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PRUDENTIUS

I



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Elliott

# PRUDEI. TUS

WITH AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY

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(IN TWO VOLUMES)

I



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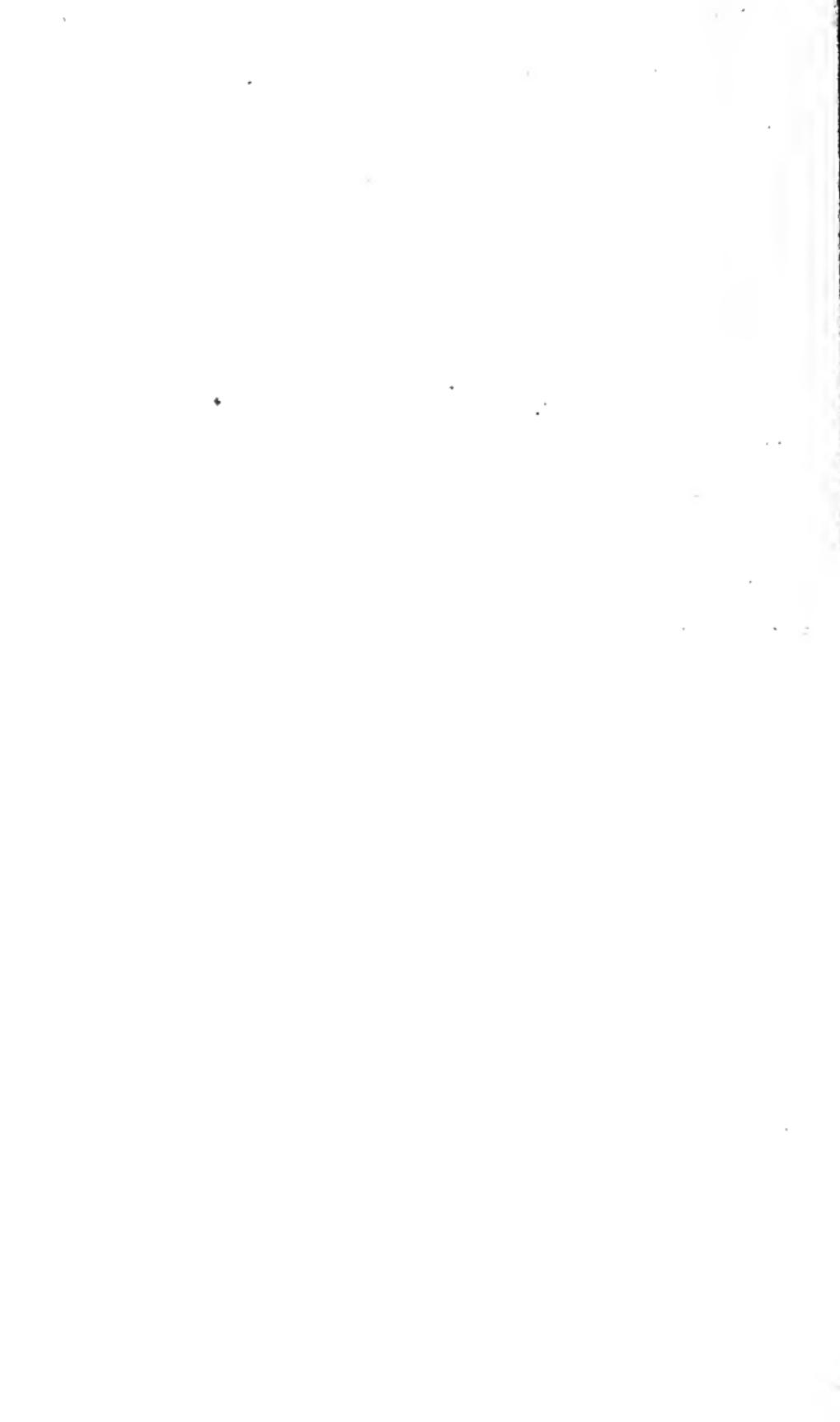
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## INTRODUCTION

AURELIUS PRUDENTIUS CLEMENS, like a number of eminent Latin writers of the classical age, was born in Spain; unlike them, although he visited Rome, he appears to have lived and worked in his native land.<sup>a</sup> In the prefatory verses which, in his fifty-seventh year, he wrote for an edition of his poems,<sup>b</sup> he indicates (at line 24) that he was born in the consulship of Salia, that is, in the year 348. He does not name his birth-place, and there is no conclusive evidence to determine it; but his own words associate his life with the north-eastern part of Spain, and on such evidence as we have it seems most likely that he was born at Caesaraugusta (Saragossa).<sup>c</sup> From the fact that, while he laments an ill-spent youth, he does not accuse himself of paganism or speak of having been converted, it is inferred that his parents were Christians. The preface goes on to tell that after receiving the usual literary and rhetorical education (lines 7-10) he became a barrister (13-15) and then an adminis-

<sup>a</sup> Cf. *Perist.* ii, 537-548; for the visit to Rome, *Perist.* ix, xi, xii; its date must have been before 405, the year of the preface to the collected poems, but after 400, since he describes the Basilica of St. Paul, evidently as completed.

<sup>b</sup> Lines 34 ff. profess to be a programme of work still to be done, as if the preface had been written first; but this must surely be a literary artifice.

<sup>c</sup> The question is discussed by Bergman in the prolegomena to his edition, pp. ix, x.

## INTRODUCTION

trator (16–18); and his career was crowned with an honour to which he refers (19–21) in terms somewhat vague, but probably meaning that he received from the emperor the rank of “comes primi ordinis,” which may have entailed special duties in the province or have been merely titular.<sup>a</sup> The date and place of his death are unknown.

Prudentius, then, is an example of the industrious public servant who is also a man of letters; and although in much of his writing he handled matters of Christian doctrine, it is not as a theologian that we must think of him, but as a man of letters and a whole-hearted Roman who is enthusiastic for the faith. Fervent Christian as he is, at a time when the hold of Christianity on the cultivated classes seems to have been very insecure, when the spirit of literature, even in a nominal Christian like Ausonius, is still essentially pagan, and when serious Christians are tending to separate themselves from the world, he has not cut himself off from the old culture nor from the patriotism of the citizen. He is steeped in the work of the classical Latin poets and suffers no qualms of conscience over his love for them, such as afflicted some of the Fathers of the Church. He regards the pagan literature and art not as things to be rejected but as part of the inheritance into which Christian Rome enters; and in appropriating Latin poetic forms, lyric, epic, didactic, he is willing to show the world that the subject-matter of the new faith can fill the ancient moulds. At times, it is true, his enthusiasm for

<sup>a</sup> The word *militia* (19) was used with reference to civil as well as to military service. For the “comites” see J. S. Reid in the *Cambridge Medieval History*, I, pp. 46–48.

## INTRODUCTION

the old masters carries him too far. Discordia, who in Virgil is the personification of strife, naturally enough becomes Heresy and may still wear her "scissa palla," and Fides is easily recognised as the Catholic Faith; Phlegethon and Styx and Acheron had, no doubt, in the educated circles for which Prudentius wrote, become harmless names with only literary associations; but we feel that the limit has been passed when Jupiter's epithet "Tonans" is used to designate the Christians' God. Still, it is as a poet in whom is embodied a reconciliation between the new faith and the old culture, and in whom Christian thought claims rank in the world of letters, that Prudentius is historically important. A similar quality is seen in his thoughts of Rome and the empire; he is intensely Roman and patriotic, but there is a new character in his patriotism. The Christian poet, far from denying Rome's divine mission, sees farther into its meaning than Virgil did. The purpose which he discerns in Roman history from Aeneas onwards was not merely to unite the world in peace and good government, but to prepare it for the coming of Christ and for the spiritual empire in which Rome is to attain her greatest glory.<sup>a</sup> The change from paganism to Christianity is not a breach with the past, but only the last stage of a development which reached its ideal completion when the far-off successor of Aeneas bowed the knee to Christ;<sup>b</sup> and for Prudentius, as for Aeneas in Virgil, Tiber is still a sacred stream, not, however, because it is associated with a river-

<sup>a</sup> Cf. *Aeneid*, VI, 847-853; *Contra Symm.* I, 287-290, 587-590; II, 583 ff.; *Perist.* ii, 425 ff.

<sup>b</sup> *Apoth.* 446-8.

## INTRODUCTION

god, but because it flows through Christ's earthly capital and past the tombs of Christian martyrs.<sup>a</sup>

When Prudentius wrote, the Church had triumphed; but even at the end of the fourth century paganism, though disestablished and officially banned, was not dead,<sup>b</sup> and there were dangers of heresy within. In both respects he appears as a defender of the faith. The two poems entitled *Apotheosis* and *Hamartigenia* are indeed concerned with the refutation of false doctrine, but even more with the exposition of the true; in the former case with reference to the divine nature of Christ, in the latter to the question of evil. Modern writers have remarked that the particular heresies which Prudentius chooses to attack had for the most part, at any rate in these precise forms, become by his time matters of the past. The explanation is probably to be found in the fact that he is not really a theological controversialist but a poet, and more at home in setting forth the positive faith of the Catholic Church with all the aids of his poetry and rhetoric. Had his interest lain primarily in theology, he would scarcely have begun the *Apotheosis* with the statement that he will only deal with a few out of many heretical doctrines, for fear of sullying his orthodox tongue. His concern is rather to present the literary world with a poetical treatment of Christian truth, following the long tradition of didactic poetry, and he is content to take a background from past writings of professed theologians. In the two books against Symmachus we have an echo of what has been

<sup>a</sup> *Aeneid*, VIII, 72; *Perist.* xii, 29–30.

<sup>b</sup> See Dill, Book I, ch. ii. (Particulars of works which are referred to will be found in the Select Bibliography, pp. xvi–xvii.)

## INTRODUCTION

called “the last great battle for the official recognition of paganism.”<sup>a</sup> It arose out of the stoppage of state payments for the upkeep of old priesthoods and their rites, and the removal of the statue and altar of Victory which had stood for centuries in the senate-house at Rome. An appeal for restoration and toleration was presented to Valentinian II on behalf of the senate, whose pagan members had carried a motion to that effect, by Quintus Aurelius Symmachus, prefect of the city and the most admired orator of the day, of whose ability and eloquence Prudentius speaks with the greatest respect; but the intervention of Ambrose, bishop of Milan, secured its rejection. This was in 384, but it was neither the first nor the last attempt of the persistent pagan party, and the reign of Eugenius gave them a brief success, soon to be reversed by Theodosius’ defeat of the usurper in 394. It was not till the early years of the new century that Prudentius wrote his *Contra Orationem Symmachi*; in Book II the reigning emperors are Honorius and Arcadius,<sup>b</sup> the youthful sons of Theodosius, who had succeeded him in 395, and line 720 refers to the battle of Pollentia, which was fought in 402 or 403. Symmachus, it seems, died about this time. If we ask why at so late a date Prudentius composed this reply to a document of 384 and in it speaks of Symmachus as if he were still alive, two facts may provide the answer. First, in spite of imperial edicts against paganism many men in the upper classes were still unwilling to abandon their old ideas, and the emperor’s efforts were often

<sup>a</sup> Accounts of it are given in Dill, *l.c.*, Glover, pp. 269 ff., Boissier, vol. II, pp. 231–291, *Camb. Med. Hist.*, I, 114 ff.

<sup>b</sup> Cf. lines 7 ff.

## INTRODUCTION

met, as Dill remarks, with a dead weight of official resistance or negligence. Secondly, Symmachus, after ceasing to be prefect of the city, had published his appeal of 384<sup>a</sup> along with his other official *relationes*, and though dead yet spoke powerfully to a world which regarded him with immense admiration and was still highly susceptible to his influence. It is the posthumous appeal of his written words which Prudentius represents Honorius and Arcadius as rejecting. He is careful to define his own attitude towards the book: <sup>b</sup> it has deservedly a great reputation, which he cannot hope to diminish; his own aim is purely defensive. He is, then, putting forth a defence of Christianity in verse which he hopes will appeal to the cultivated readers who admire the prose of Symmachus.

These works, however, represent only half, or less than half, of Prudentius' production. Apart from them, he was a pioneer in the creation of a Christian literature, and has the credit of originating new types of Christian poetry, the literary hymn, the moral allegory, and what has been called the Christian ballad. Hymns for the use of the Church had been written by Ambrose, but they differ in character from the long and elaborate odes of the *Liber*

<sup>a</sup> This is *Relatio III*, on pp. 280–283 of Seeck's edition of Symmachus (Berlin, 1883). It had also been published by Ambrose (from the official copy) along with his reply (Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, vol. XVI, 966–982). In the text of Symmachus it bears the heading “D(omino) N(ostro) Theodosio,” but we know from Ambrose that the official copy was formally addressed to Valentinian, Theodosius, and Arcadius (Seeck, pp. xvi f.). For the date of the death of Symmachus see Seeck, pp. lxxii f.

<sup>b</sup> I, 643 ff.

## INTRODUCTION

✓ *Cathemerinon.* Portions, indeed, of some of these have been included in the Roman Breviary and, in translations, in modern hymnals,<sup>a</sup> but their real nature is not understood if we think of them as intended for congregational singing. They are literary odes in which the mythology of the classical ode is replaced by stories from the Scriptures. It is in this work that Prudentius is most attractive. The hymns are, as Mr. Raby says, his happiest creation, and they furnish his strongest claim to be called a poet. The *Psychomachia*, with its personifications of Virtues and Vices and its epic account of single combats between their leaders, develops a genuine Roman tendency to personify abstract ideas. It was the most popular of the poet's works during the middle ages and the ultimate inspiration of much moral allegory and of much religious and ecclesiastical art.<sup>b</sup> In the *Peristephanon Liber* his devotion to the martyrs combines with his love of telling a story. As one might expect, Spanish martyrs figure largely in the book. It has for us less interest as poetry than as historical evidence of the cult of the martyrs and the place it held in the Christian life of the time. An excess of rhetoric makes the description of these pieces as "ballads" less appropriate than it might have been.<sup>c</sup>

Apart from the other poems stands the collection

<sup>a</sup> E.g. "Corde natus ex Parentis" and J. M. Neale's version in corresponding metre, "Of the Father's love begotten", from *Cath.* ix.

<sup>b</sup> See the edition by M. Lavarenne, pp. 58 ff. He refers to two works by E. Mále, *L'art religieux au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle en France* (Paris, 1910) and *L'art religieux à la fin du moyen âge* (Paris, 1908).

<sup>c</sup> On the *Peristephanon* see especially Raby, pp. 50-57.

## INTRODUCTION

of four-line stanzas under the heading of *Dittochaeon* or (in Bergman's edition) *Tituli Historiarum*, which are inscriptions intended for, or suggested by, a series of pictures or mosaics in a church, representing scenes from the Old and New Testaments in equal numbers. The MSS. are confused as to the title, and some have none. It is possible, as Bergman thinks, that these quatrains were not included by Prudentius himself when he published his works; they are not contained in the two oldest MSS.

## THE MANUSCRIPTS

Prudentius was much read in the middle ages, and the surviving MSS. number more than three hundred; a much smaller number, however, contain the complete works. Two are of special interest on account of their age, one having been written in the sixth century, the other in the seventh; some others on account of their illustrations.<sup>a</sup> The first systematic survey of all the material was made by J. Bergman, whose edition of the text appeared in 1926. For this he selected the following twelve MSS.<sup>b</sup> :—

*A* (6th century) in the National Library at Paris (Lat. 8084). It now contains *Cath.*, *Apoth.*, *Ham.*, *Psych.*, *Perist.* I–V, 142.

*C* (9th century) in the library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge (223).

<sup>a</sup> H. Woodruff, *The Illustrated MSS. of Prudentius*, Cambridge, Mass., 1930.

<sup>b</sup> Three others, which contain the *Psychomachia* alone or almost alone, are quoted in the apparatus criticus to that poem.

## INTRODUCTION

- D (10th century) in the Dean and Chapter library of Durham Cathedral (B 4. 9).
- B (7th century) in the Ambrosian Library at Milan (D 36 sup.). This MS. is available only for parts of the poems; the missing portions have been supplied by a hand of the 9th or 10th century.
- V (early 10th century) in the Vatican Library (Reg. 321).
- N (10th century) in the National Library at Paris (8305).
- P (early 10th century) in the National Library at Paris (8086). It lacks *Ham.* 454 to the end, and *Psych.* 1–811.
- E (early 10th century) in the University Library at Leyden (Burm. Q 3).
- M (9th century), in the monastery library of Monte Cassino (374).
- O (10th century) in the library of Oriel College, Oxford (3). It lacks *Apoth.*, *Ham.* and *Psych.*
- S (9th or early 10th century) in the monastery library of St. Gall (136).
- U (late 9th century) in the City Library at Berne (264). It now has considerable gaps.

These MSS. Bergman divides into two classes (Class A including MSS. A to N, Class B the others), mainly on the grounds that they differ in the order of the poems and in the presence or absence of certain interpolated lines; and each class is subdivided into two families.<sup>a</sup> His text is based on the

<sup>a</sup> Bergman's methods are criticised by G. Meyer in *Philologus* 87 (1932), pp. 249 ff. and 332 ff., F. Klingner in *Gnomon* 6 (1930), pp. 39 ff.

## INTRODUCTION

MSS. of class A, particularly on the two oldest wherever they are available. Where the present edition differs from his, the divergence is indicated. At a number of places, of which the most striking is *Cath.* 10, 9–16, the 9th and 10th century MSS. differ radically from that of the 6th, and Bergman adopts the view that interpolation has occurred. On the other hand, it has been argued that the character of the later text at some, at least, of these places, is more consistent with the view that it represents a revised edition from the hand of Prudentius himself. In the matter of orthography Bergman in general follows the two oldest MSS. Particularly in the case of Greek words I have reverted to the practice of his predecessors, printing, for instance, *sophia*, not *sofa*, and *Phlegethon*, not *Flegeton*. I have also at a few places adopted a different punctuation.

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# THE POEMS OF PRUDENTIUS

VOL. I.

B

# AURELII PRUDENTII CLEMENTIS

## PRAEFATIO

PER quinquennia iam decem,  
ni fallor, fuimus; septimus insuper  
annum cardo rotat, dum fruimur sole volubili.  
instat terminus, et diem  
vicinum senio iam Deus adplicat. 5  
> quid nos utile tanti spatio temporis egimus?  
aetas prima crepantibus  
flevit sub ferulis. mox docuit toga  
infectum vitiis falsa loqui, non sine crimine.  
tum lasciva protervitas 10  
et luxus petulans (heu pudet ac piget!)  
foedavit iuvenem nequitiae sordibus ac luto.  
exim iurgia turbidos  
armarunt animos, et male pertinax  
vincendi studium subiacuit casibus asperis. 15  
bis legum moderamine  
frenos nobilium reximus urbium,  
ius civile bonis reddidimus, terruimus reos.  
tandem militiae gradu  
evectum pietas principis extulit 20  
adsumptum propius stare iubens ordine proximo.

# THE POEMS OF AURELIUS PRUDENTIUS CLEMENS

## PREFACE

FULL fifty years, if I err not, have I lived, and beyond that it is the seventh time that the heaven is wheeling the year and I have the benefit of the circling sun. The end is close upon me, and by now what God is adding to my days is on the border of old age. What profitable thing have I done in all this length of time? My first years wept under the crack of the rod; after that the *toga* corrupted me and taught me to utter sinful falsehoods; <sup>a</sup> then lewd sauciness and wanton indulgence, to my shame and sorrow now, marred my youth with the filthy dirt of wickedness. Next disputings armed my vehement spirit, and a perversely stubborn passion for victory laid itself open to cruel falls. Twice with the law's controlling curb I governed famed cities, rendering civil justice to good men and striking terror into evil-doers. Finally His Grace the Emperor advanced me in his service and raised me up, attaching me closer to him and bidding me stand in the

<sup>a</sup> *I.e.* after assuming the *toga virilis* he attended a school of rhetoric, where he would practise the art of making the best of a case.

PRUDENTIUS

haec dum vita volans agit,  
inrepsit subito canities seni,  
oblitum veteris me Saliae consulis arguens,  
sub quo prima dies mihi 25  
quam multas hiemes volverit, et rosas  
pratis post glaciem reddiderit, nix capitum probat.  
numquid talia proderunt  
carnis post obitum vel bona vel mala 29  
cum iam, quidquid id est quod fueram, mors  
aboleverit?  
dicendum mihi: " quisquis es,  
mundum, quem coluit, mens tua perdidit.  
non sunt illa Dei, quae studuit, cuius habeberis."  
atqui fine sub ultimo  
peccatrix anima stultitiam exuat: 35  
saltem voce Deum concelebret, si meritis nequit.  
hymnis continuet dies,  
nec nox ulla vacet quin Dominum canat;  
pugnet contra hereses, catholicam discutiat  
fidem,  
conculcat sacra gentium, 40  
labem, Roma, tuis inferat idolis,  
carmen martyribus devoveat, laudet apostolos.  
haec dum scribo vel eloquor,  
vinclis o utinam corporis emicem  
liber, quo tulerit lingua sono mobilis ultimo! 45

## PREFACE

nearest rank.<sup>a</sup> While fleeting life thus busied itself, of a sudden the hoar of age has stolen upon me, convicting me of having forgotten Salia's consulship of long ago. Under him my time began, and how many winters it has seen roll on, how often seen the roses given back to the meadows after the frost, the snow on my head proves. Will such things, good or bad, be of any profit after my flesh is dead, when death shall have wiped out all that I was? It must be said to me: "Whosoever thou art, thy soul hath lost the world it cherished; not to God, who will claim thee as His, belong the things for which it was zealous." Yet as my last end draws near let my sinning soul put off her folly. With voice at least let her honour God, if with good deeds she cannot. With hymns let her link the days together, and no night pass without singing of her Lord. Let her fight against heresies, expound the Catholic faith, trample on the rites of the heathen, strike down thy idols, O Rome, devote song to the martyrs, and praise the apostles. And while I write or speak of these themes, O may I fly forth in freedom from the bonds of the body, to the place whither my busy tongue's last word shall tend.

<sup>a</sup> See Introduction, p. viii.

# LIBER CATHEMERINON

## I

### HYMNUS AD GALLI CANTUM

ĀLES diēī pūntiū  
lūcēm p̄opīnquām p̄aecīnīt;  
nōs ēxcitātōr mēntiū  
iam Christus ad vitām vōcāt.

“ auferte ” clamat “ lectulos  
aegros, soporos, desides ;  
castique, recti ac sobrii  
vigilate, iam sum proximus.”

post solis ortum fulgidi  
serum est cubile spernere,  
ni parte noctis addita  
tempus labori adieceris.

vox ista qua strepunt aves  
stantes sub ipso culmine,  
paulo ante quam lux emicet,  
nostrī figura est iudicis.

tectos tenebris horridis  
stratisque opertos segnibus  
suadet quietem linquere  
iam iamque venturo die,

ut, cum coruscis flatibus  
aurora caelum sparserit,  
omnes labore exercitos  
confirmet ad spem luminis.

5

10

15

20

# THE DAILY ROUND

## I

### A HYMN FOR COCK-CROW

THE bird that heralds day forewarns that dawn is at hand; now Christ, the awakener of our souls, calls us to life. "Away," He cries, "with beds that belong to sickness, sleep, and sloth. Be pure and upright and sober and awake, for now I am very near." It is late to spurn the couch after the shining sun is up, unless by adding a part of the night thou hast given more hours to toil. The loud chirping of the birds perched under the very roof, a little while before the light breaks forth, is a symbol of our Judge. As we lie closed in by foul darkness, buried under the blankets of sloth, He bids us leave repose behind, for day is on the point of coming; that when dawn besprinkles the sky with her shimmering breath she may make us all, who were spent with toil, strong to embrace the hope of light. This

## PRUDENTIUS

hic somnus ad tempus datus  
est forma mortis perpetis:  
peccata, ceu nox horrida,  
cogunt iacere ac stertere.

sed vox ab alto culmine  
Christi docentis praemonet  
adesse iam lucem prope,  
ne mens sopori serviat,

ne somnus usque ad terminos  
vitae socordis opprimat  
pectus sepultum criminis  
et lucis oblitum suae.

ferunt vagantes daemonas  
laetos tenebris noctium  
gallo canente exterritos  
sparsim timere et cedere.

invisa nam vicinitas  
lucis, salutis, numinis,  
rupto tenebrarum situ  
noctis fugat satellites.

hoc esse signum praescii  
norunt repromissae spei,  
qua nos soporis liberi  
speramus adventum Dei.

quae vis sit huius alitis,  
Salvator ostendit Petro,  
ter antequam gallus canat  
sese negandum praedicans.

fit namque peccatum prius  
quam praeco lucis proximae  
inlustret humanum genus  
finemque peccandi ferat.

flevit negator denique  
ex ore prolapsum nefas,

25

30

35

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45

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55

## THE DAILY ROUND, I

sleep that is given us for a time is an image of everlasting death. Our sins, like foul night, make us lie snoring; but the voice of Christ from the height of heaven teaches and forewarns us that daylight is near, lest our soul be in bondage to slumber, and to the very end of a slothful life sleep lie heavy on a heart that is buried in sin and has forgotten its natural light. They say that evil spirits which roam happily in the darkness of night are terrified when the cock crows, and scatter and flee in fear; for the hated approach of light, salvation, Godhead, bursts through the foul darkness and routs the ministers of night. They have foreknowledge that this is a sign of our promised hope, whereby being freed from slumber we hope for the coming of God. What this bird signifies the Saviour showed to Peter, when He declared that ere the cock crew He should be thrice denied. For sin is committed before the herald of coming day sheds light on the race of men and brings an end of sinning. So he who denied Christ wept for the wickedness that fell from his lips while his

# PRUDENTIUS

cum mens maneret innocens  
animusque servaret fidem.

60

nec tale quidquam postea  
linguae locutus lubrico est,  
cantuque galli cognito  
peccare iustus destitit.

inde est quod omnes credimus  
illo quietis tempore  
quo gallus exultans canit  
Christum redisse ex inferis.

65

tunc mortis oppressus vigor,  
tunc lex subacta est Tartari,  
tunc vis diei fortior  
noctem coagit cedere.

70

iam iam quiescant improba,  
iam culpa furva obdormiat,  
iam noxa letalis suum  
perpessa somnum marceat.

75

vigil vicissim spiritus  
quodecumque restat temporis,  
dum meta noctis clauditur,  
stans ac laborans excubet.

80

Iesum ciamus vocibus  
flentes, precantes, sobrii ;  
intenta supplicatio  
dormire cor mundum vetat.

sat convolutis artubus  
sensem profunda oblivio  
pressit, gravavit, obruit  
vanis vagantem somniis.

85

sunt nempe falsa et frivola  
quae mundiali gloria,  
ceu dormientes, egimus :  
vigilemus, hic est veritas.

90

## THE DAILY ROUND, I

mind remained upright and his heart kept faith; nor ever after did he speak any such word by slip of tongue, and when he heard the cock crow he was made a just man and ceased to sin. Hence it is that we all believe it was at this hour of rest, when the cock crows in his pride, that Christ returned from the dead. Then was the strength of death crushed, then was the law of hell subdued, then did the stronger potency of day force night to flee. Now, now let wickedness sink to rest, now let dark sin fall asleep, now let deadly guilt wither away, the victim of its own slumber; and let the spirit in its turn awake, and for the time that remains, while the night's course is drawing to a close, stand and be active at its post. Let us call on Jesus with our voices, in tears and prayers and soberness; earnest supplication keeps the pure heart from slumbering. Long enough has deep forgetfulness, as we lay curled up, pressed heavily on our sense and buried it while it wandered in baseless dreams. Surely false and worthless are the things we have done because of worldly glory, as though we did them in sleep. Let us awake! Reality is here. Gold, pleasure, joy,

# PRUDENTIUS

aurum, voluptas, gaudium,  
opes, honores, prospera,  
quaecumque nos inflant mala,  
fit mane, nil sunt omnia.

95

tu, Christe, somnum dissice,  
tu rumpe noctis vincula,  
tu solve peccatum vetus,  
novumque lumen ingere.

100

## II

### HYMNUS MATUTINUS

Nox et tenebrae et nubila,  
confusa mundi et turbida,  
lux intrat, albescit polus,  
Christus venit, discedite.

5

caligo terrae scinditur  
percussa solis spiculo,  
rebusque iam color reddit  
vultu nitentis sideris.

sic nostra mox obscuritas  
fraudisque pectus consciuum  
ruptis reiectum nubibus  
regnante pallescat Deo.

10

tunc non licebit claudere  
quod quisque fuscum cogitat,  
sed mane clarescent novo  
secreta mentis prodita.

15

fur ante lucem squalido  
inpune peccat tempore,  
sed lux dolis contraria  
latere furtum non sinit.

20

## THE DAILY ROUND, II

riches, honour, success, all the evil things that puff us up,—comes morning, all are naught. Do Thou, O Christ, scatter our slumbers. Do Thou burst the bonds of night. Do Thou undo our long-established sin, and pour in upon us the light of the new day.

## II

### A MORNING HYMN

NIGHT and darkness and clouds, all the world's perplexed disorder, get ye gone! The dawn comes in, the sky is lightening, Christ is coming. Earth's blackness is split asunder by the stroke of the sun's dart, and now the world resumes its colour under the glance of his shining orb. So presently will the darkness in us, the heart that knows its own sin, be cleared with the breaking of the clouds and grow light under the rule of God. Then we shall not be free to hide our dark thoughts, but in the newness of morning the secrets of the heart will be revealed and made manifest. It is in the murky time before the light comes, that the thief offends unpunished; but light, the foe of guile, suffers not theft to be

## PRUDENTIUS

versuta fraus et callida  
amat tenebris obtegi,  
aptamque noctem turpibus  
adulter occultus fovet.

sol, ecce, surgit igneus :  
piget, pudescit, paenitet,  
nec teste quisquam lumine  
peccare constanter potest.

quis mane sumptis nequiter  
non erubescit poculis,  
cum fit libido temperans,  
castumque nugator sapit ?

nunc, nunc severum vivitur,  
nunc nemo temptat ludicrum,  
inepta nunc omnes sua  
vultu colorant serio.

haec hora cunctis utilis  
qua quisque quod studet gerat,  
miles, togatus, navita,  
opifex, arator, institor.

illum forensis gloria,  
hunc triste raptat classicum.  
mercator hinc ac rusticus  
avara suspirant lucra.

at nos lucelli ac faenoris  
fandique prorsus nescii,  
nec arte fortis bellica,  
te, Christe, solum novimus.

te mente pura et simplici,  
te voce, te cantu pio  
rogare curvato genu  
flendo et canendo discimus.

his nos lucramur quaestibus,  
hac arte tantum vivimus,

*dimic?*

25

30

35

40

45

50

## THE DAILY ROUND, II

hidden. Sly, cunning dishonesty loves to shroud itself in darkness, and the stealthy paramour cherishes the night because it is fitted for base deeds. But lo! the fiery sun arises, and there come regret and shame and sorrow, and no man can sin coolly under the eye of light. Who does not blush in the morning after a bout of the wine-cup? For then desire moderates and the ne'er-do-well savours purity. Now, now it is that life is serious, now none essays aught sportive, now all men put a grave face on their follies. This is the hour that profits all for carrying on their several businesses, be it soldier or citizen, sailor, workman, husbandman or huckster. One is carried away by desire for fame in the courts, another by the grim war-trump; and here are the trader and the countryman sighing for their greedy gains. But we, who know nought of paltry gain or usury or eloquence, nor show our prowess in the art of war, know Thee, O Christ, alone. Of Thee with pure and single heart, with devout voice and song, on bended knee with tears and singing we learn to make request. This is the trafficking whereby we grow rich, this

# PRUDENTIUS

- haec inchoamus munera, 55  
 cum sol resurgens emicat.
- intende nostris sensibus  
 vitamque totam dispice ;  
 sunt multa fucis inlita,  
 quae luce purgentur tua. 60
- durare nos tales iube,  
 quales, remotis sordibus,  
 nitere pridem iusseras  
 Iordanetos flumine.
- quodcumque nox mundi dehinc 65  
 infecit atris nubibus,  
 tu, rex, Eoi sideris  
 vultu sereno inlumina,
- tu, sancte, qui taetram picem  
 candore tinguis lacteo, 70  
 ebnoque crystallum facis,  
 delicta tergens<sup>1</sup> livida.
- sub nocte Iacob caerula,  
 luctator audax angeli,  
 eo usque dum lux surgeret,  
 sudavit inpar proelium ; 75
- sed cum iubar claresceret,  
 lapsante claudus poplite  
 femurque victus debile,  
 culpae vigorem perdidit. 80
- nutabat inguen saucium,  
 quae corporis pars vilior  
 longeque sub cordis loco  
 diram fovet libidinem.
- hae nos docent imagines  
 hominem tenebris obsitum,  
 si forte non cedat Deo,  
 vires rebelles perdere. 85

## THE DAILY ROUND, II

the employment by which alone we live, these the duties we enter upon when the sun breaks forth at its rising again. Look into our thoughts, and examine our whole life; many stains are there to be cleansed by Thy light. Bid us so continue as Thou didst aforetime bid us shine when we were dipped in Jordan's stream and our uncleanness was done away. Whatsoever the night of the world since then has darkened with its black clouds do Thou, O King, illumine with the bright face of the morning star, Thou, O Holy One, who dost give to foul pitch the whiteness of milk and make crystal of ebony and dost wipe away the stains of sin. It was under the dusk of night that Jacob, wrestling boldly with the angel, toiled hard in unequal fight until the light arose. But when the beam shone forth his ham gave way and he was lamed, and being overcome in the infirmity of his thigh he lost the strength to sin. His loins were wounded and enfeebled, that baser part of the body, far below the heart, which nurtures fearful lust. These figures teach us that man, sunk in darkness, if he yield not to God, loses the strength

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<sup>1</sup> Some MSS. of Bergman's class B have terge.

## PRUDENTIUS

erit tamen beatior,  
intemperans membrum cui  
luctando claudum et tabidum  
dies oborta invenerit.

90

tandem facessat caecitas,  
quae nosmet in praeceps diu  
lapsos sinistris gressibus  
errore traxit devio.

95

haec lux serenum conferat  
purosque nos praestet sibi;  
nihil loquamur subdolum,  
volvamus obscurum nihil.

100

sic tota decurrat dies,  
ne lingua mendax, ne manus  
oculive peccent lubrici,  
ne noxa corpus inquiet.

speculator adstat desuper,  
qui nos diebus omnibus  
actusque nostros prospicit  
a luce prima in vesperum.

105

hic testis, hic est arbiter,  
hic intuetur quidquid est  
humana quod mens concipit;  
hunc nemo fallit iudicem.

110

## III

### HYMNUS ANTE CIBUM

O CRUCIFER bone, lucisator,  
omniparens pie, Verbigena,  
edite corpore virgineo,  
sed prius in genitore potens,  
astra, solum, mare quam fierent,

5

## THE DAILY ROUND, III

to resume the fight; yet he will be more blessed in whom the day, when it appears, finds the unruly body lamed and wasted with the struggle. At last let the blindness be gone, which has long caused us to fall into danger and made us wander from the path with misguided steps. May this light give us a clear day and make us pure to meet it; let us speak no guile and think no dark thought. So may the whole day pass that neither lying tongue, nor hands, nor straying eyes commit sin, nor any guilt stain our body. There is One that stands by watching from above, who each day views us and our doings from dawn of light till evening. He is witness, He is judge; He looks on every thought the mind of man conceives, and this judge none can dupe.

### III

#### A HYMN BEFORE MEAT

O KIND bearer of the cross, spreader of light, loving source of all, born of the Word, Thou that wert the fruit of a virgin's body, yet mighty in the Father ere stars and earth and sea were made, hither, I pray,

## PRUDENTIUS

huc nitido, precor, intuitu  
flecte salutiferam faciem  
fronte serenus et irradia,  
nominis ut sub honore tui  
has epulas liceat capere.

10

te sine dulce nihil, Domine,  
nec iuvat ore quid adpetere,  
pocula ni prius atque cibos,  
Christe, tuus favor inbuerit,  
omnia sanctificante fide.

15

fercula nostra Deum sapiant,  
Christus et influat in pateras;  
seria, ludicra, verba, iocos,  
denique quod sumus aut agimus,  
trina superne regat pietas.

20

hic mihi nulla rosae spolia,  
nullus aromate fragrat<sup>1</sup> odor,  
sed liquor influit ambrosius  
nectareamque fidem redolet  
fusus ab usque Patris gremio.

25

sperne, Camena, leves hederas,  
cingere tempora quis solita es,  
sertaque mystica dactylico  
texere docta liga strophio,  
laude Dei redimita comas.

30

quod generosa potest anima,  
lucis et aetheris indigena,  
solvere dignius obsequium,  
quam data munera si recinat  
artificem modulata suum?

35

ipse homini quia cuncta dedit,  
quae capimus dominante manu;  
quae polus aut humus aut pelagus  
aëre, gurgite, rure creant,

### THE DAILY ROUND, III

with bright look turn Thy saving face, and with gladsome countenance shine upon us, that we may take this meal in honour of Thy name. Without Thee, Lord, nought is sweet, and appetite finds no relish unless Thy grace, O Christ, first flavour cups and food, while faith sanctifies all. May our dishes savour of God, and Christ be poured into our bowls ; may all things grave or light, our talk, our merriment, all that we are or do, be governed by the three-fold love from on high. Here no plunder of the rose, no scent of spice smells in my nostrils, but an ambrosial liquor flows into me, with the aroma of faith sweet as nectar, and pouring from the Father's breast. Put away, my Muse, the paltry ivy-leaves wherewith thou hast been wont to encircle thy brows ; learn to weave mystic garlands and tie them with a band of dactyls,<sup>a</sup> and wear thy hair wreathed with the praise of God. What worthier service can the high-born soul, native of light and heaven, pay, than to chant the gifts she has received, singing of her Creator ? For He has given all things to man, and we take them with a hand that bears dominion ; all that sky or earth or sea produces in air or flood or field, all this

\* The phrase is suited to the metre of this hymn, which is the dactylic tetrameter (catalectic).

<sup>1</sup> *Here and elsewhere the spelling of the MSS. varies between fragl- and flagr-.*

# PRUDENTIUS

haec mihi subdidit, et sibi me.

40

callidus inlaqueat volucres  
aut pedicis dolus aut maculis,  
inlita glutine corticeo  
vimina plumigeram seriem  
inpediunt et abire vetant.

45

ecce per aequora fluctivagos  
texta greges sinuosa trahunt;  
piscis item sequitur calamum  
raptus acumine vulnifico,  
credula saucus ora cibo.

50

fundit opes ager ingenuas,  
dives aristiferae segetis,  
hic ubi vitea pampineo  
bracchia palmite luxuriant,  
pacis alumna ubi baca viret.

55

haec opulentia Christicolis  
servit et omnia subpeditat.  
absit enim procul illa fames,  
caedibus ut pecudum libeat  
sanguineas lacerare dapes.

60

sint fera gentibus indomitis  
prandia de nece quadrupedum;  
nos holeris coma, nos siliqua  
feta legumine multimodo  
paverit innocuis epulis.

65

spumea mulctra gerunt niveos  
ubere de gemino latices,  
perque coagula densa liquor  
in solidum coit, et fragili  
lac tenerum premitur calatho.

70

mella recens mihi Cecropia  
nectare sudat olente favus;  
haec opifex apis aërio

### THE DAILY ROUND, III

has He put under me, and me under Himself. Cunning craft snares birds in gins or meshes, or twigs smeared with the glue that comes from bark catch a line of the feathered creatures and will not let them go. See how through the waters the encircling nets draw the shoals that roam the waves; and fish fall to the rod too, caught by the sharp, piercing hook, their too trustful mouth wounded by the bait. The land pours forth its native wealth in all the riches of its corn-crop, while here too the vine's branches luxuriate with leafy shoots and the berry that is the nursling of peace<sup>a</sup> flourishes. All this abundance is in the service of Christ's followers and supplies their every need. Far from us be the appetite that would choose to slay cattle and hack their flesh to make a bloody feast. Let tribes uncivilised have their savage meals from the slaughter of four-footed beasts: as for us, the leaves of greens, the pod that swells with beans of diverse sorts, will feed us with an innocent banquet. Foaming pails bear the snow-white milk drawn from a pair of teats; and by means of thickening rennet the liquor solidifies, and the soft curd is pressed in a frail wicker basket. The fresh comb exudes for me Cecropian<sup>b</sup> honey with the scent of nectar; the worker bee, that knows no

<sup>a</sup> I.e. the olive.

<sup>b</sup> I.e. Athenian, a literary epithet, Attic honey being famous.

## PRUDENTIUS

- rore liquat tenuique thymo,  
 nexilis inscia conubii. 75
- hinc quoque pomiferi nemoris  
 munera mitia proveniunt;  
 arbor onus tremefacta suum  
 deciduo gravis imbre pluit  
 puniceosque iacit cumulos. 80
- quae veterum tuba quaeve lyra  
 flatibus inclyta vel fidibus  
 divitis omnipotentis opus,  
 quaeque fruenda patent homini,  
 laudibus aquiperare queat? 85
- te, Pater optime, mane novo,  
 solis et orbita cum media est,  
 te quoque luce sub occidua,  
 sumere cum monet hora cibum,  
 nostra, Deus, canet harmonia. 90
- quod calet halitus interior,  
 corde quod abdita vena tremit,  
 pulsat et incita quod resonam  
 lingua sub ore latens caveam,  
 laus superi Patris esto mihi. 95
- nos igitur tua, sancte, manus  
 caespite conposuit madido,  
 effigiem meditata suam,  
 utque foret rata materies  
 flavit et indidit ore animam.<sup>1</sup> 100
- tunc per amoena virecta iubet  
 frondicomis habitare locis,  
 ver ubi perpetuum redolet  
 prataque multicolora latex  
 quadrifluo celer amne rigat. 105
- “haec tibi nunc famulentur” ait;  
 “usibus omnia dedo tuis,

✓ ✓

### THE DAILY ROUND, III

union in wedlock, makes this clear fluid from the dew of the air and the slender thyme. From the earth too come the ripe gifts of the orchard. The heavy tree is shaken and rains down its load in a falling shower, casting its red fruits in heaps upon the ground. What trumpet or lyre of old, with famous music of wind or strings, could fitly praise the work of Him who is rich and almighty, and all that is provided for man's enjoyment? Of Thee, best Father, when the morn is new, and when the sun's course is half-way run, of Thee too under the sinking light, when the time of day admonishes us to take food, of Thee, O God, shall be our song. For the breath that is warm within me, for the blood that pulses unseen in my heart, for the tongue ensconced within my mouth and beating nimbly on its sounding chamber, let me praise the Father on high. Thy hand, then, it was, O Holy One, that made us from the moist earth. After His own image He made us, and that our substance might be perfected, breathed with His mouth into us the breath of life. Then He bade man dwell in a leafy place, ranging over pleasant lawns, where the scent of spring was unending and a swift stream in fourfold channel<sup>a</sup> watered the many-coloured meads. "Be all this now in thy service," He said. "All I give over to thee for thy enjoyment. But I bid thee

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<sup>a</sup> Cf. Genesis ii, 10.

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<sup>1</sup> ore animam dedit ex proprio A.

## PRUDENTIUS

sed tamen aspera mortifero  
stipite carpere poma veto,  
qui medio viret in nemore."

110

hic draco perfidus indocile  
virginis inlicit ingenium,  
ut socium malesuada virum  
mandere cogeret ex veticis,  
ipsa pari peritura modo.

115

corpora mutua (nosse nefas)  
post epulas inoperta vident,  
lubricus error et erubuit :  
tegmina sua parant foliis,  
dedecus ut pudor occuleret.

120

conscia culpa Deum pavitans  
sede pia procul exigitur.  
innuba femina quae fuerat,  
coniugis excipit imperium,  
foedera tristia iussa pati.

125

auctor et ipse doli coluber  
plectitur inprobus, ut mulier  
colla trilingua calce terat ;  
sic coluber muliebre solum  
suspicit atque virum mulier.

130

his ducibus vitiosa dehinc  
posteritas ruit in facinus,  
dumque rudes imitatur avos,  
fasque nefasque simul glomerans,  
inopia crimina morte luit.

135

ecce venit nova progenies,  
aethere proditus alter homo,  
non luteus velut ille prius,  
sed Deus ipse gerens hominem,  
corporeisque carens vitiis.

140

fit caro vivida Sermo Patris,

### THE DAILY ROUND, III

not pluck the harsh fruit from the deadly tree that grows in the midst of the wood." Then the treacherous serpent beguiled the simple heart of the maid to seduce her male partner and make him eat of the forbidden fruit, being herself doomed to ruin in like manner. Each other's body (unlawful knowledge), after eating, they saw uncovered, and their sinful lapse brought the blush to their cheeks; coverings they made by stitching leaves, that modesty might veil their shame. Trembling before God for the guilt they felt, they were driven out from the abode of innocence, and the woman, till then unwedded, came under a husband's rule and was commanded to submit to stern laws. The wicked serpent, too, that devised the guile, was condemned to have its three-tongued head bruised by the woman's heel; so the serpent was under the woman's foot, as the woman under the man. Following their lead, succeeding generations are corrupted and rush into sin, and through copying their primitive ancestors, lumping right and wrong together, pay with death for their rebellious deeds. But lo! there comes a new scion, a Second Man sent forth from heaven, not of clay as was that one before, but God Himself putting on man without the body's faults. The Word of the Father becomes

## PRUDENTIUS

numine quam rutilante gravis  
non thalamo, neque iure tori,  
nec genialibus inlecebris  
intemerata puella parit.

145

hoc odium vetus illud erat,  
hoc erat aspidis atque hominis  
digladiabile discidium,  
quod modo cernua femineis  
vipera proteritur pedibus.

150

edere namque Deum merita  
omnia virgo venena domat;  
tractibus anguis inexplicitis  
virus inerme piger revomit,  
gramine concolor in viridi.

155

quae feritas modo non trepidat  
terrata de grege candidulo?  
inpavidas lupus inter oves  
tristis obambulat et rabidum  
sanguinis inmemor os cohibet.

160

agnus enim vice mirifica  
ecce leonibus imperitat,  
exagitansque truces aquilas  
per vaga nubila perque Notos  
sidere lapsa columba fugat.

165

tu mihi, Christe, columba potens,  
sanguine pasta cui cedit avis,  
tu niveus per ovile tuum  
agnus hiare lupum prohibes,  
subiuga tigridis ora premens.

170

da, locuples Deus, hoc famulis  
rite precantibus, ut tenui  
membra cibo recreata levent,  
neu piger inmodicis dapibus  
viscera tenta gravet stomachus.

175

### THE DAILY ROUND, III

living flesh; pregnant by the shining Godhead, not by wedlock nor espousal nor allurement of marriage, a maid inviolate bears it. This was the meaning of that age-long hate, that quarrel to the death between snake and man, that now the serpent on his belly is crushed by a woman's feet. For the virgin who proved worthy to give birth to God subdues all its poisons, and the snake, its length twisted in coils it cannot unravel, feebly spews its harmless venom on the green grass whose hue it matches. What wild beast does not tremble now in fear of the white-clad flock? The dire wolf prowls amid fearless sheep, and with no thought of blood keeps close his ravening mouth. For see—by a wondrous change the lamb commands the lions, and the dove gliding from the sky drives the fierce eagles in flight through the unresting clouds and the winds. Thou for me, O Christ, art the puissant dove to which the blood-fed bird gives place. Thou art the snow-white lamb that dost prevent the wolf from opening his jaws in all Thy fold and dost subdue and close the tiger's mouth. Grant, mighty God, to Thy servants' devout prayers that with a frugal meal they may refresh and sustain their bodies, and that the stomach be not heavy with immoderate feasting and strain and weigh upon the inner parts. Far from us be the

## PRUDENTIUS

haustus amarus abesto procul,  
ne libeat tetigisse manu  
exitiale quid aut vetitum ;  
gustus et ipse modum teneat,  
sospitet ut iecur incolumē.

180

sit satis anguibus horrificis  
liba quod in pia corporibus  
a ! miseram peperere necem ;  
sufficiat semel ob facinus  
plasma Dei potuisse mori.

185

oris opus, vigor igneolus  
non moritur, quia flante Deo  
compositus supero que fluens  
de solio patris artificis  
vim liquidae rationis habet.

190

viscera mortua quin etiam  
post obitum reparare datur,  
eque suis iterum tumulis  
prisca renascitur effigies,  
pulvere o coeunte situ.

195

credo equidem, neque vana fides,  
corpora vivere more animae ;  
nam modo corporeum memini  
de Phlegethone gradu facili  
ad superos remeasse Deum.

200

spes eadem mea membra manet,  
quae redolentia funereo  
iuissa quiescere sarcophago,  
dux parili redivivus humo  
ignea Christus ad astra vocat.

205

### THE DAILY ROUND, III

baneful draught; let it not please us to handle aught that is deadly or forbidden; and let our eating, too, observe due measure, to preserve the flesh but hurt it not. Let the terrible serpents be content that sinful food brought forth, alas! sad death to men's bodies; be it enough that once through sin God's creature could die. The work of His mouth, the glowing life, dies not, because being created by the breath of God and flowing from the heavenly throne of the Father, its maker, it has the force of pure reason. Yea, it is even granted to restore the dead flesh after its decease, and once again from its tomb the old form is reborn, when the mouldering dust comes together. I indeed believe (and my faith is not vain) that bodies live as does the soul; for now I bethink me it was in bodily form that God returned from Phlegethon with easy step to heaven. The same hope awaits my members, which, though they are bidden to rest scented with spices in the tomb of death, Christ my leader, who rose from the like earth, calls to the glowing stars.

# PRUDENTIUS

## IV

### HYMNUS POST CIBUM

PASTIS visceribus ciboque sumpto,  
quem lex corporis inbecilla poscit,  
laudem lingua Deo Patri rependat,

Patri, qui Cherubin sedile sacrum  
nec non et Seraphin suum supremo  
subnixus solio tenet regitque.

hic est quem Sabaoth Deum vocamus,  
expers principii carensque fine,  
rerum conditor et repertor orbis,

fons vitae liquida fluens ab arce, 10  
infusor fidei, sator pudoris,  
mortis perdomitor, salutis auctor.

omnes quod sumus aut vigemus, inde est.  
regnat Spiritus ille sempiternus  
a Christo simul et Parente missus. 15

intrat pectora candidus pudica,  
quae templi vice consecrata rident  
postquam conbiberint Deum medullis.

sed si quid vitii dolive nasci  
inter viscera iam dicata sensit, 20  
ceu spurcum refugit celer sacellum.

tactrum flagrat enim vapore crasso  
horror conscius aestuante culpa,  
offensemque bonum niger repellit.

nec solus pudor innocensve votum  
templum constituant perenne Christo  
in cordis medii sinu ac recessu,

sed ne crapula ferueat cavendum est,  
quae sedem fidei cibis refertam  
usque ad congeriem coartet intus. 30

## THE DAILY ROUND, IV

### IV

#### A HYMN AFTER MEAT

Now that we have fed our flesh, taking the food which the weakly law of our body requires, let our tongue render due praise to God the Father, the Father who, sitting on the supreme throne, holds sway over Cherubim and Seraphim, His sacred seat. This is He whom we call God of Sabaoth, who is without beginning and without end, maker of all things and creator of the world, source of life flowing from the clear light of heaven, who inspires faith and implants goodness in us, the conqueror of death and author of salvation. From Him do we all have our being and our life. The Spirit reigns eternal, He whom both Christ and His Father have sent. In His purity He enters chaste hearts, which are consecrated as His temple, smiling brightly when they have drunk deep of God. But if He perceives sin or guile arising in the flesh now dedicated to Him, swiftly He departs as from an unclean shrine. For the disordered conscience burns foully with thick smoke as the fire of sin rages, and its blackness offends and drives away the good. Yet not alone do purity and innocent desire make an everlasting temple for Christ in the depths of the heart within us, but we must beware of the fever of excess that would stuff in food till the mass of it constricted the seat

## PRUDENTIUS

parcis victibus expedita corda  
infusum melius Deum receptant;  
hic pastus animae est saporque verus.

sed nos tu gemino fovens paratu  
artus atque animas utroque pastu  
confirmas, Pater, ac vigore cōples.

sic olim tua p̄aecluens potestas  
inter raucisonos situm leones  
inlapsis dapibus virum refovit.

illum fusile numen execrantem  
et curvare caput sub expolita  
aeris materia nefas putantem

plebs dirae Babylonis ac tyrannus  
morti subdiderant, feris dicarant  
saevis protinus haustibus vorandum.

o semper pietas fidesque tuta!  
lambunt indomiti virum leones,  
intactumque Dei tremunt alumnum.

adstant comminus et iubas reponunt,  
mansuescit rabies, fameque blanda  
praedam rictibus ambit incruentis.

sed cum tenderet ad superna palmas  
expertumque sibi Deum rogaret  
clausus iugiter indigensque victus,

iussus nuntius advolare terris,  
qui pastum famulo daret probato,  
raptim desilit obsequente mundo.

cernit forte procul dapes inemptas,  
quas messoribus Ambacum<sup>1</sup> propheta  
agresti bonus exhibebat arte.

huius caesarie manu prehensa,  
plenis, sicut erat, gravem canistris

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<sup>1</sup> This is the form of the name in the Septuagint, and presumably in the Latin version (if any) used by Prudentius.

## THE DAILY ROUND, IV

of faith in us. Hearts that spare living leaves unencumbered receive better the inpouring of God; He is the soul's true food and savour. But Thou dost make twofold provision for our nurture; our bodies and our souls with two several kinds of sustenance Thou dost strengthen and invigorate. Thus once Thy renowned power revived a man set amid rough-voiced lions, with a meal that came to him.<sup>a</sup> Because he abominated a god cast in metal and thought it sin to bow his head before a material image of polished bronze, the people of fell Babylon and their king had exposed him to death, giving him over to the wild beasts to be devoured forthwith by their cruel jaws. How safe always are goodness and faith! The untamed lions lick the hero, and tremble before the child of God, hurting him not! They stand close by him with manes laid back; their fury turned to gentleness and their hunger to fawning, they walk round their prey with jaws unbloodied. But when he stretched his hands towards heaven in prayer to the God he had proved before, being confined without remission and in need of food, a messenger was bidden to fly to earth and give nourishment to His tried servant, and quickly descended, while the heavens made way. It chanced that some way off he descried a home-grown meal which the kindly prophet Habakkuk was providing with the countryman's rude art for his reapers. Grasping him by the hair, he carried him off the ground just as he was, with the load of his full baskets,

\* The story is in "Bel and the Dragon," to be found among the Apocrypha, and also in the Septuagint and Vulgate as chapter 14 of the Book of Daniel.

## PRUDENTIUS

- suspensum rapit et vehit per auras.  
 tum raptus simul ipse prandiumque  
 sensim labitur in lacum leonum,      65  
 et quas tunc epulas gerebat offert.  
 “sumas laetus” ait “libensque carpas,  
 quae summus Pater angelusque Christi  
 mittunt liba tibi sub hoc periclo.”  
 his sumptis Danielus excitavit      70  
 in caelum faciem, ciboque fortis  
 “amen” reddidit, “alleluia” dixit.  
 sic nos muneribus tuis refecti,  
 largitor Deus omnium bonorum,  
 grates reddimus et sacramus hymnos.      75  
 tu nos tristifico velut tyranno  
 mundi scilicet inpotentis actu  
 conclusos regis et feram repellis,  
 quae circumfremit ac vorare temptat,  
 insanos acuens furore dentes,      80  
 cur te, summe Deus, precemur unum.  
 vexamur, premimur, malis rotamur;  
 oderunt, lacerant, trahunt, laceſſunt;  
 iuncta est suppliciis fides inquis.  
 nec defit tamen anxiis medella;      85  
 nam languente truci leonis ira  
 inlapsae superingeruntur escae.  
 quas si quis sitienter hauriendo,  
 non gustu tenui sed ore pleno,  
 internis velit implicare venis,      90  
 hic sancto satiatus ex propheta  
 iustorum capiet cibos virorum,  
 qui fructum Domino metunt perenni.  
 nil est dulcius ac magis saporum,  
 nil quod plus hominem iuvare possit,      95  
 quam vatis pia praecinentis orsa.

## THE DAILY ROUND, IV

and bore him through the air. Then the ravished prophet and his meal together glided gently down into the lions' den, and he proffered the feast he was carrying. "Take with good cheer," said he, "and eat readily the viands which the supreme Father and the angel of Christ send thee in this thy danger." So Daniel took them and lifted his face towards heaven, and being now fortified with food, said "Amen, Alleluia" in response. In the same manner we, being refreshed by Thy gifts, O God, the generous giver of all good things, return thanks and dedicate our hymns to Thee. Imprisoned as we are by the world's cruel violence, as it were by a grim despot, Thou dost direct us and drive away the wild beast that goes roaring round about and seeks to devour us, sharpening its teeth to frenzy with rage, for that, O God supreme, we pray to Thee alone. We are afflicted, oppressed, tossed about with evils; men hate us, tear us, carry us away captive, assail us; faith is yoked to unjust penalties. Yet in our trouble we lack not healing comfort, for food comes down to us from above, and the lion's fierce wrath subsides. And if a man be willing to swallow it eagerly, not tasting daintily but by mouthfuls, and make it part and parcel of his inner being, then will he receive from the holy prophet the food of righteous men who reap the harvest for their everlasting Master, and will be satisfied. Nought is sweeter or more savoury, nought more helpful to man, than the devout words of the prophet foretelling things to

## PRUDENTIUS

his sumptis licet insolens potestas  
pravum iudicet inrogetque mortem,  
inpasti licet inruant leones,  
nos semper Dominum Patrem fatentes 100  
in te, Christe Deus, loquemur unum,  
constanterque tuam crucem feremus.

## V

### HYMNUS AD INCENSUM LUCERNAE

INVENTOR rutili, dux bone, luminis,  
qui certis vicibus tempora dividis,  
merso sole chaos ingruit horridum.  
lucem redde tuis, Christe, fidelibus.

quamvis in numero sidere regiam  
lunarique polum lampade pinxeris,  
incussu silicis lumina nos tamen  
monstras saxigeno semine quaerere,

ne nesciret homo spem sibi luminis  
in Christi solido corpore conditam,  
qui dici stabilem se voluit petram,  
nostris igniculis unde genus venit.

pinguis quos olei rore madentibus  
lychnis aut facibus pascimus aridis,  
quin et fila favis scirpea floreis  
presso melle prius conlita fingimus.

vivax flamma viget, seu cava testula  
sucum linteolo suggerit ebrio,  
seu pinus piceam fert alimoniam,  
seu ceram teretem stuppa calens bibit.

nectar de liquido vertice fervidum  
guttatim lacrimis stillat olenibus,  
ambustum quoniam vis facit ignea

5

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## THE DAILY ROUND, V

come. Once we take this food, arrogant power may pass perverse judgment and condemn us to death, the starved lions may rush upon us; but as for us, we shall ever make confession that our Lord the Father is one in Thee, O God Christ, and with constancy shall bear Thy cross.

### V

#### A HYMN FOR THE LIGHTING OF THE LAMP

CREATOR of the glowing light, our kindly guide, who dost divide the times in a fixed order of seasons, now the sun has sunk and the gruesome darkness comes upon us; give light again, O Christ, to Thy faithful ones. Albeit Thou hast adorned the heavens, Thy royal court, with countless stars and with the moon's lamp, yet Thou teachest us to seek light from a stone-born spark by striking the flint, that man might know that his hope of light is founded on the firm body of Christ, who willed that He be called the steadfast rock, from whence our little fires draw their origin. With lamps bedewed with rich oil, or with dry torches, we feed them, and we make rush-candles too, smearing them with flower-scented wax of the combs after the honey has been pressed from them. The lively flame thrives, whether it be a little earthen bowl that supplies sap to a thirsty linen wick, or pinewood that brings its pitchy sustenance, or a warm tow that drinks up the smooth, round wax, while hot nectar trickles from the molten top in scented tear-drops, for the strong heat sends them dripping in a

# PRUDENTIUS

imbrem de madido flere cacumine.

25

splendent ergo tuis muneribus, Pater,  
flammis nobilibus<sup>1</sup> scilicet atria,  
absentemque diem lux agit aemula,  
quam nox cum lacero victa fugit peplo.

30

sed quis non rapidi luminis arduam  
manantemque Deo cernat originem?  
Moses nempe Deum spinifero in rubo  
vidit conspicuo lumine flammeum.

35

felix qui meruit sentibus in sacris  
caelestis solii visere principem,  
iussus nexa pedum vincula solvere  
ne sanctum involucris pollueret locum.

40

hunc ignem populus sanguinis inclyti,  
maiorum meritis tutus et inpotens,  
suetus sub dominis vivere barbaris,  
iam liber sequitur longa per avia.

45

qua gressum tulerant castraque caeruleae  
noctis per medium concita moverant,  
plebem pervigilem fulgure praevio  
ducebat radius sole micantior.

50

sed rex Niliaci litoris invido  
fervens felle iubet praevalidam manum  
in bellum rapidis ire cohortibus,  
ferratasque acies clangere classicum.

55

sumunt arma viri seque minacibus  
accingunt gladiis, triste canit tuba.  
hic fudit iaculis, ille volantia  
praefigit calamis spicula Gnostiis.

densetur cuneis turba pedestribus,  
currus pars et equos et volucres rotas  
conseendunt celeres, signaque bellica  
praetendunt tumidis clara draconibus.

<sup>1</sup> mobilibus *in some MSS. of both classes.*

## THE DAILY ROUND, V

burning shower from the liquid summit. So our halls  
shine, Father, with Thy gifts of noble flames; their  
emulous light plays the part of day when it has gone,  
and night with torn mantle flees before it in defeat.  
But who would not discern that the swift light has  
its source on high and flows from God? Moses in  
truth saw God in a prickly bush in the form of flame  
with brilliant light. Blessed was he who was worthy  
to behold in the sacred brier the lord of the heavenly  
throne, and was bidden to undo the ties on his feet  
lest with their coverings he pollute the holy place.  
It was this fire that the nation of illustrious blood,  
preserved by its fathers' merits and of no strength  
itself, when at last set free after long living under  
barbarous lords, followed far over desert ways.  
Wherever they turned their steps, rousing and mov-  
ing their camp amid the darkness of night, a ray that  
flashed brighter than the sun led the unsleeping  
people with a gleam that went before them. But the  
king who ruled on the banks of the Nile, burning  
with a jealous hatred, commands a mighty force to  
go to war in swift-marching companies, and his iron-  
clad ranks to sound the loud bugle. His warriors  
take up arms, girding themselves with menacing  
swords, and the trumpet blows its grim call. One  
puts his trust in javelins, another fixes sharp, flying  
heads on Gnosian<sup>a</sup> shafts. The multitude forms up  
in serried ranks of foot; others swiftly mount  
chariots with their horses and flying wheels, and dis-  
play their banners of war with their famous dragons<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> I.e. Cretan, another literary epithet.

<sup>b</sup> Prudentius ascribes to Pharaoh a banner of the Roman  
imperial armies. It is described by Ammianus Marcellinus,  
XVI, 10, 7.

# PRUDENTIUS

- hic iam servitii nescia pristini  
gens Pelusiacis usta vaporibus  
tandem purpurei gurgitis hospita  
rubris litoribus fessa resederat. 60
- hostis dirus adest cum duce perfido,  
infert et validis proelia viribus.  
Moses porro suos in mare praecipit  
constans intrepidis tendere gressibus.
- praebent rupta locum stagna viantibus, 65  
riparum in faciem pervia sistitur  
circumstans vitreis unda liquoribus,  
dum plebs sub bifido permeat aequore.
- pubes quin etiam decolor asperis  
inritata odiis rege sub inpio 70  
Hebraeum sitiens fundere sanguinem  
audet se pelago credere concavo.
- ibant praecipi turbine percita  
fluctus per medios agmina regia,  
sed confusa dehinc unda revolvitur  
in semet revolans gurgite confluo.
- currus tunc et equos telaque naufraga  
ipsos et proceres et vaga corpora  
nigrorum videas nare satellitum,  
arcis iustitium triste tyrannicae. 75
- quae tandem poterit lingua retexere  
laudes, Christe, tuas ? qui domitam Pharon  
plagis multimodis cedere praesuli  
cogis iustitiae vindice dextera ;
- qui pontum rabidis<sup>1</sup> aestibus invium  
persultare vetas, ut reffluo in solo<sup>2</sup>  
securus pateat te duce transitus,  
et mox unda rapax ut voret inpios ;
- cui iejuna eremi saxa loquacibus  
exundant scatebris, et latices novos 90

## THE DAILY ROUND, V

swelling. At this time, free now from its ancient bondage, the race that had burned under Egypt's heat had at length halted, weary and in a strange land, on the shores of the Red Sea. Their dread enemy is upon them under his faithless leader, and with strong forces launches the attack; but Moses firmly bids his people go forward into the sea with steps unfaltering. The flood separates and makes room for them as they travel; the waves, opening a path as it were between banks, stand still with glassy waters on either hand while the people pass over on the bed of the divided sea. Yea, the swarthy warriors too, under their ungodly king, stirred by their bitter hatred and thirsting to shed Hebrew blood, venture to trust themselves to that trough in the deep. In headlong rush the king's columns were sweeping like a hurricane through the midst of the flood; but now the waters pour together and roll back on themselves, racing to meet again. Then could be seen the wreck of chariots and horses and weapons, and the princes too, and bodies of their black henchmen floating this way and that, a sad day of mourning for the despot's throne. What tongue can tell Thy praises, O Christ? Thou dost overcome Egypt and by manifold afflictions compel her to give way to the protector of righteousness through the deliverance of Thy right hand. The sea, impassable when its surges rage, Thou dost forbid to leap, that on its bed laid bare there may open a passage that is safe under Thy guidance, and then the ravenous waves may swallow up the ungodly. At Thy command the barren rocks of the desert gush with babbling springs, and the cleft flint pours forth

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<sup>1</sup> rapidis in some MSS. of class B.

<sup>2</sup> salo in some MSS. of both classes.

## PRUDENTIUS

fundit scissa silex, quae sitientibus  
dat potum populis axe sub igneo.

instar fellis aqua tristifico in lacu  
fit ligni venia mel velut Atticum.

lignum est quo sapiunt aspera dulcius, 95  
nam praefixa cruci spes hominum viget.

inplet castra cibus tunc quoque ninguidus,  
inlabens gelida grandine densius ;  
his mensas epulis, hac dape construunt,  
quam dat sidereo Christus ab aethere. 100

nec non imbrifero ventus anhelitu  
crassa nube leves invehit alites,  
quae, difflata in humum cum semel agmina  
fluxerunt, reduci non revolant fuga.

haec olim patribus praemia contulit 105  
insignis pietas numinis unici,  
cuius subsidio nos quoque vescimur  
pascentes dapibus pectora mysticis.

fessos ille vocat per freta saeculi  
discisis populum turbinibus regens,  
iactatasque animas mille laboribus  
iustorum in patriam scandere praecipit.

illuc purpureis tecta rosariis  
omnis fragrat humus caltaque pingua  
et molles violas et tenues crocos  
fundit fonticulis uda fugacibus. 115

illuc et gracili balsama surculo  
desudata fluunt, raraque cinnama  
spirant, et folium, fonte quod abditu  
praelambens fluvius portat in exitum. 120

felices animae prata per herbida  
concentu pariles suave sonantibus  
hymnorum modulis dulce canunt melos,  
calcant et pedibus lilia candidis.

## THE DAILY ROUND, V

new streams, giving drink to the multitudes that thirst under the burning sky. Water that tasted like gall in the pool of bitterness is made, by virtue of a log of wood, like the honey of Attica.<sup>a</sup> Wood it is whereby bitter things taste sweeter; for it is when fixed on the cross that men's hope is strong. Then food, too, fills the camp, dropping like snow, showering more thickly than the chilly hail; and with this meal, this feast, which Christ gives them from the starry heavens, they furnish their tables.<sup>b</sup> And the wind with rainy blast brings light-winged birds in a thick cloud, which when once their ranks are scattered by the breeze and stream to the ground, fly not away again.<sup>c</sup> These gifts once the surpassing goodness of the one God gave to our fathers; and by His support we too are fed, nurturing our hearts with a mystic feast. He calls the weary over the sea of the world and guides His people, cleaving the storms; souls that have been tossed by a thousand distresses He bids go up into the country of the righteous. There all the ground is covered and scented with beds of red roses; watered by running streamlets it pours forth rich marigolds and soft violets and tender crocuses. There balsam, too, exudes in a stream from its slender shoot, the rare cinnamon breathes its scent, and the leaf<sup>d</sup> which the river by whose stream it grows carries from its hidden source to its mouth. The blessed souls over the grassy meads sing their sweet song in harmonious concert, and pleasantly sounds the melody of their hymns, as with white feet they tread the lilies. And the guilty

<sup>a</sup> Cf. Exodus xv, 23-25.

<sup>b</sup> Exodus xvi, 14 ff.

<sup>c</sup> Numbers xi, 31.

<sup>d</sup> Of nard, brought down the Indus and the Ganges.

## PRUDENTIUS

- 125
- sunt et spiritibus saepe nocentibus  
poenarum celebres sub Styge feriae  
illa nocte, sacer qua rediit Deus  
stagnis ad superos ex Acherunticis,
- 130
- non sicut tenebras de face fulgida  
surgens Oceano Lucifer inbuit,  
sed terris Domini de cruce tristibus  
maior sole novum restituens diem.
- 135
- marcent suppliciis Tartara mitibus,  
exultatque sui carceris otio  
functorum<sup>1</sup> populus liber ab ignibus,  
nec fervent solito flumina sulphure.
- 140
- nos festis trahimus per pia gaudia  
noctem conciliis votaque prospera  
certatim vigili congerimus prece,  
extractoque agimus liba sacrario.
- 145
- pendent mobilibus lumina funibus,  
quae suffixa micant per laquearia,  
et de languidulis fota natatibus  
lucem perspicuo flamma iacit vitro.
- 150
- credas stelligeram desuper aream  
ornatam geminis stare trionibus,  
et qua bosphoreum temo regit iugum  
passim purpureos spargier hesperos.
- 155
- o res digna, Deus,<sup>2</sup> quam tibi roscidae  
noctis principio grex tuus offerat,  
lucem, qua tribuis nil pretiosius,  
lucem, qua reliqua praemia cernimus.
- tu lux vera oculis, lux quoque sensibus,  
intus tu speculum, tu speculum foris ;  
lumen quod famulans offero, suscipe,  
tinctum pacifici chrismatis unguine,
- 155
- per Christum genitum, summe Pater, tuum,  
in quo visibilis stat tibi gloria,

## THE DAILY ROUND, V

spirits too, in their crowds often have holiday from punishment in hell, on the night on which the holy God returned to the world of men from the waters of Acheron, not like the morning star when it rises from Ocean and first tinges the darkness with its shining torch, but a greater than the sun, restoring new day to a world saddened by the cross of its Lord. Hell's force abates, its punishments are mild, and the people of the dead, set free from the fires, rejoices in the relaxation of its imprisonment, nor do the sulphurous rivers boil as hot as they are wont. As for us, we pass the long night with pious gladness in festal congregations,<sup>a</sup> in sleepless prayer we earnestly heap up petitions that will be granted, and on the altar raised up make offerings to God. The lamps gleam out, that hang by swaying cords from every panel of the roof, and the flame, fed by the oil on which it floats lazily, casts its light through the clear glass. One would think the starry space stood over us, decked with the twin Bears, and that bright evening stars were everywhere scattered, where the Wain directs its team of oxen. How worthy a thing, O God, for Thy flock to offer Thee at dewy night's beginning—light, Thy most precious gift, light, by which we perceive all Thy other blessings! Thou art the true light of our eyes, the true light of our minds; by Thee we see as in a glass within, a glass without. Take the light which in Thy service I offer, dipped in the unction of the oil of peace; through Christ Thy son, O Highest Father, in whom Thy glory stands visible;

\* At the service on Easter eve, lasting throughout the night, and for which churches were brilliantly illuminated.

<sup>1</sup> umbrarum in A and some other MSS. of both classes.

<sup>2</sup> Pater in ACD.

## PRUDENTIUS

qui noster Dominus, qui tuus unicus  
spirat de patro corde Paraclitum. 160

per quem splendor, honos, laus, sapientia,  
maiestas, bonitas et pietas tua  
regnum continuat numine triplici,  
texens perpetuis saecula saeculis.

## VI

### HYMNUS ANTE SOMNUM

ADES, Pater supreme,  
quem nemo vidit umquam,  
patrisque Sermo Christe,  
et Spiritus benigne,  
o Trinitatis huius 5  
vis una, lumen unum,<sup>1</sup>  
deus ex Deo perennis,  
deus ex utroque missus.

fluxit labor diei,  
redit et quietis hora, 10  
blandus sopor vicissim  
fessos relaxat artus.

mens aestuans procellis,  
curisque sauciata,  
totis bibit medullis  
obliviale poculum. 15

serpit per omne corpus  
Lethaea vis, nec ullum  
miseris doloris aegri  
patitur manere sensum. 20

lex haec data est caducis  
deo iubente membris,

## THE DAILY ROUND, VI

Christ our Lord and Thy only-begotten, who from His Father's heart breathes the Comforter; through whom Thy glory and honour and praise and wisdom, Thy majesty and goodness and love extend Thy kingdom with its three-fold Godhead, uniting age to age for ever and ever.

### VI

#### A HYMN BEFORE SLEEP

BE present, most high Father, whom no man hath seen at any time, and Christ the Word of the Father, and Thou, kindly Spirit; O Thou who in this Trinity art one essence and one light, God of God everlasting, and God sent forth of both. The day's toil is past and the hour of rest comes again; caressing slumber in its turn relaxes our tired limbs. The mind storm-tossed and careworn drinks deep the cup of forgetfulness. Oblivion steals over all the body and lets no sense of soreness abide with the afflicted. This is the law appointed by God's command for our frail

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<sup>1</sup> ACDP (*followed by Bergman*) *habe vis ac potestas una.*

# PRUDENTIUS

ut temperet laborem  
medicabilis voluptas.

25

sed dum pererrat omnes  
quies amica venas  
pectusque feriatum  
placat rigante somno,

30

liber vagat per auras  
rapido vigore sensus,  
variasque per figuras  
quae sunt opera cernit;

35

quia mens soluta curis,  
cui est origo caelum  
purusque fons ab aethra,  
iners iacere nescit.

40

imitata multiformes  
facies sibi ipsa fingit,  
per quas repente currens  
tenui fruatur actu.

45

sed sensa somniantum  
dispar fatigat horror.  
nunc splendor intererrat,  
qui dat futura nosse;

plerumque dissipatis  
mendax imago veris  
animos pavore maestos  
ambage fallit atra.

50

quem rara culpa morum  
non polluit frequenter,  
hunc lux serena vibrans  
res edocet latentes;

55

at qui coquinatum <sup>polluerat</sup>  
vitiis cor inpiavit,  
lusus pavore multo  
species videt tremendas.

## THE DAILY ROUND, VI

members, that healing pleasure temper toil. But while kindly repose spreads through all our body, and as sleep floods it, lulls the heart to rest from labour, the spirit roams free through the air, quick and lively, and in diverse figures sees things that are hidden; for the mind, whose source is heaven and whose pure fount is from the skies, cannot lie idle when it is freed from care. By imitation it fashions for itself images of many shapes, to enjoy a ghostly activity while it courses quickly through them. But by contrast terror troubles our thoughts in dreams. At times a brilliant light comes in upon them and gives us knowledge of things to be; often reality is scattered and a lying image makes our minds unhappy and afraid and deceives them with a dark obscurity. If a man's stains of guilty conduct are few and far between, him the clear, flashing light teaches secret things; but he who has polluted and befouled his heart with sins is the sport of many a fear and sees frightful visions. This our patriarch <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Genesis xl and xli.

## PRUDENTIUS

- hoc patriarcha noster  
sub carceris catena  
geminis simul ministris  
interpres adprobavit, 60  
quorum regressus unus  
dat poculum tyranno,  
ast alterum rapaces  
fixum vorant volucres.  
ipsum deinde regem,  
perplexa somniantem,  
monuit famem futuram  
clausis cavere acervis. 65  
mox praesul ac tetrarches  
regnum per omne iussus  
sociam tenere virgam,  
dominae resedit aulae. 70  
o quam profunda iustis  
arcana per soporem  
aperit tuenda Christus,  
quam clara, quam tacenda ! 75  
evangelista summi  
fidissimus Magistri  
signata quae latebant  
nebulis videt remotis : 80  
ipsum Tonantis agnum  
de caede purpurantem,  
qui conscientum futuri  
librum resignat unus.  
huius manum potentem  
gladius perarmat anceps,  
et fulgurans utrimque  
duplicem minatur ictum. 85  
quaesitor ille solus  
animaequa corporisque, 90

## THE DAILY ROUND, VI

proved by his interpretation to two ministers who were with him in the bondage of prison: the one is restored and again hands the cup to the king, but the other is hanged and the birds of prey devour him. Next he warned the king himself, when he dreamt a dream inscrutable, to provide against coming famine by shutting plenty up in store. Then was he made ruler and governor over all the kingdom and bidden to bear the sceptre in partnership, and he dwelt at the king's court. How deep the mysteries Christ lays open to the sight of the righteous in their sleep! How clear, and not to be uttered! The most faithful evangelist <sup>a</sup> of the great Master, when the clouds are dispelled, sees things that formerly were sealed in darkness: the very Lamb of the Thunderer, red from the slaughter, who alone unseals the book that has knowledge of things to be. His mighty hand is armed with a two-edged sword, and flashing this way and that it threatens two strokes at once. He alone is inquisitor of soul and body both, and the

<sup>a</sup> Revelation v, 6-9.

## PRUDENTIUS

ensisque bis timendus  
prima ac secunda mors est.

idem tamen benignus  
ultor retundit iram,  
paucosque non piorum  
patitur perire in aevum.

huic inclytus perenne  
tribuit Pater tribunal,  
hunc obtinere iussit  
nomen supra omne nomen.

hic praepotens cruenti  
extinctor Antichristi,  
qui de furente monstro  
pulchrum refert tropaeum.

quam bestiam capacem  
populosque devorantem,  
quam sanguinis Charybdem  
Iohannis execratur;

hanc nempe, quae sacratum  
praeferre nomen ausa  
imam petit gehennam  
Christo perempta vero.

tali sopore iustus  
mentem relaxat heros,  
ut spiritu sagaci  
caelum peragret omne.

nos nil meremur horum,  
quos creber inplet error,  
concreta quos malarum  
vitiat cupido rerum.

sat est quiete dulci  
fessum fovere corpus;  
sat, si nihil sinistrum  
vanae minentur umbrae.

95

100

105

110

115

120

## THE DAILY ROUND, VI

blade twice to be feared is the first and second death. Yet in kindness too the Avenger blunts the edge of His wrath, and suffers but few of the ungodly to perish for ever. To Him the illustrious Father has assigned the everlasting judgment-seat; Him He has commanded to hold a name above every name. He is the mighty destroyer of the bloody Antichrist, and over that raving monster wins a noble victory. This is the beast, which nothing can fill, which devours the nations, the blood-engulfing Charybdis that John curses; the beast that dared to boast the holy name and is slain by the true Christ and plunges to the depths of hell. Such is the sleep with which the righteous hero rests his mind, that with prophetic spirit it traverses the whole heaven. As for us, we merit none of these things, for many an error fills our heart, and a hardened desire for evil things corrupts us. It is enough with sweet repose to refresh the tired body, enough if unsubstantial phan-

## PRUDENTIUS

- 125
- cultor Dei, memento  
te fontis et lavacri  
rorem subisse sanctum,  
te chrismate innotatum.
- 130
- fac, cum vocante somno  
castum petis cubile,  
frontem locumque cordis  
crucis figura signet.
- 135
- crux pellit omne crimen,  
fugiunt crucem tenebrae :  
tali dicata signo  
mens fluctuare nescit.
- 140
- procul, o procul vagantum  
portenta somniorum,  
procul esto pervicaci  
praestigiator actu.
- 145
- o tortuose serpens,  
qui mille per meandros  
fraudesque flexuosas  
agitas quieta corda,
- discede, Christus hic est,  
hic Christus est, liqueſce.  
signum quod ipse nosti  
damnat tuam catervam.
- 150
- corpus licet fatiscens  
iaceat recline paulum,  
Christum tamen sub ipso  
meditabimur sopore.

## VII

### HYMNUS IEUNANTIUM

O NAZARENE, lux Bethlem, Verbum Patris,  
quem partus alvi virginalis protulit,

## THE DAILY ROUND, VII

toms threaten no ill. Worshipper of God, remember that thou has been washed in the holy water of baptism and marked with the holy oil. See that, when at the call of sleep thou seekest thy pure couch, the sign of the cross seals thy brow and the place where lies thy heart. The cross drives out every sin; before the cross darkness flees away; consecrated with this sign, the spirit cannot be unquiet. Away, away with the monstrosities of rambling dreams! Away with the deceiver and his persistent guile! O twining serpent that by a thousand winding ways and twisting deceptions dost disturb hearts at rest, depart, for Christ is here! Christ is here: vanish away! The sign thou thyself knowest condemns thy company. Though the weary body lie down for a little, yet even in sleep our thoughts shall be of Christ.

## VII

### A HYMN OF THE FASTING

O NAZARENE, Light of Bethlehem, Word of the Father, offspring of a virgin's womb, be present,

## PRUDENTIUS

adesto castis, Christe, parsimoniis,  
festumque nostrum rex serenus aspice,  
ieiuniorum dum litamus victimam.

5

nil hoc profecto purius mysterio,  
quo fibra cordis expiatur vividi,  
intemperata quo domantur viscera,  
arvina putrem ne resudans crapulam  
obstrangulatae mentis ingenium premat.

10

hinc subiugatur luxus et turpis gula,  
vini atque somni degener socordia,  
libido sordens, inverecundus lepos,  
variaeque pestes languidorum sensuum  
parcam subactae disciplinam sentiunt.

15

nam si licenter diffluens potu et cibo  
ieiuna rite membra non coerces,  
sequitur frequenti marcida oblectamine  
scintilla mentis ut tepescat nobilis,  
animusque pigris stertat in praecordiis.

20

frenentur ergo corporum cupidines,  
detersa et intus emicet prudentia ;  
sic excitato perspicax acumine  
liberque flatu laxiore spiritus  
rerum parentem rectius precabitur.

25

Elia tali crevit observantia,  
vetus sacerdos, ruris hospes aridi,  
fragore ab omni quem remotum et segregem  
sprevisse tradunt criminum frequentiam,  
casto fruentem Syrtium silentio.

30

sed mox in auras igneis iugalibus  
curruque raptus evolavit praepete,  
ne de propinquo sordium contagio  
dirus quietum mundus afflaret virum  
olim probatis inclytum ieiuniis.

35

non ante caeli principem septemplicis

## THE DAILY ROUND, VII

Christ, at our pious acts of abstinence, and as our King look with favour on our holy day while we offer the sacrifice of our fast. Nothing surely is purer than this rite, whereby the heart is enlivened through the cleansing of its tissues, and the intemperate flesh subdued so that fat, exuding the stinking sweat of excess, shall not constrict and choke the mind. Hereby are conquered indulgence and shameful appetite, the debased sloth that comes of wine and slumber, filthy passion, immodest pleasantry, and all the plagues that dull our senses are put down and feel the discipline of restraint. For if uncurbed a man abandons himself to drinking and eating and does not duly control his body by fasting, then in the consequence the spark of the noble soul wastes and cools off by reason of constant indulgence, and the mind falls heavily asleep in the sluggish breast. Let the desires of our bodies, then, be bridled, and the clean flame of wisdom shine within us: so, with judgment awakened, the spirit will see clearly, it will have freedom and more room to breathe, and will pray better to the Father of all things. It was by such observance that Elias, the priest of old, grew strong, when he was a sojourner in a dry land, and they say that thus remote and separate from all the noise of the world he put from him a multitude of sins while he enjoyed the pure silence of the desert. But afterwards he was carried away by horses of ire in a swift-flying chariot and soared into the breezes, lest from the near contagion of filth the fell world should breathe upon a man at peace, whose acts approved had given him renown. Moses,<sup>a</sup> the faithful messenger of the awful throne, was not able

<sup>a</sup> Cf. Exodus xxxiv, 28.

## PRUDENTIUS

Moses tremendi fidus interpres throni  
potuit videre, quam decem recursibus  
quater volutis sol peragrans sidera  
omni carentem cerneret substantia.

40

victus precanti solus in lacrimis fuit ;  
nam flendo pernox irrigatum pulverem  
humi madentis ore pressit cernuo,  
donec loquentis voce praestriktus Dei  
expavit ignem non ferendum visibus.

45

Iohannis huius artis haud minus potens  
Dei perennis praecucurrit Filium,  
curvos viarum qui retorsit tramites,  
et flexuosa corrigens dispendia  
dedit sequendam calle recto lineam.

50

hanc obsequellam praeparabat nuntius  
mox adfuturo construens iter Deo,  
clivosa planis, confragosa ut lenibus  
converterentur, neve quidquam devium  
inlapsa terris inveniret veritas.

55

non usitatis ortus hic natalibus :  
oblita lactis iam vieto in pectore  
matris tetendit serus infans ubera,  
nec ante partu de senili effusus est  
quam praedicaret virginem plenam Deo.

60

post in patentes ille solitudines,  
amictus hirtis bestiarum pellibus  
saetisve tectus hispida et lanugine,  
secessit, horrens inquinari et pollui  
contaminatis oppidorum moribus.

65

illic dicata parcus abstinentia  
potum cibumque vir severae industriae  
in usque serum respuebat vesperum,  
rarum lucustis et favorum agrestium  
liquore pastum corpori suetus dare.

70

## THE DAILY ROUND, VII

to see the Lord of the sevenfold heavens till the sun in his passage through the constellations had rolled forty times on his returning path and beheld him lacking all sustenance. While he prayed, his only meat was in his tears; for with his weeping all night long he watered the dust and the ground was wet where he lay with face bowed low on it, until God spoke and His voice touched him and he trembled at the fire his eyes could not bear. John was no less a master of this power, he who went before the Son of the everlasting God, who made straight the crooked paths and by setting right the twisting ways gave a direct course to follow. This service the messenger made ready beforehand, making a way for God who was presently to come, so that the steep places should be changed to level and the rough places to smooth, and that Truth coming to the earth should find no devious way. No common birth was his: it was a late child that strained nipples that had forgotten their milk, on his mother's shrunken breast; and ere he was brought forth from her aged womb he proclaimed a virgin pregnant with God. Afterwards he withdrew into the wide solitudes, wrapped in shaggy skins of beasts or covered with rough hair and coarse wool, dreading defilement and corruption from the impure ways of towns. There, living sparingly with devoted abstinence, in his unremitting strictness he would put food and drink from him until the late time of evening, and used to give his body sustenance at these long intervals with locusts and the honey from wild honey-combs. He

## PRUDENTIUS

hortator ille primus et doctor novae  
fuit salutis. nam sacrato in flumine  
veterum piatas lavit errorum notas,  
sed tincta postquam membra defaecaverat,  
caelo refulgens influebat Spiritus.

75

hoc ex lavaero labe dempta criminum  
ibant renati, non secus quam si rudit  
auri recocta vena pulchrum splendeat,  
micet metalli sive lux argentei  
sudum polito praenitens purgamine.

80

referre prisci stemma nunc ieunii  
libet fidi proditum volumine,  
ut diruendae civitatis incolis  
fulmen benigni mansuetum Patris  
pie repressis ignibus pepercerit.

85

gens insolenti praepotens iactantia  
ollebat olim, quam fluentem nequiter  
corrupta vulgo solverat lascivia,  
et inde bruto contumax fastidio  
cultum superni neglegebat numinis.

90

offensa tandem iugis indulgentiae  
censura iustis excitatur motibus,  
dextram perarmat rompheali incendio,  
nimbos crepantes et fragosos turbines  
vibrans tonantum nube flammarum quatit.

95

sed paenitendi dum datur diecula,  
si forte vellent improbam libidinem  
veteresque nugas condomare ac frangere,  
suspendit ictum terror exorabilis,  
paulumque dicta substitit sententia.

100

Ionam prophetam mitis ultor excitat,  
poenae imminentis iret ut praenuntius,  
sed nosset ille qui minacem iudicem  
servare malle quam ferire ac plectere,

## THE DAILY ROUND, VII

was the first preacher and teacher of the new salvation, for in the consecrated stream he washed clean the marks of old sins, but after he cleansed the tainted bodies the Spirit flowed shining into them from heaven. From this baptism, the stain of sin removed, men came reborn, shining as fair as does rough gold when it is refined, bright as the glistening sheen of silver ore when it is purified and polished. I will now recount the history of a fast in ancient times, a tale made known to us by the faithful Book, how the merciful Father's thunderbolt was appeased, its fires in love suppressed, and spared the inhabitants of a city that merited destruction. There flourished once a mighty and arrogant nation, given over to evil indulgence, and which in its debased wantonness had in the mass passed all restraint; wherefore being stiff-necked in its stupid pride, it was disregarding the worship of God on high. Justice ever merciful is at last offended and aroused in righteous wrath. It arms its right hand with a fiery sword and brandishes rattling storms and crashing whirlwinds in a cloud of fire and thunder. Yet giving them a brief space for repentance, if haply they might be willing to subdue and break their wicked lust and long-continued follies, the awful Judge, who is yet easily entreated, suspends the blow, the doom pronounced is for a little stayed. The merciful Avenger calls Jonah the prophet to go and proclaim impending punishment; but he, knowing that the Judge who threatened would rather save than strike and

## PRUDENTIUS

tectam latenter vertit in Tharsos fugam.

105

celsam paratis pontibus scandit ratem,  
udo revincta fune puppis solvitur,  
itur per altum: fit procellosum mare,  
tum causa tanti quaeritur periculi,  
sors in fugacem missa vatem decidit.

110

iussus perire solus e cunctis reus,  
cuius voluta crimen urna expresserat,  
praeceps rotatur et profundo inmergitur:  
exceptus inde beluinis faucibus,  
alvi capacis vivus hauritur specu.

115

transmissa raptim praeda cassos dentium  
eludit ictus incruentam transvolans  
inpune linguam, ne retentam mordicus  
offam molares dissecarent uidi,  
os omne transit, et palatum praeterit.

120

ternis dierum ac noctium processibus  
mansit ferino devoratus gutture;  
errabat illic per latebras viscerum,  
ventris meandros circumibat tortiles  
anhelus extis intus aestuantibus.

125

intactus exim tertiae noctis vice  
monstri vomentis pellitur singultibus;  
qua murmuranti fine fluctus frangitur  
salsosque candens spuma tundit pumices,  
ructatus exit seque servatum stupet.

130

in Ninevitas se coactus percito  
gressu reflectit, quos ut increpaverat  
pudenda censor inputans opprobria,  
“inpendet” inquit “ira summi vindicis,  
urbemque flamma mox cremabit, credite.”

135

apicem deinde ardui montis petit,  
visurus inde conglobatum turbidae  
fumum ruinae cladis et dirae struem,

## THE DAILY ROUND, VII

punish, flees in secret and turns his steps privily to Tarshish. He embarks on a tall ship by the gangway standing ready ; the wet mooring-rope cast off, the vessel sails and they make their way over the deep. But the sea grows stormy, and then search is made for the cause of the great peril, and the lot is cast and falls on the fugitive prophet. Arraigned, he alone of them all, and condemned to die, for the turning of the urn had made his guilt manifest, he is hurled headlong and plunged in the deep, caught then in a monster's jaws, and swallowed up alive in the vault of its great belly. Passing swiftly over, the prey escapes the futile stroke of the teeth, for he flies unhurt over the tongue without shedding of blood, so that the wet grinders cannot hold the morsel in their bite and break it in pieces ; right through the mouth he passes, and beyond the palate. While three days and nights went by he remained engulfed in the beast's maw, wandering there in the darkness of its inward parts, round and round the tortuous windings of its guts, his breath choking with the heat of the entrails. From thence, when the third night comes round, the monster retching spews him out unharmed ; where the wave breaks at its loud-sounding close and the white spray beats on the briny rocks he is belched out, amazed at his preservation. Back to Nineveh perforce he turns with quickened step, and after upbraiding and censuring its people, laying their shameful misdeeds to their charge, he cries : "The wrath of the great Judge hangs over you and will presently burn your city with fire, believe ye." Then he makes for the peak of a high mountain, to see from there the thick smoke arise from the jumbled ruin, and the city in a heap of dire destruction, while

# PRUDENTIUS

- tectus flagellis multinodis germinis,  
nato et repente perfruens umbraculo. 140
- sed maesta postquam civitas vulnus novi  
hausit doloris, heu, supremum palpitat:  
cursant per ampla congregatim moenia  
plebs et senatus, omnis aetas civium,  
pallens iuventus, eiulantes feminae. 145
- placet frementem publicis ieuniis  
placare Christum; mos edendi spernitur,  
glaucos amictus induit monilibus  
matrona demptis, proque gemma et serico  
crinem fluentem sordidus spargit cinis. 150
- squalent recincta veste pullati patres,  
saetasque plangens turba sumit textiles,  
impexa villis virgo bestialibus  
nigrante vultum contegit velamine,  
iacens harenis et puer provolvitur. 155
- rex ipse Coos aestuantem murices  
laenam revulsa dissipabat fibula,  
gemmas virentes et lapillos sutiles  
insigne frontis exuebat vinculum,  
turpi capillos inneditus pulvere. 160
- nullus bibendi, nemo vescendi memor,  
ieiuna mensas pubis omnis liquerat:  
quin et negato lacte vagientium  
fletu madescunt parvolorum cunulae,  
sucum papillae parca nutrix derogat. 165
- greges et ipsos claudit armentalium  
sollers virorum cura, ne vagum pecus  
contingat ore rorulenta gramina,  
potum strepentis neve fontis hauriat;  
vacuis querellae personant praesepibus. 170
- mollitus his et talibus brevem Deus  
iram refrenat temperans oraculum

## THE DAILY ROUND, VII

he shelters under the shoots of a plant that sprouts from many a joint and enjoys a shade that of a sudden has grown up.<sup>a</sup> But ah ! the saddened people, pierced by grief not known before, is in the agony of death. Commons and councillors, citizens of every age, young men with pale faces, wailing women, rush to and fro in crowds all about the wide city. Resolved to appease the angry Christ with public fasts, they put the habit of eating from them ; the matron, taking off her necklaces, dons dark vestures, and instead of jewels and silk foul ashes besprinkle her flowing hair. The fathers wear the dark robes of mourning all ungirt, the common crowd in lamentation put on coarse haircloth, the maids, with hair unkempt and shaggy like a beast's, cover their faces with black veils, the children lie rolling in the sand. The king himself, pulling away the clasp, tore in pieces his mantle that had the glow of Coan purple, put off his bright jewels, his band of precious stones, the emblem that clasped his brows, and cluttered his hair with unsightly dust. None had any thought of drinking or of eating ; the whole manhood had turned from the table to fasting ; nay, the cradles are wet with the tears of little ones crying because milk is denied them, for the niggard nurse withdraws the liquor of the breast. The very flocks the herdsmen take shrewd care to enclose, lest roaming at large the cattle put their lips to the dewy grass or drink a draught from the brawling stream, and the sound of their plaints fills the foodless stalls. Softened by these and the like acts, God restrains His short-lived anger and turns propitious, mitigating

<sup>a</sup> Cf. Jonah iv, 5-6.

## PRUDENTIUS

- prosper sinistrum; prona nam clementia  
haud difficulter supplicem mortalium  
solvit reatum fitque faatrix flentium. 175
- sed cur vetustae gentis exemplum loquor,  
pridem caducis cum gravatus artubus  
Iesus dicato cordeieiunaverit,  
praenuncupatus ore qui prophetico  
Emmanuel est, sive "nobiscum Deus"? 180
- qui corpus istud molle naturaliter,  
captumque laxo sub voluptatum iugo,  
virtutis arta lege fecit liberum,  
emancipator servientis plasmatis,  
regnantis ante victor et cupidinis. 185
- inhospitali namque secretus loco  
quinis diebus octies labentibus  
nullam ciborum vindicavit gratiam,  
firmans salubri scilicet ieunio  
vas adpetendis inbecillum gaudiis. 190
- miratus hostis posse limum tabidum  
tantum laboris sustinere ac perpeti  
explorat arte sciscitator callida  
deusne membris sit receptus terreis,  
sed increpata fraude post tergum ruit. 195
- hoc nos sequamur quisque nunc pro viribus,  
quod consecrati tu magister dogmatis  
tuis dedisti, Christe, sectatoribus,  
ut, cum vorandi vicerit libidinem,  
late triumphet imperator spiritus. 200
- hoc est quod atri livor hostis invidet,  
mundi polique quod gubernator probat,  
altaris aram quod facit placabilem,  
quod dormientis excitat cordis fidem,  
quod limat aegram pectoris rubiginem. 205
- perfusa non sic amne flamma extinguitur,

## THE DAILY ROUND, VII

His awful sentence ; for His ready mercy willingly cancels the guilt of men when they humble themselves, and shows favour to their tears. But why do I speak of the example of an ancient race, seeing that Jesus, long since, when He was burdened with a mortal body, fasted with consecrated heart, He who was aforetime by the mouth of the prophet named Emmanuel, God with us ? This body, which is by nature weak and a prisoner under the lawless tyranny of pleasures, He set at liberty by the strict law of virtue ; He gave freedom to the enslaved flesh and conquered the passion that held sway before. For, living remote in an inhospitable place, while forty days passed He never claimed the pleasant taste of food, but with wholesome fasting strengthened the vessel which is enfeebled by its seeking after joys. The enemy, wondering that perishing clay can sustain and endure such effort, tries to find out by cunning artful inquiry whether it is God that has been received in an earthly body ; but his trickery is rebuked and he flees behind Christ's back. Let us now follow, each according to his strength, this that Thou, O Christ, the teacher of holy doctrine, hast given to Thy followers, that the spirit, being in command and having overcome the lust of eating, may triumph over all the field. This it is that earns the black enemy's malice and spite, this that wins the approval of Him who rules earth and heaven, that makes the altar of sacrifice propitious, awakens faith in the sleeping heart, and clears away the unhealthy blight from our breasts. Not so surely does

# PRUDENTIUS

nec sic calente sole tabescunt nives,  
ut turbidarum scabra culparum seges  
vanescit almo trita sub ieunio,  
si blanda semper misceatur largitas.

210

est quippe et illud grande virtutis genus,  
operire nudos, indigentes pascere,  
opem benignam ferre supplicantibus,  
unam paremque sortis humanae vicem  
inter potentes atque egenos ducere.

215

satis beatus quisque dextram porrigit  
laudis rapacem, prodigam pecuniae,  
cuius sinistra dulce factum nesciat:  
illum perennes protinus conplent opes,  
ditatque fructus faenerantem centplex.

220

## VIII

### HYMNUS POST IEUNIUM

CHRISTE, servorum regimen tuorum,  
mollibus qui nos moderans habenis  
leniter frenas, facilique saeptos  
lege coerces,  
ipse cum portans onus impeditum  
corporis duros tuleris labores,  
maior exemplis famulos remisso  
dogmate palpas.

5

nona summissum rotat hora solem,  
partibus vixdum tribus evolutis,  
quarta devexo superest in axe  
portio lucis.

10

nos brevis voti dape vindicata  
solvimus festum, fruimurque mensis  
adfatim plenis, quibus inbuatur  
prona voluptas.

15

## THE DAILY ROUND, VIII

water put out fire, or the snows melt in the heat of the sun, as the unclean crop of rebellious sins vanishes under the cleansing of a restoring fast, if kindly liberality be ever joined with it. For it is a noble form of virtue too, to clothe the naked, feed the needy, give kindly aid to them that beg for it, hold that rich and poor share one and the same humanity. Blest enough the man who holds out a right hand that grasps at merit but is lavish of money, whose left hand knows not the kind deed : him everlasting wealth straightway satisfies, and profit an hundred-fold on his lending makes him rich.

## VIII

### A HYMN AFTER FASTING

CHRIST, the director of Thy servants, who dost govern us with light rein and gentle curb and dost hedge and restrain us with an easy law, since Thou Thyself whilst bearing the cumbering burden of the body didst endure hardship, Thy example makes Thee greater, and Thy hand is light on Thy servants and Thy decree is mild. The ninth hour is wheeling the sun on his downward course, scarce yet has the daylight three parts rolled away, and the fourth still is left in the down-sloping sky ; we, taking our meat, break off the observance of our short vow and let eager appetite enjoy its first taste of the table's

# PRUDENTIUS

- tantus aeterni favor est Magistri,  
doctor indulgens ita nos amico  
lactat hortatu, levis obsequella ut  
mulceat artus. 20
- addit et ne quis velit invenusto  
sordidus cultu lacerare frontem,  
sed decus vultus capitisque pexum  
comat honorem.
- “ terge ieunans ” ait “ omne corpus, 25  
neve subducto faciem rubore  
luctus tinguat color aut notetur  
pallor in ore.”
- rectius laeto tegimus pudore  
quidquid ad cultum Patris exhibemus ; 30  
cernit occultum Deus et latentem  
munere donat.
- ille ovem morbo residem gregique  
perditam sano, male dissipantem  
vellus adfixis vepribus per hirtae 35  
devia silvae
- inpiger pastor revocat lupisque  
gestat exelusis umeros gravatus,  
inde purgatam revehens aprico  
reddit ovili, 40
- reddit et pratis viridiique campo,  
vibrat inpexis ubi nulla lappis  
spina, nec german Sudibus perarmat  
carduus horrens,
- sed frequens palmis nemus, et reflexa  
vernat herbarum coma, tum perennis  
gurgitem vivis vitreum fluentis  
laurus obumbrat. 45
- hisee pro donis tibi, fide pastor,  
servitus quaenam poterit rependi ? 50

## THE DAILY ROUND, VIII

abundant plenty. Such favour does our eternal Teacher show us, with exhortation so friendly does our kind Instructor draw us on, that the light obedience is comfortable to the flesh. He commands, too, that none clothe himself in dismal, untidy garb and disfigure his brows, but that we comb and dress our hair, which is the ornament of our countenance, the glory of our head.<sup>a</sup> “ Cleanse thy whole body,” He saith, “ when thou fastest; and let not thy cheeks lose their redness and wear a yellow hue, nor a pale cast be marked on thy face.” Better is it to cover with a cheerful modesty anything that we do for the honour of the Father: God sees that which is in secret, and rewards him who acts by stealth. When a sheep lags behind because it is sick, and is lost from the healthy flock, wasting its wool by catching on thorny bushes along un-frequented ways in the rough woodland, He as a tireless Shepherd calls it again, and driving off the wolves, takes the load on His shoulders and carries it, and so brings it home cleansed and restores it to the sunny fold; restores it to the meadows too, and the green field, where no rough, prickly burs quiver and no bristling thistle arms its shoots with spikes, but the grove is filled with palms, the bending leaves of grass flourish, and the glassy stream of running water is shaded with evergreen bay. For these gifts, O faithful Shepherd, what service can ever be repaid

<sup>a</sup> Cf. Matthew vi, 16-18.

# PRUDENTIUS

nulla compensant pretium salutis  
     vota precantum.  
 quamlibet spreto sine more pastu  
 sponte confectos tenuemus artus  
 teque contemptis epulis rogemus      55  
     nocte dieque,  
 vincitur semper minor obsequentum  
 cura nec munus genitoris aequat,  
 frangit et eratēm luteam laboris  
     grandior usus.      60  
 ergo ne limum fragilem solatae  
 deserant vires et aquosus albis  
 umor in venis dominetur aegrum  
     corpus enervans,  
 laxus ac liber modus abstinendi      65  
 ponitur cunctis, neque nos severus  
 terror inpellit; sua quemque cogit  
     velle potestas.  
 sufficit, quidquid facias, vocato  
 numinis nutu prius inchoare,      70  
 sive tu mensam renuas cibumve  
     sumere tempes.  
 adnuit dexter Deus et secundo  
 prosperat vultu, vclut hoc salubre  
 fidimus nobis fore, quod dicatas      75  
     carpimus escas.  
 sit bonum, supplex precor, et medellam  
 conferat membris animumque pascat  
 sparsus in venas cibus obsecrantum  
     Christicolarum.

## THE DAILY ROUND, VIII

to Thee? No vows that we can offer in our prayers can make up for the price of salvation. Though we should turn utterly from food, and of our own will weaken and mortify our bodies, and disdaining the table pray to Thee night and day, yet the zeal with which we serve Thee is ever inferior and over-matched and cannot equal the Father's gift, and our frame of clay cannot bear to practise endurance overmuch. Therefore, lest our strength be undone and desert the frail clay, and a watery fluid prevail in whitened veins, enfeebling and unmanning the body, an easy and free measure of abstinence is laid on all; no stern fear drives us; it is each one's own power that constrains him to be willing. Sufficient is it, whatever a man does, to set about it after first appealing for God's approval, whether he refuse the table or put forth his hand to take food. God is propitious and with favourable countenance gives consent and blessing; as now we trust it will be healthful for us that we eat of these dedicated viands. Humbly I ask that our act be good for us and that our food, spreading into the veins, may bring healing to the body and nourish the spirit of Christ's worshippers who offer this prayer.

# PRUDENTIUS

## IX

### HYMNUS OMNIS HORAE

DA, puer, plectrum, choreis ut canam fidelibus  
dulce carmen et melodum, gesta Christi insignia.  
hunc Camena nostra solum pangat, hunc laudet  
lyra.

Christus est, quem rex sacerdos adfuturum  
protinus  
infulatus concinebat voce, chorda et tympano,      5  
spiritum caelo influentem per medullas hauriens.

facta nos et iam probata pangimus miracula.  
testis est orbis, nec ipsa terra quod vedit negat,  
comminus Deum docendis proditum mortalibus.

corde natus <sup>1</sup> ex parentis ante mundi exordium, 10  
alpha et Ω cognominatus, ipse fons et clausula  
omnium quae sunt, fuerunt, quaeque post futura  
sunt.

ipse iussit, et creata, dixit ipse, et facta sunt  
terra, caelum, fossa ponti, trina rerum machina,  
quaeque in his vigent sub alto solis et lunae globo. 15

corporis formam caduci, membra morti obnoxia  
induit, ne gens periret primoplasti ex germine,  
merserat quem <sup>2</sup> lex profundo noxialis Tartaro.

o beatus ortus ille, virgo cum puerpera  
edidit nostram salutem feta Sancto Spiritu,      20  
et puer redemptor orbis os sacratum protulit.

psallat altitudo caeli, psallite omnes angeli,  
quidquid est virtutis usquam psallat in laudem  
Dei,

nulla linguarum silescat, vox et omnis consonet.

ecce, quem vates vetustis concinebant saeculis,      25

<sup>1</sup> fusus in the Ambrosian MS. (B).

## THE DAILY ROUND, IX

### IX

#### A HYMN FOR EVERY HOUR

GIVE me my quill, page, that in loyal trochees I may sing a sweet, tuneful song of the glorious deeds of Christ. He alone shall be my Muse's theme, Him alone my lyre shall praise. Christ it is whose speedy coming the priest-king in his priestly vestment sang with sound of voice and string and tambour, drinking deep the inspiration that flowed on him from heaven. Of wonders done and proved we sing; the world is witness, the very earth denies not that which it has seen, God made manifest to men to teach them in His own person. Born of the Father's love before the world's beginning, called Alpha and Omega, He is both source and end of all things that are or have been or hereafter shall be. He gave the word and they were created, He spoke and they were made—earth, heavens, the deep sea, the threefold fabric of the world, and all that lives in them under the lofty globes of sun and moon. He put on the shape of mortal body, members doomed to die, so that the race that sprang from the first man's stock should not perish though the law of sin had plunged him deep in hell. O blessed birth, when a virgin in labour, having conceived by the Holy Spirit, brought forth our salvation, and the child who is the world's Redeemer revealed His sacred face! Let high heaven sing, sing all ye angels, let every power in every place sing to the praise of God, let no tongue keep silence, and every voice sound in concert. Lo, He whom seers in ancient times foretold, and the

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<sup>2</sup> quam *some MSS.* of class B.

## PRUDENTIUS

quem prophetarum fideles paginae spoponderant,  
emicat promissus olim : cuncta conlaudent eum.

cantharis infusa lympha fit Falernum nobile,  
nuntiat vinum minister esse promptum ex hydria,  
ipse rex sapore tinetis obstupescit poeulis. 30

“ membra morbis ulcerosa, viseerum putredines  
mando ut abluantur ” inquit : fit ratum quod  
iusserat ;

turgidam cutem repurgant vulnerum piamina.

tu perennibus tenebris iam sepulta lumina  
inlinis limo salubri 'saeri et oris nectare : 35  
mox apertis hac medellā lux reducta est orbibus.

inerepas ventum furentem quod procellis tristibus  
vertat aequor fundo ab imo, vexet et vagam ratem :  
ille iussis obseeundat, mitis unda sternitur.

extimum vestis saeratae furtim mulier attigit : 40  
protinus salus secuta est, ora pallor deserit,  
sistitur rivus cruore qui fluebat perpeti.

exitu dulcis iuventae raptum ephebum viderat,  
orba quem mater supremis funerabat fletibus ;  
“ surge ” dixit : ille surgit, matri et adstans  
redditur. 45

sole iam quarto carentem, iam sepulero absecon-  
ditum

Lazarum iubet vigere redditio spiramine :  
foetidum ieeur reductus rursus intrat halitus.

ambulat per stagna ponti, summa calcat  
fluctuum :  
mobilis liquor profundi pendulam praestat viam, 50  
nec fatiscit unda sanctis pressa sub vestigiis.

suetus antro bustuali sub catenis frendere,  
mentis inpos, efferatis percitus furoribus  
prosilit ruitque supplex, Christum adesse ut sen-  
serat.

## THE DAILY ROUND, IX

faithful pages of the prophets pledged, comes forth, promised of old: let all things join in praise of Him. Water poured into tankards is changed to noble wine; the servant tells how the wine was drawn from the water-pot, and the very master of the feast is amazed at the taste that flavours the cups. "Bodies diseased and ulcerous, festering flesh I command," saith He, "to be washed"; His bidding is done, and the cleansing of the wounds makes the swollen skin pure. Eyes buried in perpetual darkness Thou dost anoint with healing clay and the nectar of Thy sacred mouth, and presently by this cure their orbs are opened and light restored to them. Thou dost rebuke the raging wind for upturning the sea from its very depths with fearful blasts, and tossing the ship without rest; it obeys Thy bidding and the wave sinks calmed. A woman has stealthily touched the edge of Thy holy garment, and straightway healing has come; the pallor leaves her cheek, the ever-flowing stream of blood is stayed. He saw a young man cut off just at the passing of sweet youth, the bereaved mother bearing him to the grave with tears of farewell: "Arise," He said; and he rises and stands restored by his mother's side. To Lazarus, now four days shut sunless in the tomb, He gives again the power to breathe and bids him live, and the breath restored enters again into the decaying flesh. He walks over the waters of the sea, treading on the surface of the flood, and the restless deep holds up a pathway, the wave sinks not under the holy footsteps. One that was wont to dwell in chains in a tomb-cavern, gnashing his teeth, out of his mind, driven by wild frenzies, leaps forth and flings himself on his knees when he sees that Christ

## PRUDENTIUS

pulsa pestis lubricorum milleformis daemonum 55  
corripit gregis suilli sordida spureamina,  
seque nigris mergit undis et pecus lymphaticum.

ferte qualis ter quaternis ferculorum fragmina;  
adfatim referta iam sunt adcubantum milia  
quinque panibus peresis et gemellis piscibus. 60

tu cibus panisque noster, tu perennis suavitas;  
nescit esurire in aevum qui tuam sumit dapem,  
nec lacunam ventris inplet, sed foveat vitalia.

clausus aurium meatus et sonorum nescius  
purgat ad praecepta Christi crassa quaeque  
obstacula, 65  
vocibus capax fruendis ac susurris pervius.

omnis aegritudo cedit, languor omnis pellitur,  
lingua fatur, quam veterna vinixerant silentia,  
gestat et suum per urbem laetus aeger lectulum.

quin et ipsum, ne salutis inferi expertes forent, 70  
Tartarum benignus intrat; fracta cedit ianua,  
vectibus cadit revulsis cardo dissolubilis.<sup>1</sup>

illa prompta ad inruentes, ad revertentes tenax,  
obice extrorsum recluso<sup>2</sup> porta reddit mortuos,  
lege versa, et limen atrum iam recalandum patet. 75

sed Deus dum luce fulva mortis antra inluminat,  
dum stupentibus tenebris candidum praestat diem,  
tristia squalentis aethrae palluerunt sidera.

sol refugit et lugubri sordidus ferrugine  
igneum reliquit axem seque maerens abdidit; 80  
fertur horruisse mundus noctis aeternae chaos.

<sup>1</sup> indissolubilis in some MSS. of both classes.

## THE DAILY ROUND, IX

is nigh: driven out, the thousand-formed plague of treacherous devils seizes upon an unclean, filthy herd of swine and plunges itself and the maddened beasts together in the black waters. Bring ye in baskets twelve the fragments left from the feast; the guests in their thousands are now amply filled with the eating of five loaves of bread and a pair of fishes. Thou art our meat and our bread, Thou our sweet savour that never fails; he can never hunger any more who partakes of Thy banquet, not filling a void in his belly but refreshing that by which he truly lives. The closed avenue of the ears, that knows no sound, clears away at Christ's bidding all its thick obstructions and gains the power to enjoy voices and give passage to whispers. Every sickness yields, every weakness is banished, the tongue speaks that had been tied in torpid silence, and the sick man carries his bed rejoicing through the city. Yea, lest those below should have no part in salvation, in His goodness He enters Tartarus. The door is forced and yields before Him; the bolts are torn away, down falls the pivot broken; that gate so ready to receive the inrush, so unyielding in face of those that would return, is unbarred and gives back the dead; the law is reversed, and the black doorway stands open to be retrodden. But while God with golden light was illumining the vaults of death, giving bright day to the astounded night, the sky was darkened and the stars dimmed in sadness; the sun fled, clad in the gloom of mourning, from the fiery heavens, and in sorrow hid himself away. "Tis said the world shuddered in fear of the darkness of eternal night.

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<sup>2</sup> revulso *A*, reculso *B* (*Bergman*).

## PRUDENTIUS

- solve vocem, mens sonora, solve linguam  
mobilem,  
dic tropaeum passionis, dic triumphalem crucem,  
pange vexillum notatis quod refulget frontibus. 85  
o novum caede stupenda vulneris miraculum!  
hinc crux fluxit unda, lympha parte ex altera;  
lympha nempe dat lavacrum, tum corona ex san-  
guine est.  
vidit anguis inmolatam corporis sacri hostiam,  
vidit, et fellis perusti mox venenum perdidit,  
saucius dolore multo, colla fractus sibila.<sup>1</sup> 90  
quid tibi, profane serpens, profuit rebus novis  
plasma primum perculis versipelli hortamine?<sup>2</sup>  
diluit culpam recepto forma mortalis Deo.  
ad brevem se mortis usum dux salutis dedidit,  
mortuos olim sepultos ut redire insuesceret, 95  
dissolutis pristinorum vinculis peccaminum.  
tunc patres sanctique multi conditorem praevium  
iam revertentem secuti tertio demum die  
carnis indumenta sumunt, eque bustis prodeunt.  
cerneret coire membra de favillis aridis, 100  
frigidum venis resumptis pulverem tepescere,  
ossa, nervos, et medullas glutino cutis tegi.  
post, ut occasum resolvit vitae et hominem  
reddidit,  
arduum tribunal alti vitor ascendit Patris,  
inclytam caelo reportans passionis gloriam. 105  
macte iudex mortuorum, macte rex viventium,  
dexter in parentis arce qui eluis virtutibus,  
omnium venturus inde iustus ulti criminum.

<sup>1</sup> So the two oldest MSS. A and B; cf. Virgil, Geo. III, 421, Aen. V, 277. Most of the others used by Bergman have sibilat.

## THE DAILY ROUND, IX

Release thy voice, my tuneful heart, release thy nimble tongue. Tell of the victory of the passion, tell of the triumphant cross, sing of the glittering ensign marked upon our brows. How strange the marvel of the wound in His amazing death! Here flowed a stream of blood, there water: water gives washing, and the crown is won with blood. The serpent saw the sacred body offered in sacrifice, saw, and straightway lost the venom of his inflamed gall; smitten he was with sore distress, his hissing throat shattered. What has it booted thee, thou wicked serpent, when the world was new, to have brought the first-created man to ruin with thy crafty incitement? The mortal frame has washed its guilt away by receiving God. The leader of our salvation gave Himself up to a short experience of death, that He might teach the dead long buried to return, by breaking the bonds of their former sins. Then many a patriarch and saint, following their creator's lead as He now returned on the third day, put on the garment of flesh and came forth from their tombs. There were the limbs assembling out of the dry ashes, the cold dust taking veins again and growing warm, the bones and sinews and innermost parts being covered with binding skin. Then, when He had annulled death and restored man to life, He ascended in victory the lofty judgment-seat of the Father on high, carrying back to heaven the illustrious glory of His passion. Glory be to Thee, judge of the dead and king of the living, who on Thy Father's throne at His right hand art renowned for Thy merits, and shalt come from thence to be the righteous avenger of all sins. Thee let

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<sup>2</sup> astutia A (*Bergman*).

# PRUDENTIUS

te senes et te iuventus, parvolorum te chorus,  
turba matrum virginumque, simplices puellulae, 110  
voce concordes pudicis perstrepant concentibus.

fluminum lapsus et undae, litorum crepidines,  
imber, aestus, nix, pruina, silva et aura, nox, dies  
omnibus te concelebrent saeculorum saeculis.

## X

### HYMNUS CIRCA EXEQUIAS DEFUNCTI

DEUS, ignee fons animarum,  
duo qui socians elementa,  
vivum simul ac moribundum,  
hominem, Pater, effigiasti,  
tua sunt, tua, rector, utraque, 5  
tibi copula iungitur horum,  
tibi dum vegetata cohaerent  
et spiritus et caro servit.

recessisse<sup>1</sup> sed ista seorsum  
solvunt hominem perimuntque; 10  
humus excipit arida corpus,  
anima rapit aura liquorem;  
quia cuncta creata necesse est

<sup>1</sup> In the oldest MS. A (followed by Bergman) lines 9–16 are as follows :

resoluta sed ista seorsum  
proprios revocantur in ortus;  
petit halitus aëra fervens,  
humus excipit arida corpus.  
sic cuncta creata necesse est  
obitum tolerare supremum,  
ut semina dissociata  
sibi sumat origo resorbens.

Some other MSS. have both versions, or the A version, in whole or part, added in the margin.

## THE DAILY ROUND, X

old men and young, Thee the choir of little children, the company of mothers and maidens and artless girls praise with loud, harmonious voice in pure strains together. Let the gliding waters of the rivers, the shores of the seas, rain, heat, snow, frost, woodland and wind, night and day unite to extol Thee for ever and ever.

## X

### A HYMN ON THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD

God, the burning source of spirits, who, by uniting two elements, one living and one dying, together, didst in Thy Fatherhood create man, Thine, O Ruler, Thine are both; it is for Thee the bond is drawn between them; Thee, while they cleave together in quickening life, both soul and flesh serve. But <sup>a</sup> their sundering apart is the dissolution and the end of man: the dry earth receives his body, the breath of air carries off the pure spirit; for all that is created

<sup>a</sup> Lines 9–16 according to the text of A: “But when they are disjoined one from the other they are called back each to its source; the glowing spirit seeks the heavens, the dry earth receives the body. All that is created must needs suffer death at the end in such wise that the elements are parted and their original draws them back into itself.” It is plausibly suggested that this was recast because it savours too much of pagan philosophies. Though the text followed above is preserved in much later MSS. (the Ambrosian 7th century MS. fails us here), it does not read like the work of a late interpolator, and it probably represents a revision by Prudentius himself.

## PRUDENTIUS

- labefacta senescere tandem,  
compactaque dissociari, 15  
et dissona texta retexi.  
hanc tu, Deus optimus, mortem  
familis abolere paratus,  
iter inviolabile monstras,  
quo perdita membra resurgent, 20  
ut, dum generosa caducis,  
ceu carcere clausa, ligantur,  
pars illa potentior extet,  
quae germen ab aethere traxit.  
si terrea forte voluntas 25  
luteum sapit et grave captat,  
animus quoque pondere victus  
sequitur sua membra deorsum.  
at si generis memor ignis  
contagia pigra recuset, 30  
vehit hospita viscera secum,  
pariterque reportat ad astra.  
nam quod requiescere corpus  
vacuum sine mente videmus,  
spatium breve restat, ut alti 35  
repetat collegia sensus.  
venient cito saecula, cum iam  
socius calor ossa revisat  
animataque sanguine vivo  
habitacula pristina gestet. 40  
quae pigra cadavera pridem  
tumulis putrefacta iacebant,  
volucres rapientur in auras,  
animas comitata priores.  
hinc maxima cura sepulcris 45  
inpeditur, hinc resolutos  
honor ultimus accipit artus

## THE DAILY ROUND, X

must needs at last grow weak and waste away, all that is joined together be separated, every fabric of contrary parts be undone. This death, O good God, Thou art ready to do away for Thy servants, and dost show them an indestructible path whereby bodies that have perished shall rise again, that so long as the noble is bound up with the mortal, as it were imprisoned, that part may prove the stronger which has drawn its source from heaven. If haply the earthly longing savours the mire and seeks after that which is gross, the spirit too is overcome by the weight and follows its bodily members downwards; but should the fire, remembering its origin, reject the numbing contagion, it carries with it the flesh with which it has sojourned, and takes it, too, home to the stars. For whereas we see the body lying at rest bereft of the spirit, there remains but a short time ere it seek again its union with the soul on high. Soon will come the time when the warmth that bore them company shall return to the bones, and wear again its old dwelling quickened with living blood. Bodies that long lay dead and still and mouldering in their tombs will be carried into the flying breezes in company with their former souls. This is why we spend such great care on graves, this is why the last honour awaits the lifeless frame and the

## PRUDENTIUS

et funeris ambitus ornat,  
candore nitentia claro  
praetendere lintea mos est,  
aspersaque myrrha Sabaeo  
corpus medicamine servat.

quidnam sibi saxa cavata,  
quid pulchra volunt monumenta,  
nisi quod res creditur illis  
non mortua, sed data somno ?

hoc provida Christicolarum  
pietas studet, utpote credens  
fore protinus omnia viva  
quaes nunc gelidus sopor urget.

qui iacta cadavera passim  
miserans tegit aggere terrae,  
opus exhibet ille benignum  
Christo pius omnipotenti,

quia lex eadem monet omnes  
gemitum dare sorte sub una,  
cognataque funera nobis  
aliena in morte dolere.

sancti sator ille Tobiae,  
sacer ac venerabilis heros,  
dapibus iam rite paratis  
ius praetulit exequiarum.

iam stantibus ille ministris  
cyathos et fercula liquit,  
studioque accinctus humandi  
fleto dedit ossa sepulcro.

veniunt mox praemia caelo,  
preiumque rependitur ingens ;  
nam lumina nescia solis  
deus inlita felle serenat.

iam tunc docuit Pater orbis

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55

60

65

70

75

80

## THE DAILY ROUND, X

funeral procession graces it, why it is our custom to spread over it linen cloths of gleaming whiteness, and sprinkled myrrh with its Sabaean drug preserves the body. What mean the chambered rocks, the noble monuments, but that something is entrusted to them which is not dead but given up to sleep? This earnest care the provident piety of Christ's followers takes because they believe that all that are now sunk in cold slumber will presently be alive. He who finds bodies lying unheeded and in pity covers them with a mound of earth<sup>a</sup> offers in love a work of kindness to Christ the all-powerful; for the same law bids us all mourn as under a common lot, and in a stranger's death to grieve for the loss of our own kin. The father of saintly Tobias,<sup>b</sup> a holy and reverend worthy, though his meal was in readiness, gave preference over it to the claims of burial. Though his servants stood ready in their places, he left cups and dishes behind, and with all his mind on the interment, laid the bones in the grave with tears. Presently comes his reward from heaven, and he is requited with a great price; for when his eyes, which knew not the sun, have been smeared with gall God enlightens them. Even then the Father of the world taught how sharp and bitter is

<sup>a</sup> Cf. Tobit i, 18-19.

<sup>b</sup> Tobit ii.

## PRUDENTIUS

quam sit rationis egenis  
mordax et amara medella,  
cum lux animum nova vexat.

docuit quoque non prius ullum  
caelestia cernere regna  
quam nocte et vulnere tristi  
toleraverit aspera mundi.

mors ipsa beatior inde est,  
quod per cruciamina leti  
via panditur ardua iustis,  
et ad astra doloribus itur.

sic corpora mortificata  
redeunt melioribus annis,  
nec post obitum recalescens  
conpago fatiscere novit.

haec, quae modo pallida tabo  
color albidus inficit, ora  
tunc flore venustior omni  
sanguis cute tinguet amoena.

iam nulla deinde senectus  
frontis decus invida carpet,  
macies neque sicca lacertos  
suco tenuabit adeso.

Morbus quoque pestifer, artus  
qui nunc populatur anhelos,  
sua tunc tormenta resudans  
luet inter vincula mille.

hunc eminus aëre ab alto  
victrix caro, iamque perennis,  
cernet sine fine gementem  
quos moverat ipse dolores.

quid turba superstes inepta  
clangens ululamina miscet?  
cur tam bene condita iura

85

90

95

100

105

110

115

## THE DAILY ROUND, X

the remedy for them that want reason, when the new light makes the mind smart.<sup>a</sup> He taught too that no man sees the heavenly kingdom ere in darkness and sore hurt he has borne the adversities of the world. Therefore is death itself more blessed, in that through the pains of death a way on high is opened for the righteous and by their sufferings they pass to the skies. Thus bodies that have perished return in better days, and the frame growing warm again after its decease cannot any more decline. These cheeks which now are wan and white with wasting shall then have beauteous skin tinged with the bloom of blood more charming than any flower. No longer then shall jealous age steal away the grace of the brow, nor withered leanness consume the sap of the arms and leave them shrunken. Baleful Disease too, which now wastes our panting frames, will then in sweat suffer the penalty of his own torments in a thousand bonds.<sup>b</sup> From high heaven, far off, the flesh, victorious and now immortal, shall see him bemoaning without end the very pains himself had caused before. Why does the band of survivors join in a loud noise of foolish lamentation, and senseless grief in its mourning blame laws so surely

<sup>a</sup> Tobit xi, 7-13.

<sup>b</sup> Morbus, personified as by Virgil at *Aeneid* VI, 275 (cf. Cicero, *De Natura Deorum* III, 44), is here probably identified with Satan; *morbus* often has a moral sense (= *vitium*).

## PRUDENTIUS

luctu dolor arguit amens?  
 iam maesta quiesce querella,  
 lacrimas suspendite, matres:  
 nullus sua pignera plangat,  
 mors haec reparatio vitae est.

120

sic semina sicca virescunt  
 iam mortua, iamque sepulta,  
 quae redditia caespite ab imo  
 veteres meditantur aristas.

nunc suscipe, terra, fovendum,  
 gremioque hunc concipe molli:  
 hominis tibi membra sequestro,  
 generosa et fragmina credo.

125

anima fuit haec domus olim  
 factoris<sup>1</sup> ab ore creatae;  
 fervens habitavit in istis  
 Sapientia principe Christo.

130

tu depositum tege corpus;  
 non inmemor ille requiriет  
 sua munera fector et auctor  
 propriique aenigmata vultus.

135

veniant modo tempora iusta,  
 cum spem Deus inpleat omnem,  
 reddas patefacta necesse est  
 qualem tibi trado figuram.

140

non, si cariosa vetustas  
 dissolverit ossa favillis,  
 fueritque cinisculus arenis  
 minimi mensura pugilli,

nec, si vaga flamina et aurae  
 vacuum per inane volantes  
 tulerint cum pulvere nervos,  
 hominem periisse licebit.

145

sed dum resolubile corpus

## THE DAILY ROUND, X

established? Be silent now, sad plaint; stay your tears, ye mothers. Let none lament for his dear ones, for this death is the renewal of life. It is thus that dry seeds shoot forth green after they are dead and buried, and, being restored from the depths of the ground, repeat the harvests of former years. Receive now, earth, this our brother into thy care, take him to thy gentle bosom. It is a man's body I leave in thy keeping; nobly born the remains that I commit to thy trust. This was once the home of a soul created from its Maker's mouth; in these remains dwelt glowing Wisdom, whose head is Christ. Do thou cover the body entrusted to thee; He who is its maker and author will not forget it, and will seek again that which He gave, the image of His own countenance. Come the just time when God shall fulfil every hope, thou must needs be opened up and give back the form, such as I give it up to thee. Never, though time's decay reduce the bones to dust, and the dry and scanty ashes be but the measure of a very little handful, never, though the inconstant winds, the breezes that fly through the empty void, carry the flesh away and leave no speck behind, will the man be allowed to have perished. But till Thou

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<sup>1</sup> cui nobilis ex Patre fons est ACD (*Bergman*).

## PRUDENTIUS

- 150
- revocas, Deus, atque reformas,  
quanam regione iubebis  
animam requiescere puram ?
- 155
- gremio senis addita sancti  
recubabit, ut est Eleazar,  
quem floribus undique saeptum  
dives procul aspicit ardens.
- 160
- sequimur tua dicta, Redemptor,  
quibus atra e morte triumphans  
tua per vestigia mandas  
socium crucis ire latronem.
- 165
- patet ecce fidelibus ampli  
via lucida iam paradisi,  
licet et nemus illud adire,  
homini quod ademerat anguis.
- 170
- illic, precor, optime dux, dux,  
famulam tibi praecipe mentem  
genitali in sede sacrari,  
quam liquerat exul et errans.
- nos tecta fovebimus ossa  
violis et fronde frequenti,  
titulumque et frigida saxa  
liquido spargemus odore.

## XI

### HYMNUS VIII KAL. Ianuarias

- Quid est quod artum circulum  
sol iam recurrens deserit ?  
Christusne terris nascitur,  
qui lucis auget tramitem ?
- 5
- heu quam fugacem gratiam  
festina volvbat dies !  
quam paene subductam facem

## THE DAILY ROUND, XI

dost recall the mortal body, O God, and make it new,  
in what region wilt Thou bid the pure soul rest?  
In the bosom of the holy patriarch shall it lie, like  
Eleazar<sup>a</sup> with flowers all about him, while the rich  
man, as he burns, looks upon him from afar. We  
follow Thy words, O Redeemer, with which, in Thy  
triumph over the blackness of death, Thou dost bid  
the robber, Thy companion on the cross, to walk in  
Thy steps. See now, for the faithful a shining way  
lies open to the spacious garden of paradise, and they  
may enter that grove which the serpent took from  
man. There, I pray, good Leader, give command  
that the spirit, Thy servant, be consecrated to Thee  
in the home of its birth, which it left to wander in  
exile. We shall care for the entombed bones with  
violets and green leaves in plenty, and with perfumed  
essence sprinkle the cold stones that bear the epitaph.

## XI

### A HYMN FOR THE 25TH OF DECEMBER

WHAT means it that the sun is now returning,  
leaving his narrow circle behind him? Is not Christ,  
who enlarges the path of light, born this day on earth?  
Ah, how fleeting was the grace day was bestowing  
as it rolled on in its haste, its light all but withdrawn

<sup>a</sup> The Lazarus of Luke xvi, 20.

## PRUDENTIUS

sensim recisa extinxerat!  
caelum nitescat laetius,  
gratetur et gaudens humus :  
scandit gradatim denuo  
iubar priores lineas.

10

emerge, dulcis pusio,  
quem mater edit castitas,  
parens et expers coniugis,  
mediator et duplex genus.

15

ex ore quamlibet Patris  
sis ortus et Verbo editus,  
tamen paterno in pectore  
Sophia callebas prius,

20

quaes prompta caelum condidit,  
caelum diemque et cetera;  
virtute Verbi effecta sunt  
haec cuneta, nam Verbum Deus.

sed ordinatis saeculis,  
rerumque digesto statu,  
fundator ipse et artifex  
permansit in Patris sinu,

25

donec rotata annalium  
transvolverentur milia,  
atque ipse peccantem diu  
dignatus orbem viseret.

30

nam caeca vis mortalium  
venerans inanes nenias,  
vel aera vel saxa algida  
vel ligna credebat Deum.

35

haec dum sequuntur, perfidi  
praedonis in ius venerant,  
et mancipatam fumido  
vitam barathro inmerserant.

40

stragem sed istam non tulit

## THE DAILY ROUND, XI

and put out as by degrees it shortened! But now let the sky shine more joyously, the earth rejoice and be glad, for the splendour is climbing again step by step to its former paths. Come forth, sweet boy. Thy mother is Chastity herself, a mother yet unwedded, O mediator<sup>and mother of us all</sup> twofold in nature. Albeit Thou didst come from the mouth of the Father and wert born of the Word, yet in the Father's heart as Wisdom Thou hadst understanding aforetime. Wisdom coming forth established the heavens, the heavens and the day and all things else; by the power of the Word were all these made, for the Word was God. But when the ages were appointed and the world set in order, the Creator and Artificer himself remained in the bosom of the Father, until the thousands of years should roll past and He himself deign to visit a world long given to sin. For the blind nature of men, paying respect to vain babblings, believed that a piece of bronze or chilly stone or wood was God; and in following these they had fallen into the power of the false robber, made over their soul to him, and plunged it in the smoking pit. But Christ

# PRUDENTIUS

Christus cadentum gentium.  
inpune ne forsan sui  
Patris periret fabrica,  
mortale corpus induit,  
ut excitato corpore  
mortis catenam frangeret,  
hominemque portaret Patri.

45

hic ille natalis dies,  
quo te creator arduus  
spiravit et limo indidit,  
sermone carnem glutinans.

50

sentisne, virgo nobilis,  
matura per fastidia  
pudoris intactum decus  
honore partus crescere?

55

o quanta rerum gaudia  
alvus pudica continet,  
ex qua novellum saeculum  
procedit et lux aurea!

60

vagitus ille exordium  
vernantis orbis prodidit,  
nam tunc renatus soridum  
mundus veternum depulit.

sparsisse tellurem reor  
rus omne densis floribus,  
ipsasque harenas Syrtium  
fragrasse nardo et nectare.

65

te cuncta nascentem, puer,  
sensere dura et barbara,  
victusque saxorum rigor  
obduxit herbam cotibus.

70

iam mella de scopolis fluunt,  
iam stillat ilex arido  
sudans amomum stipite,

75

## THE DAILY ROUND, XI

did not suffer the nations thus to fall and be destroyed. Lest perchance His Father's handiwork perish unregarded, He put on a mortal body, so that by raising the body to life He might break death's chain and carry man to the Father. This is the natal day on which the Creator on high breathed Thee forth and set Thee in a frame of clay, uniting flesh with the Word. Feelest thou, noble maiden, through thy weariness now come to its time, that the undefiled glory of thy purity waxes with the honour of the child thou bearest? What joys for the world that chaste womb holds, whence comes forth the new age with its golden light! That child's crying showed forth the beginning of the world's spring, for then the world reborn put away its foul torpor. The earth, I ween, thickly besprinkled all the countryside with flowers, and the very sands of the desert were scented with nard and nectar. All things rough and rude were conscious of Thy birth, O Child; even the hardness of stone was overcome and clothed the rocks with grass. Now honey flows from the crags, now the oak sweats drops of perfume from its dry

# PRUDENTIUS

iam sunt myricis balsama.

o sancta praesepis tui,  
aeterne rex, cunabula,  
populisque per saeclum sacra  
mutis et ipsis credita !

80

adorat haec brutum pecus,  
indocta turba scilicet,  
adorat excors natio  
vis cuius in pastu sita est.

85

sed cum fidi spiritu  
concurrat ad praesepia  
pagana gens et quadrupes,  
sapiatque quod brutum fuit,  
negat patrum prosapia  
perosa praesentem Deum :  
credas venenis ebriam,  
furiisve lymphatam rapi.

90

quid prona per scelus ruis ?  
agnosce, si quidquam tibi  
mentis resedit integrae,  
ducem tuorum principum.

95

hunc, quem latebra et obstetrix  
et virgo feta et cunulae,  
et inbecilla infantia,  
regem dederunt gentibus,

100

peccator intueberis  
celsum coruscis nubibus,  
deiectus ipse et inritis  
plangens reatum fletibus,

105

cum vasta signum bucina  
terris cremandis miserit,  
et scissus axis cardinem  
mundi ruentis solverit.

insignis ipse et praeminens

## THE DAILY ROUND, XI

trunk, and the tamarisks bear balsam. How holy  
Thy manger-cradle, King eternal! The nations  
through all time, and even the dumb beasts, hold  
it sacred. The brute cattle adore it, a mere herd  
without knowledge; the senseless tribe adores it,  
whose only vigour is in feeding. Yet though with  
faithful spirit heathen race and four-footed beast  
come together to the stall and what was brutish show  
understanding, the seed of the patriarchs deny Him,  
hating the God who is present among them, as if they  
were drugged with poisons or maddened by Furies.  
Why dost thou rush headlong on the path of sin?  
Recognise, if thou hast any remainder of sound sense,  
the leader of thy princes. On this child, whom place  
of refuge and midwife and maiden mother and little  
cradle and feeble infancy have given to the nations  
as their King, thou as a sinner shalt look when He  
is seated on high in flashing clouds, thyself cast down  
and bemoaning thy guilt with vain tears, when the  
awful trump shall have sounded the signal for the  
burning of the earth, and the axis of the universe  
is broken and lets its pole fall down and it crashes in  
ruin. He himself, raised in eminence above all, shall

## PRUDENTIUS

meritis rependet congrua,  
his lueis usum perpetis,  
illis gehennam et Tartarum.

110

Iudaea, tunc fulmen crucis  
experta, qui sit senties  
quem, te furoris praesule,  
mors hausit et mox reddidit.

115

## XII

### HYMNUS EPIPHANIAE

Quicumque Christum quaeritis,  
oculos in altum tollite:  
illuc licebit visere  
signum perennis gloriae.

haec stella, quae solis rotam  
vincit decore ac lumine,  
venisse terris nuntiat  
cum carne terrestri Deum.

5

non illa servit noctibus  
secuta lunam menstruam,  
sed sola caelum possidens  
cursum dierum temperat.

10

Arctoa quamvis sidera  
in se retortis motibus  
obire nolint, attamen  
plerumque sub nimbis latent.

15

hoc sidus aeternum manet,  
haec stella nunquam mergitur,  
nec nubis occursu abdita  
obumbrat obductam facem.

20

tristis cometa intercidat,  
et, si quod astrum Sirio

## THE DAILY ROUND, XII

requite each according to his deserts, giving these to enjoy unending light, those to suffer hell and Tartarus. Then, O Judaea, when thou hast felt the thunderbolt of the cross, thou shalt understand who He is whom death, raging under thy patronage, swallowed up, and then gave back.

## XII

### A HYMN FOR EPIPHANY

ALL ye that seek the Christ, lift up your eyes on high; there may you see the sign of everlasting glory. This star which in its beauty and light surpasses the sun's orb proclaims that God has come to earth with earthly flesh. No servant of the night is this, attending the monthly moon, but sole tenant of the sky, ruling the course of the days. Though the constellations of the Bears, whose motions turn again upon themselves, refuse to set, yet oft are they hidden under storm-clouds. This star abides for ever, this star never sinks nor is hidden by oncoming cloud drawing a shade over its brightness. Perish the ill-omened comet, let every star that burns even with

# PRUDENTIUS

fervet vapore, iam Dei  
sub luce destructum cadat.

en Persici ex orbis sinu,  
sol unde sumit ianuam,  
cernunt periti interpretes  
regale vexillum magi.

quod ut refulsit, ceteri  
cessere signorum globi,  
nec pulcher est ausus suam  
conferre formam Lucifer.

“ quis iste tantus ” inquiunt  
“ regnator astris imperans,  
quem sic tremunt caelestia,  
cui lux et aethra inserviunt ?

inlustre quiddam cernimus,  
quod nesciat finem pati,  
sublime, celsum, interminum,  
antiquius caelo et chao.

hic ille rex est gentium  
populique rex Iudaici,  
promissus Abrahae patri  
eiusque in aevum semini.

aequanda nam stellis sua  
cognovit olim germina  
primus sator credentium,  
nati inmolator unici.

iam flos subit Daviticus  
radice Iessea editus,  
sceptrique per virgam virens  
rerum cacumen occupat.”

exim sequuntur perciti  
fixis in altum vultibus,  
qua stella sulcum traxerat  
claramque signabat viam.

25

30

35

40

45

50

55

## THE DAILY ROUND, XII

Sirius' heat sink now in destruction under God's light. See, from the far corner of the Persian land, whence the sun makes his entry, wise men, skilled interpreters, discern the royal ensign. As soon as it flashed out, all other starry orbs gave place, and even the fair morning star durst not put his beauty in comparison. "Who," say they, "is this great ruler who commands the stars, of whom the heavenly bodies thus stand in awe, whom light and sky obey? It is a glorious thing we see, that can suffer no end, exalted, lofty, boundless, more ancient than heaven and the realm of darkness. This is that king of the nations and of the people of Judaea, who was promised to father Abraham and to his seed for ever. For the first father of all believers, he who offered his only son in sacrifice, learned that his progeny must one day be made equal to the stars.<sup>a</sup> Now comes the flower of David, sprung from the root of Jesse, blooming along the sceptre-rod <sup>b</sup> and taking the highest place in the world." Then quickly did they follow, with eyes fixed on high, where the star was marking the way with its trail of light. But the sign

<sup>a</sup> Genesis xv, 5.

<sup>b</sup> Cf. Numbers xvii, 1-8.

# PRUDENTIUS

sed verticem pueri supra  
signum pependit inminens,  
pronaque submissum face  
caput sacratum prodidit.

60

videre quod postquam magi,  
Eoa promunt munera,  
stratique votis offerunt  
tus, myrrham et aurum regium.

65

agnosce clara insignia  
virtutis ac regni tui,  
puer o, cui trinam Pater  
praedestinavit indolem :

70

regem Deumque adnuntiant  
thesaurus et fragrans odor  
turis Sabaei, at myrrheus  
pulvis sepulcrum praedocet.

hoc est sepulcrum, quo Deus,  
dum corpus extingui sinit  
atque id sepultum suscitat,  
mortis refregit carcerem.

75

o sola magnarum urbium  
maior Bethlem, cui contigit  
ducem salutis caelitus  
incorporatum gignere !

80

altrice te summo Patri  
heres creatur unicus,  
homo ex Tonantis spiritu,  
idemque sub membris Deus.

85

hunc et prophetis testibus  
isdemque signatoribus  
testator et sator iubet  
adire regnum et cernere,

regnum, quod ambit omnia  
dia et marina et terrea

90

## THE DAILY ROUND, XII

hung in the heavens above the child's head, and, coming low, with downward beam revealed the sacred Person. And seeing Him the wise men bring forth gifts from the East, and prostrating themselves in worship make offerings of incense and myrrh and royal gold. Recognise, O Child, the clear emblems of Thy power and sovereignty, Thou for whom the Father fore-ordained a threefold nature. King and God the treasures proclaim, and the sweet scent of Sabaeon incense; but the powder of myrrh foretells the tomb. This is the tomb in which God, by suffering the body to die and raising it again from the grave, has broken death's prison. O Bethlehem, greatest art thou of great cities, since to thee it has fallen to bring to birth incarnate the heaven-sent leader of salvation. Thou dost nurse the only-begotten heir of the supreme Father, who is man born of the Thunderer's breath, yet also God in the flesh. Him His Father's testament, with the prophets to witness and affix their seals, bids enter on His kingdom and take possession<sup>a</sup>—a kingdom that embraces all things in heaven and sea and earth from east to west,

\* Prudentius has in mind some of the formalities connected with a Roman will. In this connection *cernere* is a technical term = *hereditatem adire*. Cf. Festus (Lindsay) 46, 18, Varro *De Lingua Latina* VII, 98. The sentence refers, of course, to the Old Testament and plays on two meanings of *testamentum*.

# PRUDENTIUS

a solis ortu ad exitum,  
et Tartara et caelum supra.

audit tyrannus anxius  
adesse regum principem,  
qui nomen Istrahel<sup>1</sup> regat,  
teneatque David regiam.

exclamat amens nuntio  
“ successor instat, pellimur :  
satelles, i, ferrum rape,  
perfunde cunas sanguine.

mas omnis infans occidat,  
scrutare nutricum sinus,  
interque materna ubera  
ensem cruentet pusio.

suspecta per Bethlem mihi  
puerarum est omnium  
fraus, ne qua furtim subtrahat  
prolem virilis indolis.”

transfigit ergo carnifex  
mucrone districto furens  
effusa nuper corpora,  
animasque rimatur novas.

locum minutis artubus  
vix interemptor invenit  
quo plaga descendat patens,  
iuguloque maior pugio est.

o barbarum spectaculum !  
inlisa cervix cautibus  
spargit cerebrum lacteum,  
oculosque per vulnus vomit ;

aut in profundum palpitans  
mersatur infans gurgitem,  
cui subter artis faucibus  
singultat unda et halitus.

95

100

105

110

115

120

## THE DAILY ROUND, XII

the depths of hell and the skies above. The uneasy monarch hears of the coming of the King of Kings to rule over the name of Israel and possess the throne of David. Out of his mind at the news, he cries "He that shall take my place is upon me, driving me out. Go, guard, grasp thy sword and steep the cradles in blood. Let every male child perish. Search the nurses' bosoms, and at the mother's breasts let the boy-child's blood redden thy blade. I suspect guile in all that have borne babes in Bethlehem, lest one of them by stealth save her male progeny." So the executioner raging madly with drawn sword pierces the new-born bodies and tears the young life out of them. Scarce can the slayer find room on the little frames for the gaping wound to fall upon; the dagger is bigger than the throat. O barbarous sight! A head dashed against the stones scatters the milk-white brains and spews out the eyes through the wound; or a babe is flung all throbbing into the depths of the flood, and beneath in his narrow throat water and breath make choking

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<sup>1</sup> This spelling is found in pre-Vulgate Latin Scriptures.

# PRUDENTIUS

- 125
- salvete, flores martyrum,  
quos lucis ipso in limine  
Christi insecuror sustulit,  
ceu turbo nascentes rosas.
- 130
- vos, prima Christi victima,  
grex inmolatorum<sup>1</sup> tener,  
aram ante ipsam simplices  
palma et coronis luditis.
- 135
- quo proficit tantum nefas?  
quid crimen Herodem iuvat?  
unus tot inter funera  
inpune Christus tollitur.
- 140
- inter coaevi sanguinis  
fluenta solus integer  
ferrum, quod orbabat nurus,  
partus fefellit virginis.
- 145
- sic stulta Pharaonis mali  
edicta quondam fugerat  
Christi figuram praefferens  
Moscs, receptor civium.
- 150
- cautum et statutum ius erat  
quo non liceret matribus,  
cum pondus alvi absolverent,  
puerile pignus tollere.
- 155
- mens obstetricis sedulae  
pie in tyrannum contumax  
ad spem potentis gloriae  
furata servat parvulum,
- quem mox sacerdotem sibi  
adsumpsit orbis conditor,  
per quem notatam saxeis  
legem tabellis traderet.
- licetne Christum noscere  
tanti per exemplum viri?

## THE DAILY ROUND, XII

spasms. Hail, martyr-flowers, whom on the very threshold of life the persecutor of Christ destroyed, as the stormy wind kills roses at their birth. You are Christ's first offerings, a tender flock slain in sacrifice, and before the very altar you play in innocence with palm and crowns. What boots such wickedness? What profits Herod from his crime? Amid so many deaths Christ alone is reared unharmed. While the blood of His generation flowed, the virgin's child alone has escaped untouched the sword that robbed young married mothers of their babes. It was thus that Moses, the protector of his people, prefiguring Christ, once escaped the wicked Pharaoh's foolish proclamation. A law had been decreed and ordained whereby mothers, when they were delivered of the womb's burden, might not rear a boy-child. But the zealous midwife, her spirit loyally disobedient to the monarch, stole away the little one and saved him for the hope of mighty glory; and by and by the world's Creator took him to be His priest, by whose hands He should transmit the law graven on tables of stone. May we not recognise Christ in the example of this great man? That

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<sup>1</sup> *inmaculatorum A B (followed by Bergman).*

# PRUDENTIUS

- 160
- dux ille caeso Aegyptio  
absolvit Istrahel iugo ;  
at nos, subactos iugiter  
erroris imperio gravi,  
dux noster hoste saucio  
mortis tenebris liberat.
- 165
- hic expiatam fluctibus  
plebem marino in transitu  
repurgat undis dulcibus,  
lucis columnam praeferens ;
- 170
- hic proeliante exercitu,  
pansis in altum bracchiis,  
sublimis Amalec premit,  
crucis quod instar tunc fuit.
- 175
- hic nempe Iesus verior,  
qui longa post dispendia  
victor suis tribulibus  
promissa solvit iugera.
- 180
- qui ter quaternas denique  
refluentis amnis alveo  
fundavit et fixit petras,  
apostolorum stemmata.
- 185
- iure ergo se Iudae ducem  
vidisse testantur magi,  
cum facta prisorum ducum  
Christi figuram pinxerint.<sup>1</sup>
- 190
- hic rex priorum iudicum,  
rexere qui Iacob genus,  
dominaeque rex ecclesiae,  
templi et novelli et pristini.
- hunc posteri Ephrem colunt,  
hunc sancta Manassae domus,  
omnesque suspiciunt tribus  
bis sena fratrum semina,

## THE DAILY ROUND, XII

leader, after he slew the Egyptian, freed Israel from the yoke; but us, who are in continual subjection to the grievous power of sin, our Leader, disabling our enemy, sets free from the darkness of death. Moses cleanses the people in the waves in the crossing of the sea and purifies them with sweet <sup>a</sup> waters, and carries before them a pillar of light. Moses, while the host does battle, stands aloft stretching up his arms and subdues Amalech,<sup>b</sup> and this was then a symbol of the cross. He <sup>c</sup> indeed is a truer Jesus, who, after long wanderings gained the victory and parted the promised lands to his tribesmen <sup>d</sup>; and lastly twelve stones did he plant firmly in the bed of the river where its waters were stayed,<sup>e</sup> and these are the forerunners of the apostles. Rightly, then, do the wise men bear witness that they have seen the Leader of Judah, since the deeds of old-time leaders pictured the figure of Christ. He is King of the judges of former times who ruled over the race of Jacob, and King of the church which now holds sway, King both of the new temple and the old. Him the descendants of Ephraim worship, Him the holy house of Manasses and all the tribes, the twelve-fold progeny of the brothers, reverence. Nay, even all

<sup>a</sup> The reference is possibly to Exodus xv, 25, 26.

<sup>b</sup> Exodus xvii, 10-13.

<sup>c</sup> Joshua, whose name appears as Jesus in the Septuagint and may have had this form in a pre-Vulgate Latin version known to Prudentius.

<sup>d</sup> Joshua xiii, 7.

<sup>e</sup> Joshua iii, 14-iv, 9.

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<sup>1</sup> finxerint in two of Bergman's class A MSS.

PRUDENTIUS

quin et propago degener  
ritum secuta inconditum,  
quaecumque dirum fervidis  
Babal caminis coxerat,

fumosa avorum numina,  
saxum, metallum, stipitem,  
rasum, dolatum, sectile,  
in Christi honorem deserit.

195

gaudete, quicquid gentium est,  
Iudaea, Roma et Graecia,  
Aegypte, Thrax, Persa, Scytha :  
rex unus omnes possidet.

200

laudate vestrum principem  
omnes beati ac perditii,  
vivi, inbecilli ac mortui :  
iam nemo posthac mortuus.

205

## THE DAILY ROUND, XII

the fallen breeds that followed a barbarous ritual  
and baked a fearful idol in burning furnaces, now  
abandon the smoke-grimed gods of their forefathers,  
of stone or metal or wood, filed smooth or hewn  
or cut, to honour Christ. Rejoice, all ye nations,  
Judaea, Rome and Greece, Egypt, Thracian, Persian,  
Scythian: one King is master of all. Praise your  
Lord every one, blessed and lost alike, the quick, the  
feeble, and the dead; no man henceforth is dead.

## APOTHEOSIS

### HYMNUS DE TRINITATE<sup>1</sup>

EST tria summa Deus, trinum specimen, vigor unus.  
corde Patris genita est Sapientia, Filius ipse est;  
Sanctus ab aeterno subsistit Spiritus ore.  
tempore nec senior Pater est, nec numine maior,  
nam sapiens retro semper Deus edidit ex se, 5  
per quod semper erat, dignanda ad saecula Verbum.  
edere sed Verbum Patris est, at cetera Verbi,  
adsumptum gestare hominem, reparare peremptum,  
conciliare Patri, dextraque in sede locare.  
Spiritus ista Dei complet, Deus ipse: fideles 10  
in populos charisma suum diffundere promptus,  
et patris et Christi virtutem in corpora transfert.

---

### <PRAEFATIO>

Est vera secta? te, Magister, consul.  
rectamne servamus fidem?  
an viperina non cavemus dogmata,  
et nescientes labimur?  
artam salutis vix viam discernere est 5  
inter reflexas semitas.  
tam multa surgunt perfidorum competa  
tortis polita erroribus,

<sup>1</sup> There is little MS. authority for this heading.

# THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

## A HYMN ON THE TRINITY

God is three supremes, threefold in person, one living power. Of the Father's love was begotten Wisdom, and the same is the Son ; the Holy Spirit is from the everlasting lips. The Father is neither older in time nor greater in divinity ; for God was wise through infinite time past, and gave forth from Himself, to bring the world into being, the Word whereby He ever was. But while to give forth the Word belongs to the Father, all else is of the Word, to take on and wear the nature of man and restore him from destruction, to reconcile him to the Father and set him at His right hand. This the Spirit of God accomplishes, who himself is God : ever ready to diffuse His gracious gift upon the faithful peoples, He transmits into their persons the power both of the Father and of the Christ.

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## PREFACE

Is our doctrine true? To Thee, the Master, I appeal. Are we keeping the right faith, or from want of guarding against venomous teachings are we slipping unawares? Hard is it to discern the narrow way of salvation amid twisting paths. So many cross-roads meet us, which have been trodden smooth by the misguided straying of the faithless; so many

# PRUDENTIUS

- obliqua sese conserunt divertia  
 hinc inde textis orbitis. 10
- quas si quis errans ac vagus sectabitur,  
 rectum relinquens tramitem,  
 serobis latentis pronus in foveam ruet,  
 quam fodit hostilis manus,  
 manus latronum, quae viantes obsidet 15  
 iter sequentes devium.
- quid non libido mentis humanae struat?  
 quid non malorum pruriat?  
 statum lace sunt omnipollentis Dei  
 calumniosis litibus, 20  
 fidem minutis dissecant ambagibus  
 ut quisque lingua est nequior;  
 solvunt ligantque quaestionum vincula  
 per syllogismos plectiles.
- vae captiosis sycophantarum strophis! 25  
 vae versipelli astutiae!  
 nodos tenaces recta rumpit regula,  
 infesta dissertantibus.
- idecirco mundi stulta delegit Deus,  
 ut concidant sophistica, 30  
 deque inbecillis subiugavit fortia,  
 simplex ut esset credere.
- lapis ecce nostro fixus offensaculo est,  
 inpingat in quem vanitas,  
 signum caventi, non caventi scandalum: 35  
 hunc sternit, illum dirigit.
- dum plura temptat caecus incerto gradu,  
 incurrit id quod obvium est.
- fax sola fidei est praeferenda gressibus,  
 ut recta sint vestigia. 40
- quis in tenebris hostis errantes tamen  
 pulsat trahitque et proterit,

## THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

side-roads join together, where tracks intertwine on this hand and on that; and if, wandering at random, a man follows them, leaving the straight path, he will plunge into the snare of a hidden pitfall which a band of enemies have dug, a band of robbers who beset travellers when they follow the byway. What would not the lust of men's minds devise? What evil would it not itch after? They assail the being of almighty God with false disputings and cut the faith in pieces with dark, finical reasonings in proportion to the wickedness of their tongues. Using intricate arguments they play fast and loose with the issues they discuss. Woe to the deceivers' cheating quirks! Woe to their crafty cunning! The right rule is a foe to their prating, and bursts their tight knots. God has specially chosen the foolish things of the world to overthrow the sophistical, and by means of weakness has subdued strength, that believing might be simple. Behold, a stone is set to trip us up, that vanity may strike against it, a guide-post to the wary, but to the unwary a stumbling-block; the one it lays low, the other it directs. The blind man groping on with uncertain step runs into that which stands in his way. The torch of faith alone is to be carried before our feet, that our steps may be straight. But when we go astray in this darkness the enemy buffets us, carries us away cap-

## PRUDENTIUS

45

qui sparsa ad ipsum conmeantum transitum  
 frumenta saevus devorat,  
 qui laeta Christi culta fur interpolat  
 addens avenas aemulas.  
 quas de veneni lacte in herbam fertiles  
 patitur colonus crescere,  
 ne forte culmum fibra inanis spiceum  
 simul revulsa internecet.        50  
 expectat ergo dum dolosa<sup>1</sup> et farrea  
 fervens coquat maturitas,  
 det ventilabro lecta quaeque ut horreis,  
 urat recrementum focis.  
 refert sed ipsa nosse, quae messem necant,    55  
 zizaniorum semina.

---

PLURIMA sunt sed pauca loquar, ne dira relatu  
 dogmata catholicam maculent male prodita linguam.  
 ille Patrem pellens solio detrudit in artum  
 corporis humani gestamen, nec pavet ipsum  
 obicctare neci duroque adfigere ligno.        5  
 passibilisne Deus? cuius species et imago  
 nulli visa umquam: nec enim comprehendier illa  
 maiestas facilis sensuve oculisve manuve.  
 Ioannis magni celebris sententia praesto est,  
 haud umquam testata Deum potuisse videri.    10  
 ille Pater, quem nulla acies violenta tuendo

<sup>1</sup> Most MSS. of the A class, including the 6th-century MS., have vitiosa, which Bergman adopts.

<sup>a</sup> In lines 1 to 320 Prudentius deals with heretical doctrines which denied the distinct personal being of the Son, and expounds the orthodox view of the Trinity. One form of "monarchic" doctrine, in order to safeguard the unity of

## THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

tive, tramples upon us, a cruel enemy who devours the provision laid out along the way for the very passage of travellers, a thief who spoils Christ's rich fields, sowing wild oats in them to compete with the corn. Them the farmer suffers to be enriched by their poisonous sap and grow into a plant, lest haply the pulling up of the worthless blade kill at the same time the stalk that bears the ear of corn. He waits therefore till ripening warmth mature the false grain and the true, that he may store in his barns what the fan selects and burn the refuse in the fire. Yet it concerns us to know the very seeds of the tares that kill the crop.

---

VERY many teachings there are, but of few shall I tell, lest misguided utterance of unspeakable doctrines stain an orthodox tongue. Yonder is one who, banishing the Father from his throne, thrusts Him into the narrow vesture of a man's body and fears not to subject the Father to death and fasten Him on the cruel cross.<sup>a</sup> Can God suffer? His shape and form no man has ever seen; for that majesty is not easily to be grasped by thought or eye or hand. We have the great John's well-known saying on our side, which declares that it has never been possible to see God. He is the Father, whom no eye has ever had force to reach by looking from

God, held that in Christ the Father himself was incarnate, whence it followed that the Father suffered on the cross. Sabellius (see 178), who developed this line of thought in the 3rd century, seems to have regarded the Trinity as three manifestations or modes (*cf.* 14) of the one God.

## PRUDENTIUS

eminus ardantis penetravit acumine visus,  
qui se forma hominis non induit, et Deitatis  
inmensum adsumpto non temperat ore modove.  
aut evangelici pietas spernenda libelli      15  
iam, blasphemē, tibi est, aut numquam visa beati  
vis intacta Patris, non admiscenda caducis.  
sed tamen et Patris est specimen quod cernere fas  
sit,  
humanis aliquando oculis concurrere promptum,  
quod quamvis hebes intuitus speculamine glauco      20  
umentique acie potuit nebulosus adire.  
quisque hominum vidiſſe Deum memoratur, ab  
ipso  
infusum vidit Gnatūm; nam Filius hoc est,  
quod de Patre micans se praestitit inspiciendum  
per species quas possit homo comprehendere visu.      25  
nam mera maiestas est infinita, nec intrat  
obtutus, aliquo ni se moderamine formet.  
hoc vidit princeps generosi seminis Abram,  
iam tunc dignati terras invisere Christi  
hospes homo, in triplicem numen radiasse figuram. 30  
hoc conluctantis tractarunt braecchia Iacob.  
ipse dator legis divinae accedere coram  
iussus, amicitiae conlato qui stetit ore  
comminus et sacris coniunxit verba loquellis,  
carnis in effigie Christum se cernere sensit.      35  
sed maiora petens animum per vota tetendit  
inconcessa homini, plusquam mortale laborans  
ipsum, quantus erat, sine corpore visere Christum.  
denique post multi sermonis mutua, postque  
conspectum praesentis Eri et consortia longa,      40

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<sup>a</sup> Genesis xviii.

## THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

without with keen, flashing vision, and who does not put on the form of man nor qualify the infinity of his Godhead by assuming countenance or mode. Either, thou blasphemer, must thou reject the faithfulness of the gospel-book, or else the intangible being of the blessed Father, which cannot mingle with mortality, has never been seen. Yet still there is a revelation of the Father which it is permitted to see, which at sundry times has presented itself to the eyes of men, and to which our sight, for all its dimness, with its dull vision and watery eyes, has been able through its mists to attain. Whosoever of men is said to have seen God has seen the Son whom He imparted; for it is the Son who, issuing from the Father, has manifested himself to our eyes in forms which man can grasp with his sight; the pure majesty is infinite, and comes not within our vision unless it takes some tempering shape. It is this divinity that Abraham, the founder of the noble race, the mortal man who entertained Christ when even thus early He deigned to visit the earth, saw radiated into three figures<sup>a</sup>; it is this that Jacob's arms touched as he wrestled with Him.<sup>b</sup> He who gave forth the divine law and was commanded to come into the presence, who stood face to face in friendship and conversed with the Holy One, understood that he saw the Christ in the form of flesh. But seeking greater things, he let his heart reach out in ambitions not permitted to man, desiring beyond mortal powers to see Christ himself in all his greatness without the body; and after much exchange of speech, after seeing his Master in person and holding long fellowship with Him, "I pray

<sup>a</sup> Genesis xxxii, 24.

## PRUDENTIUS

“quaeso”<sup>a</sup>, ait “ut liceat te nunc, Deus optime,  
nosse.”

respondit Dominus “mea, non me, eernere iustis  
posteriora dabo.” quid apertius, absque aliena  
quam sumat faeie Verbum non posse videri,  
posse tamen, eum malit, idem numquam Patre viso 45  
terrenis oculis habitu se ostendere nostro,  
saepe et in angelicas vel mortales moderatum  
induci species, queat ut sub imagine eerni?  
hoc Verbum est quod vibratum Patris ore benigno  
sumpsit virgineo fragilem de corpore formam. 50  
inde figura hominis nondum sub carne Moysi  
obieeta effigiem nostri signaverat oris,  
quod quandoque Deus Verbi virtute eoactum  
sumpturus corpus faciem referebat eandem.  
sed tamen et sentam visa est excita cremare 55  
flamma rubum. Deus in spinis volitabat aeutis,  
vulnificasque eomas innoxius ignis agebat,  
esset ut exemplo Deus inlapsurus in artus  
spiniferos, sudibus quos texunt crimina densis  
et peccata malis hirsuta doloribus inplet. 60  
inculto nam stirpe frutex vitiosus inquis  
luxuriam virginis in honesto effundere suo  
cooperat et nodos per acumina crebra ligabat.  
cernere erat steriles subito splendescere frondes,  
accensisque eitum foliis magno in pte late 65  
conlucere Deum, nec spinea laedere texta,  
lambere sanguineos fructus et poma eruenta,  
stringere mortiferi vitalia germina ligni,  
quandoquidem tristes purgantur sanguine eupiae,

<sup>a</sup> Exodus xxxiii, 11 and 18–23.

<sup>b</sup> The Word being conceived as the Creator. Cf. the *Hymn on the Trinity*, 6, and John i, 3.

<sup>c</sup> Exodus iii, 2.

## THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

Thee," he said, " O God most excellent, let me now know Thee." And the Lord answered, " My back parts, not myself, shall I grant the righteous to see."<sup>a</sup> What is plainer than that, apart from an external form which He assumes, the Word cannot be seen, but that when He so wills, though the Father has never been seen, yet the Word can show himself to earthly eyes in habit like ourselves, and that often He qualifies himself and puts on the shape of angel or of man, that He may be visible in a likeness? This is the Word which, sent forth from the Father's gracious mouth, took upon Him a perishable form from a maiden's body. The figure of a man that was presented to Moses not yet in the flesh bore the likeness of our countenance because God, intending one day to assume a body formed by the power of the Word,<sup>b</sup> was producing the same features. Yet flame also came forth and seemed to burn the thorny bush: God was moving amid the sharp pricks, and the fire was tossing its hurt-dealing tresses harmlessly,<sup>c</sup> that God might give an example, since He was one day to enter into our thorny frames, which sins entangle with thick-set spikes and bristly transgressions fill with bitter sorrows. For the bush had gone wrong from want of attention to its stock, had begun to spread rankly with bad sap into unwholesome growth, and was making knotty joints along many a sharp-pointed shoot. There were the unprofitable boughs suddenly brightening, and God, stirring amid the burning leaves, shining afar with mighty power, yet not hurting the thorny tangle, lapping the blood-hued fruits, the red berries, and lightly touching the shoots of life on the deathly wood; in as much as the bitterness of sin is cleansed

## PRUDENTIUS

quem contorta rubus densis cruciatibus edit. 70  
 ergo nihil visum nisi quod sub carne videndum,  
 lumen imago Dei, Verbum Deus et Deus ignis,  
 qui sentum nostri peccamen corporis inplet;  
 nam lucis genitor, Verbi sator, auctor et ignis  
 creditur extra oculos, ut apostolus edocet auctor, 75  
 qui negat intuitu fontem Deitatis adiri.  
 credite, nemo deum vedit, mihi credite, nemo.  
 visibilis de fonte Deus, non ipse Dei fons  
 visibilis; cerni potis est qui nascitur, at non  
 innatus cerni potis est: latet os Patris illud 80  
 unde Deus qui visibilem se praestitit olim,  
 tale aliquid formans in sese quale secuta est  
 passio, quae corpus sibi vindicat; ardua nam vis  
 est inpassibilis, quoniam natura superni  
 ignis ad horrificas nescit descendere poenas, 85  
 nec capit humanis angoribus exeruciari,  
 pura, serena, micans, liquido praelibera motu,  
 subdita nec cuiquam, dominatrix utpote rerum,  
 cui non principium de tempore, sed super omne  
 tempus et ante diem maiestas cum Patre summo, 90  
 immo animus Patris et ratio, via consiliorum,  
 quae non facta manu nec voce creata iubentis  
 protulit imperium patrio ructata profundo.  
 hanc igitur non flagra secant, non sputa salivis  
 aspergunt, alapis non vexat palma relisis, 95  
 nec perfossa cruci clavorum vulnera figunt.  
 his adfecta caro est hominis, quam femina praegnans

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<sup>a</sup> John i, 18.

## THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

with blood, which the bush sheds as it writhes under tortures unrelieved. So then nothing has been seen but what is to be seen in the flesh, light the image of God, God the Word, God the fire that fills the thorn-bush of sin in our bodies; for the begetter of light, the Father of the Word and the source of the fire is believed to stand beyond the reach of the eyes, as the apostle on whom we rely teaches when he says that sight cannot attain to the fountain-head of deity.<sup>a</sup> Believe me, no man has seen God; believe me, no man. God who comes forth from the fountain-head is visible, but the very fountain-head of God is invisible; He that is born can be seen, but He that was not born cannot be seen. Concealed is that mouth of the Father from whence came God who once made himself visible, taking on himself such a form as suffering, which demands a body, followed upon. For the potency on high cannot suffer, since the heavenly fire cannot lower itself to feel dreadful pains, nor does it admit of being racked with human tortures. It is pure, serene, shining, utterly free and unconstrained in movement, not subject to any power, for it is master of all things, having no beginning from a time, but beyond all time and before the days began it is the majesty that resides with the Father supreme, yea, the spirit of the Father, his thought, the channel of his designs, which, not made by his hand nor created by the voice of his command, but emitted from the depths of the Father, carried forth his will. This therefore no scourges cut nor spitting defiles, nor hand hurts with buffeting nor nail-pierced wounds fasten upon a cross. It was the flesh of man that felt these things, flesh that a woman with child

## PRUDENTIUS

enixa est sub lege uteri, sine lege mariti.  
 ille famem patitur, fel potat et haurit acetum,  
 ille pavet mortis faciem, tremit ille dolorem. 100  
 dicite, sacrilegi doctores, qui Patre summo  
 desertum iacuisse thronum contenditis illo  
 tempore quo fragiles Deus est inlapsus in artus,  
 ergo Pater passus? quid non malus audeat error?  
 ipse puellari conceptus sanguine crevit? 105  
 ipse verecundae distendit virginis alvum?  
 et iam falsiloqua est divini pagina libri,  
 quae Verbum in carnis loquitur fluxisse figuram?  
 at non, qui Verbi Pater est, caro factus habetur.  
 fige gradum, Scriptura, tuum; nil mobile et  
     aneeps 110  
 adfirmasse decet: Pater est, quem cernere nulli  
 est licitum; Pater est, qui numquam visus in orbe  
     est,  
 nec mundana inter radiavit lumina coram.  
 verbum conspicuum misit, missumque recepit  
 cum voluit: Verbo praestrinxit viscera purae 115  
 virginis, et Verbo struxit puerilia membra.  
 ipse quidem in terris virtute et numine praesens  
 semper adest quocumque loci, nec pars vacat ulla  
 maiestate Patris; nusquam est genitor Deus absens,  
 per Verbum sed semper adest; atque inde  
     Philippo 120  
 Christus ait " tanto tecum iam tempore versor,  
 et Patrem te nosse negas, quem perspicis in me? "  
 est invisibilis donum Patris edere natum  
 visibilem, per quem valeat Pater ipse videri,  
 nec solis sanctorum oculis, sed lumine cassis 125  
 128

## THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

brought forth according to the law of birth, without the law of wedlock. He it is that suffers hunger, that drinks the gall and drains the vinegar. He it is that fears the shape of death and trembles at the pain. Tell me, ye blasphemous teachers, who maintain that the supreme Father abandoned his throne at the time when God entered into a mortal body, was it the Father, then, who suffered? What would not evil error dare? Was the Father himself conceived and did He grow from a maid's blood? Did He himself swell a modest virgin's womb? And does the page of the holy book lie, then, when it says that the Word passed into the form of flesh? It is not He who is the Father of the Word, that is believed to have been made flesh. Plant thy step firmly, O Scripture; it is not seemly to have stated aught that is unsure and undependable. He is the Father, whom none has been permitted to see; He is the Father, who has never been seen in the world nor shone in his own person among the world's luminaries. He sent the visible Word and received again, when He would, the Word He sent. By the Word He touched the pure virgin's flesh, and by the Word built up the child's body. He indeed is always and everywhere present on earth in power and spirit, and no part of it is without the Father's majesty; God the Father is nowhere absent; but it is through the Word that He is ever present, and hence it is that Christ says to Philip, "Am I with thee this long time, and sayest thou that thou knowest not the Father, whom thou seest in me?" It is the gift of the invisible Father that He brings forth the visible Son, through whom the Father himself can be seen, and not only by the eyes of the

## PRUDENTIUS

caecorum; caecos loquor, atra socordia quorum  
 corde tenebroso verum perpendere nescit.  
 quem si perspicuum mortalibus infitiaris,  
 fare age, quem videat Babylonis ab arce tyrannus  
 innocuas inter flamas procul exspatiantem,      130  
 calcantem rapidos inadustis fratibus ignes.  
 nempe ait " o proceres, tris vasta incendia anhelis  
 accepere viros fornacibus; additus unus  
 ecce vaporiferos ridens intersecat ignes.  
 Filius ille Dei est; fateorque et victus adoro.      135  
 inrisas removete faces, taedasque tepentes  
 subtrahite; friget succensi sulphuris ardor.  
 Filius (haud dubium est) agit haec miracula rerum,  
 quem video, Deus ipse, Dei certissima proles.  
 imperat inmensis ardoribus et domat iras,      140  
 insultans famulante rogo, piceosque furores  
 conprivit et rabiem flammarum algescere cogit.  
 barbaricos calida aura sinus non tangere iussa  
 praeterit et tenues stridens transcurrit amictus.  
 ipse per Assyrios metuit vapor ire tiaras,      145  
 ne coma fusa umeris fumo obsordescat amaro."  
 haec ait, et varios iubet obmutescere cantus,  
 organa, sambucas, citharas calamosque tubasque.  
 stulta supersticio tacuit, vox festa quievit,  
 quae male conspicuae celebrabat imaginis aurum. 150  
 carmina sanctorum resonant iam sola virorum  
 triplice concentu regem laudantia caeli,  
 qui marc, qui terras, qui lucida sidera fecit,

<sup>a</sup> Daniel iii, 24 ff.

<sup>b</sup> Prudentius makes Nebuchadnezzar speak like an occidental, just as Virgil does Aeneas (*Aeneid* ii, 504).

## THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

holy, but by the sightless eyes of the blind ; and by the blind I mean those who in the black dullness of their darkened heart cannot appreciate the truth. If you deny that He is visible to mortals, then tell me who it is that from Babylon's throne the king sees at a distance walking unharmed through the flames, and trampling on the consuming fires with his brethren unscorched.<sup>a</sup> He says, you know, " Ye nobles, three men the devouring fire received in the panting furnace, and lo ! one more parts asunder with a smile the flame's hot gust. That is the Son of God. I confess it, and yield and worship Him. Take ye away the brands, for they are laughed to scorn ; draw off the dying logs of pitch-pine ; the brimstone ye set fire to is chilled. It is the Son, no doubt of it, that works these wonders ; He is before my eyes, God himself, God's most assured Son, commanding the measureless heat and taming its wrath, triumphing over the fire, his servant ; He subdues the raging pitch and compels the fierce flames to grow cold. The hot breath is forbidden to touch the folds of their oriental<sup>b</sup> garments ; it passes them by, and runs hissing past their fine raiment. The very heat fears to penetrate their Assyrian turbans, lest the hair that falls on their shoulders be dirtied by the acrid smoke." So saying, he bids the varied sounds of music cease, all the instruments, sackbuts, harps, reed-pipes and cornets. Foolish superstition is silent, stilled are the festal notes that were sounding in honour of the golden image wickedly set up to view. Now only the songs of the holy men ring out as with three voices in concert they praise the king of heaven, who made the sea, the lands, the shining stars, and covered his

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ignibus et mediis securos texit alumnos.  
 semper in auxilium Sermo Patris omnipotentis      155  
 descendit servando homini, mortalia semper  
 admiscenda sibi proprio curavit amore,  
 ut socianda caro Dominoque inplenda perenni,  
 degenerem vitam quae tunc animalis agebat,  
 [exemplo mutaret eri, similesque per artus]<sup>1</sup>      160  
 cernere consortem terreni adsuesceret oris,  
 participemque suum visu velut obside nosse,  
 et consanguineo paulatim accedere Christo.  
 ergo animalis homo quondam, nunc Spiritus illum  
 transtulit ad superi naturam seminis, ipsum      165  
 infundendo Deum mortalia vivificantem.  
 nunc nova materies solidata intercute flatu,  
 materies sed nostra tamen, de virgine tracta,  
 exuit antiquae corrupta exordia vitae,  
 immortale bonum proprio spiramine sumens,      170  
 filius ille hominis, sed Filius ille Tonantis,  
 iam solus vultum Patris aspicit et videt ipsum.  
 nemo Patrem novit nisi Filius et cui monstrat  
 Filius, et nostri mediator et omnipotentis.  
 denique concludam brevis ut compendia summae: 175  
 non Pater in carnem descendit, sed Patris arcem  
 sumpta caro ascendit, Natus per utrumque cucurrit.  
 Cede, profanator Christi, iam cede, Sabelli,  
 depositorque Patris Natique insane negator.  
 nonne Patrem violas dum Natum scire recusas?      180

<sup>1</sup> This line does not appear in the oldest MSS., and is bracketed by Bergman.

<sup>a</sup> "The Song of the Three Holy Children" (*Benedicite*) is in the Greek and the Vulgate Latin versions of Daniel iii, after verse 23, though not in the Hebrew.

<sup>b</sup> Cf. 1 Corinthians xv, 46.

## THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

children from fear in the midst of the fire.<sup>a</sup> Ever did the Word of the almighty Father come down to help and save man; ever did He of his own love cause his own being to take on humanity, that the flesh which was to be associated with Him and filled with the everlasting Lord, but was then animal in its nature and leading a debased life, might [change it after its Master's example and in like body] learn to recognise Him as sharer of its earthly features, to know Him with the warranty of sight as partaker of its nature, and by degrees draw nearer to Christ its kinsman. So then man was once as the animals, but now the Spirit has transformed him into the nature of a child of heaven by the inpouring of God himself, who quickens what is mortal.<sup>b</sup> Now a new substance embodied by the spirit of God within, but yet *our* substance, derived from a virgin, has put off the corruption that infected the life of old from its beginning and of its own spirit assumes the good that is everlasting. He who is the Son of Man but also Son of the Thunderer now alone looks on the face of the Father and sees Him. None knows the Father save the Son and him to whom the Son, the mediator between us and the Almighty, shows Him. In fine, to put the whole matter in short, it is not the Father that came down into the flesh, but the flesh being assumed has ascended to the Father's throne: the Son passed both ways.

Yield, thou desecrator of Christ, yield now, Sabellius,<sup>c</sup> thou that dost put down the Father and madly deny the Son. Dost thou not do violence to the Father in refusing to know the Son? For there

<sup>a</sup> See the note on line 5.

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quandoquidem non est genitor, nisi filius extet,  
nec vocitare patrem potis es quem germine fraudas.  
sed fortasse velis patriae pietatis honore  
despoliare Deum, contentus nomine nudo,  
quod Deus est, adimasque decus Patris et generis  
vim.

185

ecquis in idolio recubans inter sacra mille  
ridiculosque deos venerans sale, caespite, ture,  
non putat esse deum summum et super omnia  
solum?

quamvis Saturnis Iunonibus et Cythereis,  
portentisque aliis fumantes consecret aras, 190  
attamen in caelum quotiens suspexit, in uno  
constituit ius omne deo, cui serviat ingens  
virtutum ratio variis instructa ministris.  
quae gens tam stolida est animis, tam barbara  
linguis,

quaeve supersticio tam sordida, quae caniformem 195  
latrantemque throno caeli praeponat Anubem?  
nemo Cloacinae aut Eponae super astra deabus  
dat solium, quamvis olidam persolvat acerram  
sacrilegisque molam manibus rimetur et exta.

consule barbati deliramenta Platonis, 200  
consule et hircosus Cynicus quos somniat et quos  
texit Aristoteles torta vertigine nervos.  
hos omnes quamvis anceps labyrinthus et error  
circumflexus agat, quamvis promittere et ipsi  
gallinam soleant aut gallum, clinicus ut se 205  
dignetur praestare deus morientibus aequum,

<sup>a</sup> In the later paganism belief in one supreme god was prevalent, and many regarded the gods of the old religion as his subordinate agents. See Bailey, *Phases in the Religion of Ancient Rome*, ch. viii.

<sup>b</sup> An Egyptian divinity. Cf. *Aeneid* viii, 698.

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is no begetter if there be no son, nor canst thou call father one whom thou dost deprive of offspring. But perchance thou wouldest rob God of the glory of fatherly love and be content with the bare name of God, only taking from Him the honour of fatherhood and the power of begetting. Is there anyone who, as he lies in a heathen temple amid a thousand sacred objects, or worships absurd gods with salt and turf-altar and incense, does not suppose there is a supreme god who stands alone above all things? Though he devote smoking altars to a Saturn, a Juno, a Lady of Cythera and other monstrosities, yet whenever he looks up to the sky he places all authority in one god, whom the vast system of powers furnished with diverse agencies obeys.<sup>a</sup> What race is so dull in mind or so barbarous in speech, what superstition so low, as to set forward the dog-shaped barking Anubis<sup>b</sup> on the throne of heaven? No man gives a seat of power above the stars to the goddesses Cloacina or Epona,<sup>c</sup> though he pay an offering of strong-smelling incense and dig unholy hands into the sacred meal and the entrails. Consult the bearded Plato's ravings, consult the close-drawn reasonings which the stinking Cynic produces in his illusion, or Aristotle contrives in a dizzy whirl. Though they are all lost in the uncertainties of a maze in which they wander round and round, though they too are wont to promise a hen or a cock that the physician-god may deign to show himself gracious to them on their

<sup>a</sup> Cloacina the divinity associated with the great drain (*cloaca maxima*) at Rome, Epona with stables and horses.

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cum ventum tamen ad normam rationis et artis,  
turbidulos sensus et litigiosa fragosis  
argumenta modis concludunt numen in unum,  
cuius ad arbitrium sphaera mobilis atque rotunda 210  
volvatur, serventque suos vaga sidera cursus.  
non recipit natura hominis, modo quadrupes ille  
non sit, et erecto spectet caelestia vultu,  
non recipit neget ut regimen pollere supremum.  
istud et ipse Numae tacitus sibi sensit haruspex, 215  
semifer et Scottus sentit, cane milite peior.  
sed nos qui Dominum libris et corpore iam bis  
vidimus, ante fide, mox carne et sanguine<sup>1</sup> coram,  
quiique voluminibus vatum cruce teste probatis  
rimantes digitos costarum in vulnera cruda 220  
mersimus, et manuum visu dubitante lacunas  
scrutati aeternum regem cognovimus Iesum,  
abiurare Deo titulum nomenque paternum  
credimus esse nefas, qui regem protulit ex se,  
non regem populi Parthorum aut Romulidarum, 225  
sed regem summae et mediae rationis et imae,  
atque ideo rerum dominum et super omnia regem.  
carnis habet medium, summum Patris, et Stygis  
imum.  
defluit his gradibus rursusque revolvitur in se ;  
est Deus, est et homo ; fit mortuus et Deus idem  
est. 230

<sup>1</sup> *The 6th-century MS. has corpore.*

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" Socrates' last words (*Plato, Phaedo*, 118) were a request to Crito to pay a cock which, he said, " we owe to Aesculapius." The cock was really a thank-offering made by persons

## THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

death-beds,<sup>a</sup> none the less, when they come to the standard of reason and logic, they bring their muddy thoughts and their contentious, clamorous arguments to the conclusion that there is one divine power by whose control the round, unresting sphere revolves and the planets keep their courses. Man's nature does not admit—provided he is not a grovelling beast but looks at the heavenly bodies with visage erect—I say, does not admit of denying the might of a supreme governor. Of this even Numa's sooth-sayer was conscious in his heart, and so is the half-bestial Scot, who is worse than a dog that fights in the wars. But we, who have now twice seen the Lord, in the scriptures and in the body, first by faith and then in flesh and blood with us and who, when the books of the prophets were proved true by the witness of the cross, plunged searching fingers into the raw wounds in his side and, because our eyes doubted, explored the holes in his hands and recognised the everlasting king Jesus, believe it sin to deny the title and name of Father to God who brought forth our king from himself—not king of the nation of the Parthians nor of the sons of Romulus, but king of the highest and of the middle and of the lowest realm, and therefore Lord of creation and king over all things. He holds the middle domain, which is that of the flesh, the highest, which is that of the Father, and the lowest, which is that of hell. By these degrees He passes down and again returns to himself. He is God, He is man also; He dies, and

who had been cured of illness through sleeping in the temple of Aesculapius at Epidaurus. Socrates was perhaps alluding to his confident belief that his soul would survive; he would awake from death cured of the ills of mortality.

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omnia percurrit naturae munia pronae,  
ut sursum Patris in gremium replicata reportet  
mortua quae fuerant, ipsos quoque subvehat artus.  
haec fore cum veterum cecinissent organa vatum,  
nos oculis, manibus, congressu, voce, loquella 235  
experti, heroum tandem intelleximus orsa  
priscorum et viso patefacta oracula Christo.  
haec est nostra salus, hinc vivimus, hinc animamur.  
hoc sequimur: numquam detracto nomine Nati  
appellare Patrem, Patris et sine nomine num-  
quam 240  
Natum nosse Deum, numquam nisi Sanctus et  
unus  
Spiritus intersit Natumque Patremque vocare;  
sic tamen haec constare tria, ut ne separe ductu  
tris faciam, tribus his subsistat sed Deus unus.  
nec Pater ipse autem qui Filius, ut, quia natum 245  
scimus ab innato, vere Pater et sata vere  
sit suboles, nec sit genitor sibi Filius ipse.  
perquam ridiculum est et futile, natus ut ex se  
sive supernatus <sup>1</sup> fuerit, sibi ipse repente  
nascendi nova materies, ac se Deus ultiro 250  
ediderit natumque sibi se fecerit ipsum.  
nil falsum aut mendax divina vocabula fingunt.  
qui Pater est, dignando Pater, tum Filius ex hoc  
Filius, auctore genitus quod sit Patre summo,  
summus et ipse tamen; nec enim minor aut Patre  
dispar.  
unde in utroque operis forma indiscreta, nisi  
omnem 256

<sup>1</sup> Some MSS. of both Bergman's classes have sive pater natus.

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still is God. He goes through all the functions of mortal nature that He may turn again and bring up to the Father's bosom all that was dead, and raise up the very bodies also. After the lyres of the old prophets had foretold these things, we, having found them come to pass, with our eyes and hands, meeting Him and hearing his voice and speech, understood at last the words of the valiant men of old and the prophecies that were made plain by the sight of Christ. This is our salvation, hence it is that we live and are quickened. This is the rule we follow, never to address the Father without naming the Son, never to know God the Son without naming the Father, never to call on the Son and the Father together but that the Holy Spirit, who is one with them, have part also; yet that these so exist as three that I must not make three Gods by separating them, but in these three is the being of one God. And He who is the Son is not the Father himself, that, since we know He was begotten of the unbegotten, there may be true Father and true begotten Son, and the Father be not Son to himself. It is very absurd and vain to suppose that He should have been born of himself, or a secondary growth upon himself, suddenly becoming for himself a new substance of birth, and that God should have brought forth himself and made himself his own Son. The divine names make no false or lying pretence. He who is the Father is Father by begetting, and the Son is Son for the reason that He was begotten and the supreme Father is the author of his being; though yet He himself is supreme also, for He is not less than the Father nor unequal with Him. How could the shape of their work be undistinguish-

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vim maiestatis patriae generosus haberet  
Filius, idque Deus genitor, quod Filius, esset?  
pergunt ulterius scrutantes quid sit id ipsum  
gignere, si fas est humanos tendere sensus      260  
usque ad secretum, quod tempora cuncta diesque  
praevenit antiquos, et principium super ipsum  
eminet et, quodecumque potest homo quaerere,  
transit.  
cum sit difficilis via noscere principiorum  
semina, qui dabitur mortali exquirere quidnam    265  
ultra principium Deus egerit, aut quo pacto  
ediderit Verbum, quod principio caret omni?  
hoc solum scimus, quod traditur esse Deum, quem  
non genitus genitor generaverit, unus et unum,  
integer integrum, non coeptum sed tamen ortum,    270  
et conperpetuum retro Patris et Patre natum.  
sed nec decisus Pater est, ut pars Patris esset  
Filius, extendens nec se substantia tractim  
produxit minuitque aliquid de numine pleno,  
dum mutata novum procudit portio Natum.      275  
non convertibilis nec demutabilis umquam  
est Deus aut gignendo aliquid sibi detrahit, atqui  
totus et ex toto Deus est, de lumine lumen.  
quando autem lumen sine lumine? quando  
refulgens  
lux fulgore caret? quando est ut proditus ignis    280  
ignem deminuat? quando Pater et Deus et lux  
non lucis Deus et Pater est? qui, si Pater olim  
non fuit, et serum genuit post tempora Natum,  
fit novus, inque novum ius proficit. absit, ut  
umquam  
plenus proficiat, qui non eget incremento.      285  
et Deus et genitor lumenque et gloria semper

## THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

able in both, did not the high-born Son possess all the force of his Father's majesty, and were not God the Father that which the Son is? Men go further, prying into the very meaning of begetting, if it is lawful to stretch human thought to the mystery which precedes all times and days of old and stands beyond the very beginning, passing all the wit of man to search out. Since it is hard to reach an understanding of the seeds of first beginnings, how shall it be given to mortal man to seek out what God did before the beginning, or how He gave forth the Word, which has no beginning? This alone we know: our tradition tells us that He is God whom the unbegotten Father begot, one Father, one Son, perfect Father, perfect Son, who had no beginning and yet originated, who existed eternally in time past equally with the Father and yet was born of the Father. But neither was the Father diminished, so that the Son would be a portion of the Father, nor did his substance extend and prolong itself and deduct something from his full Godhead by changing a portion so as to forge a new being in the Son. God can never turn nor change, nor does He by begetting subtract something from himself; but He is whole God born of whole God, light from light. And when is there light without light? When is there a shining light that does not shine? When does the flame that is emitted diminish the flame? When is He who is Father and God and light not the God and Father of light? If once He was not Father, and late in the passage of time begot the Son, He becomes what He was not before, and advances to a new status. Perish the thought that He who is perfect and needs no enlargement can ever advance! Both God and

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ille fuit, nec post sibi contulit ut Pater esset.  
sic fit ut aeternum credamus cum Patre Christum,  
illo auctore satum, cui nullus praefuit auctor. 290  
haec tu si dubitas Nati mysteria Christi,  
perdite, catholica non es de plebe, sed unus  
de grege turifero, venerator Deucalionum,  
devotus cippo, ficulni stipitis unctor.  
quin potius scrutare Dei signacula in ipso  
fonte vetustatis, percurre scrinia primi 295  
scriptoris, quem non bardus pater aut avus augur,  
fabula nec veteris famae, nec garrula nutrix,  
nec sago clangore loquax et stridula cornix  
rem docuere Dei, sed coram proditus ipse,  
ipse Deus trepidum mortalem mitis amico 300  
inbuit adloquio seque ac sua summa retexit.  
nimirum meminit scriptor doctissimus illo  
orbis principio non solum nec sine Christo  
informasse Patrem facturae plasma novellae.  
“ fecit ” ait “ condens hominem Deus, et dedit olli 305  
ora Dei.” quidnam est aliud quam dicere “ solus  
non erat, atque Deo Deus adsistebat agenti,”  
cum Dominus faceret Domini sub imagine  
plasma?  
Christus forma Patris, nos Christi forma et imago ;  
condimur in faciem Domini bonitate paterna, 310  
venturo in nostram faciem post saecula Christo.  
possum multa sacris exempla excerpte libris,

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<sup>a</sup> Worship of the dead was alien to the old Roman religion, but honours were paid yearly at their tombs. In imperial times, however, the conception of the dead as divine appears. *Cippus* may here be simply a derogatory term for an idol (“a post”). Deucalion, though not a divinity, seems to be used here contemptuously as a type of mythical personage.

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Father and light and glory He ever was, nor did He afterwards confer fatherhood on himself. Thus does it come about that we believe Christ eternal along with the Father and begotten of Him before whom was no begetter. If thou doubtest these mysteries of Christ the Son, abandoned man, thou art not of the Catholic people, but one of the crew of incense-offerers, a worshipper of Deucalions, devotee of a grave-stone,<sup>a</sup> anointer of a fig-tree stump. Rather scan the marks of God in the very fount of antiquity, run through the collection of books of the earliest of writers,<sup>b</sup> who did not learn of God from a minstrel sire or soothsaying grandsire, nor from a tale of old tradition nor garrulous nurse, nor noisy crow that chattered with prophetic cry, but God himself appearing to him graciously instructed the trembling mortal, speaking to him like a friend,<sup>c</sup> and revealed himself and his majesty. Clearly the well-informed historian tells us that in that beginning of the world it was not alone nor without Christ that the Father shaped the figure of his new creation. "God," he says, "in creating made man and gave him the features of God." What is this but to say "He was not alone and God was by God's side in the work," since the Lord made the creature in the image of the Lord? Christ is the figure of the Father, and we the figure and image of Christ; we are made after the likeness of the Lord by the goodness of the Father, and Christ was to come into our likeness after ages of time. I can pick many an instance from the holy books, if

<sup>b</sup> *I.e.* Moses, in the Pentateuch.

<sup>c</sup> Cf. Exodus xxxiii, 11.

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ni refugis, quae te doceant non in Patre solo  
 vim maiestatis positam, sed cum Patre Christum  
 esse Deum, velut illud ait genealogus idem :      315  
 “ a Domino Dominus flammam pluit in  
 Sodomitas.”

quis Dominus, de quo Domino, si solus ab arce  
 siderea spectat Pater aut ardescit in iras ?  
 Filius armatam Domini Patris ignibus iram  
 spargebat Dominus : sunt unum fulmen utraque. 320

Haec si Iudaicos sic intellecta rigassent  
 auditus stupidas ut possent<sup>1</sup> tangere fibras,  
 audissent Dominum virtutum, qui pereuntes  
 venerat ut servaret oves ; sed ab auribus omnis  
 fluxerat ornatus, caput et iam coctile Bahal      325  
 finixerat auriculasque suo spoliarat honore.  
 dux populi peccantis adest de monte corusci  
 luminis adloquioque Dei, tabulasque tremendo  
 incisas digito caeca ad tentoria defert,  
 sed cadit in faciem plebs non visura profundae      330  
 legis in effigie scriptum per enigmata Christum.  
 infelix, quae luce oculos praestricta paventes  
 texerit et presso faciem velarit amictu !  
 at nos rejecto Christum velamine coram  
 cernimus atque Deum vultu speculamur aperto,      335  
 nec sub lege gravi depressa fronte iacemus,  
 sed legis radium sublimi agnoscimus ore.  
 heu, frondosa prius ramis felicibus arbos,  
 pinguibus, heu, quondam radix oleagina bacis !  
 ecce tibi inserto revirescit nunc oleastro      340

<sup>1</sup> *The two oldest MSS. have possint.*

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<sup>a</sup> From this point to line 551 Prudentius attacks the Jews  
 for their rejection of Christ.

<sup>b</sup> Cf. Exodus xxxii.      <sup>c</sup> Cf. 2 Corinthians iii, 14-18.

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you do not turn your back on them, to prove to you that the potency of majesty lies not in the Father alone, but that Christ is God with the Father, such as the statement of the same author of Genesis: "The Lord rained fire from the Lord upon the Sodomites." What Lord, and from what Lord, if the Father alone looks from the throne of heaven or blazes into anger? The Lord the Son was hurling the wrath of the Lord the Father, armed with fire. The two thunderbolts are one.

Had these truths soaked the ears of the Jews<sup>a</sup> and been understood sufficiently to touch their dull heartstrings, they would have listened to the Lord of the heavenly powers, who had come to save the sheep that were being lost; but all the trappings had vanished from their ears and gone to fashion a cast head of Baal,<sup>b</sup> robbing the ears of their honour. The sinning people's leader appears from the mountain of flashing light and from hearing the speech of God, bringing down to their blinded tents the tablets graven by that awful finger; but the people fall on their faces and will not see Christ written symbolically in the figure of the law's mystery. Unhappy race, in that they covered their trembling eyes before the dazzling light and pressed close their garments to veil their faces! But we have thrown back the veil and see Christ in person, looking upon God with countenance uncovered,<sup>c</sup> nor do we lie with head bowed down under the weight of the law, but with face lifted up we recognise the law's splendour. Alas for the tree that was once so leafy, its branches so fertile! Alas for the root of the olive whose fruits were once so rich! Lo, since the wild olive was grafted on thee, thy stem flourishes again and is

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truncus et externi vestitur cortice libri.  
iam miserere tui. non se silvestris olivi  
sureulus exultans alieno stipite iactat,  
sed monet ut generis proprii memor unguine amaro  
contristare comas desuescas, stirpe nec imo 345  
invideas missis in celsa cacumina virgis.  
blasphemas Dominum, gens ingratissima,  
Christum.

pascha tuum dic, dic, cuius de sanguine festum  
tam sollemne tibi est? quis tandem caeditur  
agnus  
anniculus? sacer ille tibi redeuntibus annis, 350  
sed sacer in pecude. stultum est sic credere  
sacrum,

sanguine balantis summos contingere postes,  
lascivire choris, similaginis azymon esse,  
cum fermentati turgescant crimine mores.

non sapiis, imprudens, nostrum te effingere pascha, 355  
legis et antiquae praeductis pingere sulcis  
omne sacramentum retinet quod passio vera,  
passio, quae nostram defendit sanguine frontem  
corporeamque domum signato conlinit ore?

hanc fugit exclusis Aegyptia plaga procellis,<sup>1</sup> 360  
haec regis Pharii regnum ferale resolvit,  
deque potestatis mundanae grandine densa  
eripit Abraham cum stirpe et gente fideli.

Abrahae genus est verum, cui sanguis in ore  
creditus inscriptusque rubet, cui visus in orbe 365  
haud dubitante fide Deus est, Deus ex Patre  
verus.

ille Deum vidit, visum mox credidit: at tu,

<sup>1</sup> Some MSS. have flagellis.

<sup>a</sup> Cf. Romans xi, 13-24.

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clothed with a covering of bark that is strange to it. Have pity on thyself now. The scion of woodland olive does not vaunt itself, glorying in a stem that is not its own, but gives warning that thou remember thy stock, cease to cloud the foliage with a bitter coating, and envy not, deep in thy trunk, the shoots that rise to high tops.<sup>a</sup> Thou dost blaspheme the Lord Christ, ungrateful race. Thy Passover—say, say, whose is the blood that makes it a feast so holy in thine eyes? What is the yearling lamb that is slain? Thou holdest it sacred each returning year, but it is sacred as a beast. It is folly to believe there is aught sacred in touching the tops of thy doorposts with a lamb's blood, in making merry with song and eating unleavened bread, while thy conduct is rising with the leaven of sin. Art thou so ignorant as not to understand it is *our* Passover thou dost represent? That in the lines drawn before by the old law thou dost portray all the mystery contained in the true passion, that passion which protects our foreheads with blood and smears it on our bodily dwelling in a mark on the brow?<sup>b</sup> It is from this that the Egyptian plague flees, its violence shut out; it is this that gives release from the deathly rule of the king of Egypt, and from the thick hail falling on the power of this world saves Abraham and his stock and faithful people. The true descendant of Abraham is he on whose brow the mark of the blood in which he has trusted is written in red, who with assured faith has seen God in the world, true God born of the Father. Abraham saw God and straight-

<sup>a</sup> The sign of the cross, made on the forehead, is compared to the smearing of the blood of the lamb on the lintels of the doors (Exodus xii, 7).

## PRUDENTIUS

posteritas carnis, carnaliter omnia cernens,  
carnis opus sub lege geris, quam spiritus inplet  
interior; nec enim caelo lex carnea fluxit,      370  
quam tu carne colis, sed Christo feta meamque  
spem paritura utero. quam spem, nisi numinis  
alnum

lumen et adventum Domini, quem viderat Abrae  
prima fides, nostrisque Pater promiserat olim  
perspiciendum oculis et legis voce probandum? 375  
nec solum legis; nam quae iam littera Christum  
non habet, aut quae non scriptorum armaria  
Christi

laude referta novis celebrant miracula libris?  
Hebraeus pangit stilus, Attica copia pangit,  
pangit et Ausoniae facundia tertia linguae.      380

Pilatus iubet ignorans “ I, scriba, tripictis  
digere versiculis quae sit subfixa potestas,  
fronte crucis titulus sit triplex, triplice lingua  
agnoscat Iudaea legens et Graecia norit  
et venerata Deum percenseat aurea Roma.”      385

quidquid in aere cavo reboans tuba curva remugit,  
quidquid ab arcano vomit ingens spiritus haustu,  
quidquid casta chelys, quidquid testudo resultat,  
organa disparibus calamis quod consona miscent,  
aemula pastorum quod reddunt vocibus antra,      390  
Christum concelebrat, Christum sonat, omnia  
Christum

muta etiam fidibus sanctis animata loquuntur.  
o nomen praedulce mihi! lux et decus et spes

## THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

way believed he had seen Him ; but thou, who art his descendant after the flesh, seest all things in the way of the flesh and doest the work of the flesh under a law which is only fulfilled by a spirit within ; for it is not a carnal law that came down from heaven, the law which thou dost honour in the flesh, but one pregnant with Christ, that should give birth to my hope. And what hope, but the kindly light of the Godhead and the coming of the Lord, whom Abraham's faith had been the first to see, and the Father had promised should one day be seen by our eyes and proved by the voice of the law ? And not of the law only ; for what literature now does not contain Christ ? What book-case is not filled with the praise of Christ, celebrating his wonderful works in new books ? The Hebrew pen, the fulness of Athens, and third the eloquent tongue of Italy are all composing them. Pilate in his ignorance gives command : " Go, scribe, set out in lines thrice inscribed what power it is that is crucified. On the head of the cross let there be a threefold superscription ; in the three tongues, as they read, let Judaea recognise and Greece know God, and golden Rome worship Him while she scans the words." All the loud music that sounds in the curved <sup>a</sup> trumpet's hollow metal, all that the great deep-drawn breath pours forth, all the ringing notes of holy harp and lyre, all the mingled harmony of unequal organ-pipes, all the songs that grottos in rivalry re-echo to the shepherds' voices, proclaim Christ and sound Christ's name ; even all dumb things are quickened by the holy music and speak of Christ. O name passing sweet to me, my light and glory and hope and my shield ! O sure

<sup>a</sup> But the *tuba* properly so called was a straight instrument.

## PRUDENTIUS

praesidiumque meum, requies o certa laborum,  
 blandus in ore sapor, fragrans odor, inriguus fons, 395  
 castus amor, pulchra species, sincera voluptas!  
 si gens surda negat sibi tot praeconia de te,  
 tam multas rerum voces elementaque tantae  
 nuntia laetitiae stolidas intrare per aures,  
 audiat insanum bacchantis energima monstri, 400  
 quod rabidus clamat capta inter viscera daemon,  
 et credat miseranda suis. torquetur Apollo  
 nomine percussus Christi, nec fulmina Verbi  
 ferre potest; agitant miserum tot verbera linguae,  
 quot laudata Dei resonant miracula Christi. 405  
 intonat antistes Domini “fuge, callide serpens,  
 exue te membris, et spiras solve latentes.  
 mancipium Christi, fur corruptissime, vexas.  
 desine, Christus adest, humani corporis ulti:  
 non licet ut spolium rapias, cui Christus inhaesit. 410  
 pulsus abi, ventose liquor; Christus iubet, exi.”  
 has inter voces medias Cyllenius ardens  
 eiulat, et notos suspirat Iuppiter ignes.  
 ecce Gerasenos legio ruit effera porcos,  
 et post multiplices busti sub rupe catenas, 415  
 poenarum gemitus longis grunnitibus edit.  
 clamarat, sed ab ore hominis “cognoscimus, Iesu  
 nate Deo, nate sceptris et germine David,  
 quid sis, quid venias; qua nos virtute repellas  
 novimus, adventusque tui terrore iacemus.” 420  
 haec, Iudea, tuas vox non pervenit ad aures?  
 pervenit, mentem sed non penetravit egenam  
 lucis, et a primis foribus disclusa refugit.

<sup>a</sup> Cf. Mark i, 23 ff., v, 1 ff.

<sup>b</sup> Mercury. For the description of the gods of the pagans as “devils” (*δαίμονες, δαίμονια*) cf. 1 Corinthians x, 20–21.

## THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

repose from toil, sweet savour in the mouth, fragrant perfume, spring of life-giving water, pure love, beauteous form, delight unmixed! If a race that is deaf says that all this proclaiming of Thee, all these voices of nature, these elements that bring tidings of joy so great, enter not its dull ears, then let it hear the wild monster's demoniacal raving, the cries of the raging devil in the flesh he has taken captive,<sup>a</sup> and let it, poor creature, believe its own! Apollo writhes when the name of Christ smites him, he cannot bear the lightnings of the Word, the lashing tongue torments him sorely whenever the praises of the God Christ's wonderful works are sounded. The priest of the Lord thunders: "Away, cunning serpent! Quit his body, and undo thy hidden coils. He whom thou art disquieting, thou corrupt thief, is Christ's property. Give over, for Christ is here to avenge man's body. Thou may'st not make spoil of him to whom Christ cleaves. Away! Thou art beaten, vain spirit. Christ commands: go out of him." In the midst of these words he of Cyllene <sup>b</sup> burns and shrieks, and Jupiter's breath is hot with the fires he knows so well. See, the wild legion drives the Gerasene swine headlong, and after the manifold chains that bound it in the rock-tomb, vents in long-drawn grunts the anguish of its punishment. It had cried out, but with the man's lips, "We know what Thou art, Jesus, the Son of God, born of David's royal stock, and why Thou comest. We know the power wherewith Thou dost drive us away, and are cast down with dread at thy coming." Has not this utterance, Judaea, reached thine ears? Yes, but not penetrated to thy darkened understanding; it was shut out and fled back from the outer door. He that

## PRUDENTIUS

audiit adventum Domini, quem solis Hiberi  
 vesper habet, roseos<sup>1</sup> et qui novus excepit ortus. 425  
 laxavit Scythicas verbo penetrante pruinias  
 vox evangelia, Hyreanas quoque fervida brumas  
 solvit, ut exutus glacie iam mollior amnis  
 Caeusea de eote fluat Rhodopeius Hebrus.  
 mansuevere Getae, feritasque eruenta Geloni 430  
 laete mero sitiens exsanguia poecula miscet  
 libatura sacros Christi de sanguine potus.  
 novit et Atlantis pridem plaga perfida Mauri  
 dedere crinitos ad Christi altaria reges.  
 ex quo mortalem praestrinxit Spiritus alvum, 435  
 Spiritus ille Deus, Deus et se corpore matris  
 induit atque hominem de virginitate creavit,  
 Delphiea damnatis tacuerunt sortibus antra,  
 non tripodas eortina regit,<sup>2</sup> non spumat anhelus  
 fata Sibyllinis fanaticus edita libris. 440  
 perdidit insanos mendax Dodona vapores,  
 mortua iam mutae lugent oracula Cumae,  
 nec responsa refert Libyeis in Syrtibus Hammon.  
 ipsa suis Christum Capitolia Romula maerent  
 principibus lueere Deum, destruetaque tempa 445

<sup>1</sup> Some MSS. have roseus et quem.

<sup>2</sup> Many of the older editions read tegit with very slight MS. support.

<sup>a</sup> Prudentius is careless about the geography. The Hebrus (Maritza) is a Balkan river.

<sup>b</sup> Ancient statements about Delphi (mainly from Roman times) speak of a chasm or cave, from which vapours arose and inspired the priestess. Modern investigation on the spot shows that there was at most a small underground chamber,

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dwells under the western sun of evening has heard of the Lord's coming, and he that welcomes anew the rosy dawn. The sound of the gospel with its piercing word has loosened the frosts of Scythia, and its warmth unlocked the Hyrcanian winter, so that Rhodopeian Hebrus, freed from ice, is now a kindlier stream as it flows from the rocks of Caucasus.<sup>a</sup> The Getans have grown peaceable and the bloody, savage Gelonian, when he thirsts, fills bloodless cups with pure milk, for he will taste the holy draught of the blood of Christ. The once treacherous land of Moorish Atlas has learned to dedicate its long-haired kings at Christ's altar. Since the Spirit, that Spirit who is God, touched a mortal womb and God entered into a mother's body and by a virgin made himself man, the cavern <sup>b</sup> of Delphi has fallen silent, its oracles condemned; no longer does the cauldron direct responses from the tripod. No longer does a priest possessed utter with foaming mouth and panting breath <sup>c</sup> fates drawn from Sibylline Books. Lying Dodona has lost its maddening vapours. Cumae is dumb and mourns for its dead oracles, and Ammon returns no answer in the deserts of Libya. The very Capitol at Rome laments that Christ is the God who sheds light for her emperors and her temples have

and the theory of intoxicating vapours is ruled out by the geological nature of the site. The *cortina* was a basin-shaped seat on which the priestess sat, supported by the tripod. Even by Ciceron's time the oracle had much declined (*De Divinatione*, I, 37; II, 117), and like the others it had really ceased to function long before it was formally abolished. (Parke, *History of the Delphic Oracle*.)

<sup>c</sup> This language is not appropriate to the Quindecimviri who had charge of the Sibylline Books at Rome and who consulted them when so instructed by the senate.

## PRUDENTIUS

imperio cecidisse ducum. iam purpura supplex  
 sternitur Aeneadae rectoris ad atria Christi,  
 vexillumque crucis summus dominator adorat.  
 principibus tamen e cunctis non defuit unus  
 me puero, ut memini, ductor fortissimus armis, 450  
 conditor et legum, celeberrimus ore manuque,  
 consultor patriae, sed non consultor habendae  
 religionis, amans ter centum milia divum.  
 perfidus ille Deo, quamvis non perfidus orbi,  
 augustum caput ante pedes curvare Minervae 455  
 fictilis et soleas Iunonis lambere, plantis  
 Herculis advolvi, genua incerare Dianaee,  
 quin et Apollineo frontem submittere gypso  
 aut Pollucis equum suffire ardentibus extis.  
 forte litans Hecaten placabat sanguine multo ; 460  
 pontificum festis ferienda securibus illic  
 agmina vaccarum steterant, vitulasque revincta  
 fronte coronatas umbrabat torta cupressus.  
 iamque insertato reserarat viscera cultro  
 vittatus de more senex manibusque cruentis 465  
 tractabat trepidas letali frigore fibras,  
 postremosque animae pulsus in cordc tepenti  
 callidus interpres numeris et fine notabat :  
 cum subito exclamat media inter sacra sacerdos  
 pallidus " en quid ago ? maius, rex optime, maius 470  
 numen nescio quod nostris intervenit aris  
 quam sufferre queant spumantia cymbia lacte,

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<sup>a</sup> The ordinances against paganism did not extend to the destruction of temples; indeed it was the emperors' intention that they should be preserved (cf. *Contra Symmachum* I, 501-5, referring to statues of gods as works of art). Jerome refers to the Capitoline and other temples at Rome in terms which do not imply more than neglect. But there was much unauthorised spoliation in different places. See Dill, *Roman Society in the last Century of the Western Empire*, p. 32.

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fallen in ruins at her leaders' command.<sup>a</sup> Now the successor of Aeneas, in the imperial purple, prostrates himself in prayer at the house of Christ, and the supreme lord adores the banner of the cross. Yet of all the emperors one<sup>b</sup> there was in my boyhood, I remember, a brave leader in arms, a lawgiver, famous for speech and action, one who cared for his country's weal, but not for maintaining true religion, for he loved myriad gods. False to God, however true to the world, he would bend the head of majesty before Minerva's feet, would lick a clay Juno's sandals, grovel at the feet of Hercules, wax the knees of Diana,<sup>c</sup> and bow before a plaster Apollo or smoke Pollux's<sup>d</sup> horse with the burning of entrails. It chanced that he was at sacrifice, making propitiatory offering to Hecate with much blood, and cows had stood there in columns waiting to be struck with the priests' ceremonial axes, and calves with cypress twined in wreaths binding and shading their heads. Already the old man, wearing his ritual head-bands, had put in the knife and laid open the inward parts, and with blood-stained fingers was handling the tissues still palpitating in the chill of death, and like a skilled interpreter counting, till they stopped, the last life-beats in the heart as it grew cold, when suddenly in the midst of the rites the priest turned pale and cried "What do I do? Some greater godhead, O best of princes, is interfering with our sacrifice, yea greater than bowls of frothing milk, the

<sup>a</sup> Julian the Apostate (361–363).

<sup>b</sup> A reminiscence of Juvenal (*Sat.* 10, 55) referring to the custom of writing a petition on a wax tablet and laying it on the knees of the image.

<sup>c</sup> But it is Castor who is the horseman (*Iliad*, III, 237).

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- caesarum sanguis pecudum, verbena, coronae.  
 accitas video longe dispergier umbras,  
 territa Persephone vertit vestigia retro      475  
 extinctis facibus, tracto <sup>1</sup> fugitiva flagello.  
 nil agit arecanum murmur, nil Thessala prosunt  
 carmina, turbatos revocat nulla hostia manes.  
 nonne vides ut turibulis frigentibus ignis  
 mareeat, ut canis pigrescat pruna favillis?      480  
 ecce Palatinus pateram retinere minister  
 non valet, elisa destillant balsama dextra,  
 flamen et ipse suas miratur vertice laurus  
 cedere, et incertum frustratur victima ferrum.  
 nescio quis certe subrepsit Christicolarum      485  
 hic iuvenum; genus hoc hominum tremit infula  
     et omne  
 pulvinar divum. lotus procul absit et unctus;  
 pulchra reformatis redeat Proserpina sacris."  
 dixit, et exsanguis conlabitur ac, velut ipsum  
 cerneret exerto minitantem fulmine Christum,      490  
 ipse quoque exanimis posito diademate princeps  
 pallet et adstantes circumspicit, equis alumnus  
 chrismatis inscripto signaret tempora ligno,  
 qui Zoroastreos turbasset fronte susurros.  
 armiger e cuneo puerorum flavicomantum,      495  
 purpurei custos lateris, deprenditur unus,

<sup>1</sup> Some MSS. of both classes have fracto.

<sup>a</sup> Identical with Hecate as goddess of the world of the dead.

<sup>b</sup> Cf. Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones*, IV, 27: "When they are sacrificing to their gods and some one is standing by whose forehead has been crossed, the rites are ineffectual and the soothsayer cannot read the entrails."

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blood of slaughtered cattle, holy herbs and wreaths can bear. I see the spirits we summoned being scattered far away. Persephone <sup>a</sup> is affrighted and turns her steps back, her torches put out, her scourge trailing as she flees. Of no avail is our secret, muttered prayer, vain our Thessalian spells; no offering can call back the routed spirits. Seest thou not how the flame is wasting away in the cold censers, the fire dying in the white ashes? See, the servant of the palace cannot hold the bowl; his hand is broken and lets the balsams spill over. The very flamen wonders at his bay-leaves slipping from his head, and the victim disappoints the unsteady knife. Surely some young worshipper of Christ has stolen upon us; this sort of men the priestly fillet and the gods' couch ever fear.<sup>b</sup> Let any that is washed and anointed depart, and let the rites be renewed and fair Proserpine return."<sup>c</sup> So saying, he fell strengthless to the ground, and the emperor himself, as though he saw the very Christ menacing him with thunderbolt outstretched, turned pale as death, and laying aside his diadem looked round upon the bystanders, to see whether there was any child of unction whose brow bore the sign of the cross and who had disordered the muttered words of Persian ritual.<sup>c</sup> One man-at-arms out of the company of flaxen-haired <sup>d</sup> lads, guarding the emperor's person, was found and denied not, but threw away his pair of

<sup>a</sup> Under Julian there was a revival of the cult of Mithras, which had its origin in the old religion of Persia. See Dill, *op. cit.* p. 67; Bailey, *Phases in the Religion of Ancient Rome*, p. 204.

<sup>b</sup> I.e. German. Even Augustus and some of his early successors had a personal guard of Germans.

## PRUDENTIUS

nec negat, et gemino gemmata hastilia ferro  
 proicit ac signum Christi se ferre fatetur.  
 prosiluit pavidus deiecto antistite princeps  
 marmoreum fugiens nullo comitante sacellum, 500  
 dum tremefacta cohors dominique oblita supinas  
 erigit ad caelum facies atque invocat Iesum.  
 iamne piget facti? iam paenitet? en tibi  
     Christum,  
 infelix Iudaea, Deum, qui sabbata solvens  
 terrea mortales aeterna in sabbata sumpsit, 505  
 gentibus emicuit, praefulsit regibus, orbem  
 possidet, imperii dominam sibi cedere <sup>1</sup> Romam  
 conpulit et simulacra deum Tarpeia subegit.  
 disce tuis, miseranda, malis, quo vindice tandem  
 vana supersticio lex et carnaliter acta 510  
 plectatur, cuius virtus te proterat ultrix.  
 destructone iacent Solomonia saxa metallo  
 aedificata manu? iacet illud nobile templum.  
 cur iacet? artificis quia dextra solubilis illud  
 caementum struxit resolubile; iure solutum est 515  
 et iacet, in nihilum quoniam reddit omne politum.  
 quod fieri recipit, recipit quandoque perire.  
 si nostrum contra quod sit vis discere templum,  
 est illud quod nemo opifex fabriliter aptans  
 composuit, quod nulla abies pinusve dolata 520  
 texuit, exciso quod numquam marmore crevit;  
 cuius onus nullis fultum sublime columnis  
 fornice curvato tenui super arte pependit,  
 sed Verbo factum Domini; non voce sonora,  
 sed Verbo, quod semper erat. Verbum caro 525  
     factum est.

<sup>1</sup> Some MSS. of both classes have credere.

## THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

lances with jewelled shafts and acknowledged that he bore the seal of Christ. The emperor leapt forward in fear, upsetting the priest and fleeing from the marble shrine with no attendant, while his trembling retinue, forgetting their master, with heads bent back raised their faces towards heaven and called upon Jesus. Dost thou not now loathe thy deed? Dost thou not now repent? There thou seest Christ, unhappy Judaea, as God, who, doing away the earthly Sabbath, has taken mankind to an eternal Sabbath. He has flashed upon the nations, his glory has shone before kings; He possesses the world, and has constrained imperial Rome to yield to Him, and subdued the images of gods on her Tarpeian Hill. Learn from thy ills, poor creature, by whose vengeance it is that vain superstition and carnal keeping of the law are punished, whose avenging power it is that tramples upon thee. Do not Solomon's stones, that were built up by hand, lie in ruins, his metal-work destroyed? That famous temple lies in ruins. And why? Because it was a craftsman's perishable hand that framed that perishable work of stone. Justly has it perished and now lies in ruins, since every work of art turns again to nothingness; that which admits of being made is bound one day to perish. If on the other hand thou wouldest learn what our temple is, it is one that no workman built up piece by piece with the skill of his craft, no fabric of hewn fir or pine, nor ever rose out of quarried marble. It is one whose mass does not rest high up on pillars, supported with delicate skill on curving arches. It is made from the Word of the Lord; not his loud-sounding voice, but his Word, which ever lived. The Word was made flesh.

# PRUDENTIUS

hoc templum aeternum est, hoc finem non habet,  
hoc tu

expugnare volens flagris, cruce, felle petisti.  
destructum iacuit poenis vexantibus : esto,  
matris enim ex utero quod destrueretur habebat.  
sed quod morte brevi materna ex parte solutum  
est

530

maiestate Patris vivum lux tertia reddit.  
vidisti angelicis comitatum coetibus alte  
ire meum, cuius servor munimine, templum.  
illius aeternae suspendunt culmina portae,  
ac per inaccessas scalarum gloria turres  
tollitur et gradibus lucet via candida summis.  
at tua congestae tumulant holocausta ruinae.  
quid mereare Titus docuit, docuere rapinis  
Pompeianae acies, quibus exstirpata per omnes  
terrarum pelagique plagas tua membra feruntur. 540  
exiliis vagus hue illuc fluitantibus errat  
Iudeus, postquam patria de sede revulsus  
supplicium pro caede luit, Christique negati  
sanguine respersus commissa piacula solvit.  
en quo prisorum virtus defluxit avorum !  
servit ab antiquis dilapsa fidelibus heres  
nobilitas, sed iam non nobilis ; illa recentem  
suspectat <sup>1</sup> captiva fidem. vis tanta novellae  
credulitatis inest ; Christum confessa triumphat  
gens infida prius, Christi sed victa negatrix  
subditur imperio dominos sortita fideles.

535

540

545

550

<sup>1</sup> Bergman reads susceptat with the 6th-century MS.

<sup>a</sup> Pompey besieged and took Jerusalem in 63 B.C., but though he entered the Holy of Holies he did not rifle the

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This is the temple that is everlasting and without end ; this is the temple thou hast attacked, seeking to take it with scourge and cross and gall. It was cast down in destruction by tormenting pains. Be it so, for from the mother's womb it had what could be destroyed : but that which, of the mother's part, was undone in brief death, the third day restores to life by the majesty of the Father. Thou hast seen my temple, by whose protection I am saved, rise on high with companies of angels. Everlasting gates support its high top, glorious stairs rise through towers inviolate, and at the summit of the steps there shines a white pathway. But thy whole burnt offerings are entombed under heaps of ruins. What thou dost merit, Titus has taught thee, and Pompey's armies <sup>a</sup> have taught thee with their rapine. Rooted out by them, thy members are carried over every region of land and sea. From place to place the homeless Jew wanders in ever-shifting exile, since the time when he was torn from the abode of his fathers and has been suffering the penalty for murder, and having stained his hands with the blood of Christ whom he denied, paying the price of sin. See what has become of the virtue of his forefathers of olden times ! The noble race that was heir to the faithful men of old has scattered away from them and is enslaved, no longer noble ; it is in captivity under the younger faith. Such is the strength the new belief possesses ; a race that formerly was unfaithful now confesses Christ and triumphs, but that which denied Christ is conquered and subdued and has fallen into the hands of masters who keep the faith.

Temple. Titus destroyed the city in A.D. 70. The dispersion of the Jews had been in process long before that date.

## PRUDENTIUS

Sunt qui Iudaico cognatum dogma furori  
instituunt media Christum ratione secuti.  
hoc tantum, quod verus homo est, at caelitus illum  
adfirmant non esse Deum ; pietate fatentur, 555  
maiestate negant : morum pro laude sacratum  
concelebrant, adimunt naturae summa supernae.  
omne opus egregium, per quod sollertia pollens  
emicat, ingenii est aut roboris : illud acuto  
corde viget, duris excellit viribus istud. 560  
mortale est sed utrumque homini ; nam cana  
senescunt  
ingenia et validos consumunt saecla lacertos.  
haec nos in Domini virtute et laude perenni  
non sequimur : sequimur nullo quod semine terrae  
germinat, inmundum quod non de labe virili 565  
sumit principium ; tener illum seminat ignis,  
non caro nec sanguis patrius nec foeda voluptas.  
intactam thalami virtus divina puellam  
sincero adflatu per viscera casta maritat ;  
inconperta ortus novitas iubet ut Deus esse 570  
credatur Christus sic conditus. innuba virgo  
nubit spiritui, vitium nec sentit amoris.  
pubertas signata manet ; gravis intus et extra  
incolumis, florens de fertilitate pudica,  
iam mater, sed virgo tamen, maris inscia mater. 575  
quid renuis ? quid inane caput, non credule,  
quassas ?  
angelus hoc saneto fore nuntiat <sup>1</sup> ore : placeatne  
credere et angelicis aurem reserare loquellis ?

<sup>1</sup> Some MSS. of both classes have sancto pronuntiat (or praenuntiat).

<sup>a</sup> In this section (552–781) Prudentius argues against the teaching of some nominally Christian sects among the Jews, who denied the divine birth of Christ while holding that his

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Some there are who set up a doctrine akin to the Jews' raving, and follow Christ by a middle way.<sup>a</sup> This much they assert, that He is real man, but they say He is not God from heaven. In respect of goodness they admit, in respect of majesty they deny; they consecrate and honour Him for the merit of his character, but they rob Him of supreme divinity. Now every piece of excellent work through which potent skill shines forth is the work either of mind or of bodily strength, the one having the vigour of keen intelligence, the other surpassing in hardy physical power. But for man each of these is mortal, for the mind grows feeble with hoary age, and time wastes the stout arms. This is not the belief that we follow in the case of our Lord's merit and eternal glory. We believe that He springs from no earthly seed, takes no unclean beginning from sin-stained man. It is the subtle fire that begets Him, not a father's flesh nor blood nor foul passion. The divine power weds a maid inviolate, breathing its pure breath over her untainted flesh. The strange mystery of his birth bids us believe that the Christ thus conceived is God. The unwedded maid is wedded to the Spirit and feels no taint of passion. The seal of her virginity remains unbroken; pregnant within, she is untouched without, blossoming from a pure fertility, a mother now, but still a maiden, a mother that has not known husband. Why dost thou deny? Why shakest thou thy foolish head, O unbeliever? An angel with holy lips proclaims that this shall be. Wilt thou not believe, and unlock thine ear to the angel's

goodness entitled Him to be called the Son of God. See the article on Ebionism in Hastings' *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*.

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ipsa coruscantis monitum sacra virgo ministri  
 credidit atque ideo concepit credula Christum ; 580  
 credentes nam Christus adit, dubitabile pectus  
 sub titubante fide refugo contemnit honore.  
 virginitas et prompta fides Christum babit alvo  
 cordis et intactis condit paritura latebris.  
 crede quod emissus solio Patris angelus infit. 585  
 vel, si concretus liquidam de sidere vocem  
 non capit auditus, mulier quid coniuge praegnans  
 clamet anus credens et tandem sobrius audi.  
 mira fides ! utero puer interceptus anili  
 virgineum Dominum materno ex ore salutat, 590  
 primus et infantem non natus nuntiat infans  
 iam nostrum ; <sup>1</sup> vagire sibi nam pusio nondum  
 norat et ora Deo reserabat garrula Christo.  
 promite secretos fatus ; date, pandite librum,  
 evomuit spirante Deo quem sanctus Esaias. 595  
 percensere libet calamique revolve sulcos,  
 sidereis quos illa notis manus aurea duxit.  
 ite hinc, dum rutilos apices submissus adoro,  
 dum lacrimans veneror dumque oscula dulcia figo ;  
 gaudia concipiunt lacrimas, dant gaudia fletum. 600  
 advenit promissa dies quam dixerat iste  
 adfore versiculus, cum virgo puerpera, teste  
 haud dubie sposo, pacti cui cura pudoris,  
 edidit, Emmanuelque meum me cernere fecit.  
 estne Deus iam noster ? homo versatur et adstat 605  
 nobiscum nomenque probat versumque vetustis  
 obscurum saeclis praesenti inluminat ore.

<sup>1</sup> *The stop is usually placed after sibi, not after nostrum.*  
*The punctuation in the text is due to M. Lavarenne.*

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<sup>a</sup> Cf. Luke i, 41 ff.

<sup>b</sup> Cf. Matthew i, 18-20.

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words? The holy Virgin herself believed the shining minister's prophecy, and therefore because of her faith she conceived Christ. For Christ comes to those who believe; the doubting heart, whose faith falters, He rejects and will not honour. Her maidenhood and ready faith drink in Christ in her womb and lay Him up in the pure secrecy of her heart, to bring Him forth in due time. Believe what the angel sent forth from the Father's throne saith; or, if thy hearing is thickened and receives not the clear voice from heaven, be sensible at last and hear with believing ear what an old woman pregnant by her husband cries.<sup>a</sup> Marvel of faith!—the child imprisoned in the aged womb greets by his mother's lips his Lord, the maiden's son; a child unborn is the first to proclaim the child who now is ours; for the boy could not as yet utter his own baby voice and so, in honour of the God Christ, was opening lips that were ready of speech. Bring out the mystic prophecies, give me the book, and open it, that holy Esaias uttered under the inspiration of God. I would fain peruse it and unroll the lines which that golden hand traced with the pen in shining characters. Depart ye hence while I humbly adore the glittering letters, doing them reverence with tears, and imprint on them loving kisses. Joy begets tears, joy causes weeping. The promised day has come, which that verse foretold, when a virgin in labour, according to the indubitable witness of her betrothed, who was solicitous for her affianced modesty,<sup>b</sup> brought forth a child and caused me to see my Emmanuel. Is not God now ours? As man He lives with us by our side and proves his name, illumining with his presence the verse that was dark to generations of old. Is not He God,

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'estne Deus, cuius cunas veneratus Eous  
lancibus auratis regalia fercula supplex  
virginis ad gremium pannis puerilibus offert? 610  
quis tam pinnatus rapidoque simillimus austro  
nuntius Auroraे populos atque ultima Bactra  
attigit, inluxisse diem lactantibus horis,  
qua tener innupto penderet ab ubere Christus?  
“ vidimus hunc ” aiunt “ puerum per sidera ferri, 615  
et super antiquos signorum ardescere tractus.”  
diriguit trepidans Chaldaeo in vertice pernox  
astrologus, cessisse Anguem, fugisse Leonem,  
contraxisse pedes lateris manco ordine Cancrum,  
cornibus infractis domitum mugire Iuvencum, 620  
sidus et Hirquinum laceris marcescere villis.  
labitur hinc pulsus Puer Hydrius, inde Sagittae,  
palantes Geminos fuga separat, improba Virgo  
prodit amatores tacitos in fornice mundi,  
quiique alii horrificis pendent in nubibus ignes 625  
Luciferum timuere novum: rota lurida solis  
haeret, et excidium sentit iam iamque futurum,  
seque die medio velandum <sup>1</sup> tegmine glauco,  
splendoremque poli peritulum nocte diurna  
orbe repentinis caput obnubente tenebris. 630  
hunc ego non cumulem myrrhaeque et turis et auri  
muneribus? seio quem videam, quae dona  
rependam.  
hunc ego non venerer, qui caelo visus humique  
inventus rex atque Deus moderatur utrumque  
naturae specimen, tumuloque inferna refringens 635

<sup>1</sup> So the oldest MS. and some others. Most have velandam.

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to whose cradle the East does reverence, offering on bended knee before the Virgin's lap kingly gifts on gilded platters for the child in swaddling-clothes? What winged messenger, swift as the rushing wind, came to the peoples of the morning in farthest Bactra to tell them a day had dawned whose hours were full of richness, the day on which the babe Christ hung on a breast unwedded? "We have seen," they said, "this child passing over the sky and outshining the trains of the ancient stars." The astrologer watching all night on a height in Chaldaea felt his blood curdle with alarm when he saw that the Serpent had given place, the Lion taken to flight, the Crab drawn in his feet in a crippled row along his side, that the Bull was roaring in defeat, his horns broken, the constellation of the Goat, with his hair torn, fading away. Here slides off in retreat the Boy with the Water Pot, there the Arrows, the Twins wander apart in flight, the false Maiden deserts her silent wooers in the vault of heaven, and the other blazing orbs hanging in awful clouds have feared the new Morning Star. The sun's wan disk stands still feeling his overthrow close at hand, conscious that he is to be curtained with a veil of darkness at noontide and the brightness of the sky to be lost in night by day while his orb covers its head with a sudden blackness.<sup>a</sup> Shall I not load this child with gifts of myrrh and incense and gold? I know whom I see, and what gifts to offer in recognition. Shall I not worship Him who has been seen in the heavens and appeared on earth, who as king and God governs nature in both her shapes, and who by breaking open the realm of death in the tomb bids them that are

<sup>a</sup> A prophetic allusion to the time of the crucifixion.

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regna resurgentes secum iubet ire sepultos?  
caelum habitat, terris intervenit, abdita rumpit  
Tartara. vera fides; Deus est, qui totus ubique  
est.

numquid vana viros aut mens aut lingua fefellit?  
numquid fortuitis frustrantia dona dederunt 640  
casibus aut caeco votum sub honore dicarunt?  
quae porro causa aut ratio submittere colla  
ante pedes Mariae puerique crepundia parvi,  
si tantum mortalis erat, nec summa potestas  
inplebat teneros divinis flatibus artus? 645  
sed iam tolle magos, tus, aurum, myrrhea dona,  
quae verum docuere Dcum, praesepia, pannos,  
matris adoratum gremium face sideris ardens:  
ipsa Deum virtus factorum et mira loquantur.  
insanos video subito mitescere ventos 650  
cum iubeat Christus, video luctantia magnis  
aequora turbinibus tranquillo marmore tendi  
imperio Christi, video calcatus eundem  
cum patitur gurges tergum solidante liquore.  
ipse super fluidas plantis nitentibus undas 655  
ambulat ac presso firmat vestigia fluctu,  
increpat ipse notos, et flatibus otia mandat.  
quis iubeat saevis aquilonibus "ite, silete  
carceribus vestris amploque facessite ponto,"  
sit nisi caelipotens aquilonum conditor idem? 660  
ninguidus agnoscit Boreas atque imbrifer Eurus  
nimborum dominum tempestatumque potentem,  
excitatque hiemem verrunt ridente sereno.  
quis pelagi calcarit aquas? quis per vada glauca  
gressibus impressis spatiatus triverit udum 665

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buried rise and go with Him? He dwells in heaven, He visits the earth, He bursts the depths of hell. It is true belief: He is God, who is everywhere in his wholeness. Did vain thought or speech deceive those men? Did they give bootless gifts in circumstances that were mere matter of chance, or dedicate their offering in worship that was blind? What cause or reason had they to bend their heads before Mary's feet and the little one's baby-things, if He was but human and the supreme power was not filling the tender frame with the breath divine? But take away the wise men, the incense, the gold, the gifts of myrrh, which proved Him true God, the manger, the swaddling-clothes, the mother's adored bosom, that shone with the blaze of the star: yet the very power of his acts, his very miracles, would proclaim Him God. I see the mad winds grow suddenly gentle when Christ commands. I see the seas, contending under violent storms, spread out in calm expanse at Christ's bidding. I see the deep submitting to his tread, the water making a firm surface. He walks on the flowing waves, resting his feet on them and bearing on the flood with firm steps. He rebukes the winds and bids the breezes sink to rest. Who would give command to the raging blasts, " Go, be silent in your prison-houses, depart ye from the broad sea," were he not also the creator of the blasts, the lord of the heavens? The snowy north wind, the rainy east, recognise the lord of the storm-clouds, the ruler of the tempests, and sweep away the storm they raised, leaving a clear, smiling sky. Who would tramp the waters of the sea? Who, walking over the dark deep and planting the weight of his steps on it, would tread the watery path without sinking,

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- non submersus iter, sola pendulus et pede sicco,  
 aequoreae nisi factor aquae, qui Spiritus olim  
 ore superfusus patrio volitabat in undis  
 nondum discretis nec certo litore elausis?  
 sustinuit gressum Domini famulus liquor, ac se 670  
 mobilitate carens solidos substrinxit ad usus.  
 quid diversa Dei memorem facta inclyta Christi?  
 altius inspecta quae,<sup>1</sup> maiestate negator,  
 haud dubitans hominem, tute ipse fatebere  
 numen.
- inlevit caecos oculos et lumina limo 675  
 reddidit umectam sacro sputamine terram  
 contrectans digitis: luteum medicamen operta  
 nox habuit, tenebras obducta uligo removit.  
 insuper ostendit quonam caligo lavaero  
 expurganda foret. variis Siloa refundit 680  
 momentis latices, nec fluctum semper anhelat,  
 sed vice distincta largos lacus accipit haustus.  
 agmina languentum sitiunt spem fontis avari,  
 membrorum maculas puro ablutura natatu.  
 certatim interea roranti pumice raucas 685  
 exspectant scatebras et sicco margine pendent.  
 hoc limum iubet inpositum de fonte lavari  
 Christus et infusa vultum splendescere luce.  
 norat enim limo sese informasse figuram  
 ante tenebrosam, proprii medicamen et oris 690  
 adiecisse novo, quem primum finxerat, Adae.  
 nam sine divino Domini perflamine summi  
 arida terra fuit, nulli prius apta medellae:  
 sed postquam liquidus caelesti Spiritus ore  
 virgineam respersit humum, medicabilis illa est. 695  
 inde trahit sucum lentoque umore salutem

<sup>1</sup> quae is strongly supported by the MSS. Most editions before Bergman's read quem with slight authority.

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his soles upheld and his foot dry, were it not the creator of the waters of the sea, the Spirit who once was breathed on it from the Father's lips and moved to and fro on the waves, ere yet they were separated or shut off by a defined shore? The sea, as its Lord's servant, sustained his step, and stilled and checked itself to afford firm footing. What need to tell of the God Christ's manifold glorious works? If you look deeper into them, you who deny in point of majesty while not doubting his humanity, you will yourself admit they are divine. He smeared blind eyes and with mud restored their sight, working with his fingers earth that was moistened with his sacred spittle; the sightless night found a cure in mud, the coating of wet earth removed the darkness. He showed, besides, the washing-place that was needed to cleanse the mists away. It is at diverse times that Siloam disgorges its waters; not always does it emit the stream, but at intervals the pool receives generous draughts. Companies of the sick yearn for the hope of the niggard spring, waiting to wash away their bodily stains by bathing in its purity. Eagerly meanwhile they look for its loud welling from the dripping stone, and hang over the dry edge. With the water of this spring Christ bids wash the clay He laid on, and the face to shine with the inpouring of light; for He knew that with clay He had formerly shaped a figure that was darkened until He gave the healing power of his mouth to the new Adam whom first He had made. For without the divine breath of the supreme Lord the earth was dry and not yet fit for healing; but since the pure Spirit issuing from the heavenly lips besprinkled a virgin's soil, it has the power to heal; from thence it draws sap, and with

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inlinit, infunditque diem baptismate lota.  
caecus adest oculis iam Christi ex ore reiectis  
seque luto et nitidis lucem sumpsisse fluentis  
clamat, et auctorem stupefacta per oppida  
monstrat, 700  
auctorem lucis largitoremque dierum,  
non dignatum medicae purgamen aquai  
corpore sub proprio monstrare errantibus aegris.  
milibus ex multis paucissima quaeque retexam,  
summatim relegam totus quae non capit orbis. 705  
quinque in deserto panes iubet et duo pisces  
adponi in pastum populis, qui forte magistrum  
non revocante fame stipabant undique saeptum,  
inmemoresque cibi vicos, castella, macellum,  
oppida, mercatus et conciliabula et urbes 710  
respuerant, largo contenti dogmate vesci.  
multa virum strato fervent convivia faeno,  
centenos simul accubitus iniere sodales,  
seque per innumeras infundunt agmina mensas,  
pisciculis—iam crede Deum—saturanda duobus 715  
et paucis crescente cibo per fragmina crustis.  
ambesis dapibus cumulatim aggesta redundant  
fercula, bis senos micarum molibus inplet  
post cenam cophinos; crudus conviva resudat  
congeriem ventris, gemit et sub fasce minister. 720  
quis cumulare potest epulas in grandia parvas?  
quis, nisi qui corpus pastumque et corporis omnem  
condens ex nihilo nulla existente creavit

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its clinging moisture spreads salvation, and pours in the light of day when it is washed in baptism. The blind man appears, his eyes now by Christ's mouth opened, crying aloud that he has received the light by means of clay and the shining waters, and declaring the author of his cure through the astonished towns, who is the author of light and giver of day, who did not disdain to show forth the cleansing virtue of healing water in his own body to suffering sinners. Out of numberless miracles I shall narrate but a very few, recounting briefly works which the whole world cannot contain. Five loaves and two fishes He commands in the desert to be served to feed the people, who as it chanced were crowding and pressing round their teacher. Hunger could not call them back; with no thought of food, they had turned their backs on villages, places of defence, markets, towns, centres of trade and trafficking, and cities, and were content to feed on the bounty of his teaching. There is a busy swarm of companies feasting together, with the parched grass beneath them. Like bosom friends they have joined in a hundred parties, spreading in their crowds in countless circles, to be satisfied with two small fishes (*believe now that He is God!*) and a few loaves of bread, which provide more and more food the more they are broken. When they have partaken heartily the dishes are still piled high and running over with the viands; twelve baskets they heap with the fragments after the banquet; while the cloyed guest is exuding the mass in his belly, the server groans under his load. Who can magnify a little meal into largeness? Who but He who is the maker both of the body and of all that feeds the body, who created the world out

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mundum materia? non sicut sculptor ab aeris  
 rudere decoctam consuescit vivere massam, 725  
 sed Deus omnipotens orbem sine semine finxit.  
 nil erat omne quod est: nil id procedere et esse  
 atque novum fieri, mox et grandescere iussum est.  
 parvum de nihilo primum fuit, addita parvo  
 incrementa modis auxerunt omnia plenis. 730  
 ergo ego, cum videam manibus sic crescere Christi  
 parva alimenta hominum, possum dubitare per  
     ipsum  
 exiguae rerum species elementaque mundi  
 ex nihilo primum modica et mox grandia sensim  
 crevisse, ex modicis quae consummata videmus? 735  
 ac ne post hominum pastus calcata perirent,  
 neve relictæ lupis aut vulpibus exiguisve  
 muribus in praedam nullo custode iacerent,  
 bis sex adpositi, cumulatim qui bona Christi  
 servarent gravidis procul ostentata canistris. 740  
 sed quid ego hæc autem titubanti voce retexo,  
 indignus qui sancta canam? procede sepulero,  
 Lazare, dic cuius vocem tellure sub ima  
 audieris, quae vis penetraverit abdita leti,  
 quod, cum te Christus penitus nigrante profundo 745  
 inmersum vocat ut redeas, ceu proximus audis,  
 nec remoratus ades? quae tam vicina Charybdis  
 regna tenebrarum tenui distantia fine  
 coniungit superis? ubi Taenara tristia vasto  
 in pæceps deiecta chao, latebrosus et ille 750

<sup>a</sup> A promontory (Cape Matapan) in the south of the Peloponnese, where there was a fabled entrance to the world of the dead.

<sup>b</sup> Phlegethon, in the under-world.

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of nothing when as yet there were no materials? He is not like the sculptor who brings to life a block that has been smelted from crude ore, but as God almighty He made the world without seed. All that is was nothing, and that nothing was bidden to come forth into being, to become a new thing, and then to grow in magnitude. The first creation out of nothing was small, and enlargements added to the small increased all things in full measure. When, therefore, I see a small supply of nourishment for men thus grow under Christ's hands, can I doubt that by Him, too, the small forms of things and elements of the world first arose in smallness out of nothing, and then by degrees grew great, which now we see from small beginnings made perfect? And lest, after men were fed, the blessings of Christ should be trampled on and wasted, or left to lie uncared for and become the spoil of wolves or foxes or tiny mice, twelve men were put in charge of them, to gather them together and save them and display them in laden baskets. But why do I with my quavering voice recount all this, unworthy as I am to sing of holy things? Come forth from the tomb, Lazarus, and tell whose voice it is that thou hast heard deep down in the earth, what force it is that has reached to the hidden abode of death, that, when thou art sunk in the dark abyss and Christ calls thee to return, thou hearest as though near by, and without delay dost present thyself. What gulf so near unites the realm of darkness to the world of the living with but a slender boundary between? Where is the gloomy Taenarum <sup>a</sup> that plunges down precipitously into the desolation of blackness, and that unexplored stream <sup>b</sup> that rolls

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amnis inexpletis volvens incendia ripis ?  
ante fores tumuli, quas saxa inmania duro  
obice damnarant scopolis substructa cavatis,  
stat Dominus nomenque ciet frigentis amici.  
nec mora, funereus revolutis rupibus horror      755  
evomit exequias gradiente cadavere vivas.  
solvite iam laetae redolentia vincla, sorores.  
solus odor sparsi spiramen aromatis efflat,  
nec de corporeo nidorem sordida tabo  
aura refert, oculos sanie stillante solutos      760  
pristinus in speculum decor excitat, et putrefactas  
tineta rubore genas paulatim purpura vestit.  
quis potuit fluidis animam suffundere membris ?  
nimirum qui membra dedit, qui fictilis ulvae  
perflavit venam madidam, cui tabida glaeba      765  
traxit sanguineos infecto umore colores.  
o mors auritis iam mitis legibus, o mors  
surda prius, iam docta sequi quodecumque iubetur,  
cui tantum de te licuit ? convicta fatere  
esse Deum, solus qui me tibi praeripit, Iesum.      770  
abde negatores Christi, nemo invidet, abde ;  
utere sorte tua blasphemis nocte tenendis  
perpetua. plebem iustorum capta resolve,  
qui norunt hominem atque Deum sic dicere  
Christum  
ut verus summusque Deus mortalia gestet.      775  
ipse gerit quod struxit opus, nec ferre pudescit  
factor quod peperit, corpus loquor atque animae  
vim.  
finixerat hoc digitis, animam sufflaverat ore.

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fire between its banks insatiate? Before the doors of the tomb, on which monstrous stones, blocking the chambered rock, had imposed an impenetrable barrier, stands the Lord and calls the name of his friend now cold in death. Straightway the stones roll back and the fearsome grave sends forth a living corpse, the dead man walking! Undo now in joy, you his sisters, the perfumed bands. The scent of the sprinkled spice is the only breath; no foul air brings any stench of bodily corruption. The eyes that were wasted with oozing decay revive and shine like a mirror with their old-time beauty, and a bright tinge of red gradually clothes the cheeks that were putrefied. Who has been able to pour life on the decaying body? Doubtless He who gave the body, who breathed through the wet substance of the slime He moulded, at whose command the crumbling earth, impregnated with moisture, took on the hue of life. O Death, grown gentle now, and whose authority listens to orders, Death that wert aforetime deaf, but now hast been taught to obey command, to whom has such power over thee been given? Confess in thy defeat that Jesus, who alone saves me from thy hands, is God. Put away them that deny the Christ; no man grudges them to thee; put them away. Use the power that falls to thee to keep the blasphemers in unending night. But now that thou art made captive, release the multitude of the righteous, who have learned to call Christ both man and God, meaning thereby that the true and supreme God has put on mortality. He himself wears the work He made, and the creator thinks no shame to bear what He brought to being, I mean the body and the living soul. The body He had shaped with his fingers, the

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totum hominem Deus adsumit, quia totus ab ipso  
 est,  
 et totum redimit quem sumpserat, omne  
 reduceens,  
 quidquid homo est, istud tumulis, ast illud  
 abyssu. 780

Occurrit dubitans hic dissertator et illud  
 obicit, anne fides capit ut substantia flante  
 inspirata Deo cruciatum sentiat, utque  
 inferni petat ima poli barathroque coquatur? 785  
 crede animam non esse Deum, sed crede creatis  
 maiorem cunctis, ipsam quoque crede creatam.  
 formata est namque ore Dei, quae non erat ante,  
 sed formata habitu pulcherrima pictaque rebus  
 divinis, et plena Deo similisque creanti,  
 non tamen ipsa Deus, quoniam generatio non est,  
 sed factura Dei est; solus de corde Parentis  
 Filius emicuit; verus, verus<sup>1</sup> Deus ille.  
 conlatum est animae, subito ut, quae non erat,  
 esset.

ille coaeternus Patris est et semper in ipso, 795  
 nec factus sed natus habet quocumque paternum  
 est,

hacc similis velut umbra Dei est. sic ipse  
 locutus

factor, utroque hominem meditans de figmine  
 iunctim

aedificare sui similem; sed non habet umbra  
 quod corpus solidum, cuius imitatio in umbra est, 800  
 atque aliud verum est, aliud simulatio veri.  
 est similis saeclis quod non consumitur ullis,  
 quod sapiens iustique capax reginaque rerum

<sup>1</sup> MSS. of class B have verus Deus ille sed istud. Some  
 MSS. of class A have both versions combined.

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soul He breathed upon it with his mouth. God takes upon Him the whole man, because man is wholly from Him; and redeems the whole man whom He took on, bringing back all that man is, the body from the tomb, the soul from the pit.

Here <sup>a</sup> a doubting disputant comes up with this objection: does the faith admit the view that the being breathed into us by the breath of God feels torment, goes to the depths of the world below, and is roasted in hell? You must believe that the soul is not God, but that, while it is greater than all created things, it too was created. For it was made by the mouth of God; it did not exist before, but was made, beauteous in form, adorned with qualities divine, filled with God, and like its creator, yet not itself God, since it is not a begetting but a creation of God. The Son alone came forth from the Father's heart; He, He is true God. It was given to the soul that, not being before, it should suddenly come into being; but the Son is co-eternal with the Father and ever in Him; not created but born, He has all that belongs to his Father; whereas the soul is a sort of semblance in the likeness of God. Thus spoke its maker himself when He planned to construct man in his own image of the two created elements in union; but the semblance has not that which the real object has, of which there is but a copy in the semblance; reality is one thing, the likeness of reality is another. It is like God in that no time can waste it, in that it is wise and capable of righteousness, and sits like a queen on

<sup>a</sup> The preceding topic leads on to a discussion of the nature of the soul (lines 782-951).

## PRUDENTIUS

imperat, ante videt, perpendit, praecavet, infit,  
verborum morumque opifex instructaque mille 805  
artibus et caelum sensu percurrere docta.  
his animam similem sibi conditor effigiavit,  
cetera dissimilem: quippe hanc comprehendere  
promptum est,  
quam modus et species determinat, at Deus ingens  
atque superfusus trans omnia nil habet in se 810  
extremum, ut claudi valeat sensuve teneri.  
incomprensa manet virtus, cui linea defit  
ultima, quam spatium non mensurabile tendit.  
ergo animam factam, magno et factore minorem  
maioresque aliis atque omnibus imperitantem, 815  
corruptela putris nascentem turbida carnis  
concepit, ac membris tabentibus interfusam  
participat de faece sua; fit mixta deinde  
peccandi natura luto cum simplice flatu.  
sed fortasse animam, Domini quia fluxit ab ore, 820  
compositam factamque neges, velut ipsa Dei pars,  
quod dictu scelus est, taetras trahat oblita culpas  
et pessum damnata ruens chaos intret opertum.  
sit res illa Dei, non abnuo; pars tamen illa  
haudquaquam dicenda Dei est, quae tempore  
coepit, 825  
nec prior aut senior quam primum plasma  
putanda est.  
tunc etenim factam video, cum cordis amici  
intravit germana domum limique recentis  
hospita et ipsa recens fraterna sedit in aula.  
illa quidem flatus Domini est, sed spiritus et vis 830  
non est plena Dei, tanto moderamine missa  
180

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the throne of the world; it sees before, thinks, takes heed, speaks, contrives words and laws, is furnished with a thousand forms of skill and can traverse the heavens in thought. In these respects the creator fashioned the soul like himself, but otherwise unlike. For it is easy to grasp the soul, which is bounded by limit and form; but God, being great and extending beyond all things, has no extremity in Him by which He can be enclosed or laid hold of by thought. His power remains beyond our grasp, since it has no bounding line and reaches through infinite space. The soul, then, is created, it is both less than its great creator and greater than other creatures and rules over them all; but at its birth the foul corruption of the flesh, which is subject to decay, receives it, and when it has passed into the wasting body, makes it partaker of its own impurity. Then sin comes about, because it arises from the mingling of the clay and the pure spirit. But perchance you would say that, since the soul flowed from the mouth of the Lord, it was not made nor created; but that would mean that a very part of God contracts the stain of foul sins, a thing which it is wicked to assert, and is condemned and cast down into the dark depths of hell. Granted that it belongs to God (for that I deny not), yet that which has had a beginning in time is not to be called a part of God, nor thought of as earlier or older than the beginning of the body. Plainly it was created at the time when, like a sister, it entered the abode of the friendly heart and settled in the home of its brother to sojourn with the newly-formed clay, itself also newly-formed. It is indeed the breath of God, but not the spirit and full power of God, since it issued under control whereby in

## PRUDENTIUS

quanto flans voluit flandi servare tenorem.  
est impossibile spectare profunda Sabaoth,  
sed speculum Deitatis homo est : in corpore discas  
rem non corpoream sollers interprete Christo 835  
qui Patrem proprium mortali in corpore monstrat.  
perspice quam varios fundamus ab ore vapores,  
spiramus quotiens animae sufflabilis auras.  
nunc flatum tepidum calor exhalatus anhelat,  
rorantes nebulas udis de faucibus efflans; 840  
cum libet, in gelidum flabrali frigore ventum  
spiritus existit tenuis et sibilat aér.  
adde et distinctum quem musica tibia flatum  
concepit: aut ille est presso modulamine parcus,  
aut tumidum largo sublimat flamine bombum, 845  
aut raukos frangit modulos, aut lene susurrat,  
aut exile trahens sonitus producit acutos,  
aut murmur tenerum sublidit voce minuta.  
haec cum te videoas mortali in corpore posse,  
cur non aeternum potuisse infundere credas 850  
qualem animam voluit? praescriptis quam quia  
condens  
efflavit fuditque modis, sit facta necesse est.  
denique multa sapit, sed non sapit omnia  
nostrae  
vis animae, certum sapere ac praenoscere iussa.  
iam cui certus inest modus et cui nosse negatum  
est 855  
omnia, factura est; nam condita et aucta pro-  
batur.  
collige de simili, sitne haec factura. creavit  
nempe manus Domini corpus mortale lutumque  
composuit digitis. numquid manus articulatim  
est digesta Dei? numquid vola? numquid et  
ungues 860

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breathing He willed to maintain the level of his breathing. It is impossible to look into the depths of the Lord of Hosts, but man is a mirror of God-head. In the body we may come to know something that is not bodily, if we acquire skill under the guidance of Christ, who shows his Father in a mortal body. Consider how diverse are the exhalations we pour from our mouths in the emission of the breath we breathe. At one time hot breath exhales a warm air, blowing out moist clouds from our wet throat; when we choose, thin breath issues as a chill wind blowing cold, and the air whistles. There is, too, the differing breath of the musical pipe: either it is slight, keeping the music down, or with great blowing it raises a loud swelling sound; it utters harsh, rough strains, or a gentle whisper, or taking in a meagre breath it brings out shrill notes, or with tone reduced it just squeezes out a soft murmur. When you see yourself able to do these things in a mortal body, why should you not believe that the Everlasting could pour into man what breath He would? And since in his act of creation He breathed and poured it forth in appointed measures, it must needs have been created. And again, our soul has power to understand many things, but not all things; only up to a point was it bidden to have understanding and fore-knowledge. Now in as much as it has in it a definite limit and is denied complete knowledge, it is a creation, for it is proved to have been brought into being and developed. You may gather from a comparison whether or no it is a creation. We say, to be sure, that the hand of the Lord made the human body and with its fingers moulded the clay. Is God's hand, then, arranged in jointed parts? Has it a

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claudere flexibiles patulam seu tendere palmam?  
ista figura manus nostrae est, quam non habet  
in se

incircumscrip<sup>tus</sup> Dominus; sed tradita forma  
est

humanis quae nota animis daret intellectum,<sup>1</sup> 865  
ut per corpoream speciem plasmasse feratur  
corporis effigiem.<sup>1</sup> sic est plasmata vicissim  
flatu incorporeo res flabilis, oris et esse  
fertur opus, tenuis per quod constructa refusit  
forma animae atque rudi factam se munere  
sensit.

si non est factura manus caro nostra, nec oris 870  
est factura anima, flatu et spiramine copta  
inque locum deducta aliquem; namque omne  
quod hora

natalis profert, locus accipit; et locus ullus  
quod cohibere potest, modicum est, nec in  
omnia fusum;

et quod tam modicum est ut certa sede locetur 875  
iam titubare potest; et quod titubaverit intra  
naturam vitii est; vitiosum denique tristem  
reccedit in poenam: Deus hoc, mihi credite, non  
est.

aut, si maiestas animae est, ostendite quid sit  
quod lapsam Christique inopem nova gratia in- 880  
undat,

Spiritus et Sanctus baptimate iustificatam  
nobilitat, famulaeque decus, quod defuit, addit.  
quod quia praestatur meritis meritisque negatur,  
absurde fertur Deus aut pars esse Dei, quae  
divinum summumque bonum de fonte perenni 885  
nunc babit obsequio, nunc culpa aut crimine  
perdit,

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palm? Has it finger-tips that can bend and close it or spread the hand out open? That is the shape of *our* hand; it belongs not to the infinite Lord; but a form familiar to human minds has been attributed to Him, to enable them to understand, so that we speak of God having in bodily form created the image of his body. It is in the same sense that that which is spiritual was in its turn created by an incorporeal breath and is called the work of his mouth, through which the finely-textured soul flashed and was conscious of its creation with power yet rudimentary. If our flesh is not the creation of his hand, neither is our soul the creation of his mouth, originating in the expiration of his breath and conducted into a particular place. For all that has a birth-time at which it is brought forth is received in some place; now what can be confined in any place is small, not being extended universally; and what is so small as to be set in a limited place of abode may be unsteady; and what is unsteady partakes of corruption; and the corrupt has become liable to stern punishment. This, believe me, is not God. Else, if the soul has divinity, show me what means it that it falls and is destitute of Christ until a new grace floods it and the Holy Spirit by baptism justifies it, ennobles it, and gives to it as the handmaid of God the honour it lacked. And since it is by desert that this is given or refused, it is irrational to say that the soul is God or a part of God, for at one time by obedience it drinks in the divine and supreme good from its everlasting source, and at another by sin and wickedness

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<sup>1</sup> Bergman places a full stop at intellectum and a comma at effigiem.

PRUDENTIUS

et modo supplicium recipit, modo libera calcat.  
miraris peccare animam, quae carne coactam  
sortita est habitare domum, cum peccet et ipse  
angelus, hospitium qui nescit adire caducum  
eratis tabifluae? peccat quia factus et ipse est,  
non genitus: quocumque modo sit factus, id unus  
scit factor Dominus: factum mihi credere sat sit.  
solus labe caret peccati conditor orbis,  
ingenitus<sup>1</sup> genitusque Deus, Pater et Patre  
natus.

solus et exceptus tormentum admittere triste

inviolatus agit, nec quidquam sentit acerbi.  
exsortem dic esse animam crucis atque doloris,

si culpae immunem vacuamque a crimen nosti.  
quae peccata valet valet et succumbere poenae

ipsa quidem sincera fuit dum conditur olim,

quae collata rudem fecit viviscere limum,  
vix illud sit, ut non inveniamur.

ut pote de liquido naturae semine primos  
accipiens habitus supereroque expressa sereno

accipiens habitus superioreque expressa sereno.  
sed mox, ut gravido iussa est innectier arvo,

suavibus inlecebris nimium blandita refrixit  
languidusq; inquietusq; nullusq; impetu-

deque volutabris pretiosum polluit ignem,  
duin transgressa Dei positum fas improba calcat.

haec prima est natura animae. sic condita

*simplex*  
decidit in vitium non cordidae foedore carpis.

decidit in vitium per sordida loedera carnis,  
exim tincta malo peccamine principis Adae

infecit genus omne hominum quod pullulat inde,

et tenet ingenitas animarum infantia in ortu  
primi hominis maculas, nec quisquam nascitur

primi hominis maculas, nec quisquam nascitur  
insons.

<sup>1</sup> The 6th-century MS. has a genitus, which Bergman accepts.

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loses it, and now must submit to punishment, again in freedom treads it under foot. Do you wonder that the soul sins, whose lot it is to dwell in a house made of flesh, when the very angel sins, who is incapable of entering a frail dwelling-place of perishing structure? He sins because he too was created, not begotten. How he was created only the Lord, his creator, knows; enough for me to believe that he was created. Only the author of the world is free from the stain of sin, God unbegotten and begotten, the Father and He that was born of the Father; He alone is exempt from stern punishment, lives unassailed, and knows no bitterness. You may say that the soul is free from cross and pain if you know it to be guiltless and sinless. The soul that can sin can also fall under the penalty. It was indeed clean at its creation, when it gave life to the raw clay with which it was united, in as much as it received its first disposition from the uncontaminated source of nature and was formed by the divine purity; but then, being bidden to attach itself to the heavy earth, it was too much charmed by agreeable temptations and grew cold, polluting its precious flame with the mire, and wickedly transgressing and trampling on God's ordinance. Such is the soul's first character. Thus pure at its creation, it fell into sin through unclean alliance with the flesh; then, tainted by the wicked deed of the first man Adam, it infected the whole race of men which springs from him; infant souls at birth have inborn in them the first man's stains, and none is born sinless. But we shall have to shun the error of supposing that the germ of the soul is transmitted to offspring by propagation of the flesh after the manner of the blood, for which the

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sanguinis exemplo, cui texta propagine vena est.  
 non animas animae pariunt, sed lege latenti  
 fundit opus natura suum, quo parvula anhelent  
 vaseula vitalisque adsit scintilla coactis. 920

quae quamvis infusa novum penetret nova semper  
 figmentum, vetus illa tamen de crimine avorum  
 dicitur, inloto quoniam concreta veterno est.  
 inde secunda redit generatio et inde lavatur  
 naturae inluvies, iterumque renascimur intus 925  
 perfusi, ut veterem splendens anima exuat Adam.  
 quae quia materiam peccati ex fomite carnis  
 consociata trahit, nec non simul ipsa sodali  
 est incentivum peccaminis, implieat ambas  
 vindex poena reas peccantes mente sub una, 930  
 peccandique cremat socias cruciatibus aequis.  
 his crucibus Christus nos liberat incorruptae  
 matris et innoeui gestator corporis unus.  
 naturam poenae expositam, sed non vitiorum  
 naturam expositam contactibus induit Iesus, 935  
 atque ideo poenae nil debuit intemeratus,  
 fraude carens, omni culparum aspergine liber.<sup>1</sup>  
 quid Christi in membris peccati saeva satelles  
 poena ageret? quid mors hominis sine crimen  
 posset?

nimirum cassis conatibus et sine nervis 940  
 conciderent steriles peccati fomite nullo.  
 mors alitur culpa; culpam qui non habet, ipso  
 pastus defectu mortem consumit inanem.  
 sic mors in Domini consumpta est corpore Christi,  
 sic periiit, solitum dum non habet arida pastum. 945

<sup>1</sup> Between 937 and 938 two MSS. of class B have this line :  
 quid peccatorum prosapia corpore in illo.

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vessel is made by generation from the parent stock. Souls do not give birth to souls, but by a mysterious law nature produces a work of her own to give the tiny vessels power to breathe, and supply the spark of life to the assembled parts. Yet though it is always a new soul that is infused into the new body, it is nevertheless said to be old after the sins of its fathers, since dirt unwashed is caked hard upon it. Then comes the second birth and the natural filth is washed away ; our inner being is born again when we are baptised, so that the soul shines bright and puts off the old Adam. But as in its fellowship with the body it draws occasion to sin from the incitements of the flesh, and itself also at the same time provokes sin in its comrade, avenging punishment lays hold of both wrongdoers together since they sin with one mind, and burns the partners in sin with like torments. From these torments Christ sets us free, for He alone had a mother immaculate and wore a sinless body ; Jesus put on a nature liable to punishment, but not a nature liable to the contagion of sin, and so He owed no debt to punishment, being undefiled, without sin, free from all besmirching fault. What would punishment, which is the stern attendant on sin, do in the body of Christ ? What could death do where there was no human wickedness ? Naturally their efforts would be vain, they would fall to the ground strengthless and ineffectual where there was nothing to prompt sin. Death is nurtured on sin, and he who has no sin annihilates death because it is exhausted through the very want of what it feeds on. So was death annihilated in the body of Christ our Lord, so was it destroyed, being withered by want of its accustomed food. Reverence there-

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suspice quapropter solum inculpabile numen,  
 virtutem<sup>1</sup> Patris et Christi, et iam desine nostrae  
 invidiam conflare animae, quod sit Deus aut quod  
 portio parva Dei, cum Christo abscidere quid-  
 quam

950

et resecare Deo partem vel earpere tantum  
 numen non liceat, plenum sibi semper et in se.

Est operae pretium nebulosi dogmatis umbram  
 prodere, quam tenues atomi conpage minuta  
 instituunt, sed cassa cedit ventoque liquescit  
 adsimilis, fluxu nec se sustentat inani.                   955

aërium Manichaeus ait sine corpore vero  
 per volitasse Deum, mendax phantasma cavamque  
 corporis effigiem, nil contrectabile habentem.  
 ac primum specta an deceat quidquam simulatum  
 ad signare Deo, cuius mera gloria falsi               960  
 nil recipit. membris hic se fallaeibus aptans  
 fingeret esse hominem ventosa subdolus arte,  
 mentitus totiens, cum diceret "inveteratis  
 do veniam morbis, simul et peccata remitto:  
 Filius est hominis, pestem qui pellere carnis           965  
 et scelerum nexus laxare ac solvere possit:  
 surge valens, surge innocuus, iam tolle grabatum:  
 Filius hoc hominis iubeo"? dignusne videtur  
 qui testis sibi sit seque ac sua carnea norit?  
 quid? cum discipulos, hominis quid Filius esset   970  
 passurus, fido iam praescius ore monebat,  
 nonne fatebatur se cum virtute paterna

<sup>1</sup> naturam ACD (*Bergman*).

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"The difficulty of conceiving the union of the divine nature with the inherent imperfection of matter led some thinkers to hold that the body of Christ was not a real human body but a semblance of it. This "docetic" doctrine was de-

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fore the divinity that alone is sinless, the strength of the Father and of Christ, and cease now to bring about odium for our soul by saying that it is God, or a small part of God, since it is not lawful to cut off anything from Christ or lop a part from God, or to diminish the great Godhead which is ever complete for and in itself.

It is worth while to make mention of the phantom that belongs to a misty doctrine. It consists of fine particles in minute structure, but it fails for lack of body, vanishes away like the wind, and is too fleeting and unsubstantial to maintain itself.<sup>a</sup> There moved about, says the Manichean, a phantasmal God without real body, a false appearance, an empty likeness of body, having nothing tangible. Now see first whether it is fitting to ascribe aught that is counterfeit to God, whose pure glory admits of nothing false. Would such a God furnish himself with unreal members, and with cunning make-believe feign himself man, lying whenever He said "I have mercy on deep-rooted diseases, and in the same act I remit sins. It is the Son of man who is able to drive out the plague of the flesh and to loosen and undo the bonds of wickedness. Arise in health, arise in innocence, take up thy bed. I, the Son of man, command it."<sup>b</sup> Does He not appear worthy to bear witness of himself, to know himself and his body of flesh? And when, knowing already before-hand, He warned his disciples with truthful lips what the Son of man was to suffer, was He not confessing that

veloped particularly under the influence of Gnosticism, and of Manicheism (*cf.* 956) which spread widely during the 4th century.

<sup>a</sup> Cf. Matthew ix, 2-6.

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esse hominem verum? quod si non credo, fefellit.  
si natura Dei quae sit, Manichaei, requiris,  
omne quod est, verum est. nam si mendosus agit  
quid,

975

nec Deus est: mendum divinus non capit usus.  
obicis aeterno Domino quod lubricus ad nos  
venerit, adsimulans aliud quam verus habebat.  
obmutesce, furor; linguam, canis inprobe, morde  
ipse tuam, lacero consumens verba palato.

980

latranti obsistit Mattheus rabiemque refellit,  
qui notat omne genus carnalis stirpis ad usque  
corporeum Christum, per sex septena virorum  
nomina descendens et venam sanguinis alti  
ex atavis longo texens per stemmata filo.

985

septimus hebdomadi venit superaddere sextae  
hunc numerum Christus, placidum qui conficit  
annum

cuncta remittentem contractibus inlaqueata  
multimodis, hominemque hominis de morte  
levantem.

inperfectus enim limus mortalis erat tunc : 990  
vir solus perfectus adest atque integer Iesus,  
cui nihil ex septem septenis defuit, ex quo  
perficeret mortale genus virtute perenni.

hic ille est nobis qui septima sabbata conplet,  
ut caro nostra Deo tandem sociata quiescat,  
quam bis terna malis vexabant sabbata noxis.  
curramus notis gradibus regumque sequamur  
progeniem: Christum invenies de carne parentum  
effluxisse hominum, qui sit de semine David,  
stirpe recensita numerandus sanguinis heres. 1000  
quid? cum sanctiloquus revoluto germine Lucas

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<sup>a</sup> Matthew i, 1-17.

<sup>b</sup> I.e. the year of jubilee (Leviticus xxv, 8 ff.).

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along with the power of the Father He was true man? If I believe not this, then He deceived them. If thou seekest, O Manichean, to know the nature of God, all that He is is real; for if He is false in anything He does, then is He not God; the divine activity admits of nothing false. Thou chargest against the everlasting Lord that He came to us deceitfully counterfeiting something other than He had in his reality. Be silent, thou madman. Bite thine own tongue, thou wicked dog; let thy torn mouth devour thy words. Matthew withstands thy barking and refutes thy raving, for he marks the whole race of the carnal stock right down to the bodily Christ, coming down through six times seven names of men and tracing the course of noble blood from his ancestors in a long line, generation after generation.<sup>a</sup> Seventh came Christ to crown the sixth seven with the number that makes the year of peace, which unlooses all things that are bound up by all manner of contracts, and frees man from man's death.<sup>b</sup> For then the mortal clay was imperfect; but now appears the only perfect and unimpaired man Jesus, in whom were completed the seven times seven whereby to make perfect the race of men in everlasting goodness. This is He that fulfils for us the seventh sabbath of years, that our flesh, being at last made partner with God, may find rest after being vexed for six sabbaths with deadly sins. Let us run over the familiar steps and follow the progeny of kings: thou wilt find that Christ came of the flesh of human parents, being of the seed of David, and if thou examine his descent, to be counted the inheritor of his blood. And again, when Luke of holy lips turns the order of descent round and takes

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sursum versus agit seriem, scandente nepotis  
corpore perque atavos cursum relegente vetustos,  
septenos decies concendit Christus in ortus  
et duo (nam totidem doctores misit in orbem); 1005  
descensos nascendo gradus redeundo retexit  
actus ad usque apicem terreni corporis Adam.  
inde parens Deitas recipit sua nostraque mixtim,  
fitque Dei summi per Christum filius Adam.  
restat ut aëriam fingas ab origine gentem, 1010  
aërios proceres, Levi, Iudam, Simeonem,  
aërium David, magnorum corpora regum  
aëria, atque ipsam fecundae virginis alvum  
aëre fallaci nebulisque et nube tumentem;  
vanescat sanguis perflabilis, ossa liquecant 1015  
mollia, nervorum pereat textura volantum;  
omne quod est gestum notus auferat inritus,  
aurae  
dispergant tenues, sit fabula quod sumus omnes.  
et quid agit Christus si me non suscipit? aut  
quem  
liberat infirmum si deditur adire 1020  
carnis onus manuumque horret monumenta  
suarum?  
indignumne putat luteum consciscere corpus,  
qui non indignum quondam sibi credidit ipsum  
pertrectare lutum, cum vas conponeret arvo  
nondum viscereo, sed inertis glutine limi 1025  
inpressoque putres sub pollice duceret artus?  
tantus amor terrae, tanta est dilectio nostri,  
dignatur praepinguis humi comprehendere mollem  
divinis glaebam digitis, nec sordida censem

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<sup>a</sup> Luke iii, 23-38; but Luke makes 75 generations from Joseph to Adam (inclusive).

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the line upwards, making the descendant in the flesh mount and retrace his way through old-time ancestors, Christ mounts to seventy generations and two <sup>a</sup> (now that is the number of teachers He sent into the world) <sup>b</sup>; the steps He came down in his birth He repeats backwards, till He arrives at Adam, the head of all earthly flesh. Then God the Father receives what is his own and ours together, and Adam through Christ becomes the son of the supreme God. All that remains for thee is to suppose the whole race from its origin unsubstantial, unsubstantial princes, Levi, Juda, Simeon, unsubstantial David, unsubstantial persons of great kings, the very womb of the pregnant virgin swelling with mere unsubstantial vapour and unreality; that the blood turn thin-bodied and vanish, the bones grow soft and melt away, the structure of quick-moving muscles perish; that the wind carry away our every act in futility, the thin airs scatter it, and the existence of us all be nothing but a tale. What does Christ achieve if He does not take up my nature? Or whom does He set free from his infirmity if He does not stoop to assume the burden of the flesh and shrinks from that which is the memorial of his own handiwork? Does He think it unfitting to take on a body of clay, who once did not believe it unfitting for Him to handle the same clay, when He was making a vessel of earth not yet become flesh, moulding the mortal frame out of the sticky, sluggish mire under the pressure of his thumb? Such is his love of earth, such his affection for us, He deigns to grasp with the divine fingers a soft clod of soil very fertile, and thinks

<sup>b</sup> Luke x, 1. The number is 70 in the English Version (from the Greek), but 72 in the Vulgate Latin.

## PRUDENTIUS

haerentis massae contagia. iusserat ut lux      1030  
 confieret, facta est ut iusserat; omnia iussu  
 imperitante novas traxerunt edita formas:  
 solus homo emeruit Domini formabile dextra  
 os capere, et fabro Deitatis figmine nasci.  
 quorsum igitur limo tanta indulgentia nostro      1035  
 contigit, ut Domini manibus tractatus honora  
 arte sacer fieret, tactu iam nobilis ipso?  
 decretat quoniam Christum Deus incorrupto  
 admiscere solo, sanctis quod fingere vellet  
 dignum habuit digitis et carum condere pignus. 1040  
 destituit natura quidem destructa coactae  
 telluris formam, mortique obnoxia cessit:  
 sed natura Dei numquam solvenda caducam  
 tellurem nostro vitiatam primitus usu  
 esse suam voluit, ne iam vitiabilis esset.      1045  
 Christus nostra caro est: mihi solvitur et mihi  
     surgit;  
 solvor morte mea, Christi virtute resurgo.  
 cum moritur Christus, cum flebiliter tumulatur,  
 me video: e tumulo cum iam remeabilis adstat,  
 cerno Deum. si membrorum phantasma meo-  
     rum est,      1050  
 et phantasma Dei est; mendax in utroque  
     necesse est  
 sit Christus, specie si Christus fallere novit.  
 si non verus homo est, quem mors hominem  
     probat ipsa,  
 nec verus Deus est, operis quem gloria prodit  
 esse Deum. vel crede mori, vel adesse refelle, 1055  
 et gemina verum Christum ratione negato.  
 nam quid magnificum, si non est mortuus Iesus,  
 et reddit? illa Dei virtus memorabilis est, ut

## THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

it not mean to touch the clinging lump. He had commanded that light be made, and it was made as He commanded; all things were brought forth and took on their new shapes at the word of his command: man alone was held worthy to receive features formed by the Lord's hand and come into being by God's shaping handicraft. To what end, then, has such favour fallen to our clay, that it should have the honour to be worked by the Lord's hands and made holy by his workmanship, being ennobled by his very touch? In as much as God had resolved to unite Christ with earth uncorrupted, He considered it worthy of his will to mould it with his holy fingers and create his dear child. True, its original nature was broken down and lost to the created earthly form and became subject to death; but the divine nature, which can never be destroyed, willed that the mortal clay, corrupted at the first by our use, should be its own, so as to be no more corruptible. Christ is our flesh; for me He dies, and for me He rises. I die by my own death, but by the power of Christ I rise again. When Christ dies and with tears is laid in the tomb, I see myself; when now He returns from the tomb and stands by me, I perceive God. If He is a mere phantom of my body, then of God too He is a phantom; in both Christ must needs be false, if Christ can wear a false appearance. If He is not true man, He whose very death proves Him man, neither is He true God, whose glorious work proclaims Him God. Either must thou believe in his death, or disprove his presence with us, and both ways deny that Christ is real. For where is the sublimity if Jesus returns without having died? It is the wonderful power of God that having been put

## PRUDENTIUS

occisus redeat superis surgatque sepultus.  
quisque Deum Christum vult dicere, dicat  
eundem 1060  
esse hominem, ne maiestas sua fortia perdat.  
Nosco meum in Christo corpus consurgere.  
quid me  
desperare iubes? veniam quibus ille revenit  
calcata de morte viis: quod credimus, hoc est.  
et totus veniam; nec enim minor aut alius quam 1065  
nunc sum restituar. vultus, vigor et color idem,  
qui modo vivit, erit, nec me vel dente vel ungue  
fraudatum revomet patefacti fossa sepulcri.  
qui iubet ut redeam, non reddet debile quidquam;  
nam si debilitas reddit, instauratio non est. 1070  
quod casus rapuit, quod morbus, quod dolor  
hausit,  
quod truncavit edax senium populante veterno,  
omne revertenti reparata in membra redibit.  
debet enim mors victa fidem, ne fraude sepulcri  
reddat curtum aliquid, quamvis iam curta vorarit 1075  
corpora; debilitas tamen et violentia morbi  
virtus mortis erat: reddet quod particulatim  
sorbuerat quocumque modo, ne mortuus omnis  
non redeat, si quid pleno de corpore desit.  
pellite corde metum, mea membra, et credite  
vosmet 1080  
cum Christo redditura Deo; nam vos gerit ille  
et secum revocat. morbos ridete minaces,  
inflictos casus contemnite, taetra sepulcra  
despuite; exsurgens quo Christus provocat, ite.

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to death He returns again to the living, and having been buried He rises. Whosoever will say that Christ is God must also say that He is man, lest his majesty lose its strength.

I know that my body rises in Christ; why dost thou bid me abandon my hope? I shall come by the same paths by which He came again from trampling upon death; it is this we believe. And I shall come whole; for I shall be restored not less nor other than now I am; my features, natural force, complexion, will be the same as they are now in life; when the tomb is opened, the grave will send me forth again without the loss of even a tooth or a nail. He who bids me return will not give back aught infirm; for if it is infirmity that returns, then is there no restoration. What calamity has robbed me of, what illness or pain has drained away, what consuming age with wasting decline has cut off, all will return, at my coming again, to a body renewed. For conquered death must keep faith, not to give back, by the grave's dishonesty, something that is maimed, albeit the bodies it devoured were maimed already; but then infirmity and vehement disease were the strength of death. It will so give back what it swallowed piecemeal in one way or another, that the dead shall not return less than entire, with something lacking to the body's completeness. Cast fear out of your heart, my members, and believe that you will return with Christ who is God; for He wears you, and calls you back with himself. Laugh at the threats of disease, despise the blows of calamity, scorn the foul tomb. Whither Christ at his rising calls you, go.

# HAMARTIGENIA

## < PRAEFATIO >

FRATRES ephebi fossor et pastor duo,  
quos feminarum prima primos procreat,  
sistunt ad aram de laborum fructibus  
Deo sacranda munerum primordia.  
hic terrulentis, ille vivis fungitur ; 5  
certante voto discrepantes inmolant,  
fetum bidentis alter, ast alter scrobis.  
Deus minoris conprobavit hostiam,  
reiecit illam quam paravit grandior.  
vox ecce summo missa persultat throno : 10  
“ Cain, quiesce ; namque si recte offeras,  
oblata nec tu lege recta dividas,  
perversa nigram vota culpam traxerint.”  
armat deinde parricidalem manum  
frater, probatae sanctitatis aemulus ; 15  
germana curvo colla frangit sarculo,  
mundum recentem caede tinguit inopia,  
sero expiandum, iam senescentem, sacro  
cruore Christi, quo peremptor concidit.  
mors prima coepit innocentis vulnere, 20  
cessit deinde vulnerato innoxio.  
per crimen orta dissoluta est criminis,  
Abel quod ante perculit, Christum dehinc ;  
finita et ipsa est finis exsortem petens.

*dunder*

# THE ORIGIN OF SIN

## PREFACE

Two young brothers, a tiller of the ground and a keeper of sheep, first-born of the first woman, set the first offerings at the altar, of the fruits of their labours, to dedicate them to God, the one furnishing things of the earth, the other living creatures; with different offerings in rivalry they sacrifice, the one the young of a sheep, the other the produce of his delving. God has accepted the sacrifice of the younger, but rejected that which the elder brought. Suddenly a loud voice rings from the throne on high: "Peace, Cain; for if thou shouldest offer aright but not divide the offerings by right rule, thy untoward sacrifice would take on the mark of sin."<sup>a</sup> Then a brother in jealousy of the goodness that was accepted arms his hand to commit parricide, and breaks his own brother's neck with his bent hoe, staining the new-made world with unnatural blood-shed, a world to be purified late in time when it was already growing old, by the sacred blood of Christ whereby the destroyer fell. Death first began with the wounding of one that was innocent, and passed away by the wounding of one that was guiltless. Through sin it arose, by sin it was done away, in that aforetime it smote Abel, and then Christ; it was itself brought to an end in aiming at one who is

<sup>a</sup> Cf. Genesis iv, 7 in the Septuagint version.

# PRUDENTIUS

25

ergo ex futuris prisca coepit fabula  
 factoque primo res notata est ultima,  
 ut ille mortis inchoator rusticus  
 insulsa terrae deferens libamina  
 Deumque rerum mortuarum deputans  
 rastris redacta digna sacris crederet,      30  
 viventis atrox aemulator hostiae.  
 agnosco nempe quem figura haec denotet,  
 quis fraticida, quis peremptor invidus  
 prave sacrorum disciplinam dividat,  
 mactare dum se vota censem rectius.      35  
 Marcion, arvi forma corruptissimi,  
 docet duitas discrepare a Spiritu,  
 contaminatae dona carnis offerens  
 et segregatim numen aeternum colens.  
 qui si quiescat nec monentem neglegat,      40  
 pacem quieta<sup>1</sup> diligit germanitas,  
 unum atque vivum fassa vivorum Deum.  
 hic se caduco dedicans mysterio  
 summam profanus dividit substantiam;  
 malum bonumque ceu duorum separans      45  
 regnum Deorum sceptrum committit duo,  
 Deum esse credens quem fatetur pessimum.  
 Cain cruentus, unitatis invidus,  
 mundi colonus, immolator squalidus,  
 cuius litamen sorbet et terram sapit,      50  
 terram caduci corporis, venam putrem,

<sup>1</sup> So the oldest MS. Most have quietam.

<sup>a</sup> Marcion, who lived in the 2nd century, taught that the “just” (or “strict”) God of the Old Testament, who created the world and man and gave the law, was different from and inferior to the “good” God revealed by Jesus Christ, who

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without end. So the tale of olden times took its beginning from things that were to be, and the last deed was indicated by the first, when the countryman who started death, making savourless offerings of the earth and supposing God to be the God of things dead, believed the product of his tools fit for the altar, in his black-hearted jealousy of the living sacrifice. It is plain to see whom this figure denotes, who is his brother's murderer, the jealous slayer who divides the way of holy things amiss while supposing that he makes his offerings more correctly. Marcion, a creature of the foulest clay, teaches men to believe in two Gods, at variance with the Spirit; he offers gifts of flesh defiled, and worships the everlasting Deity in separate shapes.<sup>a</sup> If he held his peace and heeded warning, the brotherhood would be happy in undisturbed quiet, acknowledging the one living God of the living. This man, giving himself up to a vain doctrine, sacrilegiously divides the supreme Being, separates a bad realm and a good as belonging to two Gods, and matches two ruling powers against each other, believing one to be a God whom he confesses to be utterly bad. He is a bloody Cain, one that hates unity, a cultivator of the world, who comes to sacrifice all befouled; his offering is unclean and savours of the earth, the earth of the mortal body, corrupt flesh lumped

intervened to save men from hopeless subjection to the law. The foundation of Marcion's doctrine was the Pauline contrast between the law and the gospel, not one between opposed powers of good and evil, so that in what follows Prudentius misrepresents his teaching. In the western empire the sect died out in the 4th century, being swallowed up by Manicheism with its opposed powers of light and darkness. (See Hastings' *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*.)

## PRUDENTIUS

umore denso congregatam et pulvere,  
 natura cuius fraude floret fertili  
 fecunda fundens noxiorum crimina,  
 animaeque vitam labe carnis enecat.      55  
 caro in sororem tela mentem dirigit,  
 mens in cerebro ventilatur ebrio,  
 ex quo furores succulentos conligit  
 madens veneno corporis lymphatico.  
 Deum perennem findit in duos Deos,  
 audet secare numen inseparabile.      60  
 cadit perempta denegans unum Deum,  
 Cain triumphat morte fratris halitus.<sup>1</sup>

---

Quo te praecipitat rabies tua, perfide Cain,  
 divisor blasphemie Dei? tibi conditor unus  
 non liquet, et bifidae caligant nubila lucis?  
 insincera acies duo per divortia semper  
 spargitur, in geminis visum frustrata figuris.      5  
 terrarum tibi forma duplex oblitus, ut excors  
 dividuum regnare Deum super aethera credas.  
 bina boni atque mali glomerat discrimina sordens  
 hic mundus, Domino sed caelum obtemperat uni.  
 non idecirco duos retinent caelestia reges      10  
 quod duo sunt opera humanas agitantia curas.  
 exterior terrenus homo est, qui talia cernens  
 conicit esse duo variarum numina rerum.  
 dum putat esse Deum qui prava effinxerit olim,  
 et qui recta itidem condens induxerit, ambos      15  
 autumat esse Deos natura dispare summos.  
 quae tandem natura potest consistere duplex  
 aut regnare diu, quam fons divisus ab arce

<sup>1</sup> So the oldest MS. Many have the metrically impossible allitus. Arevalo conjectured allitus.

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together of thick water and dust, whose nature it is to bloom richly with wickedness, pouring out prolific crops of sin in guilty men, and with the foulness of the flesh to kill the life of the soul. The flesh aims its weapons at its sister the spirit, and the spirit is swung about in a drunken brain, from which it contracts strong frenzies, being intoxicated with the maddening poison of the body. It splits the everlasting God into two Gods, daring to divide the Godhead indivisible, and is slain and perishes in denying the one God, while Cain triumphs in the death of his brother's soul.

---

To what lengths does thy madness drive thee, faithless Cain, thou blasphemous divider of God? Is not the one creator plain to thee? Is thy vision befogged and double? Sight that is blurred ever divides along two paths, cheating the eyes with double shapes. The twofold form of the world fools thee into the senseless belief that a divided God reigns above the skies. This defiled world is a mixture of two contrasted elements, good and bad, but the heaven obeys one Lord. It does not follow that the heavens contain two kings, because there are two sorts of works that busy the hearts of men. The outer man is of the earth, and seeing such things he infers that there are two Godheads of the different realms. Supposing that there is a God who once fashioned the evil, and one who similarly created and brought in the right, he avers that both are supreme Gods though of unlike nature. What nature that is twofold can maintain itself or reign for long, when a divided source shuts it off from

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separat, alternaque apicum dictione recidit?  
aut unus Deus est, rerum cui summa potestas, 20  
aut quae iam duo sunt minuuntur dispare summa.  
porro nihil summum nisi plenis viribus unum,  
distantes quoniam, proprium dum quisque revulso  
vindicat imperio, nec summa nec omnia possunt.  
ius varium non est plenum, quia non habet alter 25  
quidquid dispar habet; cumulum discretio carpit.  
nos plenum sine parte Deum testamur et unum,  
in quo Christus inest, idem quoque plenus et unus,  
qui viget ac viguit super omnia quique vigebit  
participem nullum collato foedere passus. 30  
summa potestatum Pater est,<sup>1</sup> dominatio rerum,  
virtutum sublime caput, fons unicus orbis,  
naturalis apex, generisque et originis auctor;  
ex quo cuncta fluunt, et lux et tempora et anni  
et numerus, qui post aliquid dedit esse secundum; 35  
unus enim princeps numeri est, nec dinumerari  
tantum unus potis est. sic, cum Pater ac Deus  
alter  
non sit, item Christus non sit genitore secundus,  
anterior numero est, cui Filius unicus uni est.  
ille Deus, meritoque Deus, quia primus et unus, 40  
in virtute sua primus, tum primus in illo  
quem genuit. quid enim differt generatio  
simplex?  
unum semper erit gignens atque unus ab uno  
ante chaos genitus numeroque et tempore liber.  
quis dixisse duos rem maiestate sub una 45

<sup>1</sup> So A (*def. B*). Some MSS. of class A as well as class B have summa potestatum simplex dominatio.

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supremacy and abridges it by subjection to one or other of two sovereignties? Either there is one God to whom belongs supreme power over the world, or else the two powers that exist are each diminished because there is a different supremacy. There is indeed no supremacy but what is one and possessed of plenary power, for separate beings each claiming his own sovereignty and rejecting control have neither supreme nor complete power. Dispersed authority is not plenary, because the one does not have what the other has; the separation takes away from the full measure. But we bear witness to a God who is perfect, undivided, and one, in whom is Christ, He, too, perfect and one, who lives, and has lived beyond all things, and shall live, admitting no partner on terms agreed. The Father is sovereign, Lord of all things, the high source of powers, the one fountain-head of the world, the starting point of all being, author of all birth and beginning. From Him flow all things, both light and times and years and number; it is He who appointed that after one thing there should be a second; for the one is the beginning of number, and one by himself cannot be counted. In this way, since there is no second Father and God, and Christ also is not next after the Father, the one, to whom belongs the one and only Son, is anterior to number. He is God, and rightly God, because first and one, first in his own power, and then first in Him whom He has begotten. For what distinction does mere begetting make? The begetter and the one begotten of one before the primeval darkness, without number or time, will always be one being. Who would venture to say that that which reigns in one majesty and belongs to itself

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regnantem propriamque sibi retroque perennem  
 ausit, et unius naturae excindere vires?  
 numquid adoptivum genitor sibi sumpsit, ut alter  
 externi generis numerum praestare duorum  
 debeat et geminum distans inducere numen? 50  
 forma Patris veri verus stat Filius ac se  
 unum rite probat dum formam servat eandem.  
 non amor adscitus sociat nec iungit utrumque  
 coniurata fides, pietas sed certa genusque  
 unum, quod Deus est, summam revocatur ad unam. 55  
 haec tibi, Marcion, via displicet, hanc tua damnat  
 secta fidem dominis caelum partita duobus.  
 quae te confundunt nebulae? quis somnus inertis  
 incubat ingenio, cui per phantasmata duplex  
 occurrit species bivio dispersa superno. 60  
 si vim mentis hebes stupor obsidet, aspice saltem  
 obvia terrenis oculis elementa, quibus se  
 res occulta Dei dignata est prodere signis.  
 hanc heresin praesaga Patris praeviderat olim  
 maiestas: fore qui rectorem lucis et orbis 65  
 scinderet in partes geminatum segregare regno.  
 idcirco specimen posuit spectabile nostris  
 exemplumque oculis, ne quis duo numina credat  
 [imperitare vagis mundi per inania formis].<sup>1</sup>  
 una per inmensam caeli caveam revolutos  
 70 praebet flamma dies, texit sol unicus annum;  
 triplex ille tamen nullo discrimine trina  
 subnixus ratione viget, splendet, volat, ardet,  
 motu agitur, fervore cremat, tum lumine fulget.

<sup>1</sup> This line (with vagas . . . formas) appears in the text of one 9th-century MS. (U).

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alone and was for ever pre-existent is two Gods, and to break down the strength of a being that is single? Did the Father take to himself a Son by adoption, so that the second, being of external origin, must then make the number two and, being separate, bring in a dual Godhead? No, He is a real Son, the likeness of a real Father, and properly proves his unity by keeping the same likeness. It is no extraneous affection that allies them, no covenant that unites them, but the true love of father and son and singleness of nature, which is God, that make a single whole. This way finds no favour with thee, Marcion, this faith thy doctrine condemns, dividing heaven between two lords. What fogs confound thee, what sleep lies heavy on thy sluggish mind, that it sees an apparition of two forms standing apart in a divided heaven? If a dull insensibility shuts up the force of thy mind, look at least at the elements that meet earthly eyes, the signs by which the mystery of God has deigned to manifest itself. This heresy the Father's majesty, with his foreknowledge, had in time past foreseen—that there would arise one who would split the ruler of light and of the world into parts, making Him twofold with separate realms. For this reason He set a sign and a token that our eyes can see, lest any should believe that there are two Godheads [ruling in divergent forms over the spaces of the world]. It is one fire that furnishes the revolution of the days in the boundless vault of heaven, one only sun that weaves the fabric of the year; and yet the sun is threefold without distinction of parts, and its activity depends on three principles; for it shines, it speeds through the sky, and it burns; it is impelled by motion, it burns with heat, and it

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sunt tria nempe simul, lux et calor et vegetamen, 75  
una eademque tamen rota sideris indiscretis  
fungitur his, uno servat tot munera ductu  
et tribus una subest mixtim substantia rebus.  
non conferre Deo velut aequiperabile quidquam  
ausim, nec Domino famulum conponere signum; 80  
ex minimis sed grande suum voluit Pater ipse  
coniectare homines, quibus ardua visere non est.  
parvorum speculo non intellecta notamus,  
et datur occultum per proxima quaerere verum.  
nemo duos soles nisi sub glaucomate vidit 85  
aut, si fusca polum suffudit palla serenum,  
oppositus quotiens radiorum spicula nimbus  
igne represco mentitos spargit in orbes.  
sunt animis etiam sua nubila, crassus et aër,  
est glaucoma, aciem quod tegmine velet aquoso, 90  
libera ne tenerum penetret meditatio caelum  
neve Deum rapidis comprendat sensibus unum;  
spargitur in bifidas male sana intentio lucea,  
et duplices geminis auctoribus extruit aras.  
si duo sunt, igitur cur non sint multa Deorum 95  
milia? cur numero Deitas contenta gemello est?  
an non in populos dispersa examina Divum  
fundere erat melius mundumque inplere capacem  
semideis passim nullo diserimine monstris,  
quis fera barbaries perituros mactat honores? 100  
dissona discretum retinent si numina caelum,  
convenit et nebulis et fontibus et reboanti  
oceano et silvis et collibus et speluncis,

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gleams with light. There you have clearly three things together, light and warmth and movement, yet it is one and the same heavenly orb that performs them without separation, it is in one course that it discharges all these functions, and one common substance underlies all three. I would not venture to compare anything with God as though it were on a par with Him, nor to match with the Lord a star that is his servant; but the Father himself has willed that men infer his greatness from what is but small, since they cannot see the things on high. In the mirror of the small we mark things we do not understand, and we are permitted to seek the hidden truth by means of what is at hand. No man has seen two suns, unless his vision were obscured, or when a dusky mantle has overcast the clear sky and a cloud, blocking the path of the shafts of light and reflecting their fire, spreads them into the shape of false orbs. Minds, too, have their clouds and thick atmosphere; there is a cataract that veils the mind's eye with a watery film and prevents the thought from freely penetrating the translucent heavens and comprehending the one God with quick perception. The earnest gaze is unsound and spreads into double vision, and so builds two altars for two creators. If there are two Gods, why then not many thousands? Why is Deity content with the number two? Had it not been better to scatter abroad whole swarms of divinities over the nations and to fill the wide world everywhere indiscriminately with the monstrous demigods in whose worship wild savages waste their sacrifices? If different Gods hold a divided heaven, then it is natural to assign to clouds and springs and the sounding ocean, to woods and hills

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- fluminibus, ventis, fornacibus atque metallis  
assignare Deos proprios, sua cuique iura. 105  
vel, si gentiles sordet venerarier umbras  
et placet esse duos sceptris socialibus aequos,  
dic, age, quis terras dicionis sorte retentet,  
quis regat aequoreas aeterna lege procellas,  
ede coheredum distinctum ius dominorum. 110  
“unus,” ais, “tristi residet sublimis in arce,  
auctor nequitiae, scelerum Deus, asper, iniquus,  
qui quodcumque malum vitioso fervet in orbe  
sevit, et anguino medicans nova semina suco  
rerum principium mortis de fomite traxit. 115  
ipse opifex mundi terram, mare, sidera fecit,  
condidit ipse hominem lutulenta et membra  
coëgit,  
effigians quod morbus edat, quod crimine multo  
sordeat, informi tumulus quod tabe resolvat.  
ast alii pietatis amor placidumque medendi 120  
ingenium, recreans homines, mortalia servans.  
Testamenta duo fluxerunt principe utroque:  
tradidit iste novum melior, vetus illud acerbus.”  
haec tua, Marcion, gravis et dialectica vox est,  
immo haec attoniti phrenesis manifesta cerebri. 125  
novimus esse patrem scelerum, sed novimus  
ipsum  
haudquaquam tamen esse Deum, quin immo  
gehennae  
mancipium, Stygio qui sit damnandus Averno,  
Marcionita Deus, tristis, ferus, insidiator, 130  
vertice sublimis, cinctum cui nubibus atris  
anguiferum caput et fumo stipatur et igni,  
liventes oculos subfundit felle perusto  
invidia inpatiens iustorum gaudia ferre.  
hirsutos iuba densa umeros errantibus hydris

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and caves, to rivers and winds and furnaces and mines gods of their own, and to each his own authority. Or if thou dost scorn to worship the false gods of the heathen and yet wilt have it that there are two who share sovereignty on equal terms, tell me then to which of them it falls to hold the land in his sway, and which rules the stormy sea with eternal law. Show me how authority is divided between the joint lords. "One," sayest thou, "sits aloft on a grim throne, the author of evil, the God of sin, cruel, unjust; it is He that sowed all the ill that ferments in this corrupt world, and steeping his new seeds in snakes' venom derived the world's beginning from that which gives rise to death. He it is, the maker of the world, who created earth and sea and stars, who made man, assembling his frame of clay and moulding a thing for disease to consume, and many a sin defile, and the grave destroy with hideous corruption. But to the other belongs loving-kindness, the gentle will to heal, that restores man and saves mortality. Two Testaments flowed from these two Powers: the kindlier gave the New, the cruel the Old." Such, Marcion, is the utterance of thy pestilent sophistry, or rather the obvious raving of a mind confounded. We know there is a father of sin, but we know he is no God for all that, but rather the bond-slave of hell, who shall be condemned to Stygian Avernus—Marcion's God, harsh, cruel, treacherous, holding high his snake-wreathed head girt about with black clouds and encompassed with smoke and fire, while envy that cannot endure the joys of the righteous stains his spiteful eyes with burning gall. A thick, shaggy mane of writhing snakes covers his shoulders, and

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obtegit et virides adlambunt ora cerastae. 135  
 ipse manu laqueos per lubrica fila reflexos  
 in nodum revocat, facilique ligamine tortas  
 innectit pedicas nervosque in vincula tendit.  
 ars olli captare feras, animalia bruta  
 inretire plagis, retinacula denique caecis 140  
 indeprena locis erranti opponere praedae.  
 hic ille est venator atrox, qui caede frequenti  
 incautas animas non cessat plectere, Nebroth,  
 qui mundum curvis anfractibus et silvosis  
 horrentem scopulis versuto circuit astu, 145  
 fraude alias tectisque dolis innectere adortus,  
 porro giganteis alias luctando lacertis  
 frangere, funereos late exercere triumphos.  
 improba mors, quid non mortalia pectora cogis?  
 ipse suam (pudet heu!) contempto principe vitae 150  
 perniciem veneratur homo, colit ipse cruentum  
 carnificem gladiisque aciem iugulandus adorat.  
 in tantum miseris peccati nectare captis  
 dulce mori est, tanta in tenebris de peste voluptas!  
 qui mala principio genuit Deus esse putatur, 155  
 qui bona infecit vitiis et candida nigris!  
 par furor illorum, quos tradit fama dicatis  
 consecrasse deas Febrem Scabiemque sacellis.  
 inventor vitii non est Deus: angelus illud  
 degener infami conceptum mente creavit, 160  
 qui prius augustum radiabat sidus et ingens  
 ex nihilo splendor nutritio ardebat honore.

<sup>a</sup> Nimrod (*Genesis x, 8-9*).

<sup>b</sup> Febris and Robigus were two of the many functional spirits recognised by the old Roman priests. The latter was the spirit which could cause "rust" (*robigo*) on crops. We do not hear elsewhere of Scabies as such a spirit, and Pruden-

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green serpents lick his face. With his hand he pulls the running loops of his snares into a knot, contriving traps of cord doubled back and lightly tied, and drawing the string tight to make fast his victim. His is the skill to hunt game, to ensnare senseless creatures in his nets, to lay unnoticed traps in dark places to catch his wandering prey. He is the cruel hunter Nebroth,<sup>a</sup> who is never weary of smiting incautious souls in constant slaughter, who with cunning craft goes about a world all rough with winding tortuous ways and wooded crags, seeking to entangle some by deceit and hidden wiles, to break others with the grip of his giant arms, and work his fatal triumphs everywhere. Ruthless death! To what dost thou not drive human hearts? Man himself (alas, the shame of it!), scorning the author of his life, does homage to his own destruction, worships the bloody assassin, pays reverence to the edge of the sword that is to murder him. So sweet is death to poor wretches caught by the charm of sin, such the pleasure they blindly draw from their bane! He who was the first begetter of evil, who stained goodness with sin, whiteness with black, is thought to be a God! No madder were they who, as tradition tells, consecrated Fever and Scurf as goddesses and dedicated shrines to them.<sup>b</sup>

The contriver of evil is no God. It was a debased angel that conceived it in his foul mind and brought it into being, one that aforetime shone like a majestic star and blazed in great brightness with a glory created and maintained out of nothing. For from

tius is probably using the word here as a synonym for Robigus; the noun *scabies* and the adjective *scabra* are found in association with *robigo*.

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ex nihilo nam cuncta retro, factumque quod  
usquam est,  
at non ex nihilo Deus et Sapientia vera  
Spiritus et Sanctus, res semper viva nec umquam 165  
copta, sed aërios etiam molita ministros.  
horum de numero quidam pulcherrimus ore,  
maiestate ferox, nimiis dum viribus auctus  
inflatur, dum grande tumens sese altius effert  
ostentatque suos licito iactantius ignes, 170  
persuasit propriis genitum se viribus ex se  
materiam sumpsisse sibi, qua primitus esse  
inciperet, nascique suum sine principe coeptum.  
hinc schola subtacitam meditatur gignere sectam,  
quae docet e tenebris subitum micuisse tyrannum, 175  
qui velut aeterna latitans sub nocte retrorsum  
vixerit et tecto semper regnaverit aevo.  
aemulus, ut memorant, opera ad divina repente  
corrumpenda caput caligine protulit atra.  
hoc ratio sed nostra negat, cui non licet unam 180  
infirmare fidem, sacro quae tradita libro est.  
“ nil,” ait, “ absque Deo factum, sed cuncta per  
ipsum,  
cuncta, nec est aliis quisquam nisi factus ab ipso.”  
sed factus de stirpe bonus, bonitatis in usum  
proditus et primo generis de fonte serenus, 185  
deterior mox sponte sua, dum decolor illum  
inficit invidia stimulisque instigat amaris.  
arsit enim scintilla odii de fomite zeli  
et dolor ingenium subitus conflavit iniquum.  
viderat argillam simulacrum et structile flatu 190

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nothing were all things, back to the beginning, every created thing everywhere; but not from nothing is God and the true Wisdom and the Holy Spirit, an eternal Being that had no beginning but has also created spiritual ministers. One of their number, a being of most beauteous features, grew over-weening in his greatness; puffed up with the excessive strength to which he had grown, bearing himself too highly in his big-swelling pride, and displaying his fires more boastfully than was proper, he persuaded some that he was begotten of his own might and of himself assumed substance whereby he first began to be, and that his birth had its origin in no creator. Hence his followers design to bring into being a stealthy school which teaches that Satan sprang on a sudden out of darkness, after having lived through all the past concealed in a kind of everlasting night, and having reigned through all time though undiscovered. In rivalry, as they tell, he thrust his head suddenly out of the black darkness to spoil the works of God. But this our way of thought denies; it is not permitted to annul the unity of the faith which is handed down to us by Scripture. "Nothing," it says, "was made without God, but all things by Him, all things; and there is no other person not made by Him." But one that from his origin was made good, created for the practice of goodness, and pure from the first source of his being, became afterwards corrupt of his own will because envy marked him with her stain and pricked him with her sore stings. For the spark of hate was fed into a flame by jealousy, and resentment suddenly kindled enmity in his heart. He had seen how a figure fashioned of clay grew warm under the breath of

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- concaluisse Dei, dominum quoque conditioni<sup>1</sup>  
 inpositum, natura soli pelagique polique  
 ut famulans homini locupletem fundere partum  
 nosset et effusum terreno addicere regi.  
 inflavit fermento animi stomachante tumorem      195  
 bestia deque acidis vim traxit acerba medullis ;  
 bestia sorde carens, cui tunc sapientia longi  
 corporis enodem servabat recta iuventam,  
 complicat ecce novos sinuoso pectore nexus,  
 involvens nitidam spiris torquentibus alvum.      200  
 simplex lingua prius varia micat arte loquendi,  
 et discissa dolis resonat sermone trisulco.  
 hinc natale caput vitiorum, principe ab illo  
 fluxit origo mali, qui se corrumpere primum,  
 mox hominem didicit nullo informante magistro. 205  
 ultimus exitium subverso praeside mundus  
 sortitur mundique omnis labefacta supellex.  
 non aliter quam cum incautum spoliare viantem  
 forte latro adgressus, praedae prius inmemor,  
     ipsum  
 ense ferit dominum, pugnae nodumque  
     moramque,      210  
 quo pereunte trahat captivos victor amictus  
 iam non obstanti locuples de corpore praedo,  
 sic homini subiecta domus, ditissimus orbis  
 scilicet in facilem domino peccante ruinam  
 lapsus erile malum iam tunc vitiabilis hausit.      215  
 tunc lolium lappasque leves per adultera culta  
 ferre malignus ager glaebris male pinguibus ausus  
 triticeam vacuis segetem violavit avenis ;  
 tunc etiam innocuo vitulorum sanguine pasci,

*After 191 U (cf. note on 69) has the line  
 qui cunctum regeret proprio moderamine mundum.*

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God and was made lord of the creation, so that earth and sea and sky had learned to pour forth their rich produce in the service of man and yield it lavishly to an earthly ruler. The beast swelled up with the passion working in his heart, and in his bitter hate drew force from his soured marrows ; a beast hitherto without spot, for upright wisdom then kept his long, young body straight, he suddenly begins with sinuous breast to gather himself in strange twinings, twisting his bright belly in intricate coils. His darting tongue, single before, has now the trick of diverse speech, and being divided in guile, utters three-forked words. From him is the original fountain-head of sin, from its beginning in him sprang the source of evil ; for he learned to corrupt first himself and then man, with no teacher's instruction ; and lastly destruction befalls the world by the ruin of its head, and all the world's store is subverted. Just as when it chances that a robber, setting about the despoiling of an unwary traveller, takes no thought at first of the plunder, but smites its owner with the sword, because it is he that is the obstacle and hindrance in the fight, that when he perishes the victorious brigand may take and carry off his clothes, enriching himself from the body that can no longer withstand him, so the house placed under man's control, the world with all its riches, fell an easy prey to destruction when its lord sinned, and already became corrupt by absorbing the evil from its master. Then it was that the niggard land from its infertile soil dared to bring forth darnel and light burs <sup>a</sup> over polluted fields, and spoiled the wheat crop with

<sup>a</sup> Cf. Genesis iii, 17-18.

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- iamque iugo edomitos rictu laniare iuvencos      220  
 occiso pastore truces didicere leones.  
 nec non et querulis balatibus irritatus  
 plenas nocte lupus studuit perrumpere caulas.  
 omne animal diri callens sollertia furti  
 inbuit et tortos acuit fallacia sensus.      225  
 quamvis maceris florentes ambiat hortos,  
 saepibus et densis vallentur vitea rura,  
 aut populator edet gemmantia germina bruchus,  
 aut avibus discepta feris lacerabitur uva.  
 quid loquar herbarum fibras medicante veneno      230  
 tinctas letiferi fudisse pericula suci?  
 noxiis in teneris sapor aestuat ecce fructectis,  
 cum prius innocuas tulerit natura cicutas,  
 roscidus et viridem qui vestit flos rhododaphnen  
 pabula lascivis dederit sincera capellis.      235  
 ipsa quoque oppositum destructo foedere certo  
 transcendunt elementa modum rapiuntque  
     ruuntque  
 omnia legirupis quassantia viribus orbem.  
 frangunt umbriferos aquilonum proelia lucos,  
 et cadit inmodicis silva extirpata procellis.      240  
 parte alia violentus aquis torrentibus amnis  
 transilit obiectas, praescripta repagula, ripas  
 et vagus eversis late dominatur in agris.  
 nec tamen his tantam rabiem nascentibus ipse  
 conditor instituit, sed laxa licentia rerum      245  
 turbavit placidas rupto moderamine leges.  
 nec mirum si membra orbis concussa rotantur,  
 si vitiis agitata suis mundana laborat

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grainless wild-oats. Then, too, fierce lions learned to kill the herdsman and feed on the blood of harmless cattle and tear with their jaws bullocks already broken in to the yoke; and the wolf by night, stirred up by the plaintive bleating, sought to burst into the full sheepfolds. Skill versed in cruel stratagem tainted every creature, and craft sharpened the senses it had perverted. Though a wall surround flourishing gardens and vine-covered lands be enclosed with thick-set hedges, yet either will the wasting locust devour the budding shoots, or the grape-clusters be torn and mangled by wild birds. Little need is there to tell how the tissues of plants were tinctured with poisonous drugs so that there flowed from them a juice fraught with the risk of death, which all at once billowed up, noxious to taste, in tender bushes, though nature formerly bore hemlock that was harmless and the dewy flower that clothes the green rhododaphne offered honest feeding to the sportive kids. The very elements, too, breaking down established order, overpass the bounds set for them and ravage all things with their havoc, shaking the world with lawless strength. The warring winds shiver the shady groves; the forest falls, uprooted by unruly storms. Elsewhere a boisterous river with its rushing waters leaps over the banks appointed to hold it in check, and spreading abroad lords it far and wide over the ruined fields. Yet the creator ordained no such raging for the elements at their birth, but the loose indisipline of the world, breaking through control, upset its peaceful laws. And no wonder if the world's parts are shaken and tossed, if the machinery of the universe fails to work smoothly because it is thrown out of order by faults in itself,

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machina, si terras luis incentiva fatigat :  
exemplum dat vita hominum, quo cetera peccent, 250  
vita hominum, cui quidquid agit vesania et error  
suppeditant, ut bella fremant, ut fluxa voluptas  
diffuat, impuro fervescat ut igne libido,  
sorbeat ut cumulos nummorum faucibus amplis  
gurges avaritiae, finis quam nullus habendi 255  
temperat aggrestis addentem vota talentis.  
auri namque fames parto fit maior ab auro.  
inde seges scelerum, radix et sola malorum,  
dum scatebras fluviorum omnes et opera metalla  
eliquat ornatus solvendi leno pudoris, 260  
dum venas squalentis humi scrutatur inepta  
ambitio scalpens naturae occulta latentis,  
si quibus in focis radiantes forte lapillos  
rimata inveniat. nec enim contenta decore  
ingenito externam mentitur femina formam 265  
ac, velut artificis Domini manus imperfectum  
os dederit, quod adhuc res exigat aut hyacinthis  
pingere sutilibus redimitae frontis in arce,  
colla vel ignitis sincera incingere sertis,  
auribus aut gravidis virides suspendere bacas, 270  
nectitur et nitidis concharum calculus albens  
crinibus aureolisque riget coma texta catenis.  
taedet sacrilegas matrum percurrere curas,  
muneribus dotata Dei quae plasmata fuco  
inficiunt, ut pigmentis cutis inlita perdat 275  
quod fuerat, falso non agnoscenda colore.  
haec sexus male fortis agit, cui pectore in arto  
mens fragilis facili vitiorum fluctuat aestu.

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and the urge that plagues it gives the earth no rest; for the life of man sets an example for all else to sin, the life of man, whose every act is prompted by folly and delusion, so that wars rage, loose pleasure wantons, lust grows hot with its unclean fire, and the maw of greed swallows piles of money down its wide throat, since no limit of possession controls it and it only puts new desires on top of the riches it has amassed. For the hunger for gold only grows keener from the gold it has got. Hence comes a crop of sins and the sole root of evil, for the love of finery, that like a pander unlooses the restraints of modesty, strains all the gushing waters of streams and the buried ores, and misplaced zeal, probing the dirty earth, scrapes out what nature has hidden away in secret, in hope to find some little glistening stones in some of its diggings to reward its rummaging. For woman, not content with her natural grace, puts on a false and adventitious beauty, and as if the hand of the Lord who made her had given her a face that was unfinished, so that she must needs further embellish it with sapphires mounted on a circlet round her brow to crown it, or surround her chaste neck with strings of glowing gems, or hang a weight of green jewels from her ears, she even fastens the little white stones from sea-shells in her hair to brighten it, and her braided tresses are held in place with bands of gold. It were wearisome to detail all the profane trouble matrons take, who colour the forms which God has dowered with his gifts, so that the painted skin loses its character and cannot be recognised under the false hue. Such are the doings of the feebler sex, in whose narrow mind a frail intelligence tosses lightly on a tide of sin. But even

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quid quod et ipse caput muliebris corporis et rex,  
 qui regit invalidam propria de carne resectam 280  
 particulam, qui vas tenerum dicione gubernat,  
 solvitur in luxum? cernas mollescere cultu  
 heroas vetulos, opifex quibus aspera membra  
 finxerat et rigidos duraverat ossibus artus,  
 sed pudet esse viros, quaerunt vanissima quaeque 285  
 quis niteant, genuina leves ut robora solvant.  
 vellere non ovium, sed Eoo ex orbe pétitis  
 ramorum spoliis fluitantes sumere amictus  
 gaudent et durum scutulis profundere corpus.  
 additur ars, ut fila herbis saturata recoctis 290  
 inludant varias distincto stamine formas.  
 ut quaeque est lanugo ferae mollissirna tactu,  
 pectitur. hunc videas lascivas praepete cursu  
 venantem tunicas, avium quoque versicolorum  
 inđumenta novis texentem plumea telis, 295  
 illum pigmentis redolentibus et peregrino  
 pulvere femineas spargentem turpiter auras.  
 omnia luxus habet nostrae vegetamina vitae,  
 sensibus in quinque statuens quae condidit auctor.  
 auribus atque oculis, tum naribus atque palato 300  
 quaeritur infectus vitiosis artibus usus;  
 ipse etiam toto pollet qui corpore tactus  
 palpamen tenerum blandis ex fotibus ambit.  
 pro dolor! ingenuas naturae occumbere leges,  
 captivasque trahi regnante libidine dotes! 305

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<sup>a</sup> I.e. silk. Virgil (*Georgics*, II, 121) speaks of the Seres  
“combing fine fleeces from the leaves.”

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he who is the head and ruler of the woman's person, who governs the weak portion cut from his own flesh and bears lordship over the delicate vessel, lets himself go in indulgence. One sees strong men, no longer young, turn effeminate in their self-refinement, though the creator made their bodies rude and their limbs hard with bones to stiffen them; but they are ashamed to be *men*. They seek after the greatest vanities to beautify them, so that in their light-mindedness they dissipate their native strength. They love to wear flowing robes not made from sheeps' fleeces but of the spoils taken from branches of trees <sup>a</sup> and fetched from the eastern world, and to overlay their hardy frames with lozenge broidery.<sup>b</sup> Art is called in to make yarns soaked in decoctions of plants work diverse fancy patterns with threads of different colours. Beasts' coats are chosen for carding for their softness to the touch. One man is seen chasing hot-foot after luxuriant tunics, and weaving downy garments with strange threads from many-coloured birds, another shaming himself by spreading womanish scents with perfumed paints and foreign powder. Indulgence is master of all the active powers of our life, which the creator made and established in our five senses. For ears and eyes, and for nostrils and palate we seek out employment which is tainted with vicious arts; and even touch, which acts over our whole body, courts the tender caress of alluring comforts. What grief to think that nature's native laws should go down, and her gifts be carried away captive by a tyrant passion! Every

<sup>a</sup> Illustrations of garments ornamented in this way may be seen in Daremberg et Saglio, *Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines*, s.v. *segmentum*.

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perversum ius omne viget, dum quidquid hab-  
endum  
 omnipotens dederat studia in contraria vertunt.  
 idcircone, rogo, speculatrix pupula molli  
 subdita palpebrae est, ut turpia semivirorum  
 membra theatali spectet vertigine ferri, 310  
 incestans miseros foedo oblectamine visus?  
 aut ideo spirant mediaque ex arce cerebri  
 demittunt geminas sociata foramina nares,  
 ut bibat inlecebras male conciliata voluptas  
 quas pigmentato meretrix iacit improba crine? 315  
 num propter lyricae modulamina vana puellae  
 nervorumque sonos et convivale calentis  
 carmen nequitiae patulas Deus addidit aures  
 perque cavernosos iussit penetrare meatus  
 vocis iter? numquid madido sapor inditus ori 320  
 vivit ob hanc causam, medicata ut fercula pigram  
 ingluviem vegetamque gulam ganeonis inescent,  
 per varios gustus instructa ut prandia ducat  
 in noctem lassetque gravem sua crapula ventrem?  
 quid durum, quid molle foret, quid lene, quid  
     horrens, 325  
 quid calidum gelidumve, Deus cognoscere nosmet  
 ad tactum voluit palpandi interprete sensu.  
 at nos delicias plumarum et linea texta  
 sternimus atque cutem fulcro adtenuante polimus.  
 felix qui indulcis potuit mediocriter uti 330  
 muneribus parcumque modum servare fruendi,  
 quem locuples mundi species et amoena venustas  
 et nitidis fallens circumflua copia rebus  
 non capit, ut puerum, nec inepto addicit amori,  
 qui sub adumbrata dulcedine triste venenum 335  
 deprendit latitare boni mendacis opero.  
 sed fuit id quondam nobis sanctumque bonumque

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power is perverted in its action, because men turn to opposite purposes all that the omnipotent gave them to possess. Has the seeing pupil, I ask, been set under the soft eyelid merely to watch the shameful figures of eunuchs whirling in the theatre, polluting its unhappy vision with a filthy amusement? Or do we have a pair of breathing passages that lead from the centre of the brain's seat to our two nostrils, merely that an ill-gotten sense of pleasure may drink in the allurements that a vile harlot throws out from her greased hair? Was it for the vain melodies of a girl playing on a lute, the sound of strings, the song inspired by inflamed wickedness at a banquet, that God gave us open ears and ordained a passage for the voice through vaulted ways? Does the power to savour, which is imparted to the moist mouth, exist only for spiced dishes to tempt the gourmand's sluggish appetite and give his palate zest, that he may prolong feasts of many courses into the night and load his belly till it is exhausted with its own excess? Hard and soft, smooth and rough, warm and cold, God willed that we should learn by contact through the medium of the sense of touch; but we spread voluptuous downs and fabrics of linen, and make our skin fine and delicate by lying on a couch. Happy the man who has been able to use with temperance the gifts granted him, and to keep frugal measure in his enjoyment of them, whom the world's rich display with its pleasant attraction and its flowing abundance of lying baubles does not charm like a child, nor enslave to a foolish love, who detects the deadly poison lurking under the feigned sweetness, in concealment under what falsely claims to be good! Yet once for us it *was* holy and good, in the

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principio rerum, Christus cum conderet orbem.  
vidit enim Deus esse bonum velut ipse Moyses  
historicus mundi nascentis testificatus 340  
“vidit,” ait, “Deus esse bonum quodcumque  
creavit.”

hoc sequar, hoc stabili conceptum mente tenebo,  
inspirante Deo quod sanctus vaticinator  
prodidit antiquae recolens primordia lucis,  
esse bonum quidquid Deus et Sapientia fecit. 345  
conditor ergo boni Pater est et cum Patre  
Christus,  
nam Deus, atque Deus Pater est et Filius unum;  
quippe unum natura facit, quae constat utriusque  
una voluntatis, iuris, virtutis, amoris.

non tamen idecirco duo numina nec duo rerum 350  
artifices, quoniam generis dissensio nulla est,  
atque ideo nulla est operis distantia, nulla  
ingenii, peperit bona omnia conditor unus.  
nil luteum de fonte fluit nec turbidus umor  
nascitur aut primae violatur origine venae, 355  
sed dum liventes liquor incorruptus harenas  
praelambit, putrefacta inter contagia sordet.  
numquid equus, ferrum, taurus, leo, funis, olivum  
in se vim sceleris, cum formarentur, habebant?  
quod iugulatur homo, non ferrum causa furoris 360  
sed manus est; nec equum vesania fervida circi  
auctorem levitatis habet rabidive fragoris:  
mens vulgi rationis inops, non cursus equorum  
perfurit: infami studio perit utile donum.  
sic Lacedaemonias oleo maduisse palaestras 365  
novimus et placidum servire ad crimina sucum,  
inde per aërium pendens audacia funem

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beginning of things, when Christ created the world. For God saw that it was good, as Moses, the historian of the world's birth, bears witness: "God," he says, "saw that all his creation was good." This faith I shall follow and hold it firmly grasped in my mind, this that the holy prophet, surveying the beginnings of light in ancient times, has declared under God's inspiration, that all that God and Wisdom created was good. The creator of good, then, is the Father and, with the Father, Christ; for He is God, and God the Father and the Son are one being, in as much as they are made one by the one nature of will and authority and power and love which is common to both. Yet are there not therefore two Gods nor two creators, since there is no divergence of being and therefore no separation of work or of mind, but it is one creator who made all things good. There is no muddy flow from the fountain-head, the water is not turbid at its rise, nor made unclean as it springs from its source; but as the pure stream washes the dirty sand along its banks it is befouled by contact with decay. Did horse and iron and bull and lion and rope and oil have any wickedness in them when they were made? In the murder of a man it is not the iron that is the cause of violence, but the hand; and when the frenzy of the circus rages, it is not the horse that is responsible for the folly or the furious din: it is the unreasoning mob, not the running of horses, that goes mad, and so a useful gift is wasted through a base passion. Thus it is that, as we know, the wrestlers in the Spartan schools were drenched with oil, and that gentle liquor was put to the service of sin; hence it is that a man boldly mounts high up on the stage along a rope in

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ardua securis scandit proscaenia plantis,  
 inde feras volueri temeraria corpora saltu  
 transiliunt mortisque inter discrimina ludunt.      370  
 sanguinis humani spectacula publicus edit  
 consensus legesque iubent venale parari  
 supplicium, quo membra hominum discerpta  
     cruentis  
 morsibus oblectent hilarem de funere plebem.  
 mille alia stolidi bacchantia gaudia mundi      375  
 percensere piget, quae veri oblita Tonantis  
 humanum miseris volvunt erroribus aevum.  
 nemo animum summi memorem genitoris in  
     altum  
 excitat, ad caelum mittit suspiria nemo,  
 nec recolens apicem solii natalis ad ipsum      380  
 respicit auctorem, nec spem super aëra librat,  
 sed mentem gravidis contentam stertere curis  
 indigno subdit domino perituraque pronus  
 diligit et curvo quaerit terrestria sensu.  
 hoc pulchrum quod terra parit, quod gloria  
     confert      385  
 lubrica, commendat quod perniciosa voluptas,  
 quod velut excitus difflato pulvere ventus  
 praeterit, exemplo tenuis quod transvolat umbrae.  
 his aegras animas morborum pestibus urget  
 praedo potens, tacitis quem viribus interfusum      390  
 corda bibunt hominum; serit ille medullitus  
     omnes  
 nequicias spargitque suos per membra ministros.  
 namque illic numerosa cohors sub principe tali

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<sup>a</sup> The rope-dancer had long been popular. In one kind of performance the rope was stretched obliquely from the level

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mid air with confident steps <sup>a</sup>; hence that rash figures spring with flying leap over wild beasts and sport amid the risks of death. It is the general public taste that produces exhibitions of human blood, and law commands the provision of men who are paid to suffer torture,<sup>b</sup> so that the tearing of human limbs asunder by blood-stained jaws may divert a populace that makes merry at the sight of death. I care not to review the thousand other wanton pleasures of the senseless world, which in forgetfulness of the true Thunderer enwrap men's life in pitiable delusions. None lifts on high a heart that remembers the supreme Father, none utters a sigh towards heaven, nor calls to mind the lofty throne of his origin and casts a thought upon his maker, nor launches his hopes beyond the skies. To an unworthy master men subject a spirit that is content to sleep heavily under the cares that weigh on it, with down-bent head they set their hearts on what is doomed to perish, and with eyes on the ground seek after earthly things. That they count lovely which is born of earth, or bestowed by shifting reputation, or set off by baneful pleasure, that which passes like a whiff of wind that has scattered the dust, or flits by like an unsubstantial shade. With these plagues of sin the powerful robber besets our sickened souls. With his stealthy forces he infiltrates into men's hearts and they draw him in. He sows all manner of wickedness in their inmost parts, and scatters his agents through their frames. For there a large force serves under

of the stage to a high platform, the performer going up on one side and down on the other.

<sup>b</sup> *Bestiarii*, trained to fight wild beasts and paid for their performances in the arena.

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militat horrendisque animas circumcidet armis,  
Ira, Superstitio, Maeror, Discordia, Luctus,<sup>1</sup> 395  
Sanguinis atra Sitis, Vini Sitis et Sitis Auri,  
Livor, Adulterium, Dolus, Obtrectatio, Furtum.  
informes horrent facies habituque minaces.  
Ambitio ventosa tumet, Doctrina superbit,  
personat Eloquium, nodos Fraus abdita nectit. 400  
inde canina foro latrat Facundia toto,  
hinc gerit Herculeam vilis Sapientia clavam,  
ostentatque suos vicatim gymnosophistas,  
incerat lapides fumosos Idololatrix  
Religio et surdis pallens advolvitur aris. 405  
heu quantis mortale genus premit improbus hostis  
armigeris, quanto ferrata satellite ductor  
bella gerit, quanta victos dicione triumphat!  
surgit in auxilium Chananeus atque agmina  
densem  
casside terribilis, saetarum pondera mento 410  
concutiens dextramque gravi cum cuspide  
quassans.  
ast alia de parte furens exercitus ardet  
regis Amorraei, tum milia Gergeseorum  
effundunt aciem toto volitantia campo;  
eminus hi feriunt, configunt comminus illi. 415  
ecce Zebusiaceae fervent ad proelia turmae,  
aurea tela quibus de sanguine tincta draconis  
mortifero splendore micant radiantque  
necantque.  
nec non terrificas pilis armare catervas

<sup>1</sup> Some MSS. of both classes have luxus.

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<sup>a</sup> A stout staff is spoken of as a characteristic appanage of philosophers. Cf. Sidonius, *Carm.* 15, 197.

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this wicked commander and invests men's souls with dreadful weapons—Anger, Superstition, Sickness-of-Heart, Strife, Affliction, foul Thirst-for-Blood, Thirst-for-Wine, Thirst-for-Gold, Malice, Adultery, Craft, Slander, Theft. Hideous and frightful are their shapes, threatening their carriage. Vaunting Ambition is puffed up, Learning is proud, Eloquence thunders, Deceit contrives snares in secret. Here Abusive Speech snarls throughout the courts, there paltry Philosophy wields the club <sup>a</sup> of Hercules and displays her naked Sages <sup>b</sup> through the streets, while Idolatry coats smoke-grimed stones with wax <sup>c</sup> and in pale fear falls prostrate before altars that cannot hear. Alas, with what armed forces does the ruthless enemy press upon the race of men, with what attendant trains under his command does he wage 'his iron wars, with what dominion triumph over the conquered! The Canaanite rises up to his aid with close-set columns and daunting helm, shaking the weight of bristly beard on his chin and waving the hand that grasps his heavy spear. On another side in burning rage stands the army of the king of the Amorites, and the Girgashites in their thousands pour out in array and come flying over the field. Some smite from a distance, others join in close combat. See, the squadrons of the Jebusites are hot for battle; their golden weapons, dipped in serpent's blood, with death-dealing lustre glitter and gleam and slay. It is thy pleasure too, O Hittite,

<sup>b</sup> "Gymnosophist" is properly a word used by the Greeks to describe certain Indian ascetics. Prudentius may be thinking of the Cynics, who are often satirised for their "nakedness" (*cf.* Juvenal, 13, 122; 14, 309).

<sup>c</sup> See note on *Apotheosis*, 457.

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- te, Cittae, iuvat; sed gens Pherezaea sagittis      420  
 insultat virtute pari, sed dispare ferro.  
 postremum cuneum rex promovet Euvaeorum  
 squamosum thoraca gerens de pelle colubri.  
 his subnixa viris scelerum perversa potestas  
 edomat invalidas mentes, quae simplicitate      425  
 indociles bellique rudes sub foedere falso  
 tristis amicitiae primum socia agmina credunt,  
 Mammoneamque fidem pacis sub amore  
 sequuntur.
- mox faciles ad vincla rapi iuga dura volentes  
 addictis subeunt cervicibus, et nebulonum      430  
 spirituum iussis servire ferocibus optant.  
 ille, supervacuis augens patrimonia fundis  
 finitimusque inhians contempto limite agellis,  
 ducitur innexus manicis et mille catenis  
 ante triumphales currus post terga revinctus,      435  
 nec se barbaricis addictum sentit habenis.  
 hic, qui ventosae scandit fastigia famae  
 inflaturque cavo pompa popularis honore,  
 qui summum solidumque bonum putat ambi-  
 tionis
- crescere successu, praeconum voce trementes      440  
 exanimare reos, miserorum in corpora fasces  
 frangere, terribiles legum exercere secures,  
 in laqueum iam colla dedit, iam compede  
 dura
- nectitur et pedibus servilia vincula limat.  
 credite, captivi mortales, hostica quos iam      445  
 damnatos cohibent ergastula, quos famulatu  
 poenarum virtus non intellecta coerct,

<sup>a</sup> Cf. Joshua xxiv, 11.

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to arm dread companies with javelins. But the tribe of the Perizzites come at us with arrows, their courage like thine, though their weapon is unlike. Last of all the king of the Hivites brings up his regiment, wearing a scaly breast-plate of snake-skin.<sup>a</sup> With these warriors to support him the perverse prince of evil overcomes weak souls, which in artless ignorance, unused to warfare, trust in a false treaty of ill-starred friendship and at first take them for allies, and so become subjects of Mammon through their love of peace. Then they are carried away to bondage, easy victims, who willingly surrender their necks to the hard yoke and of their own choice obey the insolent commands of ne'er-do-well spirits. That man, who is enlarging his inheritance with properties he does not need, and, scorning the boundary between, casts longing eyes on his neighbour's bit of land, is being led in shackles before the triumphal cars, fettered with a thousand chains behind his back, and yet does not realise that he is made over to cruel bondage. This one, who climbs the heights of windy reputation and is puffed up with the unsubstantial fame of popular display, who thinks it the chief and only real good to succeed in pushing himself farther and farther forward, to terrify prisoners at the bar who tremble at the voice of the criers, to break the rods on poor wretches' bodies and wield the terror-striking axes of the law, has already put his head into the noose, already he is bound with the hard fetter and rubbing smooth with his feet the shackles of slavery. Believe, ye captive mortals, who are condemned to confinement in your enemy's prison-house, who are kept in durance under the bondage of punishment because you did not

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haec illa est Babylon, haec transmigratio nostrae  
 gentis et horribilis victoria principis Assur,  
 carmine luctifico quam deflens Hieremias      450  
 orbatam propriis ululavit civibus urbem.  
 num latet aut dubium est animas de semine Iacob  
 exilium gentile pati, quas Persica regna  
 captivas retinent atque in sua foedera cogunt?  
 illic natali desuescunt vivere ritu      455  
 moribus et patriis exutae in barbara iura  
 degenerant linguamque novam vestemque  
     sequuntur,  
 deque profanato discunt sordescere cultu  
 nutricemque abolent petulanti e pectore Sion.  
 iam patriae meminisse piget, iam mystica  
     frangunt      460  
 organa et externi laudant anathemata regni.  
 nonne fuit melius saevum Memphitidis aulae  
 imperium tolerasse patres penitusque sinistris  
 adsedisse focus, positos Pharaonis iniqui  
     sub pedibus, limo et paleis servire paratos,      465  
 carnis et inmodicæ spurco ructamine crudos?  
 quo tantum auxilii per prodigalia signa  
 effudit Dominus, populum dum forte rebellem  
 servat ope inmerita, vinclis dum subdita colla  
 solvit et Aegyptum virga serpente coerct?      470  
 quid iuvat aequoreum pelago cedente profundum  
 pulvrea calcasse via, cum conscientia ponti  
 saxa sub ignoto patuerunt prodita caelo  
 aruit et medio sitiens in gurgite limus,  
 si victor virtute Dei mediasque tenebras      475  
 luce columnari scindens exercitus olim

<sup>a</sup> Cf. 2 Kings xxiv, 10 ff.      <sup>b</sup> Cf. Exodus xvi, 3.  
<sup>c</sup> Exodus vii, 10.

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understand goodness, this is the Babylon ye have heard of, this is the removal of our race <sup>a</sup> and the fearful conquest of the king of Assyria which Jeremiah bewailed in his song of lamentation, weeping for a city bereft of her people. Is it not known beyond doubt that the souls of the seed of Jacob suffer exile among the Gentiles, held in captivity by the realms of Persia and compelled to join with them? There they forget the way of life to which they were born, and shedding their native manners, debase themselves to obey heathen laws, adopt new speech and dress, learn to befoul themselves with unhallowed worship, and efface from their foward heart all thought of Zion, their nurse. They care not any longer to remember their own country, they break their holy instruments of music, and speak well of the sacrifices of a foreign kingdom. Had it not been better that their fathers should have borne with the cruel government of the court of Memphis and sat well in by hearths unfriendly, under the oppressor Pharaoh's feet ready to be the slaves of clay and straw, and eating their fill of flesh till they belched disgustfully from the surfeit? <sup>b</sup> To what end did the Lord lavish all that help by miraculous signs, saving a rebellious people with succour they did not deserve, freeing their necks from the bonds laid on them and constraining Egypt with the rod that crawled? <sup>c</sup> What profits it to have trodden the deep waters by a sandy path while the sea made way, when rocks that had felt the main lay exposed under a sky they knew not, and the slime grew dry and parched in the midst of the flood, if the host that once conquered by the power of God and cut through the darkness with a pillared light has lost the rich valley where it

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perdidit inventi vallem botryonis opimam,  
 si nescit versare solum, cui melle perenni  
 glaeba fluens niveos permiscet lactea rivos,  
 si domitam Ierichon lituis atque aere canoro      480  
 rursus in antiquos patitur consurgere muros,  
 si ripis reflui Iordanis pellitur et iam  
 deserit adscriptam dimensa in iugera sortem,  
 denique si structam tantis sudoribus urbem  
 et quae nubigenas transcendunt culmina nimbos      485  
 defensare nequit, si nescit quis lapis ille est  
 hostibus obsistens et inexpugnabile turris  
 praesidium, quem non aerato machina rostro  
 arietat insiliens, nec ferrea verbera quassant?  
 angulus hic portae in capite est, hic continet  
     omnem      490

saxorum seriem constructaque limina firmat.  
 quem qui rite suis per propugnacula muris  
 noverit insertum, seque ac sua moenia vallo  
 praecingat triplici celsa stans eminus arce,  
 fretus amore petrae castis et pervigil armis,      495  
 non illum regina Tyri, non accola magni  
 Euphratis Parthus rapiet, non decolor Indus  
 tempora pinnatis redimitus nigra sagittis.  
 quin si fulmineos cogens ad bella gigantas  
 allophilus tua castra velit delere tyrannus,  
 tutus eris, nec te firma statione movebit      500  
 ipse Charon mundi, numen Marcionis, ipse,  
 qui regit aërio vanas sub sole tenebras.  
 nam vanum quidquid sol aspicit, ex elementis

<sup>a</sup> Numbers xiii, 23–27.

<sup>b</sup> Cf. Joshua iii, 16.

<sup>c</sup> Joshua xiii–xix.

<sup>d</sup> The word ἀλλόφυλος = “alien,” but is used particularly of the Philistines. Cf. the heading of Psalm 56 in the Septuagint

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found the bunch of grapes,<sup>a</sup> if it cannot work the soil where the land flows with honey unceasing and colours the streams snow-white with its milk, if it suffers Jericho, after being subdued by the loud brazen trumpet, once more to rise to the height of her ancient walls, if it is driven from the banks of Jordan, which stayed its waters,<sup>b</sup> and abandons the lands that were allotted in apportioned measures,<sup>c</sup> if it cannot defend the city that was built with such labour, and the high tops that rise beyond the cloud-born storms, if it knows not which is that stone that withstands the foe like an impregnable tower of defence, which no engine of war leaping upon it can batter down with its brazen snout, nor blows of iron shake? This is the keystone at the head of the gateway; this it is that holds together the whole course of blocks and makes the structure of the entrance firm. If a man knows that this stone is duly set in the defences of his walls and girds himself and his stronghold with a threefold rampart, while he stands at a distance on his lofty citadel in reliance on the love of the stone, watching and keeping his armour clean, such a man neither queen of Tyre nor Parthian that dwells by great Euphrates shall ravish, nor swarthy Indian whose black brows are wreathed with feathered arrows. Even should the prince of the Philistines<sup>d</sup> gather his fiery giants for war and seek to destroy thy camp, thou wilt be safe, nor will the very Charon of the world, Marcion's deity, he who rules over the unsubstantial realm of darkness below the sun in the sky, dislodge thee from thy strong post. For all that the sun looks

and Vulgate. Prudentius uses it again in *Tit. Hist.* xviii, 3 (cf. Judges xv, 5).

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- cuncta solubilibus fluxoque creamine constant. 505  
 fallo, creaturam nisi doctor apostolus omnem  
 subiectam vanis non sponte laboribus orsus  
 periuro ingemuit miserans servire latroni :  
 “ errat ” ait, “ qui luctamen cum sanguine nobis  
 et carne et venis ferventibus et vitios  
 felle putat calidisque animam peccare medullis.  
 non mentem sua membra premunt, nec terrea  
 virtus
- oppugnat sensus liquidos bellove lacessit,  
 sed cum spiritibus tenebrosis nocte dieque  
 congregimur, quorum dominatibus umidus iste 515  
 et pigris densus nebulis obtemperat aër.”  
 scilicet hoc medium, caelum inter et infima terrae  
 quod patet et vacuo nubes suspendit hiatu,  
 frena potestatum variarum sustinet ac sub  
 principe Belia rectoribus horret inquis. 520  
 his conluctamur praedonibus, ut sacra nobis  
 oris apostolici testis sententia prodit.  
 nemo habitum naturae, aut inritamina peccans  
 corporis accuset; facile est frenare rebelles  
 affectus carnis nimiosque retundere pulsus 525  
 materiae fragilis et viscera victa domare.  
 quippe animus longe praestantior, utpote summo  
 aethere demissus, subiectos si velit artus  
 imperio quassare gravi iussisque severis  
 dedere, regnanti domino vis nulla resistet. 530  
 maior inest vis illa homini, quae flatile virus  
 ingerit et tenuem tenui ferit aëre mentem.  
 Parthica non aeque ventos transcurrit harundo,

<sup>a</sup> Cf. Romans viii, 20–22.

<sup>b</sup> Cf. Ephesians vi, 12; ii, 2.

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upon is unsubstantial; all things consist of mortal elements and transient matter of creation. I plead guilty to deceiving, if the apostle who instructs us has not said that all creation is subject, not willingly, to vain struggles,<sup>a</sup> and lamented in pity that it is in bondage to the false robber. "He errs," says he, "who supposes that our contest is with blood and flesh, with burning passions of the body and corrupted gall, and that the soul sins because the marrow is hot. It is not its body that bears down upon the soul, nor earthly power that attacks the pure spirit and makes war upon it, but it is with spirits of darkness that we contend night and day, which bear rule over the damp and heavy-clouded air."<sup>b</sup> All this middle region, you must know, which stretches between the heavens and the earth beneath and suspends the clouds in its great empty space, upholds the government of diverse powers and is the gruesome seat of wicked rulers under the command of Belial. It is with these robbers that we wrestle, as the holy words of the apostle's mouth testify to us. Let no man blame the cast of his nature or the provocation of his body for his sin. It is easy to curb the rebellious passions of the flesh, to beat down the inordinate impulses of frail matter and conquer and subdue the body. For the spirit by far excels it, since it came down from heaven on high, and if it cares to break with stern rule the members that are put under it and subject them to strict command, no force can withstand its royal mastery. But there is a stronger force in man, one that attacks him with a breath of poison and strikes the subtle soul with a subtile air. Not so quickly through the breezes flies the Parthian arrow, whose path no eye can

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cuius iter nullus potis est comprehendere visus ;  
praepes enim volucres dum pennis transvolat  
auras,

535

inprovisa venit, nec stridor nuntiat ante  
adventum leti quam pectoris abdita rumpat,  
securam penetrans medicato vulnere vitam ;  
sed magis aligera est magis et medicata sagitta,  
quam iacit umbrosi dominatio lubrica mundi, 540  
eludens excussa oculos calamique volantis  
praepete transcursu cordis penetralia figens.  
nec segnis natura animae est aut tarda cavendi  
vulneris, ignitum quoniam Deus indidit olli  
ingenium, purum, sapiens, subtile, serenum, 545  
mobile, sollicitum, velox, agitabile, acutum,  
factorem modo casta suum veneretur et ipsi  
militet ac victum proculcet sobria mundum,  
nil de pestiferis opibus aut falsificatis  
terrarum spoliis stulto oblectamine libans, 550  
ne sub fasce iacens alieno et dedita regno  
non queat argutas hostis vitare sagittas.  
sed quid ego omne malum mundique homin-  
umque maligni

hostis ad invidiam detorqueo, cum mala nostra  
ex nostris concreta animis genus et caput et vim, 555  
quid sint, quid valeant, sumant de corde parente ?  
ille quidem fomes nostrorum et causa malorum est,  
sed tantum turbare potest aut fallere quantum  
nos volumus, qui decrepito suggesta leoni  
armamenta damus : friget fera futille frendens, 560  
humani generis ni per suffragia gliscat.  
gignimus omne malum proprio de corpore  
nostrum,  
ut genuit David, alias pater optimus, unum  
crimen Abessalon ; taetrum pater ille, sed unum,

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perceive ; for flitting swifty with its feathers through the winged airs it comes unforeseen, and no hissing proclaims the approach of death before it bursts its way into the recesses of the breast, piercing the unconcerned life with a poisoned wound ; but it is a swifter arrow with a deadlier poison that the deceitful lord of the darksome world shoots, one that baffles the eye when it is launched, and with the quick passage of its flying shaft pierces the inmost heart. Yet the soul is not naturally sluggish or slow to avoid the wound, since God has given it a lively nature that is pure, wise, delicate, tranquil, active, careful, quick, light-moving, keen-edged : if it but piously reverence its maker and fight in his service, and in soberness overcome the world and trample it under foot, tasting not in foolish enjoyment any of the deadly riches or fraudulent spoils of the earth, lest, being weighed down under its burden and given over to another's rule, it be unable to avoid the enemy's whizzing arrows. But why shift all the evil of the world and of men on to the spite of a malign enemy, when our sins grow out of our own minds and take their birth and source and power, their being and their strength from the heart which begets them ? The enemy indeed is the tinder that sets our sins alight, but he can only trouble or deceive us to the extent that we are willing. It is we who furnish weapons as a gift to the enfeebled lion ; the wild beast flags and gnashes his teeth to no purpose unless he gain strength from the favour of mankind. We beget all our sin from our own body, just as David, who was otherwise blessed as a father, begot the one guilty Absalom. In that instance a father begot,

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innocuas inter suboles genuit patricidam, 565  
 ausus in auctorem generis qui stringere ferrum  
 (a pietas!) signis contraria signa paternis  
 egit et unius commisit sanguinis arma.  
 nostra itidem diros urente propagine natos  
 pectora parturiunt, versis qui protinus in nos 570  
 morsibus insuescunt gignentum vivere poenis;  
 depopulantur enim nimium fecunda parentum  
 viscera et interitu genitalis stirpis aluntur.  
 progeniem verum ille suam, rex utpote summus  
 atque Dei vates pariturae et virginis auctor, 575  
 tristibus atque piis variaverat, ut Solomonis  
 frater Abessalon sereret sua crimina iustis  
 pigneribus dulcemque domum turbaret amaris.  
 nos dignum Solomone nihil, nos degener inplet  
 solus Abessalon lacerans pia viscera ferro. 580  
 si licet ex ethicis<sup>1</sup> quidquam praesumere vel si  
 de physicis exempli aliquid, sic viperā, ut aiunt,  
 dentibus emoritur fusae per viscera prolix,  
 mater morte sua, non sexu fertilis aut de  
 concubitu distenta uterum, sed cum calet igni 585  
 percita femineo, moriturum obscena maritum  
 ore sitit patulo; caput inserit ille trilingue  
 coniugis in fauces atque oscula fervidus intrat,  
 insinuans oris coitu genitale venenum.  
 nupta voluptatis vi saucia mordicus haustum 590  
 frangit amatoris blanda inter foedera guttur,  
 infusasque bibit caro pereunte salivas.

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<sup>1</sup> Some MSS. have ethnicis (*the heathen*), which Bergman adopts as being the reading of A.

<sup>a</sup> The statement about the viper is in part as old as Herodotus (iii, 109).

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among his innocent children, a horrid patricide, but only one, who dared to draw the sword against the author of his being (alas, for filial duty!), set forces in motion against his father's, and fought against his own flesh and blood. So do our hearts give birth to a galling breed of accursed children who straightway turn their teeth upon us and learn to live by the sufferings of their begetters; for they waste the all too fruitful flesh of their parents and feed on the death of the stock from which they sprang. But David, being a great king and a prophet of God also, and ancestor of the virgin who was to bear a child, had dutiful as well as unhappy children, so that Solomon's brother Absalom brought his crimes into a family that was virtuous and troubled a pleasant household with his sorrowful deeds, whereas there is nothing in us to be compared with Solomon, but only the debased Absalom who tears the flesh of his kin with the sword. If we may draw on the moralists for anything or take an instance from natural history,<sup>a</sup> it is thus, they say, that the viper perishes by the teeth of the progeny that is brought forth through her flesh. She becomes a mother by her own death; she does not bear her young by an organ of sex, nor does her womb swell from intercourse, but when she burns with the excitement of the female's heat the lewd beast opens her mouth wide in thirst for a mate that is doomed. He puts his three-tongued head into his spouse's jaws, eagerly entering her alluring mouth and inserting his baneful seed by an oral union. The bride, smitten with the strong pleasure, takes her lover's head between her teeth and breaks his neck with a bite in the midst of their fond compact, drinking in the injected slaver while her dear one

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his pater inlecebris consumitur, at genitricem  
clausa necat subolis; nam postquam semine  
adulto

incipiunt calidis corpusecula parva latebris        595  
serpere motatumque uterum vibrata ferire,  
aestuat interno pietatis crimine mater  
carnificemque gemit damnati conscientia sexus  
progeniem, saepti rumpentem obstacula partus.  
nam quia nascendi nullus patet exitus, alvus        600  
fetibus in lucem nitentibus excruciatia  
carpitur atque viam lacerata per ilia pandit.  
tandem obitu altricis prodit grex ille dolorum  
ingressum vitae vix eluctatus et ortum  
per scelus exculpens; lambunt natale cadaver        605  
reptantes catuli, prolis dum nascitur orba,  
haud experta diem miserae nisi postuma matris.  
non dispar nostrae conceptus mentis: ab ore  
vipereo infusum sic conbibit illa venenum  
coniuge Beliade, sic oscula devorat haustu        610  
interiusque rapit, sic felle libidinis ardens  
inpletur vitiis perituro mixta marito.  
tunc praegnans letale genus concepta maligni  
fert opera ingenii de semine complicis hydri;  
quem poenis pensare prius sua facta necesse est        615  
corruptae pro stupro animae proque orbe  
perempto.

ipsam porro animam crudelia vulnera carpunt  
mille puerperiis, suboles dum parturit ex se  
contra naturam genitas, peccamina crebra

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dies. With these allurements the sire is destroyed; but the young shut up within her kill their dam. For when the seed develops and the tiny bodies begin to creep about in their warm hiding-place and to shake the womb with their waving and lashing, the mother is tormented by the outrage against filial duty within her, and, conscious of her guilty sex, bemoans the fate that makes her progeny her executioners as they break through the barriers that stop their bringing forth. For because there is no passage to give them birth, the belly is tortured and gnawed by the young as they struggle into the light, till a way is opened through the torn sides. At last the grievous brood come forth by the death of her that has nurtured them, scarce forcing an entrance into life and carving out their way to birth by a crime, and the young creep about licking the corpse that bore them, a family of orphans at their very birth, that have only seen the light of day as the posthumous children of their poor mother. Just so does our soul conceive. In the same way it imbibes the baneful fluid poured into it from the serpent's mouth, mating with the son of Belial; in the same way it gulps down the allurements of his lips, greedily drawing them in; in the same way it burns with the gall of desire and is filled with sins by its union with a spouse that is doomed to perish. Then being pregnant it brings forth its deadly brood in works of an evil nature, conceived from the seed of its partner the serpent, which must first pay the penalty for its deeds, for corrupting and debauching the soul and ruining the world. Again, cruel wounds tear the soul too in a thousand labour-pains, as she gives birth to her unnatural progeny, to wit a multitude

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- scilicet et pastos materno funere natos. 620  
 hinc illa est Domini iusta obiurgatio Christi :  
 “ nonne pater daemon, vos increpo, peccatores,  
 concubitu carnis semen sitientis iniquum  
 vos genuit ? ” sanctum, lector, percense  
 volumen :
- quod loquor, invenies Dominum dixisse profanis 625  
 vera obiectantem mortalibus : “ ex Patre nam vos  
 esse meo genitos pietas,” ait, “ ipsa probaret  
 ac pietatis opus.” pro caeca libido ! quid hoc est,  
 quod cum se thalamis despontam mens bona iustis  
 noverit, inque torum regis nuptura vocetur, 630  
 et regis semper iuvenis senioque repulso  
 divinum decus aeterno servantis in ore,  
 malit adulterium fulvo et se munere vilem  
 vendat nocticolae spurcis complexibus Indi,  
 aspernata Dei fusam per virginis artus 635  
 progeniem dulcesque vocans in fornice natos ?  
 sentio quam contra moveat pellacia litem,  
 quo dente obnitens spinosa calumnia pugnet  
 nosque lacessito vocet ad luctamina vero.  
 “ si non vult Deus esse malum, cur non vetat ? ”  
 inquit. 640
- “ nil refert auctor fuerit factorque malorum,  
 anne opera in vitium sceleris pulcherrima verti,  
 cum possit prohibere, sinat ; qui si velit omnes  
 innocuos agere omnipotens, nec sancta voluntas  
 degeneret, facto nec se manus inquinet ullo. 645  
 condidit ergo malum Dominus quod spectat ab  
 alto  
 et patitur fierique probat, tamquam ipse crearat ;  
 ipse creavit enim quod, cum discludere possit,

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<sup>a</sup> Cf. John viii, 44.

<sup>b</sup> Cf. John viii, 41–42.

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of sins, children that have fed on their mother's corpse. Hence the just reproach of the Lord Christ: "Is not the devil—I accuse you, ye sinners—the father that begot you, by union with the flesh that thirsted for the seed of iniquity?"<sup>a</sup> Examine the holy book, O reader: you will find that the Lord spoke as I say, bringing true charges against unholy men. "For love," He says, "and the work of love would prove you begotten of my Father."<sup>b</sup> "O blind lust! What means it that the good soul, knowing herself plighted for a true marriage, and called to the king's chamber to be his bride, bride of a king ever young, who keeps the divine beauty for ever on his countenance and admits not the approach of age, would rather choose adultery and sell herself cheap for a gift of gold to the foul embraces of a blackamoor that loves the darkness, while she rejects the Son of God brought forth by a virgin's body, and calls children born in a brothel sweet?

I know the seductive argument that is brought forward on the other side, the sharp tooth with which stinging malice presses the fight, challenging us to the contest by attacking the truth. "If God does not will the existence of evil," it says, "why does He not forbid it? It matters not whether He was the author and creator of evil, or only suffers his fairest works to be misapplied to sin when He could prevent it. If He, being omnipotent, willed that all men live innocent lives, neither would the pure will be debased nor the hand pollute itself with any act. Therefore the Lord established the evil which He looks on from on high and permits and sanctions, as much as if He himself created it; for He has himself created that which, though He could shut it out, He does not

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non abolet longoque sinit grassarier usu.”  
damna aures, Pater alme, meas, et claude meatus 650  
obbrutescentis capitis, ne pervia tales  
concipiat flexura sonos; est perdere tanti  
extinctum vitae officium de parte cerebri,  
inmunem modo sese anima expertemque nefandi  
auditus felix stolida conservet ab aure. 655  
quis ferat haec iniecta Deo convicia, qui se  
divinis meminit praecellere nobilitatum  
muneribus? multa ut taceam, vel sola be-  
nignum  
res probat esse Deum, vetiti quo amore  
peremptos  
excitat e tumulis homines regnique per aevum 660  
participes iubet esse sui. qui si foret auctor  
servatorque mali, nunquam post damna salutis  
peccantumque obitus redivivam ferre medellam  
vellet et amissos ope restaurare secunda.  
labi hominis, servare Dei est: meritis perit iste, 665  
ille abolet pereuntis opus meritumque resolvit,  
argumentum ingens Dominum, qui talia praestet,  
nolle malum nec, quod post abluit, ante probare.  
“ invitone aliquis potis est peccare Tonante,  
cui facile est in corde hominis conponere sensus 670  
quos libeat, fibrasque omnes animare pudicis  
pulsibus et totum venis infundere honestum? ”  
nescis, stulte, tuae vim libertatis ab ipso  
formatore datam? nescis ab origine quanta  
sit concessa tibi famulo super orbe potestas, 675  
et super ingenio proprio laxaeque soluto

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abolish, but allows to riot unchecked." Destroy my ears, bountiful Father, stop up the passages of my head and let it lose its sense, ere their windings take up such sounds and give them access; to annihilate the function of life in a part of my brain and lose it utterly is not too high a price, if only my soul, thanks to a dulled ear, has the blessedness to keep itself immune and free from hearing impiety. What man, remembering that it is the divine grace that has given him the rank in which he surpasses all other creatures, would bear to have such insults hurled against God? To pass over many things, God is proved good even by the mere fact that though men were cut off by their love of what was forbidden He raises them from the grave and bids them be partakers of his kingdom for ever. If He were the author and maintainer of evil, He would never, after the loss of salvation and the death of sinners, have willed to bring healing and restoration and by his gracious help to reinstate the lost. To fall is of man, to save is of God. Man dies according to his desert; God wipes out the work of dying man and annuls his desert, a strong proof that the Lord who bestows such blessings does not will evil nor sanction beforehand that which He afterwards washes away. "Can one sin without the consent of the Thunderer, for whom it were easy to dispose whatsoever feelings He pleased in the heart of man, to endow all his tissues with pure impulses and pour nought but goodness into his veins?" Knowest thou not, thou fool, the strength of thine own liberty, given thee by the creator himself? Knowest thou not the greatness of the power that was granted to thee from the beginning over a world at thy service, and over thine own purpose and the

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iure voluntatis, liceat cui velle sequique  
quod placitum, nullique animum subiungere  
vinclo? 680  
an cum te dominum cunctis, quaecumque  
crearat,  
praeficeret mundumque tuis servire iuberet  
imperiis, cumque arva, polum, mare, flumina,  
ventus  
dederet, arbitrium de te tibi credere avarus  
nollet ut indigno libertatemque negaret?  
quale erat electus magni rex orbis ut esset  
non rex ipse sui, curto foedatus honore? 685  
nam quis honos domini est, cuius mens libera non  
est,  
una sed inpositae servit sententia legi?  
quae laus porro hominis vel quod meritum, sine  
certo  
inter utramque viam discriminare iuste?  
non fit sponte bonus, cui non est prompta potestas  
velle aliud flexosque animi convertere sensus.  
atqui nec bonus est nec conlaudabilis ille  
qui non sponte bonus, quoniam probitate coacta  
gloria nulla venit sordetque ingloria virtus;  
nec tamen est virtus, ni deteriora refutans 690  
emicet et meliore viam petat indole rectam.  
“vade,” ait ipse parens opifexque et conditor  
Adae,  
“vade, homo, adflatu nostri prae nobilis oris,  
insubiecte, potens, rerum arbiter, arbiter idem  
et iudex mentis propriae, mihi subdere soli 700  
sponte tua, quo sit subiectio et ipsa soluto  
libera iudicio. non eogo nec exigo per vim,  
sed moneo iniustum fugias iustumque sequaris.

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uncontrolled discretion of a free will, so that it may will and follow out its own determination, subjecting the spirit to no bondage? When God made thee lord over all his creation and bade the world be the servant of thy commands, when He gave up to thee land and sky and sea and streams and winds, would He grudge and refuse to entrust thee with control over thyself because He deemed thee unworthy of it, and deny thee freedom? What sort of honour had it been to have been chosen ruler of the great world but not ruler of oneself, bearing the slur of a privilege that was abridged? For what is the honour of a lord whose mind is not free, but whose will obeys a law imposed on it, and cannot vary? And what credit or merit belongs to man in living righteously if he has not to make a definite choice between two paths? A man does not become good of his own will if he has not the power in his discretion to will something else and to divert his sentiments into an opposite course. But he who is not good of his own will is not good nor praiseworthy, since no honour comes of uprightness that is forced, and virtue without honour has no worth; and after all it is not virtue unless it spring forth in the act of rejecting the worse and seek the right path because its nature is better. "Go," says Adam's very father and maker and creator, "go, O man, who art raised in rank above all by the breath of my mouth, not made subject but possessed of power, ruler of the world, ruler also and judge of thine own purpose, to me only be thou subject of thine own will, so that thy very subjection may be freely made with unfettered judgment. I force thee not nor constrain thee, but I counsel thee to shun unrighteousness and follow after righteous-

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lux comes est iusti, comes est mors horrida iniqui.  
elige rem vitae; tua virtus temet in aevum 705  
provehat, aeternum damnet tua culpa vicissim,  
praestet et alterutram permissa licentia sortem.”  
hac pietate vagus et tanto munere abundans,  
transit propositum fas et letalia prudens  
eligit atque volens, magis utile dum sibi credit 710  
quod prohibente Deo persuasit callidus anguis.  
persuasit certe hortatu, non inpulit acri  
imperio; hoc mulier rea criminis exprobranti  
respondit Domino, suadelis se malefabris  
inlectam suasisse viro; vir et ipse libenter 715  
consensit. licuitne hortantem spernere recti  
libertate animi? licuit; namque et Deus ante  
suaserat ut meliora volens sequeretur; at ille  
spernens consilium saevo plus credidit hosti.  
nunc inter vitae Dominum mortisque magistrum 720  
consistit medius; vocat hinc Deus, inde tyrannus  
ambiguum atque suis se motibus alternantem.  
accipe gestarum monumenta insignia rerum,  
praelusit quibus historia spectabile signum.  
Loth fugiens Sodomis ardentibus omnia secum 725  
pignera cara domus properabat sede relicta  
nubibus urbieremis subducere, sulpure cum iam  
nimbo ignitus coelum subtexeret aér  
flagrantemque diem crepitans incenderet imber.  
angelus hanc hospes legem praescripserat ollis 730  
emissus virtute Dei sub imagine dupla,

<sup>a</sup> Cf. Genesis xix, 1.

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ness. Light is the companion of righteousness, death the dread companion of wrong-doing. Choose the way of life; thy goodness must promote thee to eternity, thy sin, again, for ever condemn thee; liberty is in thy hands to assure either fate." Thus allowed by God's goodness to go his own way, and amply enriched with this great gift, he transgresses the right that is set before him and knowingly, of his own will, chooses the things of death, believing that to be more profitable to him which the cunning serpent has persuaded him to do against the will of God. The serpent did indeed persuade by urging, not drive with sharp behest; the woman's answer to God's reproach, when she stood accused of the sin, was that she was won over by crafty persuasions and then urged the man; and the man also readily agreed. Might he not have rejected her urging, in the freedom of an upright soul? He might, for God too had before urged him to follow after the better of his own will; but he, rejecting the counsel, trusted more in his cruel enemy. Now he stands between the Lord of life and the teacher of death. On the one hand God calls him, on the other the devil, the while he wavers and goes from side to side.

Listen now to a famous record of events whereby history has given beforehand a notable sign. Lot was seeking in hurried flight from blazing Sodom, where he had abandoned his home, to save himself and all the dear ones of his house from the storm that was consuming the city with fire. Already the air was glowing red and veiling the sky with sulphurous clouds, and a rattling rain was kindling the day into flames. An angel visitor sent forth by the power of God in twofold shape <sup>a</sup> had laid down for them this

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omnis ut e portis iret domus atque in apertum  
 dirigeret constans oculos, nec pone reflexo  
 lumine regnantes per moenia cerneret ignes :  
 " nemo, memor Sodomae, quae mundi forma  
 cremandi est,

735

ut semel e muris gressum promoverit, ore  
 post tergum verso respectet funera rerum."

Loth monitis sapiens obtemperat, at levis uxor  
 mobilitate animi torsit muliebre retrorsus  
 ingenium Sodomisque suis revocabilis haesit.      740  
 traxerat Eva virum dirae ad consortia culpae :  
 haec peccans sibi sola perit; solidata metallo  
 diriguit fragili saxumque liquabile facta  
 stat mulier, sicut steterat prius, omnia servans  
 caute sigillati longum salis effigiata,  
 et decus et cultum frontemque oculosque co-  
 mamque

745

et flexam in tergum faciem paulumque relata  
 menta retro, antiquae monumenta rigentia noxae.  
 liquitur illa quidem salsis sudoribus uda,  
 sed nulla ex fluido plenae dispendia formae      750  
 sentit deliquio, quantumque armenta saporum  
 attenuant saxum, tantum lambentibus umor  
 sufficit attritamque cutem per damna reformat.  
 hoc meruit titulo peccatrix femina sisti,  
 infirmum fluidumque animum per lubrica solvens      755  
 consilia et fragilis iussa ad caelestia. voti

750

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<sup>a</sup> On Jebel Usdum ("the mountain of Sodom"), a range of rock-salt cliffs at the S.W. end of the Dead Sea, large fragments sometimes detach themselves and appear as "pillars of salt" (S. R. Driver in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*). Josephus (*Jewish Antiquities*, I, 204) says that the pillar into which Lot's wife was turned still existed in his day and that he had seen it. According to C. Geikie (*The*

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rule, that all the household go forth from the gates and keep their eyes unwaveringly on the open country, nor turn their gaze back to see the fires that were lording it over the city : “ Let no one think of Sodom, which is the prefiguration of the burning of the world, and, when once he has stepped from the walls, turn his face back to look upon the death of all things.” Lot, being wise, obeyed the warning, but his light-minded wife with unsteady purpose, like a woman, turned her thoughts backwards, and hearing the call of her dear Sodom, cleaved to it. Eve had drawn her husband into partnership in an accursed fault, but this woman by her sin brought death on herself alone. She stiffened in a solid mass of wasting stone ; turned into soluble rock she stands there a woman still, as she had stood before, preserving every detail modelled in a pillar of salt that has long borne her image, her graceful form, her dress, brow and eyes and hair, her face turned to look behind, the chin carried slightly backwards, a stiff memorial of an ancient sin.<sup>a</sup> Her wet figure dissolves, indeed, in salt sweats, but she suffers no loss to her full form from the waste that drips away ; and however much the cattle wear away the savoury rock, there is always as much moisture for them to lick, and she grows again the skin that is rubbed off and lost. Such is the memorial statue earned by a woman who sinned, for she let her weak, unstable resolution melt away in slippery courses and had no firm constancy to keep heaven’s commands. Lot on the

*Holy Land and the Bible*) one pillar still bears among the Arabs the name of “ Lot’s Wife.” Prudentius may have derived details of his description from a picture which he had seen in some church.

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propositum contra non commutabile servat  
Loth ingressus iter, nec moenia respicit alto  
in cinerem conlapsa rogo, populumque perustum  
et mores populi, tabularia, iura forumque,      760  
balnea, propolas, meritoria, templa, theatra,  
et circum cum plebe sua, madidasque popinas.  
quidquid agunt homines Sodomorum incendia iustis  
ignibus involvunt et Christo iudice damnant.  
haec fugisse semel satis est; non respicit ultra    765  
Loth noster, fragilis sed coniunx respicit, et quae  
fugerat inverso mutabilis ore revisit,  
atque inter patrias perstat durata favillas.  
en tibi signatum libertatis documentum,  
quo voluit nos scire Deus, quodcumque sequen-  
dum est,    770  
sub nostra dizione situm, passimque remissum  
alterutram calcare viam. duo cedere iussi  
de Sodomis; alter se proripit, altera mussat,  
ille gradum celerat fugiens, contra illa renutat.  
liber utrius animus, sed dispar utrius voluntas. 775  
dividit huc illuc rapiens sua quemque libido.  
talem multa sacris speciem notat orbita libris.  
aspice Ruth gentis Moabitidis et simul Orphan.  
illa socrum Noomin<sup>1</sup> fido comitatur amore,  
deserit haec. atquin thalamis et lege iugali      780  
exutae Hebraeisque toris sacrisque vacantes  
iure fruebantur proprio. sed pristinus Orphae  
fanorum ritus praeputia barbara suasit  
malle et semiferi stirpem nutrire Goliae;  
Ruth dum per stipulas agresti amburitur aestu,    785

<sup>1</sup> The spelling -oo- is found as a variant in the Septuagint.

<sup>a</sup> In Jewish legend Orpah appears as the mother of Goliath (Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, IV, 31).

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other hand kept his purpose unchanged once he started on his way, and cast no thought back to the city which had fallen in a heap of ashes like a lofty funeral-pyre, or to its consumed people and its people's life, its archives, courts and market-place, its baths, its hucksters' stalls, its brothels and temples and theatres, its circus and the masses that thronged it, and its drunken cookshops. The flames of Sodom enwrap all the concerns of men in righteous fire and condemn them under the judgment of Christ. To have escaped all this once is enough; our good Lot casts no glance back again; but his frail wife does glance back; in her inconstancy she turns her face and looks again on what she had fled from, and now she stands petrified amid the embers of her homeland. In that figure you have a proof of freedom, whereby God willed that we should know that the course we are to take lies in our own discretion and we are everywhere free to tread either path. Two were bidden to leave Sodom; one hastens away, the other falters; one quickens his step in flight, the other refuses. Each has freedom of will, but each wills differently. Men are carried separate ways each by his own free choice. Many a line in the Scriptures records examples of this. Consider Ruth, of the race of Moab, together with Orpah. The one accompanies Naomi her mother-in-law with faithful affection, the other leaves her. Now they were no longer bound by their marriages and the law of wedlock, they were rid of Hebrew bridal and rite, and independent; but the old religion of her temples urged Orpah to prefer an uncircumcised barbarian and to raise a monstrous scion in Goliath,<sup>a</sup> while Ruth, burning under the heat in the field as she went

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fulera Boos<sup>1</sup> meruit, castoque adscita cubili  
 Christigenam fecunda domum, Davitica regna,  
 edidit atque Deo mortales miscuit ortus.  
 saepe egomet memini fratres geminos ad hiulcum  
 pervenisse simul bivium nutante iuventa      790  
 et dubitasse diu bifido sub tramite, quodnam  
 esset iter melius; cum dextrum spinea silva  
 sentibus artaret scopulosaque semita longe  
 duceret aërium clivoso margine calle,  
 at laevum nemus umbriferum per amoena virecta 795  
 ditibus ornaret pomis et lene iacentem  
 planities daret ampla viam: squalentibus unum  
 contentum spinis reptasse per ardua saxa,  
 porro alium campo sese indulsisse sinistro;  
 illum sideribus caput inmiscere propinquis,      800  
 hunc in caenosas subito cecidisse paludes.  
 omnibus una subest natura, sed exitus omnes  
 non unus peragit placitorum segrege forma.  
 haud secus ac si olim per sudum lactea forte  
 lapsa columbarum nubes descendat in arvum      805  
 ruris frugiferi, laqueos ubi callidus auceps  
 praetendit lentoque inlevit vimina visco,  
 sparsit et insidias siliquis vel farre doloso,  
 inlicitunt alias fallentia grana, gulamque  
 innectunt avidam tortae retinacula saetae,      810  
 molle vel implicitas gluten circumligat alas,  
 ast aliae, quas nullus amor prolectat edendi,  
 gressibus innocuis sterili spatiantur in herba  
 suspectamque cavent oculos convertere ad escam;  
 mox ubi iam caelo revolandum, pars petit      815  
     aethram

<sup>1</sup> -oo- in the Septuagint and Vulgate. Cf. Matthew i, 5.

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<sup>a</sup> Ruth iv, 17; Matthew i, 5-16.

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over the stubble, proved herself worthy of the hand of Boaz, and being taken in pure wedlock she conceived and gave birth to the family of Christ, David's royal line, and numbered God along with her mortal descendants.<sup>a</sup> I myself remember when often two brothers together in youthful indecision have come where the road split in two and hesitated long at the forks, wondering which path was the better; for on the right a prickly forest of briars narrowed the track and the rocky footpath traced its mounting course far up along a precipitous ridge, while on the left shady trees along fair greensward beautified the scene with rich fruits and a wide plain offered a gently descending highway. One was content with the rough thorns and crept along the lofty rocks; the other, again, gave his heart to the plain on the left. The one set his head in close proximity to the stars, but the other fell suddenly into miry bogs. There is in all the same nature, but the same end does not complete the course of all, because their decisions take different shapes. Just as at times it chances that a milk-white cloud of doves floats down to the ground through the clear air in a rich countryside, where a cunning fowler has laid snares and smeared twigs with clinging bird-lime and sprinkled peas or treacherous meal to bait his traps, and some are tempted by the deceptive grains and their greedy throats are caught and held by the twisted hair-cord, or the soft glue grips their wings and binds them fast about them, but others, not enticed by love of eating, strut about unharmed on the bare grass and take care not to turn their eyes towards the suspicious food; and then, when it is time to fly back into the sky, some make for the starry heavens

## PRUDENTIUS

- libera sidereum plaudens super aëra pinnis,  
 pars captiva iacet laceris et saucia plumis  
 pugnat humi et volucres nequiquam suspicit.  
 auras ;
- sic animas caeli de fontibus unicoloras  
 infundit natura solo, sed suavibus istic 820  
 devinctae inlecebris retinentur, et aethera paucae  
 descendunt reduces, multas viscosus inescat  
 pastus et ad superas percurrere non sinit auras.  
 praescius inde Pater liventia Tartara plumbo  
 incendit liquido piceasque bitumine fossas 825  
 infernalis aquae furvo subfodit Averno,  
 et Phlegethoneo sub gurgite sanxit edaces  
 perpetuis scelerum poenis inolescere vermes.  
 norat enim flatu ex proprio vegetamen inesse  
 corporibus nostris animamque ex ore perenni  
 formatam non posse mori, non posse vicissim  
 pollutam vitiis rursum ad convexa reverti  
 mersandam penitus puteo ferventis abyssi.  
 vermbus et flammis et discruciatibus aevum  
 inmortale dedit, senio ne poena periret 835  
 non pereunte anima. carpunt tormenta fovent-  
     que
- materiam sine fine datam, mors deserit ipsa  
 aeternos gemitus et flentes vivere cogit.  
 at diversa procul regionibus in paradisi  
 praemia constituit maiestas gnara futuri 840  
 spiritibus puris et ab omni labe remotis,  
 quique Gomorreaes non respexere ruinas,  
 aversis sed rite oculis post terga tenebras  
 liquerunt miseri properanda pericula mundi.  
 ac primum facili referuntur ad astra volatu, 845

## THE ORIGIN OF SIN

at liberty, clapping their wings far up in the air, while others lie prisoners, hurt and struggling on the ground with their feathers torn, and looking up in vain towards the flying breezes: so nature from their source in heaven pours on earth souls of one complexion, but they are caught and held there by agreeable temptations and few ascend again to heaven, while many are entrapped by clinging food which does not let them fly to the breezes above. Therefore the Father, having foreknowledge, lit the fires of Tartarus dark-hued with molten lead, and in gloomy Avernus dug channels for the pitchy bituminous streams of hell, and down in Phlegethon's gulf ordained that gnawing worms indwell for the everlasting punishment of sin. For He knew that the life in our bodies came from his breath, and that the soul that had its being from the everlasting lips could not die, nor again could it return once more to heaven when it was polluted with sin, but must be plunged in the depths of the burning pit. To worms and flames and tortures He gave deathless endurance, so that the punishment should not die away through length of years while the soul never died. The torments keep alive, while they consume it, the stuff that is given them without limit of time. Death itself turns its back on the everlasting lamentations and compels the weeping victims to live. But far away in the regions of paradise God's provident majesty has set rewards for spirits that are pure and free from every stain, that have not looked back on the ruins of Gomorrah, but with eyes faithfully turned away have left behind them the darkness that portends the wretched world's peril soon to come. And first they pass again with easy flight to the

## PRUDENTIUS

unde fluens anima structum vegetaverat Adam.  
nam quia naturam tenuem declivia vitae  
pondera non reprimunt nec tardat ferrea conpes,  
concretum celeri relegens secat aëra lapsu  
exsuperatque polum fervens scintilla remensum, 850  
carcereos exosa situs, quibus haeserat exul.  
tunc postliminio redeuntem suscipit alto  
cana Fides gremio tenerisque oblectat alumnam  
deliciis, multos post divorsoria carnis  
ore renarrantem querulo, quos passa, labores. 855  
illuc purpureo latus exorrecta cubili  
floribus aeternis spirantes libat odores  
ambrosiumque bibt roseo de stramine rorem,  
ditibus et longo fumantibus intervallo  
fluminaque et totos caeli sitientibus imbres 860  
inplorata negat digitum insertare palato,  
flammarumque apices umenti extinguere tactu.  
nec mirere locis longe distantibus inter  
damnatas iustasque animas concurrere visus  
conspicuos meritasque vices per magna notari 865  
intervalla, polus medio quae dividit orbe.  
errat, quisque animas nostrorum fine oculorum  
aestimat, involvit vitreo quos lucida palla  
obice, quis speculum concreta coagula texunt  
inpediuntque vagas obducto umore fenestras. 870  
numne animarum oculis denso vegetamine guttae  
volvuntur teretes aut palpebralibus extra  
horrescunt saetis, ciliove umbrante teguntur?  
illis viva acies, nec pupula parva, sed ignis

<sup>a</sup> Cf. Luke xvi, 19–26.

<sup>b</sup> I.e. the site of hell.

## THE ORIGIN OF SIN

heavens from whence flowed the soul that quickened Adam when he was created; for because the down-bearing weights of life do not check its subtle nature, nor iron fetter impede it, the glowing spark cuts its way again through the thick air with rapid course and leaves the skies behind it in its return, hating the place of its imprisonment, where it had been confined far from its home. Then as the exiled soul returns to be reinstated in her heavenly country, hoary Faith receives her in her bosom and comforts her nursling with tender fondness while with plaintive voice she tells over the many toils she has endured since she took up her lodging in the flesh. There, stretched on a shining couch, she enjoys the scents that breathe from unfading flowers and drinks the ambrosial dew from her bed of roses, and refuses the prayer of the rich men burning afar off and thirsting for rivers of water and all the rain of heaven, to put her finger in their mouths and quench the tips of the flames with its moist touch.<sup>a</sup> Nor should you wonder that, although the damned souls and the just are far separated, they can see each other clearly and observe the fate that each has earned, across the great spaces that lie between heaven and the centre of the earth.<sup>b</sup> He errs who judges souls by the limit of our eyes, which are wrapped in a transparent tunic that makes a glassy barrier, and in which a thickened humour forms a mirror and with its coating of fluid impedes the freedom of their outlook. From souls' eyes do round drops roll in gushing showers? Do they have rough, bristly eyelashes outside them, or are they shaded with a covering lid? Theirs is a lively vision; they have not a small pupil but a fire that can pierce the mists and

# PRUDENTIUS

- traector nebulae vasti et penetrator operti  
est. 875
- nil ferrugineum solidumve tuentibus obstat,  
nocturnae cedunt nebulae, nigrantia cedunt  
nubila, praetenti cedit teres area mundi.  
nec tantum aërios visu transmittit hiatus  
spiritus, oppositos sed transit lumine montes, 880  
oceani fines atque ultima littora Thylae  
transadigit volucresque oculos in Tartara mittit.  
nostris nempe omnes pereunt sub nocte colores  
visibus et caeco delentur tempore formae.  
numquid et exuti membris ac viscere perdunt 885  
agnitione notas rerum, vel gressibus errant?  
una animas semper facies habet et color unus  
aëris, ut cuique est meritorum summa, sinistri  
seu dextri: alternas nec commutabile tempus  
convertit variatque vices; longum atque perenne  
est 890
- quidquid id est, unus volvit sua saecula cursus.  
expertus dubitas animas percurrere visu  
abdicta corporeis oculis, cum saepe quietis  
rore soporatis cernat mens viva remotos  
distantesque locos, aciem per rura, per astra, 895  
per maria intendens? nec enim se segregat ipsa  
ante obitum vivis ex artibus aut fugit exul  
sanguinis et carnis penetralia seque medullis  
exuit abductamve abigit de pectore vitam,  
viscerea sed sede manens speculatur acutis 900  
omnia luminibus et, qua circumtulit acrem  
naturae levis intuitum nullo obice rerum  
disclusa, ante oculos subiectum prospicit orbem

<sup>a</sup> Cf. Matthew xxv, 31-41.

## THE ORIGIN OF SIN

penetrate the waste of darkness. Nothing obscure or material blocks their gaze; the mists of night give way to them, as do black clouds and the whole round extent of the universe that spreads before them. And not only does the spirit with its vision cross the open spaces of the air; its sight passes through mountains that stand in its way, it pierces to the limits of ocean and the shores of Thule at the end of the earth, and sends its quick glance into hell. For our sight, to be sure, all colours are lost in the night and all shapes destroyed in the hours of darkness. But do those too, who have put off the body and the flesh, lose any of their power to recognise the features of things, or go astray in their steps? Ever the same in look, the same in hue, is the atmosphere about souls, on the right or on the left <sup>a</sup> according to the sum of each one's deserts; no change of time brings alternation or variance in their lot; whatever it is, it lasts for long, it lasts for ever; the same course runs through ages all its own. Do you doubt that souls traverse with their vision things hidden from bodily eyes, when you know by experience how many a time, when we are sunk in unconsciousness by the dew of sleep, the lively mind sees places far away and far sundered, directing its eyes over fields and stars and seas? For it does not separate itself before death from the living members, nor banish itself from its home within the flesh and blood, withdrawing from our inmost parts and reaving the life from our breast; but while remaining in its fleshly abode it explores all things with its keen sight, and turning hither and thither the sharp gaze of its subtle nature, not shut off by any barrier of material things, it views the world that lies before its eyes, and

## PRUDENTIUS

- atque orbis sub mole situm sordens elementum.  
obiacet interea tellus nec visibus obstat. 905
- quin si stelligerum vultus convertat ad axem,  
nil intercurrens obtutibus impedit ignem  
pervigilis animae, quamvis denseta graventur  
nubila et opposito nigrescat vellere caelum.
- sic arcana videt tacitis cooperta futuris 910  
corporeus Iohannis adhuc nec carne solutus,  
munere sed somni paulisper carne sequestra  
liber ad intuitum sensuque oculisque peragrans  
ordine dispositos venturis solibus annos.
- procinctum videt angelicum iam iamque crem-  
andi 915
- orbis in excidium, tristes<sup>1</sup> et percipit aure  
mugitus gravium mundi sub fine tubarum.  
haec ille ante obitum membrorum carcere  
saeptus,
- secedente anima, non discedente videbat.
- nonne magis flatus sine corpore cuncta notabit 920  
corporis involucris tumulo frigente repostis?  
certa fides rapidos subterna nocte caminos,  
qui pollutam animam per saecula longa perenni  
igne coquunt, oculis longum per inane remoti  
pauperis expositos; nec setius aurea dona 925  
iustorum dirimente chao rutilasque coronas  
eminus ostendi poenarum carcere mersis.  
hinc paradisicolae post ulcera dira beato  
proditur infelix ululans in peste reatus  
spiritus inque vicem meritorum mutua cernunt. 930

<sup>1</sup> So both the oldest MSS. Others have raukos.

<sup>a</sup> Cf. Luke xvi, 19-26.

## THE ORIGIN OF SIN

even the dirty earth down in the world's great mass. And all the while the earth stands in its way, yet does not impede its vision. Indeed should it turn its face towards the starry heavens, nothing coming in the way of its eyes checks the flame of the sleepless soul, even though thick-gathered clouds lower and the sky wear a blanket of darkness before it. It is thus that John sees mysteries hidden in the silence of the future while he is yet in the body and not delivered from the flesh but, by the grace of sleep through the medium of the flesh, free for a while to observe, and with discerning eyes travels through time in the settled order of years to come. He sees the angels arrayed in readiness for the destruction of a world doomed presently to be consumed with fire, and hears the dread bray of the stern trumpets at the last day. These things he saw before his death, when still shut up in the prison-house of the body, while his soul separated itself but did not depart. Shall not the spirit all the more without the body observe all things, when its bodily wrappings are laid in the cold grave? It is a sure belief that the consuming furnaces in the nether darkness, that torment the defiled soul through long ages with unending fire, are before the poor man's eyes though he is far off over the length of space, and in the same way the flashing crowns that are the golden prizes of the righteous, though the gulf separate them, are displayed from afar to the souls that are plunged in the prison-house of punishment. So it is that to the dweller in paradise, blessed now, his fearful sores all ended, is revealed the unhappy spirit wailing under the bane of guilt, and they each see the reward of the other's deserts.<sup>a</sup>

## PRUDENTIUS

o Dee cunctiparens, animae dator, o Dee  
Christe,

cuius ab ore Deus subsistit Spiritus unus,  
te moderante regor, te vitam principe duco,  
iudice te pallens trepido, te iudice eodem  
spem capio fore quidquid ago veniable apud te, 935  
quamlibet indignum venia faciamque loquarque.  
confiteor; dimitte libens et parce fatenti.  
omne malum merui, sed tu bonus arbiter aufer  
quod merui; meliora favens largire precanti  
dona animae quandoque meae, cum corporis  
huius

940

liquerit hospitium nervis, cute, sanguine, felle,  
ossibus exstructum, corrupta quod incola luxu  
heu nimium complexa fovet, cum flebilis hora  
clauserit hos orbes, et conclamata iacebit  
materies oculisque suis mens nuda fruetur, 945  
ne cernat truculentum aliquem de gente latronum  
inmitem, rabidum, vultuque et voce minaci  
terribilem, qui me maculosum aspergine morum  
in praeeeps, ut praedo, trahat nigrisque ruentem  
inmerget specubus, cuncta exacturus ad usque 950  
quadrantem minimum damnosae debita vitae.  
multa in thensaureis Patris est habitatio, Christe,  
disparibus discreta locis. non posco beata  
in regione domum; sint illic casta virorum  
agmina, pulvereum quae dignantia censem 955  
divitias petiere tuas, sit flore perenni  
candida virginitas animum castrata recisum.  
at mihi Tartarei satis est si nulla ministri  
occurrat facies, avidae nec flamma gehennae

## THE ORIGIN OF SIN

O God, the Father of all and giver of the soul, O God Christ, from whose mouth proceeds the Spirit, God in unity, by thy governance I am directed, under thy leadership do I live my life, under thy judgment I pale and tremble, under thy judgment too I take hope that what I do will find pardon with Thee, however unworthy of pardon be my act or speech. I confess my sin; be Thou ready to forgive me and spare the confessor. I have deserved all ill, but do Thou, who art a kindly judge, take away my desert and in gracious answer to my soul's prayer bestow better gifts one day upon it, when it shall have left behind this bodily lodging built up of sinews, skin, blood, gall, bones, to which its indweller, corrupted with indulgence, clings, alas! too fondly, and when the doleful hour shall have closed these eyes and the material body shall lie dead and the bared soul have the use of its natural vision, that what it sees be not one of the race of robbers, fierce, ruthless, raging, with frightful, threatening look and voice, that shall drag me down headlong, as a brigand his captive, spotted as I am with the stains of my conduct, and send me plunging into black caverns, there to exact from me to the last farthing all that is due for my wasteful life. Many dwellings are there in the Father's treasure-city, O Christ, and set apart on sites that differ. I do not ask for a home in the region of the blessed. There let the companies of pure men dwell who have disdained earthly possessions and sought after thy riches, and the unspotted virgins whose flower has never faded and who have cut off the appetites of the heart. Enough for me if the features of no minister of hell meet me, and this soul of mine be not plunged in the depths of

## PRUDENTIUS

devoret hanc animam mersam fornacibus imis. 960  
esto, cavernoso, quia sic pro labe necesse est  
corporea, tristis me sorbeat ignis Averno:  
saltem mitificos incendia lenta vapores  
exhalent aestuque calor languente tepescat;  
lux inmensa alios et tempora vineta coronis 965  
glorificant: me poena levis clementer adurat.

## THE ORIGIN OF SIN

the furnaces and devoured by the flames of greedy Gehenna. And let it be that the grim fire swallow me in the chasm of Avernus because for my bodily stain it must needs be so ; yet at least may the flames be gentle and the heat of their breath be mild, may their fury die down and their burning moderate. Let others enjoy the glory of infinite light and crown-encircled brows : as for me, may my punishment be light, my torment merciful.

# PSYCHOMACHIA

## PRAEFATIO

SENEX fidelis prima credendi via  
Abram, beati seminis serus pater,  
adiecta cuius nomen auxit syllaba,  
Abram parenti dictus, Abraham Deo,  
senile pignus qui dicavit victimae, 5  
docens ad aram cum litare quis velit,  
quod dulce cordi, quod pium, quod unicum  
Deo libenter offerendum credito,  
pugnare nosmet cum profanis gentibus  
suasit, suumque suasor exemplum dedit, 10  
nec ante prolem coniugalem gignere  
Deo placentem, matre Virtute editam,  
quam strage multa bellicosus spiritus  
portenta cordis servientis vicerit.  
victum feroce forte reges ceperant 15  
Loth inmorantem criminosis urbibus  
Sodomae et Gomorrae, quas fovebat advena  
pollens honore patruelis gloriae.  
Abram sinistris excitatus nuntiis  
audit propinquum sorte captum bellica 20  
servire duris barbarorum vinculis:  
armat trecentos terque senos vernulas,  
pergant ut hostis terga euntis caedere,

<sup>a</sup> Genesis xvii, 5.

<sup>b</sup> Genesis xiv.

# THE FIGHT FOR MANSOUL

## PREFACE

THE faithful patriarch who first showed the way of believing, Abram, late in life the father of a blessed progeny, whose name was lengthened by a syllable (for he was called Abram by his father, but Abraham <sup>a</sup> by God), he who offered in sacrifice the child of his old age, teaching us thereby that when a man would make an acceptable offering at the altar he must willingly and with faith in God offer to Him that which is dear to his heart and the object of his love, that of which he has but one, has counselled us to war against the ungodly tribes, himself giving us an example of his own counsel, and shown that we beget no child of wedlock pleasing to God, and whose mother is Virtue, till the spirit, battling valorously, has overcome with great slaughter the monsters in the enslaved heart. It chanced that insolent kings overcame Lot and took him captive <sup>b</sup> when he was dwelling in the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, to which he clung and where, though but an immigrant, he was a great man because of the honour paid to his uncle's fame. Called by a bearer of the evil tidings, Abram learns that his kinsman, by the fortune of war, has been taken and put into subjection to hard bondage under the barbarians. He arms three hundred and eighteen servants born in his house, to pursue the enemy and slay them on their

# PRUDENTIUS

dives ac triumphus n...  
 captis tenebant impeditum copiis. 25  
 quin ipse ferrum stringit et plenus Deo  
 reges superbos mole praedarum graves  
 pellit fugatos, sauciatos proterit,  
 frangit catenas et rapinam liberat :  
 aurum, puellas, parvulos, monilia,  
 greges <sup>1</sup> equarum, vasa, vestem, bucelas. 30  
 Loth ipse ruptis expeditus nexibus  
 attrita bacis colla liber erigit.  
 Abram triumphi dissipator hostici  
 redit recepta prole fratris inclytus 35  
 ne quam fidelis sanguinis prosapiam  
 vis pessimorum possideret principum.  
 adhuc recentem caede de tanta virum  
 donat sacerdos ferculis caelestibus,  
 Dei sacerdos, rex et idem praepotens, 40  
 origo cuius fonte inenarrabili  
 secreta nullum prodit auctorem sui,<sup>2</sup>  
 Melchisedech, qua stirpe, quis maioribus  
 ignotus, uni cognitus tantum Deo.  
 mox et triformis angelorum trinitas 45  
 senis revisit hospitis mapalia,  
 et iam vietam Sarra in alvum fertilis  
 munus iuventae mater exsanguis stupet,  
 herede gaudens, et cachinni paenitens.  
 haec ad figuram praenotata est linea, 50  
 quam nostra recto vita resculpat pede :  
 vigilandum in armis pectorum fidelium,

<sup>1</sup> Bergman, following the 6th-century MS., prints oves, equarum vasa, interpreting vasa as = ornamenta. Bardy conjectures aquarum vasa.

<sup>2</sup> Lines 41 and 42 are not found in A (6th century), though they are in B (7th century), and Bergman brackets them as

## THE FIGHT FOR MANSOUL

march, encumbered as they are and slowed down by the rich treasure of the great spoils their glorious victory has won. He himself, too, draws the sword and, being filled with the spirit of God, drives off in flight those proud kings, weighed down with their booty, or cuts them down and tramples them under foot. He breaks the bonds and looses the plunder—gold, maidens, little children, strings of jewels, herds of mares, vessels, raiment, cattle. Lot himself, set at liberty by the bursting of his chains, straightens his neck in freedom, where the links had chafed. Abram, having scattered his enemies' triumph, returns in the glory of recovering his brother's son so that wicked kings should not keep a descendant of the faithful stock under their violent power. To the warrior fresh from this great slaughter the priest presents heavenly food, the priest of God, himself also a mighty king, whose mysterious birth from a source that cannot be named has no ostensible author—Melchisedec, whose line and forefathers no man knows, for they are known to God alone.<sup>a</sup> Then also a triad of angels in the form of three persons visits the old man's cabin, and he entertains them; and Sara, conceiving, is amazed to find the function of youth come to her aged womb, becoming a mother when she has passed her time, and she rejoices in an heir, and repents of her laughter.<sup>b</sup> This picture has been drawn beforehand to be a model for our life to trace out again with true measure, showing that we must watch in the armour of faithful hearts, and

<sup>a</sup> Genesis xiv, 18; Hebrews vii, 1-3.

<sup>b</sup> Genesis xviii, 1-15.

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*interpolated. They correspond to line 60 in the parallel between Melchisedec and Christ.*

## PRUDENTIUS

omnemque nostri portionem corporis,  
quae capta foedae serviat libidini,  
domi coactis liberandam viribus ;  
nos esse large vernularum divites,  
si quid trecenti bis novenis additis  
possint figura noverimus mystica.

55

mox ipse Christus, qui sacerdos verus est,  
parente inenarrabili atque uno satus,<sup>1</sup>  
cibum beatis offerens victoribus  
parvam pudici cordis intrabit casam,  
monstrans honorem Trinitatis hospitiae.  
animam deinde Spiritus complexibus  
pie maritam, prolis expertem diu,  
faciet perenni fertilem de semine,  
tunc sera dotem possidens puerpera  
herede digno Patris inplebit domum.

60

65

---

CHRISTE, graves hominum semper miseratae labores,  
qui patria virtute cluis propriaque, sed una,  
(unum namque Deum colimus de nomine utroque,  
non tamen et solum, quia tu Deus ex Patre,  
Christe,)

dissere, rex noster, quo milite pellere culpas  
mens armata queat nostri de pectoris antro,  
exoritur quotiens turbatis sensibus intus  
seditio atque animam morborum rixa fatigat,  
quod tunc praesidium pro libertate tuenda  
quaeve acies furiis inter praecordia mixtis  
obsistat meliore manu. nec enim, bone dux,

5

10

<sup>1</sup> A and B have parente natus alto et ineffabili, which is metrically faulty. The line in the text too is abnormal.

## THE FIGHT FOR MANSOUL

that every part of our body which is in captivity and enslaved to foul desire must be set free by gathering our forces at home; that we are abundantly rich in servants born in the house if we know through the mystic symbol what is the power of three hundred with eighteen more.<sup>a</sup> Then Christ himself, who is the true priest,<sup>b</sup> born of a Father unutterable and one, bringing food for the blessed victors, will enter the humble abode of the pure heart and give it the privilege of entertaining the Trinity; and then the Spirit, embracing in holy marriage the soul that has long been childless, will make her fertile by the seed eternal, and the dowered bride will become a mother late in life and give the Father's household a worthy heir.

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Christ, who hast ever had compassion on the heavy distresses of men, who art glorious in renown for thy Father's power and thine own—but one power, for it is one God that we worship under the two names; yet not *merely* one, since Thou, O Christ, art God born of the Father—say, our King, with what fighting force the soul is furnished and enabled to expel the sins from within our breast; when there is disorder among our thoughts and rebellion arises within us, when the strife of our evil passions vexes the spirit, say what help there is then to guard her liberty, what array with superior force withstands the fiendish raging in our heart. For, O kind leader, Thou

<sup>a</sup> The Greek letters ΤΙΗ represent 318; but they are also a symbol of Christ crucified, Τ representing the cross, while ΙΗ are the first two letters of the name Jesus ('ΙΗΣΟΥΣ).

<sup>b</sup> Cf. Psalm 110, 4.

## PRUDENTIUS

magnarum Virtutum inopes nervisque carentes  
Christicolas Vitiis populantibus exposuisti.  
ipse salutiferas obsesso in corpore turmas  
depugnare iubes, ipse excellentibus armas      15  
artibus ingenium, quibus ad ludibria cordis  
oppugnanda potens tibi dimicet et tibi vineat.  
vincendi praesens ratio est, si comminus ipsas  
Virtutum facies et conluctantia contra  
viribus infestis liceat portenta notare.      20

prima petit campum dubia sub sorte duelli  
pugnatura Fides, agresti turbida cultu,  
nuda umeros, intonsa comas, exerta lacertos;  
namque repentinus laudis calor ad nova fervens  
proelia nec telis meminit nec tegmine cingi,      25  
pectore sed fidens valido membrisque reiectis  
provocat insani frangenda pericula belli.  
ecce lacessentem conlatis viribus audet  
prima ferire Fidem Veterum Cultura Deorum.  
illa hostile caput phalerataque tempora vittis      30  
altior insurgens labefactat, et ora cruore  
de pecudum satiata solo adplicat et pede calcat  
elisos in morte oculos, animamque malignam  
fracta intercepti commercia gutturis artant,  
difficilemque obitum suspiria longa fatigant.      35  
exultat victrix legio, quam mille coactam  
martyribus regina Fides animarat in hostem.  
nunc fortis socios parta pro laude coronat  
floribus ardente iubet vestirier ostro.

## THE FIGHT FOR MANSOUL

hast not exposed the followers of Christ to the ravages of the Sins without the help of great Virtues or devoid of strength. Thou thyself dost command relieving squadrons to fight the battle in the body close beset, Thou thyself dost arm the spirit with pre-eminent kinds of skill whereby it can be strong to attack the wantonness in the heart and fight for Thee, conquer for Thee. The way of victory is before our eyes if we may mark at close quarters the very features of the ~~Virtues~~ and the monsters that close with them in deadly struggle.

Faith first takes the field to face the doubtful chances of battle, her rough dress disordered, her shoulders bare, her hair untrimmed, her arms exposed; for the sudden glow of ambition, burning to enter fresh contests, takes no thought to gird on arms or armour, but trusting in a stout heart and unprotected limbs challenges the hazards of furious warfare, meaning to break them down. Lo, first Worship-of-the-Old-Gods ventures to match her strength against Faith's challenge and strike at her. But she, rising higher, smites her foe's head down, with its fillet-decked brows, lays in the dust that mouth that was sated with the blood of beasts, and tramples the eyes under foot, squeezing them out in death. The throat is choked and the scant breath confined by the stopping of its passage, and long gasps make a hard and agonising death. Leaps for joy the conquering host which Faith, their queen, had assembled from a thousand martyrs and emboldened to face the foe; and now she crowns her brave comrades with flowers proportioned to the glory they have won, and bids them clothe themselves in flaming purple.

# PRUDENTIUS

- 40
- exim gramineo in campo concurrere prompta  
 virgo Pudicitia speciosis fulget in armis,  
 quam patrias succincta faces Sodomita Libido  
 adgreditur piceamque ardenti sulpure pinum  
 ingerit in faciem pudibundaque lumina flammis  
 adipetit, et taetro temptat subfundere fumo.      45
- sed dextram furiae flagrantis et ignea dirae  
 tela lupae saxo ferit inperterrita virgo,  
 excussasque sacro taedas depellit ab ore.  
 tunc exarmatae iugulum meretricis adacto  
 transfigit gladio; calidos vomit illa vapores      50  
 sanguine concretos caenosos; spiritus inde  
 sordidus exhalans vicinas polluit auras.
- “ hoc habet,” exclamat victrix regina, “ supremus  
 hic tibi finis erit, semper prostrata iacebis,  
 nec iam mortiferas audebis spargere flammas      55  
 in famulos famulasve Dei, quibus intima casti  
 vena animi sola fervet de lampade Christi.  
 tene, o vexatrix hominum, potuisse resumptis  
 viribus extincti capitis recalescere flatu,  
 Assyrium postquam thalamum cervix Olofernus      60  
 caesa cupidineo madefactum sanguine lavit,  
 gemmantemque torum moechi ducis aspera
- Judith
- sprevit et incestos compescuit ense furores,  
 famosum mulier referens ex hoste tropaeum  
 non trepidante manu vindex mea caelitus  
 audax!      65
- at fortasse parum fortis matrona sub umbra  
 legis adhuc pugnans, dum tempora nostra figurat,  
 vera quibus virtus terrena in corpora fluxit  
 grande per infirmos caput excisura ministros.  
 numquid et intactae post partum virginis ullum      70

## THE FIGHT FOR MANSOUL

Next to step forth ready to engage on the grassy field is the maiden Chastity, shining in beauteous armour. On her falls Lust the Sodomite, girt with the fire-brands of her country, and thrusts into her face a torch of pinewood blazing murkily with pitch and burning sulphur, attacking her modest eyes with the flames and seeking to cover them with the foul smoke. But the maiden undismayed smites with a stone the inflamed fiend's hand and the cursed whore's burning weapon, striking the brand away from her holy face. Then with a sword-thrust she pierces the disarmed harlot's throat, and she spews out hot fumes with clots of foul blood, and the unclean breath defiles the air near by. "A hit!" cries the triumphant princess. "This shall be thy last end; for ever shalt thou lie prostrate; no longer shalt thou dare to cast thy deadly flames against God's man-servants or his maid-servants; the inmost fibre of their pure heart is kindled only from the torch of Christ. Shalt thou, O troubler of mankind, have been able to resume thy strength and grow warm again with the breath of life that was extinguished in thee, after the severed head of Holofernes soaked his Assyrian chamber with his lustful blood, and the unbending Judith, spurning the lecherous captain's jewelled couch, checked his unclean passion with the sword, and woman as she was, won a famous victory over the foe with no trembling hand, maintaining my cause with boldness heaven-inspired?"<sup>a</sup> But perhaps a woman still fighting under the shade of the law had not force enough, though in so doing she prefigured our times, in which the real power has passed into earthly bodies to sever the

<sup>a</sup> Judith xiii.

## PRUDENTIUS

fas tibi iam superest? post partum virginis, ex  
quo

corporis humani naturam pristina origo  
deseruit carnemque novam vis ardua sevit,  
atque innupta Deum concepit femina Christum,  
mortali de matre hominem, sed cum Patre numen. 75  
inde omnis iam diva caro est quae concipit illum  
naturamque Dei consortis foedere sumit.

Verbum quippe caro factum non destitit esse  
quod fuerat, Verbum, dum carnis glutinat usum,  
maiestate quidem non degenerante per usum 80  
carnis, sed miseros ad nobiliora trahente.

ille manet quod semper erat, quod non erat esse  
incipiens: nos quod fuimus iam non sumus, aucti  
nascendo in melius: mihi contulit et sibi mansit.  
nec Deus ex nostris minuit sua, sed sua nostris 85  
dum tribuit nosmet dona ad caelestia vexit.  
dona haec sunt, quod victa iaces, lutulenta Libido,  
nec mea post Mariam potis es perfringere iura.  
tu princeps ad mortis iter, tu ianua leti,  
corpora conmaculans animas in Tartara mergis. 90  
abde caput tristi, iam frigida pestis, abyso;  
occide, prostibulum; manes pete, claudere  
Averno,

inque tenebrosum noctis detrudere fundum.  
te volvant subter vada flammea, te vada nigra  
sulpureusque rotet per stagna sonantia vertex, 95  
nec iam Christicolas, furiarum maxima, tempes,

## THE FIGHT FOR MANSOUL

great head by the hands of feeble agents? Well, since a virgin immaculate has borne a child, hast thou any claim remaining—since a virgin bore a child, since the day when man's body lost its primeval nature, and power from on high created a new flesh, and a woman unwedded conceived the God Christ, who is man in virtue of his mortal mother but God along with the Father? From that day all flesh is divine, since it conceives Him and takes on the nature of God by a covenant of partnership. For the Word made flesh has not ceased to be what it was before, that is, the Word, by attaching to itself the experience of the flesh; its majesty is not lowered by the experience of the flesh, but raises wretched men to nobler things. He remains what He ever was, though beginning to be what He was not; but we are no longer what we were, now that we are raised at our birth into a better condition. He has given to me, yet still remained for Himself; neither has God lessened what is his by taking on what is ours, but by giving his nature to ours He has lifted us to the height of his heavenly gifts. It is his gift that thou liest conquered, filthy Lust, and canst not, since Mary, violate my authority. It is thou that leadest to the way of death, that art the gate of destruction, that dost stain our bodies and plunge our souls in hell. Bury thy head in the grim pit, thou bane now powerless. Death to thee, harlot, down with thee to the dead; be thou shut up in hell and thrust into the dark depths of night! May the rivers below roll thee on their waves of fire, the black rivers and the eddying sulphur whirl thee along their roaring streams. No more, thou chief of fiends, tempt thou the worshippers of Christ; let their cleansed bodies

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- ut purgata suo serventur corpora regi."  
 dixerat haec et laeta Libidinis interfectae  
 morte Pudicitia gladium Iordanis in undis  
 abluit infectum, sanies cui rore rubenti      100  
 haeserat et nitidum macularat vulnere ferrum.  
 expiat ergo aciem fluviali docta lavacro  
 victricem vietrix, abolens baptismate labem  
 hostilis iuguli; nec iam contenta piatum  
 condere vaginae gladium, ne tecta rubigo  
 occupet ablutum scabrosa sorde nitorem,  
 catholico in templo divini fontis ad aram  
 consecrat, aeterna splendens ubi luce coruscat.      105  
 ecce modesta gravi stabat Patientia vultu  
 per medias inmota acies variosque tumultus,  
 vulneraque et rigidis vitalia pervia pilis  
 spectabat defixa oculos et lenta manebat.  
 hanc procul Ira tumens, spumanti fervida rictu,  
 sanguinea intorquens subfuso lumina felle,  
 ut belli exsortem teloque et voce lacessit,      115  
 inpatiensque morae conto petit, increpat ore,  
 hirsutas quatiens galeato in vertice cristas.  
 "en tibi Martis," ait, "spectatrix libera nostri,  
 excipe mortiferum securo pectore ferrum,  
 nec doleas, quia turpe tibi gemuisse dolorem."      120  
 sic ait, et stridens sequitur convicia pinus  
 per teneros crispata notos, et certa sub ipsum  
 defertur stomachum rectoque inliditur ictu,  
 sed resilit duro loricae excussa repulsa.  
 provida nam Virtus conseruo adamante trilicem      125

<sup>a</sup> Throughout these lines Prudentius has been playing on the idea of baptism as a purification. God is the "spring" whose water washes away sin.

## THE FIGHT FOR MANSOUL

be kept pure for their own king." So spake Chastity, and rejoicing in the death of Lust, whom she had slain, washed her stained sword in the waters of Jordan; for a red dew of gore had clung to it and befouled the bright steel from the wound. So the conqueress deftly cleanses the conquering blade by bathing it in the stream, dipping it in to wash away the stain of blood that came from her foe's throat; and, no longer content to sheathe the purified sword, lest rust unseen engross the clean, bright surface with its dirty scurf, she dedicates it by the altar of the divine spring <sup>a</sup> in a Catholic temple, there to shine and flash with unfading light.

Lo, mild Long-Suffering was standing with staid countenance, unmoved amid the battle and its confused uproar, with fixed gaze watching the wounds inflicted as the stiff javelins pierced the vital parts while she waited inactive. On her from a distance swelling Wrath, showing her teeth with rage and foaming at the mouth, darts her eyes, all shot with blood and gall, and challenges her with weapon and with speech for taking no part in the fight; irked by her hanging back, she hurls a pike at her and assails her with abuse, tossing the shaggy crests on her helmeted head. "Here's for thee," she cries, "that lookest on at our warfare and takest no side. Receive the death-stroke in thy calm breast, and betray no pain, since it is dishonour in thine eyes to utter a cry of pain." So speaks she, and the pine-shaft, launched through the yielding airs, goes hissing after her angry words. Sure-aimed, it hits the very stomach and smites hard with full force, but is struck off by the resistance of a hard cuirass, and rebounds; for the Virtue had

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induerat thoraca umeris squamosaque ferri  
texta per intortos commiserat undique nervos.  
inde quieta manet Patientia, fortis ad omnes  
telorum nimbos et non penetrabile durans.  
nec mota est iaculo monstri sine more furentis, 130  
opperiens propriis peritaram viribus Iram.  
scilicet indomitos postquam stomachando lacertos  
barbara bellatrix inpenderat et iaculorum  
nube supervacuam lassaverat irrita dextram,  
cum ventosa levi cecidissent tela volatu, 135  
iactibus et vacuis hastilia fracta iacerent,  
vertitur ad capulum manus improba et ense  
coruseo  
conisa in plagam dextra sublimis ab aure  
erigitur mediumque ferit librata cerebrum.  
aerea sed cocto cassis formata metallo 140  
tinnitus percussa refert aciemque retundit  
dura resultantem, frangit quoque vena rebellis  
inlisum chalybem, dum(cedere)nescia cassos  
excipit adsultus ferienti et tuta resistit.  
Ira, ubi truncati mucronis fragmina vidit 145  
et procul in partesensem crepusse minutias,  
iam capulum retinente manu sine pondere ferri,  
mentis inops ebur infelix decorisque pudendi  
perfida signa abicit monumentaque tristia longe  
spernit, et ad proprium succenditur effera letum. 150  
missile de multis, quae frustra sparserat, unum  
pulvere de campi perversos sumit in usus:  
rasile figit humi lignum ac se cuspidे versa

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three-ply corselet of mail impenetrable, the fabric of iron scales joined every way with leathers interlaced. So Long-Suffering abides undisturbed, bravely facing all the hail of weapons and keeping a front that none can pierce. Standing unmoved by the javelin while the monster that shot it rages in ungoverned frenzy, she waits for Wrath to perish by reason of her own violence. And when the barbarous warrior had spent with fuming the strength of her unconquerable arms and by showering javelins tired out her right hand with no success till it was useless, since her missiles, having no force in their flight, fell ineffectual, and the shafts, all idly cast, lay broken on the ground, her ruthless hand turned to her sword-hilt. Putting all its strength into a blow with the flashing blade, it rises high above her right ear and then, launching its stroke, smites her foe's head in the very middle. But the helmet of forged bronze only resounds under the blow; the blade rebounds with blunted edge, so hard it is; the unyielding metal breaks the steel that smites it, unflinchingly receives the vain attack, and stands up to the striker without hurt. Seeing her blade shivered in pieces and how the sword has scattered away in rattling fragments while her hand still grasps the hilt after it has lost its weight of steel, Wrath is beside herself and casts away the luckless ivory that has been false to her, the token of honour turned to shame. Afar she flings that unwelcome reminder, and wild passion fires her to slay herself. One of the many missiles that she had scattered without effect she picks up from the dust of the field, for an unnatural use. The smooth shaft she fixes in the ground and with the upturned point stabs herself,

# PRUDENTIUS

perfodit et calido pulmonem vulnere transit.

quam super adsistens Patientia "vicimus,"  
inquit,

" exultans Vitium solita virtute, sine ullo  
sanguinis ac vitae discrimine; lex habet istud  
nostra genus belli, furias omnemque malorum  
militiam et rabidas tolerando extinguere vires.

ipsa sibi est hostis vesania seque furendo      160  
interimit moriturque suis Ira ignea telis."

haec effata secat medias inpune cohortes  
egregio comitata viro; nam proximus Iob  
haeserat invictae dura inter bella magistrae,  
fronte severus adhuc et multo funere anhelus,  
sed iam clausa truci subridens ulcerâ vultu,  
perque cicatricum numerum sudata recensens  
millia pugnarum, sua praemia, dedecus hostis.

illum diva iubet tandem requiescere ab omni  
armorum strepitu, captis et perdita quaeque  
multiplicare opibus, nec iam peritura referre.  
ipsa globos legionum et concurrentia rumpit  
agmina, vulniferos gradiens intacta per imbræ.

omnibus una comes Virtutibus adsociatur,  
auxiliumque suum fortis Patientia miscet.      170  
nulla anceps luctamen init Virtute sine ista  
Virtus, nam vidua est quam non Patientia firmat.

forte per effusas inflata Superbia turmas  
effreni volitabat equo, quem pelle leonis  
texerat et validos villis oneraverat armos,  
quo se fulta iubis iactantius illa ferinis

## THE FIGHT FOR MANSOUL

piercing her breast with a burning wound. Standing over her, Long-Suffering cries : " We have overcome a proud Vice with our wonted virtue, with no danger to blood or life. This is the kind of warfare that is our rule, to wipe out the fiends of passion and all their army of evils and their savage strength by bearing their attack. Fury is its own enemy ; fiery Wrath in her frenzy slays herself and dies by her own weapons." So saying, she makes her way unharmed through the midst of the battalions, escorted by a noble man ; for Job had clung close to the side of his invincible mistress throughout the hard battle, hitherto grave of look and panting from the slaughter of many a foe, but now with a smile on his stern face as he thought of his healed sores and, by the number of his scars, recounted his thousands of hard-won fights, his own glory and his foes' dishonour. Him the heavenly one bids rest at last from all the din of arms and with the riches of his spoils make manifold restitution for all his losses, carrying home things that shall no more be lost. She herself presses through the massed legions and clashing columns, stepping unhurt amid the deadly showers. To all the Virtues Long-Suffering alone joins herself in company and bravely adds her help ; no Virtue enters on the hazard of the struggle without this Virtue's aid, for she has nought to lean upon, whose strength Long-Suffering does not uphold.

It chanced that Pride was galloping about, all puffed up, through the widespread squadrons, on a mettled steed which she had covered with a lion's skin, laying the weight of shaggy hair over its strong shoulders, so that being seated on the wild beast's mane she might make a more imposing figure as she

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inferret tumido despectans agmina fastu.  
turritum tortis caput adcumularat in altum  
crinibus, extractos augeret ut addita cirros  
congeries celsumque apicem frons ardua ferret. 185  
carbasea ex umeris summo collecta coibat  
palla sinu teretem nectens a pectore nodum.  
a cervice fluens tenui velamine limbus  
concipit infestas textis turgentibus auras.  
nec minus instabili sonipes feritate superbit, 190  
inpatiens madidis frenarier ora lupatis.  
huc illuc frendens obvertit terga, negata  
libertate fugae, pressisque tumescit habenis.  
hoc sese ostentans habitu ventosa virago  
inter utramque aciem supereminet et phaleratum 195  
circumflectit equum, vultuque et voce minatur  
adversum spectans cuneum, quem milite raro  
et paupertinis ad bella coegerat armis  
Mens Humilis, regina quidem, sed egens alieni  
auxilii proprio nec sat confisa paratu. 200  
Spem sibi collegam coniunxerat, edita cuius  
et suspensa ab humo est opulentia divite regno.  
ergo Humilem postquam male sana Superbia  
Mentem  
vilibus instructam nullo ostentamine telis  
aspicit, in vocem dictis se effundit amaris : 205  
“ non pudet, o miseri, plebeio milite claros  
adtemptare duces ferroque lacessere gentem  
insignem titulis, veteres cui bellica virtus  
divitias peperit, laetos et gramine colles  
imperio calcare dedit? nunc advena nudus 210  
nititur antiquos, si fas est, pellere reges!  
en qui nostra suis in praedam cedere dextris

## THE FIGHT FOR MANSOUL

looked down on the columns with swelling disdain. High on her head she had piled a tower of braided hair, laying on a mass to heighten her locks and make a lofty peak over her haughty brows. A cambric mantle hanging from her shoulders was gathered high on her breast and made a rounded knot on her bosom, and from her neck there flowed a filmy streamer that billowed as it caught the opposing breeze. Her charger also, too spirited to stand still, carries itself proudly, ill brooking to have its mouth curbed with the bit it is champing. This way and that it backs in its rage, since it is denied freedom to run off and is angered at the pressure of the reins. In such style does this boastful she-warrior display herself, towering over both armies as she circles round on her bedecked steed and with menacing look and speech eyes the force that confronts her; a force but small in number and scantily armed, that Lowliness had gathered for the war—a princess she, indeed, but standing in need of others' help and wanting trust in her own provision. She had made Hope her fellow, whose rich estate is on high and lifted up from the earth in a wealthy realm. Therefore Pride in her madness, after looking on Lowliness and her poor equipment of paltry arms that made no display, broke forth in speech with bitter words: "Are ye not ashamed, ye poor creatures, to challenge famous captains with troops of low degree, to take the sword against a race of proud distinction, whose valour in war has long won wealth for it, and given it power to impose its rule on hills where rich grass grows? And now—can it be?—a newcomer with nothing is trying to drive out the ancient princes! Behold the warriors who will have our

## PRUDENTIUS

sceptra volunt! en qui nostras sulcare novales  
arvaque capta manu popularier hospite aratro contendunt, duros et pellere Marte colonos! 215  
nempe, o ridiculum vulgus, natalibus horis totum hominem et calidos a matre amplectimur artus,  
vimque potestatum per membra recentis alumni spargimus, et rudibus dominamur in ossibus omnes.  
quis locus in nostra tunc vobis sede dabatur, 220  
congenitis cum regna simul dicionibus aequo robore crescebant? nati nam luce sub una et domus et domini paribus adolevimus annis, ex quo plasma novum de consaepto paradisi limite progrediens amplum transfugit in orbem, 225  
pellitosque habitus sumpsit venerabilis Adam, nudus adhuc, ni nostra foret praecepta secutus. quisnam iste ignotis hostis nunc surgit ab oris importunus, iners, infelix, degener, amens, qui sibi tam serum ius vindicat, hactenus exul? 230  
nimirum vacuae credentur frivola famae, quae miseros optare iubet quandoque futuri spem fortasse boni, lenta ut solacia mollem desidiam pigro rerum meditamine palpent.  
quidni illos spes palpet iners, quos pulvere in isto 235  
tirones Bellona truci non excitat aere,  
inbelllesque animos virtus tepefacta resolvit?  
anne Pudicitiae gelidum iecur utile bello est?  
an tenerum Pietatis opus sudatur in armis?  
quam pudet, o Mavors et virtus conscientia, talem 240

## THE FIGHT FOR MANSOUL

sceptres become the spoil of their right hands, who seek to drive the furrow over lands that *we* have broken up, to ravage with a strangers' plough the soil our hands have taken, and with war expel its hardy cultivators! Absurd mob! Why, in the hour of birth we embrace the whole man, his frame still warm from his mother, and extend the strength of our power through the body of the new-born child, we are lords and masters all within the tender bones. What place in our abode was granted to you when the growing strength of our realm was matched by that of the sovereignty that was born with it? For both the house and its masters were born on the same day and we grew side by side as the years passed, since the time when the first man, going forth from the hedged bounds of Eden, went over into the wide world, and the venerable Adam clothed himself with skins, whereas he had been naked still, had he not followed our instruction. What foe is this that from shores unknown arises now to trouble us, a spiritless, luckless, base, insensate foe, who claims his rights so late, after banishment till now? Doubtless there will be trust in the silly dreams of the vain talk which bids poor wretches choose the hope of a good that may some day come to pass, so that its feckless consolations flatter their unmanly sloth with idle expectation! Ay, a nerveless hope it must be that flatters these raw troops, for in the dust of battle here the bray of the War-Queen's trumpet does not rouse them, and their courage is not hot enough to brace their unwarlike spirit. Is Chastity's cold stomach of any use in war, or Brotherly Love's soft work done by stress of battle? What shame it is, O god of war, O valorous heart of

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contra stare aciem ferroque lacessere nugas,  
et cum virgineis dextram conferre choreis,  
Iustitia est ubi semper egens et pauper Honestas,  
arida Sobrietas, albo Ieiunia vultu,  
sanguine vix tenui Pudor interfusus, aperta 245  
Simplicitas et ad omne patens sine tegmine vulnus,  
et prostrata in humum nec libera iudice sese <sup>(+ se)</sup> ~~sese~~  
Mens Humilis, quam degenerem trepidatio  
prodit!  
faxo ego, sub pedibus stipularum more teratur  
invalida ista manus; neque enim perfringere  
duris 250  
dignamur gladiis, algenti et sanguine ferrum  
inbuere fragilique viros foedare triumpho.”  
talia vociferans rapidum calcaribus urget  
cornipedem laxisque volat temeraria frenis,  
hostem humilem cupiens impulsu umbonis equini 255  
sternere deiectamque supercalcare ruinam.  
sed cadit in foveam paeceps, quam callida forte  
Fraus interciso subfoderat aequore furtim,  
Fraus detestandis Vitiorum e pestibus una,  
fallendi versuta opifex, quae praescia belli 260  
planitiem scrobibus vitiaverat insidiosis  
hostili de parte latens, ut fossa ruentes  
exciperet cuneos atque agmina mersa voraret;  
ac ne fallacem puteum deprendere posset  
cauta acies, virgis adopertas texerat oras, 265  
et superinposito simularat caespite campum.  
at regina humilis, quamvis ignara, manebat  
ulteriore loco nec adhuc ad Fraudis opertum  
venerat aut foveae calcarat fulta malignae.  
hunc eques illa dolum, dum fertur paepe cursu, 270  
incidit, et caecum subito patefecit hiatum.

## THE FIGHT FOR MANSOUL

mine, to face such an army as this, to take the sword against such trumpery, and engage with troupes of girls, among them beggarly Righteousness and poverty-stricken Honesty, dried-up Soberness and white-faced Fasting, Purity with scarce a tinge of blood to colour her cheeks, unarmed Simplicity exposed with no protection to every wound, and Lowliness humbling herself to the ground, with no freedom even in her own eyes, and whose agitation betrays her ignoble spirit! "I shall have this feeble band trodden down like stubble; for we disdain to shatter them with our stark swords, to dip our blades in their frigid blood, and disgrace our warriors with a triumph that needs no manhood." Thus exclaiming she spurs on her swift charger and flies wildly along with loose rein, eager to upset her lowly enemy with the shock of her horse-hide shield and trample on her fallen body. But she falls headlong into a pit which as it chanced cunning Deceit had privily dug across the field—Deceit, one of those cursed plagues, the Vices, a crafty worker of trickery, who foreseeing the war had secretly broken the level earth with treacherous trenches on the enemy's side, that the ditch might catch their regiments in their onrush and the columns plunge into it and be swallowed up; and lest the army should be watchful and discover the pit that was set to deceive it, she had concealed the edges by covering them with branches and laying turf over them to simulate ground. But the lowly princess, though knowing nought of this, was still on the further side, and had not yet come up to Deceit's trap nor set foot on the craftily hidden pit that meant her ill. Into the snare has fallen that rider as she galloped in swift career, and suddenly revealed the

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- prona ruentis equi cervice involvitur, ac sub  
pectoris inpressu fracta inter crura rotatur.  
at Virtus placidi moderaminis, ut levitatem  
prospicit obtritam monstri sub morte iacentis, 275  
intendit gressum mediocriter, os quoque parce  
erigit et comi moderatur gaudia vultu.  
cunctanti Spes fida comes succurrit et offert  
ultorem gladium laudisque inspirat amorem.  
illa cruentatam correptis crinibus hostem 280  
protrahit et faciem laeva revocante supinat,  
tunc caput orantis flexa cervice resectum  
eripit ac madido suspendit colla capillo.  
extinctum Vitium sancto Spes increpat ore:  
“ Desine grande loqui; frangit Deus omne  
superbum, 285  
magna cadunt, inflata crepant, tumefacta pre-  
muntur.  
disce supercilium deponere, disce cavere  
ante pedes foveam, quisquis sublime minaris.  
pervulgata viget nostri sententia Christi  
scandere celsa humiles et ad ima redire feroce. 290  
vidimus horrendum membris animisque Goliam  
invalida cecidisse manu: puerilis in illum  
dextera fundali torsit stridore lapillum  
traiectamque cavo penetravit vulnere frontem.  
ille minax, rigidus, iactans, truculentus, amarus, 295  
dum tumet indomitum, dum formidabile fervet,  
dum sese ostentat, clipeo dum territat auras,  
expertus pueri quid possint ludicra parvi  
subcubuit teneris bellator turbidus annis.  
me tunc ille puer virtutis pube secutus  
298 300

## THE FIGHT FOR MANSOUL

secret gulf. Thrown forward, she clings around the horse's neck in its tumble; the weight of its breast comes down on her and she is tossed about among its broken legs. But the quiet, self-controlled Virtue, seeing the vain monster crushed and lying at the point of death, bends her steps calmly towards her, raising her face a little and tempering her joy with a look of kindness. As she hesitates, her faithful comrade Hope comes to her side, holds out to her the sword of vengeance, and breathes into her the love of glory. Grasping her blood-stained enemy by ~~the hair~~, she drags her out and with her left hand turns her face upwards; then, though she begs for mercy, bends the neck, severs the head, lifts it and holds it up by the dripping locks. Hope with her pure lips upbraids the dead Vice: "An end to thy big talk! God breaks down all arrogance. Greatness falls; the bubble bursts; swollen pride is flattened. Learn to put away disdain, learn to beware of the pit before your feet, all ye that are overweening. Well known and true is the saying of our Christ that the lowly ascend to high places and the proud are reduced to low degree. We have seen how Goliath, terrible as he was in body and in valour, fell by a weak hand; it was but a boy's right hand that shot at him a little stone whizzing from his sling, and pierced a hole deep in his forehead. He, for all his stark menace, his boasting and his fierce and bitter speech, in the midst of his ungoverned pride and fearful raging, as he vaunted himself, affrighting the heavens with his shield, found what a little child's toy can do, and wild man of war as he was, fell to a lad of tender years. That day the lad, in the ripening of his valour, followed me; as his spirit came to its bloom

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florentes animos sursum in mea regna tetendit,  
servatur quia certa mihi domus omnipotentis  
sub pedibus Domini, meque ad sublime vocantem  
victores caesa culparum labe capessunt."

dixit, et auratis praestringens aëra pinnis      305  
in caelum se virgo rapit. mirantur euntem  
Virtutes tolluntque animos in vota volentes  
ire simul, ni bella duces terrena retardent.  
configunt Vitiis seque ad sua praemia servant.

venerat occiduis mundi de finibus hostis      310

Luxuria, extinctae iam dudum prodiga famae,  
delibuta comas, oculis vaga, languida voce,  
perdita deliciis, vitae cui causa voluptas,  
elumbem mollire animum, petulanter amoenas  
haurire inlecebras et fractos solvere sensus.      315

ac tunc per vigilem ructabat marcida cenam,  
sub lucem quia forte iacens ad fercula raukos  
audierat lituos, atque inde tepentia linquens  
pocula lapsanti per vina et balsama gressu  
ebria calcatis ad bellum floribus ibat.      320

non tamen illa pedes, sed curru inventa venusto  
saucia mirantium capiebat corda virorum.

o nova pugnandi species! non ales harundo  
nervum pulsa fugit, nec stridula lancea torto  
emicat amento, frameam nec dextra minatur;  
sed violas lasciva iacit foliisque rosarum  
dimicat et calathos inimica per agmina fundit.  
inde eblanditis Virtutibus halitus inlex

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<sup>a</sup> Why western? Luxury is usually spoken of as coming from the east. Many tentative explanations have been offered, one of them (with which Mr. T. R. Glover agrees) that Rome is meant.

<sup>b</sup> Wine was often mixed with warm water.

## THE FIGHT FOR MANSOUL

he lifted it up towards my kingdom ; because for me is kept a sure home at the feet of the all-powerful Lord, and when I call men on high the victors who have cut down the sins that stain them reach after me." With these words, striking the air with her gilded wings, the maid flies off to heaven. The Virtues marvel at her as she goes and lift up their hearts in longing, desiring to go with her, did not earthly warfare detain them in command. They join in conflict with the Vices and reserve themselves for their own due reward.

From the western <sup>a</sup> bounds of the world had come their foe Indulgence, one that had long lost her repute and so cared not to save it; her locks perfumed, her eyes shifting, her voice listless, abandoned in voluptuousness she lived only for pleasure, to make her spirit soft and nerveless, in wantonness to drain alluring delights, to enfeeble and undo her understanding. Even then she was languidly belching after a night-long feast; for as it chanced dawn was coming in and she was still reclining by the table when she heard the hoarse trumpets, and she left the lukewarm <sup>b</sup> cups, her foot slipping as she stepped through pools of wine and perfumes, and trampling on the flowers, and was making her drunken way to the war. Yet it was not on foot, but riding in a beauteous chariot that she struck and won the hearts of the admiring fighters. Strange warfare! No swift arrow is sped in flight from her bowstring, no lash-thrown lance shoots forth hissing, her hand wields no menacing sword; but as if in sport she throws violets and fights with rose-leaves, scattering baskets of flowers over her adversaries. So the Virtues are won over by her charms; the alluring

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- inspirat tenerum labefacta per ossa venenum,  
et male dulcis odor domat ora et pectora et arma 330  
ferratosque toros obliso robore mulcet.  
deiciunt animos ceu victi et spicula ponunt,  
turpiter, heu, dextris languentibus obstupefacti  
dum currum varia gemmarum luce micantem  
mirantur, dum bratteolis crepitantia lora 335  
et solido ex auro pretiosi ponderis axem  
defixis inhiant obtutibus et radiorum  
argento albentem seriem, quam summa rotarum  
flexura electri pallentis continet orbe.  
et iam cuncta acies in deditio[n]is amorem 340  
sponte sua versis transibat perfida signis  
Luxuriae servire volens dominaeque fluentis  
iura pati et laxa ganearum lege teneri.  
ingemuit tam triste nefas fortissima Virtus  
Sobrietas, dextro socios decedere cornu 345  
invictamque manum quondam sine caede perire.  
vexillum sublime crucis, quod in agmine primo  
dux bona praetulerat, defixa cuspide sistit,  
instauratque levem dictis mordacibus alam  
exstimulans animos nunc probris, nunc prece  
mixta : 350  
“ quis furor insanas agitat caligine mentes ?  
quo ruitis ? cui colla datis ? quae vinclula tandem,  
pro pudor, armigeris amor est perferre lacertis,  
lilia luteolis interlucentia sertis  
et ferrugineo vernantes flore coronas ? 355  
his placet adsuetas bello iam tradere palmas  
nexibus, his rigidas nodis innectier ulnas,

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breath blows a subtle poison on them that unmans their frames, the fatally sweet scent subduing their lips and hearts and weapons, softening their iron-clad muscles and crushing their strength. Their courage drops as in defeat; they lay down their javelins, their hands, alas! enfeebled, all to their shame struck dumb in their wonder at the chariot gleaming with flashing gems of varied hue, as with fixed gaze they look longingly at the reins with their tinkling gold-foil, the heavy axle of solid gold, so costly, the spokes, one after another, of white silver, the rim of the wheel holding them in place with a circle of pale electrum. And by this time the whole array, its standards turned about, was treacherously submitting of its own will to a desire to surrender, wishing to be the slaves of Indulgence, to bear the yoke of a debauched mistress, and be governed by the loose law of the pot-house. The stout-hearted Virtue Soberness mourned to see a crime so sore, her allies deserting the right wing, a band once invincible being lost without shedding of blood. Like the good leader she is, she had carried the standard of the cross at the head of her troops, and now she plants the spike in the ground and sets it up, and with biting words restores her unsteady regiment, mingling appeals with her reproaches to awake their courage: "What blinding madness is vexing your disordered minds? To what fate are you rushing? To whom are you bowing the neck? What bonds are these (for shame!) you long to bear on arms that were meant for weapons, these yellow garlands interspersed with bright lilies, these wreaths blooming with red-hued flowers? Is it to chains like these you will give up hands trained to war, with these bind your stout

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ut mitra caesariem cohibens aurata virilem  
conbibat infusum croceo religamine nardum,  
post inscripta oleo frontis signacula, per quae 360  
unguentum regale datum est et chrisma perenne,  
ut tener incessus vestigia syrmate verrat  
sericaque infractis fluitent ut pallia membris,  
post inmortalem tunicam quam pollice docto  
texuit alma Fides, dans inpenetrabile tegmen 365.  
pectoribus lotis, dederat quibus ipsa renasci,  
inde ad nocturnas epulas, ubi cantharus ingens  
despuit effusi spumantia damna Falerni  
in mensam cyathis stillantibus, uda ubi multo  
fulera mero veterique toremata rore rigantur? 370  
excidit ergo animis eremi sitis, excidit ille  
fons patribus de rupe datus, quem mystica virga  
elicuit scissi salientem vertice saxi?  
angelicusne cibus prima in tentoria vestris  
fluxit avis, quem nunc sero felicior aevo 375  
vespertinus edit populus de corpore Christi?  
his vos inbutos dapibus iam crapula turpis  
Luxuria ad madidum rapit importuna lupanar,  
quosque viros non Ira fremens, non idola bello  
cedere compulerant, saltatrix ebria flexit! 380  
state, precor, vestri memores, memores quoque  
Christi.  
quae sit vestra tribus, quac gloria, quis Deus et  
rex,  
quis Dominus meminisse decet. vos nobile Iudae  
germen ad usque Dei genetricem, qua Deus ipse

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arms, to have your manly hair confined by a gilded turban with its yellow band to soak up the spikenard you pour on, and this after you have had inscribed with oil on your brows the signs whereby was given to you the king's anointing, his everlasting unction? To walk softly with a train sweeping the path you have trod? To wear flowing robes of silk on your enfeebled frames, after the immortal tunic that bountiful Faith wove with deft fingers, giving an impenetrable covering to cleansed hearts to which she had already given rebirth? And so to feasts that last into the night, where the great tankard spills out wasted floods of foaming wine, while the ladles drip on to the table, the couches are soaked with neat liquor, and their embossed ornaments still wet with the dew of yesterday? Have you forgotten, then, the thirst in the desert, the spring that was given to your fathers from the rock, when the mystic wand split the stone and brought water leaping from its top? Did not food that angels brought flow into your fathers' tents in early days, that food which now with better fortune, in the lateness of time, near the end of the world's day, the people eats from the body of Christ? And it is after tasting of *this* banquet that you let shameful debauchery carry you relentlessly to the drunken den of Indulgence, and soldiers whom no raging Wrath nor idols could force by war to yield have been prevailed on by a tipsy dancer! Stand, I pray you. Remember who ye are, remember Christ too. Ye should bethink yourselves of your nation and your fame, your God and King, your Lord. Ye are the high-born children of Judah and have come of a long line of noble ancestors that stretches down to the mother of God, by whom God

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esset homo, procerum venistis sanguine longo. 385  
 excitet egregias mentes celeberrima David  
 gloria continuis bellorum exercita curis,  
 excitet et Samuel, spolium qui divite ab hoste  
 adtrectare vetat nec victum vivere regem  
 incircumcisum patitur, ne praeda superstes 390  
 victorem placidum recidiva in proelia poscat.  
 parcere iam capto crimen putat ille tyranno,  
 at vobis contra vinci et subcumbere votum est.  
 paeniteat, per si qua movet reverentia summi  
 numinis, hoc tam dulce malum voluisse nefanda 395  
 proditione sequi; si paenitet, haud nocet error.  
 paenituit Ionatham ieunia sobria dulci  
 conviolasse favo sceptri mellisque sapore  
 heu male gustato, regni dum blanda voluptas  
 oblectat iuvenem iurataque sacra resolvit. 400  
 sed quia paenituit, nec sors lacrimabilis illa est,  
 nec tinguit patrias sententia saeva secures.  
 en ego Sobrietas, si conspirare paratis,  
 pando viam cunctis Virtutibus, ut malesuada 405  
 Luxuries, multo stipata satellite, poenas  
 cum legione sua Christo sub iudice pendat."  
 sic effata crucem Domini ferventibus offert  
 obvia quadriugis, lignum venerabile in ipsos  
 intentans frenos. quod ut expavere feroce 410  
 cornibus obpansi et summa fronte coruscum,  
 vertunt praecipitem caeca formidine fusi  
 per praerupta fugam. fertur resupina reductis  
 nequiquam loris auriga comamque madentem

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<sup>a</sup> Cf. 1 Samuel xv.

<sup>b</sup> Cf. 1 Samuel xiv, 24 ff. It has been suggested that Prudentius in lines 399 and 400 confuses the story of Jonathan with that of Absalom; but perhaps he is only reading too much into the words of Jonathan in verses 29 and 30.

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himself was to become man. Let the renowned David, who never rested from the troubles of war, awake your noble spirits; and Samuel too, who forbids touching the spoil taken from a rich foe, nor suffers the uncircumcised king to live after his defeat, lest the captive, were he allowed to survive, summon the victor from his life of peace to a renewal of war.<sup>a</sup> He counts it sin to spare the monarch even as a prisoner; but your desire, on the contrary, is to be conquered and submit. Repent, I beseech you by the fear of the high God, if at all it moves you, that you have desired to follow after this pleasant sin, committing a heinous betrayal. If ye repent, your sin is not deadly. Jonathan repented that he had broken the sober fast with the sweet honeycomb, tasting, alas! in an evil hour the savour of honey on his rod, when the tempting desire to be king charmed his young mind and broke the holy vow.<sup>b</sup> Yet because he repented we do not have to lament the fate that was decreeed, and the cruel sentence did not stain his father's axe. Lo, I, Soberness, if ye make ready to concert with me, open up a way for all the Virtues whereby the temptress Indulgence, for all her great train, shall pay the penalty, she and her regiment, under the judgment of Christ." So speaking, she holds up the cross of the Lord in face of the raging chariot-horses, thrusting the holy wood against their very bridles; and for all their boldness they have taken fright at its outspread arms and flashing top,<sup>c</sup> and in the rout of blind panic career down a steep place. Their driver, leaning far back and pulling on the reins, is carried helplessly along,

<sup>a</sup> The top of the cross being decorated with precious metal or jewels.

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pulvere foedatur. tunc et vertigo rotarum  
 implicat excussam dominam ; nam prona sub axem 415  
 labitur et lacero tardat sufflamine currum.  
 addit Sobrietas vulnus letale iacenti,  
 coniciens silicem rupis de parte molarem.  
 hunc vexilliferae quoniam fors obtulit ictum  
 spicula nulla manu sed belli insigne gerenti, 420  
 casus agit saxum, medii spiramen ut oris  
 frangeret, et recavo misceret labra palato.  
 dentibus introrsum resolutis lingua resectam  
 dilaniata gulam frustis cum sanguinis inplet.  
 insolitis dapibus crudescit guttur, et ossa 425  
 conliquefacta vorans revomit quas hauserat offas.  
 “ ebibe iam proprium post pocula multa cruo-  
     rem,”  
 virgo ait increpitans, “ sint haec tibi fercula  
     tandem  
 tristia praeteriti nimiis pro dulcibus aevi.  
 lascivas vitae inlecebras gustatus amarae 430  
 mortis et horrifico sapor ultimus asperat haustu.”<sup>1</sup>  
 caede ducis dispersa fugit trepidante pavore  
 nugatrix acies. Iocus et Petulantia primi  
 cymbala proiciunt ; bellum nam talibus armis  
 ludebant resonando meditantes vulnera sistro. 435  
 dat tergum fugitivus Amor, lita tela veneno  
 et lapsum ex umeris arcum pharetramque  
     cadentem  
 pallidus ipse metu sua post vestigia linquit.  
 Pompa, ostentatrix vani splendoris, inani  
 exuitur nudata peplo ; discissa trahuntur 440  
 serta Venustatis collique ac verticis aurum

<sup>1</sup> The 6th-century MS. originally had horrifico . . . asperat haustus, which was altered to horrificos . . . asperet haustus. Bergman adopts the latter reading.

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her dripping locks befouled with dust; then she is thrown out and the whirling wheels entangle her who was their mistress, for she falls forward under the axle and her mangled body is the brake that slows the chariot down. Soberness gives her the death-blow as she lies, hurling at her a great stone from the rock. As chance has put this weapon in the standard-bearer's way (for she carries no javelins in her hand, but only the emblem of her warfare), chance drives the stone to smash the breath-passage in the midst of the face and beat the lips into the arched mouth. The teeth within are loosened, the gullet cut, and the mangled tongue fills it with bloody fragments. Her gorge rises at the strange meal; gulping down the pulped bones she spews up again the lumps she swallowed. "Drink up now thine own blood, after thy many cups," says the maiden, upbraiding her. "Be these thy grim dainties, in place of the too much sweetness thou hast enjoyed in time past. The taste of bitter death in thy mouth, the savouring of this final, ghastly draught, turns to gall the wanton delights that allured thee in thy life." At the slaughter of its leader her company of triflers scatters and runs in a flutter of fear. Jest and Sauciness first cast away their cymbals; for it was with such weapons that they played at war, thinking to wound with the noise of a rattle! Desire turns his back in flight. Pale himself with fear, he leaves behind his poisoned darts, abandoning his bow where it has slipped from his shoulder, his quiver where it falls. Ostentation, that parader of empty grandeur, is stripped bare of her vain flowing robe. Allurement's garlands are torn and trail behind her, the gold on her neck and head

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solvitur, et gemmas Discordia dissona turbat.  
non piget ad tritis pedibus per acuta fructecta  
ire Voluptatem, quoniam vis maior acerbam  
conpellit tolerare fugam; formido pericli      445  
praedurat teneras iter ad cruciabile plantas.  
qua se cumque fugax trepidis fert cursibus agmen,  
damna iacent, crinalis acus, redimicula, vittae,  
fibula, flammeolum, strophium, diadema, monile.  
his se Sobrietas et totus Sobrietatis      450  
abstinet exuvii miles damnataque castis  
scandala proculeat pedibus, nec fronte severos  
conivente oculos praedarum ad gaudia flectit.  
fertur Avaritia gremio praecincta capaci,  
quidquid Luxus edax pretiosum liquerat, unca      455  
corripuisse manu, pulchra in ludibria vasto  
ore inhians aurique legens fragmenta caduci  
inter harenarum cumulos. nec sufficit amplos  
inplevisse sinus; iuvat infercire cruminis  
turpe lucrum et gravidos furtis distendere fiscos, 460  
quos laeva celante tegit laterisque sinistri  
velat opermento; velox nam dextra rapinas  
abradit spoliisque unguis exercet aenos.  
Cura, Famis, Metus, Anxietas, Periuria, Pallor,  
Corruptela, Dolus, Commenta, Insomnia, Sordes, 465  
Eumenides variae monstri comitatus aguntur.  
nec minus interea rabidorum more luporum  
Crimina persulant toto grassantia campo,  
matris Avaritiae nigro de lacte creata.  
si fratri galeam fulvis radiare ceraunis      470  
germanus vedit commilito, non timet ensem

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unfastened, and jarring Strife disorders her jewels. Pleasure is content to go with injured feet through thorny brakes, for superior force makes her endure the painful flight, and the dread of danger hardens her tender soles to bear the torture of the way. Wherever the column turns, as it rushes this way and that in its agitated flight, lie things lost, a hairpin, ribbands, fillets, a brooch, a veil, a breast-band, a coronet, a necklace. These spoils Soberness and all the soldiers of Soberness refrain from handling ; they trample under their chaste feet the cursed causes of offence, nor let their austere gaze turn a blind eye towards the joys of plunder.

"Tis said that Greed, her robe arranged to make a capacious fold in front, crooked her hand and seized on every thing of price that glutinous Indulgence left behind, gaping with mouth wide open on the pretty baubles as she picked up the broken bits of gold that had fallen amid the heaps of sand. Nor is she content to fill her roomy pockets, but delights to stuff her base gain in money-bags and cram swollen purses to bursting with her pelf, keeping them in hiding behind her left hand under cover of her robe on the left side, for her quick right hand is busy scraping up the plunder and plies nails hard as brass in gathering the booty. Care, Hunger, Fear, Anguish, Perjuries, Pallor, Corruption, Treachery, Falsehood, Sleeplessness, Meanness, diverse fiends, go in attendance on the monster; and all the while Crimes, the brood of their mother Greed's black milk, like ravening wolves go prowling and leaping over the field. If a soldier sees his own brother and fellow-soldier with a helmet that glances with precious stones of tawny hue, he fears not to

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exerere atque caput socio mucrone ferire,  
 de consanguineo rapturus vertice gemmas.  
 filius extinctum belli sub sorte cadaver  
 aspexit si forte patris, fulgentia bullis      475  
 cingula et exuvias gaudet rapuisse cruentas:  
 cognatam Civilis agit Discordia praedam,  
 nec parcit propriis Amor insatiatus Habendi  
 pigneribus spoliatque suos Famis inopia natos.  
 talia per populos edebat funera vixtrix      480  
 orbis Avaritia, sternens centena virorum  
 millia vulneribus variis: hunc lumine adempto  
 effossisque oculis velut in caligine noctis  
 caecum errare sinit perque offensacula multa  
 ire, nec oppositum baculo temptare periculum.      485  
 porro alium capit intuitu fallitque videntem,  
 insigne ostentans aliquid, quod dum petit ille,  
 excipitur telo incautus cordisque sub ipso  
 saucius occulto ferrum suspirat adactum.  
 multos praecipitans in aperta incendia cogit      490  
 nec patitur vitare focos, quibus aestuat aurum,  
 quod petit arsurus pariter speculator<sup>1</sup> avarus.  
 omne hominum rapit illa genus, mortalia cuncta  
 occupat interitu, neque est violentius ullum  
 terrarum Vitium, quod tantis cladibus aevum      495  
 mundani involvat populi damnetque gehennae.  
 quin ipsos temptare manu, si credere dignum est,  
 ausa sacerdotes Domini, qui proelia forte  
 ductores primam ante aciem pro laude gerebant  
 Virtutum, magnoque inplebant classica flatu.      500  
 et fors innocuo tinxisset sanguine ferrum,

<sup>1</sup> *peculator, adopted by Bergman, is the reading of the 6th-century MS. That of the 7th and some others show speculator only after alteration.*

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unsheathe his sword and smite the skull with a comrade's blade, purposing to snatch the gems from a kinsman's head. If a son chances to look on his father's body lying lifeless by the luck of war, he joyfully seizes the belt with its shining studs and strips off the blood-stained armour. Civil War makes plunder of his kin, the insatiable Love of Possession spares not his own dear ones, unnatural Hunger robs his own children. Such the slaughter that Greed, the conqueress of the world, was dealing among the nations, laying low myriads of men with diverse wounds. One, made sightless, his eyes prised out, she leaves to wander blindly as in the darkness of night over many a stumbling-block, nor lets him test with a staff the danger in his way. Another, again, she captures by means of his sight and cheats him with his eyes open by displaying to him some splendid thing, and in the act of reaching for it, all unheeding, he is caught by her stroke and utters a sigh at the sword-thrust that wounds him in the very depths of his heart. Many she drives headlong on to open fires, not suffering them to avoid the flames, in which gold is burning, and a man eyeing it greedily reaches for it though he is doomed to burn with it. The whole race of men she seizes upon, all mortality she destroys before it can help itself. There is no more furious Vice in the world to envelop the life of the people of the world in such disaster, condemning them to hell-fire. Nay, she even dared—can we believe it?—to raise her hand against the very priests of the Lord, the leaders posted before the front line, who were doing battle for the credit of the Virtues and filling their war-trumpets with a great blast. And perchance she would have dipped

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ni Ratio armipotens, gentis Levitidis una  
semper fida comes, clipeum obiectasset et atrae  
hostis ab incursu claros texisset alumnos.

stant tuni Rationis ope, stant turbine ab omni 505  
inmunes fortesque animi; vix in cute summa  
praestringens paucos tenui de vulnere laedit  
cuspis Avaritiae. stupuit luis improba castis  
heroum iugulis longe sua tela repelli;  
ingemit et dictis ardens furialibus infit: 510  
“vincimur, heu, segnes nec nostra potentia  
perfert

vim solitam, languet violentia saeva nocendi,  
suevrat invictis quae viribus omnia ubique  
rumpere corda hominum; nec enim tam ferrea  
quemquam

duravit natura virum, cuius rigor aera 515  
sperneret aut nostro foret inpenetrabilis auro.  
ingenium omne neci dedimus; tenera, aspera,  
dura,  
docta, indocta simul, bruta et sapientia, nec non  
casta, incesta meae patuerunt pectora dextrae.  
sola igitur rapui quidquid Styx abdit avaris 520  
gurgitibus. nobis ditissima Tartara debent  
quos retinent populos. quod volvunt saecula  
nostrum est,

quod miscet mundus, vesana negotia, nostrum.  
qui fit praevalidas quod pollens gloria vires  
deserit et cassos ludit fortuna lacertos? 525  
sordet Christicolis rutilantis fulva monetae  
effigies, sordent argenti emblemata, et omnis  
thensaurus nigrante oculis vilescit honore.  
quid sibi docta volunt fastidia? nonne triumphum

## THE FIGHT FOR MANSOUL

her steel in their innocent blood, had not the mighty warrior Reason, ever before all the true comrade of Levi's race, put her shield in the way and covered her famed foster-children from their deadly foe's onslaught. They stand in safety by Reason's aid, taking no hurt from all the tempest, and stout of heart; only a few did Greed's javelin touch, grazing them with a slight wound not skin-deep. Outrageous plague that she was, she stood amazed to see her weapons turned from the heroes' pure throats, and with a groan she broke into raging words of passion: "We are losing the fight, alas! for want of vigour, our power has lost its wonted drive, our fell strength to hurt is grown feeble, though it used to break through every heart of man everywhere with force unconquerable; for no man ever had such an iron nature to harden him that he could inflexibly scorn money or be proof against our gold. Every temper we have given over to death; hearts tender, rough and hard, minds learned and unlearned alike, stupid and wise, pure and impure too, have been open to my hand. It is I alone who have carried off all that Styx now hides away with his greedy floods; it is to us the hell we have enriched owes the peoples it keeps in durance; the thoughts of all generations are of what belongs to us, all the world's busy stirring and mad trafficking is of us. How comes it that the glorious might deserts our prevailing strength and fortune makes a mock of our feckless arms? Worthless to the followers of Christ is the yellow image on the shining coin, worthless is embossed silver, no treasure has any value to their eyes, for its glory is clouded. What means this new-learned daintiness? Did not we triumph over

## PRUDENTIUS

- egimus e Scarioth, magnus qui discipulorum      530  
 et conviva Dei, dum fallit foedere mensae  
 haudquaquam ignarum dextramque parabside  
     iungit,  
 incidit in nostrum flammante cupidine telum,  
 infamem mercatus agrum de sanguine amici  
 numinis, oblico luiturus iugera collo?      535  
 viderat et Iericho propria inter funera quantum  
 posset nostra manus, cum victor concidit Achar.  
 caedibus insignis murali et strage superbus  
 subcubuit capto victis ex hostibus auro,  
 dum vetitis insigne legens anathema favillis      540  
 maesta ruinarum spolia insatiabilis haurit.  
 non illum generosa tribus, non plebis avitae  
 iuvit Iuda parens, Christo quandoque propinquuo  
 nobilis et tali felix patriarcha nepote.  
 quis placet exemplum generis, placeat quoque  
     forma      545  
 exitii: sit poena eadem, quibus et genus unum  
     est.  
 quid moror aut Iudee populares aut populares  
 sacricolae summi (summus nam fertur Aaron)  
 fallere fraude aliqua Martis congressibus inpar?  
 nil refert armis contingat palma dolisve."      550  
 dixerat et torvam faciem furialiaque arma  
 exuit inque habitum sese transformat honestum;  
 fit Virtus specie vultuque et veste severa  
 quam memorant Frugi, parce cui vivere cordi est  
 et servare suum; tamquam nil raptet avare,      555

<sup>a</sup> Joshua vii. Achar is the form of the name in the Septuagint version. Achan represents the Hebrew here, though Achar at 1 Chronicles ii, 7.

## THE FIGHT FOR MANSOUL

Iscariot, a great one among the disciples of God, and one that sat at meat with Him? Being false to Him (though He knew all) as he sat at his table and put his hand into the dish with Him, he fell upon our weapon in the heat of his desire, for he bought a piece of land of ill fame with the price of the blood of God, who was his friend, and was doomed to atone for his acres with a strangled neck. Jericho too in the destruction of its people saw the strength of our hand, when Achar <sup>a</sup> fell in the midst of victory. ✓ For though he won glory by the slaughter and was exalted by the overthrowing of the walls, he fell a victim to the gold that was taken from the beaten foe, picking up from the forbidden ashes a thing that caught his eye (but it was the accursed thing) and grasping covetously the sorrowful spoils from the ruins of the city. Neither did the nobility of his tribe avail him, nor his ancestry deriving from Judah, a patriarch of high rank in that Christ should one day be his kinsman, and blessed in his great descendant. Those that choose to take his race as their pattern, let them choose also the form of his destruction; let those who own the same race suffer the same pains. Why not trick with some device the countrymen of Judah or of the chief priest (for they call Aaron chief), since I cannot match them in the clash of battle? It matters not whether the prize of victory comes by arms or by guile." With these words she puts off her grim look and her fiendish weapons, and changes to a noble bearing. In appearance, with austere mien and dress, she becomes the Virtue men call Thrifty, whose pleasure it is to live sparingly and save what she has; she looks as if she never snatched aught with greedy hands, and with her air of careful-

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artis adumbratae meruit ceu sedula laudem.  
huius se specie mendax Bellona coaptat,  
non ut avara lues, sed Virtus parca putetur;  
nec non et tenero pietatis tegmine crines  
obtegit anguinosa, ut candida palla latenter 560  
dissimulet rabiem, diroque obtenta furori,  
quod rapere et elepere est avideque abscondere  
parta,  
natorum curam dulci sub nomine iactet.  
talibus inludens male credula corda virorum  
fallit imaginibus, monstrumque ferale sequuntur 565  
dum credunt Virtutis opus; capit inopia Erinys  
consensu faciles manicisque tenacibus artat.  
attonitis ducibus perturbatisque maniplis  
nutabat Virtutum acies errore biformis  
portenti, ignorans quid amicum credit in illo 570  
quidve hostile notet: letum versatile et anceps  
lubricat incertos dubia sub imagine visus,  
cum subito in medium frendens Operatio campum  
prosilit auxilio sociis, pugnamque capessit  
militiae postrema gradu, sed sola duello 575  
inpositura manum, ne quid iam triste supersit.  
omne onus ex umeris reiecerat, omnibus ibat  
nudata induviis multo et se fasce levarat,  
olim divitiis gravibusque oppressa talentis,  
libera nunc miserando inopum, quos larga benigne 580  
foverat effundens patrium bene prodiga censem.

<sup>a</sup> The goddess Mâ, introduced to Rome from Cappadocia, was identified with the Roman Bellona. Her worship, which resembled that of the Magna Mater, was of a wild, orgiastic character.

## THE FIGHT FOR MANSOUL

ness she has gained repute for the quality she counterfeits. With this Virtue's likeness the false Bellona<sup>a</sup> equips herself, so as to be thought not a greedy pest but a thrifty Virtue. With a delicate covering of motherly devotion she hides her snaky tresses so that the white mantle shall disguise the raging that lurks beneath and screen the fearful fury, and so display her plundering and thieving and greedy storing of her gains under the pleasing name of care for her children. With such semblances she befools men and cheats their too credulous hearts. They follow the deadly monster, believing hers to be a Virtue's work, and the wicked fiend takes them, easy, willing victims, and binds them with gripping shackles. Their leaders bewildered, their companies confounded, the Virtues' line is faltering; for they are misled by the monster's twofold figure and know not where to see a friend in her and where to mark a foe. The deadly creature's changing, double form makes their sight unsteady and dubious, not knowing what to make of her appearance. But now of a sudden Good Works dashes in anger on to the midst of the battle-ground to help her comrades, and takes up the fight; posted last on the field is she, but destined singly so to put her hand to the war that nought shall remain to be feared.<sup>b</sup> Every load she had cast off from her shoulders, and she moved along stripped of all coverings; of many a burden had she lightened herself, for once she had been borne down by riches and the weight of money, but now had freed herself by taking pity on the needy, whom she had cared for with kindly generosity, lavishing her patrimony with a wise

<sup>a</sup> Cf. Matthew xix, 20-21.

# PRUDENTIUS

iam loculos ditata fidem<sup>1</sup> spectabat inanes,  
 aeternam numerans reddituro faenore summam.  
 horruit invictae Virtutis fulmen et inpos  
 mentis Avaritia stupefactis sensibus haesit      585  
 certa mori: nam quae fraudis via restet, ut ipsa  
 calcatrix mundi mundanis victa fatiscat  
 inlecebris spretoque iterum sese implicet auro?  
 invadit trepidam Virtus fortissima duris  
 ulnarum nodis, oblico et gutture frangit      590  
 exsanguem siccamque gulam; compressa  
     ligantur  
 vincla lacertorum sub mentum et faucibus artis  
 extorquent animam, nullo quae vulnere raptam  
 palpitat atque aditu spiraminis intercepto  
 inclusam patitur venarum carcere mortem.      595  
 illa reluctant genibusque et calcibus instans  
 perfodit et costas atque ilia rumpit anhela,  
 mox spolia extincto de corpore diripit; auri  
 sordida frusta rudis nec adhuc fornace recoctam  
 materiam, tineis etiam marsuppia crebris      600  
 exesa et virides obducta aerugine nummos  
 dispergit servata diu victrix et egenis  
 dissipat ac tenues captivo munere donat.  
 tunc circumfusam vultu exultante coronam  
 respiciens alacris media inter milia clamat:      605  
     “ solvite procinctum, iusti, et discedite ab armis!  
 causa mali tanti iacet imperfecta; lucrandi  
 ingluvie pereunte licet requiescere sanctis.  
 summa quies nil velle super quam postulet usus  
 debitus, ut simplex alimonia, vestis et una      610

<sup>1</sup> *The 7th-century MS. and others have fide.*

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<sup>a</sup> Cf. Revelation iii, 18.

## THE FIGHT FOR MANSOUL

prodigality. And now, enriched in faith, she was looking at her empty purse and reckoning the sum of her eternal wealth with the interest that would accrue. Like a thunderbolt to Avarice was the sight of the invincible Virtue. Cold with terror, no longer mistress of herself, her senses benumbed, she could not move, and knew her doom had come. For what method of trickery would be left, whereby she who had already trampled on the world should faint under worldly temptations and once again entangle herself with the gold she had scorned? As she stands thus in consternation the brave Virtue sets upon her with the iron grip of her arms and strangles her, crushing the blood out of her throat till it is dry. Her arms, pressed tight like bands beneath the chin, squeeze the gorge and wrest the life away; no wound ravishes it in the agony of death; the breath-passage stopped, it suffers its end shut up in the prison of the body. As she struggles, the victor presses hard on her with knee and foot, stabs her through the ribs and pierces the heaving flanks. Then from the dead body she takes the spoils. Dirty bits of unwrought gold, stuff not yet purified in the furnace,<sup>a</sup> worm-eaten money-bags, coins green with rust, things long hoarded, the conqueress scatters, distributing them to the needy, giving gifts to the poor of what she has taken. Then with a look of exultation she turns her eyes on the ring around her and eagerly calls out amid the thousands: "Doff your armour, ye upright, and lay your weapons aside. The cause of all our ill lies slain. Now that the lust of gain is dead, the pure may rest. 'Tis the deepest rest to wish for nought beyond what due need calls for, simple fare and one garment to cover

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infimos tegat ac recreet mediocriter artus  
expletumque modum naturae non trahat extra.  
ingressurus iter peram ne tollito, neve  
de tunicae alterius gestamine providus ito,  
nec te sollicitet res crastina, ne cibus alvo 615  
defuerit: redeunt escae cum sole diurnae.  
nonne vides ut nulla avium eras cogitet ac se  
pascendam, praestante Deo, non anxia credat?  
confidunt volucres victum non defore viles,  
passeribusque subest modico venalibus asse 620  
indubitata fides Dominum curare potentem  
ne pereant. tu, cura Dei, facies quoque Christi,  
addubitas ne te tuus umquam deserat auctor?  
ne trepidate, homines; vitae dator et dator escae  
est.

quaerite luciferum caelesti dogmate pastum, 625  
qui spem multiplicans alat invitiabilis aevi,  
corporis inmemores: memor est qui condidit illud  
subpeditare cibos atque indiga membra fovere."

his dictis curae emotae, Metus et Labor et Vis  
et Scelus et placitae fidei Fraus infitiatrix 630  
depulsae vertere solum. Pax inde fugatis  
hostibus alma abigit bellum, disceingitur omnis  
terror et avulsi exfibulat ilia zonis.

vestis ad usque pedes descendens defluit imos,  
temperat et rapidum privata modestia gressum. 635  
cornicinum curva aera silent, placabilis inplet  
vaginam gladius, sedato et pulvere campi  
suda redit facies liquidae sine nube diei,  
purpuream videoas caeli clarescere lucem.

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<sup>a</sup> Cf. Matthew vi, 26-34; x, 9-10, 29.

## THE FIGHT FOR MANSOUL

and refresh our weak bodies in moderation, and when nature's measure is satisfied, draw us on no farther. When thou art going on a journey, carry no wallet, nor take thought, when thou goest, for another tunic to wear. And be not anxious about the morrow, lest thy belly lack food; bread for the day comes duly with the sun. Seest thou not how no bird thinks of tomorrow, but rests untroubled in the faith that it will be fed by God's provision? The fowls of the air, which are so cheap, trust that food will not fail; the sparrows which are sold for a humble farthing have a sure and certain faith that the mighty Lord cares for them, that they perish not. And thou, who art God's care and the image of Christ, dost thou fear thy creator will ever desert thee? Be not anxious, O men! He who gives life gives food also. Seek ye in heavenly teaching the food that brings light and that shall nourish and enlarge the hope of a life incorruptible, forgetting the body. He who made it is mindful to furnish it with food and to care for the needs of its members."<sup>a</sup>

At these words their troubles departed. Fear and Suffering and Violence, Crime and Fraud that denies accepted faith, were driven away and fled from the land. Then kindly Peace, her enemies now routed, banishes war. All the dread-inspiring gear is doffed; they unclasp their sides, pulling off their belts; their robes fall flowing down to their feet and a civilian sobriety moderates their quick step. The trumpeters' curved brasses are silent, the sword returns in peace to its scabbard, the dust settles down on the field, the bright face of clear cloudless day comes back, and light from heaven begins to shine resplendent to the view. The squadrons,

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agmina casta super vultum sensere Tonantis	640
adridere hilares pulso certamine turmae,	
et Christum gaudere suis victoribus arce	
aetheris ac patrium famulis aperire profundum.	
dat signum felix Concordia reddere castris	
victrices aquilas atque in tentoria cogi.	645
numquam tanta fuit species nec par decus ulli	
militiae, cum dispositis bifida agmina longe	
duceret ordinibus peditum psallente caterva,	
ast alia de parte equitum resonantibus hymnis.	
non aliter cecinit respectans victor hiantem	650
Istrahel rabiem ponti post terga minacis,	
cum iam progrediens calcaret litora sicco	
ulteriora pede, stridensque per extima calcis	
mons rueret pendentis aquae nigrosque relapso	
gurgite Nilicolas fundo deprenderet imo,	655
ac refluente sinu iam redderet unda natatum	
piscibus et nudas praeceps operiret harenas.	
pulsavit resono modulantia tympana plectro	
turba Dei celebrans mirum ac memorabile saeclis	
omnipotentis opus, liquidas inter freta ripas	660
fluctibus incisis et subsistente procella	
crescere suspensosque globos potuisse teneri.	
sic expugnata Vitiorum gente resultant	
mystica dulcimodis Virtutum carmina psalmis.	
ventum erat ad fauces portae castrensis, ubi	
artum	665
liminis introitum bifori dant cardine claustra.	
nascitur hic inopina Mali lacrimabilis astu	
tempestas, placidae turbatrix invida Pacis,	

<sup>a</sup> Cf. Revelation iii, 21.

<sup>b</sup> Cf. Exodus xv, 1-21.

## THE FIGHT FOR MANSOUL

gladdened by the ending of contention, see the face of the Thunderer smiling on their unstained forces from above, and Christ in the height rejoicing in the victory of his followers and opening for his servants his Father's home in the deep of heaven.<sup>a</sup> In happiness Concord gives the signal to take the victorious standards back to camp and return to their tents. Never did army look so fine, so glorious, as she led her troops in double column with ranks in long array, the regiment of foot singing as they marched, while on the other side rang out the horsemen's hymns. Just so sang victorious Israel, looking back on the yawning gulf of the sea that raged menacingly behind them, when now in their onward march they were treading the further shore dry-foot, as the hanging mountain of water crashed down hissing at their very heels and the flood falling back caught in the depths the dark-skinned people of the Nile, letting the fish swim again in the hollow as it filled, and with a rush covered the sand that had been bared. God's company beat loud the rhythmic timbrels to celebrate the marvellous work of the Almighty, a work to be told to all generations, how banks of water were able to rise up with sea on either hand, cutting a path through the waves while the wind stayed, and the masses to be held poised on either side.<sup>b</sup> So when the race of Vices was subdued the Virtues' holy songs rang out in sweet, melodious psalms.

They had reached the pass of the camp-gate, where the double-doored barrier swings open to afford a narrow way of entrance; and here arises a storm unlooked for, through the cunning of a woeful Evil, to spite and trouble calm Peace and disturb

## PRUDENTIUS

quae tantum subita vexaret clade triumphum.  
inter confertos cuneos Concordia forte 670  
dum stipata pedem iam tutis moenibus infert,  
excipit occultum Vitii latitantis ab ictu  
mucronem laevo in latere, squalentia quamvis  
texta catenato ferri subtegmine corpus  
ambirent sutis et acumen vulneris hamis  
respuerent, rigidis nec fila tenacia nodis  
in tactum sinerent penetrare in viscera telum.  
rara tamen chalybem tenui transmittere puncto  
commissura dedit, qua sese extrema politae  
squama ligat tunicae sinus et sibi conserit oras. 680  
intulit hoc vulnus pugnatrix subdola victae  
partis et incautis victoribus insidiata est.  
nam pulsa Culparum acie Discordia nostros  
intrarat cuneos sociam mentita figuram.  
scissa procul palla structum et serpente flagellum 685  
multiplici media camporum in strage iacebant.  
ipsa redimitos olea frondente capillos  
ostentans festis respondet laeta choreis.  
sed sicam sub veste tegit, te, maxima Virtus,  
te solam tanto e numero, Concordia, tristi 690  
fraude petens. sed non vitalia rumpere sacri  
corporis est licitum, summo tenus extima tactu  
laesa cutis tenuem signavit sanguine rivum.  
exclamat Virtus subito turbata: “ quid hoc est?  
quae manus hic inimica latet, quae prospera  
nostra 695  
vulnerat et ferrum tanta inter gaudia vibrat?  
quid iuvat indomitos bello sedasse Furores  
et sanctum Vitiis pereuntibus omne receptum,

## THE FIGHT FOR MANSOUL

the great triumph with a sudden disaster. Concord, thronged in the press of close-packed companies, just as she is setting foot within the safety of the ramparts, receives a treacherous thrust in her left side from the stroke of a lurking Vice, albeit the stiff fabric of iron chain-mail covered her body and with its links repelled the deadly point, and the firm, hard-knotted strands did not suffer the weight of the blow to reach the flesh; yet an open joint let the steel pass through with a slight prick, just where the last scale is fastened to the bright cuirass and the breast-piece connected with the skirt. Such the wound that the crafty defender of the beaten side inflicted, lying in wait to take the victors off their guard. For, when the Vices' army was driven off, Discord had entered our ranks wearing the counterfeit shape of a friend. Her torn mantle and her whip of many snakes were left lying far behind amid the heaps of dead on the field of battle, while she herself, displaying her hair wreathed with leafy olive, answered cheerfully the joyous revellers. But she has a dagger hidden under her raiment, seeking to attack thee, thou greatest of Virtues, thee alone, Concord, of all this number, with bitter treachery. Yet was she not permitted to pierce the vital parts of thy sacred body; only the skin was hurt with a mere touch on the surface, and showed the mark of but a slight stream of blood. "What means this?" cries the Virtue, thus unexpectedly disturbed. "What enemy's hand is hidden here, that stabs our victory and launches its weapon amid our great rejoicing? What boots it by war to have reduced the ungovernable Passions and brought the good back without loss, while the Vices perished, if a Virtue

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si Virtus sub pace cadit? " trepida agmina  
maestos  
convertere oculos: stillabat vulneris index 700  
ferrata de veste crux, mox et pavor hostem  
comminus adstantem prodit; nam pallor in ore  
conscius audacis facti dat signa reatus  
et deprena tremunt languens manus et color  
albens.  
circumstat propere strictis mucronibus omnis 705  
Virtutum legio exquirens fervente tumultu  
et genus et nomen, patriam sectamque, Deumque  
quem colat et missu cuiatis venerit. illa  
exsanguis turbante metu: " Discordia dico,  
cognomento Heresis; Deus est mihi discolor,"  
inquit, 710  
" nunc minor, aut maior, modo duplex et modo  
simplex,  
cum placet, aërius et de phantasmate visus,  
aut innata anima est quoties volo ludere numen;  
praeceptor Belia mihi, domus et plaga mundus."  
non tulit ulterius capti blasphemia monstri 715  
Virtutum regina Fides, sed verba loquentis  
inpedit et vocis claudit spiramina pilo,  
pollutam rigida transfigens cuspide linguam.  
carpitur innumeris feralis bestia dextris;  
frustatim sibi quisque rapit quod spargat in  
auras, 720  
quod canibus donet, corvis quod edacibus ultro  
offerat, inmundis caeno exhalante cloacis  
quod trudat, monstris quod mandet habere  
marinis.  
discissum foedis animalibus omne cadaver  
dividitur, ruptis Heresis perit horrida membris. 725

## THE FIGHT FOR MANSOUL

falls in time of peace?" The ranks in alarm turned sorrowing eyes upon her, and there was the tell-tale blood dripping from the armoured coat! Then fear betrays the foe as she stands close by, for the pallid cheek shows consciousness of the outrage and gives proof of guilt, and the limp hand and white face tremble at discovery. Quickly with drawn swords the whole army of the Virtues surrounds her, asking in an uproar of excitement her race and name, her country and her faith, what God she worships, of what nation he that sent her. And she, all pale with upsetting fear, says: "I am called Discord, and my other name is Heresy. The God I have is variable, now lesser, now greater, now double, now single; when I please, he is unsubstantial, a mere apparition, or again the soul within us, when I choose to make a mock of his divinity."<sup>a</sup> My teacher is Belial, my home and country the world." No further did Faith, the Virtues' queen, bear with the outrageous prisoner's blasphemies, but stopped her speech and blocked the passage of her voice with a javelin, driving its hard point through the foul tongue. Countless hands tear the deadly beast in pieces, each seizing bits to scatter to the breezes, or throw to the dogs, or proffer to the devouring carrion crows, or thrust into the foul, stinking sewers, or give to the sea-monsters for their own. The whole corpse is torn asunder and parcelled out to unclean creatures; so perishes frightful Heresy, rent limb from limb.

<sup>a</sup> These expressions indicate heretical beliefs with which Prudentius deals in the *Apotheosis* and *Hamartigenia*. Cf. *Apoth.* 255 ff. (*minor, maior*), *Ham.* 1-16, etc. (*duplicis*), *Apoth.* 178 ff. (*simplex*), 952 ff. (*phantasma*). *Innata anima* seems to refer to the doctrine treated at *Apoth.* 820 ff., that the soul is a very part of God.

## PRUDENTIUS

compositis igitur rerum morumque secundis  
in commune bonis, postquam<sup>1</sup> intra tuta morari  
contigit ac statione frui valloque foveri  
pacificos Sensus, et in otia solvere curas,<sup>1</sup> 730  
exstruitur media castrorum sede tribunal  
editiore loco, tumulus quem vertice acuto  
excitat in speculam, subiecta unde omnia late  
liber inoffenso circum inspicit aëre visus.  
hunc sincera Fides simul et Concordia, sacro  
foedere iuratae Christi sub amore sorores, 735  
concedunt apicem; mox et sublime tribunal  
par sanctum carumque sibi supereminet aequo  
iure potestatis, consistunt aggere summo  
conspicuae populosque iubent adstare frequentes.  
concurrunt alacres castris ex omnibus omnes, 740  
nulla latet pars Mentis iners, quae corporis ullo  
intercepta sinu per conceptacula sese  
degeneri languore tegat, tentoria apertis  
cuncta patent velis, reserantur carbasa, ne quis  
marceat obscuro stertens habitator operto. 745  
auribus intentis expectant contio, quidnam  
victores post bella vocet Concordia princeps,  
quam velit atque Fides Virtutibus addere legem.  
erumpit prima in vocem Concordia tali  
adloquio: "cumulata quidem iam gloria vobis, 750  
o Patris, o Domini fidissima pignera Christi,  
contigit: extincta est multo certamine saeva  
barbaries, sanctae quae circumsaepserat urbis  
indigenas, ferroque viros flammaque premebat.

<sup>1</sup> The 6th-century MS. A and some others have  
in commune bonis, tranquillae plebis ad unum  
sensibus in tuta valli statione locatis  
exstruitur, etc.

The 7th-century MS. is not available for lines 668–892.

## THE FIGHT FOR MANSOUL

So now that a fair and happy state of circumstance and life has been established over all, now <sup>a</sup> that the peaceable Sentiments can dwell in security under the protection of guard-post and rampart, and find relief in relaxation of their cares,<sup>a</sup> a platform is set up at the midmost point of the camp on an elevated ground, a peak-topped hillock rising to make a look-out whence the eye can freely range afar on every side without obstruction. To this projection mounts honest Faith and, with her, Concord, sisters sworn in holy alliance in the love of Christ. Then the sacred pair, dear to each other, take their stand together towering above the lofty platform, for their authority is equal; and from their prominent place on the summit of the rising ground they bid the people attend them in their numbers. All assemble briskly from the whole camp. No member of Soul lurks in idleness, shut off in a pocket of the body and lying close in some retreat in ignoble sloth. All tents stand exposed, their curtains drawn back, the canvas open, so that no dweller therein shall lie lazily asleep in undiscovered secrecy. With ears alert the assemblage waits to hear for what cause its leader Concord summons the victors now that war is over, or what new rule Faith will lay on the Virtues. Concord first breaks into speech with these words: "Abundant glory has come to you, ye faithful children of the Father and of Christ our Lord. With a great struggle have you wiped out the cruel savages that had beset the dwellers in the holy city round about with hard pressure of fire and sword.

<sup>a</sup> With the text of *A* etc. "now that the folk is at peace and every Sentiment, down to the last, settled safely behind the protection of the rampart."

## PRUDENTIUS

publica sed requies privatis rure foroque 755  
constat amicitiis: scissura domestica turbat  
rem populi, titubatque foris quod dissidet intus.  
ergo cavete, viri, ne sit sententia discors  
Sensibus in nostris, ne secta exotica tectis  
nascatur conflata odiis, quia fissa voluntas 760  
confundit variis arcana biformia fibris.  
quod sapimus coniungat amor; quod vivimus uno  
conspiret studio: nil dissociabile firmum est.  
utque homini atque Deo medius intervenit Iesus,  
qui sociat mortale Patri, ne carnea distent 765  
Spiritui acerno sitque ut Deus unus utrumque,  
sic, quidquid gerimus mentisque et corporis actu,  
spiritus unimodis texat conpagibus unus.  
pax plenum Virtutis opus, pax summa laborum,  
pax belli exacti pretium est pretiumque pericli. 770  
sidera pace vigent, consistunt terrea pace.  
nil placitum sine pace Deo: non munus ad aram  
cum cupias offerre probat, si turbida fratrem  
mens impacati sub pectoris oderit antro,  
nec, si flammicomis Christi pro nomine martyr 775  
ignibus insilias servans inamabile votum  
bile sub obliqua, pretiosam proderit Iesu  
inpendisse animam, meriti quia clausula pax est.  
non inflata tumet, non invidet aemula fratri,  
omnia perpetitur patiens atque omnia credit, 780  
nunquam laesa dolet, cuncta offensacula donat,

## THE FIGHT FOR MANSOUL

But the nation's peace depends on good will between its citizens in field and town. Division at home upsets the common weal and difference within means faltering abroad. Therefore be on the watch, my soldiers, that there be no discordant thought among our Sentiments, that no foreign faction arise in us from the occasion of hidden quarrels; for a divided will creates disorder in our inmost nature, making two parties in a heart at variance. Let our understanding be united by love, our life be in accord in a single aim; where there is separation there is no strength. And just as Jesus mediates between man and God, uniting mortality with the Father so that the fleshly shall not be separated from the eternal Spirit and that one God shall be both, so let one spirit shape in single structure all that we do by action of soul and body. Peace is the fulfilment of a Virtue's work, peace the sum and substance of her toils, peace the reward for war now ended and for peril faced. It is by peace that the stars live and move, by peace that earthly things stand firm. Without peace nothing is pleasing to God. When thou desirest to offer a gift at the altar, it is not acceptable to Him if thy soul is angry and hates thy brother in the depths of a heart unreconciled; and if in martyrdom for the name of Christ thou shouldst leap into the fire with its tresses of flame, while from spiteful wrath thou dost still keep some uncharitable desire, it will not profit thee to have sacrificed thy precious life to Jesus, for it is peace that is the perfection of merit. It is not puffed up with pride, it feels no jealous envy of a brother; it endures all things with long-suffering, believes all things. It bears wrong without resentment, it forgives all

## PRUDENTIUS

occasum lucis venia praecurrere gestit,  
 anxia ne stabilem linquat sol conscius iram.  
 quisque litare Deo mactatis vult holocaustis,  
 offerat in primis pacem: nulla hostia Christo 785  
 dulcior: hoc solo sancta ad donaria vultum  
 munere convertens liquido<sup>1</sup> oblectatur odore.  
 sed tamen et niveis tradit Deus ipse columbis  
 pinnatum tenera plumarum veste colubrum  
 rimante ingenio docte internoscere mixtum 790  
 innocuis avibus; latet et lupus ore cruento  
 lacteolam mentitus ovem sub vellere molli,  
 cruda per agninos exercens funera rictus.  
 hac sese occultat Photinus et Arrius arte,  
 inmanes feritate lupi. discrimina produnt 795  
 nostra recensque crux, quamvis de corpore summo,  
 quid possit furtiva manus." gemitum dedit  
     omnis  
 Virtutum populus casu concussus acerbo.  
 tum generosa Fides haec subdidit: " immo  
     secundis  
 in rebus casset gemitus. Concordia laesa est, 800  
 sed defensa Fides: quin et Concordia sospes,  
 germanam comitata Fidem, sua vulnera ridet.  
 haec mea sola salus, nihil hac mihi triste recepta.  
 unum opus egregio restat post bella labori,  
 o proceres, regni quod tandem pacifer heres 805  
 belligeri, armatae successor inermus et aulae,  
 instituit Solomon, quoniam genitoris anheli  
 fumarat calido regum de sanguine dextra.

<sup>1</sup> pure in the 6th-century MS.

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<sup>a</sup> Both taught heretical doctrines with regard to the Trinity.  
 The name of the latter is more familiar as Arius.

## THE FIGHT FOR MANSOUL

offences ; it is eager to pardon before daylight sinks, uneasy lest the conscious sun leave behind it an enduring anger. Whosoever would worship God acceptably with whole burnt offerings, let him above all offer peace. No sacrifice is sweeter to Christ ; it is this gift alone that pleases Him with a pure aroma when He turns his face towards the holy altar. Yet God himself gives the snow-white doves the skill to know, with sense that looks beneath the surface, the winged snake in its dress of soft, downy feathers, when it mingles with the harmless birds. The wolf, too, with his gory jaws, conceals himself in a soft fleece, counterfeiting a milk-white sheep, while he carries on his bloody murders by devouring the lambs. It is by this device that Photinus and Arrius <sup>a</sup> disguise themselves, those wolves so wild and savage. This danger to me, and this fresh bleeding, superficial though it be, show what a stealthy hand can do." A cry of sorrow arose from all the nation of the Virtues in their agitation at the grievous mischance. Then noble Faith added these words : " Nay, let there be no cry of sorrow in our hour of victory. Concord has been hurt, but Faith defended. Indeed Concord has been saved, and standing by her sister Faith, laughs at her wounds. She is my sole salvation ; with her rescue there is nought to cast me down. One task alone, ye captains, now that war is over, remains for a noble effort to perform ; the task that Solomon, the peaceful heir of a warlike throne, the unarmed successor to an armed court, set on foot, since his father panted from the slaughter and his hand reeked of the warm blood of kings.<sup>b</sup> For it is when

<sup>b</sup> Cf. 1 Chronicles xxviii, 2-3 ; 1 Kings v, 2-5.

## PRUDENTIUS

- sanguine nam terso templum fundatur et ara  
ponitur auratis Christi domus ardua tectis. 810
- tunc Hierusalem templo inlustrata quietum  
suscepit iam diva Deum, circumvaga postquam  
sedit marmoreis fundata altaribus arca.  
surgat et in nostris templum venerabile castris,  
omnipotens cuius sanctorum sancta revisat. 815
- nam quid terrigenas ferro pepulisse phalangas  
Culparum prodest, hominis si Filius arce  
aetheris inlapsus purgati corporis urbem  
intret inornatam templi splendentis egenus?  
haec alternis sudatum est comminus armis: 820
- munia nunc agitet tacitae toga candida pacis,  
atque sacris sedem properet discincta iuventus."  
haec ubi dicta dedit, gradibus regina superbis  
desiluit tantique operis Concordia consors  
metatura novum iacto fundamine templum. 825
- aurea planitiem spatiis percurrit harundo  
dimensis, quadrent ut quattuor undique frontes,  
ne commissuris distantibus angulus inpar  
argutam mutilet per dissona semetra normam.  
Aurorae de parte tribus plaga lucida portis 830
- inlustrata patet, triplex aperitur ad austrum  
portarum numerus, tris occidualibus offert  
ianua trina fores, totiens aquilonis ad axem  
panditur alta domus. nullum illic structile  
saxum,
- sed cava per solidum multoque forata dolatu 835
- gemma reluenti limen complectitur arcu,  
vestibulumque lapis penetrabile concipit unus.  
portarum summis inscripta in postibus auro

<sup>a</sup> Cf. Revelation xxi, 15. In what follows, Prudentius draws many details from the description of the New Jerusalem in that chapter.

## THE FIGHT FOR MANSOUL

blood is cleansed that a temple is built and an altar set up in an house adorned with gold, to be the majestic home of Christ. Then it was that Jerusalem was made glorious with her temple and, herself now divine, received her God to rest there, now that the homeless Ark was established in its place on the marble altar. In our camp too let a sacred temple arise, that the Almighty may visit its holy of holies. For what does it profit to have driven back with the sword the earth-born regiments of the Sins, if the Son of Man coming down from high heaven and entering the city of the cleansed body finds it unadorned and lacks a shining temple? Hitherto have we laboured hard in close battle one after another; now let the white plain dress of quiet peace be active in its tasks, and our soldiers unharnessed hasten to build an abode for holy worship."

So speaking, with majestic step descended the queen and Concord, her partner in the great work, to lay out the new temple and set its foundation. Her golden reed <sup>a</sup> runs over the ground measuring out the distances, so that the four sides shall square every way and the junctures be true, leaving no unequal angle to mar the neatness of the plan by breaking its harmonious regularity. On the side of the dawn stretches clear a quarter lit up by three gates; three gates open towards the south; three entrances present three doors to the west; and as many openings does the lofty house show towards the pole of the north. No building-stone is there, but a single gem, a block through which much hewing has pierced a passage, frames the doorway with a shining arch, and a single stone forms the entrance-court. On the tops of the gateways gleam the

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nomina apostolici fulgent bis sena senatus.  
 Spiritus his titulis arcana recondita Mētis      840  
 ambit et electos vocat in praecordia Sēnsus;  
 quaque hominis natura viget, quam corpore toto  
 quadrua vis animat, trinis ingressibus aram  
 cordis adit castisque colit sacraria votis;  
 seu pueros sol primus agat, seu fervor ephēbos    845  
 incendat nimius, seu consummabilis aevi  
 perficiat lux plena viros, sive algida Borræ  
 aetas decrepitam vocet ad pia sacra senectam,  
 occurrit trinum quadrina ad compita nomen,  
 quod bene discipulis disponit rex duodenis.      850  
 quin etiam totidem gemmarum insignia textis  
 parietibus distincta micant, animasque colorum  
 viventes liquido lux evōmit alta profundo.  
 ingens chrysolitus, nativo interlitus auro,  
 hinc sibi sapphirum sociaverat, inde beryllum,      855  
 distantesque nitor medius variabat honores.  
 hic chalcedon hebes perfunditur ex hyacinthi  
 lumine vicino; nam forte cyanea propter  
 stagna lapis cohibens ostro fulgebat aquoso.  
 sardonicem pingunt amethystina, pingit iaspis      860  
 sardium iuxta adpositum pulcherque topazon.  
 has inter species smaragdina gramine verno  
 prata virent volvitque vagos lux herbida fluctus.  
 te quoque conspicuum structura interserit, ardens

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<sup>a</sup> The four sides of the square temple represent here the four ages of man which are described in lines 845–48.

<sup>b</sup> *Compita* here is the area covered by the temple (including the temple itself) into which ways lead from the four directions. Trebatius (a jurist and a younger contemporary of Cicero) as quoted by Servius “Danielis” in a note on Virgil (*Georgics*, II, 383) defines *compita* as a place into which, or from which,

## THE FIGHT FOR MANSOUL

twelve names of the apostolic senate inscribed in gold. With these inscriptions the Spirit encircles the unseen privacy of Soul, calling elect Sentiments into the heart; and at whatever side is man's life,<sup>a</sup> whose bodily temper is given by a four-fold force, it approaches the altar in the heart by three avenues and with pure desires honours its sanctuary; whether it be the brisk dawn of childhood, or the strong burning heat of youth, or the broad day of the man's full maturity, or the chill time of north wind calling feeble age to its devotions, three names present themselves at this meeting-place of ways on each of its four sides,<sup>b</sup> where the King sets them out in honour of his twelve disciples. And more, the same number of gems, set singly in the fabric of the walls, sparkle conspicuously, and out of their clear depths the light from on high pours living, breathing colours. A great chrysolite, speckled with natural gold, had partnered with it on one side a sapphire, on the other a beryl, and the lustre between them gave varying tones to the beauties it parted. Here a dull chalcedony is flooded with colour from the light of its neighbour jacinth; for as it chanced that stone with the dark depths imprisoned within it was shining near by with its pellucid flash of crimson. The amethyst's hue tinges the sardonyx, jasper and fair topaz the sardius set beside them. Amid these beauties are emeralds like grassy meadows in the spring, whose green light rolls out ever-changing waves. Thou too, gleaming chrysoprase, hast a conspicuous place in the structure, ways lead from, or in, a number of directions, either with or without an altar, and either roofed over or in the open, and in which the people of a country district meet together.

## PRUDENTIUS

chrysoprase, et sidus saxis stellantibus addit. 865  
 stridebat gravidis funalis machina vinclis  
 inmensas rapiens alta ad fastigia gemmas.  
 at domus interior septem subnixa columnis  
 crystalli algentis vitrea de rupe recisis  
 construitur, quarum tegit edita calculus albens 870  
 in conum caesus capita et sinuamine subter  
 subductus conchae in speciem, quod mille talentis  
 margaritum ingens, opibusque et censibus hastae  
 addictis, animosa Fides mercata pararat.  
 hoc residet solio pollens Sapientia et omne 875  
 consilium regni celsa disponit ab aula,  
 tutandique hominis leges sub corde retractat.  
 in manibus dominae sceptrum non arte politum  
 sed ligno vivum viridi est, quod stirpe recisum,<sup>1</sup>  
 quamvis nullus alat terreni caespitis umor, 880  
 fronde tamen viret incolumi, tum sanguine tinctis  
 intertexta rosis cendentia lilia miscet  
 nescia marcenti florem submittere collo.  
 huius forma fuit sceptri gestamen Aaron  
 floriferum, sicco quod germina cortice trudens 885  
 explicuit tenerum spe pubescente decorum  
 inque novos subito tumuit virga arida fetus.  
 reddimus aeternas, indulgentissime doctor,  
 grates, Christe, tibi, meritosque sacramus honores  
 ore pio; nam cor vitiorum stercore sordet. 890  
 tu nos corporei latebrosa pericula operti  
 luctantisque animae voluisti agnoscere casus.  
 novimus ancipites nebuloso in pectore sensus

<sup>1</sup> *Bergman reads reciso with the 6th-century MS.*

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<sup>a</sup> The identification of the precious stones is often dubious. The names used in the Authorised Version of Revelation xxi are here retained, but *sapphirus* is certainly lapis lazuli and *hyacinthus* is sapphire.

## THE FIGHT FOR MANSOUL

thy star is added to the glittering stones. The crane was creaking with the weight on its chains as it whirled the vast gems up to the heights.<sup>a</sup> An inner chamber, too, is constructed, which rests on seven pillars<sup>b</sup> cut from a glassy rock of ice-like crystal and topped with a white stone cut cone-wise and curved on the lower part into the likeness of a shell, a great pearl to buy which Faith had boldly sold at auction all her substance and her property, and paid for it a thousand talents.<sup>c</sup> Here mighty Wisdom sits enthroned and from her high court sets in order all the government of her realm, meditating in her heart laws to safeguard mankind. In the sovereign's hands is a sceptre, not finished with craftsman's skill but a living rod of green wood; severed from its stock, it draws no nurture from moist earthly soil, yet puts forth perfect foliage and with blooms of blood-red roses intermingles white lilies that never droop on withering stem. This is the sceptre that was prefigured by the flowering rod that Aaron carried, which, pushing buds out of its dry bark, unfolded a tender grace with burgeoning hope, and the parched twig suddenly swelled into new fruits.<sup>d</sup>

We give to Thee, O Christ, Thou tenderest of teachers, unending thanks and offer to Thee the honour that is thy due with loyal lips—for our heart is foul with the filth of sin. Thou didst wish us to learn the dangers that lurk unseen within the body, and the vicissitudes of our soul's struggle. We know that in the darkness of our heart conflicting affections

<sup>b</sup> Cf. Proverbs ix, 1.

<sup>c</sup> Cf. Matthew xiii, 45–46.

<sup>d</sup> Cf. Numbers xvii, 6–8.

## PRUDENTIUS

sudare alternis conflictibus, et variato  
 pugnarum eventu nunc indole crescere dextra, 895  
 nunc inclinatis virtutibus<sup>1</sup> ad iuga vitae  
 deteriora trahi seseque addicere noxis  
 turpibus et propriae iacturam ferre salutis.  
 o quotiens animam, vitiorum peste repulsa,  
 sensimus incaluisse Deo! quotiens tepefactum 900  
 caeleste ingenium post gaudia candida taetro  
 cessisse stomacho! fervent bella horrida, fervent  
 ossibus inclusa, fremit et discordibus armis  
 non simplex natura hominis; nam viscera limo  
 effigiata premunt animam, contra ille sereno 905  
 editus adflatu nigrantis carcere cordis  
 aestuat, et sordes arta inter vincla recusat.  
 spiritibus pugnant variis lux atque tenebrae,  
 distantesque animat duplex substantia vires,  
 donec praesidio Christus Deus adsit et omnes 910  
 virtutum gemmas conponat sede piata,  
 atque, ubi peccatum regnaverat, aurea templi  
 atria constituens texat spectamine morum  
 ornamenta animae, quibus oblectata decoro  
 aeternum solio dives Sapientia regnet. 915

<sup>1</sup> Some MSS. have cervicibus.

## THE FIGHT FOR MANSOUL

fight hard in successive combats and, as the fortune of battle varies, now grow strong in goodness of disposition and again, when the virtues are worsted, are dragged away to live in bondage to the worse, making themselves the slaves of shameful sins, and content to suffer the loss of their salvation. How often, when the plaguing sins have been driven away, have we felt our soul aglow with the presence of God, how often, after these pure joys, felt our heavenly nature grow cool and yield to foul desire! Savage war rages hotly, rages within our bones, and man's two-sided nature is in an uproar of rebellion; for the flesh that was formed of clay bears down upon the spirit, but again the spirit that issued from the pure breath of God is hot within the dark prison-house of the heart, and even in its close bondage rejects the body's filth. Light and darkness with their opposing spirits are at war, and our two-fold being inspires powers at variance with each other, until Christ our God comes to our aid, orders all the jewels of the virtues in a pure setting, and where sin formerly reigned builds the golden courts of his temple, creating for the soul, out of the trial of its conduct, ornaments for rich Wisdom to find delight in as she reigns for ever on her beauteous throne.

# CONTRA ORATIONEM SYMMACHI

## LIBER I

### PRAEFATIO

PAULUS, praeco Dei, qui fera gentium  
primus corda sacro perdomuit stilo,  
Christum per populos ritibus asperis  
inmanes placido dogmate seminans,  
inmansueta suas ut ceremonias 5  
gens pagana Deo sperneret agnito,  
actus turbinibus forte nigerrimis  
hibernum pelagus iam rate debili  
et vim navifragi pertulerat noti.  
sed cum caerulei proelia gurgitis 10  
iussisset Domini dextra quiescere,  
ad portum fluitans cumba relabitur  
exponitque solo litoris uidi  
contractos pluvio frigore remiges.  
tunc de litoreis saepibus algidi 15  
arentum propere bracchia palmitum  
convectant rapidos unde focos struant:  
fascem quisque suum congerit ignibus  
expectans calidi luxuriam rogi.  
Paulus, dum fragiles cogere surculos 20  
et densere foci congeriem studet,  
incautam cumulis inseruit manum,  
torpebat glacie pigra ubi vipera

# A REPLY TO THE ADDRESS OF SYMMACHUS<sup>a</sup>

## BOOK I

### PREFACE

PAUL, the herald of God, who first with his holy pen subdued the wild hearts of the Gentiles and with his peaceable teaching propagated the knowledge of Christ over barbarous nations that followed savage ways, so that the untamed pagan race might come to know God and reject its own rituals, chanced once to be driven before a black tempest and with his ship disabled endured a stormy sea and a furious, wrecking wind. But when the Lord's hand made the dark, warring waters sink to rest, the vessel, still afloat, glided into a haven and on the wet shore disembarked her crew all pinched with cold and rain; and then, shivering the while, they hastily gathered dry, branching shoots from bushes by the shore to make a vehement blaze, each one, as he piled his bundle on the flames, looking to enjoy the warmth of the bonfire. Paul, busily gathering brittle twigs and pressing them on the burning heap, put an unwary hand into the pile, where a viper had been

<sup>a</sup> See Introduction, pp. x-xii.

# PRUDENTIUS

sarmentis laqueos corporis implicans.  
 quae postquam intepuit fomite fumeo  
 laxavitque ferox colla rigentia,  
 iam flecti facilis, rettulit ad manum  
 vibrato capite spicula dentium.  
 haerentem digitii vulnere mordicus  
 pendentemque gerens Paulus inhorruit.  
 exclamant alii, quod cute livida  
 virus mortiferum serpere crederent.  
 at non intrepidum terret apostolum  
 tristis tam subiti forma periculi.  
 adtollens oculos sidera suspicit  
 Christum sub tacito pectore murmurans,  
 excussumque procul discutit aspidem.  
 abiectus coluber verberat aëra  
 atque oris patuli solvit acumina.  
 mox omnis sanies deserit et dolor  
 ceu nullo laceram vulnere dexteram,  
 siccatusque perit vipereus liquor.  
hydrum præcipitem dum rotat inpetus,  
 arsurum mediis intulit ignibus.  
 sic nunc post hiemem vimque trucis freti,  
 quo iactata ratis tunc Sapientiae est,  
 cum sub sacricolis territa regibus  
 vix pango poterat currere carbaso  
 afflictosque suos turbine saeculi  
 vectarat rabidis fluctibus innatans,  
 morsum vulnificum lex pia pertulit.  
 occultabat enim se prius abditum  
 virus nec gravidum protulerat caput,  
 contentum involucris atque cubilibus  
 subter comprimere clausa silentia.  
 sed, dum forte latens inpietas riget,  
 dextram Iustitiae pigra momorderat

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## A REPLY TO ADDRESS OF SYMMACHUS

lying torpid and benumbed with the frost, its body twined in coils about the sticks; and now that it was warmed up by the smoking fire and got its stiff neck loosened it grew fierce again, and with its suppleness restored it poised its head and struck at his hand with its sharp teeth. Paul shuddered as he lifted it while it clung to the wound in his finger, hanging on by its bite. Others cried out, for they supposed the deadly venom was spreading and discolouring the skin; but the apostle was undaunted; the sudden peril in this grim shape did not affright him. Raising his eyes, he looked up to heaven, silently uttering the name of Christ in his heart, and shook the reptile off and cast it from him, and the snake, as he threw it off, lashing the air opened its mouth and released its fangs. Then all the tainted blood and the pain vanished from the hand as though no wound had torn it, and the viper's venom dried up and disappeared. The forceful toss sent the serpent whirling into the midst of the fire to burn.

So in our day, after the storm and violence of the angry sea whereon Wisdom's barque was driven about, what time she was put in fear under idolatrous rulers and could scarce run with canvas spread, and the people she carried as she floated over the raging waves were in distress from the storm of the world, her holy law suffered a bite that wounded it. For the poison had been lurking hitherto in secret, nor put forth its virulent head, but had been content to lie wrapped up deep in its lair and keep close silence; but while Impiety was lying stiff and unperceived, numb as it was, it bit the hand of Righteousness, for its gall was inflamed and it was heated with

## PRUDENTIUS

succensi stomacho fellis inaestuans.  
 heu, quam catholicam nil prope profuit  
 puppem nasse sacri remigio stili      60  
 quem Paulus variis gentibus edidit!  
 vix portu placido tuta quieverat  
 victrix edomitis mille furoribus,  
 vix adstricta suis iam retinaculis  
 vectores stabili condiderat solo :      65  
 erumpit subito triste periculum.  
 nam dum praecalidos igniculos sibi  
 solvendis adolescent et senio et gelu,  
 dum virgas steriles atque superfluas  
 flammis de fidei palmite concremant,      70  
 ut concreta vagis vinea crinibus  
 silvosi inluviam poneret idoli,  
 palpavit nimius perniciem tempor.  
seps. insueta subit serpere flexibus  
 et vibrare sagax eloquii caput :      75  
 sed dextra inpatiens vulneris inritos  
 oris rhetorici depulit halitus ;  
 effusum ingenii virus inaniter  
 summa Christicolis in cute substitit.

Salvator generis Romulei, precor,  
 qui cunctis veniam das pereuntibus,  
 qui nullum statuis non operis tui  
 mortalem, facili quem releves manu,  
 huius, si potis est, iam miserescito      80  
 praeruptam in foveam praecipitis viri.  
 spirat sacrilegis flatibus inscius  
 erroresque suos indocilis fovet.  
 obtestor, iubeas ne citus inpetus  
 arsurum mediis inferat ignibus.      85

## A REPLY TO ADDRESS OF SYMMACHUS

rage. Alas, how all but bootless it has been that the Catholic barque has swum the seas under the oarage of the holy writings that Paul put forth to many nations! Scarce had she come to rest in safety in the calm haven after her victory over a thousand wild storms, scarce had she been made fast with her mooring-ropes and landed her passengers on firm ground, when suddenly the grim peril burst forth. For while they were making hot fires to relieve their weariness and cold, burning in the flames the barren and useless shoots from the vine of the faith,<sup>a</sup> which had grown into a thick mass of gadding tresses, to rid it of its rank forest-growth of idolatry, the all too warm caress of the heat brought the plague to life. The snake began to creep and twine anew and poise a head that was skilled in speech. But a hand that no wound can hurt turned aside the vain breathings of that eloquent mouth;<sup>b</sup> its poisonous talent was poured out without effect and stopped short on the surface of the Christians' skin.

O Saviour of the race of Romulus, who dost grant thy grace to all that are perishing and dost establish as a work of thine every mortal whom with ready hand Thou raisest up, I pray Thee, if it may be, have compassion now on this man who has fallen into a sheer pit. Unwittingly he breathes impiety, and in his ignorance clings to his errors. I beseech Thee, command that a swift toss shall not send him into the midst of the fire to burn.

<sup>a</sup> This probably refers to the condemnation of heresies by the Council called by Theodosius I at Constantinople in 381.

<sup>b</sup> Prudentius admits the oratorical pre-eminence of Symmachus.

## PRUDENTIUS

CREDEBAM vitiis aegram gentilibus urbem  
iam satis antiqui pepulisse pericula morbi  
nec quidquam restare mali, postquam medicina  
principis inmodicos sedarat in arce dolores.  
sed quoniam renovata lues turbare salutem      5  
temptat Romulidum, patris inploranda medella  
est,  
ne sinat antiquo Romam squalere veterno  
neve togas procerum fumoque et sanguine tingui.  
inclitus ergo parens patriae, moderator et orbis,  
nil egit prohibendo vagas ne pristinus error      10  
crederet esse deum nigrante sub aëre formas,  
aut elementorum naturam, quae Patris ars est  
omnigeni, summa pro maiestate sacraret,  
vir solus cui cura fuit ne publica morum  
plaga cicatricem summa leviter cute clausam      15  
duceret, et latebram tabentis vulneris alte  
impressam penitusque putri de pure peresam  
iuncta superficies medico fallente foveret,  
sed studuit quo pars hominis generosior intus  
viveret atque animam letali peste piatam      20  
nosset ab interno tutam servare veneno?  
illa tyrannorum fuerat medicina, videre  
quis status ante oculos praesentibus ac perituris  
conpeteret rebus, nec curam adhibere futuris.  
heu, male de populo meriti, male patribus ipsis      25  
blanditi, quos praecipites in Tartara mergi  
cum Iove siverunt multa et cum plebe deorum!

## A REPLY TO ADDRESS OF SYMMACHUS

I USED to think that Rome, which was sick with her pagan errors, had by now quite rid herself of the dangers of her old disease and that no ill remained behind, now that the emperor's healing measures had assuaged in the seat of power her grievous pains.<sup>a</sup> But since the plague has broken out anew and seeks to trouble the well-being of the race of Romulus, we must beg a remedy of our father, that he let not Rome sink again into her old filthy torpor nor suffer her great men's gowns to be stained with smoke and blood. Did the illustrious father of his country and ruler of the world achieve nothing, then, when he forbade old error to believe in shapes of gods that went about in the murky air, or to consecrate in place of the supreme majesty the elements which are the handiwork of the Father who created all? He was the one man whose care it was that, while the wound in the nation's character showed outwardly a scar lightly healed on the skin, the union of the surface should not, because of the surgeon's dishonesty, foster in secret a deep-seated wasting sore, all eaten away with putrefaction; but sought diligently to make man's nobler part within him live and know how to keep the soul that was cleansed of the deadly plague safe from internal poison. The treatment the usurpers applied before had been to see what order of affairs would meet the passing situation of the moment, and to take no trouble for the future. Alas, ill did they serve the nation, ill complaisance did they show to the senators themselves, when they let them plunge headlong into hell in company with Jupiter and the great mob

<sup>a</sup> Pagan worship was forbidden under Theodosius I.

## PRUDENTIUS

ast hic imperium protendit latius aevo  
posteriore suis cupiens sancire salutem.  
nimirum pulchre quidam doctissimus " esset  
publica res," inquit, " tunc fortunata satis, si  
vel reges saperent vel regnarent sapientes." 30  
estne ille e numero paucorum qui diadema  
sortiti aetheriae coluerunt dogma sophiae?  
contigit ecce hominum generi gentique togatae  
dux sapiens. felix nostrae res publica Romae  
iustitia regnante viget. parete magistro  
sceptra gubernanti. monet ut deterrimus error  
utque supersticio veterum procul absit avorum,  
nec putet esse deum, nisi qui super omnia summus 40  
emineat magnique inmensa creaverit orbis.  
num melius Saturnus avos rexisse Latinos  
creditur, edictis qui talibus informavit  
agrestes animos et barbara corda virorum?  
" sum deus. advenio fugiens. praebete latebras, 45  
occultate senem nati feritate tyranni  
deiectum solio. placet hic fugitivus et exul  
ut lateam, genti atque loco Latium dabo nomen.  
vitibus incurvum, si qua est ea cura, putandis  
procudam chalybem, necnon et moenia vestri 50

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<sup>a</sup> Under Christian emperors before Theodosius paganism had been at least tolerated; indeed the emperor, though himself a Christian, was, as Pontifex Maximus, the official head of the old state religion. Gratian (in 375) was the first emperor who refused to hold this office. The senate had been the stronghold of paganism. *Cambridge Medieval History*, I, 114.

<sup>b</sup> Plato, *Republic* V, 473d.

<sup>c</sup> According to the legend (as in Virgil, *Aeneid* VIII, 319 ff.) Saturn, on being expelled from heaven by his son Jupiter, took refuge in Latium, where he introduced the elements of civilisation. There was also a tradition of a

## A REPLY TO ADDRESS OF SYMMACHUS

of their gods! <sup>a</sup> But this emperor has extended the fame of his reign further in time to come by seeking to establish his people's well-being. To be sure a learned man finely says, "The Commonwealth would then be blest enough, if either kings were wise or wise men kings." <sup>b</sup> Is not he of whom I speak among the few who, having received the diadem, devoted themselves to the teachings of heavenly wisdom? In him the race of men and the people who wear the toga have found a wise leader; Rome's commonwealth in our day thrives in blessedness because righteousness is on the throne. Obey ye a teacher who wields the sceptre; he gives warning that the wicked error and superstition of our forefathers of old be put away and not suppose there is a god except Him who stands out supreme over all things and created the infinitude of the great world.

Is Saturn thought to have ruled our Latin forebears better, he who shaped the rude minds and uncivilised hearts of men with proclamations such as these? <sup>c</sup>—"I am a god. I come to you an outcast; give me a hiding-place. Conceal an old god driven from his throne by a savage, usurping <sup>d</sup> son. It is my pleasure to hide me here, a fugitive and exile, and to race and country I shall give the name of *Latin*. To prune your vines, if you are interested in that, I shall beat out a curved tool of iron, and I shall

town called *Saturnia* (*Aeneid* VIII, 355-8). At line 48 Prudentius alludes to the fanciful derivation of *Latium* from *lateo*. Later times looked back to the reign of Saturn in Latium as a golden age. Cf. lines 72-73; *Aeneid* VIII, 324-5; Tibullus I, 3, 35-48.

<sup>a</sup> Cf. the frequent description of usurping emperors as "tyranni."

## PRUDENTIUS

fluminis in ripa statuam Saturnia vobis.  
 vos nemus adpositasque meo sub honore sacrantes  
 (sum quianam Caelo genitus) celebrabitis aras."  
 inde deos, quorum patria spectata sepulcra  
 scimus, in aere hebetes informavere minores, 55  
 advena quos profugus gignens et equina libido  
 intulit Italiae: Tuscis namque ille puellis  
 primus adhinnivit simulato numine moechus.  
 mox patre deterior silvosi habitator Olympi  
 Iuppiter incesta spurcavit labe Lacaenas, 60  
 nunc bove subvectam rapiens ad crimen amatam,  
 nunc tener ac pluma levior blandosque susurros  
 in morem recinens suave inmorientis oloris,  
 capta quibus volucrem virguncula ferret amorem,  
 nunc foribus surdis, sera quas vel pessulus artis 65  
 firmarat cuneis, per tectum dives amator  
 imbricibus ruptis undantis desuper auri  
 infundens pluviam gremio excipientis amicae,  
 armigero modo sordidulam curante rapinam  
 compressu immundo miserum adficiens catamitum, 70  
 pelice iam puero magis indignante sorore.  
 haec causa est et origo mali, quod saecla vetusto  
 hospite regnante crudus stupor aurea finxit,  
 quodque novo ingenio versutus Iuppiter astus  
 multiplices variosque dolos texebat, ut illum, 75

<sup>a</sup> The legend that Saturn on one occasion changed himself into a horse is referred to by Virgil, *Georgics* III, 92-4.

<sup>b</sup> The Greek stories to which Prudentius refers are those of Europa, whom Zeus (Jupiter) in the form of a white bull carried on his back, swimming from Phoenicia to Crete; Leda, to whom he came as a swan; Danaë, who was kept by her father in a brazen tower but was visited by Zeus in the form of a shower of gold; Ganymede, who was carried off by an eagle to be Jupiter's cup-bearer. The eagle is spoken

## A REPLY TO ADDRESS OF SYMMACHUS

establish for you on the bank of your river a city called Saturnia. As for you, you will consecrate a grove and an altar thereby in my honour (for I am the son of Heaven) and will worship there." So dull-witted posterity shaped gods in bronze of men whose tombs we know were sights to be seen in their country. The homeless stranger with his horse-lust <sup>a</sup> begot them and brought them upon Italy, for he was the first fornicator that pretended divinity when he whinnied after the maids of Tuscany.

Next Jupiter, who was worse than his father and lived on wooded Olympus, defiled the Laconian women with the stain of lust, at one time carrying off his loved one on a bull's back <sup>b</sup> to commit his crime; again, gentle and lighter than down and chanting soft wooing notes like a swan's sweet death-song, to charm the girl and make her willing to submit to his winged love; or again, when doors were deaf and tight-wedged bar or bolt held them fast, the rich lover would break the tiles and through the roof pour streaming down a shower of gold for his mistress to catch it in her lap; or his armour-bearer managed the vile ravishing and he held the wretched Ganymede in his foul embrace, and his sister was angrier than ever at having now a boy as her rival. The cause and fountain-head of the evil is that raw stupidity imagined a golden age in the reign of the old stranger, and that with his unheard-of cleverness the wily Jupiter devised many a dexterous trick and form of guile, so that, when he chose to change his skin

of as Jupiter's armour-bearer (e.g. *Aeneid* V, 255); or as the carrier of his thunder-bolts (*Horace, Odes* IV, 4, 1; *Ovid, Metamorphoses* XII, 560).

## PRUDENTIUS

vertere cum vellet pellem faciemque, putarent  
 esse bovem, praedari aquilam, concumbere cynum,  
 et nummos fieri et gremium penetrare puellae.  
 nam quid rusticitas non crederet indomitorum  
 stulta virum, pecudes inter ritusque ferinos      80  
 dedere sueta animum diae rationis egenum?  
 in quamecumque fidem nebulonis callida traxit  
 nequitia, infelix facilem gens praebuit aurem.  
 successit Iovis imperio corruptior aetas,  
 quae docuit rigidos vitiis servire colonos.      85  
 expertes furandi homines hac inbuilt arte  
 Mercurius, Maia genitus; nunc magnus habetur  
 ille deus, cuius dedit experientia fures.  
 necnon Thessalicae doctissimus ille magiae  
 traditur extinctas sumptae moderamine virgae      90  
 in lucem revocasse animas, Cocytia leti  
 iura resignasse sursum revolantibus umbris,  
 ast alias damnasse neci penitusque latenti  
 inmersisse chao. facit hoc ad utrumque peritus  
 ut fuerit geninoque armarit criminis vitam;      95  
 murmure nam magico tenues excire figuratas  
 atque sepulcrales scite incantare favillas,  
 vita itidem spoliare alios ars noxia novit.  
 artificem scelerum simplex mirata vetustas  
 supra hominem coluit, simulans per nubila ferri      100  
 aligerisque leves pedibus transcurrere ventos.

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<sup>a</sup> Mercury (Hermes) was god of thieves. Among his other functions was that of conducting the souls of the dead into the lower world. The wand is his regular attribute; in Homer he uses it to produce or dispel sleep; but it also becomes his official emblem in his capacity as herald of the gods. Prudentius no doubt has in mind Virgil's lines (*Aeneid* IV, 242)

tum virgam rapit: hac animas ille evocat Orco  
pallantis, alias sub Tartara tristia mittit.

## A REPLY TO ADDRESS OF SYMMACHUS

and features, men thought he was a bull, or an eagle carrying off his prey, or a swan at his loves, and that he turned into money and so made his way to the maiden's bosom. For what would those foolish, rude, uncivilised folk not believe, who were wont to bestow all their attention on dealing with cattle and the ways of beasts, and whose minds were devoid of heavenly reason? No matter to what belief the wastrel's cunning profligacy drew them, the luckless race lent a ready ear.

After Jupiter's reign came an age more debased, which taught the hardy countrymen to be the slaves of sin. Men who knew naught of thieving were first instructed in this art by Mercury, son of Maia; and now he whose practised skill produced thieves is reckoned a great god! Expert too in Thessalian wizardry, as we are told, he used a wand that he took in his hands to call spirits of the dead back to the light, annulling the control of Cocytus over death by making the shades fly upwards, while others he condemned to death and plunged them deep in the nether darkness.<sup>a</sup> This proves that he was skilled both ways and armed his life with two kinds of crime; for he had a guilty knowledge of how to raise unsubstantial spirits with muttered magic and cleverly bewitch the ashes in the tomb, and also how to rob other men of life; and the simple folk of old wondered at his contrivance of crime and honoured him as more than human, pretending that he came through the clouds and passed on winged feet through the light airs.

## PRUDENTIUS

ecce deum in numero formatus et aeneus adstat  
Graius homo augustaque Numae praefulget in arce.  
strenuus exculti dominus quidam fuit agri  
hortorumque opibus memorabilis; hic tamen  
idem

105

scortator nimius multaque libidine suetus  
rusticolas vexare lupas interque salicta  
et densas saepes obscena cubilia inire;  
indomitum intendens animum semperque paratum  
ad facinus nunquam calidis dabat otia venis. 110  
hic deus e patrio prae nobilis Hellesponto  
venit ad usque Italos sacris cum turpibus hortos;  
sinum lactis et haec votorum liba quotannis  
accipit ac ruris servat vineta Sabini,  
turpiter adfixo pudeat quem visere ramo. 115

115

Herculeus mollis pueri famosus amore  
ardor et in transtris iactata efferbuit Argo,  
nec maris erubuit Nemea sub pelle fovere  
concubitus et Hylan pereuntem quaerere caelebs.  
nunc Saliis cantuque domus Pinaria templum 120  
collis Aventini convexa in sede frequentat.

Thebanus iuvenis superatis fit deus Indis,  
successu dum victor ovans lascivit et aurum  
captivae gentis revehit spoliisque superbus

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<sup>a</sup> Priapus, a spirit of fertility, figures as "guardian of gardens, part scarecrow, part warning to human thieves, part luck-bringer" (Rose, *Handbook of Greek Mythology*, p. 175).

<sup>b</sup> An almost verbatim quotation from Virgil (*Ecllogues*, 7, 33).

<sup>c</sup> In the course of the voyage of the Argonauts Hylas went for water to a spring, and for his beauty was drawn under by the water nymphs. Hercules was left behind searching for him. The killing of the Nemean lion was one of the twelve labours of Hercules; he afterwards wore its skin. The

## A REPLY TO ADDRESS OF SYMMACHUS

See there, standing amid the gods, a man of Greece, shaped in bronze too, and gleaming on Numa's majestic Capitol. There was an active owner of well-tilled land, a man who was notable for the wealth of his gardens; but he was an arrant whoremonger too, and with exceeding lust used to plague the poor country drabs and couch obscenely amid the willow-groves and thick-set bushes, inciting a passion untamed and ever ready for misdeeds, and giving his hot blood no rest. This man came as a famous god from his native Hellespont to the gardens of Italy<sup>a</sup> with his base rites, receiving "year by year a bowl of milk and these votive cakes,"<sup>b</sup> and guarding the vineyards of the Sabine countryside, a shameful sight with the branch fastened to him.

The passion of Hercules, who was notorious for his love of a girlish boy, raged even on the thwarts while Argo tossed on the waters, and he blushed not to cover his wickedness under the wild beast's skin of Nemea and to search for Hylas, when he disappeared, as if he had lost a wife. And now the Pinarian house fills his temple with dancing, chanting priests, where it stands on the slope of the Aventine hill.<sup>c</sup>

A young man of Thebes<sup>d</sup> becomes a god because he has conquered India and comes wantoning in triumph for his victory, bringing home the gold of the vanquished nation, and in the pride of his spoils

story of the establishment of his worship at Rome is told by Virgil (*Aeneid* VIII, 184–275) and by Livy (I, 7). Tradition said that the families of the Potitii and Pinarii were placed in charge of it.

<sup>a</sup> Bacchus (Dionysus, Bromius, Liber). See Rose, pp. 149 ff.

# PRUDENTIUS

difflit in luxum cum semiviro comitatu      125  
 atque avidus vini multo se proliuit haustu,  
 gemmantis paterae spumis mustoque Falerno  
 perfundens biugum rorantia terga ferarum.  
 his nunc pro meritis Baccho caper omnibus aris  
 caeditur et virides discindunt ore chelydros      130  
 qui Bromium placare volunt, quod et ebria iam  
     tunc  
 ante oculos regis satyrorum insania fecit,  
 et fecisse reor stimulis furiabibus ipsas  
 maenadas inflammante mero in scelus omne rotatas.  
 hoc circumsaltante choro temulentus adulter      135  
 invenit expositum secreti in litoris acta  
 corporis egregii scortum, quod perfidus illuc  
 liquerat incesto iuvenis satiatus amore.  
 hanc iubet adsumptam fervens post vina Neaeram  
 secum in deliciis fluitantis stare triumphi,      140  
 regalemque decus capitis gestare coronam.  
 mox Ariadnaeus stellis caelestibus ignis  
 additur: hoc pretium noctis persolvit honore  
 Liber, ut aetherium meretrix inluminet axem.  
     tantum posse omnes illo sub tempore reges      145  
 indocilis fatui ducebat ineptia vulgi,  
 ut transire suis cum sordibus induperator  
 posset in aeternum caeli super ardua regnum.  
 regia tunc omnis vim maiestatis et omnis,  
 parva licet, caeli imperium retinere potestas      150  
 credita: ture etiam ducibus parvoque sacello  
 inpertitus honos, quem dum metus aut amor aut  
     spes  
 adcumulant, longum miseris processit in aevum

<sup>a</sup> Ariadne, deserted on the isle of Naxos by Theseus.

<sup>b</sup> As the constellation Corona.

## A REPLY TO ADDRESS OF SYMMACHUS

abandoning himself to indulgence in company with his emasculate following, in his lust for wine soaking himself with many a draught and with the Falernian juice that foams from his jewelled cup besprinkling the dripping backs of the wild beasts that draw his chariot. In recognition of these merits a goat is now sacrificed to Bacchus on every altar, and they that would propitiate Bromius tear green snakes with their mouths, as even at that time the mad-drunk satyrs did before their king's eyes and, I dare say, the maenads did too in their frenzied excitement, when the wine set them afire and whirled them into every sort of sin. With this company dancing around him the tipsy adulterer finds abandoned on the sands of a lonely shore a mistress passing fair,<sup>a</sup> whom a faithless young lover had deserted there when he tired of his unclean passion. Heated with drink, he takes up this lady-love and bids her stand with him amid his voluptuous, drunken procession and wear a royal crown to grace her head. And next Ariadne's fire is added to the stars in the sky; <sup>b</sup> the price that Liber pays for her favour is that his mistress shall have the honour of lighting up the heavens.

With such power in those days did the ignorant, silly, stupid rabble accredit any king, that a ruler could pass with all his uncleanness to an endless kingdom in the heights of heaven. At that time men believed that kingly power, however small, possessed the strength of all majesty and the government of all the heaven, and leaders had honour paid to them with incense and a little shrine. Fear or love or hope kept adding to it, and the inherited tradition went marching on among wretched men to distant

## PRUDENTIUS

mos patrius : coepit falsae pietatis imago  
ire per ignaros nebuloso errore nepotes ;  
tum quia, quae vivis veneratio regibus ante  
contigerat, functis eadem iam munere lucis  
cessit et ad nigras altaria transtulit urnas.  
inde puellarum ludibria, pignera, partus,  
et furtivus amor iuvenum et depensa iugalis      155  
corruptela tori, quoniam regalibus aula  
fervore tunc vitiis solita est, nec perdita luxu  
divorum suboles sancti meminisse pudoris.

atque ut, Roma, tuos caelesti ex sede parentes,  
quis te semideam iactant auctoribus ortam,      165  
praestringam breviter, Gradivum vel Cytheream,  
ille sacerdotem violat, contra illa marito  
subcumbit Phrygio. coitus fuit inpar utrique :  
nec terrestre deam decuit mortalis obire  
coniugium, nec caelicolam descendere ephebum      170  
virginis ad vitium furtivoque igne calere.  
sed Venus augusto de sanguine femina vili  
privatoque viro vetitum per dedecus haesit ;  
et, si Rhea sacram lascivi Martis amore  
lusa pudicitiam fluviali amisit in ulva,      175  
crediderim generosae aliquem stirpis, sed eundem  
moribus infamem, compressa virgine per vim  
se dixisse deum, ne stuprum numinis ullus  
obicere auderet turpi miseraeque puellae.  
haec Italos induxit avos vel fama vel error,      180  
Martia Romuleo celebrarent ut sacra campo,

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<sup>a</sup> Rhea Silvia, the mother of Romulus.

## A REPLY TO ADDRESS OF SYMMACHUS

ages, the false semblance of piety spreading through succeeding generations whose ignorant minds were clouded in a mist of error. And then too, the same reverence that had first fallen to living kings was paid to them also after they had passed from the light, and carried their worship over to their dark tombs. From all this came dishonouring of young women, pledgings of love, births of children, stealthy passion for young men, adulterers caught defiling the marriage-bed, because then courts used to be all afire with the misdeeds of princes, and the progeny of the deified abandoned themselves to indulgence and took no thought of pure modesty.

And now, Rome, to touch briefly on thy progenitors from heaven, in virtue of whom men boast that thou art half divine, Gradivus and the Lady of Cythera,—the one violates a priestess,<sup>a</sup> the other for her part yields to a Phrygian mate.<sup>b</sup> It was an unequal match for both, for it became not a goddess to submit to earthly wedlock with a mortal, nor a swain from heaven to come down to ravish a girl or to burn with a stealthy passion. But the truth is that Venus was a woman of noble blood who cleaved to a low, common man in a forbidden deed of shame; and if Rhea became the plaything of wanton Mars' love and lost her sacred modesty amid the sedge on a river-bank, I should think it was some man of high birth but disreputable character that forced the maid and said he was a god, so that none might dare to reproach the poor, defiled girl with the lewd act of a divinity. This legend or error it was that led our Italian ancestors to keep rites of Mars on the Field

<sup>a</sup> Anchises, the father of Aeneas.

## PRUDENTIUS

utque Palatinis Capitolia condita saxis  
signarent titulo proavi Iovis atque Pelasgae  
Palladis et Libyca Iunonem ex arce vocarent,  
cognatos de Marte deos, Veneris quoque nudum 185  
accirent proceres Erycino e vertice signum,  
utque deum mater Phrygia veheretur ad Ida,  
Bacchica de viridi peterentur ut orgia Naxo.  
facta est terrigenae domus unica maiestatis,  
et tot templa deum Romae quot in orbe sepulcra 190  
heroum numerare licet; quos fabula manes  
nobilitat, noster populus veneratus adorat.  
hos habuere deos Ancus, Numitor, Numa, Tullus,  
talia Pergameas fugerunt numina flamas,  
sic Vesta est, sic Palladium, sic umbra penatum, 195  
talis et antiquum servavit terror asylum.  
ut semel obsedit gentilia pectora patrum  
vana supersticio, non interrupta cucurrit  
aetatum per mille gradus. tener horruit heres  
et coluit quidquid sibimet venerabile cani 200

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<sup>a</sup> *I.e.* the temple of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva (Pallas) on the Capitoline hill. (Tradition ascribed its foundation to the Tarquins.) The expression "Palatinis saxis" is strange in this connection, but Prudentius is thinking of early Rome and his thought may be coloured by his memory of *Aeneid* VIII, 337 ff., where, although Evander's city is situated on the Palatine, the Capitol and other parts seem to be treated as lying within its territory. Livy (I, 10, 5) gives a tradition that Romulus "marked out the boundaries" of a temple of Jupiter (Feretrius) on the Capitol.

<sup>b</sup> Romulus, the "father" of Rome, being through Mars the grandson of Jupiter.

<sup>c</sup> *I.e.* Carthage, which according to *Aeneid* I, 15, was Juno's favourite seat.

<sup>d</sup> In Sicily.

<sup>e</sup> Livy (XXIX, 10-11) tells how the black stone which represented the Mother of the Gods (Cybele, Magna Mater) was brought to Rome from Pessinus in Phrygia in 204 B.C.

## A REPLY TO ADDRESS OF SYMMACHUS

at Rome, to inscribe on the Capitol<sup>a</sup> which they built on the rocks of their Palatine city, the names of their great-grandsire<sup>b</sup> Jupiter and the Grecian Pallas, and bring Juno from her stronghold in Africa,<sup>c</sup> deities of Mars' kin; and it made their leaders fetch the nude figure of Venus from the peak of Eryx,<sup>d</sup> carry the mother of the gods from Phrygian Ida<sup>e</sup> and import the wild revels of Bacchus from green Naxos.<sup>f</sup> There came to be one single home for all earth-born divinities, and you may count as many temples of gods at Rome as tombs of heroes in all the world; to dead men glorified by legendary fame our nation gives reverence and worship. Such are they whom Ancus, Numitor, Numa, and Tullus reckoned as gods, such the divinities that fled from the flames of Troy. So it is that we have Vesta and the Palladium<sup>g</sup> and our imaginary household gods, and it was fear of such that kept safe the Refuge<sup>h</sup> of long ago. Once the vain superstition beset the fathers' pagan hearts, it ran unchecked through a thousand generations one after another. The young heir bowed shuddering before anything which his hoary ancestors had

<sup>a</sup> The orgiastic ritual of Bacchus (Dionysus) reached Rome from South Italy and (according to Livy) Etruria. It was put down by decree of the senate dated 186 b.c., but was permitted within narrow limits. Prudentius must have had in mind Virgil's line "bacchatamque iugis Naxon viridemque Donusam" (*Aeneid* III, 125).

<sup>b</sup> The "image of Athena" which was the talisman of Troy. Rome claimed to possess it (at the temple of Vesta). Cicero, *Pro Scauro*, 48, describes it as "quasi pignus nostrae salutis atque imperi." Cf. Servius on *Aeneid* II, 166.

<sup>c</sup> Legend says that Romulus, in order to attract inhabitants to his new city, established a place of sanctuary for outlaws from other communities (Livy I, 8, 5).

## PRUDENTIUS

monstrarant atavi; puerorum infantia primo  
 errorem cum lacte babit, gustaverat inter  
 vagitus de farre molae, saxa inlita ceris  
 viderat unguentoque lares umescere nigros.  
 formatum Fortunae habitum cum divite cornu      205  
 sacratumque domi lapidem consistere parvus  
 spectarat matremque illic pallere precantem.  
 mox umeris positus nutricis trivit et ipse  
 impressis silicem labris, puerilia vota  
 fudit opesque sibi caeca de rupe poposcit,      210  
 persuasumque habuit, quod quis velit, inde  
 petendum.  
 numquam oculos animumque levans rationis ad  
     arcem  
 rettulit, insulsum tenuit sed credulus usum,  
 privatos celebrans agnorum sanguine divos.  
 iamque domo egrediens, ut publica festa diesque      215  
 et ludos stupuit celsa et Capitolia vidit  
 laurigerosque deum templis adstare ministros  
 ac Sacram resonare Viam mugitibus ante  
 delubrum Romae (colitur nam sanguine et ipsa  
 more deae, nomenque loci ceu numen habetur,      220  
 atque urbis Venerisque pari se culmine tollunt  
 templa, simul geminis adolentur tura deabus),  
 vera ratus quaecumque fiant auctore senatu,<sup>1</sup>  
 contulit ad simulacra fidem dominosque putavit

<sup>1</sup> *The 7th-century MS. and some others have quaecumque  
senatu auctore probantur (or probentur).*

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<sup>a</sup> See note on *Apoth.* 457.

## A REPLY TO ADDRESS OF SYMMACHUS

designated as worshipful in their eyes. Children in their infancy drank in the error with their first milk; while still at the crying stage, they had tasted of the sacrificial meal, and had seen mere stones coated with wax <sup>a</sup> and the grimy gods of the house dripping with unguent. The little one had looked at a figure in the shape of Fortune, with her wealthy horn, standing in the house, a hallowed stone, and watched his mother pale-faced in prayer before it. Then, raised on his nurse's shoulder, he too pressed his lips to the flint and rubbed it with them, pouring out his childish petitions, asking for riches from a sightless stone, and convinced that all one's wishes must be sought from thence. Never did he raise eyes and heart and turn them towards the throne of wisdom, but clung with credulous faith to his witless tradition, worshipping gods of his own house with the blood of lambs. And then when he went abroad, and lost in wonder viewed the public festivals on national holy days with their games, and saw the lofty Capitol, the laurelled priests standing at the temples of their gods, and the Sacred Way resounding with the lowing of cattle before the shrine of Rome (for she too is worshipped with blood after the fashion of a goddess, the name of the place is reckoned as a divinity, the temples of the City and Venus rise to the same high top and incense is burned to the pair of goddesses together,) <sup>b</sup> he would think that what is done by the senate's authority must be genuine, and so gave his faith to the images and believed that the figures standing in a row, <sup>c</sup> which he shuddered

<sup>a</sup> The temple of Venus and Rome, built by Hadrian, stood on the north side of the Sacra Via.

<sup>c</sup> Many statues of deities stood in the *area Capitolina*.

## PRUDENTIUS

aetheris, horrifico qui stant ex ordine vultu. 225  
 illic Alcides, spoliatis Gadibus hospes  
 Arcadiae, fulvo aere riget, gemini quoque fratres  
 corrupta de matre nothi, Ledeia proles  
 nocturnique equites, celsae duo numina Romae,  
 inpendent retinente veru, magnique triumphi 230  
 nuntia suffuso figunt vestigia plumbo.  
 adsistunt etiam priscorum insignia regum,  
 Tros, Italus, Ianusque bifrons, genitorque Sabinus,  
 Saturnusque senex, maculoso et corpore Picus,  
 coniugis epotum sparsus per membra venenum. 235  
 omnibus ante pedes posita est sua cuique vetusta  
 arula. Iano etiam celebri de mense litatur  
 auspiciis epulisque sacris, quas inveterato,  
 heu miseri, sub honore agitant, et gaudia ducunt  
 festa Kalendarum. sic observatio crevit 240  
 ex atavis quondam male copta, deinde secutis  
 tradita temporibus serisque nepotibus aucta.  
 traxerunt longam corda inconsulta catenam,  
 mosque tenebrosus vitiosa in saecula fluxit.  
 hunc morem veterum docili iam aetate secuta 245  
 posteritas mense atque adytis et flamine et aris  
 Augustum coluit, vitulo placavit et agno,  
 strata ad pulvinar iacuit, responsa poposcit.

<sup>a</sup> Hercules, who was entertained by the Arcadian Evander at his town on the site of Rome (*Aeneid* VIII, 185 ff.).

<sup>b</sup> Castor and Pollux, who were said to have helped the Romans at the battle of Lake Regillus and brought news of the victory. Cicero (*De Natura Deorum* II, 6) recounts a story that Publius Vatinius, on his way to Rome by night in 168 B.C., was told by "two young men on white horses" that king Perseus of Macedonia had been taken that day.

<sup>c</sup> Cf. *Aeneid* VII, 177-191. Tros figures in the great temple which Virgil imagines at the beginning of *Georgics* III.

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to look at, were the lords of the heavens. There stands Alcides,<sup>a</sup> all stiff in tawny bronze, he who was Arcadia's guest after spoiling Gades; the twin brethren too, bastard sons of a seduced mother, Leda's progeny, those night-riders, the two protecting deities of lofty Rome,<sup>b</sup> bend forward, held up by a spit, and fix in a sea of lead the feet that brought the news of great victory. By these stand also figures of old-time kings, Tros, Italus, Janus Facing-Both-Ways, father Sabinus, old Saturn, and Picus of the dappled body, his frame spotted from drinking his spouse's potion.<sup>c</sup> Each of them has his own little old altar set before his feet; and to Janus offering is made in a month when crowds assemble and auspices are taken and there is a sacred feast, which, alas, men still keep in its long-established honour, carrying on the festal rejoicing of the Kalends.<sup>d</sup> In such wise has the observance grown; starting in an evil hour long ago from our forefathers it was then handed on to the generations that followed and carried further by their remote descendants. Their unthinking hearts dragged a lengthening chain, and the blind custom spread down to depraved ages.

Following this custom of olden days, posterity in an age when it had become easy to learn the lesson did reverence to Augustus with a month named in his honour, and with shrine and priest and altar, and propitiated him with calf and lamb; it prostrated itself before his sacred couch and asked for oracles.

Picus was changed into a woodpecker by the enchantress Circe.

<sup>a</sup> I.e. New Year's Day still has a festal character among Christians.

## PRUDENTIUS

testantur tituli, produnt consulta senatus  
Caesareum Iovis ad speciem statuentia templum. 250  
adiecere sacrum fieret quo Livia Iuno,  
non minus infamis thalami sortita cubile  
quam cum fraterno caluit Saturnia lecto.  
nondum maternam partu vacuaverat alvum  
conceptamque viri subolem paritura gerebat. 255  
pronuba iam gravidae fulcrum et geniale  
parantur;  
iam sponsus saliente utero nubentis amicos  
advocat, haud sterilem certus fore iam sibi pactam.  
vitricus antevenit tardum praefervidus ortum  
privigni nondum geniti; mox editur inter 260  
Fescennina novo proles aliena marito.  
idque deum sortes, id Apollinis antra dederunt  
consilium: nunquam melius nam cedere taedas  
responsum est, quam cum praegnans nova nupta  
iugatur.  
hanc tibi, Roma, deam titulis et honore sacratam 265  
perpetuo Floras inter Veneresque creasti!  
nec mirum: quis enim sapiens dubitaverat illas  
mortali de stirpe satas vixisse, et easdem  
laude venustatis claras in amoribus usque  
ad famae excidium formae nituisse decore? 270  
quid loquar Antinoum caelesti in sede locatum,  
illum delicias nunc divi principis, illum

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<sup>a</sup> See Taylor, *The Divinity of the Roman Emperor*, pp. 229–232. Divine honours for Livia, the widow of Augustus, were refused by her son Tiberius at her death (Tacitus, *Annals* V, 2), but established by Claudius (Suetonius, *Claudius*, 11). Earlier attribution was unofficial.

<sup>b</sup> Bergman and other editors place no stop after *gerebat*, taking *pronuba* as its subject; this involves taking *geniale* as a substantive parallel with *fulcrum*. In a Roman marriage

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Inscriptions bear witness to it, decrees of senate setting up a temple of Caesar in the fashion of Jupiter reveal it. They added a rite to make Livia Juno;<sup>a</sup> and indeed the marriage that fell to her lot was of no better repute than when Saturn's daughter lay afire in her brother's bed. Her womb was pregnant with a child unborn, she was carrying a babe conceived of a husband and still to be brought forth. Brideswoman<sup>b</sup> and marriage-bed are provided for a bride already with child; and the bridegroom calls his friends when the child in his bride's womb is already leaping and he is sure now that his betrothed will not be barren. The stepfather in his eagerness will not wait for his unborn stepson's slow appearance, and then another man's child is born to the new husband amid rude jests. And *this* was the counsel that the oracles of the gods, the caverns of Apollo, gave; for the answer was that marriage never turns out better than when the bride is with child at the union.<sup>c</sup> Of such a woman, O Rome, hast thou made thee a goddess and consecrated her with titles and constant worship along with thy Floras and thy Venuses. Nor is it strange, for what man of sense but knew that they too were of mortal stock and lived on earth and were renowned for their charms, and that the beauty of their figures made them famous in amours till it ruined their good name?

There is Antinous too, set in a heavenly home, he who was the darling of an emperor now deified and the bride was attended to the *lectus genialis* by a woman already married once and called *pronuba*.

<sup>a</sup> For the facts see Tacitus, *Annals* I, 10, 4, and Dio, *Roman History* XLVIII, 44, 2.

## PRUDENTIUS

- purpureo in gremio spoliatum sorte virili,  
 Hadrianique dei Ganymedem, non cyathos dis  
 porgere sed medio recubantem cum Iove fulcro 275  
 nectaris ambrosii sacrum potare Lyaeum,  
 cumque suo in templis vota exaudire marito?  
 ergo his auspicibus Traianus, Nerva, Severus  
 et Titus et fortes gesserunt bella Nerones,  
 quos terrena viros inlustres gloria fecit 280  
 et virtus fragilis provexit in ardua famae,  
 adscita e<sup>1</sup> terris sub religione iacentes!  
 quam pudet hoc illis persuasum talibus, ut se  
 Romanasque acies censerent Martis amore  
 posse regi, dum se Paphiae male blandus  
     adulter 285  
 venditat Aeneadasque suos successibus auget!  
 felices, si cuncta Deo sua prospera Christo  
 principe disposita scissent, qui currere regna  
 certis ducta modis Romanorumque triumphos<sup>2</sup>  
 crescere et inpletis voluit se infundere saeclis! 290  
 sed caligantes animas et luce carentes  
 in Iovis Augustique adytis templisque duarum  
 Iunonum Martisque etiam Venerisque sacellis  
 mactatas taetro leti immersere barathro,  
 supremum regimen crassis in partibus orbis  
 esse rati mersoque poli consistere fundo. 295  
 quidquid humus, quidquid pelagus mirabile  
     gignunt,  
 id duxere deos. colles, freta, flumina, flamas,  
 haec sibi per varias formata elementa figuras  
 constituere patres, hominumque vocabula mutis 300

<sup>1</sup> adscitae . . . iacentis *Bergman and others.*

<sup>2</sup> triumphis *Bergman with a number of MSS. including that of the 7th century.*

## A REPLY TO ADDRESS OF SYMMACHUS

in the imperial embrace was robbed of his manhood, the god Hadrian's Ganymede, not handing cups to the gods, but reclining with Jupiter on the middle couch and quaffing the sacred liquor of ambrosial nectar, and listening to prayers in the temples with his husband!

Such then were they under whose favour Trajan, Nerva, Severus, Titus, and the brave Neros waged their wars! Earthly glory made these men famous and mortal valour raised them to the heights of renown while they lay under the power of a superstition adopted from the earth. How shameful that such men as they should have been persuaded to believe that they themselves and the armies of Rome could be directed by the passion of Mars; that adulterer, for no good end, making himself agreeable to the Lady of Paphos and courting her favour by heaping victories on the seed of Aeneas, his descendants! Happy had they been had they known that all their successes were ordered by the governance of the God Christ, whose will it was that kingdoms should run their appointed courses and the triumphs of Rome grow from more to more, and that He should enter the world in the fulness of time. But they made sacrifice of their darkened, blinded souls in the sanctuaries of Jupiter and Augustus, the temples of the two Junos, the shrines of Mars and Venus, and plunged them into the foul abyss of death, supposing supreme power to reside in the gross parts of the world and to be established in the sunken depths of the universe.

Every marvel that earth or ocean produces they held a god. Hills, seas, rivers, fire, all these elements, shaped into diverse figures, our sires set up for themselves, and inscribed names of persons on dumb

## PRUDENTIUS

scripserunt statuis, vel Neptunum vocantes  
 oceanum, vel Cyaneas cava flumina Nymphas,  
 vel silvas Dryadas, vel devia rura Napaeas.  
 ipse ignis, nostrum factus qui servit ad usum,      305  
 Vulcanus perhibetur et in virtute superna  
 fingitur ac delubra; deus et nomine et ore  
 adsimilatus, habet, necnon regnare caminis  
 fertur et Aeoliae summus faber esse vel Aetnae.  
 est qui conspicuis superos quaesivit in astris,  
 ausus habere deum solem; cui tramite certo      310  
 condicio inposita est vigilem tolerare laborem  
 visibus obiectum mortalibus, orbe rotundo  
 praecipitem teretique globo per inane volantem  
 et, quod nemo negat, mundo caeloque minorem.  
 area maior enim quam qui percurrit in illa,      315  
 et longe campi spatium diffusius in quo  
 emicat ac volucri fervens rota volvitur axe.  
 quamvis nonnullis placeat terram breviorē  
 dicere circuitu quam sit pulcherrimus ille  
 circulus, et flamas immensi sideris ultra      320  
 telluris normam porrecto extendere gyro,  
 numne etiam caeli minor et contractior orbis,  
 cuius planitiem longo transmittere tractu  
 circinus excurrens meta interiore laborat?  
 ille Deus verus, quo non est grandior ulla      325  
 materies, qui fine caret, qui praesidet omni  
 naturae, qui cuncta simul concludit et inplet.  
 solem certa tenet regio, plaga certa coërcet,  
 temporibus variis distinguitur: aut subit ortu

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statues, calling, for instance, the ocean Neptune, rivers in their beds Cyanean Nymphs, woodlands Dryads, sequestered spots Napaea. The very fire, a created thing in the service of our needs, is called Vulcan and fashioned with the attributes of divine power. Represented as a god in name and features, it has shrines and is said to rule over furnaces and to be High Chief Smith of Aeolia or Etna.<sup>a</sup> Some have sought to find divinities in the shining stars and dared to count the sun a god;<sup>b</sup> yet he has laid on him the necessity of keeping up his sleepless toil before the eyes of men in a fixed path, hurrying on his circular orbit and flying through space in the form of a round ball and, as none gainsays, smaller in size than the universe and the heavens; for the running-ground is larger than the runner, and far wider than the chariot is the race-course on which the glowing wheel flashes as it turns on its flying axle. Though some hold that the earth is shorter in circumference than is that noble circle, and that the vast star's fires spread over a ring that is wider than the measure of the world, yet is the circle of the heavens also smaller and more confined, whose surface a compass, stretching out from its inner mark, for all its long reach is taxed to cross? He is the true God, than whom no material thing is greater, who is without limit, who governs all nature and at once bounds and fills all things. The sun is held in a fixed region, confined to a fixed quarter, and its course is marked off by differences of time: it rises

<sup>a</sup> Cf. *Aeneid* VIII, 416–422.

<sup>b</sup> The worship of Sol Invictus held a dominating position from the third century to the fall of paganism. See Bailey, *Phases in the Religion of Ancient Rome*, pp. 259–261.

## PRUDENTIUS

- aut ruit occasu, latet aut sub nocte recurrens ; 330  
 nec torquere facem potis est ad signa trionum  
 orbe nec obliquo portas aquilonis adire  
 nec solitum conversus iter revocare retrorsum.  
 hic erit ergo deus, praescriptis lege sub una  
 deditus officiis ? libertas laxior ipsi 335  
 concessa est homini, formam cui flectere vitae  
 atque voluntatis licitum est, seu tramite dextro  
 scandere seu laevo malit decurrere campo,  
 sumere seu requiem seu continuare laborem,  
 seu parere Deo sive in contraria verti. 340  
 ista ministranti regimen solemne dierum  
 haudquaquam soli datur a factore potestas,  
 sed famulus subiectus agit quodcumque necesse  
 est.
- hoc sidus currum rapidasque agitare quadrigas  
 commenti et radios capitis et verbera dextrae, 345  
 et frenos phalerasque et equorum pectora anhela  
 aeris inaurati vel marmoris aut orichalci  
 iusserunt nitido fulgere polita metallo.  
 post trabeas et eburnam aquilam sellamque  
 curulem
- cernuat ora senex barbatus et oscula figit 350  
 cruribus aenipedum, si fas est credere, equorum,  
 inmotasque rotas et flecti nescia lora  
 aut ornat redimita rosis aut ture vaporat.
- hoc tamen utcumque est tolerabile. quid,  
 quod et ipsae
- dant tibi, Roma, deos inferni gurgitis umbrae ? 355  
 Eumenidum domina Stygio caput exerit antro  
 rapta ad tartarei thalamum Proserpina regis,  
 et, si quando suos dignatur adire Quirites,  
 placatur vaccae sterilis cervice resecta,

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at morning, sinks at eventide, is hidden in the night on its returning path. It cannot divert its torch towards the constellation of the Wain, nor with its orbit sideways approach the gates of the north wind, nor turn about and reverse its wonted course. Shall this be a god, then, this sun which by unvarying law is assigned to appointed functions? A wider freedom has been granted even to man, for he may change the shape of his life and will, whether he choose to ascend by the path on the right or go down over the champaign on the left, to take rest or carry on his task, to obey God or turn the other way. This power is not given by its creator to the sun in its conduct of the routine of the days; it is as servant and subordinate that it does what it cannot choose but do. Such is the star which men have imagined driving his ear and swift team, and have made the rays about his head, the whip in his hand, the bridles and trappings and panting breasts of his horses flash bright in shining figures of gilded bronze or marble or orichalc. After he has worn robes of state, held the ivory eagle, and sat on the curule chair, a bearded old man bends his face to earth and plants kisses (it is all but incredible!) on the legs of bronze-footed horses, and decks with wreaths of roses, or smokes with incense, wheels that cannot turn and reins that cannot bend.

This, however, we might contrive to bear. But even the shades in the gulf below give thee gods, O Rome. The mistress of the Furies, Proserpina, she who was carried off to be the bride of the king of hell, lifts her head from the Stygian cavern, and when she deigns to visit her Romans is propitiated by cutting the throat of a barren heifer. She is

## PRUDENTIUS

360

et regnare simul caeloque Ereboque putatur,  
 nunc bigas frenare boves, nunc saeva sororum  
 agmina vipereo superis inmittere flagro,  
 nunc etiam volucres caprearum in terga sagittas  
 spargere, terque suas eadem variare figuræ.  
 denique cum Luna est, sublustrî splendet amictu; 365  
 cum succincta iacit calamos, Latonia virgo est;  
 cum subnixa sedet solio, Plutonia coniunx  
 imperitat Furiis et dictat iura Megaerae.  
 si verum quaeris, Triviae sub nomine daemon  
 tartareus colitur, qui te modo raptat ad aethram 370  
 sidereoque deum venerandum suadet in astro,  
 per silvas modo mortiferi discurrere mundi  
 erroresque sequi subigit nemorumque putare  
 esse deam, quae corda hominum pavitantia figat  
 quaeque feras perimat letali vulnere mentes, 375  
 depresso modo subter humum formidine sensus  
 obruit, inplorent ut numina lucis egena  
 seque potestati committant noctis operæ.

380

respice terrifici scelerata sacraria Ditis,  
 cui cadit infasta fusus gladiator harena,  
 heu, male lustratae Phlegethontia victima Romae!  
 nam quid vesani sibi vult ars inopia ludi?  
 quid mortes iuvenum? quid sanguine pasta  
 voluptas?  
 quid pulvis caveae semper funebris, et illa  
 amphitheatralis spectacula tristia pompa? 385  
 nempe Charon iugulis miserorum se duce dignas

<sup>a</sup> Cf. *Aeneid* VI, 243–251.

<sup>b</sup> Proserpina was confused with Hecate (Trivia), who was also identified with Luna and Diana (Latonia virgo).

<sup>c</sup> Herself one of the Furies.

<sup>d</sup> The exhibition began with a procession of the gladiators through the arena.

## A REPLY TO ADDRESS OF SYMMACHUS

supposed to reign both in heaven and in hell,<sup>a</sup> now to drive a pair of oxen, again with a whip of snakes to let loose the cruel columns of her sisters on the world above, and again to shower flying arrows on the backs of wild goats, thrice changing her form yet still the same.<sup>b</sup> And when she is the moon-goddess she shines in a shimmering mantle; when she girds herself up to shoot her arrows she is Latona's maiden daughter; when she sits supported on her throne she is Pluto's spouse, ruling over the Furies and issuing commands to Megaera.<sup>c</sup> If you seek the truth, it is a devil from hell that is worshipped under the name of Trivia, one that now carries you off to the skies and tells you there is a god to be worshipped in the form of a star in the heavens, again compels you to run about and about on the mazy forest-paths of the deadly world and to think there is a goddess of the woodlands who pierces men's trembling hearts and with a mortal wound slays their wild spirits, and again plunges your mind beneath the ground and overwhelms it with fear, to make it pray to spirits of darkness and commit itself to the power of black night.

Look at the crime-stained offerings to frightful Dis, to whom is sacrificed the gladiator laid low on the ill-starred arena, a victim offered to Phlegethon in misconceived expiation for Rome. For what means that senseless show with its exhibition of sinful skill, the killing of young men, the pleasure fed on blood, the deathly dust that ever enshrouds the spectators, the grim sight of the parade in the amphitheatre?<sup>d</sup> Why, Charon by the murder of these poor wretches receives offerings that pay for

# PRUDENTIUS

accipit inferias placatus crimine sacro.  
 hae sunt deliciae Iovis infernalis, in istis  
 arbiter obscuri placidus requiescit Averni.  
 nonne pudet regem populum sceptrisque poten-  
 tem

390

talia pro patriae censere litanda salute,  
 religionis opem subternis poscere ab antris ?  
 evocat, heu, poenis tenebrosa ex sede ministrum  
 interitus, speciosa hominum cui funera donet.

incassum arguere iam Taurica sacra solemus :      395

funditur humanus Latiari in munere sanguis,  
 concessusque ille spectantum solvit ad aram

Plutonis fera vota sui. quid sanctius ara

quae bibit egestum per mystica tela cruentum ?

anne fides dubia est tibi sub caligine caeca      400

esse deum, quem tu tacitis rimeris in umbris ?

ecce, deos manes cur infitiaris haberi ?

ipsa patrum monumenta probant : Dis MANIBUS illic  
 marmora secta lego, quacumque Latina vetustos  
 custodit cineres densisque Salaria bustis.      405

dic, quibus hunc scribis titulum, nisi quod trucis  
 Orci

imperium verae ceu maiestatis adoras ?

en quibus implicita squalebat regia summi  
 imperii tractis maiorum ab origine sacris,

cum princeps gemini bis victor caede tyranni      410  
 pulchra triumphali respexit moenia vultu.

<sup>a</sup> *I.e.* for taking the souls of the dead across the Styx.

<sup>b</sup> Pluto (Dis).

<sup>c</sup> Greek mythology tells of human sacrifice to Artemis in  
 the land of the Tauri (in the Crimea).

<sup>d</sup> On this matter see Bailey, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-102.

<sup>e</sup> Theodosius had defeated first Maximus and then Eugenius  
 with his Frankish general Arbogast (Gibbon, chapter XXVII).

## A REPLY TO ADDRESS OF SYMMACHUS

his services as guide,<sup>a</sup> and is propitiated by a crime in the name of religion. Such are the delights of the Jupiter of the dead,<sup>b</sup> such the acts in which the ruler of dark Avernus finds content and refreshment. Is it not shameful that a strong imperial nation thinks it needful to offer such sacrifices for its country's welfare, and seeks the help of religion from the vaults of hell? With blood, alas, it calls up the minister of death from his dark abode to present him with a splendid offering of dead men. Vain is now our wonted condemnation of the Tauric rites<sup>c</sup>: human blood is shed at the Latin god's festival and the assembled onlookers there pay savage offerings at the altar of their own Pluto. What more holy than an altar which drinks blood drawn by ritual weapons? Do you waver in your belief that there exists, in the blind darkness below, the god for whom you grope amid the silent shades? See there! Why do you deny that the spirits of the dead are counted divine, when your fathers' very monuments prove it? I read there marble slabs inscribed "To the divine spirit of the dead," wherever the Latin or the Salarian road guards the old ashes in their thickly planted tombs.<sup>d</sup> Tell me, to whom do you carve this inscription, but that you revere the throne of grim Orcus as though it were the seat of real majesty?

Such are the rites, drawn from the early days of our ancestors, which entangled and defiled the imperial abode of supreme power, when an emperor who had twice been victorious and slain two usurpers,<sup>e</sup> turned his eyes in triumph on her noble battlements.

His suppression of pagan worships is referred to in lines 496 ff.

## PRUDENTIUS

nubibus obsessam nigrantibus aspicit urbem  
noctis obumbratae caligine ; turbidus aër  
arcebat liquidum septena ex arce serenum.  
ingemuit miserans et sic ait : “ exue tristes,      415  
fida parens, habitus ! equidem praedivite cultu  
inlustrata cluis spoliisque insigne superbis  
attollis caput et multo circumfluis auro ;  
sed nebulis propter volitantibus obsitus alti  
verticis horret apex, ipsas quoque livida gemmas 420  
lux hebetat spissusque dies, et fumus ob ora  
subfuscus rutilum frontis diadema retundit.  
obscuras video tibi circumferrier umbras  
caeruleasque animas atque idola nigra volare.  
censeo sublimem tollas super aëra vultum      425  
sub pedibusque tuis nimbosa elementa relinquas.  
omne quod ex mundo est tibi subiacet ; hoc Deus  
ipse  
constituit, cuius nutu dominaris et orbi  
imperitas et cuncta potens mortalia calcas.  
non decet ut submissa oculos regina caducum      430  
contemplere solum maiestatemque requiras  
circa humiles rerum partes, quibus ipsa superstas.  
non patiar veteres teneas ut me duce nugas,  
ut cariosorum venereris monstra deorum.  
si lapis est, senio dissolvitur aut crepat ictu      435  
percussus tenui ; mollis si brattea gypsum  
texerat, infido rarescit glutine sensim ;  
si formam statuae lamnis commisit aénis  
lima terens, aut in partem cava membra gravato  
pondere curvantur, scabra aut aerugo peresam      440  
conficit effigiem crebroque foramine rumpit.

## A REPLY TO ADDRESS OF SYMMACHUS

He looked at a city beset with black clouds in the dark shadow of night, and the thick air shut out the clear, bright sky from the seven hills. In sorrow and pity he addressed her thus: "Put off thy gloomy habit, faithful mother. Renowned indeed art thou for the exceeding richness of thy garb; thou raisest a head ennobled by thy proud spoils and dost abound in wealth of gold. But thy majestic crest is covered and befouled with vapours that flit about it, the leaden light and dense air dull thy very jewels, and smoke pouring over thy visage deadens the gleam of the diadem on thy brows. I see murky shades moving around thee, dark spirits and black idols flitting about thee. I counsel thee, lift thy face on high above the air of earth and leave the stormy elements beneath thy feet. The whole world is subject to thee. This is the ordinance of God himself, by whose will it is that thou hast lordship and dost rule the world and in thy might dost plant thy foot on all things mortal. It becomes thee not as a queen to lower thine eyes and gaze on the perishable earth, looking about for majesty in the low parts of the creation, over which thou thyself dost stand superior. I shall not suffer thee, while I am thy leader, to hold to old idle notions, nor to worship decayed monstrosities of gods. If it is stone, it perishes with age or cracks under the stroke of a light blow; if it is plaster covered with sheets of pliant metal, the cement proves treacherous and gaps gradually appear; if the smoothing file has given the shape of a statue to plates of bronze, then either the hollow frame droops to one side with the pressure of the weight, or a scurvy rust eats into the image and wastes it, piercing it with many

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nec tibi terra deus, caeli nec sit deus astrum,  
nec deus oceanus, nec vis quae subter opera est,  
infernis triste ob meritum damnata tenebris.  
sed nec virtutes hominum deus aut animarum 445  
spirituumve vagae tenui sub imagine formae.  
absit ut umbra deus tibi sit geniusve locus,  
aut deus aërias volitans phantasma per auras.  
sint haec barbaricis gentilia numina pagis,  
quos penes omne sacrum est, quidquid formido  
tremendum

suaserit; horrificos quos prodigalia cogunt 451  
credere monstra deos, quos sanguinolentus edendi  
mos iuvat, ut pinguis luco lanietur in alto  
victima visceribus multa inter vina vorandis.

at te, quae domitis leges ac iura dedisti 455  
gentibus, instituens, magnus qua tenditur orbis,  
armorum morumque feros mansuescere ritus,  
indignum ac miserum est in religione tenenda  
hoc sapere, inmanes populi de more ferino  
quod sapiunt nullaque rudes ratione sequuntur. 460  
seu nos procinctus maneat, seu pace quietas  
dictemus leges, seu debellata duorum  
colla tyrannorum media calcemus in urbe,  
agnoscas, regina, libens mea signa necesse est,  
in quibus effigies crucis aut gemmata refulget 465  
aut longis solido ex auro praefertur in hastis.  
hoc signo invictus transmissis Alpibus ulti  
servitium solvit miserabile Constantinus,  
cum te pestifera premeret Maxentius aula.

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<sup>a</sup> Such as Fides, Pietas, Concordia.

## A REPLY TO ADDRESS OF SYMMACHUS

a hole. Let not earth be thy god, nor a star in the sky, nor ocean, nor a power that is buried below, being condemned to infernal darkness for its ill deserts; but neither make gods of human virtues,<sup>a</sup> nor unsubstantial phantoms that wander at large in the shape of souls or spirits. Far be it from thee to have a ghost for thy god, or a genius<sup>b</sup> or a place, or an apparition that flits through the breezes in the air. Leave these heathen divinities to pagan barbarians; with them everything that fear has taught them to dread is held sacred; signs and marvels compel them to believe in frightful gods, and they find satisfaction in the bloody eating that is their custom, which makes them slaughter a fatted victim in a lofty grove to devour its flesh with floods of wine. But for thee, who hast appointed law and justice to the conquered nations, teaching savage ways of war and life, the wide world o'er, to become civilised, it is a sorry shame that in thy clinging to superstition thy thoughts should be those of barbarous, brutish peoples who adopt them in unreasoning ignorance. Whether we must still be ready for battle, or are to lay down laws in peace and quietness, or to trample under foot in the midst of Rome the heads of the two usurpers we have vanquished, thou must needs, O queen, be ready to acknowledge my standards, on which the figure of the cross leads the van, either gleaming in jewels or fashioned of solid gold on the long shafts. It was this standard that made Constantine invincible when he crossed the Alps as a liberator and undid a cruel bondage, when Maxentius was oppressing thee with his baleful

<sup>a</sup> For the "genius" and its worship see Bailey, *op. cit.* (index).

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lugebas longo damnatos carcere centum, 470  
 ut scis ipsa, patres. aut sponsus foedera pactae  
 intercepta gemens diroque satellite rapta  
 inmersus tenebris dura inter vincla luebat ;  
 aut si nupta torum regis conscendere iussa  
 cooperat inpurum domini oblectare furorem, 475  
 morte maritalis dabat indignatio poenas.  
 plena puellarum patribus ergastula saevi  
 principis ; abducta genitor si virgine mussans  
 tristius ingemuit, non ille inpune dolorem  
 prodidit aut confessa nimis suspiria traxit.<sup>1</sup> 480  
 testis Christicolae ducis adventantis ad urbem  
 Mulvius exceptum Tiberina in stagna tyrannum  
 praecipitans, quanam victricia viderit arma  
 maiestate regi, quod signum dextera vindex  
 praetulerit, quali radiarint stemmate pila. 485  
 Christus purpureum gemmanti textus in auro  
 signabat labarum, clipeorum insignia Christus  
 scripserat, ardebat summis crux addita cristis.  
 ipse senatorum meminit clarissimus ordo,  
 qui tunc concreto processit crine catenis 490  
 squalens carcereis aut nexus conpede vasta,  
 complexusque pedes victoris ad inclyta flendo  
 procubuit vexilla iacens. tunc ille senatus  
 militiae ultricis titulum Christique verendum

<sup>1</sup> After 480 some MSS. have the line vim libertatis nimiam (or nimiae) patriumque dolorem.

<sup>a</sup> Constantine invaded Italy from Gaul and defeated Maxentius in 312 (Gibbon, chapter XIV). His biographer Eusebius was told by him that one afternoon (probably on his march from Gaul) he saw the cross in the sky and under it the words "By this conquer."

<sup>b</sup> Maxentius was drowned while trying to escape back into Rome by way of this bridge after his defeat.

## A REPLY TO ADDRESS OF SYMMACHUS

court.<sup>a</sup> Thou wert mourning for a hundred of thy senators, as thou thyself knowest, condemned to long imprisonment. If a man who was betrothed bemoaned the filching of his promised bride at the hands of some cursed minion, he would be plunged in darkness and make atonement in cruel bonds. Or if a bride had begun to please the tyrant's impure passion and had been commanded to go up into the royal bed, her husband's resentment would pay the penalty with death. The cruel emperor's prisons were full of the fathers of girls. If a sire murmured and complained too bitterly when his daughter was taken away, he was not suffered to betray his anger or heave too frank a sigh with impunity. The Mulvian bridge, by hurling the usurper into the waters of the Tiber when he set foot on it,<sup>b</sup> bore witness to the divine power which it saw directing the victorious arms of the Christian general who was approaching Rome, the standard which the avenging hand bore at the head of his array, the emblem with which the javelins gleamed. The mark of Christ, wrought in jewelled gold, was on the purple labarum;<sup>c</sup> Christ had drawn the bearings on the shields, and the cross blazed on the crests atop. The noble order of senators remembers. That day it came forth with matted hair, limbs loaded with prison chains, or bound with a rough fetter, and clasping the victor's feet lay prostrate in tears before the famous banners. That day those senators did reverence to the super-scripture which the avenging army bore, the wor-

<sup>a</sup> The standard adopted by Constantine, bearing a monogram of the Greek letters XP (=CHR) representing the name of Christ.

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- nomen adoravit, quod conluebat in armis. 495  
 ergo cave, egregium caput orbis, inania post haec  
 prodicia et larvas stolido<sup>1</sup> tibi fingere cultu,  
 atque experta Dei virtutem spernere veri.  
 deponas iam festa velim puerilia, ritus  
 ridiculos tantoque indigna sacraria regno. 500  
 marmora tabenti respergine tincta lavate,  
 o proceres: liceat statuas consistere puras,  
 artificum magnorum opera: haec pulcherrima  
     nostrae  
 ornamenta fuant<sup>2</sup> patriae, nec decolor usus  
 in vitium versae monumenta coinquinet artis." 505  
     talibus edictis urbs informata refugit  
 errores veteres et turbida ab ore vieto  
 nubila discussit, iam nobilitate parata  
 aeternas temptare vias Christumque vocante  
 magnanimo ductore sequi et spem mittere in  
     aevum. 510  
 tunc primum senio docilis sua saecula Roma  
 erubuit; pudet exacti iam temporis, odit  
 praeteritos foedis cum religionibus annos.  
 mox ubi, contiguos fossis muralibus agros  
 sanguine iustorum innocuo maduisse recordans, 515  
 invidiosa videt tumulorum millia circum,  
 tristis iudicii mage paenitet ac dicionis  
 effrenis nimiaeque sacris pro turpibus irae.  
 compensare cupit taeterrima vulnera laesae  
 iustitiae sero obsequio veniaque petenda;  
 ne tanto imperio maneat pietate repulsa 520  
 crimen saevitiae, monstrata piacula quaerit,

<sup>1</sup> prodicia esse deos solito Bergman with MSS. of both classes.  
*The 6th- and 7th-century MSS. are not here available.*

<sup>2</sup> fiant Bergman with a number of MSS.

## A REPLY TO ADDRESS OF SYMMACHUS

shipful name of Christ which shone on its arms. Beware then after this, thou noble capital of the world, of fashioning thee unreal monstrosities and ghosts in senseless worship, and of scorning the power of the true God, now that thou hast proved it. I would have thee now lay aside thy childish festivals, thy absurd ceremonies, thy offerings which are unworthy of a realm so great. Wash ye the marbles that are bespattered and stained with putrid blood, ye nobles. Let your statues, the works of great artists, be allowed to rest clean; be these our country's fairest ornaments, and let no debased usage pollute the monuments of art and turn it into sin."

Taught by such proclamations, Rome withdrew from her long-standing errors and shook the murky clouds from her aged face, her nobles ready now to essay the everlasting ways, to follow Christ at the call of their great-hearted leader, and cast their hopes into eternity. Then for the first time, in her old age, did Rome become teachable and blush for her long history, ashamed of her past and hating the years gone by with their foul superstitions. Then, when she recalled how the lands that bordered on the ditches under her walls had been wet with the innocent blood of the righteous, and saw around her thousands of accusing tombs, she repented still more of her harsh judgment, her unbridled acts of power, her too great anger in the cause of a base religion. She sought to make up for the shocking wounds of injured righteousness by showing a late obedience and asking for pardon. Lest her great power lie under the charge of cruelty because she rejected goodness, she sought the prescribed atonements and

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inque fidem Christi pleno transfertur amore.  
 laurea victoris Marii minus utilis urbi,  
 cum traheret Numidam populo plaudente Iugur-  
 tham, 525  
 nec tantum Arpinas consul tibi, Roma, medellae  
 contulit extincto iusta inter vincla Cethego,  
 quantum praecipuus nostro sub tempore princeps  
 prospexit tribuitque boni. multos Catilinas  
 ille domo pepulit, non saeva incendia tectis 530  
 aut sicas patribus, sed Tartara nigra animabus  
 internoque hominum statui tormenta parantes.  
 errabant hostes per templa, per atria passim,  
 Romanumque forum et Capitolia celsa tenebant,  
 qui coniuratas ipsa ad vitalia plebis 535  
 moliti insidias intus serpente veneno  
 consuerant tacitis pestem miscere medullis.  
 ergo triumphator latitante ex hoste togatus  
 clara tropaea refert sine sanguine, remque  
 Quirini  
 adsuescit supero pollere in saecula regno. 540  
 denique nec metas statuit nec tempora ponit :  
 imperium sine fine docet, ne Romula virtus  
 iam sit anus, norit ne gloria parta senectam.  
 exultare patres videas, pulcherrima mundi  
 lumina conciliumque senum gestire Catonum  
 candidiore toga niveum pietatis amictum  
 sumere et exuvias deponere pontificales.  
 iamque ruit, paucis Tarpeia in rupe relictis,  
 ad sincera virum penetralia Nazareorum 545

<sup>a</sup> In his triumphal procession, 104 B.C.

<sup>b</sup> Cicero, who was born at Arpinum, suppressed the conspiracy of Catiline, in which Cethagus was involved, in 63 B.C.

## A REPLY TO ADDRESS OF SYMMACHUS

with entire love passed over to faith in Christ. Less profitable to the city was the conquering Marius' laurel, when he led the Numidian Jugurtha as a captive amid the people's applause;<sup>a</sup> nor healing so great did thy consul from Arpinum<sup>b</sup> bring to thee, O Rome, when he put Cethegus to death in a well-deserved prison, as the blessing which a great emperor in our time planned and conferred on thee. Many a Catiline did he banish, that was not plotting fierce fires for thy houses nor daggers for thy senators, but black hell for men's souls and torments for the life within them. Foes were roving everywhere through temples and courts, holding possession of the Roman Forum and the lofty Capitol; they had conspired to contrive a treacherous attack on the very vitals of thy people, with whose marrows they were wont secretly to mingle bane, so that the poison spread stealthily within them. Therefore in peaceful triumph over his lurking foe he won famous, bloodless victories, and taught Quirinus' realm how to have power for everlasting in a supremacy that is from heaven. No bounds indeed did he set, no limits of time did he lay down. Unending sway he taught, so that the valour of Rome should never grow old nor the glory she had won know age.

The fathers were to be seen leaping for joy, the world's noblest ornaments, that assemblage of old Catos<sup>c</sup> eager to put on, with whiter toga, the snowy robe of holiness, and cast off their priestly vestments. And now, leaving but a few on the Tarpeian rock, to the pure sanctuaries of the men of Nazareth and

<sup>a</sup> M. Porcius Cato, the republican stalwart of Julius Caesar's time and great-grandson of the famous censor of 184 B.C., became a type of high principle and strict conduct.

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atque ad apostolicos Evandria curia fontes, 550  
 Anniadum suboles et pignera clara Proborum.  
 fertur enim ante alios generosus Anicius urbis  
 inlustrasse caput: sic se Roma inclyta iactat.  
 quin et Olybriaci generisque et nominis heres,  
 adiectus fastis, palmata insignis abolla, 555  
 martyris ante fores Bruti submittere fasces  
 ambit et Ausoniam Christo inclinare securem.  
 non Paulinorum, non Bassorum dubitavit  
 prompta fides dare se Christo stirpemque superbam  
 gentis patriciae venturo attollere saeclo. 560  
 iam quid plebicolas percurram carmine Gracchos,  
 iure potestatis fultos et in arce senatus  
 praecipuos, simulacra deum iussisse revelli  
 cumque suis pariter lictoribus omnipotenti  
 suppliciter Christo se consecrasse regendos? 565  
 sescentas numerare domos de sanguine prisco  
 nobilium licet ad Christi signacula versas  
 turpis ab idolii vasto emersisse profundo.  
 si persona aliqua est aut si status urbis, in his est;  
 si formam patriae facit excellentior ordo, 570  
 hi faciunt iuncta est quotiens sententia plebis  
 atque unum sapiunt plures simul et potiores.  
 respice ad inlustrem, lux est ubi publica, cellam:

<sup>a</sup> I.e. an institution dating from the very earliest stage of Roman history. Cf. note on 226.

<sup>b</sup> The names mentioned in these lines represent prominent noble families of the time. The Gracchi (561) are called *plebicolae* in allusion to the tribunes Tiberius and Gaius-Gracchus of the 2nd century B.C.

<sup>c</sup> The privilege of wearing the *toga picta* and *tunica palmata* had belonged in republican times to generals celebrating triumphs. The later phrase *toga palmata* (Martial VII, 2, 8, etc.), if it is not used to designate the costume as a whole,

## A REPLY TO ADDRESS OF SYMMACHUS

the baptismal waters of the apostles hastens Evander's<sup>a</sup> senate, the descendants of the family of Annius<sup>b</sup> and the illustrious children of the Probi. For it is said that a noble Anicius before all others shed lustre on the city's head (so famed Rome boasts herself), and the inheritor of the blood and name of Olybrius, though he was entered on the Register of Consuls and enjoyed the glory of the palm-figured robe,<sup>c</sup> was eager to lower Brutus' rods<sup>d</sup> before a martyr's doors and humble the Ausonian axe to Christ. The quick faith of a Paulinus and a Bassus did not hesitate to surrender to Christ and to lift up the proud stock of a patrician clan to meet the age that was to come. It were needless in my song to tell the tale of how the house of the Gracchi, those friends of the people, supported by the authority of office and holding distinguished rank in the high place of the senate, commanded the images of gods to be pulled down, and along with their lictors dedicated themselves humbly to the all-powerful Christ to be ruled henceforth by Him. We may count hundreds of families of old noble blood who turned to the sign of Christ and raised themselves out of the vast abyss of base idolatry. If there is any embodiment of the city and its being, it is in these. If it is the higher order of men that give their country its character, these do so, when the people's will unites with theirs and the majority and the better are of one mind. Look at the illustrious chamber where sit the nation's luminaries: would imply that the palm-embroidery appeared on the toga also. This was now the official dress of consuls.

<sup>a</sup> The *fasces* of the consuls are here attributed to Brutus because he was the traditional founder of the republic, in which the two yearly consuls took the place of the king.

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vix pauca invenies gentilibus obsita nugis  
 ingenia, obtritos aegre retinentia cultus,      575  
 et quibus exactas placeat servare tenebras  
 splendentemque die medio non cernere solem.  
 posthinc ad populum converte oculos.    quota  
 pars est

quae Iovis infectam sanie non despuat aram?  
 omnis qui celsa scandit cenacula vulgus      580  
 quiique terit silicem variis discursibus atram  
 et quem panis alit gradibus dispensus ab altis,  
 aut Vaticano tumulum sub monte frequentat,  
 quo cinis ille latet genitoris amabilis obses,  
 coetibus aut magnis Lateranas currit ad aedes,    585  
 unde sacrum referat regali chrismate signum.  
 et dubitamus adhuc Romam tibi, Christe, dicatam  
 in leges transisse tuas omnique volentem  
 cum populo et summis cum civibus ardua magni  
 iam super astra poli terrenum extendere regnum?    590  
 nec moveor quod pars hominum rarissima clausos  
 non aperit sub luce oculos et gressibus errat.  
 quamlibet inlustres meritis et sanguine clari  
 praemia virtutum titulis et honoribus aucti  
 ardua rettulerint fastorumque arce potiti      595  
 annales proprio signarint nomine chartas,  
 atque inter veteres cera numerentur et aere,

<sup>a</sup> Centres at which the distribution was made were called "gradus." From the time of the emperor Aurelian (270-275) it was in the form of bread, not grain.

<sup>b</sup> St. Peter.

<sup>c</sup> This house, over the site of which stands the church of St. John Lateran, almost certainly belonged to the Plautius Lateranus who was condemned in 65 for conspiring against Nero. Constantine gave it to the Church in 313 and it was for some time the official residence of the popes (Platner-

## A REPLY TO ADDRESS OF SYMMACHUS

hardly will you find a few minds still beset with pagan vanities and clinging feebly to their suppressed worships, who would keep the darkness that has been banished and refuse to see the noon-day brightness of the sun.

Now turn your eyes to the people. How small the fraction that does not loathe Jupiter's blood-stained altar! All the multitude that climb aloft to their garrets, that wear the black pavement with their various comings and goings, and are fed with the bread that is dispensed from the high steps,<sup>a</sup> either crowd to the tomb at the foot of the Vatican hill, where lie in pledge the famed ashes of their father,<sup>b</sup> so worthy of their love, or hasten in great companies to the house of Lateranus<sup>c</sup> to get the holy sign of the King's anointing. And do we still hesitate to believe that Rome, O Christ, has devoted herself to Thee and placed herself under thy governance, and that with all her people and her greatest citizens she is now eagerly extending her earthly realm beyond the lofty stars of the great firmament? I am not disturbed because some men but here and there keep their eyes closed and will not open them in the light of day, so that they wander in their steps. Famed as they are for their services and noble in descent, though they have won high reward for their merits in promotion to dignity and office, though they have attained the supreme height of the Register and marked with their names the record of the years,<sup>d</sup> and in wax or bronze figure among

Ashby, *Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, p. 183). Evidently there was a church connected with it.

<sup>a</sup> I.e. have been "consules ordinarii," so that the years are dated by their consulships.

## PRUDENTIUS

attamen in paucis, iam deficiente caterva,  
 nec persona sita est patriae nec curia constat;  
 et quodcumque fovent studii privata voluntas      600  
 ac iam rara tenet, sed publica vota reclamant  
 dissensu celebri trepidum damnantia murmur.  
 si consulta patrum subsisterc conscriptorum  
 non aliter licitum prisco sub tempore, quam si  
 ter centum sensisse senes legerentur in unum,      605  
 servemus leges patrias: infirma minoris  
 vox cedat numeri parvaque in parte silescat.

aspice quam pleno subsellia nostra senatu  
 decernant infame Iovis pulvinar et omne  
 idolium longe purgata ex urbe fugandum.      610  
 qua vocat egregii sententia principis, illuc  
 libera cum pedibus tum corde frequentia transit.  
 nec locus invidiae est, nullum vis aspera terret;  
 ante oculos sic velle patet cunctique probatum,  
 non iussum, sola capti ratione sequuntur.      615  
 denique pro meritis terrestribus aequa rependens  
 munera sacricolis summos inpertit honores  
 dux bonus et certare sinit cum laude suorum,  
 nec pago implicitos per debita culmina mundi  
 ire viros prohibet, quoniam caelestia numquam      620  
 terrenis solitum per iter gradientibus obstant.  
 ipse magistratum tibi consulis, ipse tribunal  
 contulit auratumque togae donavit amictum,  
 cuius religio tibi displicet, o pereuntum

<sup>a</sup> The argument is put in a curious way, but seems to be that a majority was required, and the Christians now have it. Augustus (*prisco sub tempore*) fixed the number of senators at 600. On the strength of the Christian and pagan parties in the senate at the time of Symmachus' petition, see Boissier, *La Fin du Paganisme* II, pp. 271-2; Dill, pp. 4, 29, 36-7.

<sup>b</sup> The words refer to the procedure in taking a division in the senate ("discessio").

## A REPLY TO ADDRESS OF SYMMACHUS

the men of old, yet it is not a small number, who have lost their following, who represent their country and constitute the senate. The attachment they cherish is maintained only by the will of individuals, and those now few and far between; the nation's wishes oppose them and with multitudinous dissent condemn their restless murmuring. If in olden days the decrees of the conscript fathers could only stand if it was on record that three hundred senators were agreed,<sup>a</sup> let us keep to our fathers' laws: let the minority's feeble voice give way and fall silent in their little section.

See in how full a house our benches decide that Jupiter's infamous couch and all the worship of idols must be banished far from our purified city! To the side to which our noble emperor's motion calls, great numbers cross,<sup>b</sup> as free in mind as in foot. No room is there for odium; none is intimidated by rude force; it is clear to see that such is their will; all are convinced by reason alone and follow their own judgment, not a command. And our good leader, requiting earthly services with equal rewards, gives to the worshippers of idols a share of the highest dignities, allows them to vie with the repute of their families, and forbids not to men who are still in the coils of paganism a career in the topmost worldly ranks when they have deserved them, since the things of heaven never prevent men of earth from passing along the accustomed ways. It is he that conferred on thee<sup>c</sup> the office of consul and the judgment-seat, and gave thee the gold-wrought toga to wear, he whose religion does not win thy favour,

<sup>c</sup> Symmachus.

PRUDENTIUS

adsertor divum, solus qui restituendos Vulcani Martisque dolos Venerisque peroras Saturnique senis lapides Phoebique furores, Iliaceae matris Megalesia, Bacchica Nysi, Isidis amissum semper plangentis Osirim mimica ridendaque suis sollemnia calvis, et quascumque solent Capitolia claudere larvas.	625
O linguam miro verborum fonte fluentem, Romani decus eloquii, cui cedat et ipse Tullius! has fundit dives facundia gemmas! os dignum aeterno tinctum quod fulgeat auro si mallet laudare Deum! cui sordida monstra praetulit et liquidam temeravit crimine vocem, haud aliter quam, si rastris quis temptet eburnis caenosum versare solum, limoque madentes excolere aureolis si forte ligonibus ulvas, splendorem dentis nitidi serobis inquinat atra, et pretiosa acies squalenti sordet in arvo.	635
non vereor ne me nimium confidere quisquam arguat ingeniique putet luctamen inire. sum memor ipse mei, satis et mea frivola novi; non ausim conferre pedem nec spicula tantae indocilis fandi coniecta lacessere linguae. inlaesus maneat liber excellensque volumen obtineat partam dicendi fulmine famam. sed liceat tectum servare a vulnere pectus	640
	645
	650

<sup>a</sup> Primitive legend said that Kronos (Saturn), having been warned that one of his children would overthrow him, swallowed them as they were born, but in place of the youngest, Zeus (Jupiter), Rhea substituted a stone.

<sup>b</sup> The *ludi Megalenses* held in honour of the Magna Mater.  
*Iliaceae* = Phrygian. Cf. 187.

<sup>c</sup> Bacchus (Dionysus) is associated with a legendary mountain called Nysa.

## A REPLY TO ADDRESS OF SYMMACHUS

thou upholder of gods outworn, who alone dost plead for the restoration of those tricks of Vulcan and Mars and Venus, old Saturn's stones<sup>a</sup> and Phoebus' prophetic frenzies, the Ilian Mother's Megalesian festival,<sup>b</sup> the Bacchic rites of the Nysian god,<sup>c</sup> the farcical ceremonies of Isis ever mourning for her lost Osiris,<sup>d</sup> which even her own bald-heads must laugh at, and all the goblins which the Capitol by custom keeps within it.

How marvellous the stream of speech that flows from that tongue, the glory of Roman eloquence, surpassing even Tullius himself! Yet these are the jewels its rich fluency pours forth! Lips worthy to be bathed in the unfading sheen of gold, if only they would rather have praised God! But to Him they have preferred unclean monstrosities and polluted their clear voice with sin,—just as, if a man should set himself to work the miry soil with a rake of ivory, or till sodden, muddy ground with a golden fork, the black soil befouls the brightness of the shining prongs, the sharp tool that cost so much is defiled by the dirty earth.

I have no fear that any man may charge me with over-confidence and imagine that I am entering upon a contest of mental powers. I do not forget who I am, I know my paltry gifts well enough and would not venture to join battle, nor with my little skill in speech to challenge the darts which that great tongue shoots. Let his book rest unattacked, his surpassing work keep the fame it has earned by its flashing eloquence. But let me be allowed to cover my breast and save it from hurt, and with my

<sup>a</sup> See Bailey, *op. cit.*, pp. 186 ff. The priests and the inner circle of devotees of Isis had their heads shaven.

## PRUDENTIUS

oppositaque volans iaculum depellere parma.  
nam si nostra fides, saeclo iam tuta quieto,  
viribus infestis hostilique arte petita est,  
cur mihi fas non sit lateris sinuamine flexi  
ludere ventosas iactu pereunte sagittas?

sed iam tempus iter longi cohære libelli,  
ne tractum sine fine ferat fastidia carmen.

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## A REPLY TO ADDRESS OF SYMMACHUS

shield to meet and turn aside the flying javelin.  
For if our faith, after reaching safety in an age of  
peace, is attacked with hostile forces and all an  
enemy's skill, why should it not be right for me to  
bend and turn and parry the shafts so that the  
shots are vain and ineffectual?

But my book is growing long; it is time now to  
halt its march, lest my song be drawn out endlessly  
and bring disgust.

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