ ða oðre
not wonder the physicians at-all because they know what the others
nyton; forðæm hi cunnon ælces hiora medtrymnesse ongiton
know-not because they can of-each of-them infirmity perceive
ȝ oncnawan, ȝ eac ða cræftas þe þærwið sculon. Hwæt
and recognize and also the skills which there-against must What
is sawla hælo bute rihtwisnes? oððe hwæt is hiora untrymnes
is of-souls health but righteousness or what is their infirmity
bute unþeawas? Hwa is þōn betera læce þære sawle þonne
but vices Who is then better physician of-the soul than
se þe hi gesceop, þ is God? He arað þæm goodan, ȝ
he who it created that is God He honors the good and
witnað ða yflan; he wat hwæs ælc wyrðe bið. Nis hit nan
punishes the evil he knows of-what each worthy is Not-is it any
wundor, forðæm he of þæm hean hrofe hit eall gesihð,
wonder because he from the high roof it all sees
ȝ þonan miscað ȝ metgað ælcum be his gewyrhtum.
and thence mixes and measures to-each by his deserts
132.20 Þ we þonne hatað wyrd, þonne se gesceadwisa God, þe
That we then call fate when the rational God who
ælces monnes ðearfe wat, hwæt wyrcð oððe geþafað þæs
of-each man need knows aught works or allows of-that
þe we ne wenað. ȝ git ic þe mæg sume bisne feaum
which we not expect and yet I thee can a-certain example in-few
wordum secgan be þæm dæle þe sio mennisce gesceadwisnes
words say by the part which the human reason
mæg ongitan þa godcundnesse. Þ is þonne þ we ongitað
can perceive the divinity That is then that we perceive
hwilū mon on oðre wisan, on oðre hine God ongit.
at-times a-man in one manner in another him God perceives

Hwilum we tiohhiað þ he sie se betra, ȝ þonne wat God
At-times we judge that he be the better and then knows God
þ hit swa ne bið. Þonne hwæm hwæt cymð oððe goodes
that it so not is When to-anyone aught comes either of-good
oððe yfles mare þonne ðe þincð þ he wyrðe sie, ne bið
or of-evil more than to-thee seems that he worthy be not is
sio unrihtwisnes no on Gode, ac sio ungleawnes bið on ðe
the unrighteousness — in God but the dullness is in thee
selfum, þ þu hit ne canst on riht gecnawan. Oft gebyreð
self that thou it not canst on right recognize Often happens
þeah þte men ongitað man on ða ilcan wisan þe hine God
however that men perceive a-man in the same manner that him God
ongit. Oft hit gebyreð þte manige men bioð swa ungetrume
perceives Often it happens that many men are so infirm
ægþer ge on mode ge on lichoman þ hi ne magon nan
each both in mind and in body that they not can any
good don, ne nan yfel nyllað unnedige, ȝ bioð eac swa
good do nor any evil will unforced and are also so
ungeþyldige þ hi ne magon nan earfoðu geþyldelice aberan.
impatient that they not can any hardships patiently bear
Forðæm hit gebyreð oft þ God nylle for his mildheortnesse 133.3
Therefore it happens often that God will-not for his mercy
nan unaberendlice broc him an settan, þy læs hi forlæten
any unbearable affliction them on set the less they forsake
hiora unsceðfulnesse ȝ weorðen wyrsan, gif hi asterede
their harmlessness and become worse if they provoked
bioð ȝ geswencte. Sume men beoð ælces cræftes full
are and afflicted Some men are of-each virtue fully
cræftige, ȝ full halige weras ȝ rihtwise. Þonne þincð þ
virtuous and fully holy men and righteous Then seems that
Gode unriht þ he swylce swence; ge furðum þone deað
to-God wrong that he such afflict and even the death

þe eallum monnum is gecynde to þolianne, he him gedeð
which to-all men is natural to suffer he for-them makes
seftran þonne oðrum monnum; swa swa gio sum wis
softer than for-other men so as of-old a-certain wise
mon cwæð þ se godcunda anwald gefrioðode his deorlingas
man said that the divine power protected its darlings
under his fiðra sceate, ⁊ hi scilde swa geornlice swa
under of-its wings covering and them shielded so diligently so
swa man deð þone æppel on his eagan. Manige tiliað
as one does the apple in his eye Many strive
Gode to cwemanne to þon georne þ hi wilniað hiora
God to please to such-degree eager that they desire by-their
agnum willum manigfeald earfoðu to þrowianne, forðæm hi
own will manifold hardships to suffer because they
willniað maran are ⁊ maran hlisan ⁊ maran weorðscipe
desire greater favor and greater repute and greater honor
mid Gode to habbanne þōn þa habbað þe softor libbað.
with God to have than those have who more-softly live
133.19 Oft eac becymð se anwald þisse worulde to swiðe goodum
Often also comes the power of-this world to very good
monnum, forðæm þ se anwald þara yfelana weorðe toworpen.
men so that the power of-the evil be overthrown
Sumū monnum God seleð ægðer ge good ge yfel gemenged,
To-some men God gives each both good and evil mixed
forðæm hi ægþres earniað; sume he bereafað hiora welan
because they of-both earn some he bereaves of-their wealth
swiðe hraðe, þæs þe hi ærest gesælige weorðað, þy læs hi for
very quickly after that they first happy become the less they for
longum gesælðum hi to up ahæbben, ⁊ þonan on ofermettum
long felicities them too up raise and thence into pride
weorðen; sume he læt þreagan mid heardum broce, þ hi
come some he lets afflict with hard affliction that they

leornigen þone cræft geþyldelice on ðæm langan geswince. Sume
learn the virtue patiently in the long toil Some
him ondrædað earfoðu swiðor þonne hi þyrfen, þeah hi
for-themselves dread hardships more than they need though they
hi eaðe adreogan mægen; sume hi gebycgað weorðlicne hlisan
them easily endure can some they buy honorable repute
þisses andweardan lifes mid hiora agnum deaðe, forðæm hi
of-this present life with their own death because they
wenað þ hi næbben nan oðer fioh þæs hlisan wyrðe buton
think that they have-not any other wealth of-the repute worthy but
hiora agnum fiore. Sume men wæron gio unoferswiðedlice,
their own life Some men were of-old unconquerable
swa þ hi nan ne meahte mid nanum wite oferswiþan;
so that them none — could with any torment overcome
þa bisnodon hiora æftergengum þ hi næren mid witum
those set-example to-their successors that they were-not with torments
oferswiðde. On þæm wæs sweotol þ hi for heora godum
overcome In that was manifest that they for their good
weorcum hæfden ðone cræft þ hi mon ne meahte oferswiðan.
works had the virtue that them one not could overcome
Ac þa yflan for hiora yflum weorcum wæron gewitnode ⁊
But the evil for their evil works were punished and
oferswiðde, forðæm þ ða witu gestirden oðrum þ hi swa
overcome so that the punishments restrained others that they so
gedon ne dorsten, ⁊ eac þa gebetan þe hi þonne brociað.
do not dared and also those amend whom they then afflict
Þ is swiðe sweotol tacn þæm wisan þ he ne sceal lufian 134.7
That is very clear token to-the wise that he not shall love
to ungemetlice ðas woruldgesælða, forðæm hie oft cumað to
too immoderately these worldly-felicities because they often come to
ðæm wyrrestum monnum. Ac hwæt wille we cweðan be
the worst men But what will we say about

þæm andweardan welan þe oft cÿð to ðæm goodū, hwæt
the present wealth which often comes to the good what
he elles sie buton tacn þæs toweardan welan, ȝ þæs edleanes
it else be but token of-the future wealth and of-the reward
angin þe him God tiohhod hæfð for his goodan willan?
beginning which for-him God appointed has for his good will
Ic wene eac þte God selle mænegum yfelū men gesælða
I think also that God give to-many evil men felicities
forðæmþe he wat hiora gecynd ȝ hiora willan swa geradne
because he knows their nature and their will so disposed
þ hi for nanum ermðum ne byoð no þy betran ac þy
that they for no miseries — are — the better but the
wyrsan. Ac se gooda læce, þ is God, lacnað hiora mod mid
worse But the good physician that is God heals their mind with
ðæm welan; wile þ hi ongiten hwonon him se wela come
the wealth wills that they perceive whence to-them the wealth come
ȝ olecce þæm þe læs he him þone welan afyrre, oðde
and flatter him the less he from-him the wealth remove or
hine þā welan, ȝ wende his þeawas to gode, ȝ forlæte
him from-the wealth and turn his ways to good and forsake
ða unþeawas ȝ þa yfel þe he ær for his ermðum dyde.
the vices and the evils which he before for his miseries did
Sume bioð þeah þy wyrson gif hi welan habbað, forðæm
Some are however the worse if they wealth have because
hi ofermodigað for ðæm welan ȝ his ungemetlice brucað.
they grow-proud for the wealth and it immoderately enjoy
134.24 Manegū men bioð eac forgifene forðæm þas weoruldgesælða
To-many men are also given for-this these worldly-felicities
þ he scile þæm goodum leanian hiora good, ȝ þæm yflum
that he should to-the good reward their good and to-the evil
hiora yfel. Forðæm sȳle bioð þa goodan ȝ þa yflan ungeþwere
their evil Because ever are the good and the evil discordant

betwuh him, ge eac hwilum þa yflan bioð ungerade betwuh
between them and also at-times the evil are at-odds between
him selfū; ge furðum an yfel man bið simle ungeþwære him
them selves and even one evil man is ever discordant with-him
selfum, forðæm þe he wat þ he untela deð, ⁊ wenð him
self because that he knows that he amiss does and expects for-himself
þara leana, ⁊ nyle þeah þæs geswican, ne hit furðum him
the rewards and will-not however of-it cease nor it even him
ne læt hreowan; ⁊ þonne for ðæm singalū ege ne mæg
— lets rue and then for the continual fear not can
no weorðan geþwære on him selfū. Oft hit eac gebyreð þ
— become at-peace in him self Often it also happens that
se yfla forlæt his yfel for sumes oðres yfles mannes andan,
the evil forsakes his evil for of-some other evil man envy
forðæm he wolde mid þy tælan þone oðerne þ he onscunode
because he would with that reproach the other that he shunned
his þeawas; swincð þonne ymb þ swa he swiðost mæg þ
his ways toils then about that as he most can that
he tiolað ungelic to bionne þæm oðrum, forðæm hit is þæs
he strives unlike to be to-the other because it is of-the
godcundan anwealdes gewuna þ he wircð of yfle good. Ac
divine power custom that it works from evil good But
hit nis nanum men alefed þæt he mæge witan eall þ God
it not-is to-any man allowed that he can know all that God
getiohhod hæfð, ne eac areccan þ þ he geworht hæfð.
appointed has nor also explain that that he wrought has
Ac on þæm hi habbað genoh to ongitanne þ se scippend 135.8
But in that they have enough to perceive that the creator
⁊ se waldend eallra gesceafta welt, ⁊ rehte gesceop eall
and the ruler of-all creatures rules and rightly created all
þ he gesceop, ⁊ nan yfel ne worhte ne get ne wyrcð, ac
that he created and no evil — wrought nor yet — works but

ælc yfel he adrifð of eallū his rice. Ac gif þu æft̃ þæm
each evil he drives from all his kingdom But if thou after the
hean anwalde spyrian wilt þæs ælmehtigan Godes, þonne ne
high power inquire wilt of-the almighty God then not
ongitst þu nan yfel on nanum þinge, þeah þe nu ðince
perceivest thou any evil in any thing though to-thee now seem
þ her micel on þys middangearde sie; forðæm hit is riht
that here much in this middle-earth be because it is right
þ ða goodan hæbben good edlean hiora gôdes, ȝ þa yflan
that the good have good reward of-their good and the evil
hæbban wite hiora yfles; ne bið þ nan yfel þte riht
have punishment of-their evil not is that any evil which right
bið, ac bið good. Ac ic ongite ðæt ic þe hæbbe aðretne nu
is but is good But I perceive that I thee have wearied now
mid þy langan spelle, forðæm þe lyst nu leoða; ac onfoh
with the long discourse because thee it-pleases now of-songs but receive
hiora nu, forðæm hit is se læcedom ȝ se drenc þe þu
them now because it is the medicine and the drink which thou
lange wilnodest, þæt ðu þy eð mæge þære lare onfon.
long desiredst that thou the more-easily can the teaching receive
135.22 Ða se Wisdom þa þis spell areaht hæfde, þa ongon he
When — Wisdom then this discourse told had then began he
eft singan ȝ þus cwæð: Gif þu willnige mid hlutrum
again to-sing and thus said If thou desire with clear
mode ongitan þone hean anweald, beheald þa tunglu þæs
mind perceive the high power behold the stars of-the
hean heofnes. Healdað þa tunglu þa ealdan sibbe þe hi on
high heaven Keep the stars the old peace which they in
gesceapne wæron, swa þ sio fyrene sunne ne onhrinð no þæs
created were so that the fiery sun not touches — the
dæles þæs heofenes þe se mona on irnð, ne se mona no ne
part of-the heaven which the moon in runs nor the moon — —

onhrinð þæs dæles þe sio sunne on irnð, þa hwile ðe hio
touches the part which the sun in runs the while that it
þæron bið. Ne se steorra þe we hatað Ursa ne cymð næfre on
therein is Not the star which we call Ursa — comes ever in
þam westdæle, þeah ealle oðre steorran faren mid þā rodore
the west-part though all other stars go with the firmament
æfter þære sunnan on þa eorþan. Nis hit nan wundor, forþā
after the sun into the earth Not-is it any wonder because
he is swiðe neah þam upende þære eaxe. Ac se steorra þe
it is very near the upper-end of-the axle But the star which
we hatað æfensteorra, þōn he bið west gesewen, þōn tacnnað
we call evening-star when it is west seen then betokens
he æfen. Færð þōn æfter þære sunnan on ðære eorðan sceade
it evening Goes then after the sun into of-the earth shadow
oð he ofirnð þa sunnan hindan; cymð wiðforan þa sunnan
until it overruns the sun from-behind comes before the sun
úp. Þōn hate we hine morgensteorra, forþā he cymð eastan
up Then call we it morning-star because it comes from-the-east
ûp; bodað þære sunnan cyme. Sio sunne ȝ se mona habbað
up announces of-the sun coming The sun and the moon have
todæled betwuht him þone dæg ȝ þa niht swiðe emne, ȝ
divided between them the day and the night very evenly and
swiðe geþwærlice ricsiað þurh godcundan foresceawunga, ȝ
very harmoniously rule through divine foresight and
unaþrotenlice þiowiað þā ælmihtigan Gode oð domes dæg.
unweariedly serve the almighty God until of-doom day
Forþi hi ne læt God on ane healfe þæs heofones bion, þy 136.8
Therefore them not lets God on one side of-the heaven be the
læs hi fordon oðra gesceafta. Ac gesibsuma God gemetgað
less they destroy other creatures But peaceable God tempers
ealla gesceafta ȝ geþwærað þa ðe betwuh him wuniað.
all creatures and reconciles those which between them dwell

Hwilū flihð se wæta þ dryge; hwilū he gemengeð þ fyr wið
At-times flees the wet the dry at-times he mingles the fire with
þam cile; hwilū þ leohte fyr ȝ þæt beorhte ûp gewit, ȝ sio
the cold at-times the light fire and the bright up departs and the
hefige eorðe sit þær niðere. Be þæs cyninges gebode brengð
heavy earth sits there below By of-the king command brings
eorðe ælcne westm ȝ ælc tudor ælce geare, ȝ se hata
earth each fruit and each offspring each year and the hot
sumor drygð ȝ gearwað sæd ȝ bleda, ȝ westmbæra hærfest
summer dries and prepares seed and fruits and fruitful autumn
bryngð ripa bleda. Hæglas ȝ snawas ȝ se oftræda ren leccað
brings ripe fruits Hails and snows and the frequent rain wet
þa eorðan on wintra; forþā underfehð sio eorðe þæt sæd ȝ
the earth in winter therefore receives the earth the seed and
gedeð þæt hit grewð on lengten. Ac se metod eallra gesceafta
makes that it grows in spring But the ordainer of-all creatures
fet on eorðan ealle growende westmas ȝ ealle forðbrengð; ȝ
feeds on earth all growing fruits and all brings-forth and
gehyt þōn he wyle, ȝ eowað þōn he wile, ȝ nimð þōn he
hides when he will and shows when he will and takes when he
wile. Þa hwile þe ða gesceafta þiowiað, sit se hehsta sceoppend
will The while that the creatures serve sits the highest creator
on his heahsetle; þanon he welt þā gewealdleðerū ealle
on his high-seat thence he rules with-the reins all
gesceaftu. Nis nan wundor, forþāðe he is cyning ȝ dryhten
creatures Not-is any wonder because he is king and lord
ȝ æwelm ȝ fruma ȝ æ ȝ wisdom ȝ rihtwis dema.
and fountain and beginning and law and wisdom and righteous judge
136.25 He sent ealla gesceafta on his ærendo, ȝ he het ealle
He sends all creatures on his errands and he bids all
eft cuman. Þær se an gestæþþega cyning gif he ne
again come If the one steadfast king if he not

staþelode ealla gesceafta, þōn wurdon hi ealle toslopene ⁊
established all creatures then would-become they all dissolved and
tostencte, ⁊ to nauhte wurdon ealle gesceafta. Þeah habbað
scattered and to naught would-become all creatures Yet have
gemænelice þa ane lufe þ hi þeowian swilcū hlaforde, ⁊
in-common the one love that they serve such lord and
fægniað þæs þæt he hiora wealt. Nis þ nan wundor,
rejoice of-that that he them rules Not-is that any wonder
forþam hi ne mihton elles bion, gif hi ne ðiowedon hiora
because they not could otherwise be if they not served their
fruman. Ða forlet se Wisdom þ leoð, ⁊ cwæð to me:
maker Then left — Wisdom the song and said to me

XL · EVERY FATE IS GOOD

Wisdom says every fate is good, since it either corrects or rewards, though common men call hard fortune evil. A wise man should no more fret over his fortune than a bold warrior over how often he must fight, and should keep the middle way between harsh and pleasant fate. The fourth book ends with a call to follow the good men of old. Wisdom, citing Aristotle, denies chance: providence has one man hide gold and another find it. Angels and men alone are free, and men the more so the nearer they set their minds to divine things.

Hwæðer ðu nu ongite hwider þios spræce wille? Ða cwæð 137.1
Whether thou now perceive whither this discourse will Then said
ic: Sege me hwider sio wille. Ða cwæð he: Ic wille secgan
I Say to-me whither it will Then said he I will say
þ ælc wyrd bio good, sam hio monnū good þince, sam hio
that each fate be good whether it to-men good seem or it
him yfel þince. Ða cwæð ic: Ic wene þ hit eaðe swa bion
to-them evil seem Then said I I think that it easily so be

mæge, þeah us hwilū oðer þynce. Ða cwæð he: Nis þæs
may though to-us at-times other seem Then said he Not-is of-that
nan tweo ðæt ælc wyrd bið good þara ðe riht ⁊ nytwyrðe
any doubt that each fate is good of-those which right and useful
bið; forðæm ælc wyrd, sā hio bio wynsū sam hio sie
is because each fate whether it be pleasant or it be
unwynsū, forðy cȳþ to ðæm goodan þ hio oðer twega do,
unpleasant for-this comes to the good that it one of-two do
oððe hine þreatige to ðon þ he bet do þonne he ær dyde,
either him rebuke to that that he better do than he before did
oððe him leanige þ he ær tela dyde. ⁊ eft ælc wyrd þara
or him reward that he before well did and again each fate of-those
þe to ðæm yflū cȳð, cymð for þæm twæm þingū, sam hio
which to the evil comes comes for the two things whether it
sie reðe, sam hio sy wynsū. Gif to ðæm yflum cymð reðu
be harsh or it be pleasant If to the evil comes harsh
wyrd, þonne cymð he to edleane his yfla, oððe to þreunge
fate then comes it to reward of-his evils or to rebuke
⁊ to lære þ he eft swa ne do. Þa ongann ic wundrian,
and to teaching that he again so not do Then began I wonder
⁊ cwæð: Is þ forinweardlice rihtracu þ þu ðær recst.
and said Is that thoroughly right-reasoning that thou there explainest
137.15 Þa cwæð he: Swa hit is swa ðu sægst; ac ic wolde,
Then said he So it is as thou sayest but I wished
gif ðu wolde, ðæt wit unc wenden sume hwile to
if thou wouldst that we-two ourselves turn some while to
þises folces spræce, þylæs hi cweþan þ wit sprecan ofer
of-this people speech lest they say that we-two speak beyond
monnes gemet. Ða cwæð ic: Sprec þ ðu wille.
of-man measure Then said I Speak what thou wilt

Đa cwæð he: Wenst þu ðæt þ ne sie good þ nit bið? Đa 137.20
Then said he Thinkest thou that that not be good which useful is Then
cwæð ic: Ic wene þ hit sie. Đa cwæð he: Ælc wyrd is nyt
said I I think that it be Then said he Each fate is useful
þara þe auðer deð, oððe lærð, oððe wyrcð. Đa cwæð ic: Þ
of-those which either does — teaches or works Then said I That
is soð. Đa cwæð he: eall bið good þte nyt bið. Đa cwæð ic:
is true Then said he all is good which useful is Then said I
þ is soð. Đa cwæð he: Sio wiðerwearde wyrd is ðæm good
that is true Then said he The adverse fate is to-those good
þe winnað wið unðeawas ⁊ wendað hi to goode. Đa cwæð
who strive against vices and turn them to good Then said
ic: Ne mæg ic þæs oðsacan. Đa cwæð he: Hwæt wenst þu bi
I Not can I it deny Then said he What thinkest thou about
þære goodan wyrde ðe oft cymð to goodū monnū on ðisse
the good fate which often comes to good men in this
weorulde, swylce hit sie foretacn ecra gooda? hwæþer þis folc
world as-if it be foretoken of-eternal goods whether this people
mæge cweðan þ hit sie yfel wyrd? Đa smearcode ic ⁊ cwæð:
can say that it be evil fate Then smiled I and said
Ne cwið þ nan mon, ac cwið þ hio sie swiðe good, swa hio
Not says that any man but says that it be very good as it
eac bið. Đa cwæð he: Hwæt wenst þu be þære unwenlicran
also is Then said he What thinkest thou about the more-unpromising
wyrde þe oft þreatað þa yflan to witnianne? hwæðer þis
fate which often threatens the evil to punish whether this
folc wene þ þ good wyrd sie? Đa cwæð ic: Ne wenað
people think that that good fate be Then said I Not think
hi no þ þ gôd wyrd sie, ac wenað þ hio sie earmlico.
they — that that good fate be but think that it be wretched

138.5 Đa cwæð he: Uton healdan unc þ wit ne wenen swa
Then said he Let-us keep ourselves that we-two not think so
swa þis folc wenð; gif wit þæs wenað ðe þis folc wenð,
as this people thinks if we-two that think which this people thinks
þonne forlæte wit ælce gesceadwisnesse ⁊ ælce rihtwisnesse.
then forsake we-two all reason and all righteousness
Đa cwæð ic: Hwy forlæte wit hi a þa ma? Đa cwæð
Then said I Why forsake we-two them ever the more Then said
he: Forðy þe folcisce men secgað þ ælc reðu wyrd ⁊
he Because that common men say that each harsh fate and
unwynsumu sie yfel; ac we ne sculon þæs gelefan, forðæm þe
unpleasant be evil but we not shall that believe because that
ælc wyrd bið good, swa we ær spræcon, sam hio sy reðe,
each fate is good as we before spoke whether it be harsh
sam hio sie wynsum. Đa wearð ic afæred ⁊ cwæð: Þ
or it be pleasant Then became I afraid and said That
is soð þ þu sægst; ic nat þeah hwa hit dyrre secgan
is true that thou sayest I not-know however who it dare say
dysegū monnū, forðæm his ne mæg nan dysi man gelefan.
to-foolish men because it not can any foolish man believe
138.15 Đa onsac se Wisdom sarlice, ⁊ cwæð: Forðy ne scyle nan
Then protested — Wisdom sorely and said Therefore not should any
wis mon forhigan ne to swiðe ȳb þ gnornian, to hwæm his
wise man fret nor too greatly about that mourn to what his
wise weorðe, oððe hwæðer him cume þe reðu wyrd þe liðu,
affair come or whether to-him come either harsh fate or gentle
ðon ma þe se hwata esne scyle ymb þ gnornian, hu oft
the more than the bold warrior should about that mourn how often
he fiohtan scyle. Ne bið his lof na ðy læsse, ac is wen
he fight must Not is his praise — the less but is expectation
þ hit sie þy mare; swa bið eac þæs wisan med þe mare, þe
that it be the more so is also of-the wise reward the greater the

him wraðre wyrd ⁊ reðre to becȳð. Þi ne sceolde nan
to-him angrier fate and harsher to comes Therefore not should any
wis man wilnian seftes lifes, gif he ænigra cræfta recð oððe
wise man desire soft life if he of-any virtues cares or
æniges weorðscipes her for weorulde oððe eces lifes æfter
of-any honor here for world or of-eternal life after
þisse weorulde. Ac ælc wis man scyle a winnan ægðer ge
this world But each wise man must ever strive each both
wið þa reðan wyrde ge wið þa wynsuman, þy læs he hine
against the harsh fate and against the pleasant the less he himself
for ðære wynsuman wyrde fortruwige, oððe for ðære reðan
for the pleasant fate presume or for the harsh
forðence. Ac him is ðearf þ he aredie þone midmestan weg
despair But to-him is need that he find the middlemost way
betweoh þære reðan wyrde ⁊ ðære liðan, þ he ne wilnige
between the harsh fate and the gentle that he not desire
wynsūran wyrde ⁊ maran orsorgnesse ðonne hit gemetlic sie,
more-pleasant fate and greater security than it moderate be
ne eft to reðre, forðæm he ne mæg nauþres ungemet adriogan.
nor again too harsh because he not can of-either excess endure
Ac hit is on hiora agnum anwealde hwæðre þara hi 138.31
But it is in their own power which of-those they
geciosen. Gif hi þonne þone midmestan weg aredian willað,
choose If they then the middlemost way find will
þonne sculon hi selfe him selfū gemetgian þa wynsuman
then must they themselves for-them selves moderate the pleasant
wyrde ⁊ þa orsorgan; þonne gemetgað him God þa
fate and the secure then moderates for-them God the
reðan wyrde ge on þisse weorulde ge on þære toweardan,
harsh fate both in this world and in the future
swa swa hi eaðe adreogan magan.
so as they easily endure can

139.5 Wella, wisan men, wel; gað ealle on þone weg ðe eow
Well-lo wise men well go all on the way which you
lærað þa foremæran bisna þara godena gumena ⁊ þara
teach the illustrious examples of-the good men and of-the
weorðgeornena wera þe ær eow wæron. Eala, ge eargan
honor-desiring men who before you were O ye cowardly
⁊ idelgeornan; hwy ge swa unnytte sien ⁊ swa aswundne?
and idleness-desiring why ye so useless be and so enfeebled
Hwy ge nyllen ascian æfter þæm wisum monnū ⁊ æfter þæm
Why ye will-not ask after the wise men and after the
weorðgeornum, hwylce hi wæron þa þe ær eow wæron?
honor-desiring what they were those who before you were
⁊ hwy ge þonne nyllen, siððan ge hiora þeawas geascod
and why ye then will-not after ye their ways found-out
hæbben, him onhirian, swa ge swiðost mægen? forðæm
have them imitate as ye most can because
hi wunnon æfter weorðscipe on þisse worulde, ⁊ tiolodon
they strove after honor in this world and strove-for
goodes hlisan mid goodum weorcū, ⁊ worhton goode bisne
good repute with good works and wrought good example
þæm þe æfter him wæron. Forðæm hi wuniað nu ofer
for-those who after them were Therefore they dwell now above
ðæm tunglum on ecre eadignesse for hiora gôdum weorcum.
the stars in eternal blessedness for their good works
Her endað sio fiorðe boc Boeties, ⁊ onginð sio fifte.
Here ends the fourth book of-Boethius and begins the fifth
139.19 Ða se Wisdom þa þis spell areaht hæfde, þa cwæð ic:
When — Wisdom then this discourse told had then said I
Swiðe riht is þin lar; ac ic wolde þe nu myndgian þære
Very right is thy teaching but I would thee now remind of-the
mænigfealdan lare þe þu me ær gehete be þære Godes
manifold teaching which thou me before promised about the of-God

foretiohhunge. Ac ic wolde ærest witan æt þe hwæðer þ auht
predestination But I would first know from thee whether that aught
sie þ we oft geherað þ men cweðað be sumum þingum þ
be that we often hear that men say about some things that
hit scyle weas gebyrian. Ða cwæð he: Me wære leofre þ ic
it should by-chance happen Then said he To-me were dearer that I
onette wið þæs þ ic þe moste gelæstan þ ic þe ær gehet,
hastened toward that that I thee might perform what I thee before promised
ȝ þe moste getæcan swa scortne weg swa ic scyrtestne findan
and thee might show as short way as I shortest find
meahte to ðinre cyððe. Ac hit is swiðe feor of uncrum wege,
could to thy native-land But it is very far from our way
of þæm wege þe wit getiohhod habbað on to farenne; þ
from the way which we-two determined have on to travel that
þ þu me ær bæde hit wære þeah nyttre to gecerranne ȝ
which thou me before askedst it were however more-useful to turn-to and
to ongitanne. Ac ic ondræde þ ic þe læde hidres þidres on ða
to understand But I dread that I thee lead hither thither on the
paðas of þinū wege, þ þu ne mæge eft þinne weg aredian.
paths from thy way that thou not can again thy way find
Nis hit nan wundor þeah þu getiorie, gif ic þe læde bi
Not-is it any wonder though thou tire if I thee lead beside
ðæm wege. Ða cwæð ic: Ne þearft þu no þ ondrædan; ac ic
the way Then said I Not needest thou — that dread but I
bio swiðe swiðe gefægen gif þu me lædst þider ic ðe bidde.
am very very glad if thou me leadest whither I thee ask
Ða cwæð he: Ic þe wille læran bispellum, swa ic þe ealne 140.2
Then said he I thee will teach with-parables as I thee all
weg dyde, ȝ þe þeah secgan wille þæt hit nis nauht
the-way did and to-thee yet say will that it not-is at-all
þ mon cwið, þ ænig þing weas gebyrige. Forðæ ælc þing
what one says that any thing by-chance happen Because each thing

cimð of sumū þingū, forðǣ hit ne bið weas gebyred; ac
comes from some things therefore it not is by-chance happened but
ðær hit of nauhte ne come þonne wære hit weas gebyred.
if it from naught — came then were it by-chance happened
140.7 Ða cwæð ic: Ac hwonan com se nama ærest? Ða cwæð
Then said I But whence came the name first Then said
he: Aristoteles min diorling hit gerehte on þære bec þe
he Aristotle my darling it treated in the book which
Fisica hatte. Þa cwæð ic: Hu rehte he hit? Ða cwæð he:
Physics is-called Then said I How treated he it Then said he
Men cwædon gio þonne him hwæt unwenunga gebirede,
Men said of-old when to-them aught unexpectedly happened
þ þ wære weas gebyred; swylce hwa nu delfe eorðan,
that that were by-chance happened as-if one now dig earth
ȝ finde ðær þonne goldhord, ond secge ðonne þ þ sie
and find there then gold-hoard and say then that that be
weas gebered. Ic wat þeah gif se delfere þa eorðan no
by-chance happened I know however if the digger the earth not
ne delfe, ne nan mon ær þ gold þær ne hydde, þonne
— dug nor any man before the gold there — hid then
ne funde he hit no. Forðy hit næs na weas funden;
not found he it — Therefore it was-not — by-chance found
ac sio godcunde foretiohhung lærde þone þe he wolde þ
but the divine predestination taught him whom he wished that
he gold hydde, ȝ eft ðone þe he wolde þ hit funde.
he gold hid and again him whom he wished that it found
140.18 Ða cwæð ic: Ðæt ic ongite þ hit is swa swa þu sægst;
Then said I That I perceive that it is so as thou sayest
ac ic þe wolde acsian hwæðer we ænigne freodom hæbben
but I thee would ask whether we any freedom have
oððe ænigne anweald, hwæt we don, hwæt we ne ne don,
or any power what we do what we not — do

þe sio godcunde foretiohhung oððe sio wyrd us nede to þā
or the divine predestination or the fate us compel to that
þe we willan. Þa cwæð he: We habbað micelne anwald;
which we will Then said he We have great power
nis nan gesceadwis gesceaft þ næbbe friodom. Se þe
not-is any rational creature that have freedom He who
gesceadwisnesse hæfð, se mæg deman ȝ tosceadan hwæs
reason has he can judge and distinguish what
he wilnigan sceal ȝ hwæt he onscunian sceal. ȝ ælc mon
he desire must and what he shun must and each man
hæfð þone freodom þ he wat hwæt he wile, hwæt he nele;
has the freedom that he knows what he wills what he will-not
ȝ þeah nabbað ealla gesceadwisa gesceafta gelicne friodom.
and yet have-not all rational creatures like freedom
Englas habbað rihte domas ȝ goodne willan, ȝ eall þ
Angels have right judgments and good will and all that
hi wilniað hi begitað swiðe eaðe, forðæmþe hi nanes wos
they desire they obtain very easily because they no wrong
ne wilniað. Nis nan þe hæbbe friodom ȝ gesceadwisnesse
— desire Not-is any who have freedom and reason
buton englum ȝ monnum; þa men habbað simle freodom
but angels and men the men have ever freedom
þy maran þe hi heora mod near godcundum ðingum
the more the they their mind nearer to-divine things
lætað, ȝ habbað þæs þy læssan friodom þe hi hiora
let and have of-that the less freedom the they of-their
modes willan near þisse weoruldare lætað. Nabbað hi nænne
mind will nearer to-this worldly-honor let Have-not they any
freodom þonne hi heora agnum willum hi selfe unðeawum
freedom when they by-their own will them selves to-vices

underðiodað; ac sona swa hi hiora mod onwendað from
subject but as-soon as they their mind turn from
gode, swa weorðað hi ablende mid unwisdome.
good so become they blinded with folly
141.6 Swaþeah is an ælmihtig God on his þære hean ceastre;
Nevertheless is one almighty God in his the high city
se gesihð ælces monnes geþoht, ⁊ his word ⁊ his dæda
who sees of-each man thought and his words and his deeds
toscead, ⁊ gilt ælcū æfter his gewyrhtum. Ða se Wisdom
distinguishes and repays to-each after his deserts When — Wisdom
þa þis spell asæd hæfde, þa ongon he singan ⁊ þus cwæð:
then this discourse said had then began he to-sing and thus said

XLI · FOREKNOWLEDGE AND FREEDOM

Wisdom sings that even the sun Homer praised cannot shine through all things, while God sees all his creatures alike. Asked why God gives the wicked freedom, Wisdom answers that a kingdom with no free man would be unfitting; to Boethius' fear that predestination makes prayer vain, he answers that God repays each by his deserts. Not all God foresees must happen: he foreknows some evils to prevent them, as a helmsman furls the sail before a storm. God sees all we do without compelling us, and each creature knows by its own measure. Wisdom sings that man alone walks upright, a sign to turn his thoughts upward.

141.11 Þeah Omerus se goda sceop, þe mid Crecū selest was: se was
Though Homer the good poet who among Greeks best was he was
Firgilies lareow; se Frigilius wæs mid Lædenwarum selest:
of-Virgil teacher that Virgil was among Latin-speakers best
þeah Omerus on his leoðū swiðe herede þære sunnan gecynd
though Homer in his songs greatly praised of-the sun nature
⁊ hiore cræftas ⁊ hiore biorhto, ne mæg heo þeah ealle
and its powers and its brightness not can it however all

gesceafta gescinan, ne þa gesceafta þe heo gescinan mæg ne
creatures shine-on nor the creatures which it shine-on can —
mæg hio ealle endemest gescinan, ne ealle innan geondscinan.
can it all equally shine-on nor all within shine-through
Ac nis þā ælmihtigan Gode swa, þe is scyppend ealra
But not-is to-the almighty God so who is creator of-all
gesceafta; he geseohð ⁊ þurhseohð ealle his gesceafta
creatures he sees and sees-through all his creatures
ændemest. Þone mon mæg hatan buton lease soþe sunne.
equally Him one can call without lie true sun
Ða se Wisdom þa þis leoð asungen hæfde, ða geswugode 141.20
When — Wisdom then this song sung had then was-silent
he ane lytle hwile. Ða cwæð ic: Sum tweo me hæfð swiðe
he a little while Then said I A doubt me has greatly
gedrefed. Ða cwæð he: Hwæt is se? Ða cwæð ic: Hit is þ
troubled Then said he What is it Then said I It is that
þ ðu sægst þ God selle ælcū men freodom swa good to
that thou sayest that God give to-each man freedom either good to
donne swa yfel, swæðer he wille; ⁊ þu sægst eac þ God
do or evil whichever he will and thou sayest also that God
wite ælc þing ær hit geweorðe; ⁊ þu sægst eac þ nan
know each thing before it happen and thou sayest also that no
þing ne geweorðe bute hit God wille oððe geðafie; ⁊ þu
thing — happen unless it God will or allow and thou
sægst þ hit scyle eall faran swa he getiohhod hæbbe. Nu
sayest that it must all go as he appointed have Now
wundrie ic þæs hwy he geþafige þ þa yflan men hæbben
wonder I at-that why he allow that the evil men have
þone freodom þ hi mægen don swa god swa yfel, swæðer
the freedom that they can do either good or evil whichever
swa hi willan, þonn̄ he ær wat þ hi yfel don willað. Ða
— they will when he before knows that they evil do will Then

cwæð he: Ic þe mæg swiðe eaðe geandwyrdan þæs spelles.
said he I thee can very easily answer that discourse
Hu wolde þe nu lician gif hwilc swiðe rice cyning wære
How would thee now please if some very powerful king were
⁊ næfde nænne freone mon on eallū his rice, ac wæren
and had-not any free man in all his kingdom but were
ealle þiowe? Ða cwæð ic: Ne þuhte me hit no rihtlic, ne
all slaves Then said I Not seemed to-me it — right nor
eac nauht gerisenlic, gif him sceolden þiowe men þenian.
also at-all fitting if him should servile men serve
142.6 Ða cwæð he: Þ wære uncynlicre, gif God næfde on eallum
Then said he That were more-unfitting if God had-not in all
his rice nane frige gesceaft under his anwalde. Forðæm he
his kingdom any free creature under his power Therefore he
gesceop twa gesceadwisa gesceafta freo, englas ⁊ men; þ̄æ
created two rational creatures free angels and men to-whom
he geaf micle gife freodomes, þ hi mosten don swa god swa
he gave great gift of-freedom that they might do either good or
yfel, swæðer swa hi wolden. He sealde swiðe fæste gife ⁊
evil whichever — they would He gave very firm gift and
swiðe fæste æ̂ mid ðære gife ælcum men oð his ende; ðæt is
very firm law with the gift to-each man until his end that is
se freodom ðæt se mon mot don þ he wile, ⁊ þ is sio æ̂
the freedom that the man may do what he will and that is the law
þ he gilt ælcū be his gewyrhtum ægðer ge on þisse worulde
that he repays to-each by his deserts each both in this world
ge on þære toweardan swa good swa yfel, swæðer he deð. ⁊
and in the future either good or evil whichever he does and
men magon begitan þurh þone freodom swa hwæt swa hi
men can obtain through the freedom so what so they
willað, buton deað hi ne magon forcerran; æc hi hine magon
will but death they not can avoid but they it can

mid goodū weorcum gelettan, þ he þe lator cymð; ge furþū
with good works delay that it the later comes and even
oð oreldo hi hine hwilū gelettað. Gif men to goodum
until old-age they it at-times delay If to-a-man for good
weorce ne onhagie, hæbbe goodne willan; þ is emngood.
work not be-possible let-have good will that is equally-good
Đa cwæð ic: Wel ðu me hæfst aretne on þā tweon, ⁊ on
Then said I Well thou me hast cheered in the doubt and in
þære gedrefednesse þe ic ær on wæs be ðæm freodome.
the trouble which I before in was about the freedom
Ac ic eom nu giet on micle maran gedrefednesse geunrotsod, 142.22
But I am now still in much greater trouble saddened
fulneah oð ormodnesse. Đa cwæð he: Hwæt is sio micle
well-nigh to despair Then said he What is the great
unrotnes? Đa cwæð ic: Hit is ym ða Godes foretiohhunge;
sadness Then said I It is about the of-God predestination
forðæm we geherað hwilum secgan þ hit scyle eall swa
because we hear at-times say that it must all so
geweorðan swa swa God æt fruman getiohhad hæfde, þ hit
happen so as God at beginning appointed had that it
ne mæge nan mon onwendan. Nu ðincð me þ he do woh,
not can any man change Now seems to-me that he do wrong
þonne he arað þa goodan, ⁊ eac þonne he witnað þa yflan, gif
when he honors the good and also when he punishes the evil if
þ soð is þ hit him swa gesceapen wæs þ hi ne mosten
that true is that it for-them so shaped was that they not might
elles don. Unnytlice we swincað þonne we us gebiddað,
otherwise do Uselessly we toil when we ourselves pray
⁊ ðonne we fæstað, oððe ælmessan sellað, gif we his
and when we fast or alms give if we for-it

nabbað ðy maran þanc þe þa þe on eallum þingum wadað
have-not the more thanks than those who in all things go
on hiora agenne willan, ⁊ æfter hiora lichoman luste irnað.
in their own will and after of-their body lust run
143.4 Ða cwæð he: Þis is sio ealde siofung þe þu longe siofodes,
Then said he This is the old complaint which thou long complainedst
⁊ manige eac ær ðe; þara wæs sum Marcus, oðre naman
and many also before thee of-those was one Marcus by-second name
Tullius, þriddan naman he was gehaten Cicero; se wæs
Tullius by-third name he was called Cicero who was
Romana heretoga; se wæs uðwita. Se wæs swiðe abisgod mid
of-Romans leader who was philosopher He was very occupied with
þære ilcan spræce, ac he hi ne meahte brengan to nanum ende.
the same question but he it not could bring to any end
Forðy he ne meahte, ne nan mon on þone timan, þa spræce
Therefore he not could nor any man in that time the question
to nanum ende bringan, forðy hiora mod wæs abisgod on
to any end bring because their mind was occupied in
ðisse weorulde wilnunga. Ac ic þe secge, gif þ soð is þ
of-this world desires But I to-thee say if that true is which
ge secgað, þ hit wæs unnet gebod on godcundum bocum þ
ye say that it was useless command in divine books that
God bebead þ mon sceolde forlætan yfel ⁊ don good; ⁊
God commanded that one should forsake evil and do good and
eft se cwide þe he cwæð: swa mon ma swincð, swa mon
again the saying which he said as one more toils so one
maran mede onfehð. ⁊ ic wundrige hwy þu hæbbe forgiten
greater reward receives and I wonder why thou have forgotten
eall þ þ wit ær spræcon. Ða cwæð ic: Hwæt hæbbe ic
all that which we-two before spoke Then said I What have I
forgiten þæs þe wit ær spræcon? Ða cwð he: Wit sædon
forgotten of-that which we-two before spoke Then said he We-two said

ær þ sio godcunde foretiohhung ælc gôd worhte ȝ nan
before that the divine predestination each good wrought and no
yfel, ne nan ne tiohhode to wyrcanne, ne næfre ne worhte.
evil nor any — appointed to work nor ever — wrought
Ge furðum þ wit gereahton to goodum þæt folciscū 143.20
Yea even that we-two explained as good which to-common
monnū yfel þuhte; þ wæs þ mon wræce ȝ witnode hwone
men evil seemed that was that one punished and chastised someone
for his yfle. Hu ne sædon wit eac ær on þisse ilcan bec
for his evil How not said we-two also before in this same book
þ God hæfde getiohhod freodom to sellanne monnum, ȝ
that God had appointed freedom to give to-men and
swa dyde; ȝ gif hi þone freodom tela gehealdon, þ he hi
so did and if they the freedom well held that he them
wolde swiðe weorðian mid ece life; ȝ gif hi ðone freodom
would greatly honor with eternal life and if they the freedom
forheolden, þ he hi þonne wolde witnian mid deaðe. He
abused that he them then would punish with death He
tiohhode, gif hi hwæt gesyngoden on ðæm freodome, þ hi
appointed if they aught sinned in the freedom that they
hit eft on ðæm freodome mid hreowsunga gebeten; ȝ gif
it again in the freedom with repentance amend and if
hiora hwylc swa heardheort wære þ he nane hreowsunge ne
of-them any so hard-hearted were that he no repentance —
dyde, þ he þonne hæfde rihtlic wite. Ealla gesceafta he
did that he then had just punishment All creatures he
hæfde getiohhod þeowu, buton englum ȝ monnum. Forðyþe
had appointed servile except angels and men Because
þa oðra gesceafta þeowe sint, hi healdað hiora þegnunga oð
the other creatures servile are they keep their services until
domes dæg; ac þa men ȝ þa englas, þe freo sint, forlætað
of-doom day but the men and the angels who free are forsake

hiora þegnunga. Hwæt magon men cweðan þ sio godcunde
their services What can men say that the divine
foretiohhung getiohhod hæfde þæs ðe hio ne þurhtuge? oððe
predestination appointed had of-that which it not carried-out or
hu magon hi hi aladian þ hi ne mægen good don, nu
how can they them excuse that they not can good do now
hit awriten is þ God gelde ælcum men be his gewyrhtum?
it written is that God repays to-each man by his deserts
144.7 Hwy sceall þonne ænig mon bion idel, ðæt he ne wyrce? Ða
Why shall then any man be idle that he not work Then
cwæð ic: Genoh þu me hæfst gefreolsod þære tweounge mines
said I Enough thou me hast freed of-the doubt of-my
modes be þære ascunga þe ic þe ahsade. Ac ic þe wolde
mind about the question which I thee asked But I thee would
giet acsian sumre spræce ðe me ymbe tweoð. Ða cwæð he:
yet ask a-certain question which me about it-doubts Then said he
Hwæt is þæt? Ða cwæð ic: Genog cuð me is þ God hit
What is that Then said I Enough known to-me is that God it
wat eall beforan, ge good ge yfel, ær hit geweorðe; ac ic
knows all beforehand both good and evil before it happen but I
nat hwæðer hit eall geweorðan sceal unanwendendlice þ
not-know whether it all happen shall unchangeably that
he wat ȝ getiohhod hæfð. Ða cwæð he: Ne ðearf hit no
he knows and appointed has Then said he Not need it —
eall geweorðan unanwendendlice; ac sum hit sceal geweorðan
all happen unchangeably but some it shall happen
unanwendendlice; þ bið þte ure nedþearf bið, ȝ his willa
unchangeably that is which our need is and his will
bið. Ac hit is sum swa gerad þ his nis nan nedþearf, ȝ
is But it is some so disposed that of-it not-is any need and
þeah ne dereð no þeah hit geweorðe; ne nan hearm ne bið,
yet not harms — though it happen nor any harm — is

þeah hit no ne geweorðe. Geþenc nu be ðe selfū hwæðer
though it not — happen Consider now about thee self whether
þu ænig þing swa fæst getiohhod hæbbe þæt þe þince þ
thou any thing so fast appointed have that to-thee seem that
hit næfre þinū willū onwend ne weorðe, ne þu butan bion ne
it never by-thy will changed — become nor thou without be —
mæge; oððe hwæðer þu eft on ængum geþeahte swa twioræde
can or whether thou again in any counsel so irresolute
sie þ þe helpe hwæðer hit geweorðe, ðe hit no ne geweorðe.
be that thee help whether it happen or it not — happen
Fela is þara þinga þe God ær wat ær hit geweorðe, 144.25
Many is of-the things which God before knows before it happen
ȝ wat eac þ hit dereð his gesceaftum gif hit gewyrð.
and knows also that it harms his creatures if it happens
Nat he hit no forðyþe he wille þ hit geweorðe, ac
Not-knows he it — because he will that it happen but
forðy þe he wile forwernan þ hit ne geweorðe, swa swa
because that he will prevent that it — happen so as
good scipstiora ongit micelne wind on hreore sæ ær ær
good helmsman perceives great wind on rough sea earlier before
hit geweorðe, ȝ hæt fealdan þ segl ȝ eac hwilum lecgan
it happen and bids fold the sail and also at-times lay
þone mæst, ȝ lætan þa bætinge; gif he ær þweores
the mast and let-go the cables if he before of-contrary
windes bætte, warenað he hine wið ðæt weder.
wind made-fast guards he him against the weather
Ða cwæð ic: Swiðe wel þu min hæfst geholpen æt þære 145.1
Then said I Very well thou me hast helped in the
spræce, ȝ ic wundrige hwy swa mænige wise men swa
question and I wonder why so many wise men so
swiðe swuncen mid þære spræce, ȝ swa lytel gewis funden.
greatly toiled with the question and so little certain found

Đa cwæð he: Hwæs wundrast þu þær swa swiðe, swa eðe
Then said he At-what wonderest thou there so greatly as easy
swa hit is to ongitanne? Hu ne wast þu þ manig þing ne
as it is to understand How not knowest thou that many thing not
bið no ongiten swa swa hit bið, ac swa swa þæs andgites
is — perceived so as it is but so as of-the understanding
mæð bið þe þæræfter spyreð? Swilc is se wisdom þ hine ne
measure is which after-it inquires Such is the wisdom that him not
mæg nan mon of þisse weorulde ongitan swilcne swylce he
can any man of this world perceive such as he
is; ac ælc winð be his andgites mæðe þ he hine wolde
is but each strives by of-his understanding measure that he him would
ongitan gif he meahte. Ac se wisdom mæg us eallunga
perceive if he could But the wisdom can us entirely
ongitan swylce swylce we sint, þeah we hine ne mægen
perceive such as we are though we him not can
ongitan eallunga swylcne swylce he is; forðæm se wisdom
perceive entirely such as he is because the wisdom
is God. He gesihð eall ure weorc ge good ge yfel, ær hi
is God He sees all our works both good and evil before they
gewordene sien, oððe furðum geþoht; ac he us ne ned no
happened be or even thought but he us not compels —
þy hraðor to þæm þ we nede scylen good don, ne us
the sooner to that that we necessarily must good do nor us
ne wernð þ we yfel don, forðæmþe he us sealde freodom.
— prevents that we evil do because he to-us gave freedom
145.16 Ic þe mæg eac tæcan sume bisne þ þu þe yð ongitan
I thee can also show a-certain example that thou the more-easily perceive
meahte ða spræce. Hwæt, þu wast þæt gesihð ȝ gehernes
couldst the argument Lo thou knowest that sight and hearing
ȝ gefrednes ongitað þone lichoman þæs monnes, ȝ þeah
and touch perceive the body of-the man and yet

ne ongitað hi hine no gelicne; þa earan ongitað þ hi
not perceive they it — alike the ears perceive what they
geherað, ⁊ ne ongitað hi þeah þone lichoman eallunga
hear and not perceive they however the body entirely
swylcne swylce he bið; sio gefrednes hine mæg gegrapian
such as it is the touch it can grope
⁊ gefredan þæt hit lichoma bið, ac hio ne mæg gefredan
and feel that it body is but it not can feel
hwæðer he bið þe blæc þe hwit, ðe fæger ðe unfæger.
whether it is either black or white or fair or foul
Ac sio gesihð æt frumcerre, swa þa eagan on besioð, hi
But the sight at first-turn as the eyes on look they
ongitað ealle þone andwlitan ðæs lichoman. Ac ic wolde
perceive all the form of-the body But I would
get reccan sume race, þ ðu wisse hwæs þu wundrode.
yet tell a-certain account that thou knewest at-what thou wonderedst
Ða cwæð ic: Hwæt is þæt? Ða cwæð he: Hit is þ se an 145.28
Then said I What is that Then said he It is that the one
man ongit þ þ he on oðrū ongit synderlice; he hine ongit
man perceives that which he in another perceives separately he him perceives
þurh þa eagan synderlice, þurh þa earan synderlice, þurh
through the eyes separately through the ears separately through
his rædelsan synderlice, þurh gesceadwisnesse synderlice, þurh
his imagination separately through reason separately through
gewis andgit. Manige sint cwucera gesceafta unstirende, swa
certain understanding Many are of-living creatures unmoving so
swa nu scylfiscas sint, ⁊ habbað þeah sumne dæl andgites,
as now shellfish are and have yet some part of-understanding
forðæm hi ne meahton elles libban, gif hi nan grot
because they not could otherwise live if they no particle
andgites næfden. Sume magon gesion, sume magon geheran,
of-understanding had Some can see some can hear

sume gefredan, sume gestincan. Ac þa styriendan netenu sint
some feel some smell But the moving beasts are
monnū gelicran, forðæm hy habbað eall þ ða unstyriendan
to-men more-like because they have all that the unmoving
habbað, ⁊ eac mare to; þ is þ hi onhyriað monnū; lufiað
have and also more besides that is that they imitate men love
þ hi lufiað ⁊ hatiað þ hi hatiað, ⁊ flioð þ hi hatiað
what they love and hate what they hate and flee what they hate
⁊ secað þ hi lufiað. Ða men ðonne habbað eall þ we ær
and seek what they love The men then have all that we before
ymbe spræcon, ⁊ eac to eacan þā micle gife gesceadwisnesse.
about spoke and also in addition-to the great gift of-reason
Englas þōn habbað gewiss andgit. Forþam sint ðas sceafta
Angels then have certain understanding Therefore are these creatures
þus gesceapene þ ða unstyriendan hi ne ahebben ofer þa
thus created that the unmoving them not raise over the
styriendan, ne him wið ne winnan, ne þa styriendan ofer
moving nor them against — strive nor the moving over
þa men, ne þa men ofer þa englas, ne þa englas wið God.
the men nor the men over the angels nor the angels against God
146.14 Ac þæt is earmlic þ se mæsta dæl monna ne secð no þ
But that is pitiful that the greatest part of-men not seeks — that
þ him forgifen is, þ is gesceadwisness; ne þ ne secð
which to-them given is that is reason nor that — seeks
þæt him ofer is, þ is þæt englas habbað ⁊ wise men; þ
which them above is that is what angels have and wise men that
is gewis andget. Ac mest monna nu onhyreð nu neatū
is certain understanding But most of-men now imitate now beasts
on þā þæt hi willniað woruldlusta swa swa netenu. Ac gif
in that that they desire worldly-lusts so as beasts But if
we nu hæfdon ænigne dæl untwiogendes andgites swa swa
we now had any part of-undoubting understanding so as

englas habbað, þōn mihte we ongiton þ þ andget bið
angels have then might we perceive that the understanding is
micle betere þōn ure gesceadwisnes se. Þeah we fela smean,
much better than our reason — Though we much consider
we habbað litellne gearowitan buton tweon; ac þā englum
we have little intelligence without doubt but to-the angels
nis nan tweo nanes þæra þinga þe hi witon; forþi is
not-is any doubt of-any of-the things which they know therefore is
hiora gearowito swa micle betra þōn ure gesceadwisnes se,
their intelligence so much better than our reason —
swa ure gesceadwisnes is betere þōn nytena andgit sie,
as our reason is better than of-beasts understanding be
oððe þæs gewittes ænig dæl þe him forgifen is auþer
or of-the wit any part which to-them given is either
oððe hrorum neatū oððe unhrorum. Ac uton nu habban ure
— to-moving beasts or unmoving But let-us now hold our
mod up swa swa we yfemest mægen wið þæs hean hrofes
mind up so as we highest can toward the high roof
þæs hehstan andgites, þ ðu mæge hrædlicost cumon ⁊
of-the highest understanding that thou can most-quickly come and
eðelicost to þinre agenre cyððe þonan þe ðu ær come.
most-easily to thy own native-land whence — thou before camest
Þær mæg þin mod ⁊ þin gesceadwisnes geseon openlice þ 146.29
There can thy mind and thy reason see openly that
þ hit nu ymb tweoð ælces þinges, ægþer ge be þære
which it now about doubts of-each thing each both about the
godcundan foresceawunge þe we nu oft ymb spræcon, ge
divine foresight which we now often about spoke and
be urum frydome, ge swa be eallū þingū.
about our freedom and so about all things

147.1 Đa se Wisdom þa þis spell asæd hæfde, þa ongan
When — Wisdom then this discourse said had then began
he singan ⁊ þus cwæð: Hwæt, þu miht ongitan þ
he to-sing and thus said Lo thou canst perceive that
manig wyht is mistlice ferende geond eorþan, ⁊ sint
many creature is variously going throughout earth and are
swiðe ungelices hiwes, ⁊ ungelice farað. Sume licgað mid
of-very unlike form and unlike go Some lie with
eallon lichoman on eorþan, ⁊ swa smuhende farað þ him
all body on earth and so creeping go that them
nauþer ne fêt ne fiðeras ne fultumað; ⁊ sume bið twiofete,
neither — feet nor wings — help and some is two-footed
sume fiowerfete, sume fleogende, ⁊ ealle þeah bioð ofdune
some four-footed some flying and all yet are downward
healde wið þære eorðan, ⁊ þider willniað, oððe þæs þe
inclined toward the earth and thither desire either of-that which
hi lyst oððe þæs þe hi beþurfon. Ac se mann ana
them it-pleases or of-that which they need But the man alone
gæþ uprihte; þ tacnað þ he sceal ma þencan úp þōn
goes upright that betokens that he shall more think up than
nyðer, þi læs þ mod sie nioðoror þōn ðe lichoma. Đa
down the less the mind be lower than the body When
se Wisdom ða ðis leoð asungen hæfde, ða cwæð he:
— Wisdom then this song sung had then said he

Wisdom says men must seek to know God by the measure of understanding he gives. Some things have both beginning and end, angels and souls have a beginning and no end, and God alone has neither. He is the highest eternity because past, present, and future are all present to him: he forgets nothing, fears nothing, never sleeps, and is everywhere. Wisdom urges men to pray humbly, hate evil, love virtue, and do good, since the eternal God sees and repays everything they do.

Forðy we scoldon ealle mægene spyrian æfter Gode, þ we 147.12
Therefore we should with-all might inquire after God that we
wissen hwæt he wære. Ðeah hit ure mæð ne sie þ we
knew what he were Though it our measure not be that we
witen hwylc he sie, we sculon þeah be þæs andgites mæðe
know what he be we must however by of-the understanding measure
þe he us gifð fandian; swa swa we ær cwædon þ mon
which he us gives try so as we before said that one
scolde ælc þing ongitan be his andgites mæþe, forðæm we
should each thing perceive by of-his understanding measure because we
ne magon ælc þing ongitan swylc swylce hit bið. Ælc gesceaft
not can each thing perceive such as it is Each creature
ðeah ægðer ge gesceadwis ge ungesceadwis þ sweotolað þ
however each both rational and irrational that shows that
God ece is, forðæm næfre swa manega gesceafta ȝ swa
God eternal is because never so many creatures and so
micla ȝ swa fægra hi ne underðiodden læssan gesceafte
great and so fair themselves — subjected to-lesser creature
ȝ læssan anwalde þonne hi ealle sindon, ne furðum
and lesser power than they all are nor even
emnmiclum. Ða cwæð ic: Hwæt is ecnes? Ða cwæð he: Þu
to-equally-great Then said I What is eternity Then said he Thou
me ahsast micles ȝ earfoðes to ongitanne; gif þu hit witan
me askest of-great and of-hard to understand if thou it know

wilt, ðu scealt habban ær þines modes eagan clæne ⁊ hlutor.
wilt thou must have first of-thy mind eyes clean and clear
Ne mæg ic ðe nauht helan ðæs ðe ic wat. Wast þu þ
Not can I thee at-all hide of-that which I know Knowest thou that
þreo ðing sindon on þis middangearde? An is hwilendlic, ðæt
three things are in this middle-earth One is transitory which
hæfð ægðer ge fruman ge ende; ⁊ ic nat ðeah nanwuht
has each both beginning and end and I not-know however anything
ðæs ðe hwilendlic is, nauðer ne his fruman ne his ende.
of-that which transitory is either — its beginning or its end
147.29 Oðer ðing is ece, þ hæfð fruman ⁊ næfð nænne ende; ⁊
Second thing is eternal which has beginning and has-not any end and
ic wat hwonne hit onginð, ⁊ wat þ hit næfre ne geendað;
I know when it begins and know that it never — ends
þ sint englas ⁊ monna saula. Þridde ðing is ece buton
that are angels and of-men souls Third thing is eternal without
ende ⁊ buton anginne; þ is God. Betweoh þæm þrim
end and without beginning that is God Between the three
is swiðe micel toscead. Gif wit þ eall sculon tosmeagan,
is very great difference If we-two that all must examine
þonne cume wit late to ende þisse bec, oððe næfre. Ac an
then come we-two late to end of-this book or never But one
þing ðu scealt nede þæran witan: forhwy God is gehaten
thing thou must necessarily therein know why God is called
sio hehste ecnes. Ða cwæð ic: Hwy? Ða cwæð he: Forðon
the highest eternity Then said I Why Then said he Because
þe we witon swiðe lytel ðæs þe ær us wæs buton be
that we know very little of-that which before us was but by
gemynde ⁊ be geæscum, ⁊ get læsse þæs ðe æft us
memory and by inquiries and yet less of-that which after us
bið. Þ an us is gewislice andweard þ þe þonne bið;
is That alone to-us is certainly present that which then is

ac him is eall andweard, ge þte ær wæs, ge þte
but to-him is all present both that-which before was and that-which
nu is, ge þte æfter us bið; eall þ is him andweard.
now is and that-which after us is all that is to-him present
Ne wexð his wela na, ne eac næfre ne wanað. Ne ofman
Not grows his wealth — nor also ever — wanes Not remembers
he næfre nane wuht, forðæm he næfre nauht ne forgeat. Ne
he ever any thing because he never aught — forgot Not
secð he nanwuht, ne ne smeað, forðæmþe he hit wat eall.
seeks he anything nor — ponders because he it knows all
Ne secð he nanwuht, forðy he nanwuht ne forleas. Ne 148.16
Not seeks he anything because he nothing — lost Not
eht he nanre wuhte, forðy hine nanwuht ne mæg flion; ne
pursues he any thing because him nothing — can flee nor
ondræt he him nane wuht, forðæm he næfð nænne ricran
dreads he for-himself any thing because he has-not any mightier
ne furðum nænne gelican. Simle he bið gifende, ȝ ne
nor even any equal Ever he is giving and not
wanað his næfre nauht. Symle he bið ælmihtig, forðæm he
wanes of-his ever aught Ever he is almighty because he
symle wile good ȝ næfre nan yfel. Nis him nanes þinges
ever wills good and never any evil Not-is to-him of-any thing
nedþearf. Sȳle he bið lociende, ne slæpð he næfre. Sȳle he
need Ever he is watching not sleeps he ever Ever he
bið gelice manþwære. Sȳle he bið ece, forþæm næfre sio tid
is equally gentle Ever he is eternal because never the time
næs þ he nære, ne næfre ne wyrð. Simle he bið freoh,
was that he not-were nor ever — will-be Ever he is free
ne bið he to nanum weorce geneded. For his godcundlicum
not is he to any work compelled For his divine
anwalde he is æghwær andweard. His micelnesse ne mæg
power he is everywhere present His greatness not can

nan man ametan; nis þ ðeah no licūlice to wenanne,
any man measure not-is that however — bodily to think
ac gastlice, swa swa nu wisdom is ȝ rihtwisnes, forðæm
but spiritually so as now wisdom is and righteousness because
he þ is self. Ac hwæt ofermodie ge þonne, oððe hwy
he that is himself But why are-proud ye then or why
ahebbe ge eow wið swa heane anwald? forðæm ge nauht
raise ye yourselves against so high power because ye naught
wið hine don ne magon; forðæm se eca ȝ se ælmehtga
against him do — can because the eternal and the almighty
sȳle sit on þ̄ heahsetle his anwaldes; þonan he mæg eall
ever sits on the high-seat of-his power thence he can all
gesion, ȝ gilt ælcū be þam swiðe rihte æfter his gewyrhtū.
see and repays to-each by that very rightly after his deserts
148.33 Forð̄ hit nis no unnet þ we hopien to Gode, forð̄ he ne
Therefore it not-is — vain that we hope in God because he not
went no swa swa we doð. Ac biddað hine eadmodlice, forðæm
turns — so as we do But pray him humbly because
he is swiðe rūmod ȝ swiðe mildheort. Hebbað eower mod
he is very generous and very merciful Raise your mind
to him mid eowrū hondū, ȝ biddað þæs þe riht sie ȝ
to him with your hands and pray for-that which right be and
eower þearf sie, forðæm he eow nele wyrnan. Hatiað yfel ȝ
your need be because he you will-not refuse Hate evil and
fleoð swa ge swiðost mægen; lufiað cræftas, ȝ folgiað þ̄.
flee as ye most can love virtues and follow them
Ge habbað micle nedðearfe þ ge sȳle wel don, forðæm ge
Ye have great need that ye ever well do because ye
sȳle beforan þā ecan ȝ þæm ælmihtgan Gode doð eall þ
ever before the eternal and the almighty God do all that
þ ge doð; eall he hit gesihð, ȝ eall he hit forgilt. Finit.
which ye do all he it sees and all he it requites It-ends

The manuscript closes with a prayer to God, maker and ruler of all creatures. By his mercy, the sign of the cross, the virginity of Mary, the obedience of Saint Michael, and the love of all his saints, the speaker asks God to guide him to God's will and his soul's need, strengthen him against the devil's temptations, free him from lust and unrighteousness, shield him from enemies seen and unseen, and teach him to do that will, so that he may love God above all things. God is his creator, redeemer, help, comfort, trust, and hope.

Drihten ælmihtiga God, wyrhta ⁊ wealdend ealra gesceafta, 149.11
Lord almighty God maker and ruler of-all creatures
ic bidde þe for þinre micelan mildheortnesse ⁊ for þære
I pray thee for thy great mercy and for of-the
halegan rode tacne, ⁊ for Scā Marian mægðhade, ⁊ for
holy cross sign and for of-Saint Mary virginity and for
Scē Michaeles gehyrsūnesse, ⁊ for ealra þinra halgana lufan
of-Saint Michael obedience and for of-all thy saints love
⁊ heora earnungū, þ þu me gewissige bet þonne ic awyrhte
and their merits that thou me guide better than I deserved
to þe; ⁊ gewissa me to þinū willan ⁊ to minre sawle
of thee and guide me to thy will and to of-my soul
þearfe bet þonne ic sylf cunne; ⁊ gestaþela min mod to
need better than I myself know and establish my mind to
þinū willan ⁊ to minre sawle þearfe; ⁊ gestranga me wið
thy will and to of-my soul need and strengthen me against
þæs deofles costnungū; ⁊ afyrra frā me þa fulan galnysse ⁊
of-the devil temptations and remove from me the foul lust and
ælce unrihtwisnysse; ⁊ gescylde me wið minū wiðerwinnū
each unrighteousness and shield me against my adversaries
gesewenlicū ⁊ ungesewenlicū; ⁊ tæc me þinne willan to
visible and invisible and teach me thy will to

wyrcenne, þ ic mæge þe inweardlice lufian toforon eallū
work that I can thee inwardly love before all
þingum mid clænū geþance ⁊ mid clænū lichaman; forþon
things with clean thought and with clean body because
þe þu eart min sceoppend, ⁊ min alesend, min fultū, min
that thou art my creator and my redeemer my help my
frofer, min trewnes, ⁊ min tohopa; si þe lof ⁊ wylder
comfort my trust and my hope let-be to-thee praise and glory
nu ⁊ a a a to worulde buton æghwilcū ende. Amen.
now and ever ever ever to world without any end Amen