

1 1 In þe bigynnyng GOD made of
nouȝt heuene and erthe.

þe – the /ðə/, /ðu/, /ði/ (def. art.): Late Old English *þe*, nominative masculine form of *the* demonstrative pronoun and adjective. After c.950, it replaced earlier *se* (masc.), *seo* (fem.), *þæt* (neuter), and probably represents *se* altered by *the* *th*-form which was used in all the masculine oblique cases. Old English *se* is from Proto Indo-European root **so-* “this, *that*” (source also of Sanskrit *sa*, Avestan *ha*, Greek *ho*, he “the,” Irish and Gaelic *so* “this”). The *þ*-forms, see *that*. The *s*-forms were entirely superseded in English by mid-13c., excepting a slightly longer dialectal survival in Kent. Old English used 10 different words for “the,” but did not distinguish “the” from “that.” *That* survived for a time as a definite article before vowels (*that one* or *that other*).

1 2 Forsothe the erthe was idel and
voide, and derknessis weren on the face of
depthe; and the SPIRYT of the LORD was
borun on the wattris.

1 3 And GOD seide, Liȝt be maad, and
liȝt was maad.

1 4 And GOD seiȝ the liȝt, that it
was good, and he departide the liȝt fro
derknessis; and he clepide the liȝt,