

THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK

And how it began

[1] I

“Now what is this?” The shepherds cry
“This light that slants adown the sky.
It is not time for morning’s light
To scatter all the shades of night;
And what this music that we hear
That sounds so sweet upon the ear?
Why seems yon star to throb and glow
And o’er the earth its bright rays throw?”

II

“See how it lights the sleeping fold
And turns the foliage to gold.
Now who is this that stands before us?
A hush of wonder settles o’er us.
Bow low your heads and worship God
For surely Holy is this sod.
List to the message that He brings
Who comes from God on shining wings.”

III

“Look up ye men of Israel
And still your anxious fears.
I bring to you from Heaven
Glad tidings of good cheer,
For unto you – in David’s town —
Is born a savior, king.
This is the blessed message
Jehovah bids me bring.
And ye shall find the baby wrapped
In swaddling clothes and laid
Within a lowly manger.
Haste then, be unafraid.”

IV

Then glory o’er the shepherds spilled
And suddenly the Heavens filled
With an angelic throng who sang
An anthem, glorious, that rang
Across the starry night.



V

“Glory to God in the Highest
And on the earth be peace.
Good will to men from this time forth
Begin and never cease
Begin and never cease.”

VI

Then back to Heaven they wing their way
The throbbing star withdraws its ray.
They have transferred a perfect life
From Heaven’s glory to earth’s strife.
Escorting thus God’s firstborn SON,
Beheld His life on earth begun.
The mightiest feature of God’s plan
That should redeem the sons of man.

VII

See in yon lowly cattle shed
On Mary’s arm, a downy head,
Two tiny flower petal hands
That flutter o’er the swaddling bands.
The shepherds kneel there in amaze
And on their miracle they gaze.

VIII

He who created all the stars
And flung the red veil over Mars —
Before whom angels, worshipping
Were wont their offerings to bring;
He, second only to our God,
For love of man has graced earth’s sod.
Now Mary tends His infant cry
While wondering angels kneel close by.

[2] I

For thirty years He goes His way
Learning earth’s problems every day.
He sees man’s grief and feels his pain;
Knows want and hunger, sun and rain,
And thus He learns at such close view
Just why men do the things they do.



II

He learns the impulses that creep
Across their lives; the sudden sweep
Of wild emotion, uncontrolled,
That shatters reason by its hold.
He feels their love and sees their hate,
Shares all their trials, small and great;
Tempted in all points as are we,
Yet always gains the victory,
And then – at thirty years of age —
Knowingly turns the darkest page.

III

He sees the race God meant to be
Noble and strong, and brave and free,
Made slaves by Satan's cruel power
Back there in Eden's witching hour.
He sees how – by the death of one —
The bands of sin can be undone.
Offers Himself in Adam's place
To bring redemption to our race.

IV

A perfect life for a perfect life.
His own – unforfeited by strife —
Can pay man's debt and set him free.
Thus He chose death for you and me.
Baptized in Jordan then by John
He took that mighty contract on.
'Twas then – His will to God resigned —
His own death warrant that He signed.
'Twas then – begotten by God's spirit —
In recognition of His merit —
A spark of life Divine was given
That should bear fruitage up in Heaven.

V

We watch Him go upon His way
Laying His life down day by day;
Turning aside from wealth and fame,
Choosing a life of want and shame,
Well knowing that at any hour
He could assert His sovereign power
If but His Heavenly gifts He'd choose
For self-advancement once to use.



VI

But no! He heals man's tortured forms
And stills their cruel mental storms.
Now from mankind He stoops to seek
Some kindred souls – men brave but meek —
Whom He can trust to carry on
The mighty work He has begun,

VII

Not to the rich or great He turned —
They would the sacrifice have spurned —
But poor and lowly fishermen
Who toiled all night in patience then —
Toil unrewarded – turned away
To toil again another day.
From such He chose a faithful few
Ready the will of God to do,
And trained them gently day by day
To do God's will – walk in His way.

VIII

God's plan now clearly by Him seen
He knew long years must intervene
Before man's schooling should have ended.
He knew how much on Him depended;
How He must start the Heavenly order
Of Melchizedek, on Israel's border.
Then passing to the Holy Place
Before the Heavenly Father's face,
His offering for men lay down
And there receive the Victor's crown.

IX

Our great High Priest, He led the way
Doing His good works every day,
For three long years and half a year
Healing and helping, far and near,
Restored their dead to life again
Thus a great picture gave to men
Of what His kingdom should accomplish
When men were no more sinful, selfish,
But yielded to God's Holy will.
Lord for that kingdom wait we still.



[3] I

Hark what is this triumphant song
This crowd that wends its way along
The dusty road and climbs the hill
To where Jerusalem – white and still —
Lies peaceful, in the Sabbath calm
The hushed, deep peace before the storm?

II

Why do the loud Hosannas ring
Announcing Israel's coming King?
See how with palms they strew the way
And take their mantles off to lay
Upon the ground before the feet
Of one with gentle mien and sweet
Who rides upon a humble steed —
An untamed beast who bears his head
With a strange pride as tho' he knew
How great the honor to his station
To bear the monarch of a nation.

III

And what a monarch! Kingly, meek,
A nobler form men need not seek,
A face so gentle and so kind,
A brow so peaceful and unlined,
A princely strength, sensed more than seen,
That gleams from eyes deep and serene.
Hark how the eager voices ring
As growing throngs proclaim Him king.

IV

“Hosanna! Hosanna! Lift up your eyes and see
The wondrous King of Israel
For this indeed is He,
Foretold by prophets and by seers,
Promised our race adown the years.
Now lift your voice in praise to God
He comes to break the oppressor's rod!
Hail Him, the mighty King of kings
Who comes with healing in His wings.
Come join with us, His praises tell
Jesus the King of Israel.”



V

But lo within the city gates
Disturbed, an angry group awaits.
“Who is this man who dares to make
Himself our king? In pride to take
Such a position on Himself?
We still control the nations wealth
And it behoves us now to see
The end of such buffoonery.”

VI

This group is swiftly swept along
Before a great, rejoicing throng,
Who pour out from the city streets
The coming King and Lord to greet.
With loud protests they seek to stay
The throng that sweeps them on its way,
And now – before the King – they stand
And seek to halt the rejoicing band.

VII

“Hearest Thou not what the people say?
Come hush this awful blasphemy!”
The eyes – serene and deep – are lifted,
They penetrate the sham and gifted
With power Divine their purpose see;
Their selfish greed and wish to be
The self styled rulers of their race.
He speaks, with humble, lordly grace.

VIII

“Should these be still the stones would cry.
Jehovah hath spoken! Let us by.”
The opposition melts away.
It is the Lord’s triumphal day.
But see, He pauses now and sweeps
The City with His glance; then weeps
And cries in grief amid His tears
In words that hush the glad throng’s cheers.

IX

“Jerusalem, Jerusalem! Who hast God’s prophets killed
And stonest those whom God sent unto thee,
How oft have I yearned over thee and willed
To take thy children neath Thy wings and be
Thy Lord and Savior, but ye would not have it.
Lo now your city and your land I see
Shall for thy sins be all laid desolate.”



X

Again the loud Hosannas ringing forth
Drown out His grief, proclaim His sovereign worth.
They escort Him to their Holy temple where
Merchants and cheating money-changers are.
With whip of cords He drives the sinners forth,
Cleansing God's dwelling place, in righteous wrath.
Then to the throng He gives His messages
Of a Kingdom yet to come, and then presages
A coming day of shame and pain and grief,
When men would seek the hills to find relief.
The long day o'er His weary steps we see
Seeking the calm and peace of Bethany.

[4] I

An upper room, a table laid with care
A roasted lamb and unleavened bread are there,
And wine that from the ripened grape is crushed;
A solemn group, their faces sad and hushed.
One in their midst has filled them with dismay,
"Ere morning one of you shall me betray".

II

"Lord is it I?" they ask with bated breath.
"Lord we would gladly go with thee to death."
He slowly dips a piece of unleavened bread
Into the gravy, turns His noble head,
And gives the sop to one of dour mean
"That which thou doest, do. Thy plot is seen."
And at this sign of favor from the one
He would betray, the dark and sullen one
Springs up in fear and anger to his feet
And hastens forth, nor hears the soft voice speak.

III

"He who has shared my food shall lift His heel
Against me. It is written. It is well."
Then from the plate He takes unleavened bread
And slowly speaks. "This loaf shall represent
My body broken for you. I am sent
For this one cause, Eat all of it, thus of my body take —
Appropriate the sacrifice I make
Unto yourselves – thus shall you share with me
My earthly suffering and my glory see."



IV

He took the wine and from it filled His cup
And passed it round that every one might sup
Its bitter contents. "Drink ye all of it.
It is my blood of the New Covenant,
For by my blood – now poured out – I will seal
The Covenant which will all earth's sorrows heal.
And – as a part of my great sacrifice – you too will share.
I go and will prepare for you a place.

V

"Behold I go away, ye may not follow yet,
I tell you this that you may not forget
When sorrow sweeps down on you like a storm
And ye are scattered like sheep in alarm.
Behold I go away unto my Father, yet some future day
I'll come for you that you may also be
There with me where I am and share my glory.

VI

"The service which I here have instituted
Shall by my loved ones hence be substituted
For the Passover. As year follows year
The members all of Heaven's mystic order
Shall meet at Passover and shall partake
Of bread and wine and thus commemorate
My sacrifice and theirs. Their vow – sealed by this token —
To leave the world, give their lives and be broken
In sacrifice with me, to shed their blood —
Turn from the world and give their lives to God —
Fill up the sufferings I leave behind.
These shall in my eternal glory find
A great reward. They all shall be with me,
Joint heirs in Heavenly glory. They shall see
Me as I am and see my Father's face
And help to raise the fallen, human race."

VII

Now through the silent streets they wend their way.
Gone are the crowds that through the live long day
Have thronged to hear the gentle voice of one
Who miracles of healing there had done;
Who spake as never other human spake,
Whose sayings dark, had seemed their hearts to take
And lift them up to heights on angel's wings
And there reveal to them the higher things.



VIII

His gentle admonitions let us hear
The while their lagging footsteps bring them near
The gates of lonely, dark Gethsemane,
Where neath the friendly trees in agony
We hear Him plead with God for strength to know
The whole dark galaxy of human woe.
Receive His Father's aid – the sweet assurance
That gave Him Heavenly comfort and endurance.

[5] I

Adown the street their comes a shouting throng.
Those streets that lately echoed the song
Of "Hosanna in the highest, Christ is King?"
Now to the sound of bitter anger ring,
And "crucify Him!" is the strident cry.
Helpless His friends as soldiers guard Him by.

II

He sees the weeping women by the way
And tells them "Mourn no more for me to-day,
But for yourselves and for the days to be
Of grief and bitter, hopeless agony."
The blood drops trickle down that matchless brow.
His back – torn by their whips – is seen to bow,
Beneath the heavy cross He bravely bears.
Upon His head a crown of thorns He wears.

III

Out through the City gates they take their way
Under the blazing sun to Calvary,
See how beneath the heavy cross He falls.
The centurion a passing stranger hails
To lift and bear the part that drags behind;
Then through the dusty road their way they wind
Till meek and willingly He lays Him down,
This mighty king whom Israel disowns.

IV

The Lord of all creation, at His call
The Heavenly hosts would swoop down one and all
And scatter His tormentors as a storm
Would sweep the useless chaff. Then why in calm
Sweet resignation, does He bow before them?
Permitting them to gain the victory o'er Him?
It was that only thus could men have life
The stricken earth forever cease its strife.



V

Those who have pierced Him shall gain life from Him;
Those who have cursed Him yet shall live to bless Him.
He gave His life. It could not have been taken
It was His Father's will that He be broken
To prove His love and His great loyalty,
That men and angels both henceforth should see
The reason why God should so highly honor
The "First-born Son" – the beneficent donor
Of life to those beneath the curse of death.
He prayed for them e'en with His dying breath.

VI

No moan escapes the tender, pitying lips,
The bitter cup of pain He bravely sips
And hanging there upon the accursed tree
He pays our debt and sets the whole race free.
Not yet however can they be released
The Ransom to their credit has been placed
But there remains a further sacrifice —
A bride to choose, who by the Father's grace,
May share His suffering and see His face.

VII

A veil of darkness hides the anguished scene.
The well loved Son of God now hangs between
Two convicts – so with 'sinners in His death' —
He grants one pardon with His dying breath.
The sun – in grief and pity – veils its light
And hides the scene in shadows as of night,
Its rays shall never aid in torturing Him
Who – by the power of God – gave its form.

VIII

"'Tis finished!" Hear the glad, triumphant cry.
"Father receive my life." A man must die
To pay the debt of one condemned to death
And as He draws that one last torturous breath,
The earth in anger trembles and the veil
That hides the Holy Place is seen to quail
And split in sunder from the top to hem,
No longer can the temple be to them
A place of refuge. God has turned aside
From Israel. Never more will He abide
With them till they repent, and repenting cry
"This is our God. It was for Him we waited."
Then only can God's righteous wrath be sated.



IX

Why does the world still travail in its tears?
Why does death still pursue us through the years
When Adam's debt was paid so long ago?
Why does the race still suffer pain and woe?
Well may ye ask. God's plan works out apace
To bring eternal life to all our race.
The debt was paid, the price with justice lay —
And men will reap its benefits – some day —
But first the price was to the Church applied,
Who left the world to come to Jesus' side.
One work – the Ransom of mankind was done
But the choosing of the Bride was just begun.
To all the world the message must be sent
That they might learn their lost state and repent.

X

For many years God gave to Israel
His favor, laws and e'en His oracles
But they esteemed Him not – rejected every one
He sent to them, and then they slew His Son.
So from His presence have the Jews been driven
And to the Gentiles was His favor given.
To them He sent His glorious invitation
To take from them a people and a nation,
Who should be kings and priests and stand before Him,
If they would give up all earth's glories for Him.

[6] I

Three Mary's haste along the dusty way
The sun caresses them with its first rays.
Their arms are filled with spice and linen strips,
While troubled queries tremble on their lips.
"Who shall we get to roll the stone away?
Pilate has sealed it with His seal they say."
"If that is so we dare not enter in.
Perchance Joseph or John could get permission."



II

“Oh look!” cries one, “The stone is rolled away.
Some one has been before us. Can you see?”
“But who would come so early to the tomb?”
“Perchance some dear one from Jerusalem
For many loved the Master, though they dare
Not show it openly because of fear.”
“We must be cautious, for the Pharisees
And scribes will punish anyone they see
To be His followers. 'Tis strange to me
That they should hate Him so,
Who was so gentle and so good and true.”

III

They reach the tomb and stoop to enter in,
But lo, the place they laid Him is not dim
But filled with glory. Angels twain are there,
One at the foot, one at the headstone where
They'd laid the Lord. “Who is it that ye seek?”
“We seek for Jesus. We laid His body here.
If ye have borne Him hence pray tell us where
Ye've laid Him. We would His body take;
Prepare it for the tomb, and disposition make
Of it until the resurrection day.”
One Mary turns in grief and tears away
And fails to hear the words the angels speak.

IV

“Why seek the living where the dead have lain?
Jesus is risen. He whom men have slain
Could not be held of death. Go ye to Galilee.
Tell His disciples that they there shall see
Their Lord. Remind them of His words
And bid them there await their risen Lord.”
Two Marys haste away, their lonely grief
Has given place to wonder and relief;
But one has wandered to the garden where
Alone, she weeps for Him who is not there.



V

Once more unto the tomb she finds her way
'Tis empty now, no angel does she see,
And kneeling by the empty grave she weeps,
Now hears the Lord as to her side He steps.
"Whom seekest Thou?" she hears a soft voice say
There stands a gardener. "If you've taken Him away
Tell me where you have laid my Blessed Lord
That I may take Him hence." Only one word
He speaks in answer. "MARY" Her heart thrills.
Only one voice can speak like that. It fills
Her heart with joy, sweeps all her fears away.

VI

"My Master and my Lord?" Her joyous cry
Rings out to greet the coming of the day.
"Delay me not, but go to Galilee
And comfort those who mourn. There will I see
You all. Gather the dear ones who on me depended
Tell them I've risen, but have not ascended
To be with God. I have some things to say
To them before I go from them away."
Swiftly now, Mary's feet sped through the morn
Her heart – so recently with anguish torn —
Was filled with wonder and with glad relief.
No doubt remained, only a mighty faith.

VII

They gathered in the secret upper room —
Silently stealing through the evening gloom —
For every where the cruel priests had plotted
Death for His followers where ever spotted.
There time and time again they told the story
Of the angels in the tomb and of their glory;
Of the gardener who proved to be the Lord;
Of the empty tomb and the inspiring words
Of Him who near Emmaus had been seen
And walked the road, His followers between,
Yet had they known Him not, save by the bread
He broke and blessed. The noble, kingly head
Bowed, and the self same words had there been spoken
As at the supper when the bread He'd broken,
"He is not dead. He lives:" The cry rang out
Yet hushed by fear at once their joyous shout.



VIII

Then one stands in their midst – Now whence came He?
The doors are barred and no one seemed to see
Him enter. Yet He stands and smiles upon them.
Silent and trembling do they kneel before Him.
“Peace be to you.” His gentle accents speak.
“Fear not, ’Tis I myself. Behold my feet
And hands. ’Tis not a spirit that ye see,
For spirits have not flesh and bones. Have ye
A little meat?” He eats it there before them
And by that simple act peace settles o’er them.

IX

He spoke to them in gentle, earnest words,
Opening the Scriptures to them. He their Lord
Must pay death’s price and rise to life again;
Return to God, forgiveness for them gain
And for all who should on their word believe.
Such should God’s holy Spirit then receive
And such, if they would follow where He led,
And do God’s will and own Him as their head,
No matter what temptation should be brought
To bear upon them, or by what means Satan sought
To overwhelm them, even unto death,
They must be faithful and their every breath
Be spent for Him – expended in His praise
Then – in His Kingdom – He each one would raise
Take them to be with Him. They’d see His face
And share His throne and know His Father’s grace.

X

The way would be a narrow one and steep,
And they must count the cost; Their vows must keep
Ambition, pride, all things be laid aside;
His word of trust must in their hearts abide.
Satan would bring his greatest powers to bear
Against each Child of God – their patience wear
And break them, if it in his power lay.
They must walk circumspectly every day,
Preaching always the message of the Kingdom;
Gathering His chosen ones, bidding them come,
Feeding His lambs, tending the mature sheep,
Striving through life His perfect law to keep,
His presence should go with them all the way,
Giving them strength and guidance every day.



XI

'Twas there He formed the nucleus of the order
Of Melchizedek, than which there is no finer —
To join it costs us all that we possess —
Our lives, our hopes, ambitions, nothing less
Can He accept. All that we have is laid
Upon His altar. We own no other head.
We turn to follow Jesus in the way
Of sacrifice that led Him day by day
To do God's will. His messages to speak,
The blessing of His little ones to seek.

XII

Conquering the evil that is in us born,
Starting anew in His strength every morn.
Counting as naught our trials and our losses,
Gaining forgiveness for the day's trespasses,
Falling so oft, yet climbing up again,
Gaining new strength from every failure then
Pressing on, always seeking to obey
His righteous law of love. 'Tis a narrow way
And few there be that seek to enter in.
Few know the wondrous prize we seek to win.

XIII

Are we unhappy in this narrow way?
Ah, No! Our Joy's renewed 'with every day.
We have the knowledge of our Captain's love.
The Father smiles upon us from above.
Midst all earth's trials we have perfect peace.
Not even sorrows pangs can cause to cease
The joy that fills our hearts, attends our ways,
And fills our lips with songs through every day.
We know no solitude, Jesus is near,
He never fails our faintest call to hear.
We know the joys that wait for us above
When we shall know in full, our Father's love.

XIV

But best of all – indeed I must confess —
We know our Father will the whole world bless,
And we shall share in passing out the blessing.
Death holds no horrors – naught that is depressing —
We know men sleep, awaiting the glad day
When Christ will strike the bands of death away
And bid them come forth from their long, long sleep
Then learn His righteous laws at last to keep.
Then up the 'Highway' we may lead their feet.



XV

They'll know the Father then and joy complete
Shall be their portion, No man then shall say
"Know thou the Lord" for in that golden day
So soon to break, when all shall know His name!
Know why He died and who has been to blame
For all earth's sorrow. Weeping may endure
Through the dark night, but morn comes swift and sure,

XVI

The "Order of Melchizedek" will soon be all complete;
The crowns they've won they'll soon lay down before the Father's feet.
When the wedding of the Bridegroom and the bride have taken place
These kings and priests in glory shall see their Father's face.
Then to the earth the Savior-King will turn His whole attention
And Satan – overcome and bound – will face his long detention;
Then all his works shall be undone, sorrow shall all be o'er,
Pain, sickness, death and poverty shall trouble man no more.
This is the time of trouble – the Kingdom comes apace,
Then let us turn again to God and praise Him for His grace.



L.K.P.

FINIS

