

Day of wrath

[THOMAS OF CELANO] (c. 1190 – c. 1260)

translated by WILLIAM JOSIAH IRONS (1812–1883)

Day of wrath! O day of mourning!
See fulfilled the prophets' warning,
Heaven and earth in ashes burning!

Oh, what fear man's bosom rendeth,
when from heaven the Judge descendeth,
on whose sentence all dependeth.

Wondrous sound the trumpet flingeth;
through earth's sepulchers it ringeth;
all before the throne it bringeth.

Death is struck, and nature quaking,
all creation is awaking,
to its Judge an answer making.

Lo! The book, exactly worded,
wherein all hath been recorded:
thence shall judgment be awarded.

When the Judge his seat attaineth,
and each hidden deed arraigneth,
nothing unavenged remaineth.

What shall I, frail man, be pleading?
Who for me be interceding,
when the just are mercy needing?

King of Majesty tremendous,
who dost free salvation send us,
Fount of pity, then befriend us!

Think, good Jesus, my salvation
cost thy wondrous Incarnation;
leave me not to reprobation!

Faint and weary, thou hast sought me,
on the cross of suffering bought me.
shall such grace be vainly brought me?

Righteous Judge! For sin's pollution
grant thy gift of absolution,
ere the day of retribution.

Guilty, now I pour my moaning,
all my shame with anguish owning;
spare, O God, thy suppliant groaning!

Thou the sinful woman savedst;
thou the dying thief forgavest;
and to me a hope vouchsafest.

Worthless are my prayers and sighing,
yet, good Lord, in grace complying,
rescue me from fires undying!

With thy favored sheep O place me;
nor among the goats abase me;
but to thy right hand upraise me.

While the wicked are confounded,
doomed to flames of woe unbounded
call me with thy saints surrounded.

Low I kneel, with heart submission,
see, like ashes, my contrition;
help me in my last condition.

*Ab! that day of tears and mourning!
From the dust of earth returning
man for judgment must prepare him;
Spare, O God, in mercy spare him!*

*Lord, all pitying, Jesus blest,
grant them thine eternal rest. Amen.*

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