

What all thy oaths and curses meant,
Or better for them go.

But tho'™ they know not, there is One,
Who knows thy sins full well,
And what shall be thy after doom, 35
Another shall thee tell.â€•

No more he said, but light as air
He vanishâ€™d from my sight;
And with him went the sunâ€™s bright beams,
And all was dark midnight. 40

The thunder roarâ€™d from under ground,
The earth it seemâ€™d to gape;
Blue flames broke forth, and in those flames
A dire gigantic shape.

â€œSoon shall I call thee mine,â€• it cryâ€™d,
With voice so dread and deep,
That quivâ€™ring like an aspin leaf
I wakenâ€™d from my sleep. 45

And tho'™ I found it but a dream,
It left upon my mind 50

That dread of sin, that fear of GOD,
Which all should wish to find;
For since that hour Iâ€™ve never darâ€™d
To use my cattle ill,
And ever fearâ€™d to curse and swear, 55
And hope to do so still.

Now ponder well ye Plow-boys all
The dream that I have told;
And if it works such change in you,
'Tis worth its weight in
gold; 60

For should you think it false or true,
It matters not one pin,
If you but deeds of mercy shew,
And keep your souls from sin.

NOTES:

Title This poem, signed â€œM.â€•, was one of two by William Mason (1724-1797) that Hannah More (1745-1833) accepted for publication in her Cheap Repository Tract scheme.â€• Masonâ€™s authorship is confirmed in a letter More wrote to her sister in which she explains why she rejected four of the six poems Mason submitted before noting that â€œtwo, one of which was called the â€˜Ploughboyâ€™s Dream,â€™ will do very wellâ€•

(William Roberts, *Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Mrs. Hannah More*, third edition [1835], vol. 2, p. 430). G. H. Spinney dates publication of this tract in August, 1795 (Cheap Repository Tracts: Hazard and Marshall Edition, *The Library*, 4th series, 20:3 [1939], p. 320).

6 *rhyme* Corrected from a printer's error.

10 *Dobbin, Ball, and Star* Common names for draft or farm horses.

18 *cattle* A collective term for live animals held as property, often applied to horses in this period (QED).

60 *its* Corrected from a printer's error.

62 *not one pin* Very little.

Source: *The Plow-Boy's Dream*, single sheet, (London and Bath, [1795]). [ESTC]

Edited by Bill Christmas