

# The *Occupatio* of Odo of Cluny

Meditations on Biblical History  
in Seven Books

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## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work makes available the first translation of a medieval text long sidelined by scholars due to the difficulty of its verse and the perceived obscurity of its thought. Odo of Cluny's *Occupatio* opens an important window on the mind of an early-medieval noble, churchman and monk, but the landscape can appear very distant from the present.

To a modern reader, verse may seem an odd medium to retell Biblical history and provide theological commentary, but to a tenth-century monk it was an erudite and appealing way to lead him into meditative reflection. In our translation and commentary, we have sought to maintain a balance between explaining the sense of things and keeping faithful to Odo. Our introduction is intended to be a starting point for understanding the *Occupatio*, outlining recent scholarship on the text and on Odo himself – much of which is inaccessible to an English-reading audience. In the translation itself, we have kept notes to a minimum in order to encourage readability, but when additional explanation is necessary we have provided explanation. Conscious of our audience, the translation follows in line with Odo's verse and strives to recreate the feel of his poetic voice, but does not reproduce his rhyme and rhythm – something which would impose great strain on modern English. Our attempt throughout has been to create a text allowing Odo's voice to faithfully and eloquently speak out to a readership removed by more than a millennium from the man himself.

### **Peter Wood**

I undertook this translation in support of the work of my dear neighbour Rita Wood (no relation) who is researching into religious stone carvings in Yorkshire and also Cluniac schemes in Romanesque sculpture, with a special interest in Malmesbury Abbey, Wiltshire, England, where the *Occupatio* may have been applied. I must thank her for searching out my texts, for proof-reading and for her scholarship and perception in understanding Odo's more obscure allusions. My thanks must also be extended to Susan Green-Wood, my dear wife, for her computer skills and forbearance.

### **Marc Saurette**

I would like to thank Peter Wood, who gracefully welcomed a newcomer to a project already underway. I also owe a debt of gratitude to Isabelle Cochelin, under whose guidance my interest in Odo was born and who has had a pervasive influence on my work. I am grateful to Matthew Ponesse for his encouragement on this project and for the years of debate about all things monkish. Finally, I would like to acknowledge a special thanks due to Jacqui Lauder, whose unflagging support and love give me the motivation to keep my nose to the grindstone.

## ABBREVIATIONS

- Recueil*      *Recueil des chartes de l'abbaye de Cluny*, Auguste Bernard and Alexandre Bruel. Collection de documents inédits sur l'histoire de France - Première série. Histoire politique. 6 Vols. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1876-1903. References are to vol. 1.
- Collationes*      Odo of Cluny, *Collationes libri tres*, in *PL* 133, col. 517-638.
- Occupatio*      Odo of Cluny, *Occupatio*, ed. A. Swoboda (Leipzig: Teubner, 1900).
- PL*      *Patrologia cursus completa. Series Latina*, ed. J.P. Migne (Paris, 1844-1865).
- RB*      Benedict of Nursia, *RB 1980. The Rule of Saint Benedict*, ed. Timothy Fry (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1981).
- VG*      Odo of Cluny, *Vita sancti Geraldi comitis aureliacensis*, in *PL* 133, col. 639-704.
- VO<sup>J</sup>*      John of Salerno, *Vita Odonis prima et maior*, in *PL* 133, col. 43-86.
- VO<sup>H</sup>*      Humillimus, *Vita Odonis minor*, ed. M.L. Fini, "L'*Editio minor* della "vita" di Oddone di Cluny e gli apporti dell'*Humillimus*. Testo critico e nuovi orientamenti," *L'Archiginnasio* 63-65 (1968/70), p. 132-259, here p. 208-257.
- VO<sup>m</sup>*      *Vita Odonis minor*, ed. M.L. Fini, "L'*Editio minor* della "vita" di Oddone di Cluny (see above)," p. 208-257.

All references to the Bible are to the *Biblia Vulgata iuxta Vulgatam Clementinam*, ed. Alberto Colunga and Laurentio Turrado, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Chistianos, 1977).

## INTRODUCTION

In present-day Benedictine monasteries, the five celebrated abbots of Cluny – Odo, Majolus, Odilo, Hugh and Peter – are commemorated each May 11<sup>th</sup> as examples of monks who lived with perfect charity and are remembered as saints who intercede for the living.<sup>1</sup> Odo of Cluny was granted this lofty position for having spent his life and writings working to create an ideal Christian society. He was also a founding force behind one of the Middle Ages’ most influential religious institutions – the abbey of Cluny – which took great care to perpetuate his memory. Since the early Middle Ages, Odo has been renowned as a perfect monk, a Christian saint and a powerful abbot. His biography and writings, however, complicate this conventional portrait and reveal him to be a nuanced thinker who tried many paths before entering the monastic world. His forays into different religious communities, his innovative thinking and his wide-ranging intellectual interests all show him to be someone searching for answers. The poem translated here, the *Occupatio*, is a significant monument to his thinking, allowing us to grasp how Odo sought to understand the question of human nature.

The *Occupatio* situates Odo’s tenth-century world within the broad landscape of sacred history. It retells the history of the world from its creation by God until Odo’s time, using biblical narrative to show where his own society came from and where it was going. Odo saw his world in very Christian terms, in which the fall of Adam and Eve and the divine incarnation of Christ explained and had lasting implications for how people could act and think in his own time. Odo perceived human nature to be flawed and in need of the correction by living as a Christian. To understand why Odo would write such a work, we will first turn to his biography and his body of writings, before introducing the reader to the *Occupatio* itself.

### Odo’s Life and *Lives*

Odo of Cluny (ca. 879-942) lived a life marked by movement and transition.<sup>2</sup> He was raised in an aristocratic court, but left it to enter a community of priests in Tours (the canons of St. Martin). He was educated there and in the tumult of Parisian cathedral schools, but decided that his true calling was the monastic life. He tested his monastic vocation first as a hermit and later as a monk in the community of Baume. He became abbot of Cluny, Déols and Massay on the death of his abbot Berno, and directly exercised his abbatial power in more than ten other monasteries by the end of his life. It was as abbot that Odo became famous, but the details of his life suggest that this position was not one he initially sought.

Establishing a clear chronology of Odo’s life and writings is made difficult due to the nature of the sources that historians depend on for proof. In reconstructing the details of Odo’s biography,

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<sup>1</sup> On this celebration, see *Proper Masses for the Use of the Benedictine Confederation* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1975), 9. The collect to the feast reads, “Lord our God, you are the shield and glorious reward of those who walk blamelessly before you. Keep us steadfast in your holy service so that, by the example and intercession of the blessed abbots of Cluny, we may with open hearts run the path of perfect charity.” Though not an universally celebrated feast, Odo’s passing is also commemorated in many monasteries on November 18<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Isabelle Rosé’s *Construire une société seigneuriale. Itinéraire et ecclésiologie de l’abbé Odon de Cluny, fin du IX<sup>e</sup>-milieu du X<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Collection du Centre d’études médiévales de Nice, 8 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008) provides a definitive history of Odo of Cluny, presenting several new insights while exhaustively summarizing relevant primary and secondary material. This text should be the starting point for anyone researching Odo of Cluny.

historians have looked at three kinds of sources: the hagiographic *vitae* (*Lives*) of Odo written to demonstrate his sanctity, numerous legal documents which he witnessed or had a hand in composing, and his own writings. As we will explore below, all of these sources provide only a partial picture of his life.

Historians have at hand several accounts of Odo of Cluny's life –some written by his contemporaries and others written centuries after his death. These accounts are hagiographic in nature, not biographic.<sup>3</sup> Modern scholarship on medieval hagiographic *vitae* has shown that medieval authors were more concerned with demonstrating how a saint fit with the model of sanctity current at the time of writing than with historical accuracy.<sup>4</sup> Having the proper 'feeling' seemed more true to them than getting all the facts right. Often *Lives* would be implicitly making a case for the sanctity of the subject or could be using the widespread fame of the subject to argue other concrete issues, such as who controls a parcel of land, or what monastery is the most prestigious. The various *Lives* of Odo, with their subtle differences in content, certainly demonstrate these kinds of concerns.

Of the *Lives* of Odo written from the tenth to the twelfth century, the first *Life* (*vita prima*) is the most useful to understanding Odo since it was written by his disciple, John of Salerno. All *Lives* composed afterwards rework this seminal text and add little new material.<sup>5</sup> John of Salerno was one of Odo's disciples who composed its three books in the year after Odo's death on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 942 CE.<sup>6</sup> He plays up this connection in the prologue to the *Life*, emphasizing that Odo led him from an Italian church to the Cluniac monastic life and the two remained together for several years after 938 CE.<sup>7</sup> But

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Head provides an excellent introduction to and general survey of hagiographic writing in his *Medieval Hagiography. An Anthology*, Garland Library of Medieval Literature (New York – London: Routledge, 2001), xiii- xxxviii.

<sup>4</sup> Jay Rubenstein outlines the differences between modern biography and medieval spiritual biography (as he calls hagiography) in his article, "Biography and autobiography in the Middle Ages," in *Writing Medieval History*, ed. Nancy Partner (London: Hodder, 2005), 22-41.

<sup>5</sup> Not long after the *vita prima* was written, another shorter *Life* was written, likely composed by a Cluniac monk, which added four new miracles and refocused attention on Odo's role at Cluny, greatly diminishing the monastic novelty ascribed to him by John. Interest in Odo burgeoned again at Cluny almost 100 years later, during the abbacy of Hugh of Semur (1049-1109) and again during the abbacy of Peter the Venerable (1122-1156). A brief version of the *Life of Odo* was written by an anonymous monk (now known as *Humillimus* due to his oft repeated exclamations of his humility) at the end of the eleventh century and a longer revised *Life* was produced by the monk Nalgod, in the second quarter of the twelfth century. In these later versions, the life and ideas of Odo were rewritten in order to serve the contemporary needs of the monastery –buttressing the monastery's political and legal autonomy. On the history of Odo's *vitae*, see Maria Luisa Fini, "L'editio minor della vita di Oddone di Cluny e gli apporti dell'Humillimus. Testo critico e nuovi orientamenti." *L'Archiginnasio* 63-65 (1968-1970), 132-259, here, 132-167 and Dominique Iogna-Prat, "La geste des origines dans l'historiographie clunisienne des XI<sup>e</sup>-XII<sup>e</sup> siècles," *Revue Bénédictine* 102.1 (1991), 135-191, here 180-81.

<sup>6</sup> John of Salerno, *Vita Odonis prima et maior*, in *Patrologia Latina* (PL) 133, col. 43-86; translated by Gerard Sitwell, *St. Odo of Cluny, Being the Life of St Odo of Cluny by John of Salerno and the Life of St. Gerald of Aurillac by St. Odo of Cluny* (London – New York: Sheen and Ward, 1958), pp. 3-87. Gerard Sitwell provides a brief introduction to his translation of John's text, but since then Maria Luisa Fini has renovated the understanding of the different *Lives* of Odo; see her article (cited in the previous note) to understand the somewhat complex relationships between versions. Four different versions of John's *vita* alone are witnessed in the manuscripts showing how, when recopied, monks felt the freedom to subtract and rearrange at will. For a brief summary of problems with the manuscripts of the *vita prima*, see Rosé, *Construire une société seigneuriale*, 29-31.

<sup>7</sup> There are some disagreements between the sources and thus among historians about the exact dating of various events in Odo's life. As Isabelle Rosé has shown (*Construire une société seigneuriale*, 45-48), John of Salerno dates events in Odo's life

while John only knew him for a few years, the *Life* provides a detailed account of Odo's entire life, combining stories circulating orally among his monks with what John observed directly or was related to him by Odo.<sup>8</sup>

John opens his account with a story about how Odo's father begged the saints for a son and secretly commended his baby to Martin of Tours, an important Frankish saint. This story foretells Odo's future attachment to this particular saint.<sup>9</sup> A series of miraculous visions and events confirm that God and Martin claimed Odo as their specific follower – a relationship which defines the rest of the *Life*. The priest in charge of Odo's childhood education, for example, receives a vision from the apostles telling him of Odo's future within the Church.

Despite these signs and his father's oath, much of Odo's childhood was spent as a typical aristocratic youth learning to serve, behave and fight like a warrior. At some time during his youthful training, however, Odo was struck down by a debilitating illness which forced him to return to his parent's home. His father, worried for his life and recalling how he offered Odo to St. Martin as a child, allows him to abandon his life as a rising young aristocrat for the religious life. This period of ill health also encourages Odo to recognize his spiritual calling and to enter the Church.

Though John downplays Odo's early involvement in secular life, it is clear that he was very much a part of it during his childhood and adolescence. Contemporary evidence shows he was fostered for almost ten years at the courts of two powerful counts: first with Fulk the Red and later with William of Aquitaine (who would become known as William the Pious for founding the monastery of Cluny).<sup>10</sup> Some historians have interpreted Odo's illness as the nervous breakdown of an adolescent unwilling to live further in the violent, hyper-masculine world of Frankish aristocratic society. John, however, depicts the event as a spontaneous conversion to the religious life. Since Odo later depicts William of Aquitaine's court as an embodiment of earthly excess and corruption, it is reasonable to conclude that his illness arose during his fosterage there and that John's religious framing was likely the version of events that Odo himself described to his monks.<sup>11</sup>

At the age of nineteen, Odo left his family home to enter a community of priests attached to the church of St. Martin in Tours.<sup>12</sup> While there, he finished an elementary training in reading and writing (the *trivium*) and began more advanced studies in philosophy and theology. John portrays Odo's time at Tours one of trial and adversity – he seeks after learning, poverty and seclusion (the latter two being key

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in years from the time of their first meeting, whereas charter evidence often specifies specific years. At times John provides a date range which is contradicted by charter evidence, a type of source historians generally find more trustworthy than a *vita*.

<sup>8</sup> Claude Carozzi suggests that correlations between John's presentation of Odo's childhood and Odo's depiction of the childhood of Gerald of Aurillac in his *Life* (on this text, see section below, "Writings"), provides strong indications of the autobiographical content of chapters 5-21 of the *Life of Odo*; see his "De l'enfance à la maturité. Etude d'après les vies de Géraud d'Aurillac et d'Odon de Cluny," *Actes du 102<sup>e</sup> Congrès National des Sociétés Savantes. Philologie et histoire jusqu'à 1610*, vol. II, *Études sur la sensibilité au moyen âge* (Paris: n.p., 1979), 103-116, here 104. Isabelle Cochelin has also independently argued that many stories about Odo's time before entering the monastery, must have been told to John by Odo himself; see "Quête de liberté et réécriture des origines. Odon et les portraits corrigés de Baume, Géraud et Guillaume," in *Guerriers et moines. Conversion et sainteté aristocratique dans l'Occident médiéval (IX<sup>e</sup>-XII<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, ed. Michel Lauwers, Collection d'études médiévales, 4, (Antibes: Éditions APDCA, 2002), 183-215.

<sup>9</sup> This attachment is not only an idea heavily underlined by John, but is evident from Odo's many writings. Isabelle Rosé, in particular, argues the defining influence of Martin on Odo's religious life and thought; see *Construire une société seigneuriale*, 80-86, 333-350.

<sup>10</sup> Cochelin, "Quête de liberté," 187-90.

<sup>11</sup> Odo does so in his *Life of Gerald of Aurillac*, see *VG*, bk. I, chp. 32-33.

<sup>12</sup> *VO<sup>J</sup>*, I, 14-20.



monastic traits) but faces resistance from the other canons. Seeking to buttress the authority of the *Rule of St. Benedict* and to explain Odo's future entry into the monastic life, John is careful to downplay the influence of this time on Odo's spiritual development. He notes that it was at St. Martin's that Odo first discovered the *Rule of St. Benedict*, began to live its precepts and thus flowered in saintly virtues. According to the *Life*, Odo attracted such a reputation that many students came from faraway to be instructed by him. While John describes this teaching as simple moral education, it appears that his time in Tours also introduced Odo to elite Christian intellectual discourses. His aptitude for book learning was recognized by his fellow canons. He was sent to continue to his studies at Paris under a famous exegete Remigius of Auxerre, after which he returned to St. Martin's and wrote an *Excerptio* (abridgement) of the Gregory the Great's biblical commentary, *Moralia in Job*, for his fellow canons.<sup>13</sup>

While John seeks to limit the role of the community of St. Martin's on Odo's life, the *Life* gives considerable evidence of Odo's attachment to the saint Martin, repeating again and again how Odo was offered to him as a child, how he composed many liturgical works in his honour and how Martin worked miracles through Odo. It is through one such miracle that Martin begins Odo on the path to monastic life. Odo's former patron, Fulk the Red, had seized and carried off some ecclesiastical vessels from the treasury of St. Martin's and, as John portrays it, was struck down by a violent illness that would not abate even after he visited St. Martin's tomb for healing.<sup>14</sup> After promising Odo that he would honour and venerate St. Martin in the future, Odo brought him before the body of St. Martin and Fulk was immediately healed. John describes how Odo urged Fulk to deepen his commitment to God in some way – something Fulk rejects but which one of his men, Adhegrin, takes to heart. He converts to the religious life and provokes Odo to quest for a monastic refuge.<sup>15</sup>

Odo's relationship with Adhegrin began a time of religious pilgrimage and experimentation. John suggests that Adhegrin gave all his wealth and property to Odo (who donated it in turn to the poor) and then the two men lived together in poverty. We can understand this poverty to be a relative one given that John also notes that Odo possessed a library of one hundred books, which would have been a very costly and rare collection in the early Middle Ages. Together they travelled across France to visit different monasteries and to compare different styles of monasticism, and eventually Adhegrin decided to leave Odo's side to make a pilgrimage to Rome. On the way, however, he stopped at the monastery of Baume, where the abbot Berno convinced him to remain. Adhegrin, impressed, sent word to Odo who came at once.

Consistent with his desire to portray Odo as already a monk at heart, John describes Odo's entry into the monastery as without difficulty. Odo underwent a short period of probation outside the doors of the monastery – tested with questions and made to wait for several days to ensure his dedication – but

<sup>13</sup> Studies, such as Michel Pacaut, *L'Ordre de Cluny* (Paris: Fayard, 1986), 97–101, have suggested that Odo was schoolmaster and precentor at St. Martin's, but Rosé has shown ( *Construire une société seigneuriale*, 74–76) the extant evidence cautions against this idea and suggests instead that the tradition likely stems from a mistaken reading of John of Salerno's text.

<sup>14</sup> John sees the theft of the ritual objects as motivated by avarice – something which God punished him for with an illness (*VO* I, 21) . It seems likely, however, that Fulk may have taken or had the vessels taken after he fell sick in order to ransom them back in exchange for the canon's prayers for his health. This kind of deal-making was an accepted form of exchange in the Middle Ages between aristocrats and divine powers.

<sup>15</sup> Historians have been unable to identify this Adhegrin beyond what John describes. Adhegrin likely derives from a Germanic patronymic *Adalgrimmus*, but no one with this name appears in any material connected to Fulk the Red. If Adhegrin was of Fulk's retinue, it is possible that he was already known by Odo during his fosterage with Fulk. John does note that they were both "former followers" of the count (*VO* I, 21).

once admitted was not made to undergo a period as a novice.<sup>16</sup> In John's account, it seems almost as if Odo arrives and then is made almost immediately an officer of the monastery as the schoolmaster. Adhegrin's path, however, diverges from Odo's at this point – he remains connected to Baume in spirit, but with permission from Berno leaves to live alone in a remote hermitage. With the departure of his companion in monastic experimentation, Odo is left to devote himself to the coenobitic life under abbot Berno.

In John's account, Adhegrin serves the narrative function of allowing Odo's transition from the Church of St. Martin to Baume without verbalizing why or how Odo left there.<sup>17</sup> Odo's arrival at Baume at age 30 (ca. 808), however, may not have been so fortuitous or happenstance as John's account suggests. Baume was a logical choice for Odo to enter on account of the personal and political links between Odo and Berno. Odo likely became a monk at Baume at the urging of his former fosterer, William of Aquitaine, who was also patron and lord to the abbot Berno and who may have envisaged Odo as an ally in establishing new monasteries under his power.<sup>18</sup> The foundation charter of the monastery at Cluny (909/910) granted by William of Aquitaine literally shows Odo's hand in its composition and the future abbacy of Cluny was likely intended for someone like Odo who would remain loyal to William and his intentions.<sup>19</sup>

According to the *Life*, Odo was groomed for immediate advancement at Baume under the guidance of Abbot Berno. Odo's learning quickly moved him into a position of authority as schoolmaster and made him a candidate for the priesthood. According to John of Salerno, Odo became a priest at the urging of Berno and a local bishop, Turpius of Limoges. John emphasizes that Odo agreed to be ordained only out of humble obedience to Berno, but the episode serves to aggrandize Odo's status and reputation inside and outside the cloister. Since entering the priesthood was hardly a necessity for monks at this time, John quickly passes over this episode, insisting that Turpius had specially sought out Odo due to his learning. Odo is therefore emphasized as being uniquely educated and wise. According to Odo's own words, Turpius later requested that he compose a text for the instruction of priests – a work which is now known by the title, *Collationes* (Collected Writings).

In John's description, Odo's ordination is soon followed by Berno's death and the immediate acclamation of Odo as his replacement at Baume.<sup>20</sup> Again, Odo is depicted as unwillingly chosen to ascend to a position of power – begged by his fellow monks and threatened with excommunication if he did not accept. This narrative is common to many monastic lives in which the subject is unwilling to advance and humbly seeks to reject their own success. John himself also notes that Odo left Baume soon after his abbot's death since Berno had granted the monastery of Cluny to Odo, "in the manner of a father".<sup>21</sup> John quickly moves away from this topic and devotes the rest of the life to describing the perfect monastic order that Odo inaugurated at Cluny. The subtle contradiction and the presence of the formulaic humility topos around his election, however hints that Odo may not have been as unwilling an

<sup>16</sup> Isabelle Cochelin, "Peut-on parler de noviciat à Cluny pour les Xe-XIe siècles?" *Revue Mabillon*, n.s. 9 (1998), 17-52, here 26-29.

<sup>17</sup> Much later in the narrative, John returns to the topic of St. Martin's (*VO'* III, 1) and emphasizes that the canons there had departed from their proper way of life – suggesting but never directly relating this to Odo's time or the reason of his departure. The delinquency of the canons, however, was what John wanted the reader to conclude was the reason for Odo's departure.

<sup>18</sup> Cochelin, "Quête de Liberté," 200-201.

<sup>19</sup> On this topic, see section "Charters".

<sup>20</sup> *VO'* I, 38 and II, 1.

<sup>21</sup> *VO'* II, 1.

abbot nor his monks so unanimous in their selection. The evidence of extant charters confirms that John's narrative is misleading.

## Charters

Medieval charters are useful supplements to John's *Life of Odo* in reconstructing Odo's life, but also must be used carefully by historians.<sup>22</sup> In Odo's time, charters were records in Latin of a formal contract or transaction, most often a donation, sale or exchange agreement between the monastery and outsiders. Most early charters relating to Cluny record gifts of land, but many record legal judgements about land ownership or ecclesiastical, papal and royal privileges granted to the monastery or to Odo.<sup>23</sup> The originals from Cluny have rarely survived and researchers must regularly depend on copies, or copies of copies made up to hundreds of years after the events took place. Medieval monasteries at times suppressed (that is, did not recopy) charters which were no longer relevant for them or which contradicted traditions which had sprung up in the meantime. Monks would also sometimes recreate (that is, forge) charters that old books or accepted wisdom said had or must have existed.<sup>24</sup> Scholars have extensively studied the earliest charters from Cluny and now generally agree on their legitimacy.

Two charters from Cluny in particular are important in giving nuance to John of Salerno's narrative about Odo: the foundation charter of Cluny and abbot Berno's will. The latter indicates that Odo's succession as abbot of Cluny was mandated by Berno (possibly at the demand of the founder, William of Aquitaine) and that Berno was at the head of a number of monasteries, only a few of which were transferred to Odo's oversight. The former gives evidence that Odo had a hand in the planning and placement of the monastery of Cluny from its very conceptualization.

The foundation charter of Cluny is a key text for understanding the nature and development of tenth-century monasticism. John says nothing about the foundation of Cluny in the *Life of Odo*, but the original version of the act (909/910) allows historians considerable insight into its composition and creation. The charter records in detail the motivations, conditions and rights that William of Aquitaine bestows on the monastery of Cluny and on Berno. In a long preamble, the charter bears witness to William's desire to make a donation in order to thank God for his success, to help the poor, and to win salvation for his soul through his largesse. It outlines what land and moneys he gives and specifies further that the monks at this new monastery are to be free from all secular and ecclesiastical authority. The text closes with a lengthy formula anathemizing any who sought to impede or transgress their liberty. This ideology, while recorded as if by William, was almost certainly put into words by a monk who composed and framed the act of William's donation. The most recent editors of the charter agree that this monk was

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<sup>22</sup> On the genre of charters, see *Medieval France: An Encyclopedia*, ed. William Kibler and Grover Zinn, Garland Reference Library of the Humanities, 932 (New York: Routledge, 1995), 208, s.v. "charter". The earliest charters for Cluny are currently being edited alongside folio sized reproductions in *Les plus anciens documents originaux de l'abbaye de Cluny*, ed. Hartmut Atsma, Sébastien Barret and Jean Vezin, Monumenta palaeographica Medii Aevi, series gallica, vol. 1-3, (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997-2002).

<sup>23</sup> Barbara Rosenwein provides an excellent introduction to these sources in her *To Be the Neighbour of Saint Peter. The Social Meaning of Cluny's Property, 909-1049*, (Ithaca-London: Cornell University Press, 1989). A more up-to-date biography can be found in the volumes of *Les plus anciens documents*, vol. 1-3.

<sup>24</sup> Though charters were kept safe as valuable evidence of donations, rights and privileges, it was not unheard of for them to be damaged, ruined, stolen or destroyed by natural and human actors. Thus, there was need to keep multiple copies, and occasionally to try to recreate a copy of those that went missing or were destroyed.

Odo. The charter is signed, “I, Odo, a deacon wrote this and signed it” –a title that would describe Odo during his time at St. Martin’s, as he would have been in 909/910. Like all medieval charters, the text is handwritten but is copied in a scribal hand showing characteristics from Tours.<sup>25</sup> The document records, moreover, an ideology of Cluny’s monastic immunity and autonomy from the secular world which is fundamental to all of Odo’s future writings. The foundation charter, therefore, suggests that Odo’s entry to Baume was mediated by his connection to and support by the powerful aristocrats of Aquitaine. Nor was he only a spiritual-minded intellectual seeking to deepen his religious devotion, but he was the representative of powerful nobles. He used this association, moreover, to frame and to shape how monasteries should be run long before he became an abbot upon Berno’s death.

A second charter provides additional insights into Odo’s rise at Baume. Abbot Berno’s testament (ca. 926) laid out arrangements for the future governance of the monasteries under his leadership when he died.<sup>26</sup> In the preamble, he discusses the importance of proper rule – that order demands obedience to good leaders and therefore he was beholden to choose suitable leaders before his death. He specifies that two brothers would succeed him: Odo and Guy. Odo would lead the communities of Cluny, Massay and Déols, and the other, Guy, would govern Gigny, Baume and Mouthier-en-Bresse. Historians have argued that Guy likely belonged to the aristocratic kin group to which Berno had also belonged –and who had founded (and in a sense, owned) Baume as part of their holdings. Guy was thus a natural successor to the monasteries in territories subject to the kings of Burgundy, whereas Odo took up those houses joined to Berno in the orbit of the Frankish kings.<sup>27</sup> While John of Salerno characterizes Odo’s departure from Baume with the *seniores* (i.e. the older, wiser monks) as the result of rebellious and undisciplined monks led by Guy, Berno’s will suggests that Odo’s move to Cluny was predetermined. Unaware of Odo’s special role in founding Cluny and of his pre-selection by Berno, John likely repeats the story told to him by Odo which buttressed Odo’s own authority and was as a means of establishing Cluny as a preeminent and separate entity from their parent monastery. The charter also suggests that Odo was made abbot by Berno, not elected, as John suggests and which fit better with the process of abbatial election stipulated in the *Rule of St. Benedict*. This document makes clear that despite the prestige that it would come to have, Cluny was not Odo’s only monastery – though later Cluniac monks would claim him as theirs alone. Odo’s multiple abbacies meant that he was constantly travelling between these three houses placed under his leadership.

The *Life of Odo* devotes much of its text to describing Odo’s time as abbot. John emphasizes the perfect order and discipline Odo implanted at Cluny, the miracles he worked and how he transmitted the Cluniac life to monastic houses elsewhere. John himself was a convert from one of Odo’s trips to Rome and often inserts himself into the narrative in order to buttress an opinion or tell an anecdote about Odo’s ideal conduct. This account jumps between the distant and recent past making Odo’s life seem to be ceaseless reform and travel. The *Life* describes Odo’s many trips to Rome, travelling throughout Italy at Pope Leo’s request and seeking to make peace between warring factions there.<sup>28</sup> A story of Odo’s capture by bandits and John’s explicit anxiety about lawless elements, Saracen invasions and Viking incursions suggest that John himself joined Odo on almost continuous travel during their years together.

<sup>25</sup> *Les plus anciens documents*, 14; “Ego Oddo [...] scripsi et subscripsi” (I, Odo, wrote and signed this).

<sup>26</sup> This best edition of this text remains a centuries old version: Berno, *Testamentum domni Benonis abbatis*, in *Bibliotheca Cluniacensis*, ed. Martin Marrier and André Duchesne (Paris: 1614; rpt. Macon: Protat, 1915), col. 10-12.

<sup>27</sup> Rosé, *Construire une société seigneuriale*, p. 165-66, citing Cochelin, “Quête de liberté,” 193-94.

<sup>28</sup> *VO*, II, 8-10.

He indicates that Odo often travelled with other abbots, bishops and aristocrats, but he largely concentrates on visits to monasteries linked to Odo and to Cluny. Though John draws attention to Odo's Italian trips, most existing evidence suggests that the majority of his reform efforts remained limited to regions of France.

Charter evidence has allowed Isabelle Rosé to reconstruct Odo's abbacy as having successive stages: an initial co-abbacy with Berno, followed by a decade of crisis and development centred at Cluny and a final period in which he worked to reform monasteries across France. The first period likely began around 924, by which time Odo had already begun to take over some abbatial responsibilities at Baume. Odo witnessed Berno's final will and testament as "abbot Odo" and did so on other charters while Berno was still alive, suggesting that he was considered a co-abbot. Only after Berno's death did Odo come into the full measure of his power – though not at Baume which was led by his fellow monk Guy. As John of Salerno describes it, Odo spent the early period of his abbacy establishing his particular brand of the monastic life and on strengthening the Burgundian monastic foundations of Cluny and Déols against Guy. Isabelle Rosé adds further colour to this portrait of conflict, noting that from 927 until 936 Cluniac charters show a dual effort to reclaim properties unlawfully held by Guy and to combat the kin and heirs of William of Aquitaine who, after William's death, sought to regain control over the lands and monastery of Cluny.<sup>29</sup> In 927 Odo received the confirmation of Cluny's legal and jurisdictional privileges from Pope John X.<sup>30</sup> The French king, Raoul, also confirmed the independence of Cluny from secular and ecclesiastical powers at the same time.<sup>31</sup> In 931 Pope John X extended these privileges to Déols, which again enshrined the status of Odo's monastery as separate and independent of secular political power.<sup>32</sup> These charters buttressed the authority of the monastery as an entity independent and apart from other institutions. They also had the effect of strengthening Odo's claim as Berno's successor and had an important impact in developing an official position on the status of monks among tenth-century rulers, nobles and churchmen. From them, we can see that Odo actively sought to reinforce Cluny's position and saw juridical instruments as the means to do so. Charters and written law became a key means for Odo to spread his conception of the monastic sphere.

While these charters granted legal privileges which were rare (but not singular) for the time, what made Cluny's position unique was its right to reform other monasteries and to receive monks who may have sworn an oath to remain at another monastery. As a result, Odo and his monks spent considerable effort during the 930s in reforming a few Burgundian monasteries which would provide a model for future efforts; Romainmôtier, Charlieu, Ambierle were all granted to Cluny, becoming its possessions and making the monks there subject to Cluniac (that is, Odo's) notions of discipline.<sup>33</sup> We

<sup>29</sup> Rosé, *Construire une société seigneuriale*, 167–75.

<sup>30</sup> Bull to Cluny of Pope John X (927), in *Papsturkunden. I. 896-1046*, ed. Hans Zimmermann, Denkschriften, 174 (Vienna, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1984), no. 58, 96–97.

<sup>31</sup> Charter of King Raoul, in *Recueil des actes de Robert I<sup>er</sup> et de Raoul, rois de France (922-936)*, ed. Jean Dufour (Paris, Imprimerie nationale, 1920), no. 12, 51.

<sup>32</sup> Bulls of Pope John X (931), in *Papsturkunden*, no. 64, 107–108 and no. 67, 111–112. Until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, monastic historians had taken Cluniac liberties to be unique, but more recent scholarship has shown that the separation of power between cloister and countryside was part of a larger trend in Burgundy. On the idea of Cluniac liberty, see Didier Méhu, *Paix et communauté autour de l'abbaye de Cluny (X<sup>e</sup>-XV<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 2001), 63–70 and Barbara Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space: Power, Restraint and Privileges of Immunity in Early Medieval Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 163–168.

<sup>33</sup> Additional monasteries – St. Gerald of Aurillac and St. Martin in Tulle – also came under Odo's influence. Though there is not detailed evidence now extant for Odo's personal role in reforming these last two houses, his hagiographic writings (see the discussion of the *Life of Gerald*, below) seem intended to implant Cluniac monastic ideas through the power of persuasive

are told by John's *Life of Odo* that Odo also had an important impact on another Benedictine house in Fleury.<sup>34</sup> In John's account, the monks at Fleury had grown used to many luxuries during a period of decadence and resisted any efforts to make them change. They were told to reform themselves by royal and noble authorities concerned with the state of the monastery and when these attempts did not succeed these same outside authorities asked Odo to restore the house to a proper obedience to the *Rule of St. Benedict*. The goal was ostensibly to ensure Fleury's submission to the king and to stamp out the growing practice of having private property (something condemned by the *Rule of St. Benedict*). When the monks at Fleury heard that Odo was coming to visit and to reform their monastery, they armed themselves to prevent his arrival, claiming that they possessed the right to elect their own abbot. John describes that the sight of Odo riding alone towards them converted their hearts towards him. In reality, this conversion may have come from a glimpse of the size of Odo's retinue or after reading the numerous papal decrees granting Odo the right to enter and correct the wayward monks. Either way, it seems likely that Odo was authorized to reform Fleury by 928 and soon after had the governance of the monastery in hand. The antiquity of Fleury and the prestige attached to its relics meant that this monastery was one of the major sites of Western Christianity. To have this house subject to Odo, and by extension to Cluny, was a measure of his success at integrating himself into the power structures of the Church.

At Fleury, Odo maintained a system of abbatial power that would become common in many monasteries reformed by him. He established a co-abbot Archambaldus to act in his place and brought practiced Cluniac monks with him to institute the customs and discipline from Cluny in the reformed Fleury.<sup>35</sup> In Odo's time, monastic practices were rarely transmitted by texts and had to depend, instead, on the supervision, personal instruction and constant discipline needing physical presence.<sup>36</sup> Odo also had a special altar to St. Martin of Tours constructed – suggesting that his devotion to the saint was part of a unifying liturgical bond between Odo's houses. Odo likely remained at Fleury for some time during this initial period of transformation, supervising monks, encouraging changes as well as spending time writing.

Odo's intention to create a common monastic form of life is shown by his reform efforts at other houses, but it is his activity at Cluny for which we have the most evidence. This evidence, however, remains in short supply. Archaeological evidence suggests that Cluny was an initially humble establishment limited to agricultural buildings when Odo took it over.<sup>37</sup> The foundation charter indicates

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text. Odo's relationship with the monastic houses in Aurillac and Tulle have been viewed, therefore, as a key stage in legitimizing Cluny as the centre of an expanding monastic network in Burgundy, see Rosé, *Construire une société seigneuriale*, 205-22.

<sup>34</sup> *VO*, III, 8-11.

<sup>35</sup> Rosé, *Construire une société seigneuriale*, 315.

<sup>36</sup> On the notion of customs and their transmission, see a number of articles by Isabelle Cochelin, including, "Besides the book: using the body to mould the mind - Cluny in the tenth and eleventh centuries," in *Medieval monastic education*, ed. George Ferzoco und Carolyn Muessig (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), 21-34; "Community and Customs. Obedience or Agency? in: *Obœdientia. Formen und Grenzen von Macht und Unterordnung im mittelalterlichen Religiosentum*, ed. Sébastien Barret and Gert Melville, Vita regularis. 27 (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2005), 229-253; and most thoroughly in "Évolution des coutumiers monastiques dessinée à partir de l'étude de Bernard," in *From Dead of Night to End of Day*, ed. Isabelle Cochelin and Susan Boyton (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 29-66.

<sup>37</sup> Kenneth Conant remains a powerful voice on the archaeological reconstructions of Cluny, even though his conclusions have been questioned and shown in need of support. Still central in discussion are his *Cluny, les églises et la maison du chef d'ordre* (Mâcon: Protat, 1968) and "Cluny Studies: 1968-1975," *Speculum* 50 (1975), 383-421. For a recent analysis of his ideas, see Janet Marquardt, "Un romantique à la recherche du passé. K. J. Conant à Cluny," *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 48 (2005), 327-340.

the monastery's ideological goal at the time of its conceptualization – that the monastery must adhere to the *Rule of St. Benedict*. This text suggests general guidelines for what Cluny must have been like. During the ninth and tenth centuries, however, many monasteries followed very different interpretations of this text while still proclaiming themselves its finest adherents. So again historians are forced to look to the *Life of Odo*.

John gives evidence of many practices followed at Cluny which demonstrate its Benedictine style of life, but it is unclear whether he carefully repeats Odo's descriptions or whether he remembers only those stories best suited to buttress the Benedictine customs he himself promoted as an abbot in Salerno. John's account has led historians to elaborate many aspects of conventual life at Cluny: the monks sang one hundred and thirty-eight Psalms over the course of a day's services, which included two masses a day and the additional offices prescribed by the *Rule of St. Benedict*.<sup>38</sup> Monks often maintained complete silence unless praying – using hand signals to communicate. Young monks and child oblates were subject to special surveillance to ensure their proper comportment and to guard them from the risk of paedophilia. Much of what life at early Cluny was like, however, remains unclear.

By 936, Odo had consolidated his and Cluny's position with the aristocratic, ecclesiastical and monastic landscape of Burgundy. He was not simply the heir to abbot Berno, but a powerful man in his own right who drew on his deep engagement with an elite network. From 936 to 942 his efforts as a reformer were focused outward, on Aquitaine and the Loire, as he was further encouraged to implement his brand of monasticism there.<sup>39</sup>

John of Salerno emphasizes Odo's role in reforming a number of monasteries in Italy, but with the exception of St. Paul-without-the-walls in Rome and St. Eli in Nepi, it is very likely that Odo had little hand in important Italian houses like Farfa or Monte Cassino, as has been previously thought.<sup>40</sup> John's emphasis on travel, however, hints at Odo's near constant itinerancy resulting from the increasing scope of influence. Few Cluniac charters evidence Odo as a signatory, and his successor, Aymard was likely made a co-abbot there before Odo's death, both of which suggest that Odo was likely away for long periods. Charters record new monastic foundations in Aquitaine linked to Odo at St. Marcellinus in Chanteuges and St. Pontius in Thomières.<sup>41</sup> In the Loire, Odo had a hand in reforming a few more houses before the end of his life, one likely being Saint-Pierre-le-Vif in Sens and another in Tours. In different historiographical traditions, Odo continued to reform additional monasteries. The *History of St. Julien's at Tours*, for example, records that Odo ended his life at this monastery seeking to establish his form of the monastic life. John of Salerno does not describe the circumstances of Odo's death and subsequent Cluniac tradition recounted that upon falling ill, Odo travelled to Tours to die near his beloved saint.<sup>42</sup> What role he had at Tours, therefore, remains ambiguous, but what is certain is that over the course of his life, Odo had remained bound to St. Martin whose story provided a model for Odo to follow as a reformer, proselytizer and ascetic.

<sup>38</sup> For a general portrait of the spiritual life at Cluny, see the general survey by Kassius Hallinger, "The Spiritual Life of Cluny in the Early Days," in *Cluniac Monasticism in the Central Middle Ages*, (London: MacMillan, 1971), 29-55.

<sup>39</sup> Rosé, *Construire une société seigneuriale*, 304-362.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 270-77.

<sup>41</sup> St. Allyre in Clermont, St. Sacerdos in Sarlat, Sauxillanges and St. Martial of Limoges are also all linked to Odo and are identified as reformed or founded by him by early modern scholars. No extant proof, however, exists to support these attributions (*ibid.*, 298-303).

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 351-59. Rosé argues that the description of Odo's death in John's *Life of Odo* (*VO'*, III, 12) was inserted long after it was first written and represents a later historiographical tradition.

Over the course of his life, Odo personally had governed a number of monasteries, each in their own way and often without creating any formal connections between them. He communicated a discipline and ideology without constructing firm institutional means to ensure their continuance after his death. In this approach Odo's reforms were very typical for his time. Aymard, Odo's successor as abbot of Cluny, would continue to play a role in the few houses directly given to Cluny, such as Charlieu, but most others linked to Odo became autonomous houses separate from direct Cluny oversight.

## Writings

While his monastic network may have been transitory, Odo's writings exerted a lasting influence on Burgundian monasticism of the tenth and eleventh centuries. Odo of Cluny left a number of texts to posterity, ranging from hagiographic stories and hymns to theological treatises, all written between 900 and 942.<sup>43</sup> These works were very much an extension of Odo's responsibilities as teacher and abbot and all seem to communicate a Christian ethos about how to live, act and think. A single work dates from his time as a schoolmaster to the canons of Tour and another was written for the secular clergy soon after he entered the cloister. The remainder of his works were written during his time within the monastery: narrative *Lives* to entertain and encourage monks (and possibly the laity) in their way of life, sermons and hymns to be recited during celebrations in monastic churches, as well as poems to draw monks into introspection about their vices and virtues. These texts give evidence of how Odo convinced monks to submit to his reforms, what sorts of ideas about human nature he had, and how these ideas influenced the kinds of spiritual practices he promoted among his monks. Odo's writings attest to a social project concerned with making change: they attack and denounce his contemporaries while also offering and promoting an ideal model of what the world should be like. From his earliest to his last works, Odo was always concerned with transforming the world around him.

Odo's first work was humble in its ambition. His *Excerptio* [Excerpts] of the *Moralia in Job* condenses Gregory the Great's (†604) well-known exegetical commentary on the biblical *Book of Job* into a short primer on its moral and theological problems.<sup>44</sup> Since Late Antiquity, Christian authors had struggled with how to understand the meaning of the Bible – a text considered to be the word of God but which was made up of books distinct in content and with apparent contradictions. The problems of interpretation encouraged scholars to develop complex rules for reading and Gregory's text was an important manual for how to debate the literal and hidden meanings of biblical texts. Odo's work, therefore, shows his engagement with medieval processes of how to read and understand Christian texts – a fundamental first stage for thinkers of his time. This text, John of Salerno confirms, was written at the request of his brothers at Tours who sought easier access to Gregory's complicated text.<sup>45</sup> Odo's first

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<sup>43</sup> For a summary of works no longer attributed to Odo and the arguments for their misattribution, see Rosé, *Construire une société seigneuriale*, 25, note 43. Rejected works include the *On music*, the *Narrative of the return of St. Martin to Burgundy*, the sermons, *On the sacrament of the body and the blood of the Lord*, the *Sermon which St. Martin said about the apostles*, and the *Second sermon on the veneration of Mary Magdalene*.

<sup>44</sup> Gregory's text, *Moralia in Job* is edited in full by Marcus Adriaen as vol. 143 of the series *Corpus Christianorum – Series Latina* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1979). An antiquated translation of an older edition is the *Morals on the Book of Job*, 3 vols, Library of the Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church, vols. 18, 20, 21, and 31, (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1844–1850).

<sup>45</sup> *VO*, I, 20.



work, therefore, is one of encouraging accessibility to elite knowledge and suggests that by the time of its writing he was seen as having mastered it.

While Odo maintains Gregory's structure and reproduces his words verbatim, the *Excerptio* nonetheless transmits Odo's own particular message by giving special attention to passages which relate to the human struggle against evil.<sup>46</sup> Odo copies and organizes Gregory's passages enumerating the variety of human sins. He also compiles the concrete personifications of evil in the person of the Devil, describing his fall and how he and his demons strive to ensnare unwitting Christians. Finally, Odo highlights passages describing God and his angelic agents who intervene in the human world. Odo thus seeks to praise divine agents who protect and encourage the good and condemn any who oppose it. Odo's readings and compiled texts would have an important influence on his reflections on human history that would appear in his later texts, the *Collationes* and the *Occupatio*.

After Odo entered the monastery at Baume, his writings continued to look outside the cloister at first. One of Odo's first pieces written as a monk was a handbook intended for general circulation among priests and bishops. Dedicated to Turpius, the bishop of Limoges, Odo's *Collationes* [Collected Writings] was a manual for bishops about how to live and to fulfil their pastoral duties.<sup>47</sup> Like the *Excerptio*, this text drew heavily on pre-existing sources, but unlike it, the *Collationes* also contextualized and rewrote them.

The dedicatory epistle of the *Collationes* consoles Turpius about the apparent success of evildoers and oppressors of the Church – something made possible by the half-heartedness of many churchmen. If only clerics and prelates would do their job and lead by example, Odo laments, they and all others could rise above the lesser pleasures and enticements of the world.<sup>48</sup> This dual focus –the condemnation of evildoers and the encouragement of clerics– represents the work's major themes. As Isabelle Rosé shows, Odo articulates three major arguments, each examined separately in its own book. The first book opens with a general inquiry into the flaws of human nature introduced by the Fall from Eden and establishing a general catalogue of problems faced by priests. In line with theologians of his time, Odo saw that Adam and Eve's sinful disobedience and its subsequent divine punishment were inherited by subsequent generations, thereby permanently disfiguring human nature. The second book lists the types of sins people commit (pride, luxury, hypocrisy) as a result of this flawed nature and identifies the body (the weakness of the flesh) as especially culpable in perpetuating sin. The third book moves from diatribe to consolation, naming the responsibilities of specific societal actors to redress the fallen human condition. Odo notes in particular that the different religious orders –priests, canons and monks– have a special role in redirecting Christian community on the path to salvation. Using examples from sacred history, Odo takes biblical figures such as Adam and Even, Cain and Abel, Satan and Christ,

<sup>46</sup> A proper edition of this text has not been edited, according to the only major study of this work (Gabriella Braga, "Problemi di autenticità per Oddone di Cluny. *L'epitome dei Moralia* di Gregorio Magno," in: *Sudi Medievali*, ser. 3, 18 (1977), 45-145). The text printed in the *Patrologia Latina* has been falsely attributed to Odo since the early twelfth century when Cluniac monks were themselves seeking to establish an authoritative copy of Odo's works during the abbacy of Hugh of Semur. The sole authentic copy of Odo's text is found in the ms. latin 2455 of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (Paris) originating from St. Martial of Limoges.

<sup>47</sup> Odo of Cluny, *Collationes libri tres*, in *PL* 133, col. 517-638.

<sup>48</sup> In the twelfth-century marginal addition to the *Chronicle* of Adhemar of Chabannes, Odo's text is given the title *De contemptu mundi* [On rejecting the world] a title which very much describes this call to reject earthly pleasures; *Chronicon*, ed. P. Bourgain-Hemeryck, R. Landes, G. Pon, Corpus Christianorum – Continuatio Medievalis, 129 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), L III, 25, l. 18-20, p. 147.

to be precursors and exemplars of the people who make up Odo's own society. The Bible is filled with good examples, Odo argues in book three, to provide suitable models of behaviour for priests in his day. And as he notes about the book of Job, suffering in the temporal world is a sign of election to the Heavenly one. Overall, then, the *Collationes* seeks to provide the evidence and examples to be used in training the clergy and educating the laity in the forms of proper Christian life.

The *Life of Gerald of Aurillac* (ca. 930s) moves Odo's writing in a new direction – using narrative not didactic expression – but repeating a common message about the need to reject the temptations of the secular world.<sup>49</sup> The text opens with a dedicatory epistle to an abbot Aymo which helps situate the text's time of writing and purpose. As the letter outlines, the *Life* was inspired by Odo's visit to the monastery of St. Gerald of Aurillac at the beginning of the 930s. He conducted an inquiry there with Aymo into the stories supporting Gerald's sanctity and miracles. Odo's *Life of Gerald* argues that Gerald was a crypto-saint; that is, that he hid much of his devotion and many of his religious practices throughout his life, but that after his death miracles and the testimony of confidantes revealed his exemplary life. His fellow nobles, for example, knew that he had founded and patronized a monastery, as well as supported and protected the Church. But none but his manservant was privy to his ascetic behaviours: he wore a hair shirt under his other clothing and prayed the psalms as diligently as a monk. The *Life of Gerald* represents him as an exceptional man among the aristocracy and underscores that this exceptionality makes him a model to be followed. His life, therefore, was something to encourage others and something on which others should base their own actions and thoughts.

The *Life* is divided into four books: the first is devoted to Gerald's religious life in the secular world from a young age, the second outlines the monastic practices and ideology Gerald secretly followed, the third lays out the course of his life until his death and the fourth describes his posthumous miracles. The text overall makes a clear argument that his sanctity may have been hidden during his life, but that careful inquisition has elucidated the proper testimony and evidence proving its certainty. The story of saint humbly hiding his devotion had become an established part of the hagiographic genre by Odo's time and thus made this narrative credible to those familiar with saints' *Lives*.

The text was somewhat exceptional in its assertion that a layman and noble could also be saint. This divergence from the dominant hagiographic tradition has made some argue that the text is a narrative crafted to promote the monastic life among the laity.<sup>50</sup> There is certainly a strong argument that Gerald's model would have spoken to contemporary aristocrats, encouraging support for the Church and respect for its independence from political interference. Odo's change to the narrative format may have resulted from his intention to speak to an audience unfamiliar with the elite discourses of the monastery and more disposed towards heroic tales. Other historians have argued that the story also provides

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<sup>49</sup> Odo of Cluny, *Vita sancti Gerard comitis aureliacensis*, in *PL* 133, col. 639-704 and translated in English by Gerard Sitwell in *St. Odo of Cluny* (cited n. 6), 90-180. Anne-Marie Bultot-Verleysen has analyzed the different manuscript versions of *VG* and concludes that the longest version (the *vita prolixior*) which is edited in *PL* and is the basis for Sitwell's translation is Odo's original work; "Le dossier de Gérard d'Aurillac" *Francia* 22.1 (1995), 173-206 and "L'évolution de l'image de Gérard d'Aurillac (†909), seigneur laïque et saint, au fil de ses très *Vitae*," *In principio erat verbum. Mélanges offerts en hommage à Paul Tombeur*, ed. B.M. Tock, Textes et Études du Moyen Âge, 25 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 45-92. Her work outlines the different versions of the *Life* which have not yet been edited – suggesting that Odo refined his text several times.

<sup>50</sup> See, for example, Stuart Airie's "The anxiety of sanctity: St Gerald of Aurillac and his maker," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 43 (1992), 372-395 and Dominique Iogna-Prat's "La place idéale du laïc à Cluny (v. 930-1150)," *Études clunisiennes* (Paris: Picard, 2002), 93-124. The condemnation of negative behaviour of aristocrats in the *Collationes*, for example, is countered here with Gerald's concrete example.

justification by analogy for Cluny's autonomy – showing how Gerald merited honour and salvation for respecting the legal and jurisdictional independence of the monastery he founded.<sup>51</sup> In supporting monastic autonomy, the *Life of Gerald* fits closely with Odo's other writings.

Odo continued to write in the hagiographic genre with the *Life of Gregory of Tours*.<sup>52</sup> Sometime in the last five years of his life, Odo wrote a new account of the life and miracles of this Merovingian archbishop of Tours, author and saint, reworking the testimony and stories from previously written *Lives*. Over twenty-six chapters, he charts the movement of a young aristocrat from the world of the nobility to the priesthood and to his ascendance to the archbishopric of Tours. This narrative was perhaps one which spoke to Odo's own sense of personal history. Odo concentrates on Gregory's actions and miracles while archbishop, depicting him as a strong but compassionate leader of lay people and priests, beloved by his flock as well as by the distant pontiff Gregory the Great. Throughout the text, Odo emphasizes the debt Gregory owed to his patron saint, Martin, and Gregory's death scene gives Odo the opportunity to engage in a lengthy praise of St. Martin of Tours as teacher and saintly protector. The text as a whole seems to be an opportunity to praise Martin through his spiritual disciple Gregory. Like the *Life of Gerald*, this text seeks to provide a model of conduct to those outside the cloister. The text complements the didacticism of the *Collationes* by providing an illustration of the comportment and devotions of an ideal cleric and prelate. The text also provides an analogue to Odo's own early life, moving from the secular world to the ecclesiastical world of Tours, thoroughly informed by a devotion to St. Martin. This theme typifies Odo's writings near the end of his life – a reflection on Martin's life and actions in light of his own experiences as a monk and as a reformer of the monastic life.

Odo's intention to inspire and to reform his audience through exemplary stories can also be seen in his sermons. Odo would have preached often and at length to his monks and also to those outside the cloister, but we have only a few extant examples of what these may have been like. Today we expect sermons to be spoken, but Carolingian prose sermons were not necessarily preached orally and may have been intended for private reading.<sup>53</sup> It was likely with this latter intention that Odo wrote six brief treatises exhorting the audience to remember and reflect upon a few key saints and their miracles. As written texts, these sermons passed to other churches and monasteries within Odo's sphere of influence. They were introduced to the liturgy as something to be read out on the saint's feast day or were read by individuals in private contemplation.

Odo's extant sermons focus on saints or feast days of special interest to Odo and his monks: the founding of St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome, the destruction of St. Martin's basilica in Tours, the movement of the relics of St. Albinus as well as the feasts of St. Benedict of Nursia, St. Martin of Tours and St. Gerald of Aurillac.<sup>54</sup> They emphasize respectively several themes common to Odo's other works: the dignity of the priesthood and the Roman see, the inevitable punishment that lax and sinful clerics merit from God, the need to purify the Church and strengthen the good, the benefits of ascetic

<sup>51</sup> Isabelle Cochelin, "Quête de liberté", p. 200–202.

<sup>52</sup> This text has traditionally been discounted as the work of Odo, but its most recent analysis convincingly argues for Odo's authorship. See Isabelle Rosé, "La *Vita Gregorii Turonensis* d'Odon de Cluny. Un texte clunisien?" *Memini. Travaux et documents* 9–10 (2005–2006), 191–278. The text is edited as *Vita sancti Gregorii episcopi Turonensis*, in *PL* 71, col. 115–128.

<sup>53</sup> Milton Gatch, *Preaching and theology in Anglo-Saxon England: Aelfric and Wulfstan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), 27–39.

<sup>54</sup> Five sermons (*Sermones quinque*) are available in the *PL* 133, col. 721–29 and another is newly edited by Paolo Facciotto, "Il *Sermone de festiuitate sancti Gerald* di Oddone di Cluny," *Hagiographica* 3 (1996), 113–36.

mortification and a well-ordered life, and a concern about the sinful rapacity of the aristocracy. These works can be seen as abbreviations of his didactic and hagiographic works – exhorting the audience by developing on known stories and events through the prism of respected authorities and scriptural texts.

Odo's shortest works – hymns and antiphons in praise of St. Martin – represent a further distillation of his thinking into a few lines of text. John of Salerno notes that the clerics of St. Martin's in Tours, had requested Odo compose new verses for St. Martin's feast, and it appears that he authored twelve antiphons (brief chants used as segues between the singing of each psalm during the monastic offices) on St. Martin and three more hymns celebrating this same saint.<sup>55</sup> The antiphons ask the clerics to remember Martin's death and resurrection in Heaven, and praise Martin directly, asking his help in deepening involvement in the religious life and in confessing sins. The hymns also celebrate Martin for his intercessory role on behalf of the poor, priests, bishops and especially monks. Written near the end of his life, Odo's antiphons and hymns entered the liturgy at St. Martin's of Tours and act as a testament to his lasting dedication to his patron saint, reminding the clerics there of Odo's and Martin's role and the key influence of monastic thinking on their house. Despite their brevity, these liturgical texts summarize many of Odo's major themes into a few lines of text ritually repeated during the mass. Since Odo saw the liturgy (the mass, singing of psalms and communal prayer in the church) as something for monks to focus their mind on attentively, these brief texts were all the more important. Only poor monks and lax clerics engaged in the unthinking repetition of psalms or hymns, he stated, whereas devoted monks carefully considered, contemplated and celebrated the words they repeated.<sup>56</sup>

Odo's liturgical works are typical of his works as a whole. Most were written while he was away from the monastery of Cluny and served to emphasize an ideology he was introducing or buttressing in institutions that had become subject to his abbacy. The consistency of the ideas presented in charters and in his didactic, hagiographic and liturgical writings indicate an individual seeking to use the lasting monument of the written word to buttress the objectives he sought to complete in person and through the presence of his agents. The *Occupatio* mirrors this intention. As a text written for a monastic audience, this text differs from the many directed to the laity or the secular clergy. As we explore below, the *Occupatio* is the most monastic of his works and likely is the one intended to most influence the monks under his authority.

## The *Occupatio*

The *Occupatio* is a verse composition organized into seven books which traces Biblical history from Creation through the Last Judgement. After opening with a praise of God's inventive genius, Odo condemns Lucifer's pride and fall (book one), presents the analogous fall of Adam and Eve (book two), outlines the lives of Old Testament patriarchs and the granting of the Mosaic Law (books three and four), and describes the incarnation and passion of Christ (books five and six) and closes with the establishment of the institutional Church on earth and the City of God in Heaven (book seven). As the following summary outlines, Odo alternates between narrating and interpreting biblical history:

## BOOK I

<sup>55</sup> *VO*, I, 10. The liturgical material is published as *Antiphonae* and *Hymnae* in *PL* 133, col. 513.

<sup>56</sup> Rosé, *Construire une société seigneuriale*, 774.

Lines 1-63	<u>The Creation</u> God created the world from nothing, integrating diverse and opposing elements
Lines 64-120	<u>God's Creatures</u> God fills his creation with angelic inhabitants; angels love and serve him, and do so freely.
Lines 121-328	<u>Lucifer's Fall</u> Despite a natural aptitude for loving God, Lucifer pridefully spurns Him and wishes to declare himself divine. His rebellion is easily overcome and Lucifer is cast out of Heaven. The rebel angels are similarly punished and obedient ones rewarded.
Lines 329-end	<u>God's Grace</u> Due to his goodness, all creatures have an innate love for God but choose to love Him or not to love Him with free will. God's grace and favour, however, is only available to those who love him.
<b>BOOK 2</b>	
Lines 1-109	<u>God creates Adam and Eve</u> Adam and Eve are created in the image and likeness of God, but are not His equal. Placed above all other mundane creatures, they live perfectly within paradisaal Eden.
Lines 110-362	<u>The Fall</u> Convinced by the serpent, Eve encourages Adam to eat the fruit from a forbidden tree. By choosing to disobey God's command not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge, Adam pridefully chooses to prefer his will to God's. His rebellion cuts him off from God and chains him to the earth, ensnared by carnal desire.
Lines 363-end	<u>Adam's Error and Punishment</u> Sinful desires oppress Adam, a state inherited by his descendents. Human nature is not corrupted by the Fall, however, but only lacking control.
<b>BOOK 3</b>	
Lines 1-96	<u>God's Forgiveness</u> Adam flees from God and hides, refusing to admit his error. God feels responsibility for his subjects and forgives them.
Lines 97-229	<u>Life after Eden</u> God makes Nature into Adam's enemy, instead of his servant. Adam and his descendents must toil and labour, while Eve and the serpent suffer further punishments.
Lines 230-389	<u>Memories of Paradise</u> Humanity's innate yearning for God's goodness does not end with the Fall, but is merely overwhelmed by base desires. It retains a moral awareness despite this declining state. Adam continues to remember Eden and seeks to regain self-control through discipline and good habits.
Lines 390-607	<u>Worldly Temptation</u> Lucifer continues to ensnare and tempt humanity through his agents. In refusing God, humans are like animals, allowing bestial instinct to run wild. Bodily pleasure alone guides them.
Lines 608-902	<u>Sins of the Flesh</u> The appetite for sensual delights dulls human sense and opens them to further

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decline – the lust for the flesh and for wine. At such depths of depravity, human nature can be fully dominated by Lucifer, allowing the laws of nature to be transgressed – as evinced by the homosexuality.

Lines 903-1103

### Human Dissolution

Free will allows the spread of corruption within post-lapsarian society. Loving humanity so greatly, however, God cannot allow it to decline unchecked. God is unwilling either to forego Grace or to destroy humanity completely, so He purifies the world with the Flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and disrupts the construction of the Tower of Babel through sowing linguistic confusion. God's interventions in history provide moral guidelines for the reader.

Lines 1104-end

### Human Innovation

Blinded by sin, human wisdom is unable to establish anything positive and of lasting value. Refinements in clothing and cooking are the product of the appetites of the flesh. Even the Liberal Arts can only find shadows and small parts of true wisdom, which will only be revealed by the Incarnation.

## **BOOK 4**

Lines 1-280

### The City of Man and the City of God

Old Testament history shows the human battle for good and evil, the opposition between the humble and the prideful, the rivalry of Jerusalem and Babylon. The line of Abel alone provides key examples of lives lived with humility and self-discipline.

Lines 281-543

### The Prophets

Old Testament history teaches a lesson in humility and sin is an instrument in salvation, showing humanity the pointlessness of mundane existence. Moses, Samuel, David, Elijah and Jeremiah were beacons of light, at times reluctantly, guiding humanity to the true path to wisdom.

Lines 544-733

### Human Contrition

Humans acknowledge that they have sinned, and in doing so open the possibility of salvation, since God awaits humanity to choose his love over its love of the world.

Lines 734-end

### God the Saviour

God decides that humanity will be given a second chance to choose Him, not through anger or punishment, but through Justice.

## **BOOK 5**

Lines 1-118

### The Incarnation

The age of the prophets is over and God is made flesh. God can coexist as a Trinity and thus the incarnation does not spell a change of God's nature. Judah does not recognize the authenticity of the Messiah.

Lines 119-314

### How he is welcomed

John foretells the arrival of Jesus Christ. Jesus is a new dawn, bringing new light and allowing humanity to see clearly for the first time since the Fall. Anyone is now able to be saved.

Lines 315-495

### The Nativity

Christ is both divine and human. Humble shepherds are the first to know of him. From a humble cradle he summons kings. Herod orders the slaughter of the innocents, but is powerless against the infant Jesus. Christ's coming signals a change

in power, by which the powerful will be bound to His commands and the humble will ascend in influence.

Lines 496-695

Christ's Mission

The Incarnation was a necessary means for God to save humanity. In flesh, Christ showed His divine power through visible miracles and overcomes Satan. His virginal mother and his simple disciples provide examples for the living to follow.

Lines 696-762

The Holy Spirit

At Christ's baptism, the Holy Spirit first appeared. Through baptism the world is cleansed, allowing future Christians to remain humble.

Lines 763-end

Christ's Message

Christ lived a life of humility and commanded all to love one another, to look beyond this world and embrace God anew.

**BOOK 6**

Lines 1-131

The Last Supper

Christ hosts a symbolic supper for his disciples, washing their feet to demonstrate humility and need for cleanliness. He offers them bread and wine to replace the Old Testament rites of animal sacrifice.

Lines 132-296

The Crucifixion

Christ suffers corporal death to conquer Death, and henceforth the cross becomes a sign to fortify hearts and rout Christ's enemies.

Lines 297-395

The Resurrection

Jesus, entombed, rises from the dead on the third day after the Harrowing of Hell. The Jews deny it, but his miraculous appearances to Mary Magdalene and the Apostles prove his power.

Lines 396-611

The Apostolic Age

The Apostles receive the divine spirit and travel to preach Christ's message. Their labour is difficult, but they will be rewarded in Heaven. The Apostles live together in charity, having all things in common.

Lines 612-812

The Power of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit, equal part of the Trinity, fills Peter and Paul and reveals the hidden mysteries of true Wisdom. The Church safeguards this knowledge and preaches it for the good of all with simple but pure rhetoric.

Lines 813-916

The Challenge of Faith

While the death of the soul is overcome by Christ's sacrifice, corporal death cannot be escaped. Martyrs died in order to testify to God's message and now the world accepts the Christian faith. Adversity strengthened the faith and allowed the foundation of the institutional Church.

Lines 917-end

Christian Leadership

The Apostles are leaders who set the example for others Christians to follow. By them Christian peace is established, angry tyrants are disciplined and all can learn self-control.

**BOOK 7**

Lines 1-296

The Danger of Sin

The Church allows Christ's order on Earth, but sin is not eradicated. Baptism

## INTRODUCTION

Lines 297-459	<p>purifies, but lusts still arise. The Eucharist is a powerful support for all Christians.</p> <p><u>Lust</u></p> <p>Carnal appetites afflict all humans, but God will support the weakness of the flesh. Humility gives the strength for chastity, which allows humanity to rise above its bestial instincts. Christians must prize chastity and be on guard like soldiers.</p>
Lines 460-541	<p><u>The Fallen</u></p> <p>God supports and loves sinners, who are innumerable and must be helped to find Grace.</p>
Lines 542-662	<p><u>The Pure</u></p> <p>Some are able to lead an angelic life on Earth, supported and loved by God. Humble and disciplined, they will defeat evil with God's help and be welcomed in Heaven. The monastery is not merely a group of men devoted to God, but the true fulfilment of Christ's work and the vanguard of the new life to come.</p>
Lines 663-end	<p><u>The Celestial City</u></p> <p>After the final reckoning, the good will be rewarded with eternal life in Heaven, where they will praise God forever.</p>

As the summary above outlines, Odo broadly retells Biblical history, with the goal of laying out means of salvation. He was fulfilling, at its most basic, Augustine of Hippo's call for literature to offer intellectual and ethical training based on Biblical content and imbued with a Christian purpose. In narrating and interpreting biblical stories, Odo hopes to provide the reader not only with the content and language of the Bible, but also with a way of thinking through it. For Odo, disseminating this higher level knowledge was the mission of the apostles, the evangelists and the Church Fathers:

Just as a few little seeds become vast crops,  
if they are entrusted to the best furrows at the right time,  
so too does the revealed Word quickly fill faithful hearts.  
The inquisitive flock, after accustomed to hearing doctrine,  
thirsts for justice, on which they live rather than bread.  
[...]  
Many of them multiply this profit by teaching  
and reveal the allegorical sense by explaining the words,  
and the plain surface gives birth to lofty powers;  
History feeds the simple and allegory feeds the erudite. (VI, 739-749)

Scripture has a transformative effect on its reader, Odo contends and sees his role as fulfilling the general function of Church to reveal and to explain God's mysteries. As Odo describes, God's word sparks a thirst and desire for knowledge in its audience in a twofold manner: first they learn doctrine and later they yearn for justice. He admits that beginners will find nourishment in reading Biblical stories and learning vocabulary, but hopes that the more learned reader contemplate the hidden meaning above the literal sense of Scripture. Once the reader attains this "lofty power" of interpretation, they experience a foretaste of the celestial state of the Heavenly elect who are sustained by divine justice not material food. Scripture, therefore, allows people to become perfect while still on Earth given the correct training.



At a number of points in the *Occupatio*, the text makes clear its intention to provide this training and to have a transformative effect. In the preface to book 1, Odo notes that “my mind creates verse/ so that my wandering mind may fix its ideas therein” (I, pr. 19-20), and at the end of the poem he spells out a similar aim, “I am writing a modest little book to prevent the slavish flesh [...] from debauching the noble mind” (VII 685-7). Stability is being sought through reading and writing, in which the bestial instincts of the flesh are disciplined by the instructed mind. Odo’s book, therefore, cannot simply be intended to provide content, but must also function as a guide to this higher level intellectual training.

How does Odo seek to train the reader in interpreting allegorically? Odo of Cluny views the human mind/ spirit as morally ambivalent – able to be good and evil depending on habit:

Whatever you might put into it, like a millstone, the mind seizes freely,  
and saves what is pleasing; to this it clings to more and more with experience. (I, pr. 9-10)

The more earthly pleasures the mind experiences through the senses, the more it is bound by them. The more spiritual inputs it receives, the more the mind can rise above corporality. Odo’s text, therefore, seeks to provide the spiritual grain to be milled and thereby encourage a disciplined Christian consciousness. The complexity of the Latin verse and vocabulary, the content of the biblical stories and their exegesis all collude to force the reader to engage in close reading and reflection; that is, to demand that they engage in a meditation upon the text.

This intention is one also suggested by the Latin title, *Occupatio*, most commonly used to refer to Odo’s poem. This title captures well Odo’s potential intentions in composing the poem. In classical and medieval literary and philosophical texts, *occupatio* commonly denotes the ideas or passions which ‘took possession’ of a person’s time or mind. In a negative sense, it could mean ‘distractions’ or ‘trifles’<sup>57</sup> and in a positive sense, a ‘taking care’ or ‘vigilance’.<sup>58</sup> In his poem, Odo highlights this dual nature, explaining that his reason for composing the work was to strengthen the wavering heart of his reader (Preface, 3-6), to stabilize the mind of his friend (I, pref. 17-21) and to firm up an inconstant spirit (VII, 649-53) against pernicious thoughts. Odo’s title, therefore, suggests a meaning akin to *meditations* because it is concerned with how the spirit ascends or falls by its engrained mental habits.

A second meaning of *occupatio* points to an additional intention underlying Odo’s text, since it also means ‘labour,’ ‘tasks’ or ‘duties’.<sup>59</sup> In entitling his poem the *Occupatio*, Odo may also be thinking

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<sup>57</sup> We see this aspect of this negative usage of *occupatio* later used in Hugh of St. Victor’s *Didascalicon* who sees reading for itself, and not in service of divine searching, to be of this sort. See Book 5, chp. 7. A common usage (see for example, the sermons of Aelred of Rievaulx or the letters of Alcuin, the Rule of the Master, the writings of John Cassian) is to use *occupationes* to refer to worldly attractions which led away from the monastic life.

<sup>58</sup> R.E. Latham, *Revised Medieval Latin Word-List from British and Irish Sources* (London: British Academy, 1965), s.v. “occupatio”. We often describe the mind as “preoccupied” in English, usually with a negative sense of being distracted or unable to focus on the proper task. This negative sense is not what Odo was intending to indicate. Marius Victorinus, defines study (*studium*) as “the careful and continuous attention (*occupatio*) of the mind to something topic with great will”; *Explanationes in Ciceronis rhetoricam*, Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, 132, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), I, chp. 25, p. 219.

<sup>59</sup> Charles duFresne et al., *Glossarium mediae et infimae Latinitatis*, 10 vols. (Niort: L. Favre, 1883-1887), vol 6, 26; s.v. “occupatio,” n. 3. As used in the English phrase, “a monk’s occupation was a life reading and prayer”, many medieval authors use it as a synonym for *labor* (work) or *negotia* (business). We see Alcuin’s *De rhetorica* speak of the “responsibilities [*occupatio*] of the king”; see *Disputatio de rhetorica et de uirtutibus sapientissimi regis Karli et Albini magistri*, in *Rhetores Latini minores ex codicibus maximam partem primum adhibitis*, ed. C. Halm, (Leipzig: Teubner, 1863), 525-550; here 525.

about something said in the Biblical book of Sirach (*Ecclesiasticus*): “a great labour [*occupatio*] was made for all humans and a weighty yoke was placed upon the sons of Adam on the day that they exited from the womb of their mother until the day of their interment in the All-Mother.”<sup>60</sup> This hard work is the disciplining of the bodily passions into Christian spiritual self-control. This hard work is what Odo sets out to describe to his audience as their painful inheritance to overcome.

### Themes and images

As the above description shows, the *Occupatio* finds a certain overarching unity in Biblical and Salvation history. Even a cursory reading of the poem, however, demonstrates that despite Odo’s implantation of structuring framework, the verse is made up of many long digressions, at times rarely linked explicitly. Odo’s text thus often appears to be a collection of works, styles and modes gathered together. Its content is encyclopaedic, illustrated by hundreds of images, allegories, and more than one hundred Biblical quotations or references (not to mention the many more Biblical allusions).<sup>61</sup> In style it is dramatic: long speeches (some almost two hundred and fifty lines) emerge from the mouths of God, Lucifer, Adam and Odo in the form of rhetorical harangues, laments, questioning, pathos-ridden pleas, sarcasm, and personal confessions. It should not be surprising to the reader, therefore, that the many voices and tones allow diverse themes to be addressed.

Odo’s verse treats two major subjects – general theological reflections as well as focused discussions of monasticism. The *Occupatio* offers a primer on theological debates key to Christianity and current during Odo’s life. Odo emphasizes repeatedly and throughout his work that God has given his creatures free will and allows them absolute freedom to make the choice to love and serve him. With a number of dichotomous metaphors, Odo devotes over ten percent of his poem to the choice humans must make between sin or virtue, Heaven or hell, eternal life or death, Jerusalem or Babylon, night or day, light or darkness, wisdom or ignorance, prosperity or poverty, flowers or thorns, corn or chaff, health or disease, medicine or poison, shipwreck or safe harbour, breathing or drowning. By highlighting the human capacity for true choice, Odo underlines a teaching of medieval Christianity that salvation is not predestined, but rather a result of free will. This theme hammers out the message that the readers are responsible for their choices and urges them to choose God’s love.

The foundational idea of Christian free-will acts as the staging ground for Odo to bring up other doctrine necessary for true wisdom. Odo outlines the meaning of the mysteries and sacraments of the faith. The nature of the divine Trinity is especially highlighted as the fount of true knowledge. The topic is initially evoked when God first instructs Adam in Paradise, teaching him the exact nature of the Trinity (II, 10-15). This knowledge, however, is lost through the Fall, confused by the false teachings of the serpent at the moment of the temptation of Adam. The discussion is taken up again in book six; in treating the descent of the Holy Spirit onto the Apostles, Odo explains what is its nature and relation to the other two persons of God (VI, 609-635). In book seven, the poem also devotes a few lines on the Trinity during his concluding praise of the elect and the last Revelation of the mysteries of the faith by Christ. Odo’s goals thus centre on the definition of what must be believed about the nature of the Trinity

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<sup>60</sup> *Sirach* (or *Ecclesiasticus*), 40: 1.

<sup>61</sup> As a good collator, Odo offers several encyclopaedic lists, among them: the paradoxes of Christ’s life – being both human and divine (V 582-602), the creative talents of humans (III 1053-61), the miracles of Moses’ days (VI 82-85) and the wooden icons of the Bible (VI 166-73).

and the links between the different parts – something expressed most succinctly at the end of his poem in his description of Heaven:

The mysteries of our faith are then made entirely clear.  
 The Son, as promised, is made visible from the Father:  
 Just as the Father bore Him as an equal,  
 so the Spirit similarly proceeds from them  
 and that God is a complete person in every detail.  
 He does not have a number, but one, which they share.  
 They have a single honour and glory, deity, essence, and power;  
 each one can be the total of what they all are;  
 we worship three persons and reject the notion of three gods. (VII, 701-709)

Odo notes that only after the Last Judgement will humans be able to comprehend truly the idea of the Trinity as three equal beings in one, unified in their powers, essence and divinity. The Trinity is, in effect, the first thing which God taught to humans after their creation as well as the final revelation made to the elect upon attaining Paradise. For Odo, the hidden nature of the Trinity thus explains the need for the institutional Church to teach doctrine and it also allows the sacraments to have efficacy.

The meaning of baptism, the Eucharist, and the sign of the cross further explore the nature of God, and show how the reader's own religious experiences are allowed by God's nature. Odo devotes long passages to the theology of baptism, offering his fullest account at the end of book 5. This passage articulates three stages: a description of an orthodox baptismal doctrine based on well established patristic explanations (V, 696-709), a reflection on the properties of baptismal water (V, 710-729) and an analysis of the involvement of the three persons of the Trinity within the sacrament, which culminates in an explanation of what role an ordained priest plays in the rite (V, 730-762). The sacrament of baptism allowed humans to rise above their fallen disorder and begin the purification necessary for salvation.

If baptism represented the first step towards the perfect life, then the Eucharist and penitence allowed Christians to advance higher. Odo shows how at the Last Supper, Christ overturns the laws of nature to make his body and blood into bread and wine – granting this power to all priests (VI, 65-115). Odo ascribes the bolstering of physical and spiritual control (chastity in the broad sense) to receiving the Eucharist. With Christ's aid, the priest is able to undertake a divine miracle of transformation for the benefit of the recipient. This spiritual tool is a somewhat passive action for the believer – by seeking out God's presence, they are able to experience his substance. Penitence is a somewhat more active practice of faith for Odo, by which Christians combat their faulty desires to life God's will. Odo repeatedly notes that had Adam only repented of his disobedience and pride, he would have been forgiven, he would not have been cast from Eden. It is a persistently misguided human obstinacy that God punishes. By willingly repenting their sins and offering satisfaction, Odo suggests that Christians are welcomed by God back into the city of God. This Christian will, however, is only possible after baptism and with the support of the Eucharist.

In book seven, Odo notes that other tools allow willing Christians to advance further towards salvation, but underlines that they are the purview of priests and monks. Living a life of poverty, humility and obedience, wearing a monastic habit and maintaining physical chastity all promote physical and mental discipline. He advises that men should avoid women, who by nature weaken continence, warning especially against the attractiveness of beautiful, slim women. Sexual intercourse, he advises, should only

arise from procreative intention and not from lust – and so it is best to wait to have children until later in life. Women are excessive in their dress, he remarks, as are some kings or members of the clergy whose ecclesiastical pomp is too luxurious and give rise to the same spiritual disorder as women provoke. The monastic habit, in contrast, possesses an almost Edenic simplicity (VII, 246-257). The habit, the lack of personal property and obedience to an abbot all instill an apostolic discipline governing everyday life which leads to greater mental perspicacity.<sup>62</sup> This alertness sensitizes monks to the hidden world of divine knowledge and to the process of contemplation. Odo devotes considerable time to the adoration of the Cross and the exegetical interpretation of biblical examples. The Bible, described as a compound bow made of the horn and string of the Old and New Testaments, fires out mysterious arrows of doctrine. Through rigorous contemplation, these mysteries can slowly be found and revealed to the faithful.

Since Odo believes that true knowledge can only be attained completely in Heaven, only glimpses can be conveyed and these only through analogy and metaphor. Odo's need to speak through such figures means that his text is rich with Biblical and classical allusions, tropes and topoi. Odo makes use of several classical words – like the name of mythological figures (Apollo, Hermes, Venus, Cerberus, Dedalus, nymphs, bacchae) and places (the Ether, Styx, Olympus, Hades, the Underworld), which is consistent with Latin poetry throughout the Middle Ages.<sup>63</sup> Authors like John Scotus Eriugena had established these figures as common features of this kind of philosophical and exegetical literature by Odo's time and Odo was also taught by Remigius of Auxerre, whose commentary on Martianus Capella's *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* demonstrates a similar mythological vocabulary. The stars of Orion, the Hyades and Arcturus are used to symbolise Christian values. His description of Paradise and its loss (III, 210-249) resemble a classical ode to Spring, as does his description of Nature's response to the Day of the Resurrection (VI, 355-66). His catalogue of Adam's sufferings in exile (III 371-91, 586-89) reads like a Golden Age theme by Ovid or Hesiod, with its sneaking admiration for days of old when life was rustic and simple, but happy, before luxury, before risk-taking adventures for profit, before alcohol, before Apicius and his cook-book. His description of the flourishing Church of his day (VII, 1-10) is as a flower-filled meadow, another set piece of the classical style.

Alongside these classical references, Odo cites Biblical parables: the lost coin (V, 40), the lost sheep (V, 40-41), the prodigal son (VII, 494), the importunate neighbour (VII, 507-10), the adulterous woman (VII 492-93), the wise and foolish virgins (VII, 570-71), the husbandmen of the vineyard (VI, 221-3) but it is the parable of the Good Samaritan which seems to hold the greatest importance for him. He cites it no less than four times to prove that Christians may be beaten, stripped and left for dead, but with God's help they will recover. He makes extensive use of agricultural metaphors, which derive the first two parables of Matthew (Matth, 13, 1-30), the sower of seed and the weeds among the Corn. He also borrows from Scripture the dichotomy of the good grapes and the bitter, lilies among thorns, roses to symbolize virginity and martyrdom, the seeds of life, the tares of evil which must be burned at harvest-time, and dust-filled Sodomitic fruit. His spiritual message with its call for discipline and repentance makes use of images of sowing, ploughing, hoeing, pruning, irrigation, harvesting the sheaves, winnowing, olive wine and honey production, shepherding, logging, horse taming and protecting crops. One of most extended metaphors is that of our tainted flesh which bears a heavy yoke, is ploughed with corruption, seeded by lust, hacks at foolish desires as if with hoes and produces a crop of depravity (III 905-8). Other images

<sup>62</sup> In the *Occupatio*, Odo views monasticism as a direct descendent of the Jerusalem community of the apostles. He characterizes the early apostolic Church as holding all property in common, united by bonds of love. The repetition of the terms *commune* or *communiter* suggests that it is this feature which best characterizes the early Church for Odo.

<sup>63</sup> See Ziolkowski, "The *Occupatio* of Odo of Cluny," 562-3.

are employed to depict our corruption: the mountain of our crime, a whirlpool or a labyrinth of sin, a bottomless well or filthy sewer of depravity, the stinking heat of lust which is a besmirching stain and an unspeakable plague.

Lightness/ darkness imagery also predominates the *Occupatio*. In Odo's thought, the metaphor of light is not a mere characteristic of sanctity – it is equally a synonym for teaching a proper mode of life and a faithfulness to the norms set by God. Men are compared to stars as reference points for others or as guiding lights showing the path to God. The morning star (John the Baptist), the true sun (Jesus), and starlight (prophets) lead people to the shining light of goodness from the dark abyss of evil. Odo includes scientific discourse on how the eye responds to bright light and how light penetrates buildings (V 151–164) to explain how people accept the Word from these luminaries or cannot see it. He refers to the light of faith, the light of virtue, the light of justice, the grim shadows of perfidy, the dark cloud of sin, the fog surrounding the arrogant and the bright light which bathes the humble. The apostles are sparks from a flint which set the dry tinder of nations alight, stars which guide the ship of faith, lanterns which light the way for those who follow. Satan, on the other hand, sucks in the mother clothed in sunlight and her baby and tears the stars from the sky (VII 121, taken from Rev. 12, 1–4).

This sampling of Odo's metaphors and allusions suggest an author working to convey erudite thoughts through images with which his audience would be familiar in their everyday life. They demonstrate, moreover, the variety of ways that he sought to communicate his message and the diversity of ideas he thought necessary to address.

### Audience

The general prologue to the *Occupatio* suggests that the poem was composed for (or at least dedicated to) a particular person, who goes unnamed. The first line addresses a “greatly beloved brother” (“Frater amande nimis”) whom Odo hopes will receive the work “like a father”.<sup>64</sup> Throughout the poem Odo addresses the reader with *frater*, a word commonly used to refer to a fellow monk. But this use was not exclusive, as Jan Ziolkowski notes, and could mean a ‘brother in Christ’, that is, any faithful Christian.<sup>65</sup> Scholars early identified two possibilities: Ernst Sackur saw Aymo, bishop of Tulle and Saint-Martial in Limoges as the likely candidate, while Max Manitius identified it to be Aymo's brother, bishop Turpius who was the dedicatee of Odo's *Collationes*.<sup>66</sup> Later scholars have questioned such attributions, with Drew Jones arguing that the use of “brother” would be too familiar an address for Turpius, a man who had ordained Odo. He sees Aymo as the more likely of the two, but agrees that this attribution lacks clear evidence.<sup>67</sup>

While text may have been dedicated to a particular individual, Odo would have expected the text to have been copied and circulated more widely. As might be expected from a work now extant in only a single manuscript of notoriously complex Latinity, the readership of the *Occupatio* was likely modest. Its Latinity demanded a highly educated audience and its content was largely of interest to elite Churchmen. Few clerics and far fewer laypersons would have possessed the necessary linguistic skills to make sense of

<sup>64</sup> *Occupatio*, Prologue, l. 1 and 15.

<sup>65</sup> Ziolkowski, “The *Occupatio* of Odo of Cluny,” 564.

<sup>66</sup> Ernst Sackur, *Die Cluniacenser in ihrer kirchlichen und allgemeingeschichtlichen Wirksamkeit bis zur Mitte des elften Jahrhunderts*, 2 vols, (Halle: 1892–1894), I, 77–82 and Max Manitius, 22–27.

<sup>67</sup> Ziolkowski hesitates to identify the recipient, arguing only that a monastic audience can be assumed (p. 564). We agree with Jones (p. 12–15), who concludes that no recipient can be identified from the existing evidence.

Odo's work or would have had an interest in exploring its mysteries. Given its contemplative, not pastoral, purpose, the *Occupatio* hints at an audience which was intended to be monastic. Given that Odo spends much of the poem talking about the problems of the monastic life and given that he closes his poem with the idea that monasteries provide the best way to salvation, we can suppose that he is preaching to the choir.

Odo may have intended his audience to be monastic, but he broadcasts messages intended to speak to three different groups: his Benedictine brothers, the rich and powerful, and the lowly. Odo sternly reminds his fellow monks of the need to adhere strictly to their rules of celibacy, poverty and obedience if they are to be models of Christian faith and morality for others. Odo calls on rich potentates –men coming to power in an age of political decentralization and autarchy– to avoid pride and excess, to use their power to protect the poor and to be aware that prosperity corrupts. As for the poor and lowly, Odo expects that they should remain meek, humble and uncomplaining.

### Language and Tone

Throughout the *Occupatio* Odo expresses a humility in his authorship typical of a medieval monk. He opens his poem with an apology for his “cold talent”, an acknowledgement of his ignorance and a fervent wish that his meagre skills will suffice for his task.<sup>68</sup> The prefaces to each book repeat these sentiments. He asks the reader not to mock his words (I, pr. 21) and expresses his fear of making a mistake (II, pr. 10). He apologizes for his audacity of writing (III, pr. 16) and prays that the foolish “words of a sinner” have some effect (IV, pr. 17-18). He repeats how overwhelmed and exhausted he is by his writing – a task he fears he will never be able to finish. He prays that God will prevent errors from slipping in (I, pr. 16) and prays for Jesus to grant him eloquence when writing in the service of religion (I, pr. 21-25). These and other self-deprecations scattered through the poem create an image of Odo as a humble writer submitting his pen to a great labour for which his skill was inadequate.

This modesty is born of two factors: the nature of Latin composition in late-Carolingian society and an attitude fundamental to monastic authors. By Odo's time, Latin had ceased to be a spoken language except by those within the Church.<sup>69</sup> Odo, like his intellectual peers, had learned to speak and to write Latin as a second language. Odo's Latin compositions (especially in poetry) can appear laboured and bookish in comparison to those of his predecessors from Antiquity because he did not write with the natural cadence and flow of a mother tongue. Odo's denigration of his own talent can be seen to arise naturally, therefore, from the hesitancy of someone writing in a second language.

But Odo also draws attention to his poverty of skill as an acknowledgement of his paucity of talent before God – the originator of language and the first ‘author’. The Latin word *auctor* can mean someone who writes a text, but it was also used to refer to anyone creating something new. Odo repeatedly calls God the *auctor* or ‘creator’ of the world (especially throughout book II). In his prefaces, Odo also calls attention to the parallel processes of authorship and divine creation. After describing the Genesis story of creation in book I, for instance, Odo starts the next book by suggesting his own work is an imitation of the divine design (II, pr. 5). He calls upon God for inspiration and depicts God as a muse. Odo's humility, therefore, communicates his belief that God is speaking through him and that he is a vessel for God's own words.

<sup>68</sup> *Occupatio*, General preface, ll. 9, 13-15.

<sup>69</sup> Charles Briggs, “Literacy, Reading and Writing in the Medieval West,” *Journal of Medieval History* 24.6 (2000), 397-420, here 406-407.

What these expressions of modesty should not be taken as, however, is as an indication of poor talent. Odo was an accomplished writer for his time and had taught grammar and rhetoric for years by the time he composed the *Occupatio*. His style (see the section on versification, below) shows him to be well versed in earlier poetic conventions. The *Occupatio* also demonstrates Odo's conversance with obscure Latin, as well as a knowledge of some Greek and Hebrew vocabulary, though it is very unlikely that Odo was fluent in either of these last two languages. The vocabulary does demonstrate that Odo did possess profound lexical and grammatical knowledge.<sup>70</sup>

Most attention of scholars has been focused on the more exotic parts of Odo's text. Its editor Anton Swoboda—a Classicist at heart—was very intrigued by Odo's vocabulary, cataloguing rare words and usages into four types: words taken from Greek or Hebrew, antiquated Latin words fallen out of usage by Odo's time, words imbued with new or atypical meaning and words taken from the vernacular.<sup>71</sup> The last two categories can be in part explained by Odo's Latinity being subject to centuries of natural linguistic evolution. Odo's deliberate use of antiquated and foreign words, however, suggests that he intended to present readers with a striking linguistic melange. Such exoticness gave evidence of Odo's love of language, his erudition and likely served to buttress his intellectual authority.

His intent, however, was not merely to be playful or recondite, but to teach. In the general preface (ll. 3-6), Odo confesses that the brother who requested the work had asked the text to be interspersed with words unknown to him. This inspiration highlights the work's lexical function (others have termed it 'glossematic'). In the first books, therefore, he introduces the reader to a new vocabulary by expressing a concept with a common Latin word and then providing a synonym or antonym in Latin, Greek, Hebrew or the vernacular (for instance, I, ll. 15-20). As the poem advances, Odo uses obscure terms (many drawn from philosophical and mythographical discourse) without contextualization and the reader must independently determine their meaning. This deliberate obscurity demands that the reader engage in a close examination of the word forms and contemplate alternate meanings. Word choice, therefore, is not merely an instrument to teach vocabulary but also a means to demand the reader participate in the hermeneutics of biblical exegesis, what Odo saw as the proper content of Christian instruction.

### Versification

In a story likely told by Odo to his hagiographer John of Salerno, we can catch a glimpse why Odo sought to package Christian doctrine in classical verse.<sup>72</sup> When still a canon at Tours Odo had a dream of a nest of serpents springing from a beautiful urn. He interpreted the snakes as the teachings of the classical poets and the urn as the writings of Virgil. The message was clear to Odo that the poetic form offered by Virgil was enticing, but filled with morally dangerous content. John further notes that after having this dream Odo eschewed classical verse and "turned his attention to those who expounded the gospels and the prophets."<sup>73</sup> While this dream has been interpreted as Odo's rejection of classical poetry,

<sup>70</sup> Rosé, these, p. 316, suggests that the *Occupatio* suggests not only an ability to transcribe, but also to make sense semantically of Greek words (at times incorrectly), which suggests this was possible.

<sup>71</sup> Anton Swoboda, "Praefatio," in *Occupatio*, xviii-xix. An in-depth exploration of the origin and usage of the Greek vocabulary is provided by Kurt Smolak, "Zu einigen Graeca in der *Occupatio* des Odo von Cluny." *Mittelalterliches Jahrbuch* 24/25 (1989-1990), pp. 449-456.

<sup>72</sup> Ziolkowski, "The *Occupatio* of Odo of Cluny," 561-63; Rosé, *Construire une société seigneuriale*, 772.

<sup>73</sup> *VO*, I.12-13.

John's words suggest that this dream did not make Odo disregard classical forms, but instead taught him to embrace Christian poets wholeheartedly. What Odo critiques about classical poetry is the dissonance between form and content. His *Occupatio* sought to create a more harmonious balance of Christian ethics and poetic aesthetic than Virgil could provide.

Odo's acknowledgement of the danger of classical verse and corresponding approval of Biblical poetry finds an echo in books five and six of the *Occupatio*. Perhaps in oblique reference to his dream, Odo points to the parable of treasure hidden in a simple container (II Cor. 4:7) as a metaphor for how simple Christians have silenced the incessant croaking of the classical poets.<sup>74</sup> He also compares the pleasant appearance of classical verse with the humble oratory of the Apostles.<sup>75</sup> The latter dispenses with showy forms since they recognize that rhetoricians try to seem as if gods are speaking through their verse. This beautiful form, Odo decries, leads people into error and distracts minds through gaudy narratives woven with complex phrasings. The Apostles, in contrast, offer a simple message made to shine through divine inspiration. And their audience, awakened by their message, begin to hunger for further instruction – something which is fulfilled through teaching history to novices and allegory to the more advanced.<sup>76</sup> It is this historical and allegorical material that Odo offers to the readers of the *Occupatio*. He presents this content, however, in the medium of classical verse forms.

The nineteenth-century editor of the *Occupatio*, Anton Swoboda, describes Odo's metrical scheme in classical terms, seeing it as an imitation of Virgil's *Aeneid* in the "epic-didactic" mode.<sup>77</sup> Odo verse makes use of the dactylic hexameter lines favoured by Virgil, but by the ninth and tenth centuries this poetic form had long since been adapted to contemporary needs.<sup>78</sup> Likely Odo made use of this style because, as Stephen Penn notes, it had become an important identifier of erudition and literary accomplishment among the Carolingian and Ottonian writers.<sup>79</sup> To show oneself to be learned required a mastery of verse and to be taken seriously as a versifier demanded the use of classical forms. And by Odo's time there was also a considerable body of medieval biblical poetry to provide a model for his endeavour. During Late Antiquity and the early medieval period, Virgil (and other classical authors) was mediated by Christian writers and combinations of Virgilian motifs, topoi and stylistic features were

<sup>74</sup> *Occupatio*, 5, 680-95.

<sup>75</sup> *Occupatio*, 6, 720-750.

<sup>76</sup> *Occupatio*, 6, 749.

<sup>77</sup> Swoboda, "Praefatio," in *Occupatio*, iii.

<sup>78</sup> A dactylic hexameter consists of six feet; the first four could be either dactyls or spondees, the penultimate foot should be a dactyl and the final foot was a spondee (— — | — — | — — | — — | — — | — —). The first four lines of book scan as follows:

Rēx īn | uīsībī | līs mūn | dūm, quī | cērñītūr, | ēgīt,  
 Indīcēt | ūt pēr ō | pūs sē — ōpī | fēx mī | rābīlē | mīrūs.  
 Māxīmā | rēs mūn | dūs rē | rūm, quās | cērñīmūs, | ēxtāt.  
 Cōnfīcīt | hūnc ā | ēr, tēl | lūs, mārē, | sīdūs, ēt | āēthēr. (I, 1-4)

On Odo's metre, see comments by Ziolkowski, "The *Occupatio* of Odo of Cluny," 563-64. For an introduction to medieval verse and a definition of terms used here to describe Odo's, see Dag Norberg, *An Introduction to the Study of Medieval Latin Versification*, trans. Grant Roti and Jacqueline de la Chapelle Skubly (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2002).

<sup>79</sup> Stephen Penn, "Latin Verse," in *German Literature of the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Brian Murdoch, The Camden House History of German Literature (Rochester, N.Y.: Camden House, 2004), 87-118. See also Mary Garrison, "The emergence of Carolingian Latin Literature and the Court of Charlemagne," in *Carolingian Culture: Emulation and Innovation*, Cambridge: University Press, 1994, pp. 111-140.



adopted by such authors as Juvenius, Sedulius, Prudentius, Arator, Avitus, and Venatius Fortunatus.<sup>80</sup> Odo had little need to adapt Virgil to his purpose when he had Sedulius' *Carmen Paschale* (*Easter Hymn*) on hand which already used dactylic hexameter to recount its religious content. Odo directly cites and alludes to Sedulius and Venatius Fortunatus in the *Occupatio*. That Juvenius' *Evangeliorum libri quattuor* (*The Four Gospel Books*) and several of Sedulius' poems were copied in the same manuscript as the *Occupatio* suggests that the tenth-century scribe considered them to be of a similar ilk.

Anton Swoboda and Jan Ziolkowski have both noted and Peter Jacobsen has made clear the impact of another text, the ninth-century *Life of St. Germain* by Heiric of Auxerre, on Odo's style.<sup>81</sup> This verse *Life* divided the narrative into six books of dactylic hexameter, each of which was introduced by short lyrical prefaces. Likewise, Odo composed his work in seven books of dactylic hexameter, each prefaced by a short lyric in a different metre (see Table 1).

	Metrical Scheme	Example (taken from l. 1 of each section)
Preface	16 lines, (7 + 7 + 3pp) <sup>82</sup>	Frātēr ā   māndē nī   mīs     Tē pīūs   īmplēt ā   mōr     gāūdēō
Preface (bk 1)	26 lines of (7 + 8p) <sup>83</sup>	Vītā bō   nūmqūē sī   mūl     Mōrsquē mǎ   lūmqūē lō   cātūr
Preface (bk 2)	10 lines of (8p + 8p) <sup>84</sup>	Ēn mǎnūs   īllā crē   ātrīx     Dē nīchī   lō—ōmnīā   fīnxīt
Preface (bk 3)	19 lines of (5p + 5p) <sup>85</sup>	Iām prōtō   gībrā     Mārcēt īn   ūmbrā
Preface (bk 4)	18 lines of 10 <sup>86</sup>	Mēstā dī   ū mīsēr   ās hōmī   nūm
Preface (bk 5)	7 verses, each 3 lines of 11p, 1 line of 6pp. <sup>87</sup>	Cūm pū   rōs hōmī   nēs lī   cēt sūp   rēmōs / ... / Pērgērē   quīuērāt.
Preface (bk 6)	6 verses, each 2 lines of (8p+8p), 1 line of 5p <sup>88</sup>	Fēssā cǎ   mēnā pū   tābāt     Hōc brēvē,   quōd sībī   rēstāt / ... / Pōst mǎrīs   ūndās.
Preface (bk 7)	6 verses, each 3 lines of (6 + 6pp),	Quōd dīs   pōnīt hō   mō     Fōrtē uēl   ōrdīnāt / ... /

<sup>80</sup> An excellent introduction to the early medieval history of Latin Biblical epics can be found in Roger Green, *Latin Epics of the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); on the Carolingian period see p. 359-63; see also Carl Springer's *The Gospel as Epic in Late Antiquity: the 'Paschale carmen' of Sedulius*, (Leiden: Brill: 1988), 5-19.

<sup>81</sup> Peter Jacobsen, "Die *Vita s. Germani* Heirics von Auxerre. Untersuchungen zu Prosodie und Metrik," in *L'École carolingienne d'Auxerre de Murethach a Remi, 830-908*, ed. Dominique Iogna-Prat, Colette Jeudy, Guy Lobrichon (Paris, Beauchesne, 1991), 329-51, here 333.

<sup>82</sup> Swoboda prints each verse as a single line of text, an arrangement we have maintained in our translation. The first two parts are dactylic trimeter catalectic, or Lesser Archilochian (— ∪ | — ∪ | ∅), followed by a closing dactyl (— ∪).

<sup>83</sup> Each line is composed of two hemistiches (a half line of verse, followed by a caesura): the first is dactylic trimeter catalectic (see previous note), the second is dactylic catalectic trimeter in two syllables (— ∞ | — ∞ | — ∅).

<sup>84</sup> Each line is composed of two dactylic catalectic trimeters in two syllables (see note above).

<sup>85</sup> Each line combines a pair of Adonics, which is identical in form to the final two feet of a hexameter (— ∪ | — ∅).

<sup>86</sup> Each line is a dactylic tetrameter, or Alcmæan verse, which is identical to the last four feet of a dactylic hexameter (— ∞ | — ∞ | — ∪ | — ∅).

<sup>87</sup> In each verse, the first three lines are hendecasyllables, or Phalaecian verse (— — | — ∪ | — ∪ | — ∪ | — ∅), followed by a line of dactylic dimeter (— ∞ | — ∞).

<sup>88</sup> Each verse has two lines of dactylic catalectic trimeter in two syllables (as in the preface to book 2), with a third line of Adonic.

	1 line of (6pp + 5p) <sup>89</sup>	Nōstrō—ēt   hūīc ōpě   rī     Cōntīgīt   īstūd.
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Table 1. Metre in the prefaces of the *Occupatio*

In Odo's hands, classical metre takes on a distinctly medieval feel. In the remaining prosody, the quantities of the classical Latin syllables are frequently transgressed. Open endings are often shortened, not only is the final 'o' of a gerundive modified, but also the nominative plural and genitive singular ending "i". More rarely the 'a', 'o' or 'u' of an ablative are short.<sup>90</sup> Adverbs ending in an 'e' are stretched or shortened. In Greek, the quality of the syllable is treated as if free. An 'h' sometimes takes the position of a consonant.<sup>91</sup> *Synaeresis* (the contraction of two or more adjacent syllables into one, especially the contraction of two vowels within a single word into a diphthong) is occasional.<sup>92</sup> *Sui, tui, ei* are treated as if monosyllables. *Tmesis* (the separation of the elements of a word by the imposition of another word in between) happens twice.<sup>93</sup> These changes may reflect contemporary medieval pronunciation, but also may arise from a growing indifference to classical rules.

The prefaces to each book demonstrate considerable variation in rhyme. There is not a strict rhyme scheme in the prefaces, with the exception of the preface to book 4 which adheres to monosyllabic and disyllabic consonance and assonance in couplets. In the body of the poem, Odo's hexameters make use of leonine rhyme as the norm – a verse form which takes its names from Pope Leo I and had become a standard characteristic of hexameter poetry by the tenth century.<sup>94</sup> According to the leonine scheme, rhyme can happen at two points for each line of dactylic hexameter. Each line is divided into two units, one before the main *caesura* and one ending the line.<sup>95</sup> Odo's hexameters commonly demonstrate *unisoni* rhymes in couplets, in which the syllable before the *caesura* and at the end of line in two successive lines are rhymed (thus rhyming four times).<sup>96</sup> He also frequently makes use of simple tail-rhyming (or *caudati*) – which makes hexameter lines into couplets. More rarely, the *Occupatio* contains a few collaterally rhymed hexameters (*collaterales*), in which the syllable before the caesurae in two successive lines rhyme, but the tails do not.<sup>97</sup> In his rhymes, therefore, Odo closely mirrors contemporary trends.

### Dating and Authorship

The *Occupatio* is likely one of Odo's later works. It shows his mature thinking and a learned style. The explicitly monastic content suggests that it dates at least from after his entry to the monastery

<sup>89</sup> Each verse has three lines of Asclepiads (— — | — ∪ | ∅ | | — ∪ | — ∪ ∅), concluding with a line of Terentian verse (a half-Asclepiad and an Adonic, namely (— — | — ∪ | ∅ | | — ∪ | — —)). See Norberg, *An Introduction*, 73–74.

<sup>90</sup> Pr. 6, II, 63, 422; III, 101; IV, 350; V, 579; VII, 335.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. I, 185, 296; II, 170, 238, 278, 345, 481, III, 814, 1052, 1064; IV, 588, 827; V, 255, 506, 752, 779; VI, 50, 161, 736, VII, 71, 203, 354.

<sup>92</sup> I, 170, 320; II, 73, V, 24, VII, 504.

<sup>93</sup> V, 174: *assue sunt facti* and VII, 53: *Turpi que tudo*.

<sup>94</sup> Norberg, *An Introduction*, 33–34.

<sup>95</sup> According to classical usage, a *caesura* (a break or pause) happens after the first syllable in the third foot, after the second syllable in the third foot if the third foot is a dactyl, after the first syllable of the fourth foot. The first possible caesura is considered the main caesura.

<sup>96</sup> Swoboda counts no less than 134 definite instances: 3 in book I; 11 in II, 25 in III, 11 in IV, 20 in V, 37 in VI and 27 in VII.

<sup>97</sup> I, 85/86; II, 193/194, 207/208, 370/371; III, 56/57, 206/207, 679/680, 1237/1238; IV, 3/4, 15/16, 137/138, 321/322, 349/350, 799/800; V, 169/170; VI, 226/227; VII, 56/57.

of Baume and its instructive and authoritative tone hints that it was written when schoolmaster at Cluny or, more likely, after his ascension to abbot. The recent analysis by Alex Baumans conjectures that the time of writing is late in Odo's life.<sup>98</sup> Rosé specifies a time between 936 and 942, likely when Odo was at Fleury.<sup>99</sup> Other scholars have situated the time of writing to be earlier. Leo Kolmer saw the links between the *Collationes* and the *Occupatio* as evidence that the latter was written before the former (917/927) while Kassius Hallinger concludes that Odo wrote it "soon after 924".<sup>100</sup> As Drew Jones has noted, however, there is no explicit evidence to allow for a definitive time and place of its composition.<sup>101</sup>

Odo's authorship, however, is undisputed. The material of the *Occupatio* is very similar to that of the *Collationes* (though with a more monastic focus).<sup>102</sup> The sole surviving manuscript identifies the "lord abbot Odo" as the author and Odo of Cluny was acknowledged as the author of a text with the title *Occupatio*.<sup>103</sup> What exactly this text was, however, has not been widely known either to medieval monks or modern scholars. The *vitae* written about Odo of Cluny are silent about this text – as they are about a number of his works. A twelfth-century library catalogue of the abbey of Cluny lists three manuscripts with the title of *Occupatio*, only one of which is a work we now identify as Odo's verse composition:

- 300. Text containing the books of the *Occupationes* of lord Odo
- 301. Text containing the same *Occupationes* and another book of miracles [...] with the life of St. Julian the Confessor as preface.
- 302. Text containing the aforementioned *Occupationes*, in metre.<sup>104</sup>

Swoboda contends that the first two entries refer to the work now known as the *Collationes*, and only the third text is Odo's biblical poem.<sup>105</sup> This conclusion finds support in other Cluniac records. In the late fifteenth-century *Chronicon cluniacense*, the chronicler François de Rivo uses *Liber Occupationum* as the title for a text which is clearly the *Collationes*.<sup>106</sup> André Duchesne also acknowledges this ambiguity

<sup>98</sup> Alex Baumans, "Original Sin, The History of Salvation and the Monastic Ideal of St. Odo of Cluny in his *Occupatio*," in *Serta Devota, in memoriam Guillelmi Lourdaux. Pars Posterior: Cultura Medievalis*, ed., W. Verbeke et al., Mediaevalia Lovaniensia, ser. I, tom. xxi. (Leuven: University Press, 1995), 335-57. here 336; Baumans sees the text as Odo's "spiritual testament", and thus a kind of rearguard attempt to nail down his ideals before he died.

<sup>99</sup> Rosé, *Construire*, p. 320-22, 634. Her suggestion of Fleury is based on the traditional links of this monastery with the Anglo-Saxon Church (especially Canterbury), which is also the provenance of the sole surviving manuscript of the *Occupatio*; see below, "Manuscripts and Printed Editions".

<sup>100</sup> Leo Kolmer, *Odo, der erste cluniacenser Magister. Beilage zum Jahresbericht des humanistischen Gymnasiums Metten für das Schuljahr 1912/13* (Deggendorf: 1913), p. 31-32; Hallinger, "Spiritual life at early Cluny," 35.

<sup>101</sup> Jones, "Sodomitic Danger," 48

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 48-49, esp. n. 165.

<sup>103</sup> See section below, "Manuscripts and Printed editions"

<sup>104</sup> *Inventaire des Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale: Fonds de Cluni*, ed. Léopold Delisle (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1884), p. 337-373; 300. *Volumen in quo continentur libri occupationum domni Odonis*; 301. *Volumen in quo continentur eadem occupationes, et liber multorum miraculorum quique Paradisus appellatur, habens in initio vitam sancti Iuniani confessoris*; 302. *Volumen in quo continentur supradicte occupationes metrice*. The catalogue has been dated to during the abbacy of Hugh of Semur (1049-1109); on this, see Veronika Von Büren, "Le grand catalogue de la bibliothèque de Cluny," in *Le gouvernement d'Hugues de Semur à Cluny, Actes du colloque scientifique international, Cluny, septembre 1988*, ed. Brigitte Maurice, (Cluny: 1990), p. 245-263, and id., "Le catalogue de la bibliothèque de Cluny reconstitué," *Scriptorium* 46 (1992), p. 256-267.

<sup>105</sup> Swoboda, "Introduction," in *Occupatio*, x-xi.

<sup>106</sup> François de Rivo, *Chronicon aliud cluniacense*, in *Bibliotheca Cluniacensis*, col. 1627-1688, here col. 1632. François de Rivo notes that he had a copy of the text before him: "By which bishop indeed, he was asked and beseeched that he might edit

when entitling the first edition of Odo's *Collationes* as the *Three Books of Collected writings or Meditations* (*Collationum seu Occupationum libri tres*).<sup>107</sup>

The seventeenth-century librarians at the monastery of St. Germain-des-Prés –Luc d'Archery and Jean Mabillon –were the first modern scholars to identify the *Collationes* and the *Occupatio* as distinct works and to identify a single manuscript copy.<sup>108</sup> Their description of the poem as being only four books indicates that they knew only the first half of the poem.<sup>109</sup> This account remained definitive until Swoboda's printed edition (1900) made the full seven books of the *Occupatio* available to modern readers.<sup>110</sup>

### Manuscripts and Printed Editions

The *Occupatio* has survived to the present in a single manuscript copy made in Canterbury, England around the year 1000 CE.<sup>111</sup> This copy is presently divided between two codices: ms. 903 of the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal in Paris (containing books 1-3, the beginning of book 4, and the end of book 7) and ms. 2410 of the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève (containing lines 271- 857 of book 4, books 5-6 and

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into a series of books those things which he had written on Jeremiah and certain other things. He completed the enjoined work in three books, which is now known by us as the *Book of the Meditations* [*Occupationum*] of Saint Odo, and is presently before us." *A quo siquidem episcopo fuit rogatus et requisitus, ut ea quae scripserat super Hieremiam, et quaecumque alia in libri seriem coaptaret, qui rebus Libellulis opus iniunctum explicuit, quod appellatur apud nos hodie, Liber Occupationum S. Odonis, et apud nos est.*

<sup>107</sup> In the note on this title Duchesne indicates that he had decided on a dual title not extant in any manuscript. He notes that the monastery of Siligny possessed a copy of a work with the title, *Occupationes sancti Odonis*, but that it matched a twelfth-century copy of the *Collationes* which he and his co-editor, Martin Marrier had used from the library of Saint-Martin-des-Champs (now Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, ms. 707); see "Notae ad Collationes S. Odonis," in *BC*, II, col. 53. Duchesne identifies that there were additional manuscripts of the *Collationes* held by the Abbey of St. Victor in Paris (now Paris, BNF, lat. 14864), and in the possession of the Jesuit scholar, Jacques Sirmond (1559-1651). He was unaware of a poem with the name *Occupatio* (sing.) or *Occupationes* (pl.).

<sup>108</sup> Luc d'Archery and Jean Mabillon, *Acta Sanctorum ordinis sancti Benedicti in saeculorum classes distributa*, 9 vols. (Paris: 1668-1701); here vol. V (1685), 145-46.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 146; "There remain four books, of which the first concerns the work of God, the second the creation of men, the third concerning his fall and the ensuing corruption of human nature, the fourth concerning the Patriarchs of the Old Testament until the arrival of Christ. In the end, it says, 'Here ends the *Occupatio* of the Lord Abbot Odo. It seems to be Saint Odo, since the monastery of Saint Julian, from which this codex comes, is where Odo was abbot and also on account of the script of the manuscript, which dates to Odo's time and on account of the title, for thus the *Collationes* is titled in the codex from Siligny, the *Occupationes* of Saint Odo'."

<sup>110</sup> We see, for example, that the description of Odo and the *Occupatio* written by Antoine Rivet de la Grange (1683-1749) in the *Histoire littéraire de la France* merely translates the description from the *Acta sanctorum*; see *Histoire littéraire de la France: ouvrage commencé par des religieux bénédictins de la Congrégation de Saint Maur, et continué par des membres du l'Institut (Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres)*, 31 vols (Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1763-1898), vol. VI, 229-253.

<sup>111</sup> The most recent description of the manuscripts can be found in Birgit Ebersperger, *Die angelsächsischen Handschriften in den Pariser Bibliotheken: Mit einer Edition von Aelfrics Kirchweihhomilie aus der Handschrift Paris, BN, lat. 943*, Anglistische Forschungen, 261, (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1999), n°. 29, p. 160-167, which updates Swoboda's analysis (*Occupatio*, p. iii- x). Swoboda's description of ms. 903 draws on the latest descriptive catalogue from the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal by Henry Martin, *Catalogue des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal*, 9 vols (Paris: E. Plon, 1885-92), here II, p. 158-160. A brief description of ms. 2410 can be found in Carl Springer, *The Manuscripts of Sedulius: A Provisional Handlist. Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 85.5 (1995), p. 91-92, and a complete list of contents is available on the database CALAMES (Catalogue en ligne des archives et des manuscrits de l'enseignement supérieur), see <http://www.calames.abes.fr/pub/ms/BSGB12635>.

the beginning of book 7). The two parts were divided during the Middle Ages and in the late Middle Ages were separately rebound with unrelated works – which led to confusion among early-modern scholars about their provenance.<sup>112</sup>

Ms. 903 of the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal at present comprises three different manuscripts bound together, two from ca. 1000 CE, and one from the twelfth century. Odo's poem is titled the *Occupatio domni Odonis abbatis* and is written in a single late-Caroline hand which fills the first 52 folios (ms. A) with about 27 lines per page. Each folio is ruled in dry point, and measures 258 x 183 mm. This manuscript came into the collection of the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal (a satellite collection of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France) from the library of the Convent of the Discalced Carmelites in Paris.<sup>113</sup>

Ms. 2410 of the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève is a collection of early medieval verse, written in late Caroline script from the turn of the eleventh century. The *Occupatio* fills folios 174-229. Ms. 2410 was bound with another manuscript (ms. 2409) when donated to the library in 1746, but as obviously distinct codices, they were subsequently separated when the text was rebound in 1850.<sup>114</sup> The material collected in ms. 2410 show the original copyist sought to produce a tome containing biblical and liturgical verse: the manuscript includes a copy of Juvenius' metrical *Evangeliorum libri quattuor*<sup>115</sup> (f. 1r-70r), a commentary on the Gospel of Matthew (f. 712-1171r), two bifolia of Greek prayers and rubrica (f. 117v-121v), the *Carmen paschale* of Sedulius Scotus<sup>116</sup> (f. 122r-168v) and two more of Sedulius' poems (169v-171r), followed by an excerpt from Aldhelm's *Epistula ad Acircium* (f. 171r-173v), and completed by Odo's *Occupatio*. It is clear from this contextualization that Odo's text was considered as part of a long tradition in biblical poetry by the compiler(s).

Modern scholars are at present unaware of the existence of any other extant copy of the *Occupatio*. Medieval library catalogues buttress the likelihood that Odo's poem did not widely circulate in the High and Late Middle Ages. The inventory of the abbey of Cluny (discussed above, see "Dating and Authorship") notes the existence of a single manuscript copy. To our knowledge, other medieval library catalogues do not provide evidence of more copies. The Canterbury provenance of the only extant manuscript does suggest, however, that the text circulated beyond the cloister libraries of Cluniac monasteries. The use of the poem by an eleventh-century German author, Sextus Amarcius and possible use by Gezo, the abbot of St. Martin of Tortona (†1014) in Italy suggest a potentially wider geographic circulation.<sup>117</sup> Scholars generally agree that it is difficult to make conclusions about the unpopularity of a

<sup>112</sup> Luc d'Archery and Jean Mabillon thought (*Acta Sanctorum*, V, 146), for instance, that the *Occupatio* manuscript was from Tours due to a medieval *ex libris* from the monastery of St. Julian of Tours (Arsenal, ms. 903, f. 215). This is the first folio of what is now identified as a separate manuscript (now called ms. C) from ms. A, which contains the *Occupatio*.

<sup>113</sup> The ms. bears the *ex libris* (Th. 1714) from the library. This manuscript copy of the *Occupatio* was known to Luc d'Archery (†1685) and Jean Mabillon (1632-1707) who mentions its existence in his discussion of the works of Odo, *Acta Sanctorum*, V, 145-46. On this library, see *Les Anciennes Bibliothèques de Paris: Églises, Monastères, Collèges etc.*, ed. Alfred Franklin, 2 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1870), 311-314. The handwritten catalogue of manuscripts (1789) for this library is now found in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, fonds français, 839 K, with the title, "Catalogue des manuscrits sur vélin, parchemin et papier [...] qui se trouvent sous les bureaux de la grande bibliothèque (des Carmes déchaussés de Paris), commencé le 25 May 1789 par le P. Sigismond."

<sup>114</sup> The database CALAMES notes that the manuscript was donated to the library by François de Martigny, of Laon; a letter of donation remains in Paris, Bibl. Sainte-Geneviève, ms. 2409 (f. 1-4).

<sup>115</sup> Caius Vettius Aquilinus Juvenius (†4<sup>th</sup> century CE), *Evangeliorum libri quattuor*, *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, 24 (Vienna: Tempsky & Freytag, 1891).

<sup>116</sup> Sedulius Scottus, *Sedulii opera omnia*, ed. Johannes Huemer, *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, 10 (Vienna: C Geroldus and sons, 1885).

<sup>117</sup> Jones, "Sodomitic Danger," 49, esp. no. 166 and Rosé, *Construire une société seigneurale*, 321.

medieval text based purely on the number of surviving manuscripts, but the lack of additional witnesses does, however, seem to suggest that the *Occupatio* was more akin to a rarity than a bestseller.

The *Occupatio* was first printed in 1900, edited by the Viennese Classicist Anton Swoboda (1865–1928) as a rare medieval volume in Teubner’s series *Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana* [The Teubner Library of Greek and Roman Writers].<sup>118</sup> Swoboda was the first to identify that ms. 2410 of the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève contained the *Occupatio* and to conclude that it had originally belonged together with ms. 903 of the Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal. Before 1900, therefore, modern scholars did not have access to a complete text of the *Occupatio*. On the basis of the two parts, Swoboda produced a *diplomatic edition*, that is, an edition which depends on a single manuscript exemplar.<sup>119</sup> Intended for university students, the poem was published with a Latin preface and notes meant to provide a succinct introduction to the text. It did not contain, however, a systematic critical apparatus (e.g. noting Odo’s sources, allusions, editing glosses) which is now typical of modern editions. Swoboda also classicized medieval orthography to correspond with Antique norms. Despite these limitations, his text is the only available printed edition and his solid editing work of the sole manuscript justifies using it as the basis of our translation.

### Translation Note

We have tried to preserve the diction of Odo as far as possible – only very occasionally have we needed to render the text less literally in order to render clear one of Odo’s obscurities (e.g. *denarium transire* becomes “the number eleven”). We have retained a line-for-line translation to retain the feel of a poem, but with no attempt at imitating Odo’s metre. As for Odo’s use of *homo*, *homines*, *vir*, *ille*, *hic*, *quidam* in ideas which refer to both sexes, we have avoided “man”, and “mankind” and used “person” “people” “they”, and the like. We have capitalised “He” and “Him” when referring to God (and Christ) mainly because of the need for clarity between different subjects in several difficult passages .

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<sup>118</sup> On the history of the Teubner series, see Friedrich Schultz, *B.G. Teubner, 1811–1911, Geschichte der Firma in deren Auftrag*, Leipzig: Teubner, 1911 and on Antonio Garzya, Marcello Gigante, and Giovanni Polara, *Omaggio a B. G. Teubner : un grande editore a gli studie classici*, Naples: D’Auria, 1983. The Bibliotheca Teubneriana Latina is now

<sup>119</sup> To understand the terminology and methodology of modern editions, see Eric Knibbs, “How to Use Modern Critical Editions of Medieval Latin Texts,” *History Compass* 5.5 (2007), pp. 1521–1549.

CHRONOLOGY OF ODO'S LIFE AND WRITINGS

879	born to a Frankish noble family, whose father was a jurist named Abbo
884	begins education under a priest
886	fostered by Fulk the Red
893	fostered by William the Pious
895	sickness forced Odo to convalesce with his parents, leading to conversion
897	became canon at St. Martin (Tours)
900	educated under Remigius of Auxerre
905	lived as hermit, trying various styles of ascetic life
908	converted to the monastic life under abbot Berno
909 - 927	schoolmaster for abbot Berno
909/ 910	writes the foundation act of Cluny for William the Pious
917	ordained priest by Turpius, Bishop of Limoges
between 917 and 926	wrote the <i>Collationes</i>
926	assumed the abbacy of Cluny, Déols and Massay upon the death of Berno
928/ 929	reformed the monastery of Romainmôtier, and maintained control of it for three years
929/ 931	travelled to Aurillac to research and write the <i>Life of Gerald</i> ; reformed the monastery of St. Gerald of Aurillac
931	reformed St. Martin (Tulle); becomes co-abbot alongside Adacius
936	reformed Fleury at the request of King Hugh the Great
936	reformed St. Paul-outside-the walls (Rome) at the request of Pope Leo VII
936	assumed control of St. Marcellin (Chanteuges) with a co-abbot Arnulf
936/942	reformed Saint-Élie (Nepi) at the request of Alberic
	founded Sainte-Marie on the Aventine at the request of Alberic
between 936 and 942	wrote the <i>Occupatio</i> and the <i>Sermon on Abbot Benedict</i>
937	reformed Saint-Sauveur (Sarlat) with his co-abbot Adacius
937	reformed St. Julian (Tours)
937	Reformed St. Peter (Sens)
between 937 and 942	composed the <i>Life of Gregory of Tours</i> , the <i>Sermon on transporting the relics of St. Albinus</i> and liturgical material in honour of St. Martin
938	met John of Salerno in Rome
940	composed the <i>Sermon on the fire at the basilica of St. Martin</i>
942	death of Odo of Cluny

Due to differences of dating between charters and other historical sources, these dates are approximations.





HERE BEGINS THE *OCCUPATIO* OF LORD ABBOT ODO

**Prologue**

Greatly beloved brother, holy love fills you, so I rejoice.  
A thirst for justice, the heart's honour, is a splendid thing.  
You lament that your heart wavers and so you bemoan your lot.  
You will want a poem then to anchor it, to stop the flow.  
5 You ask repeatedly that words unfamiliar to you be sown: it is a great task,  
for someone to make pleasing such a thing as novelty in meaning.  
But it would be good for me to know what use it is. You ask of me novelties  
(old ideas would satisfy your zeal for learning, I think, were you not demanding my cold talent  
to grow hot). Certainly, proper study is everywhere cold, too much so now;  
10 everyone desires worthless ideas, no one seeks worthwhile ones. O the pain!  
I am glad, then, that your mind longs for these things, as it should.  
But how may a stream flow from barren rock?  
Though ignorant, I will tackle the things which you command, as best I can.  
The Lord above judges the work by the promise of the author: this I ask,  
15 That like a father, you too receive my service by weighing my ability.

## Book 1

### Preface

Life and death, good and evil, are placed side by side  
before humanity: what chances to please them, is given them.  
The law of Moses states this, that sage admits it.  
But the good person shines in Heaven and the bad burns in the depths.  
5 Habit debases those who incline towards the basest things with further inclinations  
but devotion corrects whatever had been made faulty.  
Therefore, though the mind opens its jaws to meaningless delights,  
it often performs a good deed when driven by force of character.  
Whatever you might put into it, like a millstone, the mind seizes freely,  
10 and saves what is pleasing; to this it clings more and more with experience.  
Since we are morally ambivalent on account of this, prompt to good ideas or bad,  
what a Heavenly dish of flavours will result!  
It may also be like the bait which catches a voracious river-pike,  
or like a splintered plank to a sailor shipwrecked on a sandbank.  
15 Indeed it pains me greatly that you are sorrowful; I need your  
help more in this because it is medicine for the sick,  
and I will strive to be more committed to new ideas, as you ask.  
Let Him who made water from a rock, water me, I pray,  
because, in order to express its modest ideas, my mind creates verse  
20 so that my wandering mind may fix its ideas therein!  
I whisper this in your ear so that no one may laugh at it.  
Let each of us pray to God not to allow any fault to exist!  
Christ Jesus, I call upon you: as you are generous, have pity!  
You make everything good and are the leader of the wise.  
25 Make your flock speak, giving me verbal expression!  
If this turns out of little use, let it not be to my detriment, I pray.

The invisible King created a visible world so that its wonderful  
Creator may reveal Himself through His wonderful work.  
The world is the greatest of things which we see.  
It consists of air, earth, sea, sky and ether.  
5 One would think the ether curved, since the flat earth is rounded.  
Air and fire go upwards, water and earth downwards.  
An insect –despite its weight– balances in the air, supported by wings,  
lest you doubt that a body can stay up in the air,  
something which a perfidious bunch of comics denies.  
10 He who makes discordant elements, the fertile building blocks,

to inter-react harmoniously, is thus proved to be God  
 (for cold things resist hot, wet oppose dry  
 and those with weight repulse those without).

Therefore the unseen becomes manifest through the visible,  
 15 beginning without beginning, end without end.  
 This gives things place and substance, beginning and end.  
 By making tiny things He is not proved smaller, nor bigger by  
 things great: things may be small, large or even medium-sized,  
 as He fashions things small, large and medium with sweet influence,  
 20 whirling round inside them and moulding them from outside.  
 What He creates from nothing, He also deploys in wonderful order,  
 making every single thing grow beautiful with His gifts:  
 colour adorns one, scent another; flavour permeates this one, strength, another.  
 But just as things flourish with varying gifts,

25 so too the customs of men may vary according to their different gifts:  
 strength, talent, beauty, appearance or eloquence,  
 and different ages and character have their own patterns of behaviour.

The world, likewise, being made from nothing, resides nowhere.  
 If nothing is something, it will clearly be proven to be nothing.  
 30 There is place outside of everything, but not inside a place's place;  
 if there were a place inside, the place would be greater than the same thing in place.  
 So why is there place for a world which has nothing outside it?  
 The mechanics of the world may perhaps be revealed to you from the design of an egg;  
 Though the image may be incompletely defined, it gives an idea.  
 35 Air encircles the earth, the sky encircles the earth all around.  
 The egg-shell surrounds the egg-white which encircles the yolk:  
 the shell thus is Heaven, the egg-white air and the yolk the earth.  
 As the poetic muse imagines, air and earth direct their own  
 energies, striving to break into each other.  
 40 This lifts, that pushes, their equal masses repelling each other;  
 the power of each makes it impossible for either to be moved.

Therefore He creates by commanding, he joins diverse things at His nod,  
 composing a single world so beautifully from diverse elements.  
 How the Creator shines more wonderfully than His wonders  
 45 is proved by all the individual things which shine, having being so made.  
 A water drop, smaller than a river, a spark, smaller than a fire, remain visible;  
 Likewise, all the glory adorning His creations is but modest;  
 the Potter is the supreme fount and supplier of loveliness.

"Why did the world not exist earlier?" one may perhaps ask.  
 50 One should ask this of oneself and one's own failings,  
 and also about the limbs, why the eye was not an ear,  
 rather than asking that, no matter how important it could be.  
 Better to have asked this: what is one doing or what is one going to be,  
 whom eternal retribution awaits on account of an impulsive deed!

- 55 God's will is everlasting, not suddenly arisen, so that  
 He may instantly create something He had not created in the past.  
 He precedes all time which shows the uses of time.  
 The kinds of things which appear in any age  
 the King had already planned deliberately from a timeless time.
- 60 Consider a craftsman planning a piece of work:  
 first his mind imagines it, then hand and skill carve it.  
 What is new to us is therefore ancient to the Creator,  
 who made the world and everything in His own good time.  
 Although God would be sufficient unto Himself alone,
- 65 He preferred that there be someone to enjoy his good for a time,  
 or, by knowing Him, to have probity of mind.  
 He created two beings able to inquire about Him,  
 to stand above the others and to surpass them by their reason.  
 He obtained no benefit for Himself by this, but gave them His gifts.
- 70 Embracing Him dearly, no, tightly with willing arms  
 such that they intensified their worship with delightful prayer,  
 they grew in strength with the dowry of both freedom and reason.  
 Such a gift ought deservedly to nourish a love of the Giver in the beloved!  
 But there would be reason for them to have to pay Him constant praises in return
- 75 and to obey His command fully and enthusiastically,  
 nay, to desire divine hymns forever,  
 since it is a very great pleasure for the pious to sing these!  
 This one thing remains, that the clay should repay the Potter;  
 there is nothing for it to give in return, except praise.
- 80 Spurning this, people are more inclined to self-love.  
 O the pain! By loving self, they drive themselves to self-ruination.  
 First, the King orders the angelic host, which is light, to exist  
 and He stamped the divine image of Himself definitively on these.  
 He created them so great and good, having nothing earthly,
- 85 and He differentiated their blessed pedigree with nine orders.  
 It is clear that there is no mention anywhere of there being ten;  
 why, the prophet says that there were only nine names of stones;  
 a doomed pile of rock was set up like a tenth army,  
 not because the Creator made it, but because strife caused it.
- 90 He gives everybody one and the same measure of nature;  
 a fault, not nature, separated fluids from solids.  
 Lucifer was an archangel and outranked the rest in honour  
 (there are indeed major and minor orders in that place)  
 and, by the King's indulgence, three Heavenly items adorn him.
- 95 He was equal in nature, as shown by the words of the prophet  
 when he struck the savage neck of the Bringer of Darkness.  
 Referring to his shame, he speaks loftily of it:  
 "Surely you had an opening made at your creation?"

He shows us that he was created capable of loving the Lord,  
 100 if he wanted, like the rest, but he didn't want.  
 A small gem with a hole in it, joined to others on a string,  
 could not take that string if it had not been pierced.  
 How will a gem which has a hole be able to be strung  
 with the rest, if it rejects the string?  
 105 Lucifer is therefore said to have a space capable of piety.  
 But it is open to pride and closed to love.  
 If, as a gem is threaded onto a golden chain, he were to take  
 up this love, he would join the other jewels in Heaven.  
 Lucifer rejected this and turned to self-love.  
 110 It happened also that many fools became arrogant  
 along with their leader and likewise suffered a swift fall  
 – O the pain! – forgetting that God had given them their being,  
 that He had placed them in Heaven, blessed with countless gifts.  
 Corrupt love and pride are the cause of so great a fall!  
 115 Abandoning his Creator, he who was made from nothing is nothing again.  
 Loving himself, lukewarm in his love of God, he abandoned Him.  
 He himself did this; by setting examples of arrogance for his followers,  
 he received the deserved reward of Hell,  
 bringing darkness upon himself instead of light eternal.  
 120 Immediately they exchange their rest for all manner of Gehennas.  
 Seized with violent rages, he then swells with increased daring  
 and said that he was going to mount the cold regions of Heaven.  
 For being cold, he fittingly wishes for a region full of cold:  
 he who is cold grows warm from the love of divine heat.  
 125 He who falls down the steep flank of a sheer mountain side,  
 impelled by body weight, is not easily checked.  
 So while he is itching to further his futile attempts  
 and is boasting that he can climb to the lofty heart of Heaven,  
 an arrogant urge to rise up against his Creator burns in him:  
 130 he now asserts that he will be His equal.  
 Lo, the coiled one prepares his strength to assault Him  
 who created all things! This is why he rises up against everything:  
 all things protest because, though he is a fragment of  
 the All-father's creations, he dares to compare himself to Him.  
 135 The majesty of the Almighty is not harmed, however,  
 rather, struggling to bite Him, he blunts his metal teeth.  
 The injury lays him low, nay, totally overwhelms him.  
 In trying to fight with Him, he disarms himself more,  
 and covers himself with disgrace which will never be removed.  
 140 Glory abandons him, everlasting confusion surrounds him.  
 The rest, cleaving to God, are steadfast in their chosen order;  
 they rejoice in the Lord and, self-disciplined, laugh at the wretch,

clinging more tightly to the King because of the rebel's fall.  
 They rage and cry out as if on the King's behalf:  
 145 "You liar, you crazy rebel, origin of death, root of sin  
 and inventor of deception, are you equal to God?  
 You? After He just made you to exist from nothing,  
 after He clothed you so elegantly and made you a noble,  
 more honoured than the angelic hosts, will you repay Him thus?  
 150 You? Equal to God? You? For Shame! Were you worthy  
 of keeping the dignity which nature gave you?  
 The honour of majesty no longer suits you, you snake.  
 Will you set up a God-like throne above God's stars?  
 Does every kind of precious gem adorn you for that reason?  
 155 Is it that no pine tree is taller than you in stature?  
 Will you also be no shorter than the cedars of Paradise  
 as tall as His lofty throne and also merit a divine sceptre?  
 Praise allied to love should be due to the Giver of so many gifts!  
 Instead, you wish to fight an unjust war! Unholy one, you yearn for  
 160 the heights of Heaven, but drown in the Styx whirlpool!  
 Behold, the new king of Heaven – rather, a beast of the deep!  
 Will you match His lofty throne? You'll be viler than ring-worm!  
 Surely one who itches to be unjust cannot be a god?  
 Nature says no; law and morality refute it.  
 165 You nothing, you imitate existence: you deserve to be nothing forever!  
 God alone has an eternally unchanging being.  
 Whosoever clings to Him, can share in this being;  
 but any who go against Him, lose true being.  
 No one but a liar sees creations as co-equal with the Creator,  
 170 except perhaps you, the father of falsehood and its origin!  
 You could prove whether you are a god by a true test:  
 it is clear that only God can make something from nothing.  
 So make a turd from nothing, then, and become a god!  
 If you moan that this is too big a task, we'll give you an easier one:  
 175 convert some rubbish into nothing!  
 If not, you are guilty of lese-majesty. Die! Or not?  
 Rather, remain forever drowning in all kinds of punishment!"  
 The faithful had spoken. At once a violent whirlwind blew him to Hell.  
 Thus he suffers the eternal darkness which he himself created.  
 180 Once higher than those in Heaven, he is now lower than the lowest,  
 rotting and crushed, burnt by scorching flames.  
 He will drink in all manner of torments, which he himself created.  
 He does not return for forgiveness, because he never has regret.  
 He himself invented sin and commits it without anyone's urging.  
 185 Thus Grace abandons him with just judgement,  
 one to whom the will had been given entirely freely .

BOOK I

The more liberality He had shown to him, the more He now constrains him;  
the more that glory adorns him, the more severely censure now throttles him.

The pure air of Heaven rejects the impure straightway.

190 For those averse to staying there, what could remain but a fall?

Indeed, a fall immediately follows pride.

They therefore get the dwelling-place they deserve, being destroyed.

God blasts them out of Heaven with His winnowing-fan of justice,

to roast them in the eternal fires like bundles of weeds,

195 and grim Death throttles the life out of them.

He, however, suffers no harm; he wanted for nothing, but now lacks all.

The complete sundering overwhelms him, but does not injure him.

We repeat this to ourselves, who must keep an eye open for him;

Lest god-given signs puff up pious disciples,

200 the Lord reminds them that Behemoth fell from Heaven.

May He give us this reminder to ponder with humble mind!

There is an anvil. On it, God beats out his vessels.

One whom He allows to run wild, he also mercifully constrains;

He slackens the reins for some through justice, and reins them in with piety.

205 When upon an anvil, for instance, a coppersmith is designing a vessel,

the anvil is set underneath and above a polishing-cloth embellishes.

A blow strikes both: battering the anvil, polishing the vessel.

His hammer beats the vessel thinner and drives down the anvil.

The anvil takes the blows but is not shaped into a vessel.

210 The Enemy is likewise stuck in the earth, remaining sunk under Lake Avernus,

and the divine hand shapes His disciples against Lucifer.

He gives him rein to make them feel fear and He reins him in to teach them faith.

May the proud ones quake at the sight of his fall!

The reprobate strips them bare or causes them to fall.

215 In both these ways, the enemy's cunning makes war on the pious.

Every trick he employs increases the heavy burden on himself,

which flows over him and drowns him for ever.

That Cerberus burns insatiably for their death.

But the Heavenly Judge, giving it a soporific,

220 muzzles the rabid mouth of the gaping monster with a ring,

His divinity hooking its nose and nostrils,

and its madness does not harm them, however insatiably it rages.

He does not punish things which are allowable nor the tiniest of offences,

but makes them a yardstick for illustrating, not that He might suppress them,

225 but how virtue is able to heal them when pride is slain.

What He does is just; what Lucifer itches to do is lawlessness.

For he sinfully wants everything and is always unjust in his desire.

But he achieves nothing by his endeavours, except what the just Creator allows.

Lo, we see that there is a division in the Heavenly ranks!

230 The earth beneath rightly trembles at the airy thunder:

if there is corruption in the Empyrean, why not more in men of clay?  
 All which is made is an unchangeable marvel; and He who  
 was responsible for its existence, allows Himself to remain fixed.  
 The arrogant are swept away, the humble remain rooted.  
 235 Grace favours the submissive and abandons complainers.  
 Nature had created for both the ability to know, and to do, good;  
 different groups, however, have followed their different will.  
 One group chooses the Creator, to whom the other thinks itself superior.  
 The former loves God and the latter loves only itself.  
 240 Let us consider what each group has as its own desire,  
 or the volition which each seizes as its own.  
 The first group stands firm, the second falters: let us see what belongs to each!  
 As eternal glory awaits the former, so failure awaits the latter,  
 and as nectar refreshes the first, confusion scorches the second.  
 245 By this he teaches all the faithful what to do and what to avoid,  
 lest ashes asphyxiate as the lung breathes in chaos.  
 O you stars of God, fellow lights of your Sun,  
 you who learned how to recognise the supreme good through reason,  
 adhering to justice, never falling for tricks,  
 250 whom piety, the mother of virtues, teaches this one thing –  
 to incline towards and to love good – which is supreme above all things.  
 You are prudent to repay what the clay owes to its Creator,  
 O you lucky ones whom eternal glory secures!  
 After the dross had been cast out, the generous Potter  
 255 applauded the purified celestials, because the meek chose to adhere  
 to true goodness. He gave them this as a reward:  
 not to want to sin any more and ultimately to be incapable of it.  
 Flowing water is quickly made hard ice,  
 and having now learnt to dedicate what is right to the Potter Himself,  
 260 which is the pinnacle of justice, they are considered as bearing every honour.  
 Moreover, with this authority they restrain the rebellious mobs  
 which dared to attack nothing but the thing decreed by them.  
 Thus the holy flock has huge giants under its jurisdiction.  
 He who presumed to equate himself to God is forced therefore,  
 265 against his wish, to succumb to angelic orders  
 and rein back his retinue at the will of the just!  
 Though he has withered away and has lost his happy existence,  
 he still remains tough, with enormous talent and natural power;  
 but the Gorgon has turned all his wiles to trickery.  
 270 He extorts nothing by force, but persuades very cunningly.  
 He does not give orders, but achieves all through craftiness,  
 determined to deceive and rejoicing in nothing but perdition,  
 laughing with the sure consolation that he takes others with him.  
 The king deserved to grow more swollen than rest of his arrogant pack.



275 Alas! In such a way the proud, by being puffed-up, deserved to be ruled!  
 Lucifer is called a shadowy mountain by the divine voice  
 not because he is lofty in virtue, but because pride has inflated him,  
 and he stands shrouded in perpetual darkness.  
 He tricks them into bringing grass into the mountains for him,  
 280 when the prideful give into the sweet acts of desire  
 and are eager to distend their insatiable bellies with this feast.  
 The dirtier the places he visits, the more fully Satan stuffs his belly;  
 he fills it with offal as plentiful as the deeds with which he is soiled.  
 One who is willing stands against him, backed by the Almighty's strength,  
 285 for no one watches out for him on his own.  
 Our spirit is too capricious; we are human; flesh is dust.  
 Would the flesh remain steadfast before the hands of so great an enemy,  
 or could dust repel his huge strength,  
 unless God Himself exhausted such strong arms?  
 290 He lays him low before the meek, but lets him prevail over the proud.  
 Therefore anyone wanting such a savage, menacing foe to run away,  
 should be quick to surrender to Him enthroned on high!  
 He alone who created him bears a sword against him.  
 Willows of the brook are said to compass him about.  
 295 Winter fills a stream and summer makes it dry; this signifies  
 that someone may have esteem in this life, but ruin in the next.  
 A willow fed by marsh-water is soon full-grown, but remains barren,  
 just as works of piety do not fructify those whom glory feeds.  
 These willows cluster around Satan, watered by the stream.  
 300 He reveals his tricks more openly to such as these;  
 those who live worse, cling more closely;  
 he bids them do all evil, this willow-grove so delightful for him.  
 But from all good people, since they are carefully watching for his appearance,  
 he hides his traps lest they perhaps grow wary if they are revealed.  
 305 Let it be very clear, in studying the case's argument,  
 that a work of piety, done because of a love of praise  
 or done sluggishly, is not worth the full reward,  
 nor is it when zeal exceeds the correct amount or time.  
 Virtue becomes vice if it lacks these two things.  
 310 Therefore the inciter of evil and the perpetual underminer of good  
 either urges evil people to open acts of wickedness, like an acquaintance with his friends,  
 or proposes hidden evil to the good, like a bandit ambushing strangers.  
 Thus, he either forbids good deeds or wants to corrupt a good achievement,  
 and so often he breaks the castle walls with this battering-ram:  
 315 using his power he tears asunder those united by a single faith.  
 Just as he was the first to dare to shatter the peace of Heaven,  
 so too does he also want the faithful at odds, confident that where  
 there is divided moral opinion, good is absent.

He is busy breaking pious hearts with thousands of devious paths,  
 320 which a humble person brushes aside easily like spiders' webs.  
 This beast, as though in the shadows plucking grass with its lips ,  
 licks our pliant minds with whispered pleasures.  
 Whomever his suggestions please, his teeth then bite off,  
 torn away from God-the-root, by whom alone it is possible to live.  
 325 From there, propelled by their assent into the mouth cavity,  
 the weak are ground up, the bones of virtue broken by depraved habit  
 until Death chews and swallows it all down his gullet, .  
 However, the Almighty's mercy took care of such people.  
 He smashed the beast's jaw and pierced it with a ring.  
 330 The wretches may be able to escape from the place in which the  
 beast pulverised them, if the prisoners recover their senses  
 and repent that they spurned their Holy Parent  
 and that they listened to a criminal to the detriment of their salvation.  
 Who could evade such cruel gaping jaws  
 335 if the pious Father, always preferring to forgive, did not take care  
 so piously and unless the fount of piety was there to help?  
 Look, He breaks through the grim molars and stops them devouring!  
 Look, he has a hole by which the prisoners can escape!  
 This enemy is revealed, full of vigour and power, but  
 340 our soldier is unfit for war, made of dust and unequal in strength.  
 The General however is a professional with a powerful sense of duty.  
 Choosing the weak and shattering whoever are strong,  
 He so pleasingly lays low the proud and the lofty by means of the humble  
 and allows the meek to accomplish outstanding triumphs.  
 345 In time of war He conceals the terrifying faces of the enemy  
 so that the soldier, who might abandon hope at that very sight,  
 thus has greater hope, triumphing over an unseen foe,  
 who can be defeated so long as he cannot be seen.  
 After the time of war has been successfully completed,  
 350 then on Judgement Day the meekest King Himself is revealed  
 and He grants Heaven to the meek as their reward  
 whilst the arrogant and proud will perish with their arrogant king.  
 Then, secure and fully rejoicing now, they see for themselves  
 against whom they had been fighting, who it is that they can beat,  
 355 knowing for sure that he was inescapable  
 had not God-made-flesh, who alone is able to defeat him  
 and, being stronger, able to divest the fettered strongman of his spoils  
 lowered Himself by uniting Himself with our flesh.  
 Our flesh, once a slave, now joined to the Thunderer, is now a master!  
 360 Afterwards the colluding and oppressive corporality endures eternal fires.  
 The pious rejoice, offering up all manner of melody to the Lord forever.  
 The punishment and sight of the defeated is cause for praise.

BOOK I

What they would be if they lacked God's grace, they prove by observing  
the one they beat: and seeing to whom they owe what they are.

365 As for the angelic hosts, reduced by the Devil's fall,  
the Almighty Father quickly and decisively repairs their losses.  
For, the more to thwart the arrogant dragon everywhere,  
He ceased to condescend to the flesh and the Spirit flooded out.  
A limping foot has a tendency to tangle its steps.

370 I too am like a lame man, wandering with slipping foot,  
so may He take pleasure in guiding my lazy steps!  
May a pause here re-invigorate my meagre strength!

**Book 2**Preface

Behold, the hand –a creator– made everything from nothing.  
 To what He gave being, He also gave the power of reason,  
 blessed with cognition, in the image of the King of honours.  
 Complaint therefore should arise less, and instead praise should resound  
 5 that the work is permitted to resemble so great a Sculptor!  
 The enemy is given his reward; the arrogant clay is cracked.  
 Alone and all powerful, the King claims the ether for Himself.  
 Pride-swollen chests head for the underworld, the meek earth submits to Heaven.  
 We receive a few things from there, like a drop of water from the sea.  
 10 May the Fount and Creator of piety not allow this to be a mistake!

For all time the King with His eternal sceptre has stood whole,  
 sufficient in Himself and lacking nothing.  
 When it pleased Him, however, He made everything to exist in an instant:  
 sky, earth, waters and the things to fill and adorn them.  
 5 But He wanted humans to be superior to His other creations.  
 So He made them as a kind of counsellor (the rest were subject to his command)  
 who were so-called due to their reason, honoured with a godly image,  
 and to be in microcosm what is in the greater universe.  
 If you have a good look around, you will see things to prove it.  
 10 Through creation, He teaches the core of His faith:  
 All creatures are created from the very number of the Creator.  
 For Scripture says, “Let Us create”, and then that “He created”.  
 This number reveals a triple yet single Creator.  
 His essence never took on a plurality of person  
 15 and what they have is common or unitary to the three.  
 The amazing thing is that the clay is in the image of its potter,  
 but that the Potter is much more of personhood than what has been formed!  
 He supplies everything to it by His impression, so that His self is within Himself,  
 He claims it for Himself and puts Himself alone into it.  
 20 Whoever is granted free-will is able to be good and to be so voluntarily,  
 as if freely redeemed by the image of the good Christ.  
 If God, compelled by no force or law, is good of His own free-will,  
 then so are humans willingly good, for what is the same thing in essence,  
 is not this and that, but the same, with not just one of them changing.  
 25 But they would be unlike Him if they were not good of their free will.  
 Surely none is truly good when forced into doing right?

## BOOK II

When I hear humans are His likeness, I note a difference between  
the Maker and His mould. For John says that we are as God is.  
Will you think for that reason that any of us are equal to God?  
30 For “alike” and “similar to” do not denote “always and identically the same”,  
but often express “something more or less the same”.  
The sun shining on the mount is thus said to “seem like” Him.  
For being alive depends upon breath, dying upon a corpse.  
The immortal part of life is the image of the eternal.  
35 Life, which has its seed from Heaven, takes earth upon it.  
Mud burdens the pure part and then plunges it downwards.  
If however that immortal part refuses arrogantly to serve God,  
it is like a lady placed below her maid, the chaste below the wanton.  
And if she is subject to Him above, she retains her pre-eminence.  
40 Because He places the first man in a land divided into four regions,  
revealing to him the sum of things and the treasury of wisdom,  
as long as the rich man grows powerful from the fourfold wealth of *ousia*,  
he is aware of what he has and choosing to live anywhere,  
let him not dare to enjoy as his own the power given him  
45 and let not the ingrate provoke to anger the One who gives freely.  
He gives a rule easy in the fulfilment and remembrance to show that  
He regards him as His true heir so long as he obeys Him.  
The Almighty lacks nothing, and ruling everything, takes nothing.  
If He is given something, He had given it to the giver in the first place.  
50 The Grace of justice is His equal and everlasting companion;  
such that Grace is a giver, not a taker away of Him.  
She gave a thousand gifts to Adam, only one thing did she ask of Adam in return.  
The King therefore gives orders to test His own apprentice,  
or rather, He who penetrates hearts reveals to Himself – not to him –  
55 whether he would put the master before the slave or the slave before the master,  
if he has the wisdom and judgement to defer to his benefactor.  
Adam was created with Paradise outside him  
and woman was created from his inside, but still he is chosen to be her master.  
An inferior position does not predetermine her in any way,  
60 nor is Eve fashioned as a greater or more holy vessel,  
but rather she became the lesser, when, urged by ill counsel, she poisons her man.  
So the example makes clear that it rebuts the murmuring of those  
who seek the primate’s throne in Pharisaic custom,  
wanting to be placed foremost in status according to seniority, not merit.  
65 If a youth grows up in the bosom of a holy cloister  
and an old man, perhaps outside, then becomes a coenobite inside,  
there is no career barrier for the old man or advantage for the young,  
unless levity weighs the old man down or honourable virtue elevates the young man.  
Honours are won by outstanding morals, not by the number of one’s years.  
70 Then the happy first man suffered loss of Paradise,

that wondrous land, which his Maker had allotted him!  
 Here he had stability, not only entirely free of all  
 sadness, but also full of the gift of complete joy;  
 barred from want for anything, convinced to reject nothing.  
 75 This occupation does not produce the bored leisure of lotus-eaters,  
 but it is like spending a pleasant rest from labour.  
 The sky does not shake nor the Heavens resound with thunder.  
 What more? No anxiety, pleasure fills all!  
 The new settler inhabits this new cloister and the whole grove,  
 80 as long as he does not take for his food what is forbidden.  
 God orders him to guard himself and to work,  
 not because he needs work or that the place fears a thief;  
 but if he had obeyed, if he had executed His order,  
 if he had done that, then he would still be guarding and working.  
 85 Eden is expert at obedience, which Adam claims as his own.  
 All the gentle animals obey and also fierce ones like griffins.  
 Adam himself gave names to the animals as if they were his own.  
 He who created them could have given each one a name;  
 but the first master would name them as his own as he wished.  
 90 But among those animals there is no one like or similar to Adam,  
 no one for him to love like himself, according to nature.  
 For who rejoices fully except in something he loves as himself?  
 Therefore, so that he might have someone to love and to enjoy as wife,  
 the Creator put him to sleep –understood metaphorically–  
 95 and then from his rib was woman produced.  
 That sleep, his side, the bone, the body make an important image:  
 the Church comes from the flank of Christ, asleep in death;  
 He gives it bone-like strength and joins its blood to His own.  
 He becomes weak in order to toughen the soft one.  
 100 Time was passing by; he stood firm, clinging to stability.  
 The banquet of the divine table was feeding his mind,  
 and Paradise gave him food from his labour.  
 Both of them stood there bearing the likeness of their Creator.  
 For their Creator alone was sufficient for them.  
 105 His mind became accustomed to joining the discourses of archangels;  
 and indeed, with rejoicing he looked on the lordly face of God.  
 As He has been accustomed to appear to our forefathers,  
 He always deigns to visit His raw apprentice.  
 O happy man, if only he had completely subjected himself unto Him!  
 110 The King adorns him, enriches him with so many such things,  
 seeking this in return, only this, that he love Him.  
 It is right for one's thanks to match or outmatch the gift;  
 when you receive and are paying back for great gifts,  
 it is base to have received a lot of gifts and to forget to give thanks.

BOOK II

115 It is totally wrong to love the gift one is given and not the giver,  
especially when the gifts of a lover flow so freely.  
On receiving so many good things, what should Adam have offered?  
Seduced by his love of gifts, he did not give enough in return.  
Alas! Delighted more by the bestowed honour,  
120 he clung to it as his own, abandoning his love of his Creator.  
Then in turn, He too cherished his ungrateful child less  
because Adam, loved, did not love Him who loved him.  
and for this he is stripped of the armour of God's help.  
Then burning with envy in the torments of Hell,  
125 a blackened Satan waged war upon the new human being.  
For remembering by what plague his arrogant self had earlier decayed,  
he secretly launched a deadly dart from the bow of pride.  
As easily as a broad chest pierced when the shield  
and breast-plate have been thrown or torn away, so readily did sin enter him.  
130 The desire of glory had put him to the test, I believe.  
It persuades him to aim for some high pinnacle,  
though certain that he would have to be stripped of his honour  
if he himself dared to usurp the godly height.  
A foolish woman also croaks with deceitful words:  
135 knowing it is wrong to be like God and therefore immortal.  
She utters those words like a honey-coated juggler.  
The evil woman promises Adam knowledge – enough to fill him and more –  
and that he will not feel the threats his Maker had made  
but could henceforth obtain an increase of his learning.  
140 He listens to this; though he wanted to believe what he ought.  
He remembers that the warning had not been delivered in an ambiguous tone;  
but still he believes that the word of God, more enduring than the stars,  
is not obligatory but that the serpent's hiss is.  
Believing, he rejoices and listens to the inciter with gaping mouth.  
145 The sinful intellect of the slippery beast slips and slides.  
Right away Adam agrees and strives to accomplish what he wants.  
He did what was forbidden, choosing to commit sin.  
Thus the foul-mouthed woman easily talked the glutton into disgrace.  
Ah, ah, unhappy father, both founder and punishment of your line,  
150 What frenzy is this? What madness has taken hold of you?  
What are you rushing into? Why do you kill us along with you?  
The Almighty orders that you be subject only to Him,  
ordering others to be beneath you or to remain your equal.  
If you were a slave to Him, you would be a very free slave.  
155 Now your liberty –thoroughly disgraced– is slave to vices.  
Your worship displeased: your veneration will remain dishonourable.  
What Phoebus warms in its circuit and the swift moon circles –  
this He handed to you, but forbade you to touch one tree!

Alas! When he picked from it, he broke the one rule.  
 160 As he grew hot with self-love and cold with God's,  
 he loses reason, suffering an ignorance full of blindness.  
 A fog blunts the sharpness of his given mind,  
 so that he willingly believes the deceit, not knowing what he had learnt.  
 Consider this! When criminal arrogance rushes headlong,  
 165 it makes a prudent man crazy enough to prefer harmful things,  
 trapped by self-love! There is nothing worse than that.  
 The coiled snake looks for vessels ready to bring forth his deceptions,  
 a woman, so that man may trust the snake though his lover,  
 so that the slippery one may master the weak sex and she the manly sex.  
 170 She is a type, it is clear, who poisons people by deception.  
 Satan is the snake, the woman is flesh, Adam the spirit:  
 He suggests, she seduces, and he assents.  
 The body usually follows where the head has entered;  
 one who lops off the head will destroy the whole.  
 175 If the first suggestion is brushed off, the operation is stopped.  
 Just as the head is a soft leaf and the trunk is the hardest cedar wood,  
 so too is guilt tender at first and then hard through use.  
 Most animals know how to seek union with their own kind;  
 thus a woman was able to understand, without conversing,  
 180 what the serpent intended, its cunning not yet appearing to mask a crime.  
 Not knowing how to detect evil, the woman was seduced,  
 naively considering the falsehood true speech.  
 And knowing this, man acts, as the apostle Paul first describes,  
 "partial more than is just, bound by the love of a spouse".  
 185 For hope tricked him, imagining his crime to be pardonable,  
 as though the King's ban was just a threat, empty of punishment.  
 But Death proves his edict by devouring everyone redeemed!  
 Let us consider what the clay's presumption does,  
 what sort of useless pact a breeze may strike with dust,  
 190 just like, of course, the assault upon Heaven from below,  
 from where the earth thunders at the stars with fiery flashes  
 and a creature of clay leaps in one bound over the lofty stars!  
 What he hurls on high rebounds into the throat of the hurler;  
 and so a catapult flings back the projectile on itself,  
 195 increasing in power, most of which is absent from there.  
 Now the wind was blowing and stirring up the dust;  
 now a pride of the heart was inciting an attack on high.  
 He leaps up, rejoices jubilantly and then makes merry.  
 Thus, after eating the fruit, he hopes soon to ascend Dindymon.  
 200 Humans are as dust and we float towards the Devil our tempter,  
 who dupes the dust into hoping to be a copy of the Thunderer.  
 But he falls from Heaven; He does not accept him there.



## BOOK II

Instead, He immediately drove him away as if into space,  
and forced him, deceived by the magician, into the abyss.  
205 He learns from his fall that he had entered into an unworkable pact  
and, drowning, knows where his presumption leads.  
He feasts therefore as if weightlessly floating skyward,  
he who had been well-fed either ate magically like God  
or, because God does not need food and he will soon be like that,  
210 thus making his farewell to food with a final tidbit,  
thinking he is changing into a god, he labours  
in vain, astonished that he is not changed into his Master's form.  
The fool hangs on, neither capable of flight  
nor with divine appearance adorning him; nay, he is naked  
215 and stripped of the cloak of honour which he had before.  
The fool therefore hangs on, shattered by his failed attempt,  
seeing himself crawling along the ground, not climbing to Heaven,  
crawling along the ground, naked under the first clothing.  
He blushed, as he secretly hides himself, a disgraceful thief,  
220 and his foul stain now clings to our little white limbs.  
As he spurned the measure he had received, preferring better things,  
and is sick of the honours which the Creator gave him,  
look, the wretch undergoes great change!  
The rich person suddenly becomes poor, the lucky unlucky, and  
225 the honourable person ruined, self-destructing, and  
realises the change into an opposite self.  
He has lost what he was, and gets what he himself has brought about.  
For the wild flesh was soon able to struggle against the spirit,  
and the rejecter of God can have no self-control  
230 nor can one who tries for undeserved great things master small ones.  
Ah! One who hopes to be polished by assuming God's splendour  
deserved in turn to suffer a suitable repulse;  
Adam took something forbidden and then lost himself.  
Now let us come to the patriarchs whom the Judge remembers  
235 or genealogical order records, collectively and individually,  
which holds the Lord like the hook on the end of a line,  
and which guts a Leviathan from the waters of our people:  
a flock great in number, but lowly in humility of spirit,  
and the same faith binds them to Christ like two abutted walls.  
240 Eloquent offspring, which the bloodline of the Word adopts,  
snow white with lilies, capped with a rose-red garland,  
a noble lineage, denounce your degenerate parent!  
Let legal minds blame the deed which the dissolute one perpetrated!  
Consider what that father of yours read or listened to!  
245 He stood sipping nectar before the very face of God,  
which cherub and seraph burn inwardly to see:

the fool is astonished to behold a serpent, a horrible creature!  
 Accustomed to hearing purely spiritual hymns,  
 nay even the voice of God which surpasses every song,  
 250 he wastes his time on the hissing filth of a strident serpent!  
 You, the new generation, bearing Christ's likeness,  
 divested of the squalor of your forefathers at last  
 and putting on fresh virtue created in Heaven,  
 taught by Him what it is to ignore an order,  
 255 you whom He makes skilful in foreseeing the fate of another,  
 so that you may be wary of the expert skills of the Devil,  
 you, with the gift of fresh sight, enlighten your ancient parent as to  
 why, after God's words, he desires to listen to the words of a snake,  
 and why, after seeing such a splendid face which makes the stars shine,  
 260 he looks to such a base and pernicious demon!  
     O intelligent mortal, whither has that famous sense of yours fled?  
 You diminish your will, you befoul your liberty!  
 The freedom which you assume for yourself is base servitude!  
 You are denied by God; you will be the evil monster's foot-stool!  
 265 You before whom lions lay down will be bitten by fleas;  
 all the lowest creatures will resist you, to whom the highest were once subject,  
 scornfully convicting you of having despised God.  
 This brilliant flatterer did not deceive you entirely!  
 Granted, he promised he will add increase to your glory:  
 270 by the name "Leviathan" he means "an addition to these";  
 clearly, the increase he adds is of diseases, too many to count,  
 and three deaths: of the soul, of the flesh and in the flames of Hell.  
 (The first death – of the soul – steals in as the Lord departs;  
 Adam brought this on himself as soon as he bit into the stolen fruit.  
 275 But as his soul departs, he then loses his second, bodily, creation.  
 The third, when he is overtaken by flames is the final payment.)  
 Sloth makes mockery of virtues, delusion deceives minds.  
 That evil tempter filled you with this and "increased" you with this!  
     That nakedness of the bashful member – ignorant of desire –  
 280 had not yet shamed its chaste appearance;  
 the navel and groin had not yet burned with the flame of lust,  
 nor had the eye been seduced by painted flesh or the touch by  
 sensual caress, and belly's creamy juices had not yet engorged  
 a virgin organ and inspired it to base use.  
 285 Before that, each limb had had its own appropriate use.  
 Harmony had created this peace in the various limbs,  
 so that they desired no evil and nothing would make them blush,  
 but each limb saw itself individually in mutual accord.  
 What nature gave him reflected only in one other.  
 290 For why would it blush when it bore only decent things?

BOOK II

Sin crept in – a limb is no longer individual or alone.  
For an ulcer, disfiguring the face, makes it feel shame  
and sin contaminates the limb to which it perhaps attaches;  
and if the wound disappears, the face regains its usual glow  
295 and the limbs shine again in their own glory when sin is removed.  
After the Fall, lust bores into the senses like leaven;  
it seduces, it entices, it feeds with an intoxicating contagion.  
But reckoning it to be of little importance to possess the first man,  
in order instead to devour the offspring which he was going to beget,  
300 Lust established a throne in that place, whence would come offspring,  
so that none would emerge without being branded with the mark of sin.  
So the first ones to be born also blushed the more for this member,  
each one shunning the sight of it and what it does.  
The other limbs move under our control;  
305 their movements we employ usefully and decently;  
this is the only limb not in our power to move,  
because it subjugates to itself our freedom and entire will.  
Therefore this arousal is marked as shameful and disgraceful,  
always loving the shades of Hell which it now samples.  
310 Behold! The promised honour, that divine summit, increases it!  
The deceiving interloper swells this honour aloft!  
When sufficient lustre adorned each limb,  
it urged us to remove what is inborn and to court the foreign.  
It was able to slip in through these tricks, all of which Adam  
315 would have quickly spat on, if he were not sleepy with arrogance of heart.  
It opens doors, getting inside as if known as a friend.  
If his heart were not now willingly wasting with this contagion,  
Adam would not, of course, lap up diabolic suggestions;  
though they ring in the ear, they would not penetrate to the heart.  
320 That tempter had promised him that he would be like God.  
Through these very tricks, then, he was well able to show contempt  
and his feverish brain connives like a puffed up snake!  
For he himself knows full well there are no gods but One.  
But perhaps he means to resemble angelic forms!  
325 But he knows he was created by the Creator of their number.  
Is it right that a worm should teach him his fill of reason?  
Is it agreed that the Lord cannot rule unless a viper says so?  
Unless he wants to be a beast, surely He could be their equal without the worm's help?  
But the snake goes on to another victim which it is itching to corrupt.  
330 It persuaded another to rot with the same contagion:  
swollen with the knowledge of how to exceed the proper limits,  
reckoning as worthless this glory which nature brings!  
Let people realise that they do not deserve the archangelic heights  
if their presumption outstrips the image of their Maker!

335 Therefore it hisses this, urges Adam to pursue this:  
 to strive against God and to use force against the Almighty,  
 forgetting that he is clay, that everyone should tremble at His power,  
 and finally to struggle to be god-like against the Creator's will.  
 It tries to talk about gods, their triple form, one glory and one power,  
 340 so that Adam may stray more treacherously;  
 there are three persons and God is one essence;  
 that which the persons have in common, remains one  
 nor can it be called plural nor ever be divided.  
 If he did not know this, it would be wrong to learn it from a snake;  
 345 mortals are strong in reasoning and the serpent is devoid of it.  
 Justice does not allow what the Potter has made to be His equal.  
 Striving for that, the demon Lucifer will become dark for eternity.  
 He ought at least to have restrained his rash attempts  
 and controlled his mocking assaults, is it not true?  
 350 If Adam lacks reasoning power, the aforesaid reason is in vain!  
 He had received instruction, was skilled in reasoning,  
 fortified by warnings and counselled with threats;  
 knowledgeable, he ignores what he knew and falls prey to lies,  
 seduced by the tricks which a snake devised!  
 355 The man in his arrogance prefers to believe such a worm  
 and trusts it, knowing it had fallen because of its own daring,  
 believed it credible though all others refuse to believe!  
 Everyone perchance asks why it happened thus;  
 for God sees the things to come as those of the present,  
 360 and by His power everything in Heaven and on earth is made,  
 and nothing is certain to happen except by His nod,  
 which is revealed when all things know Him to the full.  
 Therefore He knew that Adam would fall by the Devil's urging.  
 Why did He allow a fierce enemy to do battle with the weak?  
 365 Firstly, it is clear that the earth from which we are said to come  
 cannot join with the lofty centre of Heaven  
 nor can we, being dust, penetrate the mind of the Almighty.  
 But there is something which may be termed "by gift",  
 which the forefathers understood and descendants learnt from them.  
 370 He established all things with His judgement and just order.  
 In His lofty plan, grace bonds some to Him  
 and allows some to have the will to behave justly.  
 It inspires devotion and aids the willing follower.  
 One person takes the gift given and trains with it;  
 375 Another person ignores the gift and, deprived, goes backwards;  
 One hangs on to what he loves, or rejects what he does not.  
 Therefore it is a matter of the will, which grace helps in one, but not the other.  
 If God knows a person's destiny, He does not fix it.

## BOOK II

For the Creator never plans a destiny for what He did not create;  
380 indeed, who ever believed that God created evil,  
when all the things He created are, on the contrary, truly good?  
For nothing comes from Him which is evil or not natural.  
As darkness is nothing but merely the absence of light  
and silence will not exist except by the cessation of noise,  
385 thus virtue, by departing, creates vice, and health, disease,  
thus evil is nothing except a melting away of goodness.  
We were created righteous and a righteous will was given to us,  
but it is possible to wish to turn away from it willingly.  
To prevent ignorance in its ambiguity from fooling us,  
390 we were first taught by warnings and buttressed by reason,  
so that we would be good and true more by our vow,  
choosing better things by His will and avoiding the harmful.  
Is anyone truly good, not out of a love of goodness,  
but because of some other thing which may exist,  
395 just as we come to know good wine by tasting it repeatedly?  
What reward shines with gold, what with a tawny colour?  
When in a will a modest fortune is left by someone,  
gratitude is not felt for the thing bequeathed, but for the giver.  
The meek person has merit, the wild and fierce one has sin.  
400 Thus a person would be without praise, if incapable of free will.  
If we did not act freely, what praise of our own would we have?  
It is accepted as praiseworthy to know evil but to prefer good.  
For what the King established can be forced on anyone.  
Therefore, because the Creator planned our destiny, are we guilty  
405 because we cannot avoid it, or because the just Judge requires  
that only our audacity is a sin, since He is usually forgiving?  
But Adam never did evil deeds which had been predestined.  
Ignorant, he had no foreknowledge of any things of the future;  
and he was not forced into any action by foreknowledge.  
410 If a doctor can foresee from some symptom,  
as often happens, the moment when the sick may die,  
do they die because of this? If he did not know this, they would still die.  
Therefore God, from whom nothing is hidden, knew Adam would fall;  
yet He did not force him or encourage his fall by His will.  
415 For Adam himself, responsible for his guilt, hid himself away  
and knowingly disobeyed God's command, forced by no one.  
He asked "Does anyone honour those who do not honour themselves?"  
Therefore he drove God, who watches for such things, to curb him  
by force, as if he were an animal, not a man,  
420 who ought to be controlled by reason or self-honour,  
seeing that someone saintly could love nothing unclean,  
and instead, being good by nature, should love goodness with a sense of wonder.

The blame for our fall is Adam's, not God's.

For the Holy Potter gave no unbearable order, and, being just,  
 425 does not punish a deed unless people knew it was avoidable.  
 It is often said that because Adam committed the sin willingly  
 he rightly gets his just punishment for what he did.

Human salvation is a compact of two things:  
 grace and choice; one inspires, the other aids or fulfills.  
 430 Grace inspires everything good and demands our enthusiasm;  
 grace gives knowledge and free-will and indeed the power to act.  
 For it is attracted by enthusiasm and repelled by laziness.  
 For something works upon us without our knowing it,  
 circumventing the lazy ones and making them enterprising,  
 435 and we are to some degree companions of that grace in our zeal.  
 It increases in the ardent and is full of yawning in the slothful.  
 Grace prevents; praise must then be given to Him who gave it to us,  
 and a reward is owed for the zeal of the One creating the plan.  
 God therefore rewards the faithful freely and justly.  
 440 But we strive for lofty things, trusting in God's generosity,  
 bursting to show that the Lord is just and kind,  
 and that humans are guilty and freely willing to sin;  
 but now I plan to return to the forgotten tragedy.

Who can satisfactorily explain little Adam's woeful error here?  
 445 For he falls for obvious tricks, even though fully educated;  
 he thinks he is God's equal, fed by the animals,  
 and thinks it a great good or profitable to know evil,  
 and that God's warnings can disappear at the words of a snake.  
 Shipwrecked, he needs to reach out his hand for a plank;  
 450 but this man, for whom there is help on every side – to no avail –  
 does not admit his sins, wandering here and there.  
 Do we read that he repented or prayed for forgiveness?  
 No, but as danger beset him, he was without a plan.  
 Remaining stupid, he shows the usual feelings:  
 455 he covers the infamous part of his body with a loin-cloth.  
 For this member, by which we are sown, would indeed be honourable  
 if savage lust, residing there, did not make it foul.

O, if only he had said "I have sinned". O, if only!  
 What a yoke he would have removed from our necks!  
 460 If he piously ignored the arrogantly talking despiser  
 who proved so often harmful, how merciful  
 would God have been to one who is meek and seeking forgiveness!  
 He did not want to be strict, but rather was ready to forgive,  
 nor had human confusion made Him confused, and Adam  
 465 does not remain confused but strives to rise after his fall.  
 Adam was dumb-struck and daring at the command from a snake

## BOOK II

which sneered that he should choose to spurn God's command,  
and, in his confusion, does not know how to take counsel,  
such as when a slave calms his angry master with pleading and  
470 asks him to be merciful, a trait proved by so many good deeds,  
and does nothing to protect himself, being prepared to die:  
I will propose words which are painful but laughable.  
If the sad broken offspring chooses to lament  
what constrains them, Father, let them suffer and weep for the fallen!  
475 Seeing in advance what its actions will lead to, the children have  
wisely become accustomed to thinking of the consequence of an action.  
If you are strong in reason, I admit, you must use it, though it is hard.  
You take on a fight too big for you; calculate carefully what the battle order demands!  
Lo, you appear almost equal in strength;  
480 He claims for Himself the Heavenly heights;  
but you crawl on the ground; nor is your war proved to be just;  
for what you are and what you have, came to you by His gift.  
Why do you then struggle in vain to compare yourself to God?  
If you devote yourself to breaking nature's law,  
485 to the Creator of which you refuse to be subject,  
and you want to wage an unjust war so savagely upon the Father,  
mixing right with wrong, breaking ranks,  
not caring for justice but being guilty of violence,  
you would, in your bestial attack, not be abiding by the law.  
490 If a sense of shame and piety and honesty are thought to be nothing  
(for in your audacity you will appear to have spurned all of them),  
confess, I ask, with what accomplices you attempt such great deeds,  
and who your fellow conspirators are, implicated in the plot!  
These things require an enormous, violent band of body-guards;  
495 they leave just you and the serpent to fight this duel!  
When indeed you climb the vast citadel of Heaven,  
how does the serpent accompany you without feet?  
The serpent's leaps toward Heaven will not be swift,  
and your inciter falls from there and will never want to return there again;  
500 therefore he himself will not aid those futile attempts of yours!  
So a four-legged lizard or some bird of ill omen  
or a hopping little bird or a buzzing, biting mosquito  
- these at least will accompany you as you go to Heaven, so that  
greater divine strength may be added to your ranks.  
505 A huge phalanx to walk hand-in-hand with you to the lofty throne!  
I'm talking nonsense, of course, but your attempt is more so!  
The Creator made many species of things subject to Him;  
they all resist and push against the same Creator.  
It is all right that He should want to create with His own gifts,  
510 unless a similar power is fashioning a parallel universe for itself,

which may favour it, prepared to obey it as its own.  
 Adam is guilty by his chosen act: he attempts other things in vain.  
 Some reprobates, nothing but worthless, were helping him.  
 Others, opposing him, will show that they know the Potter better,  
 515 so that each may destroy the Lord's common enemy.  
 We laugh at the fool, but he is free to weep for his deed!  
 We say this, not as mimics, following a theme,  
 but we weep that our parent was caught, disastrously for us,  
 because through him we are miserable, and his pain hurts us in turn.  
 520 He punished himself, with his innocent offspring also punished.  
 Then we were all of him in essence, as he is our begetter;  
 so he subjects us to death, like himself,  
 and sprays us with the shower of vices with which he is drenched.  
 We are born with a lineage of seed with a birthmark grafted on,  
 525 we suffer this like the man who suffered the bandits of Jericho,  
 being left half-dead from the blows rained upon us.  
 We are partly dead, not seeing the spiritual,  
 clothed perhaps in just a corporeal cloak,  
 and partly alive, being still strong in reason,  
 530 since we know how to censure our crime and recover with caution.  
 That pain creates lethargy, reason creates arguments;  
 the former elicits groans, the latter stirs those whisperings.  
 With a rustic pen I force a civilized song to sound,  
 re-echoing the primordial glories of the First Potter,  
 535 then, as Adam's innate glory removed itself,  
 disgracing him so that he was ashamed to look at himself  
 (and fled hence in panic to a shadowy hide-away).  
 Next, I am going to tell what the Holy Creator did for him.  
 I finish, preparing my strength for a third little book.



**Book 3**

Preface

Now the first man languishes in shadow  
as if his sin is shrouded by a dark cloud.  
That Heavenly passion of his has cooled,  
demonic coldness has taken over.  
5 Stripped of the honour he rejects,  
he struggles in vain against the Almighty.  
Surely he does not aim for the heights? He heads for the depths!  
He heads for the dark which befits his base deeds!  
He gives birth to something which afflicts everybody,  
10 and the disease is passed on from him to his descendants.  
All his progeny, catching this plague  
and being heir to his morality, is worthless.  
O Holy Potter, this earthenware which  
you created in your image is cracked!  
15 Created from nothing, it fell together from Him.  
May it stay intact, since it arises from you.  
Thus I will speak a few words with rash daring,  
if you will show me the means or some kindness.  
Have pity on those revealing these things!

God knew what poor prideful Adam had done,  
and observes the wretch in his vain attempt to ruin himself,  
he who had robbed himself of His gifts because of his presumption,  
helpless, weak and feeble, confusedly sending himself into darkness.  
5 But with God watching over him, good things seem possible.  
How could things be prosperous, if they lacked His supervision?  
But look! He is afraid to be seen alone as the first of creatures!  
By loving himself, he is deprived of a common wealth. Through his  
bad example, he shows what humanity might be without God.  
10 He alone flees from what makes anyone else happy;  
our inglorious leader shuns the brilliance of the gifts he received.  
When, a little earlier, he was glorious and in charge of all things,  
and saw what remained in the state in which nature had put them,  
but saw himself as degenerate and full of shame,  
15 it is clear that he blushed at his sudden defects,  
no longer daring to look upon the injured face of the Lord,  
and he fled in fear to caves and sought a hiding-place.

O, what humiliating confusion to be separated from the Lord!  
 O, the devastating distress – to remember, most cruel thing of all,  
 20 that one had lost God by committing a sin  
 and had lost everything good by briefly enjoying one's desires!  
 Then the Holy Father pitied the wretch more  
 and, omitting to punish him, returned to the forgivable clay,  
 examining not its crime but its goodness,  
 25 and is distressed by the actions of His creation, though the creation  
 He made is pleasing, and He is sad that Adam had a sudden fall,  
 for He preferred to grant him a happy and eternal life.  
 He sees that there is nothing left which may give him salvation,  
 except Him who alone could produce him from nothing.  
 30 As if His power had not been scorned or injured,  
 He is swayed and the force of duty motivates Him  
 to seek out the runaway who is less desirous of complaining,  
 however much troubled and swollen with dread!  
 For he runs away in fear, is arrogant in excusing his guilt, trying  
 35 to bring the woman's role to the Creator's attention.  
 But the King still courteously mitigates His righteous anger.  
 Adam contradicts the One he has hurt and who wants to help him,  
 and the Judge is still in no way swayed, but circles around him,  
 trying to provoke the accused into confessing his sins.  
 40 Deigning to speak with His creation, He urges him to have faith.  
 Conversation between them could calm most points of disagreement,  
 but Adam did not want it and prolongs his audacity all the more.  
 For everyone makes a sin worse by defending it.  
 Rebuked courteously, he replies with vicious snarling.  
 45 Supported by God's sense of duty, let him joyfully marvel  
 that God Himself went out to search for a guilty runaway.  
 What is God? What is a human? Who could hope for this, unless he  
 knew it to have been established, that His sense of duty had been so great?  
 But yet God receives unjust complaints from him.  
 50 But God does not abandon one who runs away from Him!  
 It is right that the one in the wrong should be the first to apologise  
 but He Himself is first to seek out the accused and speak to him: no reply.  
 Yet He does not hesitate. He asks first, where he is.  
 Surely God is not unaware of the bushes where he is hiding?  
 55 But He advises him to consider what he is, whence he flees, where he is.  
 For Adam walks along, never affected by place or time,  
 walking in liquid, because he does not stay fixed of heart.  
 A warm breeze makes him aware that his passion has grown cold.  
 In a father there is established the model for future offspring.  
 60 He imprints himself on the world for those coming to Him in the future,  
 and intimates that He will pay the price to restore the lost sheep to the flock

### BOOK III

which no longer knows how to love its own salvation,  
grows increasingly wild and frantic with the friendly doctor  
and repays with death the medication it was given.

65 Our forefather begets this example, teaching that it must be followed,  
excusing his crime and striving to ascribe it to the Lord.

This root germinates black shoots all over its stem,  
such that people prefer to defend themselves  
or to diminish their sin or blame it on someone else.

70 In covering up his sins, our forefather increases them.  
Now at last the anger of a peaceful dove moves Him,  
and now He punishes the accused, now His censorial power rages.  
Manipulating the twin scales of justice and piety,  
the Assessor raises uppermost the pan of duty.

75 He did not want to punish to the full the fool's sin  
for in the anger alien to His own goodness  
He is mindful of the fickle deceit and tricks which corrupted him.  
He reduces His censure, taking into account the Devil's cunning.  
The clay which He decreed to have eternal glory

80 grieves to have incurred, on the contrary, eternal disgrace  
and because he remains worthless and without His guidance.

Lamenting, he runs back to the support of His goodness;  
he sees that he is a poor wretch to be treated with medicine  
by the kind Creator after languishing from a blow,

85 so that tribulation may lift him up after prosperity laid him low.  
He is saved indeed by the duty of forgiveness, but by the  
same pact he must live amid countless misfortunes,  
wherein a worthless trifle overwhelms the first of creatures,  
that is, the worthless hissing of a snake and the bite of its mouth,  
90 his life battered by a thousand uncertain dangers,  
a life cut off by certain death in an uncertain end.

As for God protecting him through His duty of forgiveness alone,  
the prophet mentions it, referring to this in an orgy of praise.

He says "If you observe in us something considered unjust, who would tolerate it?

95 Thus, God, it remains for you alone to forgive."

The rest of his speech proclaims this in other words.

Then because he was naked and in appearance he was no master of bodily asceticism,  
questioning dogma, robbed of the prize of dignity,  
(for genuine dignity of the flesh and liveliness of mind

100 had left him open now to suffering and shame),  
his mortal being is dressed, aptly, in the skin of a wild animal;  
why, he who was made in the likeness of God, stands dressed in skins,  
forced to recognise now what he was without God.

The Creator had said – but ironically – that this man was like Him.

105 More like an ass, no match for Him in honour!

As for the disgraceful acts in which he got involved, the consequence of pride,  
 the Dutiful Avenger gives him a chance to end them – through prayer to Him,  
 so that thereby he may lose his swollen head, thereby learn to grow humble,  
 to restrain himself meekly, until his body pants with wonderment and yearns  
 110 for the manna of salvation when he is overwhelmed by disgust.

Moreover, grimmer things will henceforth torment him if too unrestrained,  
 and eternal punishment will follow his brief sins,  
 and because he had not ceased to be arrogant after his fall  
 and did not reply to the mild One with fit words,  
 115 the earth is replete with labourious toil among the thorns for him  
 and will burden him with barren fruits and plants.

The woman, who persuaded her husband to be gullible about what he ate,  
 was ordered to undergo punishment shared with her mate,  
 ordered also to bring forth her offspring in sorrow and to bear the  
 120 yoke of a husband to whom she passed on the urge to transgress.  
 One punishment is shared, the other is hers alone.

Because the Devil will never be called to forgiveness  
 he is trapped in darkness, being the deadly creator of these things;  
 censure shakes him, he lacks no manner of beating.  
 125 The King, about to decree something which all were fit to receive,  
 that He was always accustomed to pardon, His strictness mixed with a sense of duty,  
 condemns not the person but rather the earth  
 and aims His dart not at the one He knew to have sinned,  
 but strikes an inanimate object, though the sin was Adam's.

Why the surprise if He blames our sins upon the earth,  
 130 preferring to hand Himself over for us  
 paying off the debts of our sin by His death,  
 and through His bruises recovering our lost salvation?  
 Meanwhile, entangled, Adam panics in fear of death,  
 135 after the tribulations of a life which the Judge threatened,  
 because he rashly presumed to touch the forbidden tree,  
 and with equal daring would partake of the tree of life.

And so He exiles the glutton from the sanctuary of Paradise;  
 if exiled, he would languish forever in those punishments,  
 140 as his soul remains in the flames of Hell and burns.

Therefore the King does this both for justice and out of tenderness;  
 So altered, Adam accepts the life of a master,  
 just as a dying vegetable root is rejuvenated and grows tall again.  
 He who, if obedient, could have gone to Heaven to join the angels,  
 145 rejecting this, sticks to mud huts, the equal of animals  
 but he toils less to produce the food which is sweated for  
 because animals get their allotted daily food easily.

So the guilty one, while not knowing how to comprehend his sin,  
 then complaining with arrogant words, wearies the calm One

### BOOK III

150 and then provokes dove-like responses from Him.  
He is forced into exile and forced at last to understand what it means.  
What the new arrival did later on earth or what followed this  
is obvious in the following generations begotten by him.  
He, to whom the whole of Eden was subservient, forages hungrily  
155 and, after the feast of Paradise, he suffers famine, sweating;  
he feeds on anxiety and drinks hard labour;  
for, deprived of food, he sighs at its exhaustion.  
Compelled to plough the earth with criss-cross furrows  
he bears the loss of his home because, turning it over in his mind,  
160 with hands clasped together, he is accustomed to weep  
and to fall on the ground and utter words of grief,  
then to sit down and hug his knees and shake his head,  
and break out in sobs and tear his hair and breast,  
then consider whither and whence he has dragged his race,  
165 how many good things he deprived it of, how many bad things he inflicted;  
for it is clear once exiled, he was recalling what he had lost;  
assailing himself from all directions with countless questions,  
accepting his current lot and taking up the plough again.  
He barked at Him, as if giving vent to howling,  
170 the ploughing oxen perhaps imitating him as they work.  
(We don't usually hear such sounds at any other time,  
except when the wailing ox-driver does his ploughing.)  
The reader will have seen this: it is certain that heavy anxiety  
will overwhelm him when he recalls how fortunate were the good  
175 things of old he lost, and how many ills he brought upon himself,  
and that it was he who injured the Creator of everything good.  
This is the greater pain, the one which torments him worse:  
to have willingly lost God and to know that he is abandoned.  
He who had the fortune to taste of God's love  
180 and is deprived of the same by committing some guilty act,  
knows from experience that this pain torments more.  
To know God and to hold Him is, in a word, the greatest good;  
but, on the contrary, there is nothing at all worse than losing Him.  
Therefore, lacking rest and burdened with toil,  
185 he exchanges Heavenly joys for all manner of grief.  
He is put in a small place between Paradise and Hell,  
living between the two and directing his gaze at both of them  
so that here he sees what he loves, and there what he fears,  
and looking at the latter, he finds the spur to redeem himself,  
190 looking at the former, he wants to haul himself back there.  
So let him spend his time on Earth, soon to be relocated in another region!  
He will either go to Hell or enter Heaven, according to his desert.  
Therefore, full of these tribulations caused by a thousand burdens,

195 his lacerated breast gnawed by biting anxiety,  
 beset by guilty feelings about the tree - the poor wretch,  
 he now understands how bad it is for one to abandon God,  
 and the difference between toil and rest, strife and peace, night and day as well  
 – which is brighter when compared to the other.

For with experience of daylight, he knows how to judge darkness  
 200 and absinthe's bitterness is revealed through the sweetness of honey;  
 in heat, a cool breeze is pleasant; its cold makes sunshine agreeable.  
 Therefore by evil he is made to appreciate the good he loses.  
 He is faced with this so that he may lament for Eden more bitterly.

Also, as for what he might be remembering about the past,  
 205 he was always pondering with gaping mouth what he had seen.  
 What forgetfulness would blot out the species of things so precious  
 and so especially fruitful which he had seen?

Therefore, to remember was to grieve with continuing sorrow,  
 to recall the face which denied the sanctuary of Paradise,  
 210 the rosy spring in that place to fill his nectared years,  
 that grove of his Master bearing manifold fruits,  
 producing lilies and violets across grassy meadows,  
 the whole earth adorned with every kind of flower,  
 always wafting their perfumes into the scented air.

215 People who have lived for many years within city walls  
 or have grown up in an ancestral mansion,  
 and have enjoyed princely banquets in some vast hall,  
 and the entertainments which can be elegantly devised  
 by talent, strength, industry, the skilled hand and the five senses,  
 220 but then by some chance or fortune are driven  
 into exile or shut up in a prison cell  
 (our destiny is hazardous and strewn with a thousand dangers)  
 - do they forget themselves, unaware of what they were until recently  
 or what style of life or custom they had, or where? They lament  
 225 for the sweet things as much as they experience the nasty.  
 The more they love prosperity, the more misfortune wearies them.

Thus Adam, weeping in exile, recalls what joys he is losing;  
 gazing at them, he says there is nothing beautiful, gentle, sweet  
 or decorous which a mortal has for human enjoyment.  
 230 Now in good weather, wintry cold having been put to flight,  
 when the sun, closer, brings calm breezes,  
 and earth shows its beautiful face everywhere in new spring,  
 relaxing its womb everywhere for a variety of growth,  
 happy furrows grow the seeds entrusted to them,  
 235 the various flowers colour the verdant meadows,  
 the branches of trees fill out with leaf or fruit,  
 the twittering of birds echoes through the valleys,

the fawn sucks on the teats of its caring mother,  
 the mother ewe knows its own lamb by its bleating,  
 240 grassy pastures nourish the pregnant cows,  
 and little lambs sample the luxuriant crops.  
 What more? Every thing pleases the gaze of the onlookers!  
 The different face of winter appears in due course:  
 everything becomes a bog and one would believe the world to be cracking  
 245 or returning to its former chaos, the primordial state of things,  
 unless one remembers that fortune has a way of changing things;  
 snow, ice, then stiff frosts appear across the landscape.  
 One who sees this, remembers what it was like when last seen,  
 preferring it to stay just as it had been then.  
 250 Just as a beautiful woman pleases, so an ugly one repulses.  
 As sad things may be happy news to happy people,  
 so happy events of the past bring sorrow to sad people.  
 A once-rich person reminisces more than the destitute, and one  
 stripped of glory more than one who had none to start with.  
 255 Adam laments that he is now as unhappy as he was once happy;  
 unhappy, he reckons things as sad as and as ugly as,  
 the sight of things in Paradise was beautiful.  
 If a mother gives birth to a child in prison  
 or even to a child outside who cannot see – as often happens –  
 260 if she explains to him, when grown up, the things which exist in the world,  
 or what the sky looks like and what things adorn the sea and land,  
 rivers or mountains, plains, farmland or cities,  
 the aerial courses of birds, and horses,  
 and what appearance, colour or form beautifies individual things,  
 265 the child may believe it all, but cannot know them as they are.  
 Suppose a wolf seized an abandoned young boy,  
 and the wolfish beast later left it uneaten.  
 Having already eaten, wolves lick their prey as if in play,  
 because wolves are not driven to destroy young children.  
 270 They fear the sight of humans instinctively,  
 as if believing that the power of a prince should be revered,  
 and will not dare to harm one whom their hunting did not harm.  
 One would think they remembered what Adam was before his sin;  
 in any event, it happens that the wild beast retains this instinct.  
 275 God implants this at His nod, as with everything;  
 now He binds shut the mouth of the wolf and the mouths of lions.  
 Now therefore the she-wolf is keen to feed the abandoned boy;  
 as she gives her teats to her own cubs, so she gives him some titbits.  
 Thus he grows up imitating the ways of the she-wolf,  
 280 completely forgetting reason and with no knowledge of himself,  
 his movements totally changed into the alien ones of an animal;

only his appearance betrays his humanity, the rest is wild animal;  
 he does not need the charms of human nature;  
 he does not want a cloak for his back or shoes for his feet  
 285 nor does he feel the pain of stepping on thorns,  
 or the wounds of hooks which tear his tender skin;  
 he does not care to cover his chaste member with a loin-cloth,  
 nor cares for the warmth of a fire or coolness in the sun's heat,  
 but covered with a hairy skin as if with wool  
 290 he prefers the form of a beast, which he thinks that he is,  
 and performs no bodily functions in a human way,  
 screeching with wild howling by way of voice.  
 He has a less inhibited urge to devour bloody flesh;  
 he does nothing with restraint, but everything like a beast,  
 295 and forgetful of who he is, he does not know the rewards of nature.  
 When someone wants him to return to his parental home,  
 he runs away and hides secretly in a dense forest.

If a royal infant is taken as a prize by enemies,  
 the kidnapper taking him off to distant shores,  
 300 where a peasant nurse puts him in with her own children,  
 he believes therefore, when grown up, that he is one of them  
 and quickly acquires peasant manners like theirs;  
 sadly, he does not remember that he comes from a lofty line,  
 nor that he is in exile, nor that he has a titled father.  
 305 His head which should bear the honour of jewels, is bare;  
 his arms shine with no rings, his right hand with no sceptre,  
 no torque adorns his neck, no purple his torso,  
 no crown encircles his brow, no diadem his temple,  
 no scarlet or white buckskin covers his legs.  
 310 What more? Sheepskin is the dress-code of his realm,  
 and a hut is enough, for he does not look for fancy palaces;  
 he misses none of these, for he does not know they were owed him,  
 nor laments the loss of titles because he did not know himself.  
 I have said that it is obvious how we are drowning in forgetfulness,  
 315 how base custom corrupts natural honesty  
 and every single innate good quality is thus lost.

Human nature is now like a dividing path,  
 agile with its original strength but slowed by the weight of its service.  
 We gape at strange things and cling tenaciously to the familiar,  
 320 and we are happy with the things of which we have experience,  
 the familiar becoming naturally pleasing to us.  
 A thing may be perfected by good use;  
 what nature created ugly, hard work can make beautiful.  
 This is evident in the various things we have changed with our skill.  
 325 Skill mastered the untamed grin of the snake,



the all too wild tiger often becomes tamed as well,  
 the left hand and even more the right get stronger through exercise.  
 Therefore nature and usage alternate throughout; but the former indeed,  
 being the stronger, hardly weak, eclipses the lesser one.

330 To add a touch more to the examples above,  
 although it is beyond human perception to experience  
 the pleasures of the flesh and the joys of the mind  
 of which the presumptuous one deprived himself and his race,  
 Adam himself however was able to understand fully what they are,  
 335 as he had recently enjoyed these to the full,  
 and, as experience taught him insights into the past,  
 he was also accustomed to passing these on to posterity, but does so badly  
 because now his mind and perception grow feeble and sluggish.  
 A thing heard is proved to be understood less than a thing seen.  
 340 As it is possible for a drunk or a sleeper to speak of  
 what he once saw, he itches to explain what he remembers.  
 But their descendants are brutish, not spiritual;  
 Adam and Eve understand less what things are like  
 because they merely hear of them; both are now animals like the donkey.  
 345 Therefore it is rather like the braying of a donkey which he utters.  
 If his children could hear their father's words,  
 none would fully understand what they are,  
 for they do not retain the experience of this past as he does;  
 therefore the thing becomes unknown along with our lack of experience of it.

350 Thus that wolf, burning to corrupt our souls,  
 snatched the first man out of Paradise, as if from his mother's lap;  
 thus was he snatched by that wolf which the gentle Lamb strangles.  
 Divine power, however, protecting us, ties up our enemy,  
 though it cannot exterminate him with blows.  
 355 Imitating a cub, he sucks the wolf's teats;  
 he drinks its milk and is exposed to the vices of the world,  
 making it grow dark with the blackness of his heart,  
 urged to marvel at what is outside but not to know what is inside.  
 Therefore, pursuing earthly things, he gets used to those customs,  
 360 which he first stumbled with, unaware of the gifts of nature;  
 deep oblivion soon ruins all which nature gave him;  
 degenerating with his peasant habits, he becomes sluggish.  
 Thus the genuine honour, with which the Creator had dutifully adorned him,  
 flags within and is put to sleep by a funeral draught.

365 Piety therefore had ebbed away from most people;  
 but though that race had now developed corrupt ways,  
 the dregs of evil had not yet grown to full size.  
 A certain natural law had imbued a few with traces  
 of virtue, with which people are rarely indeed adorned;

370 wrong-doing inundates the rest like a flood.  
 Evil therefore did not hold sway with such loose rein;  
 crude existence did not train itself for sober acts then.  
 The gullet did not stimulate the appetite to such varied dishes,  
 not knowing how to create gourmet dishes for banquets,  
 375 (Apicius had not yet been hot at work in his kitchen,  
 armed with that talent which he had been the first to develop)  
 nor had the gullet grown accustomed to a palate so regularly rich;  
 a river perhaps was the source of drinking water;  
 one did not love the gifts of Bacchus when one's lips were dry;  
 380 at dusk a simple acorn satisfied hunger  
 and some vegetable growing from the earth;  
 Doric woman had not yet woven things with yellow thread of gold  
 nor had she dyed silky fleeces with the produce of the murex shell,  
 nor cloaks embroidered with circular patterns,  
 385 and natural colour had not yet given way to Tyrian purple;  
 shade gave sleep, there was no soft pillow for snoring on.  
 Who would want to risk the sea and danger to life  
 for love of profit, when there was no reward in dying?  
 Surely they would not desire something at the risk of trouble?  
 390 Thus that age was content with its trusty fields.  
 Luxury did not know how to soften manly minds,  
 nor had study made their strength womanish;  
 experience had enhanced the blessings of nature.  
 But that impostor, who first urged the evil deed,  
 395 burns insatiably to suck the human race in.  
 He demands interest, which Adam agreed to pay,  
 having chosen to eat the tempting fruit of the forbidden tree,  
 in his desire to force our forefathers to corrupt their descendants;  
 he could not tolerate peasants leading a blameless life.  
 400 He knew they were like cattle because he made them so;  
 animal-like men with brutish movements he drives hence;  
 as is normal with young goats, they were riven by quarrels  
 and butted each other with hatred as if with goats' horns.  
 Setting a fire to burn with the stinking heat of lust  
 405 he thus goads Cain to have reason for butting his brother.  
 It is purely a matter of hate, because the Creator loved Abel more,  
 because he sacrifices dutifully, offers greater devotion,  
 because the Judge of men's hearts accepts his gifts,  
 because he proves that he has the gift of fair judgement,  
 410 because in His eyes this brother is pleasing, the other displeasing.  
 O Cain, who but yourself makes Jesus hostile toward you?  
 God looks upon them both and knows what each is like inside;  
 He sees that this one is harmless and that you are evil.

If you want to be a wrong-doer, you will rob yourself of reward.  
 415 Was that kind man worthy of hatred or death?  
 The flame of envy, however, is never controlled by reason,  
 the virus having now spread through his whole breast.  
 That same envy is a personal vice born of one's self;  
 the flame of this fire-brand burnt our forefathers  
 420 and now burns savagely to scorch our whole race;  
 it cannot be extinguished, being too powerful with its hidden fire.  
 A live victim is acceptable because it proves that we exist;  
 the Creator rejected offerings of fruit of the earth as dead;  
 yet both are good; He judges offerings by the vow of the sacrificer.  
 425 Through Cain, therefore, Satan scatters the weed of vices  
 and furtively mixes rye with wheat.  
 Therefore, although there are a few good men, like certain seeds,  
 whom the ideal of justice perfectly adorned,  
 Cain grew up amid chaff and ears of corn.  
 430 Because my clumsy pen is trying to gather from both,  
 it has put the worse - the chaff - first and the better part last.  
 Therefore it is wrong for anyone to achieve intermixing of these,  
 wrong to reckon nothing of importance, to by-pass reason,  
 to live confused, out of control, like a peasant, like an animal.  
 435 That lineage - in its moral journey - is like a beast led uphill.  
 The stain of guilt thus besmirches honest nature,  
 and gets worse as habits degenerate.  
 Beauty of the flesh usually excels in reprobates,  
 as they have not been blessed with mental talent.  
 440 Absalom, Goliath, Alcheus, Saul, the five giants  
 are outstanding with their bronzed skin or large bodies;  
 all slim women are said to have been Cainite.  
 When therefore we happen to read of the beauty of evil people,  
 the writer indeed is also living a reprobate existence.  
 445 Rather than extolling that gift with praise, they belittle it  
 and prove the oxymoron that they grow used to having such gifts.  
 God often gives reprobates the worthless gift which they desire;  
 hence, those devoid of virtue frequently cling to the flesh;  
 but whether one is beautiful or ugly,  
 450 that blessing given by the Creator does not do enough for them.  
 They are all arrogantly ambitious to exceed the limits set for them  
 and to enhance their beauty through the truly vain cult of clothes  
 (it is shameful and one may see ordained men walking around like this),  
 for the enemy has such snares for those with cow eyes,  
 455 driven by animal instincts, not by the force of reason,  
 that they willingly besmire themselves like a filthy sewer.  
 The enemy, using familiar arguments in order to entrap them,

puts these forward in the usual form of a woman to trap a man.  
 How badly does presumption turn his cause to adversity!  
 460 Woman was created for man, joined to him to people the earth.  
 O, the pain! She ruined her man, his seed and his land!  
 When perchance someone shines under the banner of goodness,  
 the face shines with the wisdom of understanding;  
 often external beauty produces inner beauty.  
 465 Cain does not therefore beget beautiful little women  
 just so that they may make the sight of flesh grow vile to the holy.  
 These beauties obey men and the act makes the men effeminate.  
 He who has strength of mind sees nothing beautiful in women;  
 he can see inside them the shit lurking along with phlegm.  
 470 The holy race however, called the offspring of the Divine Parent,  
 having chosen a blessed angelic name by fate,  
 will become mixed up with – o, the pain! – the she-wolves of Cain  
 and try to conceal their wrong-doing with the name of marriage.  
 An honourable title with legal status may conceal its depravity!  
 475 But the Judge of our heart assesses our motivation in the act;  
 it is a good act, as He himself gave us it, not because lust excites it;  
 He wants purity, for something stained does not please Him,  
 such as one who loves love-making rather than procreation.  
 Therefore huge bodies aroused, as it were, with gigantic members  
 480 take excessive pleasure, being motivated by self-indulgence,  
 so that it is clear to future generations what sort of sin this is.  
 Why, it is reported that God felt regret and grieved that  
 He had created one who would do such a thing,  
 befouling the specimen groomed in the image of its Maker!  
 485 Adam had now sinned, deceit had now doomed Eve;  
 both of them had compounded their crime by replying arrogantly;  
 guilty Cain had wickedly killed his innocent brother.  
 How serious are the crimes, do you think, now committed world-wide,  
 crimes which would severely arouse the Judge's blazing anger?  
 490 But He had said that He did not regret having made humans:  
 that one thing alone is worse than all the others,  
 because the sublime work of God is thought worthless because of it!  
 Regret, grief, concern for the future had this result:  
 that the Father burst forth with a voice of rebuke.  
 495 The Creator regrets having made something which obstructs Him  
 and regrets Adam's lack of devotion which followed.  
 God therefore wanted humans to remain blessed but  
 that hope faded because Adam did not follow His will,  
 because he surrendered his salvation of his own free will,  
 500 and He regretted having made him because an enemy perverted him  
 and he did not reach the stage his Lover wanted.

This nevertheless is said about the supposedly human character!  
 Things which happen in various ages He had created all together  
 ages earlier, for to Him past, present and future are one;  
 505 He knew in advance that Adam would fall and He would redeem him.  
 He does not think that this came about otherwise, by chance,  
 but He makes it clear that He punishes the one and only crime  
 which causes Him regret, whereby He reveals it will be worse.  
 Every age, sex, race - the whole world - knows this  
 510 and should be astounded at the dispensation for so great a crime,  
 which caused God to admit that He felt regret and grief,  
 and which resulted in the cataclysm!  
 Not only does He exterminate fornicators in the waters but also the one man  
 who had fathered them and the animals which had been created for them.  
 515 Let him who can, then, assess the crime by the weight of the waters!  
 The promiscuity of the flesh deserved the torrents of the Flood,  
 that huge vengeance punishing this huge wrongdoing.  
 He made the abyss boil with great whirlpools,  
 so that the vast tide of corruption is killed off by a greater wave.  
 520 The polluted earth was in need of such a great washing  
 and the very space of the air which the wild beast had polluted.  
 It is Satan's strength, with which he overwhelms the world  
 and quickly softens minds and savagely enflames them;  
 with this thick smoke he obscures the eyesight of the world.  
 525 Let everyone in all ages hear this and quake:  
 if the world is beaten by such a great rod of punishment,  
 when written warnings fail to discourage and vengeance fails to frighten,  
 after so many promulgated laws and examples,  
 how great an anger will strike one who does such a thing after that?  
 530 Therefore the Potter grieves because His vessels destroy themselves;  
 but He pities their hurt because compassion fills Him;  
 He senses their mood, compassion makes Him pliant.  
 But He punishes in order to curb such deeds, wary for the future,  
 lest impiety should mount too high, as if unaware of its guilt.  
 535 This is not so much to help these people, as those of the future.  
 Therefore it pains Him to teach them by overturning their world;  
 He did not say this until after lust had entered their hearts.  
 Now we are called flesh - a great disparagement - flesh which  
 is of no use, says He who knows everything.  
 540 We had been called earth, which is often an honourable name;  
 the spirit is willing, but flesh forces it to languish and grow sick;  
 one whose mind is carnal becomes flesh in spirit;  
 the qualities which existed in the meek start to become the anger of a rebel.  
 Though He sees the hill of their sins grow into a mountain, yet  
 545 He is not quick to turn the anger they deserve upon the proud ;

moreover, for a hundred and twenty years He dutifully holds back,  
 lest someone may perhaps complain that His judgement is hasty.  
 But as He waits, seeing the outrageous abuse,  
 and that sin has instead increased over the course of time,  
 550 He calls an end to the allotted limits which He sees do not work,  
 since evil deeds are not reduced but are growing worse.  
 For all flesh had deeply corrupted its deeds,  
 and all human sense was heading for the depths.  
 Now therefore the long delayed censure blazed forth, and though  
 555 impassionate and devoid of anger, He is moved and inflamed  
 so that He strikes at last, having long dissimulated.  
 Their ignorant impiety demands to be stopped and punished,  
 being for some time now unchecked by the threats of the Almighty.  
 He is thought to care nothing for threats made to deter  
 560 with intent to terrorise – and to care nothing for punishment –  
 as if, forgetful of justice, He is letting crime go unavenged  
 or, lacking virtue, is unable to stop what is happening.  
 But they prove by their demise that His threats are not empty,  
 and their ruination is a lesson to them, justice striking all asunder.  
 565 Therefore He punishes Adam, the earth and all He made for him,  
 and the sense of duty owed to him perishes with him;  
 the qualities which existed in the meek start to become the anger of a rebel,  
 and the world fights against those who are thoughtless.  
 This destruction is enough to ensure the fall of all the rest;  
 570 but the earth, which He vowed to destroy, stands eternal.  
 How does it perish, then, when His holy voice admits it to exist?  
 But it does perish, and the True One is proved to have spoken truly,  
 and it stands the same, as true reason affirms:  
 it perishes in that it has lost its former power of rebirth;  
 575 although it remains in essence, languishing in its duties,  
 because earth born of earth is now devoid of merit,  
 it cannot bring forth fruits in its usual amount.  
 The Judge's tenderness mixed with justice restores it.  
 Just as a caring mother looking after her son, perchance wounded,  
 580 concerned that the victim get better through her nursing,  
 likewise God, deigning to withhold his strict whip,  
 gives us more and better things to eat for our use,  
 so that these comforts outweigh the punishment inflicted.  
 The All-producing One always has this way of working,  
 585 in that He re-creates more bounteously what fate restricts.  
 Neither treatment of meat nor the sweated concern of cooks,  
 not dishes made with cider, nor simple cod-fish,  
 were ever a feature of existence in the afore-mentioned era  
 and no one over-ate or became tipsy; but later when the earth,

590 which earlier had produced things of its own accord,  
 became barren through excessive sin and went unploughed,  
 the Holy Father indulgently gave them things for their use,  
 being generous and prepared to cherish the afflicted.  
 He provides such things helpfully and providently,  
 595 lest their dissolute minds gawp at things usually forbidden,  
 claiming that poverty especially compels them,  
 seeing that the things initially given to them were cut off.  
 Wealthy, Adam had taken paradisaal feasts for granted.  
 How much more would he have done this, if need had forced him?

600 Therefore He gave them meats and does not forbid them when they  
 wanted to eat them, lest their bold presumption might make it a crime.  
 But indeed, for the abstemious there remains their own reward,  
 as, with their love of virtue, they do without the food they were allowed.  
 He heaps merit upon them and removes the guilt from gluttons.

605 The marriage pact comes in a similar category,  
 because it is right for anyone to agree to sire children  
 except perhaps if it is forced by rank or some pledge.  
 O the pain! Wickedness is on the loose again  
 and foul lust makes its flame burn hot again.

610 No longer content to cremate hearts on some usual pyre,  
 lust dares to fire up a sin not experienced for ages.  
 One would believe it to be a chimera with three new heads for each cut off!  
 Not completely doused, appetite suddenly flares up more vigorously.  
 Although the weight of the Flood overwhelmed Olympus

615 and wiped out all flesh which did not escape its waters,  
 and happened because of that sin, destroying all of it,  
 it could not however destroy this one scorpion.  
 The world does not recall why it was very recently flooded.  
 This viper, dying, hatches twin offspring;

620 for, being utterly filthy, it makes things dirty with grime old and new;  
 when it takes on male intercourse and still retains the use of a woman.  
 This viper would be emasculated and burnt out  
 if men did not corruptly feed its fires with dry tinder,  
 and if they did not willingly throw themselves into them, like chaff.

625 It has therefore created a sin contrary to the laws of nature.  
 Alas, human kind rushing headlong into harmful ways!  
 Alas, the urge to make love raging through brutish hearts!  
 Alas, the minds of men wanting to be filthy in their love-making!  
 This custom, the one set up for procreation by the provident

630 Creator, does not seem to be contrary to nature.  
 When, however, someone dares to cross the permitted limits  
 and feels a greater itch for that act,  
 this crime, a scandal for ages, deserves the cataclysm.

He vigorously punishes His new little world with a penalty;  
 635 it is easy to announce later that much heavier punishments were deserved.  
 Now as for a man who is aware that he is committing a devious sin  
 with his lust aflame at the touch of a woman,  
 judge from it how he takes the level of his depravity to the depths.  
 It is something which nature forbids and what no age has known.  
 640 What will happen, do you suppose, to a man to commit such a sin  
 an affront to nature and an unknown manner of copulating,  
 something against reason, when he violates natural laws,  
 committing debauchery which no age has known?  
 The tongue should rather keep quiet about what it knows not how to describe!  
 645 Who may react to that with sufficient revulsion or the deserved abhorrence?  
 Male flesh – o the shame! – suffering intercourse like a woman;  
 enjoyment of effeminate intercourse – so pitiable to relate!  
 Each one is equal in wrongdoing, if each is equally willing;  
 that man corrupts his fellow, this man crazily accepts him.  
 650 If the spirit were willing to be subject to God, it could  
 - with His aid – subject the flesh to it;  
 when the spirit is puffed up, it feels at once that the flesh is likewise.  
 It overwhelms him totally, and he knows it is nothing but brutish.  
 All things have been ordered to run subject to the authority on high;  
 655 Every thing has its own law and no one can rescind it,  
 and a method of procreation was established each according to its rights;  
 He alone, in charge of everything, gave us His laws,  
 all of which endure and do not change to the contrary;  
 but the mindless man alone claims for himself a foreign experience.  
 660 What wild beast, what sort of worm or animal,  
 what is there so depraved as ever to join males with males?  
 Man alone, though blessed with the power of reason, commits that act!  
 His aim is to offer resistance to the Creator of things,  
 and to try to overthrow the immutable laws of nature;  
 665 the impostor, the author of all crime, urges this,  
 the thirst of his envy always raging thus,  
 so that, once subverted, he falls into worse ways,  
 into a well of crime whose bottom he cannot reach,  
 but he falls straight into Hell until he claims it for himself as his own.  
 670 Thus the Devil treats human minds like saddles  
 and with his spurs, as it were, drives them on to worse deeds,  
 so that they are self-hating to the point where the Creator departs them.  
 Firstly, the devil tricked him into thinking he was equal to the Potter,  
 so that, when he grabbed what was not his, he deservedly loses what he had;  
 675 and then the Devil urges worse deeds to make him worse,  
 until he reaches the stage where he can no longer be called human.  
 Thus he loses the gift of reason for these two reasons:



### BOOK III

either aiming for things too high, or stooping too far to the depths.

Now he thinks it worthless, if he - doomed - obtains all the  
680 things which the plunderer orders, befouling natural laws.  
What? He kindles the flame of a sin worse than all others,  
so that by his actions he causes nothing human to remain!  
He is a wild boar, a butting goat, a plover, a sparrow,  
nay, worse: which of these ever lusted after such a practice?  
685 Run through history books and leaf through poets of yore:  
there has not been one in all the world who knew of pederasty,  
nor any historian who ever told of such.  
Falling man's punishment does not satisfy the flame of Satan's envy;  
he had made him like a mule some time before  
690 urging the brute like an animal into the embraces of the flesh,  
so that he thinks of sex rather than of procreating children;  
this is bestial and alien to human nature;  
but you should consider it nothing compared with pederasty.  
Whirlpool and fire punish that sort of adultery:  
695 water either washes clean or nourishes what it has deluged;  
what the flame licks becomes either consumed or burnt.  
It shows that atonement for adultery can be made with water  
and that this sort of thing deserves eternal burning by fire,  
which is a punishment greater than a quick whipping,  
700 or Tartarus where everlasting fire is available instead,  
which eternal torment can never exhaust,  
but the sin is rightly more worthy of eternal Gehenna,  
unless it is alleviated by the piety always extolled by the Judge  
who absolves one of great debts for a small payment.  
705 Thus it had not been necessary for God to punish at first,  
except that vengeance acts to discourage such wrongdoing,  
so that the plague does not infect future men, ignorant of it.  
The more grave it is for others, the more should such sins be avoided,  
and because the clever work of the Devil may lead to worse sins,  
710 unless the Judge thus punishes that crime in some part.  
Thus severe punishment destroys the authors of sin,  
and a new and corrupt lust burns the unchaste.  
Thus He decides to condemn this crime with a new punishment,  
raining down sulphur and flames upon the obscene bum boys,  
715 stench replacing filthiness, flames burning passion to ash.  
The cleft earth produced wrongdoing which it could not tolerate;  
until then it could bear all evil, but the torn earth screams  
that she cannot bear this one sin, though she tolerates all others  
and is about to explode from this sin alone which she has sucked in.  
720 If you look at why the Creator has punished this crime,  
you will see the four elements seriously damaged by it:

water and earth are in a frenzy, the air rains sulphur and fire,  
in order to strike this in unison, but injuring each other.

Earlier, water on its own punished female impurities,  
725 but now they all join together in the battle plan,  
so that a shared vengeance punishes a common crime.

When fools want to raise a tower skywards,  
as if to foil some Heavenly plan,  
in order to be higher up in case a flood were to happen again,  
730 He does not drown them with the waters or burn them with fires,  
since this would indeed be a great and huge presumption,  
but He halts their ridiculous work with mockery,  
making one unable to understand the speech of the other.  
What united action strove for, language problems ruined.

735 Behold. Punishment teaches what it is which the Judge most abhors,  
and proves that sin and its punishment are entirely separate matters.  
Let not some feeble voice play down the weight of this sin,  
being unable to utter out loud the word for it.  
Anyone, in the words of the Scripture, can grasp its sense:  
740 you, with your expertise and grasp of knowledge, consider deeply  
what it is and how much more than detestable it is; know that  
we wanted to say more than we have the power to!

God foreknows that this is a consuming cancer  
and that, even though it is drowned by the fear of death,  
745 many will freely be devoured in its jaws.  
He takes action to let the world know it is a horrible sin;  
He reveals the abyss of shadowy Hell to those on their way to it,  
so that the sight of the chasm may force them to turn back.  
Ever unaware, anyone may by chance run into this trap;  
750 thus, fruit which grows in Sodomitic regions  
is said to be full of dust at harvest time;  
though they may shine outwardly, they betray the crime in themselves.  
They are warnings to beholders of the crime and its punishment,  
so that one who believes a viper's venom to be incurable  
755 and also serpent's poison, the bitter grape of Gomorrah,  
may not let limbs dedicated to God be gnawed by a snake.  
Let one who can, take note what the Creator shuns as too harsh!  
A new punishment struck when the world was barely adult:  
what, then, may He do to a youngster doing such a thing?  
760 The notion of punishment, together with the charisma of faith,  
teach us that everlasting Gehenna remains for the fallen,  
so let us feel ashamed to violate the Lord's sacred temple!

Meat and wine are considered to have two bloodsucking progeny:  
gluttony and drunkenness, and they are the mother to desire.  
765 Fed on blood, she is aptly called the bloodsucker of the soul,

and her offspring feed excessively on food and drink;  
 one gorges on meat, the other on the consumption of wine,  
 and they cry out "Bring me, bring me" because they are not full.  
 The will gives birth to them, sweating with their heat;  
 770 the stuffed mother is as wet as her offspring are fat.  
 Now because meat-eating and wine did not exist before the Flood,  
 perhaps because of this she did not rampage with such loose rein;  
 but after gorging herself, she burns and blazes more vigorously.  
 The Founder of all species of things, seeing everything,  
 775 He who alone knows what each person wants at heart,  
 or whence all evil springs, or where it should be lopped off,  
 warns us to sever our evil deeds at the root,  
 exhorting us not to let over-eating and intoxication burden our hearts,  
 and to cut these two out, the rest being then easily avoided.  
 780 The branch of a corrupt work droops when cut off at the root.  
 The world is drowning amid a sea of sins in a thousand ways;  
 these two offspring, however, and the mother who produced them  
 stain this world with filth and strip it of the gift of reason,  
 so that such a devotee of the stomach is a beast, not human.  
 785 Thus the flesh takes a fall, thus it alienates the poor mind;  
 thus the vessel – cracked, alas! – had acted corruptly.  
 Whoever you are, therefore, if some reason remains,  
 despise the beauty of skin with which the whole world is obsessed!  
 Everywhere people are slaves to young skin, beyond moderation,  
 790 and everywhere foul lust is preferred to God.  
 We all have a god, something we love more than Him,  
 and because of which we have chosen to spurn Him,  
 as the catechist of the world says when speaking about the stomach.  
 How crazy is the person who abandons Him for the flesh  
 795 and worships and delights in stallion-like motions instead of God  
 and is not ashamed to give himself over to canine goads!  
 Therefore they retain little care for themselves or their safety,  
 or to recover their former selves and reconsider their well-being,  
 or to consider whose likeness they have or in whose image they shine,  
 800 and whence they come here, or where lies their hope of returning!  
 Let them not think their worth so little that they sell it for skin!  
 Rather let them see what such things will get them!  
 The itch which burns and is scratched in a brief moment  
 earns everlasting flames – the torment of Hell.  
 805 Though the flesh is alive through breath, the flesh smothers what breathes;  
 the lowest destroys the highest, the worthless destroys the precious.  
 When however this breath dies, with its life-giving essence cut off,  
 body and spirit die together, suffocated and doomed forever.  
 While there is still time therefore to change one's course,

- 810 let us make an about-face and not run willingly toward Hell,  
and consider what it means to lack joy and to weep forever,  
or what we are allowed to do, as if in some sort of contract!
- The Judge had decided to soften His anger;  
He did not want to condemn the arrogant utterly,  
815 or to punish them forever for some spur-of-the-moment sin.  
He did not suffer them to be deprived totally of His heart's light;  
though they keep intact the gift of judgement and mental acumen  
in order to be able to recognise their Creator again in the end,  
to rise after their fall and to go on their way with caution.
- 820 Let them also learn to fear the Lord through a taste of the whip.  
As a craftsman refines gold or silver by smelting,  
so He placed the wretches in the furnace of this exile,  
to cleanse them quickly and avoid perpetual punishment,  
and so that brief censure might obviate eternal whipping.
- 825 But they prefer exile, willingly courting the furnace.  
How crazy the villain who does not know how to escape prison!  
They are sorely lacking in wisdom if they yearn to be imprisoned!  
They are not without metal slag, but become worse in it  
and, turning into lead, as it were, corrupt that very thing
- 830 and exile themselves and befoul themselves with a cataract of crimes.  
This people, led astray, believes poison to be the antidote,  
because it stupidly and willingly licks the sugar mixed with it.  
Totally unaware of reason, it is addicted to this poison;  
it licks it as if it were honey, yet it is bitter beeswax.
- 835 Look! Perhaps one may see love of such a life for what it is:  
it entices, it ensnares and then hurts its softened-up victim.  
As a tidbit lures birds willingly into a snare,  
so are these people lured into degeneracy, enticed by sweetness,  
so that they cannot spread their wax-smeared feathers
- 840 and lack appreciation of virtue, as a wing lacks flight,  
and their quick snack makes them feel eternal hunger.  
Shamefully, they are slow to give up their favourite taste;  
it inflames, stimulates and exacerbates their hunger and thirst.
- Whoever loves the world is not filled with love of the Father.  
845 Love of the world makes them worthy of the Judge's anger because  
they prefer the base to the beautiful, the worthless to the precious.  
For a friend of the world is an enemy of the Father, as Holy  
Scripture says, and the prophet also said that humans lick the dust.  
To righteous people, licking the dirt seems disgusting;
- 850 it is not something suitable for the tongue of humans, but of a dog.  
The prophet therefore preaches about the action of a stupid dog,  
and about the filthy animal's love of the world.  
Some people are shown up by their action in imitation of a dog;

the way a dog licks shows that it is disgusting.

855 One who licks the earth stoops down to the lowest point, forgetful  
of the Heavens, though created upright to look at the heights.  
Other animals, face down, look at the ground, the human design  
alone showing that they are raised to the stars,  
so that their mind is directed to where design points their face;

860 but that love of the ground bends them down low like hunchbacks.  
Whoever you are, then, see what you deserve if you love the world!  
Consequently, Moses was ordered to exterminate the Amalekites,  
whose name, in Latin, means the people who love to lick, and this  
remains the fate marked out for those desirous of the earth.

865 This does not normally fulfil one, but delights with base pleasure.  
Who would be wont to lick, except one who behaves like a glutton?  
This disgraceful mentality indicates one who wants earthly things,  
and the dirt shows how dirty they are who pursue such things,  
so that baseness betrays the base and worthlessness the worthless,

870 and a thing which does not fulfil but which they pursue like gluttons,  
- the prophet preferred to speak of them by such a name,  
people whom that love burns, urging them to love the transitory.  
Therefore he branded those as truly degenerate, these as worthless.  
When he says "licking," he shows what they are and what they love.

875 The mind therefore chooses evil in order to drown in Hell;  
the mind provokes the grim axe to cut it down and kill it.  
The gullet is proved to have been the cause of this great sin  
and through it lust, stuffed with meat and wine.  
The Devil thus drives his gluttonous captives on to worse deeds.

880 First he makes them eat excessive foods without limit,  
thus stimulating the flesh which feeds on evil and kills the mind;  
what it does then is against the law; thus it becomes sick of the familiar  
and vomits a new pool of filth to wallow in,  
and – the crime! – now pursues liaisons contrary to nature,

885 shameful to hear of! A male with a passion for a male.  
It is a practice of one insanely possessed, full of madness,  
to do nothing with judgement or worthy of reason;  
he performs and desires something which bestiality perhaps urges;  
as though out of his mind, he happily does things, unaware that they are disgusting.

890 Also, he rages, in the grip of such great insanity,  
and stupidly engages in something which no animal has ever done,  
which is shameful to hear, a man whinnying with desire for a man.  
This man is bereft of reason, devoid of intelligence and enfeebled of mind,  
his lust not driven by any natural form of intercourse.

895 This is worse than disgraceful behaviour: the Creator is therefore scorned.  
He sanctifies the procedure which all species observe:  
whoever abuses this, commits an offence against Him.

He would not do this willingly unless possessed by a demon.  
Is this lust? It seems, I admit, far from it;

900 by this act, lust seems to exceed itself and its tricks  
and to take upon itself a demonic behaviour, alien to itself, as it were;  
such a person becomes no longer human, but a slave of the enemy!

Therefore, what the Holy Father has indulgently given  
us to make use of, evil stubbornness of the depraved has turned to sin.  
905 So it deserves to bear a heavy yoke from beginning to end;  
for the flesh, riddled or ploughed, as it were, with corruption,  
hacking with hoes at these things which it foolishly desires,  
brings forth things which corrupt, its seeds, of course, sown by lust.  
Now apart from diseases unknown to Hippocrates,  
910 and apart from the gnawing and devouring anxieties thereof,  
our very salvation, although it seems to be safe,  
is more fragile than glass, in doubt and teetering in the balance.  
Because Evil is perverse and dysfunctional, it spreads spontaneously  
but when it is profitable, its preparation is more seriously planned,  
915 and it can die away suddenly and spring up again slowly.  
Foolish presumption causes this evil in arrogant wretches,  
and by these steps they succeed in hastening their own ruin.

When thirst, hunger, cold or heat weary people  
and other things which stir their basic passions,  
920 one clearly needs to look for means of holding them in check.  
However, remedies which are taken to cure this  
may themselves make it worse, if applied too little.  
They long to stand up, lie down, walk, stay awake, sleep,  
or to relieve their sore limbs with various activities;  
925 but soon this very activity is seen to be counterproductive,  
and they suddenly feel that something which gave a little relief is harmful.  
The flesh, which gloats at the success of sin, together  
with a wanton mind, causes health to suffer through worthy cures  
which, turning bitter, harm the greedy more than the just.  
930 Thus it is fitting that they who do not know how to defer to the Parent  
or to love the Father or to value the Almighty's love  
or to take care to fear His gentle threat, which they disregard,  
should be punished; but soon their flesh is surrendered to the enemy,  
they lose self-control, denying that they are the Creator's;  
935 they who choose nothing, are nothing and lose touch with reality.  
Thus they are censured and struck by a certain hammer, so that  
they may learn from their beating not to puff up about what they have  
or to presume to injure Him Above with their gifts.  
Not only does adversity harm them, but also prosperity.

940 When pain attacks sick people and they feel the smart of it,  
they ask if there may be relief for them from various treatments;

they put a poultice on their side, back or face,  
 then move it to their feet or wherever else the fever dictates;  
 but nothing proves to soothe or bring relief;  
 945 there is no rest to make the discomfort go away.  
 In the sick, the five senses usually waste away,  
 so that they grow weak and feeble in all they feel,  
 and they can get no great pleasure from anything.  
 No light pleases their eyes, no ringing voice their ear,  
 950 fruit has no flavour, their nostrils lose the sense of smell,  
 their whole body loses the feel of the soft things around it;  
 although things may be real to the touch,  
 the sick person feels no pleasure in them.

Thus Adam, after his crime, drifted towards goodness as though  
 955 languishing, unable to make out the causes of meritorious deeds;  
 and he does not know how delightful or beautiful they are;  
 the talent of his people for meritorious action is diminished.  
 The basic tenet had been this: the slave should love his Master  
 and rejoice in true and eternal goodness on high,  
 960 through which he would have complete rest without end.  
 But when he turned away from His love, looking at other things,  
 and was exiled outside, he knows not what is wise inside.  
 Therefore he looks everywhere for respite in various amusements;  
 he finds everything hard; there is nowhere for him to rest,  
 965 until he returns to Him who was the source of his innate power,  
 so that he who had been created by the Lord may find rest in Him.

The Creator Himself orders what His creation should be like and for how long,  
 and all things retain a little of their God-given nature  
 and His nature or order or design draws up the details.  
 970 When Adam gave these up, he harmed himself first and foremost.  
 Can a fire last without heat or snow without cold?  
 Can an animal which breathes air live underwater?  
 Nothing which is exiled from nature's design can last long.  
 God therefore gave him the chance to be blessed by loving Him,  
 975 except that, in spite of that love, he obstructs the laws of nature.  
 As he spurns nature, he is not where he may now rest;  
 thus a wanderer, unsettled, shattered, powerless and worthless,  
 he becomes mentally unstable through the influence of the flesh.  
 He hates the things he once loved and often loves what he hated  
 980 and, as unsubstantial as wax, his will keeps changing;  
 it will want one thing, then quickly changes and rejects it;  
 his mind is prey to ignorance, though it thinks it is wise,  
 and, making no effort, it falls, and rises again when forced but with difficulty;  
 in prosperity it puffs up, but pines away, troubled, in adversity  
 985 and is scarred by worries in a thousand ways.

Pride, not a natural innate quality, has infected it.

He desires to be glorious, a thing which naturally appeals to him;  
worried, he yearns for glory and searches for it as hard as he can;  
but he cannot be glorious here whence he has sadly exiled himself.

990 He works to prepare everything, but soon his plans fall apart;  
his credit balance becomes worthless, clearly in the red and falling,  
and he cannot rid his mind of its distressing obsession with crime.  
Yet he does not cease to court things he knows are frivolous.  
He yearns to have the goodness to which all things desire;  
995 he would like all to be well in a way suiting his own nature;  
he does not know where he is, where to look or where the place he has left;  
so he tries various things, panting after this and that.

But nothing can satisfy him except the Creator Himself,  
and the drink he has drunk in his dreams does not satisfy his thirst;  
1000 the fires of his fever do not recede before the coolness of water.  
Often, a thing which seemed just recently to help is instead harmful.  
Nature granted him that his Creator would satisfy him.  
But if he were to amass for himself mountains of pure gold,  
and every kind of gem and choice stone,

1005 or if he ate enormous meals for a thousand years,  
whatever the whole world has, scattered throughout its regions,  
or what every person has, if the whole of it may belong to one person,  
the things which exist or can be named or imagined,  
they will not be able to satisfy nature's demand fully,  
1010 until he returns to Him he fought against with arrogant heart.  
But although the fool grows excessive and inflated by these,  
he crawls across the earth and will in the end prove he is a worm.

He who had granted to Adam the foods of Paradise,  
forbids them because of the failure of a sinner who ate the forbidden.

1015 Is it right for a bad slave to take the goods of a good master?  
Is a content person equal to an ingrate or the proud to the humble?  
With what effrontery may one take the gifts of a hated master?  
They who want to be independent should use their own talents.  
But he has nothing of his own, no self except, of course, sin.

1020 Do they who stand contrary to themselves have a self?  
Rightly should the Judge take away from whingers all they have.  
Reptiles, quadrupeds and birds bear a likeness to human beings.  
What humans do which is similar to animals is as follows:  
humans, who desire only the earth, crawl across it like reptiles;  
1025 bearing some burden, good for praise, they are like cattle,  
because they do not cling to the earth nor fly up to the stars;  
and birds seeking the heights are like humans dutifully doing right.  
Following their fall, therefore, humans are like reptiles,  
prostrate on their belly, although they were made to be upright.



### BOOK III

1030 A life brutish in every detail is unworthy of human beings.  
But His sense of duty won: He did not take everything from the fallen;  
they partake of the food of the earth, but not quite enough,  
food fit for animals, they had not adapted themselves to that;  
but He established in this, as right and justice demand,  
1035 that if people are willing to obey the Power Above, they may learn  
that the goods of the earth are given them in return.  
This then is good, that they may partake of food if they obey,  
and contrarily it is unjust if He denies them those things.  
Nevertheless, people break the pact which is in their interest.  
1040 Therefore, censorial power would soon remove the gift,  
if His tenderness, excelling above all, had not left them that.  
One might believe that those two were being balanced in Adam's  
case and one would see the Judge's right hand tilting the scales;  
though that pan held many things, this one also yields much.  
1045 Because the sinner kills off the seeds of virtue within himself,  
it is just that the earth repay him with thorns and thistles,  
and, because the power of justice flags through love of the flesh,  
he is lethargic and obstructive in his attitude toward things sacred,  
as when a seedling pops up, harmful, well known to be useless.  
1050 Look what the soil is like and all it produces everywhere!  
To produce revitalizing crops requires serious effort;  
plants not thought beneficial grows without our help:  
on their own cowslip, burr, nettle and thorn spring up, and  
the peasant's hand scarcely can stop the thorn-bush with his bill-hook;  
1055 it is takes years of toil for vines to produce grapes  
but hard labour is scarcely able to deter ferns and harmful plants,  
nor are clearances of the harvest able to stop weeds proliferating,  
and it is constant difficult toil which brings wheat to a farm's granaries.  
Poplar, hypericon, box-tree, sumachs and cypresses  
1060 and trees which are suitable for human uses  
grow by themselves and are a law unto themselves.  
A bent hunchback transports their timber in a cart or barrow,  
working at them with adze, axes, planes and chisels,  
to make whatever human need demands.  
1065 The earth bears very many plants which many hoes need cut back,  
plants for our good, but it is our toil which adapts them for our use.  
A multitude of free gifts benefit the guilty and the innocent,  
provided for free to ingrates by His love of duty.  
Sun, air, earth, sea do not refuse His order to obey.  
1070 O how great the things they control or have to soothe our senses!  
Things soft, scented, harmonious, tasty, beautiful,  
which give joy to the soul fed with a variety of pleasure!  
They all show that their Creator is wonderful and kind,

because He creates such wonders and provides them for ingrates.

1075       A cataract does not blind them with dense clouds:  
 wanting to open their sleepy eyes to the light  
 they desire to recover gradually their mental acumen.  
 For the sweet Judge, overflowing with His usual sense of duty,  
 slow to apportion blame and quick to forgive, beats them  
 1080 so as, while punishing them, to spare them and save them for forgiveness.  
 Though people have made themselves beasts of burden,  
 they could not however bear to lose this human feeling.  
 Though ignorant of the idea of a week or public office,  
 they have much talent in handling earthly objects:  
 1085 marble, silk, gems, glass, bronze or gold.  
 They suspend the ceilings of lofty buildings upon arches  
 and plinths with columns and cross-beams set upon a base,  
 or engrave the floor with a pattern or adorn a wall with plaster  
 or objects beautifully carved or sculpted from clay,  
 1090 fitting square mosaic pieces into sapphire frames,  
 getting marble letters to adhere with glue,  
 and organs giving sweet melody to accompany disharmony,  
 the faithful musician shaking his harmonious cymbals,  
 military equipment which either brings death or prevents it  
 1095 (shields, greaves, helmet, breastplate, cuirass to avert death,  
 lance, hilted sword, catapult, axe to bring death), offensive and defensive,  
 and things to carry food and drink:  
 dishes, plates and cruets, cooking pots, vinegar-bowls, goblets,  
 sop trays; or weaving belts and veils,  
 1100 weaving lots of clothes with hair girdles;  
 the wrestling coach, practising his feints and postures.  
 Who will explain all these things which indicate mental energies?  
 They visualise these ideas inside the mind, then make them reality outside.

Without doubt, mental power can be both lively or dormant:  
 1105 you will think that nothing was drawn from it for the ideas of early life;  
 one firmly believes that its sharpness is equal to its stupidity,  
 which is clearly so if one perchance compares skilled people to brutes.  
 It is dormant in those above, and bedridden in those wanting to lapse,  
 in whom the fire dies, the longer it ceases to ponder the mysteries.  
 1110 It does not gaze fully at the stars and the earth at the same time;  
 more or less everyone looks at one of these,  
 the greater the admiration for it, the less for the other, which is then ignored.  
 Therefore, when tepidity besets the mind, the flesh's activity increases,  
 and is expert in application and skill when it focuses its passion,  
 1115 and the hopes and allurements of a promise excite each person.

Often the energy of the flesh robs the senses of their keenness;  
 conversely, the mind's virtue is dulled by the power of the flesh;

### BOOK III

hence, Jacob is wanting, but the energy of Nimrod is great.

In the old, knowledge of the flesh is hazy, but of the mind quick;

1120 in the young, knowledge of the flesh is strong, of the heart weak:

thus infants recognise their nurse by scent alone;

the tranquillity of Barzillai is said not to calm minds,

since the five senses of the old are proved to be feeble;

thus, Shammah wants to be David's young attendant.

1125 Both mind and flesh take control in turn, and have their time.

Indeed, though there were a few aroused by love of praise

or by quick wits, because laziness had not completely

swamped them, aroused as if walking through a cavern,

looking at the path in the light of lamps shining from above,

1130 they search for something a little better suited to their characters,

to sharpen their minds and force them to stir themselves,

and to explore the arts which are called Liberal,

because these are wont to stimulate mental insights.

For although the mind vacillates, submerged in deep sleep,

1135 seeing in dreams what nature has given,

it may however feel the light with a sort of numb cheek

and consider the causes of things with sharpness of reason.

Such people raise their sensitivity to things to a higher level.

But although some may perchance be wise and sharp-witted,

1140 when they think they have penetrated something subtle or deep,

they are like the shadow of a thing rather than a vision of truth.

No one - not a lying teacher or rhetor, not Apollo or Hermes -

can be all-knowing and penetrate the profound points of wisdom.

Whoever does not seek wisdom for its own sake is not only foolish

1145 (those, whom love of popular acclaim or favour motivates,

will want to use their knowledge to delight in inane praise,

using any means to get that praise),

but in not seeking wisdom for themselves they are also unworthy

and do not know what its content is or what it tastes like.

1150 If they exhale its aroma and do not know how to taste its content,

not only do they not receive its secret treasures,

but none of them even whose intention is pure

(what the Lord calls a singular eye

which sees purity clearly with a pure eye),

1155 drinks deeply of it, although able to taste it.

They are not that man of lofty vision, John, for whom paradise is penetrable

to whom alone the third door of Heaven is revealed,

nor a Heaven-dweller hearing the message to be told to mortals;

that man deciphers the mysteries and prophecies only a part.

1160 Though the sophist wants to be Solomon, wisdom shrinks far from him.

The rhetor, as if asleep, sees knowledge in a dream-vision

but a sleeping man sees things differently than a man awake;  
 [John] sees reality and things appear as they really are;  
 what the rhetor sees –nothing– passes completely into the imagination.

1165 By recalling the things he has experienced and fixed in his mind,  
 he depicts images which the imagination fashions for him.  
 Knowing God, John knows that He knows everything sufficiently.

The first man, before his crime, stood awake and clever,  
 oppressed neither by the weight of the flesh nor of the mind,  
 1170 seeing things as they are in clear daylight.  
 When attracted to forbidden things, he obscures his ray of light  
 and becomes drowsy and lazy, as if devoid of reason;  
 therefore his vision is either dubious or short-sighted,  
 but although the power of nature is scarcely mindful of itself,  
 1175 he recalls the knowledge known to him as if for a long time;  
 he dreams of these very skills which he tonguelessly prattles about  
 and partially remembers the lost wisdom which he has forgotten.

Such people discover and imagine very many things  
 which benefit the studies of those whom grace has chosen;  
 1180 they sharpen the mind's cutting edge like axes on a whetstone.  
 They make the meek humbler and make the proud swell up;  
 thus they harm these whilst helping those.  
 They plunder Egypt and dress themselves becomingly,  
 as the Holy Scripture says; the fool is slave to the wise,  
 1185 as bees have honey or sheep have fleece – not for themselves,  
 and the voice of the sea ceases and the turtle-dove coos.  
 Sense of duty therefore spared the guilty who strike at those things.  
 With such a great pruning, how little of knowledge survives?  
 How would we know, think you, if it survived safe and sound?  
 1190 For a long time, like a well painted picture, but now obscured by smoke,  
 it reveals by its own evidence what it was, when intact,  
 and the skilled hand of the Painter and His former glory.  
 Thus Adam shows by his own testimony who he was before his sin,  
 having the likeness of his Potter, though that honour later disappeared.  
 1195 But who was sane who remains so languid?  
 What had the Creator, who reserves so much for a complainer,  
 given to a content person? He will spend freely, for He thinks of both.

I have long found certain habits of brutish people to be partly  
 barking, people who show through slightly better deeds,  
 1200 when paying attention, that they could understand wisdom  
 and, something which may be closer to their nature,  
 how the stupid can be slaves to the wise,  
 in whom ingenuity has made the intellect sharp.  
 An eloquent tongue polishes them, but a worthless life sullies them;  
 1205 their mind crawls on the ground, but their sense seeks the heights;

nor does it help them that they look into the unknown with little interest,  
 nay, it hinders them, since they are unable to know God,  
 whom the details of all things retain in their orderliness,  
 though omitting to provide a divine cult.

1210 They also get no pleasure from faith, which they clearly lack.  
 Though they are of the clay which is rightly beset by His anger,  
 and they have a vacuum, which they got from love of praise,  
 seeing as they are uncivilised, though eloquent when they speak,  
 they rate therefore as less disgusting in the list of the depraved,  
 1215 because they have studied something not disgusting but useful,  
 and doing something less adverse is clearly good for their salvation  
 – provided however one does not enjoy this love too much.  
 For it harms most people, whom it caresses with its alluring ways,  
 and who find doctrine nauseous and feed upon worthless poetry.  
 1220 But though they seek these skills with all their heart,  
 breaking into or surrendering their private free time,  
 though they penetrate many ideas and pretend they know the unknown,  
 and are thought to have a steady, honest moral base,  
 it is of no help to them because they have neglected the one worship  
 1225 to which all things must deservedly be made subject.

A flint struck to make a hot fire does not illuminate itself;  
 it produces sparks, but gives them out to others, and does not  
 own what it gives to them, and administers light, though blind.  
 People who are keen to plough up veins of wisdom from faith,  
 1230 thus, by remaining firm, make the pious learned;  
 they confer much on them, though they do nothing for themselves.  
 Such people are not excluded from divine benefaction;  
 certainly, wisdom has given partial approval to the unworthy,  
 so that it indeed transfers itself through them to the wise.

1235 The sun thus shines on the wicked, the Creator rains on the unjust,  
 and He will not desert the human race in any age.  
 But He keeps for Himself a few grains of the scorched chaff  
 which lie underneath the ears of corn, concealed by them;  
 birds would have them, if they had not been covered.

1240 Thus repression of the wicked saves the good from perhaps  
 one day abandoning their struggle and becoming arrogant.  
 The wise person with his knowledge and the crazy unjust one  
 therefore soldier on to be of use to those who are wisely wise.

Mention of the stupid, like the sad wolves of the world,  
 1245 long read about in poems, leaves a nasty taste;  
 one longs therefore hungrily to taste something sweeter.  
 Thus, though my Muse has touched the good with rash daring,  
 she struggles to direct her song toward the ancestral fathers  
 who pour forth from Heaven's windows upon the abyss a light

## OCCUPATIO

1250 from the true sunlight of the shining human heart,  
so that it rebounds powerfully upon those worthy of mention.  
But my pen, its blunt nib, grows weary.  
Let me stop here so that a break may refresh my withered strength!

**Book 4**Preface

My unhappy Muse has long been recalling  
 the sad works of people who,  
 by shunning the sweet Father, have handed  
 themselves over willingly to rotten sins.  
 5 Their wicked race, like a slave to Venus,  
 has increased many times over;  
 but the more numerous it became,  
 the more and more it polluted itself.  
 That crop deserves to be burnt well enough,  
 10 although it has produced some grain worth storing.  
 The genealogical tree of the Fathers, put in order later,  
 as a rhetor of the Church teaches,  
 placed the bestial first,  
 then, following on from this, the spiritual.  
 15 So my Muse sadly makes it a priority  
 to sing something happily about that.  
 If only she may inspire the words of the sinner  
 who has dedicated his foolish mouth to speaking!

When the whole mechanism of the world was set up in its order  
 and its individual parts flourished in their own fashion,  
 humans, alas, ahead of the rest, went backwards, willingly,  
 as my wordy poem has barked about too much above.  
 5 Though rejected, the Almighty Adjudicator, however,  
 utterly filled with tenderness, did not forever reject Adam who rejected Him  
 or let him be deprived completely of His indulgent gift  
 or return to the former chaos, though the things He made for him  
 would suffer this destruction on account of his sin.  
 10 If, in His very fair judgement, many a vessel has been rejected,  
 grace has selected a few of them, though not compelled,  
 who wisely realise the debt which the vessels have to the Potter,  
 and the glorious nature of the gift of a mind, and of reason,  
 on which humans rely, fashioned in the image of their Maker,  
 15 and how foul a yoke it is to be a slave to the tricks of vice  
 and how beautiful it is for anyone to be subject to God.  
 These made the choice in their mind to cling to the Supreme Good  
 and to remain humble rather than to rebel against the light.

God therefore sees them and dutifully directs their deeds;  
 20 He cherishes them or afflicts them, feeding them either pleasant or acrid food;  
 He sends adversity to stop them becoming arrogant in success,  
 not too much, however; being kind, He moderates both.  
 He makes them run life's course along with the reprobates:  
 lilies grow up with the thorns, corn with weeds,  
 25 wheat is choked beneath the chaff and seeds beneath the awn,  
 the colour white shines out more against a black background,  
 so do the honest shine in the midst of a corrupt people.  
 Just as the brown earth has produced gold,  
 did not that lineage produce two peoples according to their two wills  
 30 very remote from each other in custom and interests?  
 One half worships God, the other insanely worships the world;  
 one half rushes into crime, multiplying its sins,  
 preferring not what the Creator orders but what the impostor wants,  
 and, rejecting medication, prefers to let its sores rot;  
 35 one half, having now learnt how harmful the easy route is,  
 chooses righteousness, avoiding things bad for its safety,  
 cautious about its deeds as well as the danger to itself,  
 wary of delighting in tricks suggested by the Devil.  
 The first two brothers were prototypes for these.  
 40 Lack of virtue is represented by the evil Cain,  
 and innocent Abel, dying, represents Jesus.  
 Moreover, each of them has his own king, kingdom, reward and city.  
 Exposed to vices, to which the first is a willing slave, his king  
 is Satan, his city Babylon, his wages death, his kingdom Hell;  
 45 necessity prompts the other to return to the bosom of his father,  
 for he has a horror of having to eat pigswill, so his King  
 is God, his city Jerusalem, his pay life, his kingdom the stars.  
 One is wary of the Devil's tricks, the other lusts after males;  
 one is afraid, the other arrogant; one returns, the other leaves;  
 50 this one, meek, is made to quake at the threats of the whip,  
 that one, unmoved by whips, knows not what punishment means,  
 and samples the troubles of life and the punishments of Hell  
 which God sometimes imposes, at other times just threatens.  
 God strikes him with moderation, not always beating him down,  
 55 because hearts are not softened by hasty whippings.  
 He will fully punish and keep watch over hearts softened by Hell.  
 Without thinking, Cain overthrows these things, but he mitigates this fall,  
 so that he becomes used to sober behaviour, wary of slipping.  
 One is staggering drunkenly, bent upon a fall,  
 60 which makes the other cautious, though their meeting renders one prostrate;  
 one, beaten with whips, learns to fear savage punishments;  
 but the other becomes hardened, making worse stupid mistakes;



one plans a road to recovery, the other insanely seeks the depths.

The life of the citizens of Babylon is like life in Jerusalem;  
 65 they follow a common course, alike,  
 and have certain things the same, other things uniquely their own.  
 Sadness, prosperity, dispute, peace, plenty or want,  
 rough and smooth, health and sickness - all the alternatives  
 in human experience of life, with varying fate,  
 70 to each his own foible – I shall say no more.  
 Some are chosen for their humility or rejected for their arrogance  
 though what fortune paints for them may be the same  
 (there is a palette of colours when prosperity acclaims someone,  
 but is almost without hue when adversity strikes),  
 75 but fortune mocks these who are corrupted by bad deeds.  
 As fortune flows from a horn of plenty upon those who are worthy,  
 so the bad are unworthy of enjoying life in Heaven;  
 harsh on the fallen, fortune does not enrich outcasts from Heaven.  
 Being able to taste here the silly things which they desire,  
 80 they are sucking the teats of a hyena as if they were their mother's.  
 But their reluctant relationship long wearies them.

May my weary Muse, who once inspired the dutiful, be keen  
 to devote itself to the same, and also toil to revive those  
 whom the Provider of things has supplied since the world's origin!  
 85 The whirlpool of crime could not suck them in completely  
 nor was any sin able to eclipse their glory of mind,  
 but the light of faith always glowed bright within them;  
 the meek, the chaste, the sober and the patient ones flourished,  
 establishing many lights of virtue in the world,  
 90 used to setting standards in dutiful work for their followers,  
 whom the dark cloud of countless sin had covered.

Firstly patient Abel who did not resist dying.  
 He represented the Lamb, a sacrificial offering,  
 by whom it is possible to take away the sins of the world.  
 95 His brother had persuaded him to go outside, to kill him:  
 evil men make mundane suggestions to make the just perish.  
 That simple man, therefore, overcome by death,  
 teaches us that good people may kill reprobates and stay innocent.  
 The name Abel comes from the word for grief in the Hebrew tongue,  
 100 signifying those who fill their years with weeping,  
 The line of Seth began to worship the Lord Above in prayer.  
 Enoch was translated to God, drawn up by mental power;  
 things they had in common attracted each other;  
 he dwelt in the paradise he deserved, in the flesh, never dying.  
 105 Noah, the lastborn son and the father of the world, survived the Flood.  
 He was chosen as the seed to renew the doomed world

and, knowing how to sail, built an ark on God's orders  
 and doomed sinners chose to laugh at the one who was to be saved.  
 Building it, he prevents the world being destroyed by the waters.  
 110 Building a ship, triple-decked like the three orders of the Church,  
 he shows us that people of different cultures will be as one,  
 since his ship's hold enclosed various life-forms,  
 the ship's look-out symbolising the waters of baptism,  
 and that the meek are to be mocked but remain faithful,  
 115 and the faces of some are to be filled with joy, of others with grief.  
 How dutifully were Shem and Japheth bound by respect for their father!  
 They covered up his nakedness which Ham mocked with derision,  
 symbolising those to whom the cross is a joke, an insult to God,  
 but these sons symbolise those fearing loss of majesty,  
 120 as, with faces averted, they do not see the shameful things  
 which He endures, overcome by love of us,  
 but they do see the divinity with which God is forever filled,  
 as they gaze upon the Heavenly mysteries of the faith in the cross,  
 certain that their eternal salvation depends on this.  
 125 What shall I say about the many subordinate to the faith outside the law  
 attracted to the work of the faith by a genuine desire,  
 and whose inborn sense of duty directed them to the study of virtue?  
 They have indeed fathered children, and not in their juvenile years;  
 for how they spurned lust in their younger days!  
 130 The age at which each is said to father children is indicative,  
 since they lay with a woman more by free choice than out of desire,  
 paying the dues owed to a wife, not taking them.  
 A man who acts through Venus is perverting a legitimate act.  
 And because most people submit to the conjugal bond,  
 135 they want to procreate, to produce divine offspring,  
 as promised by the forefathers of their faithful race.  
 Because it is not about love-making but for the sake of children,  
 it is thus clear that a promise was made to men only,  
 for whom it is possible to sow their seed in many women,  
 140 but no woman is allowed to marry multiple men;  
 for, taking the seed of one man, she does not bear others  
 until the pregnancy is finally brought to term.  
 When someone fell, overcome by lust perhaps,  
 when someone fell (for the weak are often tempted) that person  
 145 becomes, upon rising again, an example of fall and forgiveness.  
 David falls in this way, prompting forgiveness by his recovery.  
 And Solomon was scarcely out of boyhood, when, as a youth,  
 after love-making, he fathered a child – a bad omen;  
 soon he is giving out his first orders in his first command,  
 150 and is undone by this – a profane ruler constructing holy temples,

when he was building a wonderful temple for the Lord,  
 and could access the treasure-stores of holy wisdom  
 and held power by the right of his body.  
 How evil was the lust which so prostrated Solomon,  
 155 in giving holy places to harlots after the temple's construction!  
 How unspeakable is adultery and its punishment with death  
 even when no law, except of nature, forbids it.  
 Tamar, pregnant, is said to have been sentenced to burning  
 and King Abimelech to have complained of Isaac that  
 160 his wife was his sister, admittedly in fear of the Gittites,  
 which became a great scandal for the king and his kingdom.  
 And Joseph, called Zaphnath-Paaneah, is willing to be imprisoned  
 rather than to give in to dishonour, and Susannah to be put to death;  
 Lucretia also preferred to avoid this shame by death.  
 165 Woe, if that was thought so great an evil, without having a law!  
 After a law was passed, after the Flower born of a virgin,  
 who came by virgin birth to atone for the world,  
 I ask this: How greatly, do you think, does this heap up corpses,  
 especially those of devoted Christians  
 170 who were sacrificial victims, to ferment and rot?  
 The Great Teacher ordains that the bodies of a husband  
 and his wife shall be under the control of each other mutually,  
 the one being under the other's conjugal constraint.  
 The chaste patriarch Abraham thus obeyed Sara completely.  
 175 Through these actions, therefore, they prove to have pleased the Lord,  
 doing as they were ordered in order to beget a race.  
 An example of faith to those who followed, he dutifully offered his son Isaac;  
 as a chaste belt girds his loins like a garland,  
 reducing through virtue the rash excesses of Venus.  
 180 Circumcised, he has offspring which will cleanse generations  
 and purify those He joins to Him when He becomes flesh.  
 So he leaves his homeland, clinging prudently to the Lord  
 to show us that anything must be left behind because of Him alone,  
 so that he soon rejects the world in which he is perchance engaged  
 185 and shuns the attraction of earth, blessed with love of Heaven,  
 and he casts off nature's chains because of his love of the Creator.  
 Worthy of entering a covenant with God and discussing with Him,  
 he runs to a herd and personally prepares a bullock,  
 being great in eloquence and no less in serving.  
 190 Thus, raised high, he admits that he is dust,  
 remembering what he is, lest someone take the gift as his own  
 and forget himself and become swollen with pride.  
 Isaac spent forty years unmarried, then was  
 finally content with just one woman, whom he married.

195 Born by God's promise, the son was then asked for by the Giver.  
 He willingly accepts that his father wants to sacrifice him;  
 the young man does not resist the old man in killing him. Though he is  
 twenty-five now and the stronger, he does not obstruct the old man.  
 Because dogma is silent on this matter, it seems like darkness perhaps.  
 200 Could he be overpowered and placed on a pyre against his will?  
 He is a good example of how fitting it is for someone to defer to his  
 parent in the smallest things, for he did not resist his father in death.  
 Jacob, running away, was in service for twenty years,  
 soaked by rain, enduring frost or scorched by heat,  
 205 so that the race of Adam does not consider rustic life odious  
 since the patriarch sweated so much in that state for a long time.  
 When the angel bound his breast with elbows spread,  
 that part of him, located far below his heart, was weak  
 - foul lust frequently stimulates it -  
 210 and burned, delighting him with many compulsions;  
 this proves that this lust grows cold in men associated with the Lord.  
 By running away, he quenched the flame of a brother's envy  
 so that it blazed less fiercely, because fate had exiled him, hated,  
 so that we might mitigate our fired-up fury.  
 215 Anger rages afresh, but often abates in the course of time,  
 as that man proves who later placates his brother.  
 And Joseph, growing up, is the son better than the rest  
 and sweeter to his father, though clearly hated more by them;  
 himself a good man, he endures the envy of his wicked brothers.  
 220 Dreams terrify minds eaten away by hatred;  
 he had been looked up to because he was their leader.  
 He is sold into slavery by a trick, not something the Creator had planned,  
 cunningly trying to overturn the divine plan.  
 He thinks about opposing this, but His order is fulfilled  
 225 and, all the more amazing, he completes what is thought impossible .  
 Therefore, what the Lord cleverly planned is not resisted.  
 A free man undergoes servitude maintaining the highest virtue;  
 the champion of justice is ordered to be a servant to vice;  
 but he spurned the mistress who was willingly a slave of Venus.  
 230 In short, she had cast lustful eyes upon him;  
 he shrank from dishonouring the loveliness offered him  
 (though his allure is the greater because it came from the lovely Creator),  
 avoiding the flesh, lest the flesh be forever mindless.  
 Restored to his position, he is ordered to obey the Lord,  
 235 because there is no power except by the assent of God;  
 but no command can be given which is contrary to justice;  
 so someone ordering unjust acts should be resisted;  
 Joseph may therefore reject what a wicked mistress orders. He teaches us

#### BOOK IV

to bear our yoke, to keep the faith, to resist evil-doers  
240 and that contempt for the Lord is not to be pardoned without some  
punishment – this by tricking his brothers; he forces them to admit  
their crimes so that there may at last be room for forgiveness;  
then he falls on their guilty necks with tears and caresses each one,  
founding the world through many symbols of virtue.  
245 Firstly he mastered his appetite, then he performed other noble deeds.  
Job, the like of whom, it is said, was nowhere on earth,  
completes his duties though bound by no statute;  
he reveals clearly that law is based upon nature.  
At the peak of virtue, he was carried away too high  
250 living among those he calls ostriches and dragons,  
which try to block his way in reality or perhaps figuratively.  
Content with God throughout all this, he is comforted by Him,  
to prove that the world was tamed by God's patience  
when the sinner feels the whips and keeps quiet, so as  
255 not to complain, like the just, and even praises his beater.  
A certain charisma flourished in him to the fullest,  
such that you would see something in him you would think special;  
thus a non-Christian claims for himself evangelical gold;  
this confounds us passive Christians very much.  
260 He is made subject to his handmaids if legal cause demands,  
accustomed to smash the frenzied teeth of predators.  
Why, he is so chaste that he does not think about young women.  
He had made a pact with his eye not to bring hurt to his heart.  
Heart and eye admit their mutual love of each other; for the eye  
265 recalls things seen and the heart demands objects to love through it.  
But Job ties them both up, lest one and the other unite with each other.  
Nevertheless he talks of this great evil fire  
which gnaws at or burns all the seeds of virtue.  
How, I ask, does a heathen react to the same sinful urge?  
270 What does it teach us of importance, if not that  
the Devil's talent, by which he prevails most, is getting worse?  
If he always trembles so greatly at the Master's trumpet (by which nothing is ordained)  
and is wholly in a state of fear even before the Law had forbidden it,  
consider what it means for limbs blessed by holy baptism to drown  
275 in mud after evangelical thunderclaps!  
All his life he lived so that his heart would not blame him;  
but there would be no place for God, if he were an adulterer.  
In face of honest deeds of duty, he was afraid to the point of panic  
that God might see that people would reject these fine things,  
280 and that some just people might tremble at just deeds.  
God sent these prophets and more such at various times,  
to make future generations aware of these examples.

Seeing where people's judgement would lead,  
 He gave them prophets to be shepherds of the holy flocks,  
 285 to prevent unchecked impiety from becoming more puffed up  
 if a carnal nobility should establish the origins of law  
 or determine the first formations of an honest life. Therefore  
 it is a peasant throng instead that teaches us the path of salvation;  
 however many kings there were, they admit that they were lacking.  
 290 Thus were races born of faith rather than of seed,  
 by shining bright not for their neighbours so much as for future generations;  
 for as a planted root grows up and down,  
 producing beautiful things above ground and ugly below,  
 thus they carried ideas not so much for now as for the future;  
 295 their effect is worthless for the present but wonderful for the future.  
 Thus they run through the ages, as stars through the zones of  
 Heaven, leading exemplary lives in the dry tinder of nations  
 to set them on fire with their sparks.

The law of nature, supported by the help of morals within them,  
 300 had grown spontaneously among good people by healthy custom.  
 When it inspired the rest, who were encouraged by written law also,  
 these two types of law influenced their deeds as early as possible:  
 in order not to impose on someone something one does not want,  
 creating for one's fellow what one really wants for oneself.  
 305 Robust law grew strong amongst them over many years  
 and conversely grew weak among reprobates, then gradually cold,  
 and has now begun to lose its strength completely.  
 As evening gradually yields to the coming night,  
 so the light of justice is repelled by the night of guilt,  
 310 saddening a few, as many as were lovers of piety.  
 For although the stars fill the Heavens, night besets the earth,  
 and although such prophets shine through their dutiful work,  
 they were not able to convert embittered minds.  
 A denser cloud of impiety has gradually enveloped the world  
 315 and has not kept a place for justice anywhere,  
 just as the night sky – darkened by dense mists  
 and obscured by cloud masses, turns pitch black  
 so that scarcely any ray of virtue may shine through it,  
 nor may the splendour of light penetrate the innermost heart.  
 320 And yet the examples of our forefathers are of benefit to some.  
 Though stars often shine here and there among the clouds,  
 and radiant stars appear as if through a skylight,  
 thus virtue, through those whom restraining grace adorned,  
 has made the shadows of perfidy grow somewhat more dispersed.  
 325 The earth therefore has as many holy ones as Heaven has stars,  
 prophets who, by the example of their works, light those who follow.

But more people are everywhere rejecting the worship of justice.  
 As a pearl is rarely seen in thick sand,  
 rare is the sight of the good in a heap of the depraved.  
 330       God therefore, being ever mindful of His duty,  
 when He sees men tearing up natural law,  
 considers, recollects and then obstructs those with a death-wish.  
 Though they may flee from Him and prefer to die, He wants to  
 counter the poison of their guilt with the antidote of discipline.  
 335       He promulgates law which threatens the foolish with torments,  
 in order to check brutish minds with the whip, at the least.  
 Moses the Law-giver, sent as the first faithful scribe,  
 brought forth what are the first principles;  
 he was the first to set out doctrines in writing. Humans had not  
 340       existed at the time when these things which Moses relates had happened.  
 That power, which natural law induces in the people of earth, which  
 orders what they each will want for themselves, as another would wish,  
 and, having a sense of shame, wants to be openly decent and honest,  
 became gradually suppressed and weakened through depraved use.  
 345       This power revives it, stimulated with legal commands,  
 and brings back God's word, as if to people very far away now,  
 and the Epistle tells those distant ones what He orders.  
 He spoke long and fully through the personae of the prophets,  
 speaking as if to neighbours and close bystanders,  
 350       producing sealed documents as if for those far away.  
 Not in a physical way, but in a cerebral way,  
 everyone is either far from, or close to, the Lord.  
 Therefore, whomever impiety relegates further from Him  
 these He hails with enigmas sent in sealed writings.  
 355       However, there is no need to break the impressed seal,  
 for that people carries the dogma concealed in the symbolic images  
 which He gave to the Church; although not knowing the cause,  
 the unwitting carrier, Judea, brings these things to the nations  
 and carries messages harmful to itself, just like Uriah.  
 360       He who opens the seven seals reveals these things.  
 He unseals them for the meek, but they stay shut for the arrogant.  
       This revealed sins but did not remove them.  
 He signals the mysteries of the faith in symbolic ritual;  
 He wants them to erase whatever sin there is.  
 365       When this woke their natural slumber from its age-old torpor,  
 it made many grow warm again for years,  
 as it was full of great enthusiasm and decent habit.  
 This man Moses, destined to be the great leader of a great people,  
 and going to work great miracles, renowned for centuries,  
 370       takes up his sublime throne over the flock which he feeds.

Ah! God, seeing lofty things from afar, raises him on high,  
calls him out of the depth; the poor man rises from the excrement!

First under chieftains, then kings, with an scattering of prophets,  
that people ran its mortal course.

375 And a ruler was found by Samuel, sworn to a leaderless people.  
He shone with God's love –this virtue more than any other–  
arguing for the bad king and his protesting battalions,  
showing that it is a great evil not to love one's enemy.

King David, fleeing though innocent, driven out by his enemies,  
380 was taking the easy path in his crisis.  
But the boy, chosen to rule because of his divine roots,  
was soon no longer in exile, though did not want to assume the throne.  
Instead he returned to his folds, feeding his sheep according to custom  
and slaughtered fierce bears and lions

385 and with the virtue of faith he defeated a huge giant.  
Trained by many tribulations and dangers,  
scarcely yet grown up, he took the throne and ruled.  
Through it all, he remains humble and lowly in his own eyes;  
he does not recall the lofty triumphs which he often won,  
390 because God had ordered him to be anointed by his rejected brothers.  
He remains humble from boyhood to saintly old age;  
he does not repay evil deeds, but repaid hatred with friendly love.  
In noble manner, he increased reverence for the ancient Law.  
Full of God-given talent, he benefited the world in all manner of ways.

395 He gave real hope of forgiveness by supporting the fallen,  
when the peak of his kingship had finally earned him praise,  
weaving together many legal precepts during his reign.  
He had been an exile with no auspicious expectation;  
he had been troubled, but could now have peace to the full.  
400 How mixed with earthly dangers is prosperity!

It is clear that he then began to embrace foul sin.  
For a volcano burned him with such a great passion for love-making  
that he seized for himself a companion by slaying her husband;  
without his usual enemy in battle, he is captured by a fiercer one.

405 Born into the privileged classes, his sin would have exiled him  
had not the old whip been quick to punish him and had not  
magisterial strictness brought him back in line with a beating.  
But later he arose and reassumed divine favour,  
given that Christ, every goodness, would be descended from him.

410 For it is agreed that every rank has its own mentors,  
through imitation of whom everyone may behave well;  
Prince David therefore sets nobles the standards for excellence!  
Elijah controlled the skies, controlling the uncontrollable,  
where unknown elements buffet unwieldy throngs,



415 elements which refuse to be controlled by evil blasphemers.  
 Whenever he wanted, he made the skies snow through force of prayer.  
 However, to tell his story, a little woman terrifies him,  
 forces him to take flight and undergo the dangers of begging.  
 A bit of meat is given to him, provided by ministering ravens,  
 420 yet later only bread is provided by the service of an angel.  
 An angelic servant is provisioned with bread to eat,  
 but lowly ravens provide meat – I don't know why;  
 in such a holy meal there was lacking a drink;  
 having eaten the bread, he survives and,  
 425 consuming lamp-oil, he stays healthy for forty days,  
 showing that a lean diet is better for health.  
 That holy generation produced many prophets,  
 as noted in the faithful relation of sacred history,  
 though more in this category have been omitted.  
 430 History recalls only as many as it is necessary to,  
 adding up a great number of creators of the faith  
 whose various dogmas found the pillar of the Church.  
 The line of prophets continued thereafter one by one.  
 Each in his time shone for duty done.  
 435 As the radiant stars adorn the face of the sky,  
 making dark night glimmer with their comings and goings,  
 as it is possible for stars to pour forth light,  
 just as the sun itself shines, which shines everywhere on its own,  
 from the reflection of which shine the rest of the stars,  
 440 thus the Provider prepared these from the start of the world,  
 so that each in its turn illuminated the abyss of crimes.  
 A sense of duty therefore shines within those men, our Fathers.  
 Sin began to disappear, justice and morality gradually to rise again,  
 the long-scorned worship of justice to grow strong again,  
 445 faith long weakened to regain its strength,  
 and goodwill to be induced again by force of nature.  
 As a ship navigates across the Aegean guided by the stars  
 and the sailor steers familiar routes through unknown wastes,  
 thus these men are leaders of righteousness, advising those who follow,  
 450 and a beacon to guide our steps.  
 God therefore gave us prophets to set standards for the faithful,  
 and to adorn the face of the earth with a ray of virtue.  
 These, by their coming and going, adorned earth for so long,  
 as the stars do the sky, until the real Sun arrived,  
 455 so that the dim dawn might turn into full-blown day  
 and the shining lighthouse of justice might gleam everywhere.  
 Stars twinkle with this light, the just with that light.  
 These, although full of light, cannot blot out the night;

but the Sun is this powerful, scattering its golden rays everywhere;  
 460 the Sun is so powerful that it lights up the darkness of black Hell,  
 alone able to drive off the night of crimes.  
 All who partake of His gift He has made holy;  
 it is not possible for anyone to shine by one's own lantern,  
 but one takes a free ticket to glory, for which one may willingly pay back.  
 465 Any one of them may be helpful in ability, or duty done,  
 or beneficial not just to himself but to comrades.  
 But though they shine, though they gleam with sunlight,  
 none of the prophets, however, could change the world  
 or could dispel the grim shadows of perfidy.  
 470 The evil cohort, of course, flooding in like a whirlpool,  
 as black night prevails over the stars with its interposed clouds,  
 was gradually making the rays of virtue dim,  
 weakening the Law, lessening the force of custom,  
 preferring to change Heaven's law by people's surrender.  
 475 The conflict between day and night is seen at dusk,  
 when the world is everywhere growing dark at day's decline.  
 The action of the depraved to smother the work of the holy  
 had spread their arrogant rule through all corners of the world,  
 and though written law, good and sacred, promotes wholesomeness,  
 480 and though it is natural, it nevertheless fell into decline, neglected by them.  
 For although the great crash of thunder and lightning's fire  
 deliver portents, although there was respect for the prophets,  
 shining with symbolic rituals, laden with images,  
 and although even the evil people knew that these were Heaven-sent,  
 485 they were not afraid to subordinate this to the teaching of mortals  
 who were unable to detect any symbolic meaning in them.  
 For the Creator had made it different from gentile ritual:  
 a people unholy with demons, alas, had made His gifts sacred,  
 although it prefers, by complaining, odious things to become popular;  
 490 yet if you look closely, all of them are full of figurative images,  
 suitable for the ministry which the faithful celebrate world-wide.  
 Each of the prophets in his own age insisted on correcting this  
 or perhaps a good king (often they had been profane)  
 striving to organise a return to worship.  
 495 But the corrupt people go backwards, prone to worse.  
 Scorning and abandoning their Maker, the people seek idols again  
 . . . . . *<line missing in manuscript>* . . . . .  
 not paying attention to the words of the prophets,  
 scorning the orders which prophets were wont to instill in them,  
 500 dying a grim death because they wanted to give themselves life  
 and obsessively devoted to profane augury and groves.

The prophets therefore see that the Law itself is despised

and that it could not convert that one people  
 though it had been given an angelic mission from Heaven  
 505 with fire-belching clouds and the shuddering crash of thunder,  
 and see that, as a result, no one may fully escape from sin  
 and that no one can be brought to the perfect state.  
 Indeed, nobody is so clean in heart, mouth or hand  
 that the Prince of the world does not obstruct him in many ways.  
 510 For anybody, even the noble, may be damaged from birth  
 since everybody, even though lofty, was born of the transfer of guilt.  
 The wild race of Adam wants to trust none but themselves, and  
 would consider no one, not even a pure man, worthy of reverence.  
 Thus also the Jewish people resist Moses;  
 515 neither his own sister nor brother listened enough to him;  
 the world therefore considered no one to be so blessed,  
 none to be clean either in thought or deed.  
 No prophet therefore was created to be a popular choice,  
 even though honoured with praises and with an exalted title,  
 520 with the wild race of Adam subservient to him  
 or obeying the word of a very lofty one,  
 since no one is good, except He who alone creates everything.  
 Drawing back from those things, they began to lose confidence in  
 the prophets, adding that they never had placed any hope in them,  
 525 that it was something far different which the world needed,  
 that prophets on a mission did not want to strive for such things,  
 which none could bring to full effect.  
 They had preferred to sit and weep at the river of Babylon  
 rather than to play a divine hymn, and did not want  
 530 organ music to echo through the willows of the brook.  
 Moses therefore pretends that he is slow of speech and begs:  
 “Do not send me, I pray, but Him whom you are going to send,  
 who by His will makes the tongue-tied and the brutish eloquent”;  
 The pagan may listen to him but the Hebrew does not obey!  
 535 Another one says “I am a child and don’t know how to speak”,  
 and tries to prove his point with a triple “Ah”.  
 He takes flight, another one denies he is a prophet,  
 saying “Send me” and offers himself to the heathens,  
 knowing that the Church will come about from such.  
 540 They teach many things on which their hope depends,  
 hope at which they gaze transfixed, gaining confidence from its gift.  
 For hope of salvation alone had been their means of communicating,  
 for the Father had promised this in words and images.  
 Therefore they see that it could not be done by any  
 545 who had been branded by their own backgrounds or deeds,  
 that the world be restored to the life taken away

or that Death, handled by the One, lose its yoke over the rest.  
 They throw themselves into prayer, their sighs increased by breast-beating  
 and they individually beg for a common justice, as it were,  
 550 recalling their injuries while lying at the feet of the Judge  
 with entreating vows; great emotion produces this,  
 how greatly they love this or what they murmur when crying,  
 their lamentation unfolding in sorrowful words.  
 For they see the whole human race overcome by vice,  
 555 and nowhere a refuge; they feed on tears as if on bread  
 and spend their days in grief and their years in lamentation,  
 hoping that one thing may remain of their salvation,  
 to be able to mitigate the response of the Judge,  
 if a kneeling confession admits to mountains of sin,  
 560 if presumption of one's merits trusts in no lie.  
 So they blame themselves, admit and beseech Him to be just.

This prophet grieves because impiety tends to blow everyone,  
 pride blows everyone as the wind snatches a leaf,  
 and another laments there is not even one person doing good,  
 565 and that, corrupted by passion, everyone is useless,  
 another because one cannot side with both God and mortals  
 and no one could be a servant of both,  
 for one either pleases Him or He sets one a standard,  
 and one's work should please the Father or reject the world.  
 570 He says "We are whirled around as if full of dizziness  
 and we do not recognise that there is grief amid our tribulations,  
 but conversely rejoice in them as though we are happy.  
 Thus we are without sense, happily tolerating the deplorable".  
 And it makes this pile of grief grow worse  
 575 that none have a care for themselves or prefer the cure,  
 - why, they mock it instead and run away from it, when offered.  
 And what will the doctor do now, spurned by the sick?  
 Who may heal one who challenges the jaws of a shark?

Wisely, they confess their crimes for a fitting judgement,  
 580 so that He may spare those who refuse to spare their own guilt.  
 So they groan, remembering their crimes, confessing to the Lord:  
 "You are our father, for Abraham did not know us.  
 But you rightly abhor base people, being yourself most beautiful.  
 Look upon the outcasts, made into saddles for vices;  
 585 and as if you did not create us and were not our Lord,  
 they thus made themselves the slaves of an alien lord  
 and willingly drive themselves on like abandoned wretches.  
 You are too angry. Alas, what king is worthy to rise up  
 and have the right to restrain you or calm your anger?  
 590 Sin envelopes each of us tightly.

Now only this one thing remains and is left for us: that you  
 may mercifully wish to pardon that which you could punish,  
 for your own name's sake, for praise of which you create  
 everything, - mercy which frankly no one deserves".

- 595        This inspires them and urges them to hope for great things,  
 because the Holy Judge restrains His deserved anger  
 so that not even their guilt may provoke His anger's full force,  
 but may preserve its dignity through many painful times.  
 So they talk of the glory of the Potter in subduing His clay,  
 600        which He puts, wonderfully, first in the order of things  
 as an image of Himself, which He wants to endure for ever  
 and to hold sway over the rest of the creatures in the world.  
 Human beings partially reveal now how great they used to be  
 because, though cast down, they are great in strength, as it were.  
 605        They have much physical power which no beast can match,  
 because, of course, they have limbs equipped for doing tasks.  
 Their mind, uncultured and impaired, can be improved by study,  
 to sharpen its limited vision to comprehend difficult things too.  
 If that mind is so strong now in seeing various things,  
 610        what would it know and be worth if strong and healthy?  
 If the advantages of a life not so worthy appear so great,  
 what would they be if supplied with a calm life? If God supplies  
 such great things to the arrogant, what would He give the innocent?  
 Adam was settled in place in a sacred Paradise,  
 615        when foolishly he desired to overstep the amount given to him  
 and lost what he had, becoming famed as a bed-mate and  
 exposed to vices and troublesome toil.  
 The Judge however did not suffer everything to be taken away:  
 Adam's many sins do not strip him completely of his original gifts.  
 620        For nature protects his ability to procreate:  
 though we are begotten full of corruption and stained with sin,  
 nature nourishes us beneficially with all manner of fuel;  
 a mother's teats flow with milk as long as infancy needs it;  
 and nature continues to give gifts at other points in life.  
 625        The mind, the intellect, and also the five senses start to function;  
 even the world serves human requirements:  
 stars, sea, earth serve various functions,  
 day and night alternate in their turn, competing to refresh us.  
 Who can say how long a life He gives for ingrates to enjoy?  
 630        What would our nature be like if it remained pure?  
 With what great titles and great honours would a man blush  
 if he did not corrupt himself with his degenerate penis?  
 How would he shine if cleaned up, when he can shine through filth?  
           But He would be content to cherish those who run away

635 from Him, if a little care for their own safety remained.  
 He wants to protect this, looking after us with a sense of duty,  
 showing us this by sending holy prophets early on.  
 When however these people prefer to despise recovery,  
 He is tolerant at first and then threatens punishments.  
 640 The world laughs at both responses by hindering holy ministers.  
 Let people weigh up how dutiful God is, how evil the world,  
 how grave their error, how justly the Creator punishes, how He  
 overlooks their evil deeds and how He saves them by beating them.  
 If He made clay devoid of breath come to life,  
 645 if dust were blessed with divine image or appearance,  
 if people were given whatever things are contained in the world,  
 did the Potter deserve that the dust be made equal to Him  
 and should wish to spurn all His orders?  
 He is completely dutiful, and just in a very appropriate way.  
 650 A weighing-scale should balance its two pans  
 so that the heavier weight of one does not overcome the other,  
 merciful forgiveness lightening the pan of justice,  
 the severity of this pan not overcoming the mercy of that one.  
 It therefore befits God to be fair in the performance of His duty.  
 655 In order that kneeling in confession may produce prayers,  
 the Creator did not, it seems, reject sinners by the barrier of merit;  
 His mercy restores the deeds of sinners.  
 Now indeed they have felt the Lord's favour upon them,  
 and hope and belief may grow now in the timid, so that,  
 660 standing before the face of the Judge, however vexed they are,  
 they might dare to request also the great things they want,  
 remembering what He himself had promised them.  
 Likewise He had promised to show Moses everything good.  
 He said "I will not be the one who plants the seeds of sin".  
 665 (The words show that He produces children who are equal,  
 His great mercy restraining His great anger.)  
 "If some olive trees bear a rather modest crop  
 and if blight leaves just one grape in a cluster,  
 whoever does not lose it, may instead say 'It's a blessing!'"  
 670 Thus I separate out the off-cuts of the human race,  
 which may grow to the number of the grains of thirsty sand,  
 from which a mason obtains a fair amount of cement,  
 separate a part of them from the majority of the clay, and set them free,  
 and I preserve them from the great pyre for myself, like a tower,  
 675 and so that I do not lose all of my people from their prayers for me."  
 Many such examples show that He is inclined toward mercy,  
 overcome by a sense of duty to temper His roused anger.  
 The prophets felt this and therefore pray joyfully.

680 Whoever seeks the promised common good,  
 asks for it with onerous vows and deep sobs.  
 They carry concealed in their words and writings the things  
 which the dutiful Father Himself had been wont to promise,  
 and they all tried to reveal them to the destroyed world.  
 But people do not care for a doctor, do not know how to diagnose  
 685 their illness, unaware of the madness which has overtaken them.  
 The Creator may reply to them like His foster children with these words:  
 "I did not create Death nor am I happy that the monster wins:  
 the wickedness of crimes has brought dearth upon the ungodly.  
 Adam was a willing sinner and rightly bound by that covenant,  
 690 under Death's rule because he corrupted himself,  
 as he went astray after some small tidbit.  
 For I exercise the just duty of a judge justly,  
 I cherish justice, I do not abandon the correct path,  
 I repay sinners their due, I do not attack them in anger.  
 695 Rather it is their guilt which makes me turn, though I prefer  
 to spare them if they are willing to restrain themselves.  
 Your guilt may have lasted long, but I do not stay angry forever.  
 People are slaves to sin and have committed it willingly; they fall  
 as a result of their wish, but will not rise quickly as they wished.  
 700 One can sell oneself and have no desire to get free,  
 for slavery weighs upon those who sell themselves into it.  
 Therefore, unless they are redeemed, they remain slaves.  
 Do people fall willingly just to be able to pay off a slave-bond?  
 How I wish that prisoners had some way of escape open to them!  
 705 Whoever exists, who pays the dues of Death,  
 should owe nothing to that tax-collector  
 and One who is without sin should set sinners free!  
 Indeed, no one should blame someone doing what is just,  
 or think me to be harsh if I judge justly!" If the Creator  
 710 did not actually say this, His deeds however have spoken for Him.  
 The suppliant choir of the holy reply to Him as follows:  
 "You are just, o King, and your judgement is also just.  
 Yours is the praise, ours the shame and great confusion,  
 we have no voice, no sense, no chance to open our mouths,  
 715 but we are all confounded like an arrested thief!  
 What could a sinner offer the Almighty in defence?  
 No sinner can ever make a just person, no just person a sinner  
 and no one involved in crime can ever justify the same.  
 Hands which wash off dirt ought to be clean.  
 720 None of us who is free has the power to resist Death,  
 and people cannot unchain not only others, but themselves.  
 We see, as it is possible because you overflow with goodness,

how ungrateful and evil we are in return.  
 O God, if we are therefore unable to offer you anything worthy,  
 725 please do not think this creature alien to you!  
 Look kindly upon us, the work which you the Potter create!  
 We offer just this, which we pray that you notice, this being the  
 only thing we have left to show you which is worthy,  
 that your creation may please you, though its action displeases,  
 730 or that the pot's deeds may be pleasing in the eyes of the Potter.  
 We know that no salvation for us can come from ourselves,  
 and that you are dutiful and Almighty,  
 the Supreme Good, all powerful and bound by no law;  
 for you make everything in Heaven, on sea and land, as you wish,  
 735 and you desire our cure a thousand times more than we do.  
 For, being divine, you dutifully have mercy upon human deeds  
 and hate none of them, but think they should be supported,  
 you, o God! What then remains for you but to spare your creatures?  
 O Thou! Spare your anger, calm your rage, though it is deserved,  
 740 look at the great riches which fill your grace!  
 For although evil is enormous and sin has made huge heaps  
 and crimes have made lofty mountains,  
 it is a short-lived accumulation, very poor and weak,  
 o King, compared with the treasure house of your great goodness,  
 745 and as a tiny drop in the vast ocean  
 and as a thin little cloud evaporating in the fire-belching sun  
 (for you say: "I shall destroy evil for my sake like a cloud").  
 Thus, dutiful King, may you destroy great sin!  
 Your peace and spiritual feeling casts out all sins.  
 750 Though you are also terrible, as we deserve, in your decisions,  
 yet you call us with the comforting words "My plan is for peace".  
 This may persuade the hateful ones to hope for kindness;  
 for your sense of duty, not knowing the outcome, is greater than their guilt.  
 Where are your guts and zeal?  
 755 Do you spurn this work which you wanted to endure forever,  
 and which you dignified with your own image?  
 Lo, we are as nothing, yet you have given us eternal life,  
 because, as nothing, we are clear that you are true.  
 You had foreknowledge that humans would fall into death  
 760 because of sin, but mighty grace foreknew also of their recovery.  
 Mercifully fill your work with what you hold in your heart,  
 revealing what your majesty has sanctified for our peace!  
 Look: you are the Father, you may consider that we are mud;  
 let not, Father, your great indignation go on raging!  
 765 You are great, for you spare the unrighteous, merciful to forgive;  
 you say this about yourself, you urge us to hope for this.



BOOK IV

O would that you might now, now, burst forth from the skies,  
dutiful King, to show mercy and pity for the wretched earth!  
As you descend the slopes from Heaven to touch the mountain-tops,  
770 hard hearts will melt at the sight of your countenance;  
and let your hand which made the earth be sent down  
from Heaven to reform what it has made!  
All is possible for the Supremely Good and Almighty;  
we seek your goodwill, we do not doubt your power.  
775 If you want to save us, there is no difficulty to hinder you;  
as you created everything, so you must wish it to last forever.  
For who will be the one you seek, just and free from sin,  
to release those in chains, rightly, deservedly, freely,  
and willingly to grant them redemption,  
780 when there is no one good except you alone, good King,  
when sacrifices themselves are not enough to help the saintly,  
and justice is like filthy menstrual rags?  
Nowhere, then, is there a way out for those shut in on all sides,  
unless you make them free from the squalor of sin, and justly  
785 and freely want to devote yourself to the redemption of sinners.”  
Therefore that suppliant choir of the holy asks this of God;  
with voice and binding vow, it resounds in Heavenly ears  
- the greater the love, the louder the sound -  
that He is Master of what is the pinnacle of salvation.  
790 Time separates them, but one love unites them,  
past, present and future attending upon Him.  
They call on Him in unison, as they pray to Him as one,  
and ask that He show the same goodness and equal concern for them.  
God then sees that everything is surrounded by great danger;  
795 but that creative hand is not however surrounded,  
for it could produce two types of matter from nothing  
- one being matter which can reproduce, the other unable to -  
and had brought forth species to fill Heaven and earth  
and He places humans at the head of things which reproduce,  
800 as He wants them to have eternal happiness.  
He is upset that they have instead earned eternal ruin,  
because nowhere is recovery open to them, shut in on all sides.  
The Fount and Origin of goodness, flowing with an everlasting  
sense of duty, special and unique in His eternal mercy,  
805 His hand does not hold back nor is His ear deaf  
to stop Him saving them or hearing the prayers of suppliants.  
He does not want to be angry perpetually nor forever  
to get revenge upon us according to our sins,  
but rather, to give us a chance to fear Him,  
810 He looks down from Heaven and revisits the earth from above.

He does not close His sacred heart to suppliant vows now,  
but is inclined to peace, preferring to soften what is rigid.

Therefore, though He sees the world piling up sin,  
He is considering how to restore salvation to runaways,  
815 thinking of the riches of His own goodness and contemplating  
whether He should weigh the huge pile of their crimes;  
He is disposed to forgiveness and suppresses His roused anger.  
He who cursed the earth, finally blesses it,  
all indignation ceasing and sins glossed over  
820 and He dutifully visits those He sees abandoned by Him.  
Now He decides to reveal to the world the eternal secret,  
the plan for peace which He had once sealed up,  
which has mystified our forefathers since the world's beginning.

But what? Duty never deserts justice.  
825 What will the one be if not supported by the other?  
They are like comrades to each other: the Calculator throned on high  
has two pans on his scales in which to weigh the deeds of men.  
One pan however rises, always putting piety uppermost.  
This therefore is uppermost if He has been merciful.  
830 He who founded the world will willingly save it,  
and will create what we need for the glory of His own name's sake,  
and, because His piety is strong, not because of our guilt,  
He may bring gifts to a world which does not want or deserve them.  
May the dutiful Potter therefore consider this and review it  
835 and hold on to His plan for creation: He had seen  
it collapse of its own accord and decided to repair it for free.  
The sinner is not obstructive, nor an enemy, to the eternal plan.

Then He decides that His work on earth is wonderful to relate.  
For the Father's handiwork - His offspring, wisdom, virtue,  
840 goodness which is as great as His great power -  
is grieved that His sublime work has been reduced to nothing.  
His rich treasure stores, amassed by eternal grace,  
riches which no sin may exhaust,  
all manner of peace which exceeds all understanding,  
845 these He thinks those wretches deserve, and He mitigates His anger.

When the whirlpool of sin was drowning all human beings  
and harsh impiety with excessively profane behaviour  
was overwhelming the whole world, blazing vigorously,  
the world never abounded in the treasures of His goodness,  
850 but though made richer by this gift, was made poorer by sin.  
Not through virtue alone, however, but through reason  
He wants to overcome and save the enemy, dutifully and justly.  
As is manifestly obvious, He does not use force  
so much as justice, because He pays a ransom for the prisoner.

## BOOK IV

855    My pen has thus far wandered freely in its humble work;  
         but the papers to be bound together mount too high.  
         Let my weary Muse rest awhile to undertake this!

**Book 5**Preface

Although my pen has covered men  
 great and pure, and their deeds,  
 and could glide along like a skiff  
 plying a tranquil river

- 5 the river suddenly rises and the water  
 lifts up the boat, threatening death:  
 so this composition, suddenly becoming grim,  
 terrifies and oppresses me.

- 10 What my simple poem is now coining  
 one would think a sort of game; but it is important  
 that some structure connect it, as the vine provides  
 support for the grape and the willow for the olive.

- The Lord came down to earth from Heaven,  
 hears our cries, sees our toil,  
 15 binds the cruel tyrant of Egypt  
 and rescues His people.

- Because He supports the wretched, some people burn  
 to speak in praise of Him, because He is the dutiful  
 Redeemer, humble indeed but also mighty,  
 20 as Paul trembles to say.

Moses stutters and hides his face,  
 another prophet says he cannot speak,  
 running away from such a great duty. What will he  
 rightly produce from that, if far away?

- 25 Emmanuel gave the mute the power to speak;  
 may He who once gave power of speech to Saul  
 also give it to the unworthy, so that a wretch (like me)  
 may sing something sacred now!

Meanwhile the era about which Daniel's trumpet resounds  
 and the days of the weeks of which he sang were over,  
 and the sacred line of prophets, full of symbolic words,

## BOOK V

had begun to be filled. It is clear that all things have their time;  
5 Scripture admits allotting a time to each thing:  
all things have a time, but a time does not have all things.  
Therefore the completion of an era duly proves the case  
that the Almighty is following the plan He once decided upon in Heaven,  
and the faithful throng marvel at Him with astonished hearts,  
10 cleansed by purity of faith and simplicity of action,  
who deserved to know a cause so great in spirit,  
trusting that they can escape from their long exile.  
Who will raise the joyful cry of that people's triumph?

Looking upon both ancient and recent times as the present,  
15 the King, who by His intervention led to our salvation,  
which He foreknew would take place on the earth,  
is now God made human and, in the evening of the world, He goes out  
and performs that work by which the face of the earth will be renewed.  
This work is not His own, but rather is foreign to Him;  
20 but yet He performs it as His own, thus undertaking the foreign;  
it is the Lord's own nature to save, and suffering is alien to Him.  
God therefore – He who created everything – is born and created,  
and He who made the world exist, is made and exists.  
While the rules of a midnight curfew were in force for all,  
25 they were astonished to see the arrival of the King of kings,  
and while the night was in mid course, as Scripture says,  
there suddenly came the voice of the Almighty from His seat on high  
and it gave light to drive away the pitch-black shadows.

In the beginning the Word was with the Father;  
30 the Father is the beginning (the Son is also the Word)  
before time was created, all things being created by Him;  
the Son is in the Father, and one is held within the other.  
True faith demands that we understand two persons  
in one Being, which is the only thing worth understanding,  
35 that He is connected to the Father as a Son and to us by His body,  
believing as we will that He is covered by a veil of flesh!  
The almighty Word of the Almighty Father comes down from  
His Heavenly seat to revisit the earth  
which He calls back from behind as it runs away, admonishing it,  
40 as if looking for a lost coin in this valley or seeking a lost sheep  
in the lofty mountains, leaving the other ninety behind.  
It is clear, then, that the world, knowing that it is loved,  
may with that knowledge run back to its Creator for His blessing.

That age when the sceptre held power in Judah has gone,  
45 power which the high priest Jacob prophesied would last until  
there comes One who had to be sent, for whom every people longs.  
False Herod rules Israel, the first to try such a thing,

not as a king but more in the manner of a tyrant.  
 That nation should have been able to tell the time of His coming  
 50 from a sign given by a prophetic tongue,  
 had it not preferred to close its eyes through perfidy of heart.  
 God became man, but from a virgin's womb, as is fitting,  
 so that His birth should transcend ordinary human birth.  
 If His clemency upheld human laws,  
 55 whatever He did as a human shone with distinction.  
 He reconciles all things in one person, different to us because  
 He deigns to take as His real form that of a slave;  
 in His every deed, He stands out above all other mortals;  
 He was born to a plan, which Job proves not to know,  
 60 He alone, born where and when He wants and without precedent.  
 Nourished by a virgin's breast, He is totally without sin.  
 The Sun allowed his own sunset to overcome Him,  
 willingly laying down His life, which He soon resumed at will;  
 in death, He killed Death and chewed up Hell;  
 65 the former He kills totally, the latter He disembowels partially.  
 He rescued his followers from Hell, rightly abandoning the evil ones.  
 The equal of His Father in hand, word, wisdom and virtue,  
 to which Job thinks pure gold cannot compare,  
 wisdom which neither Hell nor the depths know.  
 70 When He preached, revealing how He excels in spirit,  
 and no less when dying, He teaches us  
 that He should not be compared to any of the prophets,  
 although He says that He is imitated in their handiwork.  
 He is a common good by whose fountain they are watered,  
 75 since anyone may be trained by it in words and deeds.  
 All these centuries they clamour for Him, making vows,  
 that He may come to redeem their end.  
 Behold now, all ye who are free from the drowsiness of sleep,  
 the splendid light which spreads over the world!  
 80 Open your minds' eyes, long closed!  
 Whoever you are, cast off now the darkness of faint heart!  
 Lo, a new offspring is visiting earth from the sky!  
 Anyone with a sense of wisdom may – it is possible – understand this:  
 what His great sense of duty or worthiness is,  
 85 who is coming or when, the sort of people He seeks or how dutifully!  
 Let Adam recognise the Lord he had seen in Paradise!  
 When he was well, he saw Him, but could not bear Him when he was ill.  
 But look, He conceals His true form so that he can see Him,  
 not keeping His real appearance but hiding His real glory;  
 90 He comes reviled, for indeed He is looking for the reviled;  
 He made Himself like electrum in order to free the world;

## BOOK V

God headed for the earth so that mortals may climb to the stars.  
The compassionate Samaritan tended the wound of one half dead;  
a Levite priest, going along this same road, did nothing  
95 of merit for the wounded man; they both were close neighbours;  
but it was that Samaritan, travelling on his own,  
who alone through his virtue heals him and them.  
Good News! Adam, in need of redemption, sees his King in one of them:  
let him marvel, praise, be stunned, venerate, worship,  
100 rejoice, exalt, be happy and of good cheer in his triumph!  
For He who walks on high on the wings of the winds,  
whom neither the heights of the sky nor the depths of the abyss  
can encompass, nor the East, the rainy West or the northern regions,  
and who is not fully detected by any sense of the living,  
105 and on whom the angelic cohorts thirst to look,  
whom only the Father and the Holy Ghost know completely,  
- for nothing in the whole of creation knows Him completely -  
He came into human view under a covering of flesh  
and makes Himself visible to the holy, nay to the evil ones too!  
110 He is shut in a narrow stall and in His mother's womb,  
He who made everything, He who flies around and fills the skies,  
and who adorns, clothes and decorates things with His gifts.  
He who has ceased to sleep in Heaven, or to sing of its harmony,  
in whom the morning stars rejoice with eternal praise,  
115 now wails in a manger in which cattle are fed,  
though foxes have their dens and birds their nests.  
He thus undertook to make His own a task which was alien,  
undertaking this because He is bound by love of us!  
Suddenly, like a lantern happening to shine in black darkness,  
120 effortlessly making grim night vanish,  
undimmed, spreading its bright light everywhere,  
He produces the colours which all things have,  
and silences the serpent hissing in the night-time,  
a true, shining Eli set in our flesh,  
125 covered by a light cloud, not spattered with guilt,  
entering Egypt which is called the earth's darkness,  
thus He penetrates the chaos and dark recesses of the mind,  
and all His radiance puts to flight the night of error;  
and this radiance shows up minds with the colours of perfidy  
130 and those whose hearts hide the faith,  
and forced the tongue of the Egyptian sea to be silent .  
When the prophets noted down the message of the Word,  
preceding the true Sun like a twinkling star,  
John became more famous than the rest, being closer to Him.  
135 As the morning star, high in the sky, is a harbinger for the sun,

so this man, last of the prophets, is a witness to Christ's coming,  
 becoming the more splendid the closer he is to Him.  
 Striking sleeping eyes, he makes them awake,  
 because his star shines brighter among the stars;  
 140 moreover, this star casts a shadow where there is usually none,  
 so that its appearance was able to be a symbol for John:  
 there are many who thought that John himself was the eternal Sun.  
 As the morning star makes ploughmen leave their beds  
 (they all think it is dawn or soon will be;  
 145 they go to feed the animals and do the work to be done pre-dawn;  
 they wash their faces and shake off idle sleep;  
 arriving for work, they all are ready for their various jobs),  
 so this rouses unseeing minds, as if sleepy from a night of crime,  
 and by its quick motion makes them awake,  
 150 so that they learn to lean towards the true light.  
 As its splendour shines through the hearts of the people,  
 it opens their mind's eye with a jolt.  
 The instinct of the eye's pupil is to want to blink;  
 shaded, it opens to the light, but it closes when exposed to it;  
 155 however, when the eye is weary, it immediately responds with  
 opened lids if there is a light shining close to it,  
 eyelids which try to focus their gaze upon it, however poorly;  
 but the light which made them open, forces them to close.  
 Sometimes they open thus, sometimes they close  
 160 and eventually they get used to looking at the flashing rays,  
 and the pupil, restored, seeks what it had at first shunned.  
 The human race is blind concerning the transfer of merit:  
 it no longer knows how to look upon a light from outside  
 which shines inside; thus it does not know itself and its inner soul.  
 165 But the dutiful Judge, ever ready to forgive,  
 has not allowed our mental spark to grow completely dim.  
 For, although blows were landed, the fierce robbers cannot  
 kill the one they captured in the Jericho valley.  
 Therefore He helps him to be able to feel the light upon him  
 170 and his doomed eyes to get used to loving the idea of being saved.  
 When that last morning star shone among the other stars,  
 with some men strangely mistaken in thinking that he was Christ,  
 some good however came of it, because, by gazing at his lamp,  
 they were made somehow to gaze assiduously at the Sun Himself.  
 175 For when His brilliance suddenly shone forth,  
 the morning star now appears to have a very small lamp;  
 it is the true Sun instead which attracts all faces toward it  
 with a certain power; the world began to understand its Potter  
 and to turn from a small light to the greatest one,



180 so that no one now cares about that former light-bearer.

Though he is called an angel and more than a prophet  
and inferior to no one born of congress with a woman  
and anointed with divine spirit in his mother's womb,  
he denies this, rejects this, forbids all thought of it,  
185 bans it, showing the people what they ought to believe:  
the pot dare not show any connection to God the Creator,  
nor a slave to his lord, nor the clay to the Potter,  
not even though he is a pure man excelling in honours,  
born of a virgin mother, rich in potent virtue,  
190 born with wondrous omens and full of life,  
with fully everlasting deity – a virgin's offspring.  
Not only does he not think himself equal, but also unworthy  
to carry His shoes or untie their laces.

He claims however to be a loyal friend of the Promised One,  
195 promised to be a blazing, shining lantern for Him.

The sun may be a symbolic image for Christ  
and the stars symbolic of these holy men whom Christ sent.  
He, when present, eclipses the stars which He lit up when absent:  
When Christ arrived, no one looked for prophets.

200 The stars, being weak, cannot drive away the night:  
only the true Sun was able to banish perfidy;  
He put to flight, through the splendour of faith, slothful  
darkness, long concealed, and the chaos of perfidy.  
This new dawn forces sleepy-heads to abandon their beds,  
205 and likewise, in His sunshine, the guilty abandon their dreams.  
One who closes his mind's eye in such a bright light,  
is not asleep but rather is thought to be dead:  
He rouses the sons of Abraham and makes them His rocks.

The Sun makes all things show their colours:  
210 He induces aspirations which are like certain colours  
and reveals each person's mental colour, as it were,  
while teaching us what each one's attitude or will is.  
For He came as wondrous scales to weigh merit,  
so that many people fall who were thought to be stable,  
215 and others who were thought to be nothing rise up,  
so that the blind can see and the deaf hear.

For good nature allots each person a good "colour";  
but lack of "colour" produces certain lax attitudes;  
for these people, vice makes their colour degenerate.  
220 Hence the words of the prophet "Where has (thy) excellent colour gone?"

The visible sun scatters its golden rays everywhere;  
but it penetrates no house unless a vent opens up:  
Christ in His wisdom scatters His light everywhere;

but a closed mind, devoted to evil, shuts itself to the light,  
 225 and, like a house's cellar, is penetrated by no ray of light,  
 which would however shine in if some passage were open.  
 Whoever you are, therefore, unlock the doors of your heart  
 and do not prohibit the light which freely wants to enter!  
 For if it tried to take itself away, it would be in demand;  
 230 but as it comes willingly, consider what it is to reject it!  
 Behold, it knocks at the doors of the heart, inviting us to have dinner,  
 and when spurned, it will lament the reasons for its rejection.

He therefore, arising, as the Father had once promised,  
 alone outshone and repelled the darkness of Hell.  
 235 But though He surpasses the prophets, doing greater deeds,  
 which He fills with His own virtue, may He rebuke the stars,  
 for neither the force of the stars nor the light of the moon help Him  
 even though He performed things which prove He is God.  
 The insane clay of the arrogant cast a veil over Him, and do not believe  
 240 Him to be the Sun, because a small cloud covered Him,  
 although they could see Him shining beneath the cloud;  
 but seeing Him covered by the body, they say He is not God,  
 and think it all worthless because they do not find Him arrogant,  
 like the servant of a nobleman who sees everything to be sublime!  
 245 They suppress their mental sight behind pride-swollen eye-lids  
 like a servant-girl, so that they cannot recognise the humble Potter,  
 not understanding and blind to the merit of the wise plan by which  
 the King, who does lofty deeds, has meekly done humble ones,  
 and does whatever they require in Heaven and on earth,  
 250 so that the meek are given access to the life above.

Because the King came down from on high, and was despised,  
 the stupid ones laugh at Him, not recognising the truth,  
 as if their delusion is wiser than the Potter Himself,  
 giving their advice to Him whose wisdom founded the world.  
 255 Will a puny little man therefore teach Him?  
 And as for the arrogant who are intolerant of humble sorts,  
 let them be a little more tolerant: for they will see Him awesome  
 in majesty and more than anyone will be able to bear,  
 when they will see thrones panicking, no matter how secure,  
 260 and will follow their arrogant king into Hell  
 and the humble King will be glory everlasting for the meek!  
 Therefore that arrogant lot is left to its darkness,  
 and pleasant medication is supplied to the meek of the faith.

Moreover, as for the mission which behoved Him to visit  
 265 the wretched world as a human being and to heal it,  
 pure faith understands this and, through faith, so do the faithful.  
 Faith enjoys something great which it alone deserves to know.

## BOOK V

In Paradise, Satan made Adam become arrogant, so that,  
though standing blessed in his condition, he fell, being full of pride;  
270 therefore, while arrogance was able in that place to snare the fool first,  
it spreads through him to all the rest of us.  
This, I expound, diffuses its poison everywhere;  
it is like a queen who subjugates the world to her counsellor's vices.  
The Lord, in order to tear down her citadel,  
275 get rid of her empire, deflate her arrogance,  
gave us many mystic examples through the prophets of old,  
by which He may teach people not to be arrogant.  
In those days, however, few accepted these examples with meek heart  
and none of the prophets could root out this disease,  
280 because the race of Adam, blinded by the ancient stain of sin,  
could not see the wound, nor sought the aid of salvation.  
Cataracts clouded their vision, arrogance their minds;  
the more each grows, the more each blinds what it encounters.  
One who is arrogant is blind, and deserves to become lost,  
285 and should follow by touch a humble person who can see.  
Standing in the light, one can see if there is any dirt on oneself;  
but in darkness, one does not know how to see one's filth.  
Light closely attends the humble, but a fog envelopes the proud.  
One bathed in light, therefore, sees by it reason to be afraid, and  
290 so remains humble, even though shining with virtue, whereas  
the arrogant one, though worse, is usually confident of improving,  
not knowing the level of his uncleanness because of his blindness.  
Moreover, the censure of the Almighty always stands in the way  
of the proud and resists them, so Holy Scripture says,  
295 and His sword quenches itself in the very Heavens,  
striking even the angelic hosts if they become arrogant.  
Grace attaches itself to the meek who spurn such things.  
When therefore the false king subjugated the world  
and a frenetic whirl spun round all the crazy ones,  
300 so that their wild race rejected the prophets, men of purity,  
God's sense of duty never grew weary nor was withdrawn,  
in a covenant under which His clemency aids the wretched,  
and He takes care of a world which has been subjected to evil.  
Thus the reality of His wise plan is understood:  
305 that it is something new, wonderful, sublime and Heavenly,  
that the ruler of Olympus appears in the guise of a slave,  
a divine human who should be worshipped by the world as God,  
while He teaches us externally to fill our minds internally,  
and whose command no one has dared to scorn,  
310 knowing that He, though human, is King over everything.  
Let earth and dust learn to curb their pride,

so that, when the meek Christ has performed His humble deeds,  
the world will base its heart's belief on Him; for the world  
could change its belief using the same power it used to form it.

315 Yet while He endured what was necessary for our salvation  
(deeds which are human or natural in appearance,  
showing us that He assumed our limbs on our behalf),  
arrogant hearts still reject His Heavenly mission.  
Circumspect faith knows what His condescension achieved,  
320 or what His majesty and planning established,  
and what action is special to His divine or His assumed form,  
or what things are achieved, worthy of God, in His divine person,  
and what one person in two forms can achieve:  
He cries out and makes terrible thunderclaps boom;  
325 lying in a cradle, He quickly summons a star from the constellations,  
which attracts suppliant Persians to His holy cradle;  
and the hosts of Heaven sing, instead of lullabies,  
"Glory on high, peace upon earth"  
which is granted only to those who dutifully possess goodwill.  
330 Faith believes in both the man and the God and admits it;  
for He performs as a man, but proves that He is Almighty.

He who holds the Heavens and the earth in the palm of His hand,  
measures the hills, calculates the weight of mountains,  
suspended the earth and positioned the world in space,  
335 counts the raindrops and grains of sand  
how many days, hours and minutes the centuries have,  
the number of atoms and particles in an indivisible entity,  
and how many hairs there are on the neck of a blonde.  
He who precedes the centuries, as He made all of them,  
340 deigns to devote a short time – a few years –  
to getting to know our make-up by implanting Himself,  
so that our flesh may be free of sin through the flesh of the Thunderer  
and His holy blood-offering may sanctify the whole pot.  
Look at the significance of what he did, mortals!  
345 If the Word becomes flesh, it is God and reigns for ever;  
He is lying in a stall because He provides the fodder of life,  
and does those things which our faith or salvation require.

When a corner bore this stone with a top to it,  
a double wall soon abutted it, so Scripture teaches.  
350 The ox and lion come together and the wolf and lamb run together;  
the rhinoceros, which present glory makes swell with pride,  
He chains up, its neck submissively put in His noose,  
though it shatters the clods of the valleys with its terrifying bellow.  
So that the Church's power on earth may master the indomitable,  
355 groups with opposed customs are made one with a joint and herded

by that boy through the pastures of life towards His kingdom.  
 All around, the world flows by, as if constrained by some force,  
 deciding I don't know what about that divine person.  
 He is a human, imbued with this power, and not an animal.

360 Watchmen in their huts were keeping guard over their folds  
 by chance, and to them the Heavenly angels spoke those tidings.  
 For it was first told by them to shepherds.  
 There was a king and high priests and wise scribes;  
 but to none of these does that band of angels wish to announce this,  
 365 thinking the sacred message should be given instead to the poor,  
 so that the powerful deserve to learn of it through outcasts.

That hymn-singing host already knew then  
 that their meek Creator could lay low the necks of the proud,  
 and that, by offering His body, which He did most humbly,  
 370 He sets standards for the meek and strives to master the proud.  
 Therefore they reveal great tidings to people on high  
 but first of all report the deeds of the Lamb of God to shepherds.

Then a sign is given which befits the greatest King:  
 they say He is to be found in a stall, wrapped in swaddling-clothes!  
 375 Whereas the mechanism and every species of the created world  
 teach us, upon examination, that He is the King or the Almighty,  
 and the stars of Arcturus, Hyades, Orion and the chambers of the South  
 and the twelve signs of radiant Heaven also profess it  
 and the storms of the wave-pounded sea, controlled by His law,  
 380 and all other things which are in a different world scheme,  
 proving by their testimony that this child is their Creator,  
 nonetheless He prefers this evidence to be revealed as if in private,  
 so that He may show the faithful that He is very humble.

Peace therefore was promised to the earth by Christ at His birth:  
 385 peace is the intermediary binding the people of earth to the angelic choirs.  
 Discordant singers have long thought themselves fellow citizens of the angels;  
 their very clean order, clinging to the Creator of cleanliness,  
 had rejected the world as though filthy with a spatter of sin.  
 That peace turns the repentant into loyal comrades.  
 390 Though this peace re-united some reprobates,  
 Ethiopians however do not care to change their skins, and  
 black skin does not turn pale when whitewashed,  
 and it is a leopard with spots training in a cage-wheel.

Word of mouth gradually spread the news of the child's power  
 395 and eventually it reached the unfortunate ears of Herod.  
 The peace shown to the holy soon puts fear into the heart of the  
 tyrant who at once fears losing the kingdom which he usurped.  
 Did you ever hear some such thing, which rightly made you panic?  
 Lo, the child was lying in a cradle – in a stall –

400 for there is no room elsewhere! He is believed to be the offspring  
 of a carpenter, and a poor little virgin mother suckles Him,  
 a cheap baby rattle completing her son's baby gear!  
 You would expect nothing but the symbol of a sceptre for the child,  
 if perhaps your faith failed to open the eyes of your heart.  
 405 What foreboding does Herod have, then, and why his panic?  
 There is in Him divine power, before which that criminal trembles;  
 his guilty mind therefore already senses the Judge's tribunal.  
 That's new! A cradle makes a king sitting on a lofty throne panic,  
 and his diadem begins to tremble before a child!  
 410 The peace lavished on the holy is believed to be strife for the evil.  
 The cruel tyrant therefore quakes when the King appears,  
 and impiety groans in the presence of the glory of justice;  
 the sly one produces trickery in the guise of a friend: he pretends  
 that He should be worshipped, but deceitfully plans to kill Him.  
 415 The fool struggles to lift his neck against the Almighty,  
 as if a puny human may change divine power.  
 Why do you rage, Herod? Why are you motivated by suspicion?  
 Why does an excess of fear shred your timid sensibility?  
 He doesn't want a kingdom on earth, but prepares one in Heaven.  
 420 It is pointless to struggle to overturn the divine plan:  
 divine power will never be altered by your trickery;  
 what has once been fixed, remains totally irrevocable.  
 It came about by His decision that you are king,  
 and because there is no power except by His nod.  
 425 If you are a king, subject yourself totally to the King of kings!  
 He has given you the power to do something, whenever He wants;  
 you fulfill His wish more in trying to turn away from it.  
 He therefore orders a dreadful crime, cruel and savage,  
 the like of which, it is agreed, no pagan frenzy has ever committed,  
 430 frenzy to which divine law had fixed no limits.  
 He massacred thousands of little ones, not yet talking!  
 No historical account tells of such a deed,  
 that an enemy could use violence on so many little boys,  
 except for those who perhaps were rebels along with their fathers.  
 435 What was Herod's madness, to spill a lake of blood,  
 when there was no guilt or reason to prompt the evil deed,  
 to have handed over for slaughter so many of tender age?  
 Legal precedent in a public conflict did not allow children to be  
 put to death; that king snatched the innocents from their parents'  
 440 homes, dragging them from their mothers' breasts and killing them,  
 and butchered so many milk-white limbs among his own citizens,  
 which no tyrant is read to have done even against foreigners.  
 He who ought to care for the good and strike fear in the bad,

not only preserving peace but driving out the plague of war,  
 445 befouls his kingdom and undoes the restraints of the laws.  
 Where is the judgement, the sense of duty, the fairness of action,  
 the bonds of nature which bind even the animals  
 bringing up their tender young with tender affection?  
 The king has no feelings which are human or worthy of reason,  
 450 but duty, law, justice and honour have died under him!  
 As rumour began to spread the news of this bloody edict,  
 the hearts of fathers quake and mothers' hearts grow weak.  
 They ask where the malice behind this grim order comes from;  
 they learn that it is nothing but the savage order of a harsh tyrant.  
 455 Hence their tears, sighing, weeping and, more than this, grief,  
 because they find there is no reason for them to lose their children.  
 Who may adequately describe the anguish which envelopes the mothers,  
 or the great sobbing which shakes their sad bosoms,  
 as the executioner pulls the suckling babes from their laps or arms  
 460 and butchers them before their very eyes?  
 A mother tries to hide her baby somewhere, but the little boy,  
 unaware of the danger, gives himself away by crying, and  
 when a soldier picks him up, he thinks it is his mother and laughs,  
 while the mother, unable to breathe because seized by convulsions,  
 465 begs "Kill me first and mutilate me with your sword, so that I may  
 not witness the murder of my son, whom I love more than myself!"  
 It is clear, Herod, that you know no scruple,  
 since, gripped by fury, you do not understand what you are doing.  
 Perhaps you think it is nothing to butcher tiny limbs!  
 470 As for those whom you killed for no reason and thought to be worthless,  
 wait a little and you will see them reign forever as  
 fully grown men, strong with the power of their virtues,  
 sitting as kings on the thrones of kings and with the King!  
 They are kings, nay gods, with God in the midst of them!  
 475 When so many thousands of kings will together accuse you,  
 what will you do then? Suffer forever the Hell you deserve!  
 Spare your tears now, you sad mothers,  
 spare them and tolerate for a little while the Heavenly plan,  
 which necessitates the enemy's guile making war on the chosen!  
 480 He is employing evil itself in a mainly benign way.  
 You want to nurse them in your sweet laps, and lament their  
 deaths, being mothers; but wait a little while:  
 behold them in radiance, following the Lamb and singing!  
 Understand how he who did this is helping them to reach the stars!  
 485 For the Boy, at the mention of whose name the tyrant raged,  
 arranges everything in a wondrous, ordered plan;  
 He wants the tears of death to take on the joys of life.

It is often said that one is not fit for a place in Heaven  
unless prepared for it by the regimen of the whip.

490 This butcher therefore victimises innocent cohorts;  
he wants them to die because of Him alone, as was the case:  
He laid low his enemy, drawing praises from the mouths of babes,  
revealing that the innocents are to be given places above the stars.  
You mothers who weep tears will thus measure out lengthy joys.  
495 These innocents are the first-fruits or the blue-print of a future people,  
just as if this was born of His mind and followed this Boy,  
doing it with the enthusiasm which nature gives to a little one.

It is a very wonderful thing, to be seen through the eyes of faith,  
that the invisible King appears on high and also in the depths.  
500 The faith, to be happy, desires to know in part the reason  
why the Almighty, Creator of the world, was also  
born a small child in Sion, which He had already founded.  
But the faith, secure and thus full of self-understanding, rejoices,  
so that it has no doubts about its secrets; it believes it all as a whole,  
505 not separating them, but reaffirming that faith is paramount.  
He was set up as a rock, to distinguish the deeds of men:  
for the good it is a climb, but for the bad a stumbling-block;  
Simeon says that many fall and rise up on it.

Although He could sustain all He wanted in Heaven, on earth,  
510 in the sea, in a word the world, in whatever way or order He wished  
and could create so great a mass from nothing,  
what He did instead was what our redemption requires,  
or what teaches redeemed people to continue in humility,  
lest they fear that they may lose again the medicines given them.  
515 Thus it was decreed in a wise plan  
that He should accept a present body and become visible.  
For He had to be seen; the result of His being seen is that  
He sets an example for the world to follow.  
Our salvation would not happen through any other intermediary,  
520 and our proud race would bear to have no other teacher.  
Long ago our race had sanctified its dogmas in words alone,  
and established them through the prophets and holy men;  
but these had not given medicines to a sick world.  
As God, He authored these, but quickly urged them to be copied.  
525 Ultimately it was necessary for Him to stand face-to-face with his followers.  
It is a law of nature for like to associate with like  
and for creatures not to imitate perfectly something different to it.  
Thus He becomes human, so that they may be quick to imitate a  
human and think a thing possible if they have proof that He did it too.  
530 Therefore He gave them not an archangel to imitate, but Himself.  
Many things He did on earth may be unworthy of God,



but instead act entirely for our salvation.  
 When God therefore does things which do not seem worthy of Him,  
 and human sense cannot see a reason for them,  
 535 let people know that His wisdom always acts wisely, and thus  
 understand what they have learnt, to respect truly the mysteries;  
 may they know what is possible and believe it is not enough!  
 Doctors often do something which a patient dislikes or scorns;  
 but they are only doing what their medical skill deems necessary.  
 540 There are two things which the mind's eye ought to distinguish,  
 that the King has this sense of duty towards us,  
 bearing such great burdens on behalf of His ungrateful servants,  
 and that such great chains hold the world bound fast,  
 that it cannot be freed except by the death of the Creator.  
 545 So let us love Him and beware of losing so great a prize!  
     If you think your talent small, do not attempt great deeds!  
 He who made everything sees how individual things may differ,  
 or how tasty are those things wisdom has created.  
 People know many things which animals do not, and many things  
 550 are in turn hidden from them, which only the Heavenly order knows.  
 You see how wise people differ from each other; this one knows  
 more than that one, and each one is ranked higher than the other.  
 Which people can know themselves completely?  
 Who knows clearly the nature, power or appearance of the soul?  
 555 Can they who do not know themselves fathom the Creator's secrets?  
 We are said to come from earth. May earth or dust then know us?  
 Paul himself had only partial knowledge and preaches it partially.  
 People will be able to know only as much as grace has allowed them.  
     Being humble, He chose to cure this arrogant world,  
 560 and came to rid that arrogance of its strength,  
 arrogance which plunges us into the seven sins, like a despot.  
 But Christ came full of the Spirit, seven-fold, so that  
 a counter-blast of virtue may blow away the unspeakable plague.  
 He makes up an antidote against one sin in particular:  
 565 through His example He teaches His followers to be humble;  
 thus He achieves all He was going to give His students as orders.  
 This virtue instils the rest of the virtues and guides them;  
 He instils this more by doing all He did in a humble way,  
 saying "I am humble; learn this from me, the rest of you!"  
 570 What He does to restore our lost life  
 the pious should venerate, though it is scorned by the arrogant.  
 Powerful in creating all, He shows by His peace that He will be  
 merciful, for His sense of duty is as great as His power.  
 He does things which our life and salvation require, so that  
 575 deeds which may seem pointless are brilliant in their symbolism.

He does these things to show that He is human as well as Almighty.  
 His divine power as much as His flesh help us to believe;  
 one who denies one of these clearly loses Him completely.  
 Thus it is necessary to recognise fully and by such evidence  
 580 that some things show Him to be God, others that He is human.  
 Faith knows how to recognise both and loves them both truly.

So, to give you some example of this:  
 a woman gave birth to the man, a virgin to the Almighty;  
 He is wrapped in swaddling-clothes, music echoes among the stars;  
 585 He is hungry and yet satisfies so many thousands with plain bread.  
 There were five thousand and the fragments fill twelve baskets.  
 Let the flock of preachers and all attendant philosophers be amazed,  
 being used to tearing divine works into pieces!  
 How may they explain how food got into their mouths?  
 590 If they cannot be wise, let them shut up and keep it to themselves!  
 He is hungry: angelic servants provide things to eat;  
 the journey tires Him, a cloud lifts Him into the air.  
 He is thirsty, and hands out water which leaves none ever thirsty;  
 He pauses, weary, and plants His footsteps on the waters;  
 595 He has no ship, He falls asleep; He quells the sea, He stills the winds;  
 Death besets the man, God Himself destroys Death;  
 He hangs on the cross, an innocent between guilty thieves,  
 but being God, He promises Paradise to one of them; they are alongside  
 Him because they are considered believers in two ways,  
 600 who, by believing in Him, share the same compassion;  
 one worships Him in action, the other denies Him by what he does.  
 One person does these things in two natures.

He performs countless miracles all powerfully without end;  
 however it was this alone which confounded the oracles of the prophets:  
 605 that He was made man, flesh having breath, because He was thus  
 taken up and united with God, so that the two are fully One.  
 It was not the flashy ornamentation of earth, sea and sky,  
 nor the make-up of the world, wondrous for its individual items,  
 which His majesty and power changed – but Himself,  
 610 His majesty inserting itself, totally enclosed, into the womb of His mother,  
 while He lies, the Almighty, in the midst of animals,  
 and moreover suffered death between two thieves,  
 though eternal sweetness comes from tasting this bitter drink, -  
 that throng is amazed at this or as if quaking at such things,  
 615 that it is possible for a man, although He is the supreme Creator,  
 to be also in contrast an abject human being, and that choir shouts:  
 “O God, after Adam spurned you in Eden  
 and went into an exile which deserved never to be rescinded,  
 what is he that you should remember him and look after him?

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620 Why is he an exile? He ought to know you,  
because cherubim from Heaven shout “Sanctus” thrice on earth,  
because he returns to forgiveness and acquires the honour of faith,  
establishing on earth a people angelic in appearance,  
the sight of which makes him steadfast and blessed.”

625 He satisfies us also on earth with His visible body,  
being wondrous on high and equally to be wondered at down here.  
For His great rank surpasses all things,  
while He performs the sacred mysteries of His hallowed table.  
He bountifully gives His visible self to us His followers,  
630 so that we may live forever by eating living bread.  
Thus the Father comes down and takes us back up.  
For He willingly bears these things which we rightly suffer,  
such as the traps which the persuasive one has set.  
As he once tripped up the first man with three tricks,  
635 overcoming him with appetite, greed and false pride,  
he itches to overcome successive people with these very snares;  
but he is defeated, driven away along the very path he crept in by.  
Thereafter, temptation becomes less of an enemy to us;  
for when it gnawed at the clay, the snake broke its teeth,  
640 making it less able to mutilate our soft parts.  
He was quickly able to drown it by the power of His majesty;  
but He repelled evil suggestions more by the word of the Scriptures,  
which is important for mortals because, lacking virtue,  
they may act with His help, hoping in Him who protects them.

645 The persuasive one suggested all manner of crime therefore,  
but who may struggle to go against what his training has taught him?  
He presses no one with force, merely persuading with trickery.  
May everyone resist him, warned by his menacing tone of voice!  
Jesus entered a virgin’s womb, to make it holy,  
650 so that virginity can be created in a mother’s womb.  
He said to wives “Grow and fill the earth!”  
May their virginity fill the halls of Heaven! That is to say,  
may fruitfulness come from such seed - an idea which He loves!  
Marriage is therefore ascribed to earth, but virginity to the Heavens.

655 Worthless semen usually produces precious offspring.  
Like a rose which is wont to grow on a slender stalk,  
the honour of virginity is thus eaten away by the spouse’s usage.  
It had not been counted as an honour under the old Law.  
Jephthah’s daughter thus complains that she knows not a man.

660 What does this virgin complain about except not having children?  
Mary is therefore said to have been the first to make this promise  
to the Lord and to be worthy of bearing divine offspring.  
Mary was therefore the first to sow the chaste little lily

which, through her, grew everywhere in countless multitudes.  
 665 This queen gives the first lead to throngs of virgins.  
 Now boys, girls, young women, old men and old women,  
 both sexes and all ages everywhere take care of this gift.  
 As the earth produces stars as if by virgin birth,  
 virginal jewels with which to beautify Heaven,  
 670 why wonder if the earth sends stars up to Heaven,  
 when it rejoices that the true Sun was born upon it,  
 so that Heaven and earth may give each other stars reciprocally?  
 The Boy who had adorned Heaven therefore is born to adorn earth,  
 and also sends other children from here to the Father as first-fruits.  
 675 He chooses disciples who have no reputation of their own,  
 and they were summoned mainly from humble backgrounds.  
 When Job refers to his followers earlier, he calls them handmaids;  
 while handmaids seem to belong to the weaker sex  
 they still bind Leviathan and cut off its limbs.  
 680 There is a parable of treasure being entrusted to earthen vessels,  
 that when humble people do great deeds and achieve greatness,  
 it can be clear that they cannot do such things by themselves,  
 but rather that divine power within them performs it all:  
 for example, a lowly person vanquishing terrible tyrants,  
 685 his feeble hand violating shrines of sacred objects,  
 small temples constructed in some great age,  
 shrines which had been decorated with such passion,  
 or some bumpkin wearing the strait-laced shoes of professors,  
 carrying his peasant cap across the frontiers of the world.  
 690 That barking of poets, like a croaking frog,  
 used to chattering everywhere, surrenders its noise before them,  
 and they force the tongue of the Egyptian sea to be silent.  
 It is therefore the work of God doing such through such people,  
 and not the virtue of these who have little strength of their own;  
 695 but He makes ordinary people overcome the world and the proud.  
 This Prince of Peace, ruling with the restraint of the Father's  
 law and making strict measures seem sweet,  
 and in order to show that His yoke is light, as He Himself said,  
 ordered nations to be immersed in baptism,  
 700 curing some old wound by so simple a ceremony,  
 shattering Hell's kingdom and revealing the kingdom of Heaven.  
 By this water that fickle sword is removed,  
 for this water can drown its fire-belching flames.  
 What, I ask, is simpler, or can be more brilliant,  
 705 than that these waters purify souls and cleanse bodies?  
 He Himself underwent baptism, which blessed Him with such honour  
 that the waters, by penetrating the grains of earth it touches,

can bestow a gift, given in all places,  
to cleanse whosoever is anointed with the virtue of faith.

710 Look! It is clear that water is of no small importance.  
There are four elements from which all things are made:  
air and fire, earth, water, but water's power is the greatest.  
With some water, earth grows fertile, air damp, fire cooled,  
and water alone supports as many things as the other three.  
715 Without water, these three are often harmful; with it, beneficial.  
The Spirit of the Almighty, setting the first example,  
demonstrates the mystical sacrament of future baptism;  
for He allows holy water to be poured over Him.  
Four rivers water the sacred places of Paradise and meander  
720 after humans to redeem them by cleansing them, so that they  
may rediscover the washing which they rejected by leaving  
and so that there may also be a place to wash in their place of exile.  
Moses speaks of this, for he taught baptism.  
Surely, it would not have been important or worthy of holy teaching,  
725 to relate where rivers run to or come from,  
unless Moses knew that some symbolism was hidden in this?  
Those whom Christ bought with His blood, He washed in baptism  
(because He washes and redeems them, water and blood pour from His side).  
May they strive to continue free from the world's bonds!  
730 The organisation of the faith becomes clearer at His baptism.  
The Father speaks from Heaven; He is one, He addresses His son,  
and a second one, His begotten son, underwent a sacred washing in a river,  
and a third persona, the Spirit of them both, remained within Him  
and the Holy Spirit reveals itself in the form of a dove.  
735 The nature of this bird presents a beautiful image;  
there are seven types of bird generally,  
which represent the same number of the loving reasons for piety,  
heard in the speeches of the prophets, not in poetic metres.  
According to them, all people will shine when washed in baptism  
740 and will maintain a dove-like attitude in their behaviour.  
The Holy Spirit comes therefore in the form of a dove,  
entering into any who want to receive it.

Something to amaze you, for you must marvel at it even more:  
the Lord wishes to be touched in baptism by the hands of a slave,  
745 so that no one should perhaps spurn a priest as unworthy.  
For priests sanctifying or performing baptism do not diminish  
the Holy Spirit, if they are sinners, nor increase it, if they are righteous,  
provided they baptise in the name of the Holy Trinity,  
since Jesus is doing the baptising through the hands of each one,  
750 lest perhaps there be (only) as many baptised as there are priests.  
Now the one God and baptism and faith are one.

The Father intoned this, then the Baptist learns this,  
that Jesus Himself established holy baptism through His own.

755 Thereafter the King allows the Devil to duel with Him,  
so that, reborn, they are taught to be wary after their washing.  
For after Pharaoh was drowned, the people had been set free;  
but they could not immediately obtain the promised land;  
indeed at first they wander wearily mostly across desert regions;  
but after countless tribulations, they occupy their land in peace.  
760 The serpent also fabricated all manner of tricks for the inexperienced,  
so that they are trained by struggle and fear into cautiousness  
in order to win many triumphs after many battles.

In teaching the rest of His ideas by word and deed,  
He created a way of making His followers remain humble.  
765 He came as a man new-born, to give new commands to an old world.  
So that His skill might cure the diseases of pride through opposites,  
He faced the arrogant with a Self humble in words and deeds.  
He wants therefore to be born to the wife of a poor carpenter,  
though she was graced with virginity and royal lineage;  
770 He lies in a stall, wrapped in cheap rags;  
it is the person of some peasant who deserves to see Him first;  
a rather poor animal is offered Him; the Creator accepts it;  
He sits not on the armoured back of a foaming stallion,  
but on a little donkey, a worthless animal, used to stuffing itself;  
775 He deigns to speak to a woman and to ask for water;  
He is touched by a prostitute, He Himself touched a leper;  
when some mad peasant with sacrilegious words spewed forth  
that outcry which our ears cringe to hear,  
He persuades him at once to understand the demon which possessed him,  
780 but did not say he was full of demons, when He could have done so;  
He asks the Father to forgive someone who caused a death;  
assailed with insults, He endures an excruciating death;  
He was struck by blows, spittle and the whip and finally  
ordered to carry His own cross, that worst of punishments;  
785 He ran the gauntlet of all the whips which criminals deserve;  
and God Himself bore it because He ceases to be a man;  
lest the arrogant swell up, He therefore takes back what God does!  
He teaches His people this and they taught those who followed,  
that they should strive to live like slaves, by the example of the Lord,  
790 whom no one follows unless he walks where He did.

He adds also a certain final special order,  
that one should always be bound by love of others  
and thus love God more than oneself, and one's fellow as oneself,  
and bestow upon one's fellow all that one wishes for oneself,  
795 and not to attack someone for taking refuge in Him,

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and always to want to help to the limit of one's capability.  
The sum total of this is that, even if you are hated, you should love,  
which is what God Himself does, who, though hurt, rewards us;  
one who is loved but does not love is worse than the pagans.  
800 To instil that more and show that it is the most important,  
He Himself calls it His one rather special commandment  
and says that it is new because He is making the world anew.  
Reprobates usually do whatever the signs appear to say for their own good;  
true disciples however obey that commandment, that they should  
805 love each other mutually, striving to put others first.  
He gives many orders and did what no other did or ordered, but  
a lot which the prophets had done, so He may not perhaps be thought different.  
There are such deeds so amazing and so numerous,  
that the whole world cannot fully understand them.  
810 Some of these have been disclosed in evangelical books,  
as many as necessary to make a mark on the world,  
to set norms for people, to give a moral lead,  
to create a basis for faith, to restore salvation,  
so that we may regain strength in the new, rejecting the old.  
815 People had clung to this life, the only one the world knew,  
wanting prosperity and rejecting adversity.  
He therefore talks about an everlasting life and shows that the present life is fleeting,  
so that one should spurn it through love of Him.  
For He spurned what people love, suffered what they abhor,  
820 despised prosperity and willingly subjected Himself to death,  
and He teaches His followers to judge these lives on their merit,  
this one wretched and fragile, that one happy and everlasting,  
so that they reject this one, not wanting to give their heart to it,  
even if it overflowed with a store of riches, but so that they  
825 wish to seek out that everlasting life with such great passion  
that they pay for it, if necessary perhaps, with abuse,  
and wish first of all to suffer and then will reign like their Master.

## Book 6

### Preface

My weary Muse was thinking her remaining work to be short  
and hoping to enjoy the longed-for end, as if sighting land now  
after enduring the waves of the sea.

But the sea engulfs her as she nears her too lofty harbour.  
5 Such is the demand of her task, which the moon and sky dread,  
and the sun itself fears.

Strange, that life eternal involves the loathsomeness of death!  
Who will sing of that, as is fitting? Yet the faithful have been  
ordered to proclaim this:

10 “Tell the nations that God rules from the Cross!” it is said.  
That Cross is like a key to reveal things hidden for ages.  
May it speak for itself!

Struck by the Cross, stone yields water; may it water us inwardly!  
May the Cross which parted the sea for the Hebrews guide us  
15 across the world’s seas when we have killed the enemy!

The people therefore now intone the very triumph of the Cross;  
manna feeds His followers set free from Pharaoh;  
the Cross achieves that.

As King Jesus had always decreed, therefore,  
and had signified in countless parables thereafter,  
that the world might quickly recognise Him as the One foretold,  
since all the predictions of the prophets referred to Him,  
5 that He would fulfil them by His deeds, He hosts a symbolic supper  
for His disciples, seeing that the time was near  
for a new Law to replace the old or rather to fulfill it.  
Adjusting the covenant according to the age, this old, that new,  
while fulfilling the old, He gave birth to the new;  
10 He not only reveals the face of truth but explains what was hidden.  
In order to teach the guests of His Heavenly banquet to be clean,  
the Lord washes the feet of servants  
and is not too proud to do obeisance to His disciples,  
to wash the feet which will carry the God-given gift of peace.  
15 How remarkable is this and beyond celestial mystery



that He washes their feet, that God Himself becomes a servant,  
and obeisance is done by Him to whom the height of Heaven is subject!  
Peter was aware of this; he shrank back, shocked, saying:

“Do you, God and Lord of mortals, wash the feet of a slave?”

20 Do you wash my feet with the hands with which you create all things?”

He teaches the minds of His followers such a duty;

He sanctified the example, which He orders to be maintained thereafter,  
that a slave wash the feet of another slave.

This was a great gesture; but He behaved even more humbly.

25 He does not refuse kisses to that wolf, Judas, for He Himself is  
humble and innocent; Jesus provided Himself as an example.

Moreover, as He promised, He simplifies the message;  
rejecting multiple and varied ceremonies for this reason,  
He prefers one to all the rest - bread and wine.

30 He makes this sacred, so that it is very brief and very holy,  
so modest in cost and so easy to prepare,  
yet so sublime that it sums up the whole deity.

This alone is enough to purge the sin of the world;

they no longer slaughter cattle at steaming altars

35 nor is the bellowing of a bull or the bleat of a lamb heard,

nor do they want or care to mutilate a red heifer,

nor is a hairy scapegoat dispatched in order to expiate sin,

nor does a priest excoriate sheep or wash their intestines.

God had ordered His people not to tolerate sacrificing

40 these creatures to demons. All that He Himself thus ordains, however,  
should signify that it will be sacrosanct that what people  
have learnt through symbols may make them well-behaved.

Does God miss these things? Surely He doesn't miss a bloody feast?

He says that He does not eat flesh or drink blood.

45 Surely cattle have not been able to bring eternal salvation?

Surely the nature of cattle cannot save the nature of man?

That is why this offering pleases Him, that it is the one from many,  
bread and wine, in addition to baptism,

so that through these the seven churches are united as one;

50 thus the body is connected to the head, and the head to the body.

This one sort of offering pleases Him, and it will endure forever;  
it is easy, brilliant, simple and full of godliness.

He said, “Unless you have my flesh to eat  
and my blood to drink, you cannot have life”.

55 Their immediate thought was that this was inhuman and inane,  
so that many shrank away and recoiled from it.

The Almighty, however, behaves wisely, as always:

He establishes for our use this neat equation,

that bread is His body and wine His blood, but in order that

60 they may be consumed, the smell, colour and taste are unchanged.  
 It becomes the prize of the faith, having very great virtue,  
 because it glorifies the true partaker in believing the mysteries.  
 Thus the faith of Abraham is perceived to have merit,  
 because he believes that God can do what nature cannot.

65 Therefore God, who created everything, held up bread  
 and said that this was His body and it was given for the sake of the world:  
 “I will give you this wine too, for it is my blood.”  
 The law of Nature is overturned, changed into what the Creator ordered;  
 Nature follows His command, to change at once into what  
 70 the Almighty orders, turning things into miracles.  
 Nature therefore changes its accustomed role at once:  
 flesh at once becomes bread, and then blood becomes wine.

And He gives all the priests, whom He joins to Him, the power  
 to perform these mysteries through Him, and He through them.  
 75 Have people on their own ever changed the nature of anything?  
 Have they ever transformed bread into something divine?  
 But the Voice which founded all things can do such a thing.  
 For as He once ordered the earth to grow grass,  
 which it has done ever since throughout all the rolling ages,  
 80 so He also ordered this change of substance to happen,  
 and this ritual of a meal is observed everywhere through Him.  
 He always performed His many works with visible power;  
 as when the sea parted and a staff turned into a snake,  
 and rock pours forth water, and a cloud provides food,  
 85 and a column bears fire or pumps out steam,  
 those things are obvious to the eye, His virtue is seen clearly;  
 those things He did openly Himself, but this He does secretly,  
 this hidden work which is revealed through manifest signs;  
 for God made things manifest for the sake of credibility,  
 90 so that the eye, while seeing those things, sees also visions of faith  
 which does not doubt that He is real and Almighty.

He says “What of this will be beautiful or precious?  
 Bread and wine generating chastity”.  
 These two things produce multitudes graced with chastity;  
 95 many young people choose to be seen to preserve their virginity,  
 so that He makes chaste those whom He adopts from the cohort;  
 corn fills the granaries, this wine fills the cellars;  
 the latter makes one’s heart happy, the former makes it strong;  
 in this way, therefore, these two create virginal convents.

100 It is necessary that those partaking of the chalice stay clean;  
 He washed His disciples feet, therefore,  
 when it was time for dinner – urging them to lead a clean life,  
 so that partakers of the divine sacrament should be cleansed

and not, like Judas, suffer loss of salvation,  
 105 the result of an unclean audacity to take the clean sacrament.  
 Through the chalice, he teaches those future born  
 who achieve judgement for themselves through the sacred mysteries.  
 Therefore, among the friends who are at the feast,  
 He allows that dog, Judas, to taste the Heavenly banquet.  
 110 He serves up for the sick what is good for the healthy.  
 He rains on the unjust and provides sunshine for the iniquitous  
 and wants them all to be saved and to recognise the truth,  
 lavishing this upon them as a common good for all to enjoy.  
 Let everyone recognize, however, who takes what gifts,  
 115 who gets the rewards of life and who the rewards of Hell.  
 Although all the demands of this cause were sanctified by law,  
 He gave this priority and ordered all those devouring the Lamb  
 to be assiduous in girding up their loins;  
 in putting this first, He makes clear what is more important.  
 120 He teaches that guests at the Heavenly banquet are chaste.  
 A priest who makes sacrifice or libation in some ancient ceremony  
 washes and removes himself from the permitted conjugal contact,  
 permitted at the time because one tribe provided the priests.  
 In the Old Testament, that sort of burnt sacrifice was acceptable.  
 125 How more glorious must he be who clings to such rites?  
 One who broke this ancient code was put to death; so work out  
 what is in store for one who perchance profanes the real thing!  
 Since all crime is getting worse, defilement grows much worse;  
 nothing is more adverse to chaste offspring than that,  
 130 and the power of it, if not spotted, is an offense;  
 as they say, "He who has no judgement, faces judgement".  
 Victim, King, Lord, Judge, altar, priest,  
 seeing that the hour of which He had foreknowledge had come,  
 He suffers death in the end, sacrificing Himself,  
 135 but with that part of Him which He wanted to share our form.  
 His divinity could feel no hurt,  
 nay rather, He kills Death which pursues Him in His fleshly form;  
 thus mortals and God Himself in the end suffer no suffering.  
 He therefore suffered the Cross; for it was necessary to set cause  
 140 against cause, because, as Death came from a tree,  
 the Cross ought to drive it away, thus a death ousts Death.  
 He chose this way because it would be harder and more repulsive;  
 this was so that His followers may not spurn dryness in green wood  
 and may bear the insults of every punishment.  
 145 The shape of the Cross fits in well with the things we must do.  
 What sort of punishment could be undergone which is so fitting?  
 Its four limbs equate to the four parts of the world;

it points to the sky and is fixed on north, south, and the abyss.  
 Thus Christ, as if holding out His arms to the world, stands in the way,  
 150 to pin down any who run headlong towards Hell.  
 Not only is it strong in virtue, but it adapts itself to everything;  
 for it has breadth, length, height and depth.  
 The Cross marks foreheads, fortifies the heart and routs enemies.  
 Could anything be depicted more beautiful than this, or more readily useful?  
 155 Because of it, our sword, lance, helmet,  
 shield become lovelier to us, more respected by our enemy.  
 Some creatures –four in flight– make the sign of the Cross  
 Another four spread their six wings in the shape of a cross,  
 and a cherubim gives shade to the ark with outspread wings;  
 160 and all birds in flight bear a likeness of this.  
 Whoever seeks the skies, climbs up there on wings,  
 the image of which had therefore been suitable for glorification.  
 It is necessary for every believer to bind his limbs to the Cross,  
 as if held on to it, crucified, by means of those limbs  
 165 as if the Cross was rescuing those bound limbs from all vices.  
 Also, prophets' deeds and words have the Cross as their banner.  
 Bitter waters are sweetened by Moses with this wood;  
 there is also the image of Noah's ark, and the olive branch,  
 the staff which twice struck the rock to give water  
 170 (so many signs involving a cross, and the striking of a rock, Christ ),  
 the two sticks with which the widow provides food for Elijah,  
 the staff bearing the snake used for healing those who beheld it,  
 the pole bearing grapes from the country of abundant fertility.  
 The first people do not see Him, the second sees Him and believes;  
 175 the Jewish people, the first in time, turn their back on Him,  
 but heathen people who came next finally turned their face to Him.  
 Though it may be said to be something new for a king to suffer on the Cross,  
 this Cross was promised for ages in earlier images,  
 and it was promised that God would renew the old world through it.  
 180 He therefore suffered the Cross, as the mission of salvation demands,  
 when each person lacks nothing, repays Him with nothing.  
 As they can and do, people renounce His cause,  
 or the goodness which inspired Him, that is, His sense of duty,  
 because He endures such insults in battling the arrogant!  
 185 The deceitful one whips the truthful, the guilty whips the innocent,  
 the Judge of the ages stands before a governor's tribunal,  
 a legal expert questions the Founder of Peace,  
 chaff gets among the corn, thorns encircle the grape,  
 criminals also mock the King of kings.  
 190 He who gave light from His own saliva, is spat upon;  
 a little earlier He had removed someone from a tomb after four days,

BOOK VI

but now they fix Him to the Cross, the wood of life evermore.  
Hereafter the living Fount gives salvation,  
as bread satisfied our hunger and the whip our discipline,  
195 as travel feels fatigue and virtue feels toil,  
the vineyard does not produce grapes, but fills vines with bitterness.  
He endures this to console His people subject to a deserved judgment.  
Suffering on their behalf, He is said to grow weary and afraid;  
He endured all this, which He did not deserve, to help us.  
200 The whale had been accustomed to swallowing people.  
When it sees a man bearing such great mounds of flesh, it thought  
that this pure man should be devoured at once, as was its custom.  
It therefore opens its mouth; but the Lord's hook caught it.  
The fishing line He used was the line of Jewish prophets;  
205 those things were begun by that people, chosen by God,  
which begat our forefathers like grain in ears of corn.  
For them He parted the sea, for them He did such great things,  
to amaze the world so that it may know its Creator.  
But that people always behaved in an ungrateful and profane way;  
210 it always despised Heavenly things and loved the things of earth.  
What people is given more care or greater gifts for free,  
even though it spurns them all, or rather, insults the Giver?  
Therefore, although God had given such gifts to no people  
as He gives to this one, being bound by His love of our holy fathers,  
215 even though it worshipped idols and rejected things spiritual,  
and allowed itself to be swamped – deservedly – by sin so great  
that it suffocates itself, He opens airways for the world to breathe,  
to save the world, but this people destroy themselves with their madness  
and then a people who did not know God, discovers Him.  
220 He therefore offers the rejected gifts to Gentiles;  
the wine-growers perish for murdering the son of their landlord,  
- for the Son is willing to die, so that the world's dead may live -  
and the father rents this vineyard to people who give him fruit.  
How good the Father proves to be, and with what a sense of duty:  
225 He hands over his only Son for death like a criminal!  
How submissively the Son Himself obeys the Father  
and is willing to die so that the world may live!  
Redemption comes at a price for He does not know how  
to cling to life and, hating Himself, would rather perish!  
230 The handsome one loves the ugly, making the ugly one beautiful!  
Thus, by redeeming the world, He taught it how much He loves it;  
the great price teaches how much the Buyer loved humankind.  
Let His beloved world at least admire or love its Redeemer!  
When He mounted the Cross, the whole of nature shook;  
235 the Sun raced away into the darkness to avoid witnessing such a crime,

as if refusing to shine on those who commit parricide,  
 and the stars fled away, dreading to witness this crime;  
 the earth is fearful and shaken, leaving tombs open;  
 rocks crack, the veil is rent and hidden things revealed,  
 240 and bodies rise up, proving that Death has died.  
 Rocks, rent asunder thus, soften nations;  
 but wretched Judah remained harder than rocks;  
 the hearts of reprobates grow harder than rocks.  
 As the psalmist said long ago, everyone was afraid:  
 245 "the man who showed fear" is one who stayed a beast no more.  
 Then the darkness gave way to an eternal light:  
 as it knows the sunset of morals, it also provides the dawn.  
 His action proved how His suffering saved the world:  
 Abraham himself did not go up to Heaven before the crucifixion;  
 250 but after the incident of the cruel thief, he could not avoid it.  
 For the thieves hang there, alike in punishment, but not in heart;  
 one is filled with piety at the moment of death,  
 the other remained foolishly determined in heart.  
 That one expresses evil ideas, this one changes his mind at the end.  
 255 The latter therefore gets to Heaven, the foolish one is buried in Hell  
 and he who chose to follow the Crucified One, of course,  
 has compassion and seems to take up the Cross.  
 But many people love earthly things in the name of the faith;  
 though there is faith on their lips, their inclination forsakes the faith;  
 260 true faith and love make true servants.  
 To endure the Cross, therefore, is not to have immediate salvation,  
 unless piety graces one adorned with the gift of faith.  
 Indeed, when all the elements were panicking,  
 when the nature of things trembles, when the moon comes to a halt,  
 265 when the sun itself weeps and grows dim with a dark cloak,  
 refusing to provide its usual light for the stars,  
 an evil cohort rejoices as if victorious, laughing hysterically;  
 they ask if He could perhaps come down from the Cross,  
 unaware of the plan under which He was sent to them  
 270 to prepare sacrilegious hands for the death of the Creator,  
 to perpetrate a crime such as no one has done before or since,  
 thereby to bring death to Himself, hence to ensure salvation for the world.  
 Here they celebrate madly with evil bravura, there they are triumphant.  
 Treacherous, bastard progeny, surely God will not change His  
 275 divine plan because of your insults, so that Christ may be proved  
 to be the Son of the Father, if He prefers to submit to punishment?  
 You seek a sign that it would not free the world if He did!  
 Unless Death beset Him, the world would not be free from Death.  
 Thus, He would have taught His followers to suffer punishments;

- 280 He would rather take off the strength which a victor puts on.  
 From that, you will be proved to be a daughter of Satan, rather,  
 because you urge Him, like Satan, to climb down;  
 it befits the Son of the Almighty instead to climb up high.  
 Wait a little: a sign will be given to you, Jonah!
- 285 You reckon the many things He did to be contrary to nature,  
 and you ask that He actually allow the world to be abandoned!  
 If you want signs for yourself (things which you always seek, being  
 not of the faith), do not keep asking for what is bad for all nations!  
 He will give a sign, not to you, but to the redeemed world;  
 290 for He will quickly arise, trample down Death, and triumph.  
 You would know how to attach greater significance to this sign  
 if you were willing to consider it without the Cross.  
 Remain stupid, head always for the depths!  
 Keep your asininity, evil one, and sink down under;
- 295 Isaac will climb the mountain, fulfil the Father's order on the top:  
 the King will do His work on the Cross, where your hands put Him!  
 The cruel things, then, which the people want to inflict on God,  
 nay rather the things which He willingly suffers for our salvation,  
 He endured and is now placed in the flesh in a sacred sepulchre.
- 300 Heading for the depths, His soul had broken the chains of Hell.  
 Although the new light then shone brightly in Hell's blackness,  
 the same people could not be corrected by whips or by Death itself,  
 but still perpetrate fresh crimes. They gnash their teeth  
 at the buried dead One and try to harm Him;
- 305 they appoint guards and calculatingly seal the tomb,  
 as if they could imprison the omnipotence of Christ.  
 He turns this around to serve His Heavenly mission;  
 the more they rage, the more in the end they betray their cause.  
 There is a soldier on guard there, forced to be a witness,  
 310 to report the truth to us and prove them liars.  
 How clever they are! Knowing the truth, they deny it  
 and know that what they foolishly want to reject is God's work.  
 Unaware that no one can alter Heaven's plan,  
 they tried to corrupt with a bribe the guards who are witnesses;
- 315 that is to their shame, for the guards tell the truth as it is.  
 Supposing that they could imagine they were thus far ignorant,  
 complaining that God cannot be believed to exist in our frail body,  
 there is nothing left for them to say, now that He is risen.  
 They are convicted of deliberate malice, resisting the Almighty  
 320 and corrupting those very witnesses whom they persuade  
 with a bribe, well aware that they know the truth.  
 They are therefore left tied up by the knot of perfidy,  
 wickedly refusing to believe in so many omens and in the prophets,

when they know well enough that it is He whom orthodoxy  
 325 proclaims to bear the same cross like a shield for the heart, and the  
 temptations deeply felt by the holy ones: the essence of salvation.  
 The King headed for Hell and caught hold of His chosen ones for raising;  
 the rest of the crowd suffers Hell without end.  
 That band of holy ones has now deserved to see His face,  
 330 for which it thirsted with all its heart since the world began.  
 Who can adequately describe how happily the holy race rejoices,  
 when their hopes are fulfilled and their King's face shines on them?  
 When He removed from prisoners such long-tied bonds,  
 how wonderfully He makes the coffin rise up with Him from there,  
 335 to teach us that bodies may live again after being dust and that  
 we may believe that people rise up intact from their tombs!  
 Therefore, having given these and others a place in Heaven,  
 He returns to those above all glorious with flesh.  
 He did not keep in suspense for long the desires of the holy ones,  
 340 who long with aching hearts to see Him.  
 Indeed, the third day, which is the starting-point for all other days,  
 revealed the Lord of the earth, the sea and the Heavens.  
 For His disciples who were worthy of knowing the sacred mysteries  
 that was a happy day, nay, it redeemed all ages!  
 345 For although He Himself made all the days generally,  
 He is said to have made this one specially,  
 which surpasses the rest and prompts us to rejoice,  
 because the world takes the greatest happiness from it.  
 A happy day which made the birds of the sky fly so swiftly,  
 350 which unlocked the kingdom of Hell and revealed that of Heaven,  
 and found its pinnacle in the hosts on high!  
 On this day the tax-collector is silent and does not push his greed,  
 and now begins to complain about his loss of interest,  
 because something from which he gets no profit hurts him sorely.  
 355 This day urges every creature to rejoice  
 and makes the whole world suddenly regain its strength:  
 the earth is coloured with various flowers,  
 and the warm dew makes barren vines swell up;  
 one sees the leaves of trees revive with sap,  
 360 and a warbling note makes certain birds melodious;  
 the earth is fertile, the sea calm, the air still.  
 You think little of this perhaps, but the Creator reveals them on that day;  
 every thing rejoices, as it were, for the common good.  
 That day can therefore drive away our earlier grief;  
 365 it is that day alone which restores Heavenly joy to people on earth;  
 we are told to exalt in this day and rightly celebrate it.  
 He wanted to show Himself first to a prostitute



(this woman reports that death had given way to life),  
 and then He gives His disciples many signs that He is alive.  
 370 At first they all quake in amazement, struck dumb with fear;  
 for they cannot quickly grasp so great an event.  
 But He gradually makes their doubtful minds understand;  
 He soothes their concern and appears more often to them;  
 He says "Peace be unto you! Do not be afraid! You can see,  
 375 behold, it is I! Put away your fear; know the truth now!"  
 At once they recognise Him, admitting He is their Lord and God  
 and that He truly retains His own very body.  
 At table, He offers His flesh and bones, bidding them to touch  
 and He allows a doubter to verify Him by touching  
 380 so that, in reassuring this man, He may strengthen us with faith  
 and so that the scars He revealed may cure our mental wound.  
 Behold, I pray, how dutiful and kind He proves Himself to be!  
 He does this so that sinners may begin to have great trust;  
 in order to reassure slaves, look, He calls them brothers,  
 385 saying "Greetings!"; uncleanly, women touch His feet;  
 He allows the rock of the Church, to deny his Master,  
 so that he may learn how He forgives by His nod;  
 after this, the evangelical succession names women as well,  
 whose deeds alone let them down, but who are chosen for their moral dignity:  
 390 Ruth the Moabite, Tamar, Bathsheba and Rahab the look-out;  
 thus He recruits well-known sinners to evangelise His deeds;  
 thus He entered the house of Zacchaeus at his invitation.  
 Faith, love and hope grow strong in this way;  
 from this it is clear that grace removes our shame.  
 395 May the world to which He sends great gifts love Him the more!  
 Moreover, He tells His faithful disciples what they must say.  
 He says He has been given some of the whole power, but less than the Father's;  
 when He had removed the loathsomeness of Death with it,  
 He is then given the full power to equal the Father.  
 400 The plan demands suffering, but then being taken up in glory.  
 He then orders them to depart unto all nations  
 and teach them the faith, eventually being baptised  
 in the name of the Trinity, and He orders them to continue all this.  
 Because these people stand by their firm covenant with the King,  
 405 and did not give in to evil nor were broken by temptation,  
 He rewarded them with gifts, ones which were not fleeting,  
 not with gold, precious jewels or riches, but instead  
 He showers on them the royal sceptres of the kingdom above.  
 Because they tolerate being stripped of temporary honour,  
 410 He gives them the means to unlock or lock Heaven, as they wish.  
 But under the terms on which the Father sent His beloved Son,

He sent those He loved to suffer degradation in this way,  
 firstly to sow tears and then to harvest sheaves with rejoicing.  
 Finally, His majesty and power are apparent from this,  
 415 because He gave His servants such promises and commands.  
 One can see none of the great prophets speaking in this way:  
 they do not dare to promise Heaven to their followers,  
 nor to speak of what they think is linked or not linked to Heaven,  
 nor to say that the Father gives them all they wish in His name,  
 420 nor that the character of Satan and of snakes lies within them, nor that  
 they are the light of the world, salt of the earth, friends of the Creator,  
 to free the world or condemn it at the last judgement.  
 Moses does not say this to Joshua, nor Elijah or Elisha,  
 nor do they send missionaries all over the world.  
 425 This mountain alone does what other mountains undertake at their peak.  
 For the Spirit, by sending itself, spreads this message over the earth.  
 In order to show that it was equal to the Father, it said to Him:  
 "Glorify me, Father, so that I may glorify you!"  
 He did not gird them fully with the highest of virtues;  
 430 but the Holy Protector fills in what they lacked,  
 so that the Heavenly Spirit and the Word of the Lord grace them,  
 and their every action is proved to be linked to the Three Persons.  
 In the case of Peter, a girl revealed how afraid they were;  
 Peter himself revealed how the Spirit made them strong after this,  
 435 by reprimanding a magistrate.  
 He promised them this Spirit and told them to expect it,  
 to teach people everything, to reveal everything openly;  
 He also promised that He would be with them always.  
 He took them outside and lifted up His hands to bless them.  
 440 Having completed all the things which salvation requires,  
 He ascends into the highest reaches of Heaven by His own right.  
 It is clear that His holy mother Mary was on the spot,  
 to watch her son being carried up above the sky,  
 Mary who is rightly called blessed among all mothers.  
 445 He thus entered among the stars, witnessed by His disciples,  
 whom He orders to cross the frontiers of the whole world,  
 so that they may tell of the certainty of the triumph they had seen,  
 and at the same time He reveals that angelic servants attend them,  
 to bear witness, as He departs, that He will return.  
 450 These appear to their fellows and do their duties for their Lord.  
 Who can imagine this, much less put it into words,  
 the amazement and wonder which strikes the Heavenly squadrons,  
 when they see a human being on high, King over all,  
 so submissively humble, so sublimely Almighty,  
 455 returned from the redemption of earth and the crushing of Death,

and how happily the host of Heaven ran to meet Him,  
 all ranks ready with His praises,  
 and with what jubilation all the halls of Heaven are filled  
 and the Heavenly ones everywhere sing divine hymns?  
 460 A most wonderful thing, that flesh joined to the Almighty  
 reigns with lofty virtues over the heights, above all!  
 How every power prays, rejoicing, and trembles,  
 how it marvels in amazement at God's gift of such piety,  
 and praises and celebrates with vows eternal,  
 465 because He wishes to help the world with such wondrous order  
 that it does not destroy itself, but elevates the flesh He assumed,  
 and just flesh purifies sinful flesh, clean flesh the flesh full of vice!  
 Flesh of sin is now blessed by the flesh of the Lord.  
 If the Son of the King has performed an outstanding deed,  
 470 through which He may appear to be strong or kind,  
 all decent people happily report and celebrate  
 how much they love the King and strive to extol His Son.  
 What joy then do you think the Heavenly hosts get  
 because this Son, King of kings and Lord of lords,  
 475 did such work so bravely and so kindly,  
 in order to save His creations by His mercy and omnipotence?  
 In a word, our flesh is joined to Him in a profound plan.  
 Lo, He bravely attacks the brave, armed enemy, strips and binds him  
 and renders his power completely removed.  
 480 With Himself as ransom, He redeems those bound by their own guilt,  
 and our innocent Lord bears the sins of the guilty slave.  
 He makes up the number diminished by Satan's fall  
 and on His own shoulders carried the sheep to Heavenly folds.  
 The angels rejoice when one sinner happens to repent.  
 485 O how happy they are when the world is everywhere set free!  
 They see this man and marvel that He is the only one  
 whom the Father rightly admits to have pleased Him,  
 as He had once said that He had driven mortals to repent.  
 For this, they return eternal praises for the Lamb and the Father.  
 490 The disciples hold their faces and arms up to the sky  
 and with their eyes follow His departure for as long as they can.  
 As the air encloses Him and a cloud carries Him into the ether,  
 they track Him, out of range now, with the eyesight of the heart  
 and upon Him as God in Heaven, whom they see through love,  
 495 they learn to focus their devotion whole-heartedly.  
 Although the great force of love stirred them to tears,  
 hope and faith nevertheless rendered them swift  
 to recall that they are the servants of the true Master,  
 who had sown true salvation everywhere through them.

500 They stood there, worshipping, reluctant to go back.  
 Later, in the midst of the upper room ,  
 they prepare themselves as receptacles for the Holy Spirit to enter,  
 so that when the Spirit comes, it may have a refuge it loves.  
 Meanwhile Peter makes the number up to twelve.

505 The number eleven usually symbolises atonement ;  
 Peter did not want the number to fall below twelve,  
 whom the coming Spirit might send out to wander the world,  
 so that thrice four might travel through the same number of regions  
 and spread the Three-fold faith, offering the seven gifts.

510 They proposed little Matthias and Joseph surnamed Justus;  
 but the grace of God chose the little one.  
 O how different are our judgements from divine ones!  
 Often what is high to us is low to God,  
 and He considers precious what is worthless to us.

515 The one whom Peter chose, therefore, had the same status  
 as they had whom the Lord Himself had chosen:  
 so that it is shown to be a sound decision of the Church.  
 On that basis has our Supreme Teacher been chosen in the long period since.  
 Thus, He did not choose all those leaders Himself,

520 in order to show that the whole process of the succession is approved,  
 because He Himself sanctifies forever what is sanctified by the Church.  
 The day therefore had come, shining with sevenfold number,  
 on which a true and jubilant world may mystically find its way back.  
 The Holy Spirit, which fills the corners of the world,

525 and is spread more widely than space itself,  
 filling it all, deigns to accost the cowardly sea-monster  
 and to reveal itself to the world with visible evidence.  
 It strengthens weak ministers and makes them brave,  
 its grace appearing in little tongues of flame,

530 so that, by their words, they may make frozen minds catch fire.  
 The third hour makes the bearers of the faith eloquent, so that  
 their holy cause may be revealed by the very number of the hour,  
 or because there are three persons in one deity,  
 or the mysteries of the New Testament are revealed.

535 The Spirit “sits” on each of them, because it rests in peace on them;  
 “sitting” implies staying upon them in a very peaceful way,  
 and that none of them trouble it with a love of evil.  
 This guest, the Spirit, is repelled when passion for the flesh prevails.  
 But it is jubilant when it revisits rejected hearts,

540 to make those with divided loyalty seek their former Lord again.  
 If it panders to each person’s evil desire, it sells itself, as it were,  
 but it accepts the price which it had perhaps wanted.  
 It says “Whoever does that is a slave to sin”.

But this oil makes the slave-bond rot away,  
 545 and the freed man jubilantly regains the justice he had lost.  
 When the Holy Spirit appears, it gives the gift of tongues.  
 What is more in harmony with the Word than speaking in tongues?  
 The Spirit gave them these to show that it is at one with the Word;  
 it speaks through it, admitting unity with the Word.  
 550 And by the gift of tongues, it shows it gives a speaker the words,  
 unless an ineloquent person already had those languages.  
 It therefore gives new bottles for the new wine to ferment in;  
 they cannot be sealed now; they all pop their corks now,  
 no longer tolerating being laid down nor fancying dark cellars,  
 555 and they spring forth abroad and dare to push their way into crowds,  
 preaching Heavenly ideas in all manner of tongues.  
 News of this rapidly spreads everywhere and inspires others;  
 they all run together, marveling in open-mouthed amazement,  
 and nations were dumbstruck at such ideas of new portent,  
 560 peoples which by chance were then present from all over the world:  
 standing around, they each recognise their own language.  
 Although there was just one voice, of one person, at one time,  
 they each believed that the language was their own.  
 Immediately, this message was reckoned to be of such great import,  
 565 that three thousand underwent the sacred baptism of the faith.  
 After this, many thousands decided to accept the kingdom above.  
 For those upon whom this vision of true love first shone,  
 the result was that they had a single, united, social spirit,  
 and none of them would now claim anything as a personal possession.  
 570 They spurned things which tend to produce serious conflicts of desire;  
 for the ability to spurn possessions removes the causes of dispute.  
 This illustrates the honest nature of the early Church,  
 that the faithful let go of their possessions and bound their hearts;  
 all the things which each of them owns become common property.  
 575 Such is the power of unity: communal usage is assured;  
 if united, there are none in need and no greedy, covetous people.  
 One body is made from several limbs,  
 each limb doing something for, and serving, the rest.  
 A covetous person is therefore not attached to the limbs of the Church,  
 580 keeping as personal property what should be common property.  
 Earthly things are therefore of no value to the early saints,  
 who had one faith so that their wherewithal was held in common.  
 This is the way for monks who are united in a communal life;  
 there are a few adhering to this, but many in name only.  
 585 The way of life of each, then, indicates their type,  
 one renounces the world truly, the other falsely.  
 One is called a "sheep", the other a "son of solace";

for Christ says one is a wolf in sheep's clothing;  
 one who is elegant in habit is often proved to be covetous of mind,  
 590 and the name and work of Ananias the apostate stick to him;  
 Joseph is an example of the other type to whom Christ gave consolation:  
 he rejected the earth, having comfort in the stars:  
 however, one who imitates Ananias, preferring to be a wolf,  
 will see how Peter punishes this so quickly!  
 595 Peter, of course, was undone by his recent triple denial.  
 He knew that it was God whom he denied when a woman denounced him;  
 he said: "You are the Son of the Almighty Father",  
 for he had heard the Father calling in divine form.  
 So many times he had been ordered to forgive his brother.  
 600 He also urges Simon the sorcerer to repent; Paul welcomes  
 him back after he had done what no pagan had done.  
 Ananias received no warning but was struck down immediately,  
 and lost no time at least in dying.  
 Peter knew that many would be tainted by this disease;  
 605 so he strikes quickly, because he wants to stop it quickly,  
 to show future generations what sort of crime this is,  
 to break the social contract and to lie to God,  
 and to show also how joyful it is if brothers are treated as one.  
 The holy brotherhood therefore maintains a communal life in all things;  
 610 every one now loves each brother as himself.  
 Having been weaned on the taste of divine honey,  
 they refuse now to lick earthly nipples.  
 This Spirit, which fills the breasts of ancient prophets,  
 proves to be God, filling the breasts of new prophets.  
 615 Like God, it transforms and feeds them with the gift of salvation;  
 inspires when it wishes and enriches with whatever gift it wants;  
 just like their one Father, it glorifies Christ;  
 it fills the world, something which only that power can do,  
 and gives the holy ones a gift, reducing the crimes of sinners;  
 620 like the Father and the Son, it blesses those bathed in baptism.  
 The third divine person proceeds from the other two.  
 Who may tell what sort of procreation process is involved,  
 or what the progress of this Spirit may be? No one.  
 It is however accepted that there is one substance in three persons;  
 625 Each of them has all power because all are as one.  
 I offer an example which is not totally, but only partially, sufficient:  
 when you number them, the first one is from nothing, and then  
 the second one comes from the first, so that the first is not from it;  
 the third one is produced from the first one and the second,  
 630 but neither the first nor the second are from the third.  
 For the Father comes from nothing, the Son from the Father alone,

and from these two proceeds this Holy Spirit;  
 it is the love of them both, the perfect result and separate;  
 true love continues, ceases to be finished.

635 At the present time, the word used should be “proceeds”  
 and not “proceeded”, to avoid implying that it has finished.

That Spirit raises new clouds into the air  
 and makes them fly with thunder over the whole earth.  
 They rain, sowing dogma, and they flash, giving signs.

640 Blinding bolts of lightning strike the high mountains;  
 all the powerful tremble when they behold powerful signs.  
 Through new signs the new preachers confirm their new ideas;  
 for they are doing things never seen before.

The shadow of Peter and Paul’s belt thus cure all types of  
 645 diseases, and achieve much more with easy nod.  
 Thus, because they taught the truth, they inspired faith in all.

The signs may make grim tyrants panic  
 so that they meekly bow their proud necks to the humble yoke.  
 When it sees such things, the world is struck dumb with wonder,  
 650 when a poor little peasant does what no prince has done  
 in ages past, nor kings besides,  
 nor a huge standing army of all nations.

Who has brought some dead person back to life  
 or driven out demons, though he rules a whole kingdom?

655 Peter’s shadow does this; tyrants therefore yield before him.  
 The peace, which the incarnate God had sown in a barren world,  
 rained down from these clouds, producing great plenty.  
 All things pour down, therefore, from salubrious clouds.

God’s wisdom calls them handmaids and uses them to bind  
 660 Behemoth and builds the Church by hewing out seven pillars  
 and leads them to the citadel above.

Trusting in God’s strength, not in their own,  
 these men are alone able to convert the world, as no one before.  
 For they explain dogma which is hidden in obscure allegorical figures,  
 665 first revealed to them by the dutiful Creator Himself.

One God laid down two Testaments, as it were,  
 and thus disclosed the same, through Himself, to His disciples  
 and revealed the hidden mysteries through the new, to the old.  
 No one else in Heaven or on earth, or punished by the abyss, can unlock  
 670 these seals, except the murdered Lamb, and therefore  
 it appears therein that there is a wheel in the middle of a wheel;  
 for the new conceals the old, and the one removes the veil from the other.  
 He therefore gave His followers these things, and they passed them on  
 to future descendants, as they had learnt them.

675 The faithful flock is therefore fed by two teats;

from them flow all the orthodox ideas that each of the prophets  
pronounced, like a hen sheltering her chicks with its pair of wings.

He, called Father and Prince of time to come,  
though rejected, did not reject, but sought to attract runaways  
680 and orders the parricidal mob to call them back  
and is not reproachful if they should reform in the end.  
He gathers to His peace those who spilled His blood.  
Clean people now drink what perfidious people formerly spilled.  
Anyone who sees them obtaining forgiveness thus  
685 should not despair of salvation because of that crime!  
Of the thousands enticed back by the words of these men,  
an unholy group reckon that they are unworthy of everlasting life.  
God therefore abandons some, saving the rest, and, as it were,  
saves for Himself a little of the countless grains of sand.  
690 He orders the clouds not to pour rain on the others  
since they show no concern for their great crime or the sweet calling  
of the Father or for fear: censure abandons such people.  
Soon, as the prophet said, the holy mission spread to foreign  
nations: the Lord directed them to people where  
695 He was unknown before, deigning to show Himself for the first  
time, reducing evil and promising the Heavenly kingdom.

Moreover, the evil mob, lacking all goodness  
and now abandoned, devolved to animal behaviour,  
so that one may be truly shocked to examine their deeds.  
700 What salvation would be left for them if Christ departed?  
Nothing human or worthy of reason remains for them,  
but turning to madness, they now murder each other;  
they are left homeless, wandering from land to land,  
driven from their abode, no roof over their heads;  
705 no longer are they bound even by ancient law.

The mission He sent hence now preaches the whole world over.  
Unhoped-for salvation makes all people rejoice,  
and they recognize that it is the Word of God which they hear,  
which is in accord with human nature and is called  
710 rational and which justly, piously, soberly and honestly teaches  
whatsoever had poured forth upon the people as apostolic rain.  
When truth-telling priests promulgate true dogma  
and faith, they buttress new speeches with new signs.  
As they enlighten through signs and soberly speak each thing,  
715 you might see the people standing thunderstruck at both.  
They know the signs are the work of God working through them  
and their message is in harmony with the customs and laws of nature.  
They are happy to get to know the true path at last;  
they now mock long-worshipped idols and defile their shrines



720 and reckon that their old gods should be considered shit.  
 They also avoid the words of poets as though inane,  
 and see how weak a message there is in drama,  
 how rhetors fill their songs with puffed cheeks,  
 making minds weak, though they soothe ears with their sound.  
 725 Such orators lead these admitted Sophists to hatred therefore  
 with their weaving of comments into complicated dramas.  
 They wanted their verses to be seen as if gods speaking through them,  
 like a cup coated with sweet honey offering poison  
 and they want vice described in honeyed speech to please,  
 730 and also so that they may forcibly stamp sin into worshippers.  
 They exhibit wildness, savagery and wantonness,  
 so that anyone who merrily copies their example  
 will please them and also perform worse crimes.  
 The world is therefore especially crazy because of rhetoricians,  
 735 who urge crimes which they call their achievements.  
 The teachings of holy men have no influence on their behaviour;  
 the simple path, through the simple Word, lay open to the simple,  
 the lye-soap of piety making the eyes of both of them open.  
 Just as a few little seeds become vast crops,  
 740 if they are entrusted to the best furrows at the right time,  
 so too does the revealed Word quickly fill faithful hearts.  
 The inquisitive flock, already accustomed to listening to doctrine,  
 thirsts for justice, on which they live rather than bread.  
 Kings also run up from the South, bringing food;  
 745 for it is clear that the breasts of kings give milk to the Church.  
 Many of them multiply this profit by teaching  
 and reveal the allegorical sense by explaining the words,  
 and the plain surface gives birth to lofty powers;  
 History feeds little ones and allegory feeds imaginative ones.  
 750 In a word, they give many commands to stop the many vices  
 with which we have been infected, deservedly, by the first beings.  
 God gave one command to that first sane human.  
 By observing this command Adam could guarantee salvation,  
 but he languishes in this old contempt of body and mind;  
 755 for disease troubles his flesh and suggestion his mind.  
 So that he could opt for, and maintain, salvation safe and sound,  
 the skilful Doctor taught him to avoid harmful things,  
 and urges him to beware only of what can injure;  
 beset now by various chronic diseases  
 760 he lacks the various medicines for the disease he has,  
 lacks the means to be able to regain full health some time;  
 medical skill prevents what he desires, forcing what he dreads.  
 The first man was just one thing short in proving his obedience

to the Lord's command: he would then be totally free;  
 765 now there is a need to constrain him with many commands,  
 so that there are as many corrective orders as vices to trouble him.

True teachers therefore taught the true faith, which is known  
 to grow stronger with effort, but to be almost dead without it.  
 They reveal every plan and ritual of God's worship;  
 770 they hide nothing, but rather provide all things useful.  
 They say that the Church consists of various limbs,  
 with three ranks in it, distinguished by different duties,  
 the third superior to the middle one, the middle one to the first,  
 but all made into one body by the one faith.

775 Heaven's mansion welcomes the weak along with the mighty;  
 the magnates lead the other lesser ones,  
 but both may say that they have a Heavenly Lord,  
 who exalts the humble and puts down the mighty!

To preserve carefully the gifts given them, they say prudently  
 780 that the world was sent for them in an earlier time,  
 and that unholy hearts were abandoned in an awesome plan.  
 In so teaching, they warn people to consider what was given them,  
 to realise that the gifts are great, so that they love the Giver,  
 He who by his death made sinners the inhabitants of Heaven.

785 Whatever they were born with, whatever later behaviour added,  
 He washes clean by this covenant, which gets rid of their old ways.  
 They who are new should do what His new Law demands,  
 and know that they belong to Him by whose blood they were saved,  
 and should now follow Him who buys them with His blood.

790 Enough of the world living in a time of sin,  
 when error or unclean desire gripped all peoples!  
 Lo, because He comes with the morning and drives night from the world,  
 all good people should strive to arise from their long sleep  
 - the time has come - only the last hour of the day remains!

795 Finally, there is soon to come a universal judgement,  
 in which everyone will be paid the full reward for work done,  
 though not everyone may be repaid further with forgiveness!  
 Not to know the path of salvation is better, to my mind,  
 than to learn of it, but to turn back from it wilfully,  
 800 in the end picking up infections, as a dog its vomit.

Let them know why Jesus rejected riches!  
 He stands before His murderers, to deny that He is a king.  
 No one has any doubt that He wants to be followed,  
 and that soldiers must follow the path which their general takes.  
 805 If people love the world or any of its lovable contents,  
 they do not know yet how to appreciate the Heavenly Father's love  
 and do not copy Him who taught them to reject the world.

No one indeed can be a slave to two masters,  
 no one can love God and the world, His enemy.  
 810 All things which are suited to our nature  
 should not stir in us a feeling of desire but should be put to use,  
 though not greedily, but according to necessity.  
 Although baptism and faith secure our salvation,  
 they do not secure a person so that no harm may strike,  
 815 but Death still ravages and destroys the flesh of those re-born.  
 Though Death may frequently be overcome by the saints,  
 so that they, whom that devourer had consumed, get to Heaven,  
 they still suffer death of the flesh, which they routed by their virtue.  
 Not to be able to die, this is the gift of the Lord's kingdom,  
 820 when a person does not sin and is not deserving of punishment.  
 Now, however, though we all trespass in many ways,  
 merit builds up in holy persons and cleanses sin.  
 If Christ wanted to free them completely from Death,  
 would a rose bloom therefore for a martyr,  
 825 suffering Death and in turn repaying Christ for His suffering?  
 Dying for Him, martyrs show how much they love Him,  
 and, after a thousand tortures, all their limbs shattered,  
 sharers of His punishment, they become fit to reign with Him.  
 But because there is death of the flesh for those reborn after baptism,  
 830 a perfidious voice sets a trap here for our faith,  
 to lessen the meaning of holy baptism, mocking it:  
 "If water washes away sin into which Death had crept,  
 it follows that if baptism is scrapped, then Death itself is likewise.  
 What now is blamed for the sins formerly removed by baptism?  
 835 Since the flesh later dies, there is no proven gain in baptism,  
 nor is there gain for the spirit, not driven out of the flesh."  
 So babbles perfidy, bleary-eyed in the daylight,  
 while it tries to fix its swollen eyes upon the rays of the sun.  
 But cautious true faith retains its own yardstick,  
 840 growing stronger by believing ideas rather than refuting them;  
 it knows that it is clear that all things are made at divine nod  
 and is not without reason, because the wise act wisely.  
 When therefore there is something untouched by refutation,  
 that which He, who does everything, does, as He ought, is enough.  
 845 There are some cases, however, in which there is refutation.  
 For God Himself admits that flesh is worthless;  
 but when the spirit makes that weak flesh come alive,  
 we do not observe the dignity characteristic of the spirit,  
 but neglect the soul and revere excessively its handmaid, the flesh;  
 850 the neglected spirit declines, the corrupted flesh grows arrogant.  
 God therefore wants to curb the flesh with various punishments,

like a furnace which purifies molten gold;  
 He sets the spirit free and abandons the flesh to Death.  
 If death or diseases could be removed by baptism,  
 855 everyone would seek it, just as a sick person would want a doctor,  
 not because of faith or Christ's honour and name,  
 but rather so that one's wretched life might be prolonged.  
 If the flesh, beset by so many ills, so often shaken by danger,  
 grows arrogant and itches to promote itself in a vain struggle,  
 860 what would it dare to do, if no one were to curb it?  
 Generally, prosperity does us harm and adversity is good for us,  
 as King David made clear to us by word and by deed.  
 He was keen to save Saul, when he was suffering adversity;  
 and it was reported that prosperity was his undoing.  
 865 Correction by the whip, however, called him back to the chosen ones.  
 Indeed, grace saved Paul himself with cuffs around the ear.  
 God also restrains His special friends tightly, like this:  
 Job lies in excrement and John dies surrounded by revelry,  
 for the more important their mission, the graver their suffering.  
 870 They also foretold of other future deviations.  
 When enemies see the crop of the faith start to grow,  
 they strive to vilify it with countless departures,  
 so that the faith, corrupted by their deeds, renders us worthless.  
 There were rhetoricians the people believed to be learned;  
 875 when they were sent, the people put more stumbling-blocks in their way,  
 to stop their enticing words from capturing the hearts of the pious.  
 Some, however, who thought it offensive to obstruct, were helpful.  
 When they finally force our fellows to reply to their trivialities,  
 a mystical thing was revealed in the war being waged:  
 880 the more the faith is challenged, the stronger it makes the faithful.  
 Signs quite often help our fellows and also restrain those.  
 The heretic Arius fills the public latrine with his bowel contents,  
 proving by his empty stomach how misguided he was in heart.  
 The world is now bound to the faith, rejoicing and attentive,  
 885 the nations rejoicing in it and performing acts of duty freely.  
 As the divine voice of God says that all people are well-behaved,  
 there exists in them the grace to accept the Word with the heart's ear,  
 so that they know through it that Christ Himself truly exists,  
 whom the Father once promised as a leader for the nations,  
 890 who so loves the human race that He became that very thing  
 which we are, and reckons that sinners are worthy of this gift,  
 that He should be willing to die, and they live up to His sacrifice.  
 As a blind person rejoices to see the lamp-light no longer visible,  
 and a captive rejoices to revisit his homeland after long exile,  
 895 and a sick person rejoices to mend after being wracked by illness,

so the people are happy to have salvation after so long,  
 and because the light is shining on them after lengthy darkness  
 and the splendour of the faith so lights up the labyrinth of sin that  
 their former hardness softens before the face of God,  
 900 the yoke which restricted the world from its origin having rotted,  
 and a place in Paradise, so long closed to humans, is now open.  
 This love so sweet, on which this Mediator insists,  
 urges us to love Him in return and to shun earthly glory.  
 It is now important to enjoy the Heavenly gift, but also  
 905 make use of the earthly one, moreover by following God who is responsible for both.  
 The holy tolerate the loss of their possessions with joy,  
 because they know that they will have riches above instead.  
 They quickly decide to give up not only all possessions for His sake,  
 but themselves as well, to Death, thinking nothing of tortures.  
 910 They laugh at the executioners and are happy to end their lives,  
 in order to look happily upon their Lord's face as soon as possible.  
 Therefore, as new borns thirst for a spiritual lake,  
 grow without deceit and are accustomed to protest the Father,  
 they know how wrong it is not to reply to His call,  
 915 and how dreadful it is to submit to Death again,  
 and how stupid to have taken as worthless the gift of grace.  
 None of the Lord's commands should be thought of lightly,  
 for neither the greatest of them nor the least of them can be ignored.  
 If a wretched little servant scorns a command given,  
 920 Death often strikes; a just judge sanctioned this. How more would  
 the judge condemn if it was an order given by the Son Himself?  
 The prophets have a line of succession of such descendants,  
 to steer the boat of the Church through later centuries,  
 to cut through the waves, to stand up to the gales with foresight.  
 925 They fulfil the captaincy of the ship spiritually, performing  
 all tasks with prudence, until they bring the ship to shore.  
 These men reveal the Old Testament and the New  
 as if firing the stout arrows of their message from a bow.  
 For as a bow is made from horn and soft bowstring,  
 930 likewise the two Testaments are one entity;  
 like a new bowstring, it is soft and flexible;  
 like an old one, it is hard and strict in punishing sins.  
 The string however becomes all taut when pulled back;  
 but the horn works together to help the job of the string;  
 935 thus the instructions of the New Testament are all about salvation  
 but not on their own: they work with the same ideas from the Old.  
 Through the ages therefore they set up a regime for people;  
 these men reveal the symbolic meanings of both Testaments.  
 If the devil tries to recruit corrupt preachers,

- 940 to violate the work of the faith or pull holes in the dogma,  
the Lord also prepares recruits whose voices will rout them.  
These books therefore were opened with the words of John, and their  
contents reveal what following generations should do or avoid doing.  
As someone looking in a mirror sees a face  
945 and ugliness or beauty is perhaps revealed in that face, so the life  
of leaders should reflect what should be the deeds of their followers.  
These men are mountains which provide pastures for their sheep.  
Whosoever does not follow or copy what pure ones do  
will suffer the judgement of these, to be punished.
- 950 The peace, granted by the King at His birth or left at His going,  
residing upon the peak of virtues, makes them one;  
this Prince of virtues feeds and adorns all the rest.  
In peace, the limbs are in harmony with their head, Christ,  
through whose judgement the disciples are known.
- 955 This peace had united and joined in love the very tyrants.  
Though rare is the tyrant who rages with Assyrian anger,  
policing cases of justice with the sword,  
any prince can suppress his uncontrollable frenzy.  
The forehead learns now to get used to the sign of the cross on it  
960 and brutish breasts learn to restrain their animal instincts;  
fierce peoples now learn not to make war, when in the past  
so many thousands have so often been reported slain.  
Peace holds a place on high, to encourage the rest.  
We keep, none of us, an everlasting peace treaty with ourselves,  
965 unless we are in harmony with orders from on high.  
Therefore they observe and obey God's orders first and foremost,  
binding them to themselves with cords which no schism can untie.  
And as the sons of Korah survived after their father's death,  
so those in holy harmony are not allowed to become worthless.
- 970 What the prophet proclaimed, now happens in the name of Christ:  
the lance turns into a scythe and the sword into a hoe,  
and the shameful tongue becomes accustomed to holy discussion,  
so that it removes vice and sweetens hardened hearts.  
With these as leaders, peace is created in time of war.
- 975 Christ therefore gave the world His disciples as leaders,  
and they and their successors taught those who were failing.  
These men created a path, to lead the people to Heaven.  
They predicted the demonic tricks to come,  
and how they might do harm in peacetime or in war,  
980 and how vice is harmful to every virtue,  
and with how many dangers later ages would be ablaze,  
and that countless people, loving themselves more than Christ,  
will be followers of pleasure, spurning their Creator,

## BOOK VI

985 urged to wicked deeds by self-love – Alas! Alas!,  
(for, because they were able to know God but then abandoned Him,  
they are deservedly left to the noose of the Anti-Christ),  
and that holy ones falter, but are to be watched over in Heaven,  
and that, because they are faithful, God shortens their days.

**Book 7**Preface

What mortals put in place or chance to order  
 most often turns out other than they want or expect.  
 Scripture tells of this and tradition affirms it;  
 this is what has happened to this work of mine.

- 5 My chatty pen has recounted, as well it could,  
 that the King, the pinnacle of justice, has arrived.  
 I had hoped to finish my poetic lines there,  
 but the narrative demands that I add something.

- The Hebrew people prefigured the Church.  
 10 The sea gives them passage, the Pharaoh is drowned,  
 but two kings still threaten them and their great struggle.  
 Finally they attain a homeland where they may find peace.

- The flock which the rod of the Cross led out over the sea  
 does not immediately approach the stars or lack enemies:  
 15 it struggles with vices: arrogance and lust  
 beset it sorely, like the kings.

- King Og and King Bashan suggest this symbolically,  
 obstructing the people who seek a homeland.  
 These two enemies do very great harm to  
 20 the holy ones, after baptism, and weary them.

Some overthrow kings and take the sceptres,  
 clearly representing the humble and the shining ones,  
 while others –the unclean– wickedly forge a calf.  
 This urges my little poem to continue.

- The whole body of the Church was strong within,  
 although it appeared on the outside to be in tatters.  
 Being lovelier within than it seems without, shining  
 honourably in the midst of a degenerate people,  
 5 just like a fragrant meadow, which a cloud waters from the sky:  
 where lilies and violets, the rose with nard oil and balsams,  
 and all the other plants add colour with their own hues.  
 These flowers represent souls blessed with different talents;  
 many have turned red as if with a martyr's garland of roses



## BOOK VII

10 others are white like pure lilies.  
The faithful were therefore quick to fulfil what the law orders.  
One would think they live in Heaven, clothed in righteousness.  
But what happens? Temptation troubles our life.  
Neither sea nor sky nor earth remains calm;  
15 they turn to wintry rain or waves and frost;  
likewise waver people whose life is temptation.  
Although that peace which Christ left to His followers on His departure  
abides forever with those whom inner grace strengthens,  
it is yet necessary that temptations arise.  
20 Therefore battles rage outside and fears inside,  
and sore temptation has sown its seeds without and within;  
hardship overwhelms those, temptation these;  
with these two things that perfidious serpent harms the faithful.  
Although a field may be sown with wheat seed,  
25 an enemy later sows weeds in it as well;  
both grow together until threshing time,  
when corn fills the granary but the weeds fill Gehenna.  
This life passes with the meek and the wanton mixed together;  
though their way of life may unite them, harvest will sort them.  
30 Because the early deeds of our fathers set us our example,  
the journey of the people from Egypt becomes a symbol for us.  
Then the people departed, freed by the drowning of the Pharaoh;  
God Himself kills the fierce enemies whom the people cannot overpower.  
These first men are rightly like powerful lords;  
35 against these, as against masters, slaves cannot fight;  
Christ therefore, without us, drowns these in the wash.  
God therefore drowns the armies of Memphis in the sea,  
cleansing every outrage, revenge which His injured people deserve.  
The descendants of Pharez now trouble the Hebrews from beyond the sea,  
40 to stop them becoming lazy should they happen to be enemy-free.  
Likewise, baptism has removed earlier sins,  
but the yearnings of the flesh are not suppressed completely,  
and the flesh whispers ideas to the spirit, daring to resist it.  
After bathing and a meal of manna, the people resist those things;  
45 after baptism the pious struggle to prevent leisure making them lazy,  
struggle against the vices which hinder those seeking the kingdom,  
so that the praises of the Lord remain the reward owed us.  
Therefore the pious fight and triumph with the Lord's help,  
winning, either by His gift or by our courage.  
50 Kings Sihon and Bashan resist after the Pharaoh was drowned;  
these kings attempt to delay the travellers.  
For it is said that Sihon means "lofty"  
and Bashan means "baseness"; pride and lust thus fight,

and these two plagues block our way like two kings.  
 55 For one ravages the flesh and the other the mind;  
 one incites the wanton desires of the flesh,  
 the other persuades us that it is very good to love praise.  
 What Lot's daughters do to their father, these two also do:  
 the first seeks sex with her father, then persuaded the second;  
 60 the first, arrogant, debauches the mind, then lust the flesh.  
 The first daughter does what the second one put him through;  
 the bed of the first is therefore laid out for the second.  
 Thus, lust frequently perverts chaste old age;  
 when lust swells within, virtue therefore rushes out.  
 65 These block those seeking a homeland after Egypt:  
 often a good man, while sleeping, may become weak at heart,  
 when grabbed by the daughters which he had procreated.  
 A holy house totally rejects such things.  
 It is revealed in countless events from the days of our ancestors  
 70 that it is indeed necessary for temptation to test us.  
 For a Babylonian king beset them with the same plagues.  
 He erected here an idol; there he set up a furnace.  
 The king is Satan and his idol is pride, his furnace lust.  
 He makes people bow to his image or casts them into the flames,  
 75 but those who spurn his image will vanquish the flames.  
 Then that fire consumes the Chaldeans, subject to the idol;  
 but it dared to do no harm to the boys.  
 As the people of Babylon run with the people of Jerusalem,  
 behold, the idol and the furnace stand nigh for both.  
 80 For arrogance and lust mix them both together.  
 However, the same fire does not consume both.  
 Vain gluttons and drinkers suffer this,  
 the furnace devours the king's followers as they are prostrate before the image;  
 but the sober and meek, like the three boys, deservedly escape  
 85 victorious, because first they mastered their own appetites.  
 In fact, they have a fourth companion, one armed with chastity,  
 who protects the meek; the furnace therefore devours them not.  
 It destroys the Chaldeans who are dragged into it without much resistance;  
 but it does not harm the abstemious; it burns but is subject to chains.  
 90 Thus, just because evil suggestion keeps hitting them, it may not break them.  
 The letter Tau is the sign of the cross marking the forehead of the  
 faithful who know that others lament because crime is rampant.  
 These angels of peace are said to weep bitterly;  
 Scripture was wont to call these people grieving.  
 95 Such are the Lord's people and a mark burns the rest,  
 whom the beast has captured and branded as his own.  
 Those bearing the Tau on their foreheads therefore mourn for the many,

and the minority grieve because debauchery abounds everywhere.  
 O, the pain, because the world, washed clean, is dirty again,  
 100 because many have suffered shipwreck on the shore,  
 because lust makes reprobates of those reborn after chrism.  
 Neither the Flood nor Gomorra's fire has beaten lust.  
 Would that baptismal waters could extinguish this!  
 But you may see that few can avoid their vapour  
 105 which works to restore at least their latent sense of decency;  
 but those vile others, filthy in body, alone receive the vapours,  
 and abandon the gift of cleanliness as though something of little value;  
 without it no one at all is going to see the Lord.  
 Those He redeems with His blood and washes in baptism  
 110 chain themselves up again and strive to be led back into lust.  
 What good is grace? What does redemption give them?  
 Rather, it is a hard task for them to give up their free gifts.  
 Of course, they prove that the path of Christ displeases them,  
 and that they prefer to run along a wide road,  
 115 they whom that prison of Gehenna restrains tightly.  
 The holy flock therefore does not cease to lament such days,  
 because in almost all the world evil lust rages.  
 Paul says that there will be many such people in the end,  
 and Peter asserts that the eyes of these are full of lust.  
 120 Therefore they grieve that many have lapsed after baptism,  
 because a mother clothed in sunlight gives birth but Satan sucks  
 them in, because a serpent tears the light-giving stars from the sky,  
 because it has the power to lay down gold for itself, like mud,  
 because it treads the very rays of the sun under its feet.  
 125 It chases out people who shine with virtue,  
 while lust makes those who resist behave like pagans.  
 Often many people, lofty in wisdom and deeds,  
 are wont, like the eagle, to fix their gaze on the sun,  
 while they perform pious deeds but subjugate themselves wickedly  
 130 to the flesh, as if they abandon the upper air and seek the body  
 in the lowest regions, or through lust pervert all things good,  
 so that one sin can destroy many good deeds.  
 But the Judge condemns the whole range of corrupting crime.  
 He can be swayed by prayer but not by money; He says:  
 135 "Let them not vainly think they can be redeemed at any price!"  
 God admits to spitting out these lukewarm ones quickly.  
 He rejoices at this and cleverly wears down those satans.  
 Reckoning the stupid to be of little worth, Satan, as if sucking up rivers,  
 is confident that he can devour even the holy, like the Jordan.  
 140 The stupid rot in their own excrement like donkeys;  
 this would be as of no consequence; but it is to be lamented that

those on whom grace shines can perish well enough by their own will.  
But, in fact, Satan has power even over ascetics and the wise!

Alas, the shame! In cloisters established long ago for study,  
145 where a shared cell may better serve the brothers,  
so that each one may be a sort of guard, reciprocally, to the other,  
and it is disgraceful to commit sin in the presence of brothers,  
here also is madness, in what is thought to be a school of the Lord.  
When a boy is sent to a monastery, like Samuel, to be brought  
150 up to participate in holy disciplines, like a pot  
retaining its flavour from what was its first content,  
and as the curved cane may teach through good use,  
someone debauches this boy and profanes Christ's gift,  
and the very one who took him to be brought up in the Lord ruins him.  
155 He whom Satan perhaps inflames to debauch a boy – as much as  
the soul is better than the body; so much worse is he than Herod,  
one destroys a soul which will live on, the other the perishable flesh.  
For this reason Nabuzaradan drove out Sopher the tutor of young boys.

Saying such things, I shock chaste ears.  
160 Paul often refers to something which he himself admits to be disgusting.  
That trumpet which resounds in all parts of the world,  
he who reveals all the mysteries of the Church,  
announces that there will be countless such in the end;  
finally, revealing in his account the vices which people have,  
165 he puts this one last, to teach us that it is more important.  
If perchance the number of faithful people is like grains of sand,  
only remnants must be chosen, says the prophet.  
This extraordinary hawker preaches that there will be such people,  
and that the final days will be full of many dangers, and there  
170 will be countless people who love themselves more than Christ,  
who abandon love of Him because of lust.  
The King Himself says that such days become more frequent in the end  
and that the flesh could not be saved unless these days were reduced.

That serpent makes the leisure time dedicated to inquiry into  
175 divine matters seethe with unspeakable pursuits.  
The more opportunity each is allowed, the dirtier the things handled.  
Hence the words of the prophet, that the enemy laughs at Sabbaths.  
“The ungodly has performed iniquities in the land of the saints”,  
but follows it with: “He will not see the glory of the Lord”.

180 Since this disease holds sway far and wide with loose rein,  
they are wretched and languid, longing for Egypt in their heart,  
nor do they feel shame for perverting the innate laws of nature,  
or that those whom Christ freed with His blood are taken prisoner.  
The mind is enslaved; the flesh holds power, like a prince;  
185 our five senses obey the rule of lust; the more one is affected

by this lust, the more one is interested in the flesh and goes on  
to incest, perverted intercourse and all sorts of depravity.

Each person's conduct deteriorates because lust is persuasive,  
cutting the limbs of Christ, creating a whore's body.

190 Now it fills the whole world, not just a part of it,  
so that one would believe the world to be like one great Gomorra.  
It also rages even among the rich, the needy, the old.  
And as if there will be no judgement ever to come  
for all that one has done with one's body,  
195 everyone therefore commits sin with enthusiasm.

A great wrong, which is inherent in limbs cleansed by chrism  
(and any part of the Church one cares to name is dying because of it)  
that one whom Christ has redeemed is later devoured by the terrible beast,  
whereas the Bride of the Groom has neither stain nor wrinkle!

200 It is important for priests themselves to serve at altars,  
because there are people ignorant of the offspring of the Virgin,  
who are aroused with the passion of a horse, even, or a mule.  
Who will satisfactorily explain what damnation waits for these?  
Without doubt, such a harsh penalty restrains such people,  
205 whom the sacred reverence of a holy place does not, nor ranks  
of office nor the Heavenly work of consecration, whereby  
they enlarge their knowledge of the mysteries of so great a matter,  
that is, that angel-servants stand at the altar and the right hand  
of God is with them when they administer the holy sacraments.

210 The majesty of the cause grows worthless in the people's eyes from this also:  
an example is provided for most of them by the act of atonement,  
though the stupid could easily understand that the  
duties of the altar are not to be performed by the profane.  
They who go with whores remove themselves from the body of Christ;  
215 they must see this: if a body is that of a whore, it is therefore profane.  
The King, seeing his guests, utters these words:  
"You, friend, lacking a marriage robe, why do you enter here?"  
He is dumbstruck and goes off in chains to outer darkness.

This wild beast thirsts for subjects, or rather, for their leaders,  
220 as every army is lost when its general is beaten. A keen general  
makes his troops keen, the feeble general makes them idle;  
so the enemy concentrates its attack on the standard-bearer or  
the general, to cut him down or make him fear for his life  
and unable to support his comrades.

225 This happens in a physical duel and also in a spiritual one  
that the fall of the general is the cause of the collapse of the rest.

Because enemies may do harm more often through the fall  
of princes, they are depicted as vipers biting the hand of Paul.  
Each follower of Paul is immediately inspired by the flame of love;

230 consequently, a prelate or other cleric,  
 quick to adopt and use Paul's example,  
 knows that the snares of Beelzebub must be faced,  
 all of whose armed soldiers beset us sorely. For the sake of all  
 his men, let the general therefore understand victory and defeat!  
 235 In his elevated rank, he easily becomes more harmful to people;  
 for example, if he is afraid for himself and for the many he supports  
 and if he trembles that many may be ruined by his own fall!  
 An incompetent general disarms and a resolute one arms, as  
 many men as the hells he knows how to feel or the crowns to receive!  
 240 People who understand a little of the feelings of brotherly love,  
 are capable of lamenting human downfall,  
 which they see as taking a Heavenly gift in vain, and preferring  
 to pursue a life of crime and to abandon the defence of virtue.  
 Such people are fulfilled by abandoning spiritual decency  
 245 with reprobate feeling, and by following falsehoods.  
 The wretches are empty of heart; and they seek to be "polished"  
 in the flesh, "unpolished" in morals or beautiful in dress;  
 as if they attempt to display a beauty which has to be improved,  
 as if they dare to tart up God's creation with beautiful cosmetics.  
 250 This vice grips men and women alike.  
 It is sickening to reveal the mindless obsessions of these women,  
 how their many changes of glad rags,  
 just to please men, whom they could often shut out,  
 if dressed in the morals which the Apostle ordered them to be.  
 255 How basely affected one would see men themselves! As if they who  
 who are now bent with old age were to wear fine attire  
 upon their trembling limbs and become wanton of spirit!  
 But why do we complain that brutes seek such things,  
 brutes who do not deserve to have found spiritual glory,  
 260 when ordained ministers are not ashamed to court this?  
 Priests, too, parade about in silly outfits,  
 so that what lacks in merit is made up for by showy dress,  
 and they gleam because of the skill of weavers, not their moral code,  
 that garment of Christ which they had worn across the sea.  
 265 They ought to break down the walls of Jericho,  
 or drown the pride in their voice, an example to the world.  
 Instead they submit to the profits of Mammon,  
 attempting to climb the peaks of wind-puffed reputation.  
 Thus the two kings, after the sea, overpower our armies.  
 270 Envy, adultery, trickery, disrespect, theft,  
 anger and riot accompany such kings like army columns.  
 Here, here, pain urges us to weep over sad quarrels.  
 Treachery - Jewish, it seems - clings to such things!

That people reckons worthless the gifts and teachings of God,  
 275 desiring instead earthly things, not valuing Heavenly.  
 So they cling to earthly things, rightly deprived of the Heavenly.  
 Also, these degenerates, rich with divine gifts,  
 given liberty and redeemed by holy blood,  
 later run back into slavery, to the servile yoke of the flesh.  
 280 Alas, the guilty minds of people, their brutish hearts, their feeble senses!  
 They do not fear the anger so often experienced by sinners  
 nor do they fear the deed in return for which the cataclysm strikes  
 nor the sulphurous paths offered by hellish Gomorra,  
 the deed for which Satan loses Heaven and goes to Hell.  
 285 Alas, too many such examples of the pitiable insane deeds of the depraved!  
 They want to be like a horse or mule, lacking sense,  
 and their flesh, after baptism, deserves to be called donkey flesh!  
 We are therefore forced to banish their sad brayings for a long time.  
 Ignoring these, who burn with the kindling-wood of flesh,  
 290 whom arrogance buffets and puffs up and bends low,  
 who think nothing of losing their integrity of mind,  
 who devote all to the flesh and nothing to the mind, like a beast,  
 nor are afraid to abandon, willingly, their own salvation,  
 and grab the ideas and generous dowries of these Jews,  
 295 plus the Ethiopians who do not want to change their black skin  
 when God whitens them and loves them with His own blood, -  
 therefore, ignoring these, the pen - as it can - preaches unto those  
 who are afraid of slipping or who try to rise up after a fall!  
 All through our life temptation runs deep.  
 300 Consequently, lust very often tempts good men  
 like Joseph and David; one ran away from it and the other clung to it.  
 By fleeing, this man shows us that everyone should flee this beast;  
 the advice of Paul, the eloquent catechist of the world, is this:  
 that no one should try to fight it in hand-to-hand combat,  
 305 for often it overwhelms even those blessed with great courage.  
 And King David taught us that downfall was swift for the courageous  
 so that none with courage should dare to fight,  
 but their eyes should avoid lust and their thoughts avoid contact,  
 lest they be seduced into choosing not to devote themselves to moderation.  
 310 One however who is tempted is restored after repentance.  
 It is clearly necessary, when temptation besets us,  
 that His divine sight sees us, even though hidden,  
 so that it is clear to us who He is, and He is revealed to each of us.  
 But God makes those setbacks the cause of salvation for his followers;  
 315 Peter is holier when he becomes more critical of himself;  
 for he knew who it was in whose strength he might trust;  
 all people, while they appear humble, are possessed of justice.

Therefore, not knowing how to recognise the danger which  
 threatens them, they neglect to ask for help from above,  
 320 without which no one could retain eternal salvation.  
 Thus God Himself advises with what prayer each person should  
 approach Him, so that each of us who deigns to take up our faith  
 is provided with a defence so that temptation may not defeat us.  
 Therefore He sees how great is the presumption of our mind,  
 325 and how few are keen to fight like that Joseph,  
 thwarting the Egyptian queen by running away;  
 but instead desire to consort with Madianite whores.  
 He takes care of His people, tempering adversity with prosperity,  
 while shaking them so that arousal ceases to swell their senses.  
 330 Therefore let Him not crush them because evil ideas beset them,  
 for that lust rages in almost all the world!  
 May the cowardly flesh, becoming braver, be eager to fight!  
 But, though beaten, this terrible beast is preparing war again:  
 the shaven hairs grow again on the skin.  
 335 Thus the Nazirites were ordered: just to shave the hairs,  
 not to pluck them, and to dedicate the shaven hair to the Lord.  
 Because the flesh either generates this or gets it from the suggestion  
 of the enemy, lest softened flesh make its sense grow soft,  
 the mind ought to cut off all of that with its swift enthusiasm.  
 340 One whom pleasure touches does not then die from it;  
 pleasure taken consumes us, but pleasure rejected crowns us.  
 Each person is said to deny God by committing sin.  
 This happens in a young horse, as a result of lust:  
 this one rejects it because of the carrots, that one because of the sticks.  
 345 What is the difference do you think? Both denials are damning;  
 this person, whom pleasure overwhelms, behaves worse than  
 the one who stops struggling, beaten by punishments.  
 If a laurel wreath adorns the a horse tamer,  
 whom the animal cannot defeat, rightly does the garland adorn him.  
 350 If the mind resists with reason when the flesh delights,  
 reasoning how it should fear the Lord, like Him or love Him,  
 it does not dare to commit a crime before His face.  
 One who is burning from the bite of a fiery serpent,  
 may see the cross and retain its golden image!  
 355 That lust urges the opening of the door of the heart;  
 God also knocks at the door and, shown in, wants to dine with you.  
 The mind must therefore see to whom it opens or closes its door!  
 No one can serve two masters equally.  
 Light does not exist in darkness; a nail drives out a nail;  
 360 in one breast there is no room for God and lust together;  
 He plucks out biting flies from human eyes.



Thus may fear be able to curtail sin in the presence of God!  
 See what it is for God to dine with a mortal,  
 and also how wretched it is for anyone to prefer to eat dirt!

365 By night and day the faithful must study the law of God.  
 We are also ordered to taste how sweet the Lord is,  
 to delight in Him, not to do evil,  
 always to seek His face with ours,  
 and also ordered to speak well of the Lord at all times.

370 When may we therefore be free from foul urges?  
 A very beautiful bride may appear radiant to her handsome groom!  
 A lungful of arrogant breath is usually bad for the health;  
 a very small spot spoils a beautiful face.  
 So the face of the soul should beware of what the Groom abhors!

375 May he fear removal from God's body because of his love of the flesh!  
 Let him not violate the temple which the Holy Spirit graces!  
 Let no one think it little to condone the crime!  
 When a corrupt mind outlines for itself obsessive ideas,  
 it defiles its own purity by condoning sin,

380 if it desires to complete the mental urge with the deed.  
 Nothing of a woman is covered up in impure minds,  
 but their bodies, though naked, are hidden in chaste minds.  
 Moreover, God teaches that chastity is precious  
 and that He wants us to be truthful and pure.

385 He puts all good deeds into the twin pans of a balance,  
 as it were, ordering us to gird ourselves with chaste loins  
 and to hold in our hands red warning lamps,  
 valuing the prize of purity as the same as other virtues.  
 What value do other virtues have if not graced with purity?

390 There is no use in carrying countless lamps  
 unless girded loins make them shine brightly.  
 As the heat of the blood usually grows cold in old men,  
 so the elderly world must have therefore grown tepid,  
 going blind, seeing its own end near,

395 sometimes washing its defiled old age with tears.  
 For it had always been foreseen from its beginning  
 in laws and signs or in the words and deeds of our forefathers,  
 foreseen whence it can later restore its former splendour,  
 to have sanity and wisdom whenever it tries to rise again.

400 Finally there came a God born of a virgin,  
 to make the world new in the end – He who created it,  
 and whom it should fear as its Lord. Therefore – unthinkable! –  
 when evil desire suggests that maybe He should not be followed,  
 the mind should weigh up rationally what it is which desire is urging,  
 405 what it is which satisfies moderation and what causes weeping for ages!

He whom God teaches will therefore never go astray like a mule!  
 As a soldier at war, because he knows what will soon happen,  
 screams and panics and considers victory in doubt,  
 the armed Christian is ordered to be likewise,  
 410 whom God has ordered to gird his loins  
 to drive off nocturnal fears with the sword at his thigh.  
 With the mention of loins He signals a special danger;  
 for it is clear that this vice is more harmful than the rest,  
 for it delights us longer and tires us more,  
 415 because it usually has flesh as its helper,  
 and this soft flesh very quickly softens one's senses.  
 Consequently, the enemy reckons that this includes Christ's member as well.  
 Let each one master the flesh, not make peace with it as one does with the enemy!  
 But not too much mastery, as restrained flesh gets to like it.  
 420 The law orders the Israelite to consider the Idumaeon an ally;  
 as flesh, when wanton, is harmful, so it is beneficial when mastered.  
 So, control it like a horse with the rein or urge it on with the spur!  
 Nobody, however, is able to subdue the flesh well by force;  
 the Creator therefore subdues it with much whipping;  
 425 though exhausted, it dares to resist the spirit.  
 How safer does its bed make the rebel feel!  
 Thus fatigue weakens the flesh, and dirty thoughts the mind;  
 on one side hunger and thirst tax one's strength, on the other, recreation.  
 The holy are not strong in the courage they desire;  
 430 fearful, they rightly have doubts about what will become of them.  
 They have doubts about the holy courage which works within them,  
 so that they hold one thing certain above all, a merciful heart,  
 and remain steadfast by always dreading ruin.  
 A mind beset by so many ills, so often hounded by dangers,  
 435 when uncertain safety and ruin are always feared,  
 when it dies so many times and death, so often at hand, is dreaded,  
 if the mind is weak and arrogant, what if it could have been saved,  
 if it were willing to ask for whatever was necessary for its safety?  
 So that lust and arrogance may not overcome the flesh or mind,  
 440 punishment coerces them and wearies them both on this account.  
 There's an order to how things happen, why and when.  
 First, the soldier takes up arms to fight battles therewith.  
 So let those who desire to conquer lust control their appetite.  
 Yielding to appetite, one is disarmed and the enemy strengthened.  
 445 I admit this is true of one who copies Joseph by running away.  
 It shows him to be free-born, whom the Egyptian woman believes a slave.  
 He whom the temptress accosts is subservient like a defenceless slave;  
 but he remains free who resists the same in manly manner.  
 As Joseph must adopt a sparing appetite, able, when imprisoned,

- 450 to check the urges of the flesh, so must we bind ourselves to the Cross  
with a cord and imprison ourselves, like Joseph!  
Joshua imprisons five kings in a closed cell,  
in that his mind, free of the flesh, rules over his locked-up senses.  
Saying this, I aim to give advice to those who are standing by,  
455 that they should stand thus: let them have eyes front and back  
lest the terrible beast enter through a secret door,  
and not let lust perchance stain limbs pledged to God,  
carefully recalling at what price they were redeemed, so that they  
are now not slaves but honoured with the title of His children.
- 460 Now let me speak a little about making peace with the lapsed!  
For we are, as Christians, fragile and lacking in sense of duty.  
Let us make peace with the lapsed like upright members!  
Therefore let them take a break, warranted by grace, while there is time.  
God does to them what they themselves did to Him;  
465 He honours those to whom He reveals the secrets of the faith;  
as for those who hurt the Lord and arrogantly prefer to reject Him,  
let them consider what they must receive in return for that.  
As Scripture says menacingly, then later reassuringly,  
let them remember that hope and fear are together within them,  
470 and remember the examination with which the Judge shatters the world,  
and that a false word will not go completely unavenged.  
“What the ungodly think, will be shattered”, it says.  
So let them be afraid to entertain hopes about the generosity of Him  
who speaks of peace to the heart of all who revert, but does not  
475 return their scorn, for He promises gifts to those returning.  
So, let those who convert to Him tremble and fear, to feel  
that He is just, strict and loving unto them.
- Those whom baptism washes, whom Christ now adopts to Him,  
whom He places on the citadel of Jerusalem, that vision of peace,  
480 are leaving Jerusalem and prefer to go down to Jericho!  
They give up their safe seat and suffer dangers through their  
own doing, soon running into fierce bandits, a wretched fate!  
They stripped them and beat them, the law being powerless,  
nor could a Levite priest help them.
- 485 These are not much different from those bandits,  
seeming to choose almost the same path.  
The Lord gives them the same journey, a Samaritan has pity:  
While he watches, He supplies what they need and attends sufficiently.  
Yet no one is said to have swayed Him with prayers, so that it  
490 is clear that He was wont to support the lapsed willingly.  
One who falls therefore may know that Christ’s rescue is swift!  
Ungodly people cunningly led a prostitute to Him;  
the prostitute asks for nothing; yet at once He undoes all their accusations.

The returning prodigal son teaches us by his father's reaction:  
 495 the father runs up to him and greets him with lengthy embrace,  
 adorning the returning recreant with his best robe and ring.  
 He came indebted, not willingly, to pay back debts like a slave;  
 at once the master took pity and offers him so much.  
 We say the sense of duty with which the King abounds is clear:  
 500 He does not reproach, but quietly supports those returning.  
 It is clear therefore that God rejoices at the lapsed returning,  
 asking His Heavenly friends to rejoice with Him.  
 He calls them rebels and delights them with the title of children.  
 "Please, return", He says, "I shall convert you, child.  
 505 Why die? I do not want the death of someone dying.  
 Nay rather, I want life to return, not for there to be ruin".  
 A man begs at a barred door at midnight. A friend inside says  
 he will not give him three loaves out of friendship;  
 he persuades him - with much bargaining over price -  
 510 to supply out of friendship as many as he needs, donating them himself.  
 Being cheated sickens people, but they are fond of cheating others.  
 Let a father soothe tough attitudes with such sweetness so that the son,  
 upon eventually returning, may live as though done with vices.  
 And may the Devil's offspring be able to be the co-heirs of Christ!  
 515 Also, although pride itself makes stupid men arrogant  
 and fornicators have a foretaste of their beloved darkness to come,  
 and God sees that such people are rebels against the light,  
 yet He does not allow all their senses to become benighted.  
 They stripped him naked and left him for dead but still alive  
 520 so that the Samaritan was able to perform his rescue;  
 thus God leaves the sinners their senses and time,  
 so that those who want to, can revive and come back to Him.  
 Let the lapsed therefore be careful after their crimes  
 and consider this life or their tears to be brief,  
 525 and what raises them up to the shore (of light) to be momentary!  
 Consuming lust pursues them for a very short time  
 but then suddenly it prepares eternal fires for the dying;  
 it removes the delights which the King reserves for their end.  
 One whom the flesh entices and conceited pride has puffed up  
 530 and is made to forget Christ, sweet above all things, -  
 may the wretch dread rotting in filthy, putrid gore!  
 Rather, let them taste how very sweet the Creator is,  
 who by His love was able to control the flesh!  
 Let them see what rotting flesh, becoming putrefaction, is like,  
 535 and, were they pure, how beautiful they would be upon rising!  
 Thus they will easily reject what now urges dark deeds.  
 Let them know that the Lord is now ready to forgive,

but that, if scorned, He quickly turns to sudden anger.  
 The longer He has to wait for someone, the more He condemns!  
 540 Let it be a concern then for the lapsed to win back salvation  
 and at last grasp hold of a plank after shipwreck!

Now I will say a few words about celebrating in honour of  
 the pure who struggle to maintain the decency and mercy of their  
 minds, not debauched by flesh but kept shining with purity.  
 545 Joined by a certain covenant to the offspring of the Virgin,  
 they are keen to separate the precious from the dross.  
 These have been called Heavenly like the Lord in appearance  
 and rightly assume the appearance of the angelic hosts above,  
 because, of course, they lead an angelic life in the body.  
 550 I admit that no words can do full justice to their virtue;  
 but I will speak about them with rejoicing, like Paul:  
 "Remain constant thus in the Lord and beware of a fall  
 because it is your duty to stand firm as it is ours to live!"  
 We ask that these shining ones stand by all their vows,  
 555 and be eager to set aside the wild urges of the flesh,  
 so that the Virgin's offspring may make them kings in Heaven.  
 That title is promised them inside the star-clustered city walls,  
 this title for a musical son or a talented daughter,  
 with which they may sing or be able to hear new songs.  
 560 While we rejoice, we fear the dangers round about them.  
 Indeed it is not safe to feel confident about fear.  
 The dearer something is, the swifter injury harms it.  
 Frost upon the grape or warmth upon an olive is like this  
 and it is also clear that nettles will be safe - at a distance.  
 565 The greater one's virtue, the more an enemy envies one,  
 in most cases generating arrogance from that very virtue,  
 and sometimes one who is proud to be virtuous falls.  
 They who know how to stay humble are therefore steadfast.  
 Therefore let them strive to avoid a diabolic downfall!  
 570 A lamp which a foolish virgin looks after does not shine;  
 she who rejoices in the gift of praises, has no oil;  
 lilies do not keep their bloom if they wilt;  
 if pure people become arrogant, then they are no longer pure.  
 There are just a few with the gift of feeling shame for the flesh,  
 575 as the offspring of the Virgin urges us to learn from Him;  
 let them be humble and not forsake the gift of such a talent,  
 and let them not allow their heart, eyes, ears to be wanton,  
 and let them foresee the last day which faces the world,  
 580 see that there may be eternal retribution for our momentary deeds,  
 that the whole form of the world will soon change,

that the Judge will arrive unexpectedly, gleaming in the flesh,  
 and that His great majesty and lofty power will appear,  
 His courage going hand in hand with His Heavenly mercy.  
 585 He manifests Himself, visible in the flesh, to reprobates,  
 His form threatening to them, but very comforting to the just:  
 as for those who fear Him, they come faithfully to meet Him,  
 and those who despise Him are plunged in panic into Hell.  
 One who loves or worships this world, will remain in it;  
 590 one who gazes at things on high, will rise weightlessly into the air.  
 As the devouring flame swiftly consumes the whole world,  
 it burns reprobates but will not be able to touch the meek.  
 That king of evil, Behemoth, is led into the middle;  
 it is clear to the meek and the arrogant what sort of beast he is,  
 595 what strength he has, how wild his threats;  
 no one can overcome him, except He who created him.  
 Then great amazement arises from the humble, astonished  
 that they could defeat such a one, but they thank  
 the Almighty who has subjected their great enemy to restraints.  
 600 If this had been foreseen, who would have dared to fight?  
 When the war was won through Christ's moderation, we see  
 that they praise the Lord through whom they have won the triumph,  
 marveling greatly to see whom they have defeated.  
 The wicked now see to whom they prefer to subject themselves;  
 605 a strong sense of anguish, late though it is, encompasses them;  
 they repent having abandoned the Lord and chosen Behemoth,  
 whom they knew fell from Heaven and was plunged into Hell.  
 Then pain and groaning, everlasting tribulation and grief  
 trouble them within and fire burns them without,  
 610 and they also take unto themselves what Scripture says about this.  
 How does that pride help the wretches or the unbridled lust  
 in which the flesh rejoices, in which the stupid find pleasure?  
 Pleasure passes quickly, scarcely tasted, but the whip endures.  
 In no way is it possible to excuse their recklessness.  
 615 As the just have obtained sunshine, the bad have rain;  
 both groups have tasted the reward for their present life;  
 what mind or body lacks, God supplies to them in like manner;  
 but they have enjoyed their reward in different ways.  
 As Holy Scripture says to shameless subjects:  
 620 the smell with which death is created for those, is salvation for these.  
 He says to them "I do not know you. Get away from me!";  
 He says nothing of what they have done, as if their deeds were  
 unworthy of divine mention; He complains that brothers were not  
 allotted their duties, as He himself orders and nature itself urges.  
 625 Fearlessly and arrogantly they excuse their guilt

and their preference for clinging to demonic urges.

They bear bitter critical censure forever,

so that they suffer the flames of Satan, stoked up without end.

Satan himself falls, along with those he joined to him in crime,

630 and the same fire consumes those infected by the same arrogance.

Then He reckons that they are just like strangers to Him

those who do not avoid evil because of Him, and do no good thanks to him.

He reproves these and their behaviour as not done for Him.

When the wicked were cast down along with their fierce chief, what great  
635 astonishment, fear and trembling will strike them, witnessing those things!

How these spectacles are to be feared by the many holy people!

If there is any blame in this, let fear purge them of it!

He remembers, and is kind to, some for what they do for the needy;

He does not mention all the evil deeds overshadowing their holy work

640 nor does He focus attention on what pious action masks.

When He speaks to them, they say they have done nothing,

that what they do is normal custom and nothing wrong.

Angelic squadrons rejoice to welcome companions;

glory remains for those on the right, punishment for the left –

645 seeing this, they give everlasting praise to the King for both,

gladly because He is justly kind to these and severe on those.

Also, Satan is said to be the eternal slave of God;

the ability to change produces grounds for praise for those set free.

Such things must be treated with a flexible heart,  
650 so that such meditation may create an open mind,

and so that they all think that judgement is so close

that they do not proclaim any divine gift to be worthless.

May they deal with things to come and not the present!

To the offspring of the Virgin and His holy mother

655 may the meek promise not to waste the talent they have received!

That Virgin is humble and visits the chaste and humble

and encourages them as if they are always especially her own.

In the uncertainty of war, a soldier looks to his standard-bearer,

so that by his lead he may obtain a triumph;

660 likewise a pure life may look to Holy Mary for help,

because she is the special leader of the meek and the chaste

and favours them as her own because of their virtue.

While my peasant's pen has long been scratching these verses,

and while I try to concentrate my fleeting thoughts in them,

665 I fear that I may have incurred a certain amount of excess;

often a sailor, watching for sandbanks, ends up in whirlpools.

If people were perchance to read these words and blame me

or my work as the product of levity of mind or lack of purpose,

they will know from this that I want to master this rebel,

- 670 to stop the custom of people gaping at the fall of the good,  
and may they reveal excess so that I may eliminate it,  
and let the people know that I want to atone for the sin rather than  
to defend it! In human affairs nothing, it is said, is perfect;  
priests are ordered to wash the holy Eucharist;
- 675 there is therefore a need for good people to fear even good deeds;  
saintly Job is fearful about all the good deeds he did; if steadfast saints  
do that, what of us as we rush through many deeds?  
Therefore let us ask for the help of the Holy Judge,  
and may it be possible for Christ to return for the common good,
- 680 He who approves or disapproves of each person's behaviour,  
being kind to the ignorant who are driven by presumption,  
as we believe that He puts help before sin!  
Christ will be the end, revealed in His own plan,  
appearing in His glory to the holy in His own age.
- 685 Therefore I am writing a modest little book, trying to complete it,  
my heart always intent on meditation, to prevent  
the slavish flesh by chance debauching the selfless soul.  
Indeed, both parties will have the form of a slave;  
reprobates will be removed so that they do not see the Lord's face.
- 690 This pyre will ravage them and He will also cleanse them by re-ploughing  
the fields, and then they will be cleansed by the divine rain of Heaven  
and all this world will be like the Paradise of the Lord.  
Their present slavish form will change to a divine one.  
God, pitying them, will give them permission to remain.
- 695 How very happy they will be because they will then see that God  
reveals Himself clearly (for indeed, to know God is life).  
This vision will wipe dry all the tears of the holy!  
For the memory of grief will no longer be recalled to mind,  
because the vision, once seen, will drive away all troubles;
- 700 their faces will fill with the smile of the just, as He had promised.  
The mysteries of our faith are then made entirely clear.  
The Son, as promised, is made visible from the Father.  
Just as the Father bore Him as an equal,  
likewise the Spirit similarly proceeds from them
- 705 and that God is a complete person in every detail.  
He does not have a number, but one, which they share.  
They have a single honour and glory, deity, essence, and virtue;  
each one can be the total of what they all are;  
we worship three persons and reject the notion of three gods.
- 710 The Son therefore reveals the Father to His followers,  
who now discern with eyes and ears three supreme beings and,  
as far as is possible for His creatures, they are clearly known.  
No one, however, knows the Lord as He knows Himself.



When He reveals Himself, He fulfils promises a hundredfold.  
 715 That sacred choir, satiated by the sight of God, recounts  
 what He has done, what He is, and triumphs with wonder;  
 it is vigorous in its praises and never fails to praise.  
 That celestial city which is called a "vision of peace"  
 gathers in only those chosen after selective purges.  
 720 No one alive can know all its glory or what great joy  
 fills their sacred processional hymns without end.  
 A Heavenly home is created for them, in different ways;  
 though they will receive one coin alike, in the same way:  
 as a grand person owns grand things and a small person small,  
 725 great love exists for those who unite the small and the grand,  
 so what grand people have, small people may believe they have too.  
 Paul, who has access to the three Heavens above, does not know  
 what great glory adorns a small person also up above,  
 but the message can go out through Him to all the world:  
 730 the eye does not see nor the heart or ear hear what the Creator  
 prepares for those whom He judges to have loved Him.  
 May the mind therefore long for such things with all its might!  
 This city however is deemed to be like glass or gold,  
 because one person sees everything in the heart of another;  
 735 and one who is without baseness or stain will enter into it;  
 corruption never has corruptibility.  
 Like people on trial, we are afraid of being rejected by Him;  
 yet there is hope because the King governs small things also.  
 It pleases Him to see the imperfection of the Church as well.  
 740 He has decreed that the small may be blessed with the grand  
 and the slave, free from the master, may also rejoice in Him.  
 The Scripture states this and urges us to hope for this;  
 so we may seek to be given a place finally in this city.  
 The King, flesh joined with God, can achieve this at once,  
 745 His sense of duty working to help the poor arise from the mire.  
 May He give the poor the right to deserve places on high!  
 The city has nothing foul, nothing that is not precious,  
 has no darkness but shines with fresh light.  
 It has no need of the rays of the moon or the light of the sun,  
 750 for the Lamb is one day of this and its eternal lamp.  
 Here the meek could overcome the fierce lion; sheep also  
 do the same, strong with the courage of the Lamb,  
 and then throw their crowns at His feet.  
 The unwarlike, if armed, can defeat the strong,  
 755 by giving to the Father and to the Lamb every sort of paeon.  
 Let the city be full of hosts singing orgies of praise,  
 and its citizens, seeing Christ, rejoice without end.

## OCCUPATIO

Living in the city, they are blessed for age upon age;  
the Lamb is eternal salvation for them and every good thing.  
760 The city therefore has peace and He is called the Lord in that place.

HERE ENDS THE *OCCUPATIO* OF THE LORD ABBOT ODO

## General Prologue

5 -10] Odo here is comparing the value of newly written texts with the authority of ancient ones. Medieval authors were careful to respect the contributions of former writers often seeing its antiquity as a key determinant of the authority of a text or idea. Given his repeated re-use and rephrasing of past authoritative texts in his other writings, Odo here makes explicit this tension between new and old, taking time to justify his new ideas and his new text as not arising from his own desire to innovate, but as the result of his obedience to another's request.

14 The lord ] Odo here uses the word *heros* to mean "Lord", likely conflating *herus* (master, lord) with *heros* (hero, demi-god) to link the hero of the poem (God) with the idea of a 'Lord God'.

## Book 1

Preface, 4 Heaven ] Odo uses the word *empyrius* (the Empyrean realm) which was understood by the Ancients as a cosmological realm of pure fire and light. The comparison is thus that both good and evil will experience divine fire – one pure, one painful.

Preface, 18 Let Him who made water from a rock ] This description foreshadows God's creation of the world, when earth and water were joined.

1 invisible king] i.e. God, who cannot be perceived by human senses.

3 ] Augustine, *City of God*, XI, 4.

10-12 ] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, I, 19.

14-20] Odo seeks to explain how creation was the beginning of matter (therefore place) and time, which did not exist previously.

16 ] After using the Latin *principium* and *finis* for 'beginning and end' in the previous line, in this line Odo switches to the Greek equivalents, *archē* and *telos*.

17 ] Augustine, *City of God*, XI, 22.

18 water ] Exodus 17: 1-8.

28+] Augustine, *City of God*, XI, 5-6.

38-41 ] The metaphor of the earth as an egg has a long history and can be traced back to Greek cosmology of the fourth century BCE. In the Middle Ages, this idea was popularized by commentators on Classical encyclopedists such as John Scotus Eriugena and Remigius of Auxerre. On this question, see Rudolf Simek's *Heaven and Earth in the Middle Ages: the physical world before Columbus*, trans. Angela Hall (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1996), 19-23.

43 ] Augustine, *City of God*, XI, 18.

49-54 ] Augustine, *City of God*, XI, 5-6. Odo asks the reader to think why God created the world when He did, but then criticizes the reader if they had thought this. He does not, in fact, answer the question with an argument, but with an exhortation not to question the divine process of creation.

67 two beings ] Odo means Adam and Eve, whom he created as rational beings intended to rule over the world of nature.

82 | Augustine, *City of God*, XI, 9, 33. Odo begins his discussion of creation with a retelling from Genesis interpreted through Augustine.

86 | The Celestial hierarchy of angels was debated by medieval theologians. Denis the Pseudo-Areopagite, and John Scottus Eriugena are in agreement about the nine orders, since they draw on common biblical passages (Ephesians 1:21 and Colossians 1:16) to discern them. The exact number seems to have been a point of contention in Odo's time, with ten original orders of angels proposed by Honorius Augustodunensis. Honorius notes that one order of angels had fallen with Lucifer. On angelic hierarchies, see the collected essays in *Angels in Medieval Philosophical Inquiry: Their Function and Significance*, eds. Isabelle Iribarren and Martin Lenz, Ashgate Studies in Medieval Philosophy (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).

87 | Cf. Ezekiel 28: 13.

90 | Augustine, *City of God*, XI, 9, 17 and XII, 1.

92 Lucifer | This and the following lines describe how Satan was not created evil, but chose to become evil. This description introduces a key concept underlying the *Occupatio* about the nature of free will. Odo draws here on Ezekiel 28:15.

94 major and minor orders | Odo here notes the parallel between the angels, who are divided by rank, and Christian clerics, who are granted further spiritual powers after their ordination into the priesthood (i.e. entering the major orders).

112 being | Odo uses *esse* (the infinitive of *esse*, "to be") for "being". A marginal gloss defines this usage, commenting, "that is, essence".

131 coiled one | Odo foreshadows how the fallen angel Lucifer will tempt Adam and Eve in Eden as a serpent.

145-77 | Augustine, *City of God*, XII, 25 and Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Job*, XXXII, 47-49.

160 Styx | Odo alludes to Lucifer's future banishment to Hell with the image of the river Styx, whose muddied waters were thought to separate the world from the Underworld even in early Christian writings.

161 beast of the deep | Job 41 and Isaiah 2; a reference to the leviathan.

162 Ring worm | Odo uses the rare term *serinco* (deriving from *sericus* 'silk') which is glossed as, "A skin burrowing grub".

174 turd | Odo uses *lendim* (likely from *lens*, meaning "insect egg"), but it is glossed as "human waste", so we have retained this meaning.

175 rubbish | Odo uses the word *peripsima*, which is glossed as "what is of inferior quality in anything."

197 We repeat this to ourselves | Odo here notes the importance of humility within the religious life. He cautions monks to consider that while Lucifer had all the signs and marks of angelic excellence, he still fell. Thus, young monks progressing in the monastic life are told not to see the evidence of their abilities as an indication that they are better than others, for then a fall is inevitable.

202 anvil | The extended metaphor of God as a coppersmith highlights that Lucifer has an important role in God's plan for humanity. Lucifer acts as a testing ground or as a choice for humans to ensure that they can willfully choose God's love. This idea of the utility of demons pervades Odo's works and becomes a defining characteristic of Cluniac demonology (cf. Peter the Venerable's *De miraculis*).

210 Lake Avernus | Among other Classical authors, Pliny and Virgil described Lake Avernus as a place of death, where birds all died and was seen as the entrance to the underworld.

218 Cerberus | Odo again uses a Classical figure of the Underworld to characterize Lucifer. This many-headed dog prevents the dead from ever leaving.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 247 stars of God | Odo here addresses the remaining angels in Heaven who stood by God.
- 256 | Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Job*, XXXII, 48. Having demonstrated their love for God, the loyal angels are rewarded with moral perfection and God made them unable to sin. By this argument, Odo avoids having to argue that angels were not perfect beings or that they did not have free will.
- 258 Flowing water is made hard ice | Odo here is using the metaphor of the different states of water to explain how free will among the angels becomes solidified into the will of God. Water is free will, ice a firm will of serving God.
- 269 Gorgon | Odo here uses the image of the Gorgons (the Medusa was one of these mythical monsters) to characterize Lucifer. The name was clearly unfamiliar to Odo's contemporaries since the word is glossed "surely, certainly" and a later hand, "henceforth".
- 279 carrying grass | A reference to Job 40:20; where Lucifer is described as a behemoth eating grass like an ox, whose appetite is endless and who is impossible to restrain.
- 285 | Gloss: These are the words of Gregory.
- 293 against him | The reference here is to Satan, both created by and foe to God.

### Book 2

- 10-15 | Genesis, I, 26; commented on by Ambrose, *Hexaemeron*, VI, 40 and Gregory the Great, *Homily 29 on the Gospels*, PL 76 (col. 1214), among others. This discussion of the divine nature of humanity is a common feature of the Christian theory of knowledge, which takes as fundamental that Adam and Eve were created "in the image and likeness" of God. What exactly was meant by "image" or "likeness" was much debated, but it was a given that they referred, at least in part, to the rational human soul. The creation of humanity is also an opportunity to argue for the eternal nature of the divine Trinity.
- 16 personhood | Odo uses the Greek term *prosopa* to denote "personhood" – linking to a debate among early Greek theologians about the nature of the divine Trinity.
- 23-24 | Gloss: God is not 'this' and 'that', but just this, that is, equal, since he is not born of difference like other creatures; as it says in the book on the Trinity, by Boethius.
- 30-31 | Gloss: Blessed Augustine said this in a letter, that 'like' is not always the same as 'equal to' and 'as if' is not always 'similitude'.
- 35 mud | Odo here addresses the creation of Adam from mud (Genesis 2: 7), but adds that by taking on an earthly envelope, Adam's soul (and therefore those of all humans) are henceforth weighted down by mundane desires.
- 37-38 | Gloss: God made the chaste and the wanton different, since, as the blessed Gregory said about the words of Elijah: the soul is not sunk in the desire of the boy, unless first it has been corrupted by pride. Thence it is, he said, that – without humility – chastity is able to be harmed even into old age.
- 40 a land divided into four regions | This is a reference to Genesis 2: 10-15, which describes Paradise as separated into four regions by different rivers.
- 42 *ousia* | Odo Latinizes the Greek term *ousia* (Ὀυσία) as *usia*, which denotes the 'quality of being', often used by Christian theologians to describe the 'substance' of the Trinity. Odo here is alluding to earlier theology debates about the nature of the single yet divided personhood of God.
- 50 Grace | Grace is the gift of God through the Holy Spirit which allows humans to be saved. In Odo's time, the exact nature of how salvation was attained was a matter of debate (and continued to be for long afterwards). Theologians were unsure whether people's actions and deeds were sufficient to merit salvation or whether it was through God's benevolence (grace) that salvation was possible.

61 poisons her man ] Odo makes reference to Eve's offering of the apple from the tree of knowledge to Adam. The apple is spiritually harmful, not physically deadly.

64 according to seniority ] According to the *Rule of St. Benedict*, social status or education before entering the cloister should not determine the rank accorded to monk, but should be based on the time spent within the cloister, their virtue and the discretion of the abbot (chp. 63.1). Thus in theory a poor but virtuous young man, who had entered the monastery as a child was higher in seniority and status than an ageing bishop who had only recently entered. Odo, like Benedict, notes that seniority cannot be the only measure of a monk, but that demonstrated merit and virtue was an more important determinant of monastic preeminence. Perhaps this valorizing of merit owes its inspiration to Odo's own arrival at Baume late in his life and his subsequent speedy rise in power and status there.

60-69 ] Ambrose, *On paradise*, chp. 4.

66 coenobite ] Odo uses the Latinized Greek term *sincellita* / *syncellita*, meaning someone who "shares a cell" namely a monk who is not solitary but lives together with other monks. (Ducange, VI, 688).

67-68 ] Gloss: Saint Ambrose said this in his book, *On Paradise*.

69 honours ] Odo here suggests a simultaneous evocation of two common connotations of the Latin word *honor* – saying that "the state of being virtuous" and "holding religious office" depend on morals, not chronological seniority.

75 Lotus-eaters ] Odo uses the term *loetargum* –likely a corruption of *lotaphagus* (Greek, λωτοφάγοι), which alludes to a common Classical depiction of an apathetic people drugged by the soporific properties of the lotus plant. Odo thus differentiates the monk's freedom to pursue spiritual labour from the purposeless recreation of the lazy.

79 cloister ] Odo uses a neologism, *neosemion*, to describe Eden as a monastery. The term is glossed by the commentator as "a new dwelling place", but the Greek word refers more specifically to new "buildings of a monastery".

85 obedience ] Odo here emphasizes how obedience is characteristic of Eden – a characteristic which he later uses to highlight the paradisiacal qualities of the monastic cloister.

95 woman] Odo uses the term, *virago*, used in Classical Latin to denote a "female warrior" or "heroine".

96-99 ] Augustine, *Treatise on the Gospel of John*, 120, 19; 10, 2. Odo provides an example of allegorical interpretation of Genesis.

110-184 ] Augustine, *City of God*, XIV, 11 and 13.

114-115] Gloss: In the book, *On the Offices*, Ambrose says, about the servers, that anyone, by offering thanks, either equals or surpasses the gift given to him or her.

115-118 ] Odo here relates a commonplace of medieval gift-exchange: that receiving a gift not only incurs obligations of reciprocity, but also is a means to gain prestige. Adam forgets his need to return the favour, but is well aware of the honour and esteem that the reception of so many gifts has bestowed. Also, he highlights that gifts are unimportant in and of themselves, but rather are a means for the demonstrated exchange of love.

127 – 129 ] Odo appeals to a military discourse as an analogy to explain sin and spiritual warfare. This idea of Christians as soldiers of Christ is common in Odo's work and other monastic writings of his time.

134 foolish woman ] That is, Eve.

156 worship ] Odo uses the Greek word *latría* to denote "worship" or "celebration of divine worship". As Agobard of Lyons (769-840) glosses this word, "And so what is called *latría* in Greek, is translated as *seruitus* in Latin, that is as "those things by which we worship God" (Agobard of Lyons, *De picturis et imaginibus*, chp. 2).

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157 Phoebus] Odo makes reference to the Greek god, Phoebus Apollo, evoking an image of the sun or “the bright one”.

168 snake] Odo uses a Greek word, *dipsae* (διψάς) to mean snake; the Greek term describes a kind of snake whose bite causes violent thirst. It was often used to mean a “thirsty woman” and in Classical Latin it came to refer to prostitutes. Odo seems, therefore, to use this play on words to make an argument equating the snake and Eve. In this depiction of Eve, however, Odo seems to characterize her as emblematic of all women, who are innately bodily.

170 type] Odo uses the word *typus* to denote that Eve represents a character-type in Biblical narrative and salvation history of all future people who act in league with the devil. Type, in this sense, is akin to “pattern” or “model”.

171-172] Ambrose, *On paradise*, II, 50-51 (col. 299B)

181-186] Augustine, *On the literal interpretation of Genesis*, II, 37.

188 clay] That is, Adam.

199 Dindymon] This reference is to a mountain sacred to the goddess Cybele which provided access, in Classical mythology, to the realm of the Gods.

203-218] Odo returns to Adam, providing an extended image of him as a man thrown from a mountain top, falling through the air to his (spiritual) death.

261-265] Odo contrasts the authority Adam held in Eden with his powerlessness when outside it.

272-273] Augustine, *City of God*, XIII, 2. Gloss: Augustine in his book, *the City of God*, said that man had incurred a threefold death simultaneously. The first is by removing God from himself, the second by the soul retreating from the flesh, and the third when with pain he is put either in the ground or in the flesh.

279 bashful member] In addition to the pain, suffering and powerlessness caused by Adam’s fall from Eden, Odo highlights his major concern with the fall: the birth of sexual desire. Odo sees lust as destroying the harmony of Adam’s original being and as a flaw inherited by each subsequent generation.

347 Lucifer] Lucifer (*luce* + *fer*) means “light bearer”, so Odo is suggesting that he is like a candle whose flame is extinguished.

423 blame] Odo concludes his discussion of free will, highlighting that adducing the blame for Adam’s fall was his underlying purpose.

458-462] Augustine, *City of God*, XIV, 14.

506-511] Augustine, *City of God*, XIV, 15.

525 bandits of Jericho] Odo makes reference to Luke 10:30, in which he describes Jesus’ parable of the good Samaritan. For Odo, the Samaritan is an allegory for the human soul, degraded after Adam’s fall and unable to perceive the spiritual truths surrounding it without the help of Grace.

### Book 3

53 hiding] Genesis 3: 9.

117-120] Augustine, *On the literal interpretation of Genesis*, II, 37.

129 inanimate object] This refers to the earth, which God cursed (Genesis 3: 17) so that Adam must work it with great labour in order for it to bear fruit.

200 absinthe] An alcoholic beverage made from wormwood – renowned for its bitterness from Classical times; see Lucretius, *On the nature of things*, book 4, l. 936-50. These images begin a long list of

contrasts, which provide analogies for the difference between life in Eden and life in the world. These contrasts the utility of loss to make clear what Adam recognized after the Fall.

266-316 ] Having established above that human nature is changed by the Fall, Odo argues here that in the fallen world, habit, custom and tradition determine patterns of thought and behaviour. Nature, he laments, is shaped and directed by nurture; this does not mean, however, that innate nature is destroyed, but rather only subordinated. Humanity is a feral child, Odo suggests, as a result of a lupine Satan having stolen Adam and Even away from the civilization of Eden.

350-363 ] Odo continues his argument on how habit creates new mental patterns – suggesting that the teachings of the devil trained Adam in the vices of the world to forget the innate gifts of God. This descent explains the subsequent downfall of human society and the need for the Flood (Genesis 6: 5).

375 Apicius ] Odo refers to Apicius, the title of a Roman cookbook (likely written in the fourth or fifth century CE) attributed to a Roman gourmand Marcus Cavius Apicius (first century CE). The latter was a subject of a treatise, *On the luxury of Apicius*, by the grammarian Apion with whom Odo was familiar.

379 gifts of Bacchus ] That is, wine.

438-458 ] Odo argues that appearance and physical beauty do not correspond to mental or spiritual goodness, suggesting instead that physical strength and looks can be a sign of an inner void. Physical beauty, he continues, can also cause pride and arrogance.

579] Gregory the Great, *Homily 1 on Ezekiel*, PL 76, 18, col. 795.

602 abstemious ] Odo highlights how it is not forbidden to eat meats, but that there is a certain virtue in avoiding some foods. This rejection of meat is a common staple of ascetic life in the Middle Ages.

614-726] After finishing describing God's first punishment of humanity through the Flood, Odo segues to God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah for their iniquity. In particular Odo takes issue with the problem of same-sex desire. Above he lamented the problem of lust between men and women, but at this stage he describes men's lust for other men as an unnatural transgression, which makes the participant effeminate (this being a negative trait for Odo).

700-702 Tartarus, Gehenna ] That is, Hell.

727-742 ] Odo identifies God's third punishment of humanity as the making of various languages to impede the building of the Tower of Babel. Odo suggests that by multiplying languages, God is having a good laugh at humanity's expense.

763 meat and wine ] Odo returns to the theme of regulation of diet (cf. l. 602) to emphasize how moderation in eating has a moderating effect on desire. Contrarily, the more one gives in to appetite, the more carnal, bestial and removed from reason one is.

769 will ] Odo uses the Greek Gnostic term, *thelema*, translated here as "the will".

805 breath ] Odo uses the Latinized Greek term *pneuma* to mean breath. The word also has the sense of "spirit" or "soul", and thus the second use of *pneuma*, conveys the idea that "flesh kills the spirit".

847 friend of the world ] James 4: 4.

862 Amalekites ] Exodus 17: 8-16. Odo provides an etymology for the term Amalekites as "licking" to show that this people, defeated by Moses provide evidence that motions of the tongue and gullet are base. This digression is meant to buttress Odo's condemnation of appetite.

909 Hippocrates ] Odo references the Greek figure, Hippocrates, renowned in the Middle Ages for his medical learning. Hippocrates' *Aphorisms* circulated in Latin translation during Odo's time (along with Galen's works and supplementary textual commentaries), so Odo may have had direct contact with Hippocrates' works. Likely, however, Odo is merely naming Hippocrates as a well-known authority, without having consulted his works. This citation introduces a length passage equating sin with disease.



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954 Adam ] After having discussed God's punishments of humanity (Fall, Flood, smiting and babbling) and the effects of appetite on the body/soul, Odo returns to Adam to show how he is the cause of it. Odo uses Adam as a case study to show what all subsequent humans experience.

1042-1103 ] Odo highlights the value of labour, noting how much God has given for human use, if only people endeavour to use it wisely. This positive image gives hope to the reader, balancing the largely negative portrait of appetite which has characterized Odo's description up to this point.

1118 Nimrod ] Genesis 10: 8. Nimrod was a king and hunter, grandson of Ham and great-grandson of Noah. In this biblical account, he is one of the founders of Babylon.

1122 Barzillai ] 2 Samuel 19: 31-43.

1124 Shammah ] 2 Samuel 23: 11-12.

1153 singular eye ] Odo uses the Latin term *oculus simplex* (simple eye, single eye) to denote a form of vision which unifies material and spiritual sight. This form of looking is able to perceive the "hidden" traces of God in the world.

1157 third door of Heaven ] The subject of this extended dialogue –Classical philosophers and rhetoricians– are being distinguished from the author of Revelations, John, who is able to see a vision of Heaven through a third door (Revelation 4: 1).

1176 tonguelessly ] Gloss: *sine lingua* ("without tongue")

1177] Augustine, *Confessions*, 10, 9, 16.

### Book 4

Preface, 15-20 ] Odo signals his intention to move away from his condemnation of sin (a fearful discourse) in the previous books to an inspirational praise (a loving encouragement). Odo, however, does not shrink from heaping blame on sinners (such as Cain) in the following book.

24 lilies ] Song of Songs 2: 2.

39 two brothers ] Genesis 4: 1-16. Odo provides a twofold interpretation of the story of Cain's killing Abel: as foreshadowing the battle between Jesus and the devil, and as a perpetual contest between a virtuous soul and the vice-ridden one.

80 hyena ] The hyena is a traditional figure of evil in Classical and Christian animal mythology. The hyena was renowned as a scavenger, and often presented as a beast that eats human corpses (cf. Pliny the Elder, *Natural Histories*, 8, 30). In the Christian transmission of this tradition in bestiaries and the *Physiologus*, the hyena is often equated with the people of Israel, who became addicted to wealth and luxury. Such readings cite a scriptural passage which is seen to compare the synagogue to an unclean animal: "My heritage is to me as the den of a hyena." (Jeremiah, 12:8).

93 the lamb ] Odo makes the link between Abel and Jesus again here.

99 grief] Jerome derives the Latin 'luctus' (grief) from Abel's Hebrew name (כחל). Jerome's reading is made in the *On the Interpretation of Hebrew Names* and later repeated in Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies*, VII, vi, 7, which likely is Odo's source.

101 Seth ] Odo notes that Adam's third son, Seth, took up the holy devotion that had characterized Abel. Enoch, who is seventh in descent from Adam in the line of Seth, was so holy that he ascended to Heaven without suffering physical death (cf. Genesis 5: 24-25 and Hebrews 11: 5). This Enoch should be distinguished from Cain's son Enoch.

105 Noah ] Genesis 7: 6 - 9: 19.

109 waters | Odo uses the Latin term *nymphae* (nymphs) to mean “waters”.

116-118 | Genesis 9: 20-27.

147 Solomon | 1 Kings 11: 1-13.

158 Tamar | Genesis 38: 24.

159 Abimelech | Genesis 27.

162 Joseph | Genesis 39: 4-23. Joseph was the son of Rachel, born to Jacob in his old age.

164 Lucretia | A Roman noblewoman whose rape at the hands Sextus Tarquinius sparked the rebellion against the kings of Rome and led to the foundation of the Roman republic. The story is told in detail by Livy to explain the sudden up-swelling of support against the unnatural tyranny of the Tarquins.

174 Abraham and Sara | Cf. 1 Peter 3:6

177 Isaac | Genesis 22: 1-14

195 the son | That is, Isaac.

203 Jacob | Genesis 28: 7 – 31:21. Jacob is the son of Isaac.

212 a brother | That is, Esau (Genesis 28: 6-9).

217 Joseph | Genesis 37-50. He is sold into slavery by his brothers (Genesis 37: 15-35), but forgives and aids them during a time of famine in Canaan (Genesis 42-45).

228 slave to vice | In monastic discourse, Egypt is often a symbol of vice and luxury; since Joseph was a servant to the Pharaoh, he is thus in service to “vice”. See 4, 162 above.

246 Job | Genesis 46: 13. The life of Job described in Genesis is expanded in the Book of Job to include much philosophical and religious discussion. In late-antique and early-medieval monastic texts, Job was an often used model for monks – giving an example of an obedient and humble servant of God.

258 non-Christian | Odo here uses the Latin term *ethnicus* and later *gentilis*, to denote non-Christian or heathen. Job predates the covenant and the giving of the Law to Moses that confirmed the Jews as the chosen people of God. Job, therefore, is represented by Odo as not Jewish or Christian, even though he was a model for both religions.

299 law | Odo here asserts the double nature of the origin of law: customary law is confirmed by practice over generations, whereas written law is validated from the authority of the law giver (e.g. God, kings). This discussion of law introduces the coming discussion of Moses and the ten commandments.

337-340 | Odo makes reference here to the medieval commonplace that Moses was the divinely inspired author of the Pentateuch – the first five books of the Bible.

358 Judea | Odo suggests that Moses and the rest of the Old Testament books transmitted Christian learning, but did so in such away as that the Jews themselves did not fully understand the hidden message – which only Christian biblical exegetes could discover. In Christian hermeneutics, much of the literal meaning of the Old Testament books is superseded at Christ’s coming and proven incorrect in light of this later revelation.

359 Uriah | 2 Samuel 11: 14-17. Uriah was sent as a messenger by King David with a letter telling Joab to set Uriah at the front of the army where the battle would be hardest. David wanted him dead so that he could marry Uriah’s wife.

375 Samuel | Samuel was a prophet and the last of the biblical Judges. He was asked by the people of Israel to appoint a king for them (1 Samuel 8: 1-22). Inspired by God, Samuel identified and anointed Saul as king, who would ensure the defeat of the Philistines at the hands of the Israelites. But Samuel later repents of his decision (1 Samuel 15: 10-15) when Saul transgresses the religious laws of the Israelites. David succeeds Saul as king of the Israelites (1 Samuel 16: 14-23).

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382 divine roots | The evangelist Matthew outlines Jesus' lineage, tracing back from Jesus to David, and from David to Abraham, listing fourteen generations separating them (Matthew 1: 1-17).

413 Elijah | The prophet Elijah is taken into the Heavens by a whirlwind, where he has a vision of God (2 Kings 2: 1-12).

528 river of Babylon | Psalms 137: 1-4.

### Book 5

Preface, 25 Emmanuel | Another name for Jesus (cf. Matthew 1:23). The Evangelists repeat similar accounts of how Jesus miraculously heals people unable to speak (Matthew 9:33, 12:22, 15:31; Mark 7:37, 9:17; Luke 11:14).

Preface, 26 Saul | Saul was the name of the Apostle Paul, before his conversion (Acts 9: 3-19). Odo refers here not to Paul's cure from being mute, but rather his divinely inspired eloquence. Paul preached and proselytized in person, but also through his writings (preserved as the fourteen Epistles ascribed to him in the Bible). Odo thus is linking his own writings to Paul's.

19 foreign | Odo uses the Latin word *peregrinum* for "foreign", but by Odo's time it also had the sense of someone on "pilgrimage". Odo seems to be describing Jesus Christ as the divine substance leaving for Earth as a temporary pilgrim.

29 the Word | John 1:1.

40 lost coin | Luke 15: 8-10.

40 lost sheep | Luke 15: 4-6. The trope of lost sheep needing a shepherd is common within both the Old and New Testaments.

44 sceptre | The kingdom of Judah conquered at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, who led the Jews into the Babylonian captivity. Judah was thereafter a client kingdom subject to Babylonian, Persian and Ptolemaic kings, before its subjection to Roman, Byzantine rulers as well as to the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates.

45 Jacob | Genesis 49: 9-10.

48 False Herod | Herod the Great (the first of four kings of that name) was established as governor and the king of Israel under the Romans. As Matthew describes, he was the king who sought to slaughter infant boys in Bethlehem (Matthew 2: 1-23).

59 Job | Job 38: 21.

68 pure gold | Job 28: 15.

91 electrum | Electrum was an alloy of silver and gold; this is thus a reference to the divine and human substance combined in Jesus' being.

96 Samaritan | Luke 10: 25-37.

124 Eli | A Jewish high priest when the Ark of the Covenant was at Shiloh (1 Samuel 1: 3-9). *Eli*, the Hebrew word for "my god", was exclaimed by Christ on the cross (Matthew 27:46).

134 John | John the Baptist, who is commonly seen as a forerunner of Christ, who was foretold and born mere months before Christ (Luke 1: 1-80). John was the object of considerable veneration (Luke 3: 15) and baptized Christ as the saviour (John 1: 29).

168 the one they captured | That is, the man rescued by the good Samaritan.

251 despised | Isaiah 53:3.

350 ox and lion | The idea that ancient enemies will be reconciled is part of Isaiah's prophecies (Isaiah 11: 6).

351 rhinoceros ] Cf. Odo of Cluny, *Life of Gerald*, I, 8 and Job 39: 10.  
 377 stars] In his epitome of Gregory's *Moralia*, Odo explains that the seven stars of the constellation represent the seven churches or seven candelabra or seven gifts of the spirit. The number is particularly significant to Odo since he sees seven as the addition of three plus four, three being the Trinity, and four for the virtues of prudence, fortitude, justice and tolerance. He interprets other constellations as the martyrs and the Church fathers. He references these same constellations without this additional contextualization here. Seven is a key number for Odo; there are seven churches, sins, spiritual gifts, types of bird, reasons for piety, seals, and seven pillars. Christ has a seven-fold spirit, Resurrection Day is sevenfold. The numbers three, made particularly important due to the divine Trinity and the number four also are often highlighted: the three orders of the Church symbolised by the three decks of Noah's ark, humans suffer three deaths, Satan plays tricks and , there are three Heavens, the three-fold faith, and four rivers of Eden symbolising four enemy nations, four dimensions, four elements, four limbs of the cross, four flying creatures.  
 391 Ethiopian ] Jeremiah, 13: 23.  
 502 Sion ] Zion, that is, Jerusalem.  
 585-96 ] Cf. Benedict of Aniane, *Testimonia*, PL, 103, col. 1383BC.  
 659 Jephthah's daughter ] Judges 11: 31-40.  
 679 ] Cf. Job 40: 24-25.  
 680] II Cor. 4: 7.

## Book 6

12 washes the feet ] John 13: 1-17.  
 15 Judas ] Matthew 26: 20-25.  
 83 seas part ] Exodus 13: 17-14: 29.  
 83 staff ] Exodus 7: 8-13.  
 84 water ] Exodus 17: 1-8.  
 84 clouds ] Exodus 16: 1-30.  
 85 column of fire ] Exodus 13: 21-22.  
 98-99 heart/court ] Odo uses the Latin words *cor* and *coreas* for "heart" and "convent" – making an implied etymological connection between them.  
 105 sacrament ] Odo uses an uncommon Latin word *liba* (an abbreviation of *libatio*) which is also used in the works of Sextus Amarius and John Scottus Eriugena.  
 117 devouring the Lamb ] That is, taking the bread and the wine of the Eucharist.  
 140 a tree ] That is, the tree of knowledge of good and evil.  
 159 ark ] Odo uses the Latin word *archa* to refer to the ancient Ark of the Covenant. This word is also used to describe a quadrangular landmark used by surveyors, which seems to be the intended connection between the ark and the cross. Odo here refers to the description of the Ark in the Temple at Jerusalem during the time of Solomon (2 Chronicles 5: 7-8).  
 167 sweetened by Moses ] Exodus 15: 25. In this and the following lines, Odo seeks to make the connection between the wooden cross, and other pieces of wood through which God worked miracles, as a way of showing that the cross was part of a longer tradition in Biblical history.  
 169 the staff ] Exodus 17: 5-7.  
 171 two sticks ] 1 Kings 17: 7-24.

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- 172 staff bearing a snake | That is, a *caduceus*, a Classical symbol of healing that continues to be a symbol for doctors and hospitals in the present. Moses also makes reference to a similar image (Numbers 21: 8).
- 173 pole bearing grapes | Numbers 13: 21-25.
- 174 first people | That is, the Jewish people, who were God's first chosen people. Christians, upon seeing the incarnate Christ (thus physically visible), however, became the new incarnation of God's chosen people.
- 190 saliva | Jesus heals a man's sight after placing a mixture of his saliva and mud on his eyes (John 9: 1-12). Jesus there states that he is "the light of the world" while he is on earth.
- 191 tomb | That is, Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead (John 11: 38: 24).
- 196 vineyard | Isaiah 5: 2-4.
- 200 whale | That is, Death. Odo makes reference to Matthew's analogy of Jesus' entombment before his resurrection to Jonah being swallowed by the whale (Matthew 12:40).
- 221-223 winegrowers | Odo makes reference to the parable of the winegrowers who resist obeying their landlord until he removes them from his land (Matthew 21: 33-46). By this parable, Jesus warns the Pharisees that the kingdom of God will be taken away from them and given to a people who will fructify.
- 234 nature shook | Matthew 27: 45-54.
- 245 | Psalms 24: 12.
- 249 Abraham | While lacking clear scriptural support, Christian theology had developed a firm conception of the Harrowing of Hell by Odo's time. According to the early-medieval apocryphal *Gospel of Nicodemus*, Jesus descended into Hell during the three days before his resurrection, did battle with Satan and rescued the souls of the virtuous Jews, bringing them with him to Heaven.
- 251 thieves hang there | Odo likely makes reference to Judas, who hanged himself after betraying Christ (Matthew 27: 1-10).
- 284 Jonah | See above, l. 200.
- 295 Isaac | Genesis 22: 2-19.
- 367 prostitute | That is, Mary Magdalene (Matthew 28: 1-10).
- 386 the rock of the Church | That is, Peter, whose Latin name (*Petrus*) closely resembles *petra* – the word for rock. This pun also exists in the original Greek (Matthew 16: 18-20).
- 390 Ruth | Ruth is one of the four women named in the genealogy of Jesus at the beginning of the book of Matthew (Matthew 1: 5). Ruth –great-grandmother to King David – and her husband Boaz were often understood allegorically as the relationship between Jesus and the Church, and the care which God takes for his people. Her story is told in the Old Testament book of Ruth.
- 390 Tamar | The daughter of King David, raped by her half-brother Amnon. She is presented as a dutiful and long-suffering woman (2 Samuel 13: 1-29), who gave birth to Perez and Zerah (Matthew 1: 3).
- 390 Bathsheba | The wife of Uriah the Hittite and later the wife of King David, and mother to Solomon (2 Samuel 11-12).
- 390 Rahab | Rahab helps the Hebrews take Jericho by hiding their spies (Joshua 2: 1-13, 6: 17-25), and joined the Hebrew people after it was captured. She is called the mother of Boaz (Matthew 1: 5). She is used as an example of a person of faith (Hebrews 11:31) and as a prostitute (James 2:25).
- 391 | Cf. Matthew 9:9; Luke 5: 27; Mark 2: 14.
- 392 Zacchaeus | Luke 19: 1-10.
- 396 missionaries | Acts 2: 1-12.
- 421 | Matthew 5: 13-16.

425 mountain ] Odo uses a geographic metaphor to show how Christ stands above even other towering figures such as Moses, Joshua and Elijah.

433 girl ] John 18: 17.

436 promised ] Acts 1: 8.

504 twelve ] Acts 1: 12-26.

522 the day ] That is Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended to the disciples (Acts 2: 1-13).

552 new wine ] Matthew 9: 17; Mark 2: 22; Luke 5: 37-39.

585-96 ] Cf. Acts 4: 36-37, 5: 1;

598 ] Matthew 17: 5, 18: 22.

590 Ananias ] Acts 5: 1-11.

600 Simon ] Acts 8: 9-25.

610-11 ] Acts 4: 32. The first monastic brotherhood is this communal life followed by the Apostles after the descent of the Holy Spirit (at Pentecost). See brief discussion of this passage in, Michael Taylor, "The Pentecost at Vézelay," *Gesta* 19.1 (1980), p. 9-15, here p. 11.

644 Paul's belt ] Acts 21:11.

670 seals ] Odo uses the word seal to mean symbol; in the Middle Ages, seals were used to seal private correspondence and usually bore a stylized image/representation of the sender.

683 drink ] That is, Christians drink the wine, which is Christ's blood.

713-14 signs ] Odo seems to be referring to how the apostles proselytized by preaching with words, but also by their actions (e.g. miracles).

721 poets ] That is, Classical poets.

745 ] Cf. Isaiah 60: 16.

813 +] Augustine, *City of God*, XIII, 4.

871 deviations ] In this and the following lines, Odo uses the words "deviations" and "departures" to refer to heresies – by which some Christians come to believe false doctrines and thus leave the truth path which leads to God.

882 Arius ] The fourth-century priest Arius (who gave name to the heresy, Arianism) promoted a concept of the Trinity very different from his opponent Athanasius of Alexandria, who, in his *Letter to Serapion* describes Arius' death. Athanasius suggests that Arius died as befitted a man of his caliber – miraculously struck dead in the middle of a shit.

968 Korah ] Numbers 16: 1-50.

## Book 7

Preface, 17 Og ] Deuteronomy 3: 1-7. Og was the king of Bashan, but the text suggests that there are two kings – Og and Bashan. Perhaps Odo or a copyist mistakenly confused Og's kingdom with the name of another king opposing the Hebrews, Sihon king of Heshbon.

Preface, 23 calf ] Exodus 32: 4.

24 field ] Matthew 13: 38.

39 Pharez ] The son of Judah and Tamar, and ancestor of King David (Matthew 1: 3).

58 Lot's daughters ] Lot's daughters seduce their father after getting him drunk, in order to continue their family line (Genesis 19: 30-38).

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- 71 Babylonian king | That is, Nebuchadnezzar. For the story of his erection of an idol in his image and the punishment of disobedient subjects, see Daniel 3: 1-30.
- 91 Tau | The Greek letter T, which was often used as a sign of the crucifix in Christian imagery. It also is seen to correspond to the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, which is called by the same word. In the Latin versions of the Bible, the word *tau* is used as a word meaning “mark”, which distinguished someone who lamented sin (cf. Ezekiel 9: 4; Job 31: 35). The presence of the *tau* in the Old Testament books confirmed to Christians like Odo that Jesus’ crucifixion was foretold in the ancient Hebrew books.
- 119 lust | 1 John 2: 16.
- 121 mother | Revelations 12: 1.
- 140 the Jordan | Job 40: 18.
- 149 Samuel | Odo likely makes reference to John Cassian’s *Conferences*, which notes that Samuel was called to God’s service as a child (conf. 2, 14).
- 150 pot | Horace, *Letters*, I, 2, 69.
- 159 Nabuzaradan, Sopher | 2 Kings 25: 19.
- 165 Paul | Romans 1: 26-27.
- 166 trumpet | Isaiah 10: 22.
- 168 hawker | 2 Timothy 3: 1.
- 178 prophet | Isaiah 26: 10.
- 196 chrism | Odo uses the Latinized Greek word *krismate* for chrism – a consecrated oil used during baptism.
- 228 vipers | Acts 28: 3.
- 269 two kings | That is, Og and Sihon.
- 295 Ethiopians | Jeremiah 13:23.
- 325 Joseph | Genesis 39:1-20
- 327 Madianite | Numbers 25: 1-18.
- 335 Nazirites | Numbers 6: 18-20.
- 371 bride | The bride and groom imagery is a reference to the biblical Song of Songs, which is a love poem interpreted as a dialogue between the soul (bride) and God (groom).
- 420 the Idumaeon | Deuteronomy 23: 7.
- 452 Joshua | Joshua 12:7-24.
- 494 prodigal son | Luke 15: 1-32.
- 508 three loaves | Luke 11: 5-13.
- 570 foolish virgin | Matthew 25:1-13.
- 728 | 2 Corinthians 12: 2.

## RESOURCES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The present bibliography strives to achieve a balance between cataloguing the breadth of work with the need to single out the most pertinent tools for those pursuing further research. We have provided annotation to point students to key works and have translated the titles of works not published in English.

The history of the scholarly work done on Odo of Cluny and the *Occupatio* is long and distinguished; the result being a vast body of research accumulated over several centuries. For an exhaustive bibliography of international scholarship on Odo of Cluny from the sixteenth century until 2008, readers should consult Isabelle Rosé's *Construire une société seigneuriale*, pp. 641-706. A continually updated bibliography on Cluny, the *Bibliotheca Cluniacensis novissima*, can be found online.

### Printed Editions

\**Bibliotheca Cluniacensis*. Ed. Martin Marrier and André Duchesne. Paris: 1614. Reprinted Macon: Brothers Protat, 1915. This seminal work collects together the majority of the *Lives* and writings of the Cluniac abbots (and of some additional monks), along with a number of charters. It publishes Latin texts with Latin introductions, commentary and endnotes. This text provides the first printed editions of many of Odo's works, and many of the texts have not been re-edited since (though many are republished, at times introducing further errors, in Migne's *Patrologia Latina*). The editors were not aware of Odo's *Occupatio*, conflating it with his *Collationes* (*Notae*, col. 53).

Humillimus. *Vita Odonis minor* [A concise Life of Odo]. In "L'*Editio minor* della *vita* di Oddone di Cluny e gli apporti dell' *Humillimus*. Testo critico e nuovi orientamenti." *L'Archiginnasio* 63-65 (1968/70), pp. 132-259, here pp. 208-57. The Latin text of the second *Life* composed by an anonymous monk (known to scholars as Humillimus) at Cluny in the eleventh-century during the abbacy of Hugh of Semur.

John of Salerno. *Vita sancti Odonis abbatis cluniacensis secundi* [The Life of St. Odo, Second Abbot of Cluny]. In *PL* 133, col. 43-86. The Latin text of the first and most detailed *Life of Odo* from the 10<sup>th</sup>-century. This is the version translated by Gerard Sitwell (see below). A different version of this text showing minor divergences in order and content is printed in the *Bibliotheca Cluniacensis* (see above), col. 13-56.

*Les Plus Anciens Documents originaux de l'abbaye de Cluny*. Ed. Hartmut Atsma, Sébastien Barret and Jean Vezin. Monumenta palaeographica Medii Aevi, series gallica, vol. 1-3. Turnhout: Brepols, 1997-2002. These volumes provide photographic reproductions as well as transcriptions of the earliest surviving charters from Cluny. The editors provide a description, a firm dating and recent bibliographic data for each charter.



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- Odo of Cluny. *Antiphonae* [Twelve Antiphons about Saint Martin of Tours]. In *PL* 133, col. 513.
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- Odo of Cluny. *Quattuor Hymnae* [Four Hymns: On the Sacrality of the Body and Blood of Christ, On the Blessed Mary Magdalene, On Saint Martin of Tours, A Second Hymn in Honour of Saint Martin of Tours, composed on Odo's deathbed]. In *PL* 133, col. 513-517. The first two hymns are misattributed to Odo.
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- Odo of Cluny, *Occupatio* [Meditations]. Ed. Antonius Swoboda. Leipzig: Teubner, 1900.
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\* *Recueil des chartes de l'abbaye de Cluny* [A Collection of the Charters of the Abbey of Cluny]. Ed. Auguste Bernard and Alexandre Bruel. Collection de documents inédits sur l'histoire de France - Première série. Histoire politique. 6 Vols. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1876-1903. Reprinted Frankfurt/Main: 1974. Commentary in French accompanies the Latin texts of the charters relating to the abbey of Cluny. The editors provide a provisional dating of the charters, some of which have been re-dated in Maurice Chaume's series of articles and Barbara Rosenwein's monographs (see below). Volume 1 contains the charters of the abbacies of Berno and Odo.

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Hallinger briefly examines the *Occupatio* within a broad survey of the ideas about monasticism and spirituality circulating at early Cluny.

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——— and Christian Sapin. "Les études clunisiennes dans tous les états [The current state of Cluniac studies]." *Revue Mabillon* 66 (1994), pp. 233-58. A critical synthesis of past and recent work on the history of Cluniac monasticism. This study provides an excellent summary of broad historiographical trends in Cluniac scholarship and suggests areas in need of further research.

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## Electronic Resources

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*Chartæ Burgundiae Medii Aevi*. <http://www.artehis.eu/spip.php?article257>. An downloadable database presented in French of Latin medieval charters from Burgundy. This tool allows a wide comparison of names and legal formulae over the long term and between a large number texts. As of 2009, the database contained more than 10,000 acts drawn from different edited collections of charters and legal manuals, the majority of which come from Cluny itself and include all the charters edited by Bernard and Bruel (see above).

*Gallica*. <http://gallica.bnf.fr>. A vast online collection of works relating to French history and literature maintained by the National Library of France. The site offers some images of medieval manuscripts, but it is most useful for the large number of rare scholarly journals and printed editions of medieval texts dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The site is consultable in English, though French words are more successful in finding matches. Many works are text searchable, but many remain only viewable in image format (.tiff/ .pdf). They can be downloaded freely for offline consultation.

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