

SERPENT FODDER

So hard to reason, so hard to feel,
With the soul on fire with burning zeal!

So hard the heart, so darkened the spark
Of Heaven's light under Satan's mark!

And so the hand, created to bless,
Torches Christ's martyrs tied to a pyre,
Confirming a hell-bound wilderness:
The scheme of a sick fiend's foul desire.

And so the saints Jesus saved to shine
Slip from the grace of their earthly breath
Into the glory of life divine—
They follow the Son and conquer death.

The faithful pawn of the serpent's will
Feeds on the ashes of zeal cooled down,
Chews on the carcass of rotting thrill,
Chokes on a bone, and dies with a frown. . . .

Quickly the devil seizes his slave,
Squeezes him tight with his dragon-grip,
Spreads fiery fangs like an open grave,
And sinks them into the brain, to sip. . . .

"Mercy!" his captive cries too late.
"Merci!" the captor cackles in lust,
Gorged with souls he shackled with hate
Safe from the Savior they failed to trust.

"Help!" the slave screams, "The flames are real!"
"Hell!" screams the serpent, with blasting heat.
"I own the sinners who ate my meal—
Slaves that served well are the best to eat!"

So hot the blaze, so heavy the dark
Of a soul inflamed by the liar's spark!

So much to regret, such pain to feel,
For the one consumed in the devil's zeal!

— *David L. Hatton, 4/19/1999*