**The Hymns of Prudentius eBook**

**The Hymns of Prudentius by Prudentius**

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**Page 1**

**Title:  The Hymns of Prudentius**

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\*\*\* *Start* *of* *this* *project* *gutenberg* EBOOK *the* *hymns* *of* *prudentius* \*\*\*

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*The* *hymns* of *prudentius*

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MDCCCCV *published* *by* J.M.  *Dent
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*Cathemerinonliber
of
prudentius*

*Hymns* *for* *the* *Christian’s* *day*

*Newlytranslated* *into
English* *verse*

*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.
Exin 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.
Haec dum vita volans agit,
inrepsit subito canities seni
oblitum veteris me Saliae consulis arguens:
ex quo prima dies mihi 25
quam multas hiemes volverit et rosas
pratis post glaciem reddiderit, nix capitis probat.
Numquid talia proderunt
carnis post obitum vel bona vel mala,
cum iam, quidquid id est, quod fueram, mors aboleverit? 30
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,
conculcet 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

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**PREFACE**

Full fifty years my span of life hath run,
Unless I err, and seven revolving years
Have further sped while I the sun enjoy.
Yet now the end draws nigh, and by God’s will
Old age’s bound is reached:  how have I spent
And with what fruit so wide a tract of days?
I wept in boyhood ’neath the sounding rod:
Youth’s toga donned, the rhetorician’s arts
I plied and with deceitful pleadings sinned:
Anon a wanton life and dalliance gross
(Alas! the recollection stings to shame!)
Fouled and polluted manhood’s opening bloom:
And then the forum’s strife my restless wits
Enthralled, and the keen lust of victory
Drove me to many a bitterness and fall.
Twice held I in fair cities of renown
The reins of office, and administered
To good men justice and to guilty doom.
At length the Emperor’s will beneficent
Exalted me to military power
And to the rank that borders on the throne.
The years are speeding onward, and gray hairs
Of old have mantled o’er my brows
And Salia’s consulship from memory dies.
What frost-bound winters since that natal year
Have fled, what vernal suns reclothed
The meads with roses,—­this white crown declares.
Yet what avail the prizes or the blows
Of fortune, when the body’s spark is quenched
And death annuls whatever state I held?
This sentence I must hear:  “Whate’er thou art,
Thy mind hath lost the world it loved:  not God’s
The things thou soughtest, Whose thou now shalt be.”
Yet now, ere hence I pass, my sinning soul
Shall doff its folly and shall praise my Lord
If not by deeds, at least with humble lips.
Let each day link itself with grateful hymns
And every night re-echo songs of God:
Yea, be it mine to fight all heresies,
Unfold the meanings of the Catholic faith,
Trample on Gentile rites, thy gods, O Rome,
Dethrone, the Martyrs laud, th’ Apostles sing.
O while such themes my pen and tongue employ,
May death strike off these fetters of the flesh
And bear me whither my last breath shall rise!

I. HYMNUS ad galli CANTUM

  Ales diei nuntius

lucem propinquam praecinit;
nos excitator mentium
iam Christus ad vitam vocat.  Auferte, clamat, lectulos 5

aegros, soporos, desides:
castique recti ac sobrii
vigilate, iam sum proximus.

    Post solis ortum fulgidi
  serum est cubile spernere, 10
  ni parte noctis addita
  tempus labori adieceris.

    Vox ista, qua strepunt aves
  stantes sub ipso culmine
  paulo ante quam lux emicet, 15
  nostri figura est iudicis.

    Tectos tenebris horridis
  stratisque opertos segnibus
  suadet quietem linquere
  iam iamque venturo die. 20

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

    Hic somnus ad tempus datus 25
  est forma mortis perpetis,
  peccata ceu nox horrida
  cogunt iacere ac stertere.

    Sed vox ab alto culmine
  Christi docentis praemonet, 30
  adesse iam lucem prope,
  ne mens sopori serviat:

    Ne somnus usque ad terminos
  vitae socordis opprimat
  pectus sepultum crimine 35
  et lucis oblitum suae.

    Ferunt vagantes daemonas
  laetos tenebris noctium,
  gallo canente exterritos
  sparsim timere et cedere. 40

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

    Hoc esse signum praescii 45
  norunt repromissae spei,
  qua nos soporis liberi
  speramus adventum Dei.

    Quae vis sit huius alitis,
  salvator ostendit Petro, 50
  ter antequam gallus canat
  sese negandum praedicans.

    Fit namque peccatum prius,
  quam praeco lucis proximae
  inlustret humanum genus 55
  finemque peccandi ferat.

    Flevit negator denique
  ex ore prolapsum nefas,
  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, 65
  illo quietis tempore
  quo gallus exsultans canit
  Christum redisse ex inferis.

    Tunc mortis oppressus vigor,
  tunc lex subacta est tartari, 70
  tunc vis diei fortior
  noctem coegit cedere.

    Iam iam quiescant inproba,
  iam culpa furva obdormiat,
  iam noxa letalis suum 75
  perpessa somnum marceat.

    Vigil vicissim spiritus
  quodcumque 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 85
  sensum profunda oblivio
  pressit, gravavit, obruit
  vanis vagantem somniis.

    Sunt nempe falsa et frivola,
  quae mundiali gloria 90
  ceu dormientes egimus:
  vigilemus, hic est veritas.

    Aurum, voluptas, gaudium,
  opes, honores, prospera,
  quaecumque nos inflant mala, 95
  fit mane, nil sunt omnia.

    Tu, Christe, somnum dissice,
  tu rumpe noctis vincula,
  tu solve peccatum vetus
  novumque lumen ingere. 100

I. Hymn at cock-crow

  Awake! the shining day is born!
  The herald cock proclaims the morn:
  And Christ, the soul’s Awakener, cries,
  Bidding us back to life arise.

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  Away the sluggard’s bed! away
  The slumber of the soul’s decay!
  Ye chaste and just and temperate,
  Watch!  I am standing at the gate.

  After the sun hath risen red
  ’Tis late for men to scorn their bed,
  Unless a portion of the night
  They seize for labours of the light.

  Mark ye, what time the dawn draws nigh,
  How ’neath the eaves the swallows cry?
  Know that by true similitude
  Their notes our Judge’s voice prelude.

  When hid by shades of dark malign
  On beds of softness we recline,
  They call us forth with music clear
  Warning us that the day is near.

  When breezes bright of orient morn
  With rosy hues the heavens adorn,
  They cheer with hope of gladdening light
  The hearts that spend in toil their might.

  Though sleep be but a passing guest
  ’Tis type of death’s perpetual rest:
  Our sins are as a ghastly night,
  And seal with slumbers deep our sight.

  But from the wide roof of the sky
  Christ’s voice peals forth with urgent cry,
  Calling our sleep-bound hearts to rise
  And greet the dawn with wakeful eyes.

  He bids us fear lest sensual ease
  Unto life’s end the spirit seize
  And in the tomb of shame us bind,
  Till we are to the true light blind.

  ’Tis said that baleful spirits roam
  Abroad beneath the dark’s vast dome;
  But, when the cock crows, take their flight
  Sudden dispersed in sore affright.

  For the foul votaries of the night
  Abhor the coming of the light,
  And shamed before salvation’s grace
  The hosts of darkness hide their face.

  They know the cock doth prophesy
  Of Hope’s long-promised morning sky,
  When comes the Majesty Divine
  Upon awakened worlds to shine.

  The Lord to Peter once foretold
  What meaning that shrill strain should hold,
  How he before cock-crow would lie
  And thrice his Master dear deny.

  For ’tis a law that sin is done
  Before the herald of the sun
  To humankind the dawn proclaims
  And with his cry the sinner shames.

  Then wept he bitter tears aghast
  That from his lips the words had passed,
  Though guileless he his soul possessed
  And faith still reigned within his breast.

  Nor ever reckless word he said
  Thereafter, by his tongue betrayed,
  But at the cock’s familiar cry
  Humbled he turned from vanity.

  Therefore it is we hold to-day
  That, as the world in stillness lay,
  What hour the cock doth greet the skies,
  Christ from deep Hades did arise.

  Lo! then the bands of death were burst,
  Shattered the sway of hell accurst:
  Then did the Day’s superior might
  Swiftly dispel the hosts of Night.

  Now let base deeds to silence fall,
  Black thoughts be stilled beyond recall:
  Now let sin’s opiate spell retire
  To that deep sleep it doth inspire.

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  For all the hours that still remain
  Until the dark his goal attain,
  Alert for duty’s stern command
  Let every soul a sentry stand.

  With sober prayer on Jesus call;
  Let tears with our strong crying fall;
  Sleep cannot on the pure soul steal
  That supplicates with fervent zeal.

  Too long did dull oblivion cloud
  Our motions and our senses shroud:
  Lulled by her numbing touch, we stray
  In dreamland’s ineffectual way.

  Bound by the dazzling world’s soft chain
  ’Tis false and fleeting gauds we gain,
  Like those who in deep slumbers lie:—­
  Let us awake! the truth is nigh.

  Gold, honours, pleasure, wealth and ease,
  And all the joys that mortals please,
  Joys with a fatal glamour fraught—­
  When morning comes, lo! all are nought.

But thou, O Christ, put sleep to flight
And break the iron bands of night,
Free us from burden of past sin
And shed Thy morning rays within.

II.  HYMNUS MATUTINUS

  Nox et tenebrae et nubila,

confusa mundi et turbida,
lux intrat, albescit polus,
Christus venit, discedite.  Caligo terrae scinditur 5

percussa solis spiculo,
rebusque iam color redit
vultu nitentis sideris.

    Sic nostra mox obscuritas
  fraudisque pectus conscium 10
  ruptis retectum nubibus
  regnante pallescit Deo.

    Tunc non licebit claudere
  quod quisque fuscum cogitat,
  sed mane clarescent novo 15
  secreta mentis prodita.

    Fur ante lucem squalido
  inpune peccat tempore,
  sed lux dolis contraria
  latere furtum non sinit. 20

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

    Sol ecce surgit igneus, 25
  piget, pudescit, paenitet,
  nec teste quisquam lumine
  peccare constanter potest.

    Quis mane sumptis nequiter
  non erubescit poculis, 30
  cum fit libido temperans
  castumque nugator sapit?

    Nunc, nunc severum vivitur,
  nunc nemo tentat ludicrum,
  inepta nunc omnes sua 35
  vultu colorant serio.

    Haec hora cunctis utilis,
  qua quisque, quod studet, gerat,
  miles, togatus, navita,
  opifex, arator, institor. 40

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

    At nos lucelli ac faenoris 45
  fandique prorsus nescii,
  nec arte fortes bellica,
  te, Christe, solum novimus.

    Te mente pura et simplici,
  te voce, te cantu pio 50
  rogare curvato genu
  flendo et canendo discimus.

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    His nos lucramur quaestibus,
  hac arte tantum vivimus,
  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,
  Iordane tinctos flumine.

    Quodcumque nox mundi dehinc 65
  infecit atris nubibus,
  tu, rex Eoi sideris,
  vultu sereno inlumina.

    Tu sancte, qui taetram picem
  candore tingis lacteo 70
  ebenoque crystallum facis,
  delicta terge livida.

    Sub nocte Iacob caerula
  luctator audax angeli,
  eo usque dum lux surgeret, 75
  sudavit inpar praelium.

    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, 85
  hominem tenebris obsitum,
  si forte non cedat Deo,
  vires rebellis perdere.

    Erit tamen beatior,
  intemperans membrum cui 90
  luctando claudum et tabidum
  dies oborta invenerit.

    Tandem facessat caecitas,
  quae nosmet in praeceps diu
  lapsos sinistris gressibus 95
  errore traxit devio.

    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 inquinet.

    Speculator adstat desuper, 105
  qui nos diebus omnibus
  actusque nostros prospicit
  a luce prima in vesperum.

  Hic testis, hic est arbiter,

his intuetur quidquid est, 110
humana quod mens concipit;
hunc nemo fallit iudicem.

II.  Morning hymn

Ye clouds and darkness, hosts of night
That breed confusion and affright,
Begone! o’erhead the dawn shines clear,
The light breaks in and Christ is here.Earth’s gloom flees broken and dispersed,
By the sun’s piercing shafts coerced:
The daystar’s eyes rain influence bright
And colours glimmer back to sight.

  So shall our guilty midnight fade,
  The sin-stained heart’s gross dusky shade:
  So shall the King’s All-radiant Face
  Sudden unveil our deep disgrace.

  No longer then may we disguise
  Our dark intents from those clear eyes:
  Yea, at the dayspring’s advent blest
  Our inmost thoughts will stand confest.

  The thief his hidden traffic plies
  Unmarked before the dawn doth rise:
  But light, the foe of guile concealed,
  Lets no ill craft lie unrevealed.

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  Fraud and Deceit love only night,
  Their wiles they practise out of sight;
  Curtained by dark, Adultery too
  Doth his foul treachery pursue,

  But slinks abashed and shamed away
  Soon as the sun rekindles day,
  For none can damning light resist
  And ’neath its rays in sin persist.

  Who doth not blush o’ertook by morn
  And his long night’s carousal scorn?
  For day subdues the lustful soul,
  And doth all foul desires control.

  Now each to earnest life awakes,
  Now each his wanton sport forsakes;
  Now foolish things are put away
  And gravity resumes her sway.

  It is the hour for duty’s deeds,
  The path to which our labour leads,
  Be it the forum, army, sea,
  The mart or field or factory.

  One seeks the plaudits of the bar,
  One the stern trumpet calls to war:
  Those bent on trade and husbandry
  At greed’s behest for lucre sigh.

  Mine is no rhetorician’s fame,
  No petty usury I claim;
  Nor am I skilled to face the foe:
  ’Tis Thou, O Christ, alone I know.

  Yea, I have learnt to wait on Thee
  With heart and lips of purity,
  Humbly my knees in prayer to bend,
  And tears with songs of praise to blend.

  These are the gains I hold in view
  And these the arts that I pursue:
  These are the offices I ply
  When the bright sun mounts up the sky.

  Prove Thou my heart, my every thought,
  Search into all that I have wrought:
  Though I be stained with blots within,
  Thy quickening rays shall purge my sin.

  O may I ever spotless be
  As when my stains were cleansed by Thee,
  Who bad’st me ’neath the Jordan’s wave
  Of yore my soiled spirit lave.

  If e’er since then the world’s gross night
  Hath cast its curtain o’er my sight,
  Dispel the cloud, O King of grace,
  Star of the East! with thy pure face.

  Since Thou canst change, O holy Light,
  The blackest hue to milky white,
  Ebon to clearness crystalline,
  Wash my foul stains and make me clean.

  ’Twas ’neath the lonely star-blue night
  That Jacob waged the unequal fight,
  Stoutly he wrestled with the Man
  In darkness, till the day began.

  And when the sun rose in the sky
  He halted on his shrivelled thigh:
  His natural might had ebbed away,
  Vanquished in that tremendous fray.

  Not wounded he in nobler part
  Nor smitten in life’s fount, the heart:
  But lust was shaken from his throne
  And his foul empire overthrown.

  Whereby we clearly learn aright
  That man is whelmed by deadly night,
  Unless he own God conqueror
  And strive against His will no more.

  Yet happier he whom rising morn
  Shall find of nature’s strength forlorn,
  Whose warring flesh hath shrunk away,
  Palsied by virtue’s puissant sway.

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  And then at length let darkness flee,
  Which all too long held us in fee,
  ’Mid wildering shadows made us stray
  And led in devious tracks our way.

  We pray Thee, Rising Light serene,
  E’en as Thyself our hearts make clean:
  Let no deceit our lips defile
  Nor let our souls be vexed by guile.

  O keep us, as the hours proceed,
  From lying word and evil deed,
  Our roving eyes from sin set free,
  Our body from impurity.

  For thou dost from above survey
  The converse of each fleeting day:
  Thou dost foresee from morning light
  Our every deed, until the night.

  Justice and judgment dwell with Thee,
  Whatever is, Thine eye doth see:
  Thou know’st what human hearts conceive
  And none Thy wisdom may deceive.

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

    Huc nitido precor intuitu
  flecte salutiferam faciem,
  fronte serenus et inradia,
  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 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
  aere, gurgite, rure creant,
  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 saucius ora cibo. 50

    Fundit opes ager ingenuas
  dives aristiferae segetis:
  his ubi vitea pampineo
  brachia palmite luxuriant,
  pacis alumna ubi baca viret. 55

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    Haec opulentia Christicolis
  servit et omnia suppeditat:
  absit enim procul ilia fames,
  caedibus ut pecudum libeat
  sanguineas lacerare dapes. 60

    Sint fera gentibus indomitis
  prandia de nece quadrupedum:
  nos oleris 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 aerio
  rore liquat tenuique thymo,
  nexilis inscia connubii. 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 inclita vel fidibus
  divitis omnipotentis opus,
  quaeque fruenda patent homini
  laudibus aequiparare 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. 100

    Tunc per amoena vireta 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:
  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 vetitis
  ipsa pari peritura modo. 115

    Corpora mutua—­nosse nefas—­
  post epulas inoperta vident,
  lubricus error et erubuit:
  tegmina suta parant foliis,
  dedecus ut pudor occuleret. 120

    Conscia culpa Deum pavitans
  sede pia procul exigitur.
  innuba fernina quae fuerat,
  coniugis excipit inperium,
  foedera tristia iussa pati. 125

    Auctor et ipse doli coluber
  plectitur inprobus, ut mulier
  colla trilinguia 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
  inpia crimina morte luit. 135

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    Ecce venit nova progenies,
  aethere proditus alter homo,
  non luteus, velut ille prior:
  sed Deus ipse gerens hominem,
  corporeisque carens vitiis. 140

    Fit caro vivida sermo Patris,
  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,
  territa de grege candidulo?
  inpavidas lupus inter oves
  tristis obambulat et rabidum
  sanguinis inmemor os cohibet. 160

    Agnus enim vice mirifica
  ecce leonibus inperitat:
  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,
  sub iuga 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

    Haustus amarus abesto procul,
  ne libeat tetigisse manu
  exitiale quid aut vetitum:
  gustus et ipse modum teneat,
  sospitet ut iecur incolume. 180

    Sit satis anguibus horrificis,
  liba quod inpia corporibus
  ah miseram peperere necem,
  sufficiat semel ob facinus
  plasma Dei potuisse mori. 185

    Oris opus, vigor igneolus
  non moritur, quia flante Deo
  conpositus superoque 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
  pulvereo coeunte situ. 195

    Credo equidem, neque vana fides,
  corpora vivere more animae:
  nam modo corporeum memini
  de Phlegethonte gradu facili
  ad superos remeasse Deum. 200

  Spes eadem mea membra manet,

quae redolentia funereo
iussa quiescere sarcophago
dux parili redivivus humo
ignea Christus ad astra vocat. 205

III.  Hymn before meat

Blest Cross-bearer, Source of good,
Light-creating, Word-begot,
Gracious child of maidenhood,
Bosomed in the Fatherhood,
When earth, sea and stars were not.

With Thy cloudless, healing gaze
Shine upon me from above:
Let Thine all-enlightening rays
Bless this meal and quicken praise,
Praise unto Thy name of Love.

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  Lord, without Thee nought is sweet,
    Nought my life can satisfy,
  If Thy favour make not meet
    What I drink and what I eat;
  Let faith all things sanctify!

  O’er this bread God’s grace be poured,
    Christ’s sweet fragrance fill the bowl!
  Rule my converse, Triune Lord,
    Sober thought and sportive word,
  All my acts and all my soul.

  Spoils of rose-trees are not spent,
    Nor rich unguents on my board:
  But ambrosial sweets are sent,
    Of faith’s nectar redolent,
  From the bosom of my Lord.

  Scorn, my Muse, light ivy-leaves
    Wherewith custom wreathed thy brow:
  Love a mystic crown conceives
    And a rhythmic garland weaves:
  Bind on thee God’s praises now.

  What more worthy gift can I,
    Child of light and aether, bring
  Than for boons the Maker high
    From His bounty doth supply
  Lovingly my thanks to sing?

  He hath set ’neath our command
    All that ever rose to be,
  All that sky and sea and land
    Breed in air, in glebe and sand,
  Made my slaves, His own made me.

  Fowler’s craft with gin and net
    Feathered tribes of heaven ensnares:
  Osier twigs with lime o’erset
    That their airy flight may let
  His relentless guile prepares.

  Lo! with woven mesh the seine
    Swimming shoals draws from the wave:
  Nor do fish the bait disdain
    Till they feel the barb’s swift pain,
  Captives of the food they crave.

  Native wealth that knows no fail,
    Golden wheat springs from the field:
  Tendrils lush o’er vineyards trail,
    Nursed of Peace the olives pale
  Berries green unbidden yield.

  Christ’s grace fills His people’s need
    With these mercies ever fresh:
  Far from us be that foul greed,
    Gluttony that loves to feed
  On slain oxen’s bloodstained flesh.

  Leave to the barbarian brood
    Banquet of the slaughtered beast:
  Ours the homely, garden food,
    Greenstuff manifold and good
  And the lentils’ harmless feast.

  Foaming milkpails bubble o’er
    With the udders’ snowy stream,
  Which in thickening churns we pour
    Or in wicker baskets store,
  As the cheese is pressed from cream.

  Honey’s nectar for our use
    From the new-made comb is shed:
  Which the skilful bee imbues
    With thyme’s scent and airy dews,
  Plying lonely toils unwed.

  Orchard-groves now mellowed o’er
    Bounteously their fruitage shed:
  See! like rain on forest floor
    Shaken trees their riches pour,
  High-heaped apples, ripe and red.

  What great trumpet voice or lyre
    Famed of yore could fitly praise
  Gifts of the Almighty Sire,
    Blessings that His own require,
  Richly lavished through their days?

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  When morn breaks upon our sight,
    Hymns, O Lord, to Thee shall ring:
  Thee, when streams the midday light,
    Thee, when shadows of the night
  Bid us sup, our voices sing.

  For my body’s vital heat,
    For my heart-blood’s pulsing vein,
  For my tongue and speech complete
    Unto Thee, Most High, ’tis meet
  That I raise my grateful strain.

  ’Twas, O Holy One, Thy care
    Wrought us from the plastic clay,
  Made us Thine own image bear,
    And for our perfection fair
  Did Thy Breath to man convey.

  On the twain Thou didst bestow
    Leafy bowers in pleasaunce fair:
  Where spring’s scents for aye did blow,
    And four stately streams did flow
  O’er meads pied with blossoms rare.

  “All this realm ye now shall sway:”
    (Saidst Thou) “use it at your will,
  Yet ’tis death your hands to lay
    On the Tree, whose verdant sway
  Doth the midmost garden fill.”

  Then the Serpent’s guileful hate
    Would not innocency spare:
  Bade the maiden urge her mate
    With the fruit his lips to sate,
  Nor ’scaped she the self-same snare.

  Each their nakedness perceives
    When the feast they once partook:
  Smit with shame their conscience grieves:
    Wove they coverings of leaves
  Shielding from lascivious look.

  Far they both in terror fled
    Thrust from dwelling of the pure:
  She who erst had dwelt unwed
    Subject to her spouse was led,
  Bidden Hymen’s bonds endure.

  On the Serpent, too, His seal
    God hath set, Who guile abhorred,
  Doomed in triple neck to feel
    Impress of the woman’s heel,
  Fearing her, who feared her lord.

  Thus sin in our parents sown
    Brought forth ruin for the race;
  Good and evil having grown
    From that primal root alone,
  Nought but death could guilt efface.

  But the Second Man behold
    Come to re-create our kin:
  Not formed after common mould
    But our God (O Love untold!)
  Made in flesh that knows not sin.

  Word of God incarnated,
    By His awful power conceived,
  Whom a maiden yet unwed,
    Innocent of marriage-bed,
  In her virgin womb received.

  Now we see the Serpent lewd
    ’Neath the woman’s heel downtrod:
  Whence there sprang the deadly feud,
    Strife for ages unsubdued,
  ’Twixt mankind and foe of God.

  Yet God’s mother, Maid adored,
    Robbed sin’s poison of its bane,
  And the Snake, his green coils lowered,
    Writhing on the sod, outpoured
  Harmless now his venom’s stain.

  What fierce brute that doth not flee
    Lambs of Christ, white-robed and clean?
  ’Midst the flock from fear set free,
    Slinks the drear wolf sullenly,
  Checked his maw and tamed his mien.

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  Wondrous change! restrained by love
    Lions the mild lamb obey:
  Eagles wild, before the dove
    Fluttering from the stars above,
  Speed o’er cloudy winds away.

  Thou, O Christ, my Dove dost reign
    Where the vulture gnaws no more:
  Thou dost, snow-white Lamb, enchain
    Tigers fierce, and wolves restrain
  Gaping at the sheepfold’s door.

  God of Love, Thy servants we
    Pray Thee now to grant our prayer
  That our feast may frugal be,
    Nor that we dishonour Thee
  By coarse surfeit of rich fare.

  May we taste no bitter gall
    In our cup, nor handle we
  Aught of death or harm at all,
    Nor intemperately fall
  Into gross debauchery.

  Be the powers of Hell content
    With their primal fraud, whereby
  Death into this world was sent,
    And that, for sin’s chastisement,
  God’s own creatures once should die.

  But in us God’s Breath of fire
    Cannot lose its vital force:
  Never can its might expire,
    Flowing from the Eternal Sire,
  Who of Reason’s strength is source.

  Nay, from out death’s chilling tomb
    Mortal atoms shall arise:
  Man from earth’s vast, hidden womb
    Other, yet the same, shall bloom,
  Dust re-made in glorious guise.

  ’Tis my faith—­and faith not vain—­
    Bodies live e’en as the soul:
  Since I hold in memory plain
    God as man uprose again,
  Loosed from Hell, to His true goal.

  Whence from Him the hope I reap
    That these limbs the same shall rise,
  Which enwrapped in balmy sleep
    Christ the Risen safe shall keep
  Till He call me to the skies.

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 5
  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.
    Taetrum flagrat enim vapore crasso
  horror conscius aestuante culpa
  offensumque bonum niger repellit.

    Nec solus pudor innocensve votum 25
  templum constituunt perenne Christo
  in cordis medii sum ac recessu:
    sed ne crapula ferveat cavendum est,
  quae sedem fidei cibis refertam
  usque ad congeriem coartet intus. 30

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    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 35
  confirmas Pater ac vigore conples.

    Sic olim tua praecluens potestas
  inter raucisonos situm leones,
  inlapsis dapibus virum refovit.
    Illum fusile numen execrantem 40
  et curvare caput sub expolita
  aeris materia nefas putantem

    Plebs dirae Babylonis ac tyrannus
  morti subdiderant, feris dicarant
  saevis protinus haustibus vorandum. 45
    O semper pietas fidesque tuta!
  lambunt indomiti virum leones
  intactumque Dei tremunt alumnum.

    Adstant cominus et iubas reponunt,
  mansuescit rabies fameque blanda 50
  praedam rictibus ambit incruentis.
    Sed cum tenderet ad superna palmas
  expertumque sibi Deum rogaret,
  clausus iugiter indigensque victu:

    Iussus nuntius advolare terris, 55
  qui pastum famulo daret probato,
  raptim desilit obsequente mundo.
    Cernit forte procul dapes inemptas,
  quas messoribus Abbacuc propheta
  agresti bonus exhibebat arte. 60

    Huius caesarie manu prehensa
  plenis, sicut erat, gravem canistris
  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, Halleluia 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 iniquis.

    Nec defit tamen anxiis medela; 85
  nam languente trucis leonis ira
  inlapsae superingeruntur escae.
    Quas si quis sitienter hauriendo
  non gustu tenui, sed ore pleno
  internis velit inplicare 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.

    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.

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IV.  Hymn after meat

  Refreshed we rise, and for this bread that feeds,
  By law of man’s weak flesh, our daily needs,
    Let every tongue, the Father’s praises sing;
  The Father Who on His exalted throne,
  O’er Cherubim and Seraphim, alone
    Reigns in His majesty, Eternal King.

  God of Sabaoth is His name:  ’tis He
  Who ne’er began and ne’er shall cease to be,
    Builder of worlds created at His word;
  Fountain of Life that flows from out the sky,
  He breathes within us Faith and Purity,
    Great Conqueror of Death, Salvation’s Lord.

  From Him each creature life and vigour gains,
  And over all the Eternal Spirit reigns
    Who cometh from the Father and the Son:
  When, dovelike, on pure hearts the heavenly Guest
  Descends, they are by God’s own presence blest,
    As temples where His holy work is done.

  But if the taint of vice or guile arise
  Within the consecrated shrine, He flies
    With speed from out the sin-defiled cell;
  For, driven forth by guilt’s black, surging tide,
  The offended Godhead may not there abide
    Where conscious sin and noisome foulness dwell.

  Not chastity nor childlike faith alone
  Build up for Christ an everlasting throne
    Deep in the inmost heart, devoid of shame:
  But watchful ever must His servants be,
  Lest the dark power of sated gluttony
    Should bind about the abode of faith its chain.

  Yet simple saints, content with frugal fare,
  More surely find the Spirit present there,
    Who is our soul’s true strength and heavenly food:
  Thy love for us a twofold feast supplies,
  O Father, whence the soul may strengthened rise
    And eke the body gain new hardihood.

  Thus, fed and sheltered by Thy matchless might,
  The lions’ hideous roar could not affright
    Thy loyal servant in the days of old:
  He boldly cursed the molten deity
  And stood with stubborn head uplifted high
    That scorned to bow before a god of gold.

  Then Babylon’s vile mob with fury glows;
  Death is his doom; and straight the tyrant throws
    The youth to be his savage lions’ prey:
  But faith and piety Thou still dost save,
  For lo! the untamed brutes no longer rave,
    But round God’s unscathed child they gently play.

  Close by his side they stand with drooping mane,
  The grisly, gaping jaws from blood refrain
    And with rough tongues their whilom prey caress:
  But when in prayer he raised his hands to heaven
  And called the God, from Whom such help was given,
    Close-prisoned, hungry, and in sore distress,

  A winged messenger to earth He sends,
  Who swiftly through the parting clouds descends
    To feed His servant, proven by the test:
  By chance he sees from far the unbought fare
  Which the good seer Habakkuk’s kindly care
    With rustic art had for the reapers dressed:

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  Then, grasping in strong hand the prophet’s hair,
  He bears him gently through the rushing air,
    Still burdened with the platter’s savoury load,
  Till o’er the lions’ den at last they stayed
  And straightway to the starving youth displayed
    The food thus brought, by God’s good grace bestowed.

  “Take this with joy,” he said, “and thankful feed,
  The bread that in thy hour of direst need,
    By the great Father sent, Christ’s angel brings.”
  Then Daniel lifts his eyes to heaven above
  And, strengthened by the wondrous gift of love,
    “Amen!” he cries, and Alleluia sings.

  Thus, therefore, by Thy bounties now restored,
  Giver of all things good, Almighty Lord,
    We render thanks and sing glad hymns to Thee:
  Though prisoned in an evil world we dwell
  Where sin’s grim tyrant rules, Thou dost repel
    With sovran power our mortal enemy.

  He roars around us, and would fain devour,
  Grinding his angry teeth when ’gainst his power
    In Thee alone, O God, we still confide:
  By evil things we are beset and vexed,
  Tormented, hated, harassed and perplexed,
    Our faith by cruel suffering sorely tried,

  Yet help ne’er fails us in our time of need,
  For Thou canst quell the lions’ rage, and feed
    Our hungry spirits with celestial fare:
  And if some soul no meagre taste would gain
  Of that repast, but thirstily is fain
    Full measure of the heavenly sweets to share,

  He by the holy seers of old is fed,
  And shall partake the loyal reapers’ bread
    Who labour in the eternal Master’s field:
  For nothing sweeter than the Word can be
  That fell from righteous lips, once touched by Thee,
    And nought can richer grace to mortals yield.

With this sustained, though vaunting tyranny
By unjust judgment doom us straight to die,
And starved lions rush these limbs to tear;
Confessing ever Thine Eternal Son,
With Thee, Almighty Father, ever one,
His cross with faith unshaken will we bear.

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 innumero sidere regiam 5

lunarique polum lampade pinxeris,
incussu silicis lumina nos tamen
monstras saxigeno semine quaerere:

    Ne nesciret homo spem sibi luminis
  in Christi solido corpore conditam, 10
  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 15
  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. 20

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    Nectar de liquido vertice fervidum
  guttatim lacrimis stillat olentibus,
  ambustum quoniam vis facit ignea
  imbrem de madido flere cacumine.

    Splendent ergo tuis muneribus, Pater, 25
  flammis mobilibus scilicet atria,
  absentemque diem lux agit aemula,
  quam nox cum lacero victa fugit peplo.

    Sed quis non rapidi luminis arduam
  manantemque Deo cernat originem? 30
  Moyses nempe Deum spinifera in rubo
  vidit conspicuo lumine flammeum.

    Felix, qui meruit sentibus in sacris
  caelestis solii visere principem,
  iussus nexa pedum vincula solvere, 35
  ne sanctum involucris pollueret locum.

    Hunc ignem populus sanguinis incliti
  maiorum meritis tutus et inpotens,
  suetus sub dominis vivere barbaris,
  iam liber sequitur longa per avia:  40

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

    Sed rex Niliaci littoris invido 45
  fervens felle iubet praevalidam manum
  in bellum rapidis ire cohortibus
  ferratasque acies clangere classicum.

    Sumunt arma viri seque minacibus
  accingunt gladiis, triste canit tuba:  50
  hic fidit iaculis, ille volantia
  praefigit calamis spicula Gnosiis.

    Densetur cuneis turba pedestribus,
  currus pars et equos et volucres rotas
  conscendunt celeres signaque bellica 55
  praetendunt tumidis clara draconibus.

    Hic iam servitii nescia pristini
  gens Pelusiacis usta vaporibus
  tandem purpurei gurgitis hospita
  rubris littoribus fessa resederat. 60

    Hostis dirus adest cum duce perfido,
  infert et validis praelia viribus:
  Moyses 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 praecipiti turbine percita
  fluctus per medios agmina regia,
  sed confusa dehinc unda revolvitur 75
  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. 80

    Quae tandem poterit lingua retexere
  laudes Christe tuas? qui domitam Pharon
  plagis multimodis cedere praesuli
  cogis iustitiae vindice dextera.

    Qui pontum rapidis aestibus invium 85
  persultare vetas, ut refluo in salo
  securus pateat te duce transitus,
  et mox unda rapax devoret inpios.

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    Cui ieiuna eremi saxa loquacibus
  exundant scatebris, et latices novos 90
  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
  uam 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 conflata 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 seculi
  discissis populum turbinibus regens 110
  iactatasque animas mille laboribus
  iustorum in patriam scandere praecipit.

    Illic purpureis tecta rosariis
  omnis fragrat humus calthaque pinguia
  et molles violas et tenues crocos 115
  fundit fonticulis uda fugacibus.

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

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

    Sunt et spiritibus saepe nocentibus 125
  paenarum celebres sub Styge feriae
  illa nocte, sacer qua rediit Deus
  stagnis ad superos ex Acheronticis.

    Non sicut tenebras de face fulgida
  surgens oceano Lucifer inbuit, 130
  sed terris Domini de cruce tristibus
  maior sole novum restituens diem.

    Marcent suppliciis tartara mitibus,
  exultatque sui carceris otio
  functorum populus liber ab ignibus, 135
  nec fervent solito flumina sulphure.

    Nos festis trahimus per pia gaudia
  noctem conciliis votaque prospera
  certatim vigili congerimus prece
  extructoque agimus liba sacrario. 140

    Pendent mobilibus lumina funibus,
  quae suffixa micant per laquearia,
  et de languidulis fota natatibus
  lucem perspicuo flamma iacit vitro.

    Credas stelligeram desuper aream 145
  ornatam geminis stare trionibus,
  et qua bosporeum temo regit iugum,
  passim purpureos spargier hesperos.

    O res digna, Pater, quam tibi roscidae
  noctis principio grex tuus offerat, 150
  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, 155
  tinctum pacifici chrismatis unguine.

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    Per Christum genitum, summe Pater, tuum,
  in quo visibilis stat tibi gloria,
  qui noster Dominus, qui tuus unicus
  spirat de patrio corde paraclitum. 160

  Per quem splendor, honos, laus, sapientia,

maiestas, bonitas, et pietas tua
regnum continuat numine triplici
texens perpetuis secula seculis.

V. Hymn for the lighting of the lamps

Blest Lord, Creator of the glowing light,
At Whose behest the hours successive move,
The sun has set:  black darkness broods above:
Christ! light Thy faithful through the coming night.

Thy courts are lit with stars unnumbered,
And in the cloudless vault the pale moon rides;
Yet Thou dost bid us seek the fire that hides
Till swift we strike it from its flinty bed.

  So man may learn that in Christ’s body came
    The hidden hope of light to mortals given:
    He is the Rock—­’tis His own word—­that riven
  Sends forth to all our race the eternal flame.

  From lamps that brim with rich and fragrant oil,
    Or torches dry this heaven-sent fire we feed;
    Or make us rushlights from the flowering reed
  And wax, whereon the bees have spent their toil.

  Bright glows the light, whether the resin thick
    Of pine-brand flares, or waxen tapers burn
    With melting radiance, or the hollow urn
  Yields its stored sweetness to the thirsty wick.

  Beneath the might of fire, in slow decay
    The scented tears of glowing nectar fall;
    Lower and lower droops the candle tall
  And ever dwindling weeps itself away.

  So by Thy gifts, great Father, hearth and hall
    Are all ablaze with points of twinkling light
    That vie with daylight spent; and vanquished Night
  Rends, as she flies away, her sable pall.

  Who knoweth not that from high Heaven first came
    Our light, from God Himself the rushing fire?
    For Moses erst, amid the prickly brier,
  Saw God made manifest in lambent flame.

  Ah, happy he! deemed worthy face to face
    To see heaven’s Lord within that sacred brake;
    Bidden the sandals from his feet to take,
  Nor with his shoon defile that holy place.

  The mighty children of the chosen name,
    Saved by the merits of their sires, and free
    After long years of savage tyranny,
  Through the drear desert followed still that flame.

  Striking their camp beneath the silent night
    Where’er they went, to lead their darkling way,
    The cloud of glory lent its guiding ray
  And shone more splendid than the noonday light.

  But, mad with jealous fury, Egypt’s king
    Calls his great host to battle for their lord:
    Swiftly the cohorts gather at his word,
  And down the mail-clad lines the clarions ring.

  Girding their trusty swords the warriors go
    To fill the ranks; hoarse bugles rend the air;
    These seize their massy javelins, these prepare
  The death-winged arrow and the Cretan bow.

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  The footmen throng in close battalions pressed;
    The chariots thunder; to the saddle spring
    The riders of the Nile, as forth they fling
  Egypt’s proud banner with the serpent crest.

  And now, forgetful of the bondage past,
    Thy children, tortured by the desert heat,
    Drag to the Red Sea’s brink their weary feet,
  And on its sandy margin rest at last.

  See! with their forsworn king the savage foe
    Draws nigh:  the threatening squadrons nearer ride;
    But ever onward urged the intrepid guide
  And through the waves bade Israel fearless go.

  Before that steadfast march the billows fall,
    Then raise on either hand their crystal mass,
    While through the sundered deep Thy people pass
  And ocean guards them with a liquid wall.

  But, mad with baffled rage, the dusky horde
    Of Egypt, by their impious despot led,
    Athirst the hated Hebrews’ blood to shed
  Pursued, all reckless of the o’er-arching flood.

  Swift as the wind the royal squadrons ride,
    But swifter yet the crystal barriers break,
    The waves exultantly their bounds forsake
  And roll together in a roaring tide.

  ’Mid steeds and chariots and drifting mail
    The drowned lords of Egypt found a grave
    With all their swart retainers ’neath the wave;
  And in their haughty courts the mourners wail.

  What tongue, O Christ, Thy glories can unfold?
    Thine was the arm, outstretched in wrath, that made
    The stricken land of Pharaoh, sore afraid,
  Bow down before Thy minister of old.

  Thy pathless deep did at the voice restrain
    Its surging billows, till with Thee for guide
    Thy host passed scathless, and the refluent tide
  Swept down the wicked to the engulfing main.

  At Thy command the desert, parched and dry,
    Breaks into laughing rills, and water clear
    Wells from the smitten rock Thy flock to cheer
  And quench their thirst beneath that brazen sky.

  Then Marah’s bitterness grew passing sweet,
    Touched by the mystic tree; so by the grace
    Of Thine own Tree, O Christ, our sinful race
  Regains its lost hopes at Thy pierced feet.

  Faster than icy hail the manna falls,
    Like snow down drifting from a wintry sky;
    The feast is set:  they heap the tables high
  With that rich food from Thy celestial halls.

  Fresh blow the breezes from the distant shore
    And bear a fluttering cloud that hides the light,
    Till the frail pinions, faltering in their flight,
  Sink in the wilderness to rise no more.

  How great the love of God’s own Son, that shed
    Such wondrous bounty on His chosen race!
    And still to us He proffers in His grace
  The mystic Feast, wherewith our souls are fed.

  Through the world’s raging sea He bids us come,
    And ’twixt the sundered billows guides our path,
    Till, spent and wearied with the ocean’s wrath,
  He calls His storm-tossed saints to Heaven and home.

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  There in His paradise red roses blow,
    With golden daffodils and lilies pale
    And gentle violets, and down the vale
  The murmuring rivulets for ever flow.

  Sweet balsams, welling from the slender tree,
    And precious spices fill the fragrant air,
    And, hiding by the stream, that blossom rare
  Whose leaves the river hurries to the sea.

  There the blest souls with one accord unite
    To hymn in dulcet song their Saviour’s praise,
    And as the chanting quire their voices raise
  They tread with shining feet the lilies bright.

  Yea, e’en the spirits of the lost, that dwell
    Where the black stream of sullen Acheron flows,
    Rest on that holy night when Christ arose,
  And for a while ’tis holiday in Hell.

  No sun from ocean rising drives away
    Their darkness, with his flaming shafts far-hurled,
    But from the cross of Christ o’er that wan world
  There streams the radiance of a new-born day.

  The sulphurous floods with lessened fury glow,
    The aching limbs find respite from their pain,
    While, in glad freedom from the galling chain,
  The tortured ghosts a short-lived solace know.

  In holy gladness let this night be sped,
    As here we gather, Lord, to watch and pray;
    To Thee with one consent our vows we pay
  And on Thy altar set the sacred Bread.

  From pendent chains the lamps of crystal blaze;
    By fragrant oil sustained the clear flame glows
    With strength undimmed, and through the darkness throws
  High o’er the fretted roof a golden haze,

  As ’twere Heaven’s starry floor our wondering eye
    Beheld, wherein the Bears their light display,
    Where Phosphor heralds the approach of day
  And Hesper’s radiance floods the evening sky.

  Meet is the gift we offer here to Thee,
    Father of all, as falls the dewy night;
    Thine own most precious gift we bring—­the light
  Whereby mankind Thy other bounties see.

  Thou art the Light indeed; on our dull eyes
    And on our inmost souls Thy rays are poured;
    To Thee we light our lamps:  receive them, Lord,
  Filled with the oil of peace and sacrifice.

  O hear us, Father, through Thine only Son,
    Our Lord and Saviour, by Whose love bequeathed
    The Paraclete upon our hearts has breathed,
  With Him and Thee through endless ages one.

  Through Christ Thy Kingdom shall for ever be,
    Thy grace, might, wisdom, glory ever shine,
    As in the Triune majesty benign
  He reigns for all eternity with Thee.

VI.  HYMNUS ante somnum

    Ades Pater supreme,
  quem nemo vidit unquam,
  Patrisque sermo Christe,
  et Spiritus benigne.

    O Trinitatis huius 5
  vis una, lumen unum,
  Deus ex Deo perennis,
  Deus ex utroque missus.

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

    Mens aestuans procellis
  curisque sauciata
  totis bibit medullis 15
  obliviale poclum.

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

    Lex haec data est caducis
  Deo iubente membris,
  ut temperet laborem
  medicabilis voluptas.

    Sed dum pererrat omnes 25
  quies amica venas,
  pectusque feriatum
  placat rigante somno:

    Liber vagat per auras
  rapido vigore sensus, 30
  variasque per figuras,
  quae sunt operta, cernit.

    Quia mens soluta curis,
  cui est origo caelum,
  purusque fons ab aethra 35
  iners iacere nescit.

    Imitata multiformes
  facies sibi ipsa fingit,
  per quas repente currens
  tenui fruatur actu. 40

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

    Plerumque dissipatis 45
  mendax imago veris
  animos pavore maestos
  ambage fallit atra.

    Quem rara culpa morum
  non polluit frequenter, 50
  nunc lux serena vibrans
  res edocet latentes.

    At qui coinquinatum
  vitiis cor inpiavit,
  lusus pavore multo 55
  species videt tremendas.

    Hoc patriarcha noster
  sub carceris catena
  geminis simul ministris
  interpres adprobavit. 60

    Quorum reversus unus
  dat poculum tyranno,
  ast alterum rapaces
  fixum vorant volucres.

    Ipsum deinde regem 65
  perplexa somniantem
  monuit famem futuram
  clausis cavere acervis.

    Mox praesul ac tetrarches
  regnum per omne iussus 70
  sociam tenere virgam
  dominae resedit aulae.

    O quam profunda iustis
  arcana per soporem
  aperit tuenda Christus, 75
  quam clara! quam tacenda!

    Evangelista summi
  fidissimus magistri
  signata quae latebant
  nebulis videt remotis:  80

    ipsum tonantis agnum
  de caede purpurantem,
  qui conscium futuri
  librum resignat unus.

    Huius manum potentem 85
  gladius perarmat anceps
  et fulgurans utrimque
  duplicem minatur ictum.

    Quaesitor ille solus
  animaeque corporisque 90
  ensisque bis timendus
  prima ac secunda mors est.

    idem tamen benignus
  ultor retundit iram
  paucosque non piorum 95
  patitur perire in aevum.

    Huic inclitus perenne
  tribuit Pater tribunal,
  hunc obtinere iussit
  nomen supra omne nomen. 100

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    Hic praepotens cruenti
  extinctor antichristi,
  qui de furente monstro
  pulchrum refert tropaeum.

    Quam bestiam capacem 105
  populosque devorantem,
  quam sanguinis charybdem
  Ioannis execratur.

    Haec nempe, quae sacratum
  praeferre nomen ausa est, 110
  imam petit gehennam
  Christo perempta vero.

    Tali sopore iustus
  mentem relaxat heros,
  ut spiritu sagaci 115
  caelum peragret omne.

    Nos nil meremur horum,
  quos creber inplet error,
  concreta quos malarum
  vitiat cupido rerum. 120

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

    Cultor Dei memento 125
  te fontis et lavacri
  rorem subisse sanctum,
  te chrismate innotatum.

    Fac, cum vocante somno
  castum petis cubile, 130
  frontem locumque cordis
  crucis figura signet.

    Crux pellit omne crimen,
  fugiunt crucem tenebrae:
  tali dicata signo 135
  mens fluctuare nescit.

    Procul, o procul vagantum
  portenta somniorum,
  procul esto pervicaci
  praestigiator astu! 140

    O tortuose serpens,
  qui mille per Maeandros
  fraudesque flexuosas
  agitas quieta corda,

    Discede, Christus hic est, 145
  hic Christus est, liquesce:
  signum quod ipse nosti
  damnat tuam catervam.

    Corpus licet fatiscens
  iaceat recline paullum, 150
  Christum tamen sub ipso
  meditabimur sopore.

VI.  Hymn before sleep

  Draw near, Almighty Father,
    Ne’er seen by mortal eye;
  Come, O Thou Word eternal,
    O Spirit blest, be nigh.

  One light of threefold Godhead,
    One power that all transcends;
  God is of God begotten,
    And God from both descends.

  The hour of rest approaches,
    The toils of day are past,
  And o’er our tired bodies
    Sleep’s gentle charm is cast.

  The mind, by cares tormented
    Amid life’s storm and stress,
  Drinks deep the wondrous potion
    That brings forgetfulness.

  O’er weary, toil-worn mortals
    The spells of Lethe steal;
  Sad hearts lose all their sorrow,
    Nor pain nor anguish feel.

  For to His frail creation
    God gave this law to keep,
  That labour should be lightened
    By soft and healing sleep.

  But while sweet languor wanders
    Through all the pulsing veins,
  And, wrapt in dewy slumber,
    The heart at rest remains,

  The soul, in wakeful vigour,
    Aloft in freedom flies,
  And sees in many a semblance
    The hidden mysteries.

  For, freed from care, the spirit
    That came from out the sky,
  Born of the stainless aether,
    Can never idle lie.

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  A thousand changing phantoms
    She fashions through the night,
  And ’midst a world of fancy
    Pursues her rapid flight.

  But divers are the visions
    That night to dreamers shows;
  Rare gleams of straying splendour
    The future may disclose;

  More oft the truth is darkened,
    And lying fantasy
  Deceives the affrighted sleeper
    With cunning treachery.

  To him whose life is holy
    The things that are concealed
  Lie open to his spirit
    In radiant light revealed;

  But he whose heart is blackened,
    With many a sin imbued,
  Sees phantoms grim and ghastly
    That beckon and delude.

  So in the Egyptian dungeon
    The patriarch of old
  Unto the king’s two servants
    Their fateful visions told:

  And one is brought from prison
    The monarch’s wine to pour,
  One, on the gibbet hanging,
    Foul birds of prey devour,

  He warned the king, distracted
    By riddles of the night,
  To hoard the plenteous harvests
    Against the years of blight.

  Soon, lord of half a kingdom,
    A mighty potentate,
  He shares the royal sceptre
    And dwells in princely state.

  But ah! how deep the secrets
    The holy sleeper sees
  To whom Christ shows His highest,
    Most sacred mysteries.

  For God’s most faithful servant
    The clouds were rolled away,
  And John beheld the wonders
    That sealed from mortals lay.

  The Lamb of God, encrimsoned
    With sacrificial stains,
  Alone the Book can open
    That destiny contains.

  By His strong hand is wielded
    A keen, two-edged brand
  That, flashing like the lightning,
    Smites swift on either hand.

  Before His bar of judgment
    Both soul and body lie;
  He whom that dread sword smiteth
    The second death shall die.

  Yet mercy tempers justice,
    And few the Avenger sends
  (Whose guilt is past all pardon)
    To death that never ends.

  To Him the Father yieldeth
    The judgment-seat of Heaven;
  To Him a Name excelling
    All other names is given.

  For by His strength transcendent
    Shall Antichrist be slain,
  And from that raging monster
    Fair trophies shall He gain:

  That all-devouring Dragon,
    With blood of martyrs red,
  On whose abhorred power
    John’s solemn curse is laid.

  And thus the proud usurper
    Of His high name is cast
  By Him, the true Christ, vanquished
    To deepest hell at last.

  Upon the saint heroic
    Such wondrous slumber falls
  That, in the spirit roaming,
    He treads heaven’s highest halls.

  We may not, in our weakness,
    To dreams like these aspire,
  Whose souls are steeped in error
    And evil things desire.

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  Enough, if weary bodies
    In peaceful sleep may rest;
  Enough, if no dark powers
    Our slumbering souls molest.

  Christian! the font remember,
    The sacramental vow,
  The holy water sprinkled,
    The oil that marked thy brow!

  When at sleep’s call thou seekest
    To rest in slumber chaste,
  Let first the sacred emblem
    On breast and brow be traced.

  The Cross dispels all darkness,
    All sin before it flies,
  And by that sign protected
    The mind all fear defies.

  Avaunt! ye fleeting phantoms
    That mock our midnight hours;
  Avaunt! thou great Deceiver
    With all thy guileful powers.

  Thou Serpent, old and crafty,
    Who by a thousand arts
  And manifold temptations
    Dost vex our sleeping hearts,

  Vanish! for Christ is with us;
    Away! ’tis Christ the Lord:
  The sign thou must acknowledge
    Condemns thy hellish horde.

And, though the weary body
Relaxed in sleep may be,
Our hearts, Lord, e’en in slumber,
Shall meditate on Thee.

VII.  HYMNUS IEIUNANTIUM

  O Nazarene, lux Bethlem, verbum Patris,

quem partus alvi virginalis protulit,
adesto castis Christe parsimoniis,
festumque nostrum rex serenus adspice,
ieiuniorum dum litamus victimam. 5  Nil hoc profecto purius mysterio,

quo fibra cordis expiatur uvidi,
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 coerceas,
  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 adflaret virum,
  olim probatis inclitum ieiuniis. 35

    Non ante caeli principem septemplicis
  Moyses tremendi fidus interpres throni
  potuit videre, quam decem recursibus
  quater volutis sol peragrans sidera
  omni carentem cerneret substantia. 40

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    Victus precanti solus in lacrimis fuit:
  nam flendo pernox inrigatum pulverem
  humi madentis ore pressit cernuo,
  donec loquentis voce praestrictus Dei
  expavit ignem non ferendum visibus. 45

    Ioannis huius artis hand minus potens,
  Dei perennis praecucurrit filium,
  curvos viarum qui retorsit tramites
  et flexuosa conrigens dispendia
  dedit sequendam calle recto lineam. 50

    Hanc obsequelam praeparabat nuntius
  mox adfuturo construens iter Deo,
  clivosa planis, confragosa ut lenibus
  converterentur, neve quidquam devium
  inlapsa terris inveniret veritas. 55

    Non usitatis ortus his 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
  setisve 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,
  parvum locustis et favorum agrestium
  liquore pastum corpori suetus dare. 70

    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 lavacro labe dempta criminum
  ibant renati non secus, quam si rudis
  auri recocta vena pulchrum splendeat,
  micet metalli sive lux argentei,
  sudum polito praenitens purgamine. 80

    Referre prisci stemma mine ieiunii
  libet fideli proditum volumine,
  ut diruendae civitatis incolis
  fulmen benigni mansuefactum Patris
  pie repressis ignibus pepercerit. 85

    Gens insolenti praepotens iactantia
  pollebat olim, quam fluentem nequiter
  conrupta vulgo solverat lascivia,
  et inde bruto contumax fastidio
  cultum superni negligebat numinis. 90

    Offensa tandem iugis indulgentiae
  censura iustis excitatur motibus,
  dextram perarmat rhompheali incendio
  nimbos crepantes et fragosos turbines
  vibrans tonantum nube flammarum quatit. 95

    Sed paenitendi dum datur diecula,
  si forte vellent inprobam libidinem
  veteresque nugas condomare ac frangere,
  suspendit ictum terror exorabilis
  paullumque dicta substitit sententia. 100

    Ionam prophetam mitis ultor excitat,
  paenae inminentis iret ut praenuntius,
  sed nosset ille qui minacem iudicem
  servare malle, quam ferire ac plectere,
  tectam latenter vertit in Tharsos fugam. 105

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    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

\* \* \* \* \*

    Intactus exin tertiae noctis vice
  monstri vomentis pellitur singultibus,
  qua murmuranti fine fluctus frangitur,
  salsosque candens spuma tundit pumices,
  ructatus exit seque servatum stupet. 130

    In Ninivitas se coactus percito
  gressu reflectit, quos ut increpaverat
  pudenda censor inputans opprobria;
  Inpendet, inquit, ira summi vindicis,
  urbemque flamma mox cremabit, credite. 135

    Apicem deinceps ardui montis petit
  visurus inde conglobatum turbidae
  fumum ruinae cladis et dirae struem,
  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 ieiuniis
  placare Christum, mos edendi spernitur,
  glaucos amictus induit monilibus
  matrona demptis, proque gemma et serico
  crinem fluentem sordidus spargit cinis. 150

    Squalent recincta veste bullati patres,
  setasque plangens turba sumit textiles,
  inpexa villis virgo bestialibus
  nigrante vultum contegit velamine,
  iacens arenis et puer provolvitur. 155

    Rex ipse Coos aestuantem murices
  laenam revulsa dissipabat fibula,
  gemmas virentes et lapillos sutiles,
  insigne frontis exuebat vinculum
  turpi capillos inpeditus pulvere. 160

    Nullus bibendi, nemo vescendi memor,
  ieiuna mensas pubis omnis liquerat,
  quin et negato lacte vagientium
  fletu madescunt parvulorum 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 hauriant,
  vacuis querelae personant praesepibus. 170

    Mollitus his et talibus brevem Deus
  iram refrenat temperans oraculum
  prosper sinistrum, prona nam clementia
  haud difficulter supplicem mortalium
  solvit reatum fitque fautrix flentium. 175

    Sed cur vetustae gentis exemplum oquor?
  pridem caducis cum gravatus artubus
  Iesus dicato corde ieiunaverit,
  praenuncupatus ore qui prophetico
  Emanuel est, sive NOBISCUM *Deus*. 180

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    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 ieiunio
  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 inperator 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,
  nec sic calente sole tabescunt nives,
  ut turbidarum scabra culparum seges
  vanescit almo trita sub ieiunio,
  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 centuplex. 220

VII.  Hymn for those who fast

O Jesus, Light of Bethlehem,
True Son of God, Incarnate Word;
Thou offspring of a Virgin’s womb,
Be present at our frugal board;
Accept our fast, our sacrifice,
And smile upon us, gracious Lord.

For by this holiest mystery
The inward parts are cleansed from stain,
And, taming all the unbridled lusts,
Our sinful flesh we thus restrain,
Lest gluttony and drunkenness
Should choke the soul and cloud the brain.

  Hence appetite and luxury
    Are forced their empire to resign;
  The wanton sport, the jest obscene,
    The ignoble sway of sleep and wine,
  And all the plagues of languid sense
    Feel the strict bonds of discipline.

  For if, full fed with meat and drink,
    The flesh thou ne’er dost mortify,
  The mind, that spark of sacred flame,
    By pleasure dulled, must fail and die,
  And pent in its gross prison-house
    The soul in shameful torpor lie.

  So be thy carnal lusts controlled,
    So be thy judgment clear and bright;
  Then shall thy spirit, swift and free,
    Be gifted with a keener sight,
  And breathing in an ampler air
    To the All-Father pray aright.

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  Elias by such abstinence,
    Seer of the desert, grew in grace,
  Who left the madding haunts of men
    And found a peaceful resting-place,
  Where, far from sinful crowds, he trod
    The pure and silent wilderness.

  Till by those fiery coursers drawn
    The swift car bore him through the air,
  Lest earth’s defiling touch should mar
    The holiness it might not share,
  Or some polluting breath disturb
    The peace attained by fast and prayer.

  Moses, through whom from His dread throne
    The will of God to man was told,
  No food might touch till through the sky
    The sun full forty times had rolled,
  Ere God before him stood revealed,
    Lord of the heavens sevenfold.

  Tears were his meat, while bent in prayer
    Through the long night he bowed his head
  E’en to the thirsty dust, that drank
    The drops in bitter weeping shed;
  Till, at God’s call, he saw the flame
    No eye may bear, and was afraid.

  The Baptist, too, was strong in fast—­
    Forerunner in a later day
  Of God’s Eternal Son—­who made
    The byepaths plain, the crooked way
  A road direct, wherein His feet
    Might travel on without delay.

  This was the messenger’s great task
    Who for God’s advent zealously
  Prepared the way, the rough made smooth,
    The mountain levelled to the sea;
  That, when Truth came from heaven to earth,
    All fair and straight His path should be.

  He was not born in common wise,
    For dry and wrinkled was the breast
  Of her that bare him late in years,
    Nor found she from her labour rest,
  Till she had hailed with lips inspired
    The Maid with unborn Godhead blest.

  For him the hairy skins of beasts
    Furnished a raiment rude and wild,
  As forth into the lonely waste
    He fared, an unbefriended child,
  Who dwelt apart, lest he should be
    By evil city-life defiled.

  There, vowed to abstinence, he grew
    To manhood, and with stern disdain
  He turned from meat and drink, until
    He saw night’s shadow fall again;
  And locusts and the wild bees’ store
    Sufficed his vigour to sustain.

  The first was he to testify
    Of that new life which man might win;
  In Jordan’s consecrating stream
    He purged the stains of ancient sin,
  And, as he made the body clean,
    The radiant Spirit entered in.

  Forth from the holy tide they came
    Reborn, from guilt’s pollution free,
  As bright from out the cleansing fire
    Flows the rough gold, or as we see
  The glittering silver, purged of dross,
    Flash into polished purity.

  Now let us tell, from Holy Writ,
    Of olden fasts the fairest crown;
  How God in pity stayed His hand,
    And spared a doomed and guilty town,
  In clemency the flames withheld
    And laid His vengeful lightnings down.

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  A mighty race of ancient time
    Waxed arrogant in boastful pride;
  Debauched were they, and borne along
    On foul corruption’s loathsome tide,
  Till in their stiff-necked self-conceit
    They e’en the God of Heaven denied.

  At last Eternal Mercy turns
    To righteous judgment, swift and dire;
  He shakes the clouds; the mighty sword
    Flames in His hand, and in His ire
  He wields the roaring hurricane
    ’Mid murky gloom and flashing fire.

  Yet in His clemency He grants
    To penitence a brief delay,
  That they might burst the bonds of lust
    And put their vanities away;
  His sentence given, He waits awhile
    And stays the hand upraised to slay.

  To warn them of the wrath to come
    The Avenger in His mercy sent
  Jonah the seer; but,—­though he knew
    The threatening Judge would fain relent
  Nor wished to strike,—­towards Tarshish town
    The prophet’s furtive course was bent.

  As up the galley’s side he climbed,
    They loosed the dripping rope, and passed
  The harbour bar:  then on them burst
    The sudden fury of the blast;
  And when their peril’s cause they sought,
    The lot was on the recreant cast.

  The man whose guilt the urn declares
    Alone must die, the rest to save;
  Hurled headlong from the deck, he falls
    And sinks beneath the engulfing wave,
  Then, seized by monstrous jaws, is plunged
    Into a vast and living grave.

\* \* \* \* \*

  At last the monster hurls him forth,
    As the third night had rolled away;
  Before its roar the billows break
    And lash the cliffs with briny spray;
  Unhurt the wondering prophet stands
    And hails the unexpected day.

  Thus turned again to duty’s path
    To Nineveh he swiftly came,
  Their lusts rebuked and boldly preached
    God’s judgment on their sin and shame;
  “Believe!” he cried, “the Judge draws nigh
    Whose wrath shall wrap your streets in flame.”

  Thence to the lofty mount withdrew,
    Where he might watch the smoke-cloud lower
  O’er blasted homes and ruined halls,
    And rest beneath the shady bower
  Upspringing in swift luxury
    Of twining tendril, leaf and flower.

  But when the guilty burghers heard
    The impending doom, a dull despair
  Possessed their souls; proud senators,
    Poor craftsmen, throng the highways fair;
  Pale youth with tottering age unites,
    And women’s wailing rends the air.

  A public fast they now decree,
    If they may thus Christ’s anger stay:
  No food they touch:  each haughty dame
    Puts silken robes and gems away,
  In sable garbed, and ashes casts
    Upon her tresses’ disarray.

  In dark and squalid vesture clad
    The Fathers go:  the mourning crowd
  Dons rough attire:  in shaggy skins
    Enwrapped, fair maids their faces shroud
  With dusky veils, and boyish heads
    E’en to the very dust are bowed.

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  The King tears off his jewelled brooch
    And rends the robe of Coan hue;
  Bright emeralds and lustrous pearls
    Are flung aside, and ashes strew
  The royal head, discrowned and bent,
    As low he kneels God’s grace to sue.

  None thought to drink, none thought to eat;
    All from the table turned aside,
  And in their cradles wet with tears
    Starved babes in bitter anguish cried,
  For e’en the foster-mother stern
    To little lips the breast denied.

  The very flocks are closely penned
    By careful hands, lest they should gain
  Sweet water from the babbling stream
    Or wandering crop the dewy plain;
  And bleating sheep and lowing kine
    Within their barren stalls complain.

  Moved by such penitence, full soon
    God’s grace repealed the stern decree
  And curbed His righteous wrath; for aye,
    When man repents, His clemency
  Is swift to pardon and to hear
    His children weeping bitterly.

  Yet wherefore of that bygone race
    Should we anew the story tell?
  For Christ’s pure soul by fasting long
    The clogging bonds of flesh did quell;
  He Whom the prophet’s voice foretold
    As *god* *with* *us*, Emmanuel.

  Man’s body—­frail by nature’s law
    And bound by pleasure’s easy chain—­
  He freed by virtue’s strong restraint,
    And gave it liberty again:
  He broke the bonds of flesh, and Lust
    Was driven from his old domain.

  Deep in the inhospitable wild
    For forty days He dwelt alone
  Nor tasted food, till, thus prepared,
    All human weakness overthrown
  By fasting’s power, His mortal frame
    Rejoiced the spirit’s sway to own.

  The Adversary, marvelling
    To see this creature of a day
  Endure such toil, spent all his guile
    To learn if God in human clay
  Had come indeed; but soon rebuked
    Behind His back fled shamed away.

  Therefore let each with all his might
    Follow the way the Master taught,
  The law of consecrated life
    Which Christ unto His servants brought;
  Till, with the lusts of flesh subdued,
    The spirit reigns o’er act and thought.

  ’Tis this our jealous foe abhors,
    ’Tis this the Lord of earth and sky
  Approves; by this the soul is made
    Thy holy altar, God Most High:
  Faith stirs within the slumbering heart
    And sin’s corroding power must fly.

  Swifter than water quenches fire,
    Swifter than sunshine melts the snow,
  Crushed out by soul-restoring fast
    Vanish the sins that rankly grow,
  If hand in hand with Abstinence
    Sweet Charity doth ever go.

  This too is Virtue’s noble task,
    To clothe the naked, and to feed
  The destitute, with kindly care
    To visit sufferers in their need;
  For king and beggar each must bear
    The lot by changeless Fate decreed.

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Happy the man whose good right hand
Seeks but God’s praise, and flings his gold
Broadcast, nor lets his left hand know
The gracious deed; for wealth untold
Shall crown him through eternal years
With usury an hundredfold.

VIII.  HYMNUS post IEIUNIUM

Christe servorum regimen tuorum,
mollibus qui nos moderans habenis
leniter frenas facilique septos

                    lege coerces: ipse cum portans onus inpeditum 5
corporis duros tuleris labores,
maior exemplis famulos remisso

                    dogmate palpas.Nona submissum rotat hora solem
partibus vixdum tribus evolutis, 10
quarta devexo superest in axe

                    portio lucis.Nos brevis voti dape vindicata
solvimus festum fruimurque mensis
adfatim plenis, quibus inbuatur 15

                    prona voluptas.Tantus aeterni favor est magistri,
doctor indulgens ita nos amico
lactat hortatu, levis obsequela ut

                    mulceat artus. 20Addit et, ne quis velit invenusto
sordidus cultu lacerare frontem,
sed decus vultus capitisque pexum

                    comat honorem.Terge ieiunans, ait, omne corpus, 25
neve subducto faciem rubore
luteus 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 exclusis humeros gravatus,
inde purgatam revehens aprico

                    reddit ovili:  40Reddit et pratis viridique campo,
vibrat inpexis ubi nulla lappis
spina, nec germen sudibus perarmat

                    carduus horrens: Sed frequens palmis nemus et reflexa 45
vernat herbarum coma, tum perennis
gurgitem vivis vitreum fluentis

                    laurus obumbrat.Hisce pro donis tibi, fide pastor,
servitus quaenam poterit rependi? 50
nulla conpensant pretium salutis

                    vota precantum.Quamlibet spreto sine more pastu
sponte confectos tenuemus artus,
teque contemptis epulis rogemus 55

                    nocte dieque;

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Vincitur semper minor obsequentum
cura, nec munus genitoris aequat,
frangit et cratem luteam laboris

                    grandior usus. 60Ergo ne limum fragilem solutae
deserant vires et aquosus albis
humor in venis dominetur aegrum

                    corpus inervans,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 temptes.Adnuit dexter Deus et secundo
prosperat vultu, velut hoc salubre
fidimus nobis fore, quod dicatas 75

                    carpimus escas.Sit bonum, supplex precor et medelam
conferat membris, animumque pascat
sparsus in venas cibus obsecrantum

                    christicolarum. 80

VIII.  Hymn after fasting

O Christ, of all Thy servants Guide,
Mild is the yoke Thou mak’st us bear,
Leading us gently by Thy side
With gracious care.

Thy love took up our life’s hard load
And spent in grievous toils its might:
Thy bond-slaves tread the easier road
Led by Thy light.

  Nine hours have run their course away,
    The sun sped three parts of its race:
  And what remains of the short day
        Fadeth apace.

  The holy fast hath reached its end;
    Our table now Thou loadest, Lord:
  With all Thy gifts true gladness send
        To grace our board.

  Such is our Master’s gentle sway,
    So kind the teaching in His school,
  That all find rest who will obey
        His easy rule.

  Thou would’st not have us scorn the grace
    Of cleanliness and vesture fair:
  Thou lovest not a soiled face
        And unkempt hair.

  Let him that fasts, Thou saidst, be clean,
    Nor lose health’s fair and ruddy glow:
  Let no wan sallowness be seen
        Upon his brow.

  ’Tis better in glad modesty
    Of our good works to shun display:
  God sees what ’scapes our neighbour’s eye
        And will repay.

  That Shepherd keen seeks one lost sheep
    Sickly and weak, strayed from the fold,
  Fleece torn with briers of thickets deep,
        Foolishly bold.

  He drives the wolves far from the track:
    And found He brings on shoulders borne
  To sunlit pen the wanderer back,
        No more forlorn:

  Yea, to the meads and grassy fields
    The lamb restores, where no thorn balks,
  No rough burrs tear, no thistle yields
        Its bristling stalks:

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  But leaves of green herbs brightly glance
    And in the grove the palm-trees dream,
  And laurels shade the eddying dance
        Of crystal stream.

  For all these gifts, O Shepherd dear,
    What service can I render Thee?
  No grateful vows my debt shall clear
        For love so free.

  Though by self-chosen fasts severe
    Our strength of limb we waste away:
  Though, spurning food, we Thee revere
    By night and day:

  Yet our works never can o’ertake
    Thy love or with Thy gifts compare:
  Our toils this earthen vessel break,
        The more we dare.

  Therefore lest failing powers consume
    Our fragile life and shrivelled veins
  Pale ’neath the tyranny of rheum
        And weakening pains:

  Thou dost not rule perpetual Lent
    For man, nor modest fare deny:
  Fearless may each unto his bent
        His wants supply.

  Enough that all our acts by prayer
    Be sanctified unto Thy will,
  Whether we fast, or with due care
        Our needs fulfil.

  Then shall God bless us for our good
    And lead us to our soul’s true wealth;
  For, if but consecrated, food
        Shall bring us health.

O Lord, grant that our feast may spread
Marrow and strength throughout our flesh:
And may all Christly souls be fed
With vigour fresh.

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 orbis est, nec ipsa terra, quod vidit, negat,
  cominus Deum docendis proditum mortalibus.

    Corde natus ex parentis, ante mundi exordium 10
  alpha et *O* 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 quam 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 seculis, 25
  quem prophetarum fideles paginae spoponderant,
  emicat promissus olim:  cuncta conlaudent eum.

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    Cantharis infusa lympha fit Falernum nobile,
  nuntiat vinum minister esse promptum ex hydria,
  ipse rex sapore tinctis obstupescit poculis. 30

    Membra morbis ulcerosa, viscerum putredines
  mando, ut abluantur, inquit; fit ratum, quod iusserat,
  turgidam cutem repurgant vulnerum piamina.

    Tu perennibus tenebris iam sepulta lumina
  inlinis limo salubri, sacri et oris nectare, 35
  mox apertis hac medela lux reducta est orbibus.

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

    Extimum vestis sacratae 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 sepulcro absconditum
  Lazarum iubet vigere reddito spiramine:
  fetidum iecur 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 senserat.

    Pulsa pestis lubricorum milleformis daemonum 55
  conripit gregis suilli sordida spurcamina,
  seque nigris mergit undis et pecus lymphaticum.

    Quinque panibus peresis et gemellis piscibus
  adfatim refecta iam sunt adcubantum milia,
  fertque qualus ter quaternus ferculorum fragmina. 60

    Tu cibus panisque noster, tu perennis suavitas;
  nescit esurire in aevum, qui tuam sumit dapem,
  nec lacunam ventris inplet, sed fovet 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 vinxerant 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 indissolubilis.

    Illa prompta ad inruentes, ad revertentes tenax,
  obice extrorsum repulso porta reddit mortuos:
  lege versa et limen atrum iam recalcandum 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.

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    Solve vocem mens sonoram, solve linguam mobilem,
  dic tropaeum passionis, dic triumphalem crucem,
  pange vexillum, notatis quod refulget frontibus.

    O novum caede stupenda vulneris miraculum! 85
  hinc cruoris fluxit unda, lympha parte ex altera:
  lympha nempe dat lavacrum, tum corona ex sanguine est.

    Vidit anguis inmolatam corporis sacri hostiam,
  vidit et fellis perusti mox venenum perdidit,
  saucius dolore multo colla fractus sibilat. 90

    Quid tibi, profane serpens, profuit, rebus novis
  plasma primum perculisse versipelli hortamine?
  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.

    Cerneres coire membra de favillis aridis, 100
  frigidum venis resumptis pulverem tepescere,
  ossa, nervos, ac medullas glutino cutis tegi.

    Post, ut occasum resolvit vitae et hominem reddidit,
  arduum tribunal victor adscendit Patris,
  inclitam caelo reportans passionis gloriam. 105

    Macte index mortuorum, macte rex viventium,
  dexter in parentis arce qui cluis virtutibus
  omnium venturus inde iustus ultor criminum.

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

    Fluminum lapsus et undae, littorum crepidines,
  imber, aestus, nix, pruina, silva, et aura, nox, dies,
  omnibus te concelebrent seculorum seculis.

IX.  Hymn for all hours

  Let me chant in sacred numbers, as I strike each sounding string,
    Chant in sweet, melodious anthems, glorious deeds of Christ our King;
  He, my Muse, shall be thy story; with His praise my lyre shall ring.

  When the king in priestly raiment sang the Christ that was to be,
    Voice and lute and clashing cymbal joined in joyous harmony,
  While the Spirit, heaven-descended, touched his lips to prophecy.

  Sing we now the works sure proven, wrought of God in mystic wise;
    Heaven is witness; earth confesses how she saw with wondering eyes
  God Himself with mortals mingling, man to teach in human guise.

  Of the Father’s heart begotten, ere the world from chaos rose,
    He is Alpha; from that Fountain all that is and hath been flows;
  He is Omega, of all things yet to come the mystic Close.

  By His word was all created; He commands and lo! ’tis done;
    Earth and sky and boundless ocean, universe of three in one,
  All that sees the moon’s soft radiance, all that breathes beneath the sun.

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  He assumed this mortal body, frail and feeble, doomed to die,
    That the race from dust created might not perish utterly,
  Which the dreadful Law had sentenced in the depths of Hell to lie.

  O how blest that wondrous birthday, when the Maid the curse retrieved,
    Brought to birth mankind’s salvation, by the Holy Ghost conceived;
  And the sacred Babe, Redeemer of the world, her arms received.

  Sing, ye heights of heaven, His praises; angels and archangels, sing!
    Wheresoe’er ye be, ye faithful, let your joyous anthems ring,
  Every tongue His name confessing, countless voices answering.

  This is He whom seer and sibyl sang in ages long gone by;
    This is He of old revealed in the page of prophecy;
  Lo!  He comes, the promised Saviour; let the world His praises cry!

  In the urns the clear, cold water turns to juice of noblest vine,
    And the servant, drawing from them, starts to see the generous wine,
  While the host, its savour tasting, wonders at the draught divine.

  To the leper worn and wasted, white with many a loathsome sore,
    “Be thou cleansed,” He said; “I bid it!” swift ’tis done, His words restore;
  To the priest the gift he offers, clean and healthful as of yore.

  On the eyes long sealed in darkness, buried in unbroken night,
    Thou didst spread Thy lips’ sweet nectar, mixed with clay:  then came the sight,
  As Thy gracious touch all-healing brought to those dark orbs the light.

  Thou didst chide the raging tempest, when the waves with foaming crest
    Leaped about the fragile vessel, buffeted and sore distressed;
  Wind and wave, their fury stilling, sank to calm at Thy behest.

  Once a woman’s timid fingers touched Thy garment’s lowest braid,
    And the pallor left her visage, healing power the touch conveyed,
  For the years of pain were ended and the flow of blood was stayed.

  Thou didst see men bear to burial one struck down in youth’s glad tide,
    While a widowed mother followed, wailing for her boy that died;
  “Rise!” Thou saidst, and led him gently to his weeping mother’s side.

  Lazarus, who lay in darkness till three nights had passed away,
    At Thy voice awoke to soundness, rising to the light of day,
  As the breath his frame re-entered touched already with decay.

  See, He walks upon the waters, treads the billow’s rolling crest;
    O’er the shifting depths of ocean firm and sure His footsteps rest,
  And the wave parts not asunder where those holy feet are pressed.

  And the madman, chained and tortured by dark powers, from whom all fly,
    As the tombs, that were his dwelling, echo to his savage cry,
  Rushes forth and falls adoring, when he sees that Christ is nigh.

  Then the legion of foul spirits, driven from their human prey,
    Seize the noisome swine, that feeding high upon the hillside stray,
  And the herd, in sudden frenzy, plunges in the waters grey.

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  “Gather in twelve woven baskets all the fragments that remain:”
    He hath fed the weary thousands, resting o’er the grassy plain,
  And His power hath stayed their hunger with five loaves and fishes twain.

  Thine, O Christ, is endless sweetness; Thou art our celestial Bread:
    Nevermore he knoweth hunger, who upon Thy grace hath fed,
  Grace whereby no mortal body but the soul is nourished.

  They that knew not speech nor language, closed to every sound their ears,
    To the Master’s call responding break the barriers of years;
  Now the deaf holds joyous converse and the lightest whisper hears.

  Sickness at His word departed, pain and pallid languor fled,
    Many a tongue, long chained in silence, words of praise and blessing said;
  And the palsied man rejoicing through the city bore his bed.

  Yea, that they might know salvation who in Hades’ prison were pent,
    In His mercy condescending through Hell’s gloomy gates He went;
  Bolt and massy hinge were shattered, adamantine portals rent.

  For the door that all receiveth, but releaseth nevermore,
    Opens now and, slowly turning, doth the ghosts to light restore,
  Who, the eternal laws suspended, tread again its dusky floor.

  But, while God with golden glory floods the murky realms of night,
    And upon the startled shadows dawns a day serene and bright,
  In the darkened vault of heaven stars forlorn refuse their light.

  For the sun in garb of mourning veiled his radiant orb and passed
    From his flaming path in sorrow, hiding till mankind aghast
  Deemed that o’er a world of chaos Night’s eternal pall was cast.

  Now, my soul, in liquid measures let the sounding numbers flow;
    Sing the trophy of His passion, sing the Cross triumphant now;
  Sing the ensign of Christ’s glory, marked on every faithful brow.

  Ah! how wondrous was the fountain flowing from His pierced side,
    Whence the blood and water mingled in a strange and sacred tide,—­
  Water, sign of mystic cleansing; blood, the martyr’s crown of pride.

  In that hour the ancient Serpent saw the holy Victim slain,
    Saw, and shed his hate envenomed, all his malice spent in vain;
  See! the hissing neck is broken as he writhes in sullen pain.

  Aye, what boots it, cursed Serpent, that the man God made from clay,
    Victim of thy baleful cunning, by thy lies was led astray?
  God hath ta’en a mortal body and hath washed the guilt away.

  Christ, our Captain, for a season deigned to dwell in Death’s domain,
    That the dead, long time imprisoned, might return to life again,
  Breaking by His great example ancient sins’ enthralling chain.

  Thus, upon the third glad morning, patriarchs and saints of yore,
    As the risen Lord ascended, followed Him who went before,
  From forgotten graves proceeding, habited in flesh once more.

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  Limb to limb unites and rises from the ashes dry and cold,
    And the life-blood courses warmly through the frames long turned to mould,
  Skin and flesh, anew created, muscle, bone and nerve enfold.

  Then, mankind to life restoring, Death downtrodden ’neath His feet,
    Lo! the Victor mounts triumphant to the Father’s judgment-seat,
  Bringing back to heaven the glory by His passion made complete.

  Hail!  Thou Judge of souls departed:  hail! of all the living King!
    On the Father’s right hand throned, through His courts Thy praises ring,
  Till at last for all offences righteous judgment Thou shalt bring.

  Now let old and young uniting chant to Thee harmonious lays,
    Maid and matron hymn Thy glory, infant lips their anthem raise,
  Boys and girls together singing with pure heart their song of praise.

  Let the storm and summer sunshine, gliding stream and sounding shore,
    Sea and forest, frost and zephyr, day and night their Lord adore;
  Let creation join to laud Thee through the ages evermore.

X. HYMNUS ad 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.

    Rescissa sed ista seorsum
  solvunt hominera perimuntque, 10
  humus excipit arida corpus,
  animae rapit aura liquorem.

    Quia cuncta creata necesse est
  labefacta senescere tandem,
  conpactaque dissociari, 15
  et dissona texta retexi.

    Hanc tu, Deus optime, mortem
  famulis abolere paratus
  iter inviolabile monstras,
  quo perdita membra resurgant:  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 conlegia sensus.

    Venient cito secula, 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
  inpenditur:  hinc resolutos
  honor ultimus accipit artus
  et funeris ambitus ornat.

    Candore nitentia claro
  praetendere lintea mos est, 50
  adspersaque myrrha Sabaeo
  corpus medicamine servat.

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    Quidnam sibi saxa cavata,
  quid pulchra volunt monumenta,
  nisi quod res creditur illis 55
  non mortua, sed data somno?

    Hoc provida Christicolarum
  pietas studet, utpote credens
  fore protinus omnia viva,
  quae nunc gelidus sopor urget. 60

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

    Quin lex eadem monet omnes 65
  gemitum dare sorte sub una,
  cognataque funera nobis
  aliena in morte dolere.

    Sancti sator ille Tobiae
  sacer ac venerabilis heros, 70
  dapibus iam rite paratis
  ius praetulit exequiarum.

    Iam stantibus ille ministris
  cyathos et fercula liquit,
  studioque accinctus humandi 75
  fleto dedit ossa sepulcro.

    Veniunt mox praemia caelo
  pretiumque rependitur ingens:
  nam lumina nescia solis
  Deus inlita felle serenat. 80

    Iam tunc docuit Pater orbis,
  quam sit rationis egenis
  mordax et amara medela,
  cum lux animum nova vexat.

    Docuit quoque non prius ullum 85
  caelestia cernere regna,
  quam nocte et vulnere tristi
  toleraverit aspera mundi.

    Mors ipsa beatior inde est,
  quod per cruciamina leti 90
  via panditur ardua iustis
  et ad astra doloribus itur.

    Sic corpora mortificata
  redeunt melioribus annis,
  nec post obitum recalescens 95
  conpago fatiscere novit.

    Haec, quae modo pallida tabo
  color albidus inficit ora,
  tunc flore venustior omni
  sanguis cute tinget amoena. 100

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

    Morbus quoque pestifer, artus 105
  qui nunc populatur anhelos,
  sua tunc tormenta resudans
  luet inter vincula mille.

    Hunc eminus aere ab alto
  victrix caro iamque perennis 110
  cernet sine fine gementem
  quos moverat ipse dolores.

    Quid turba superstes inepta
  clangens ululamina miscet,
  cur tam bene condita iura 115
  luctu dolor arguit amens?

    Iam maesta quiesce querela,
  lacrimas suspendite matres,
  nullus sua pignora plangat,
  mors haec reparatio vitae est. 120

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

    Nunc suscipe terra fovendum, 125
  gremioque hunc concipe molli:
  hominis tibi membra sequestro
  generosa et fragmina credo.

    Animae fuit haec domus olim
  factoris ab ore creatae, 130
  fervens habitavit in istis
  sapientia principe Christo.

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    Tu depositum tege corpus,
  non inmemor illa requiret
  sua munera fictor et auctor 135
  propriique aenigmata vultus.

    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 arens
  minimi mensura pugilli.

    Nec, si vaga flamina et aurae 145
  vacuum per inane volantes
  tulerint cum pulvere nervos,
  hominem periisse licebit.

    Sed dum resolubile corpus
  revocas, Deus, atque reformas, 150
  quanam regione iubebis
  animam requiescere puram?

    Gremio senis addita sancti
  recubabit, ut est Eleazar,
  quem floribus undique septum 155
  Dives procul adspicit ardens.

    Sequimur tua dicta redemptor,
  quibus atra morte triumphans
  tua per vestigia mandas
  socium crucis ire latronem. 160

    Patet ecce fidelibus ampli
  via lucida iam paradisi,
  licet et nemus illud adire,
  homini quod ademerat anguis.

    Illic precor, optime ductor, 165
  famulam tibi praecipe mentem
  genitali in sede sacrari,
  quam liquerat exul et errans.

  Nos tecta fovebimus ossa

violis et fronde frequenti, 170
titulumque et frigida saxa
liquido spargemus odore.

X. Hymn for the burial of the dead

Fountain of life, supernal Fire,
Who didst unite in wondrous wise
The soul that lives, the clay that dies,
And mad’st them Man:  eternal Sire,

Both elements Thy will obey,
Thine is the bond that joins the twain,
And, while united they remain,
Spirit and body own Thy sway.

  Yet they must one day disunite,
    Sunder in death this mortal frame;
    Dust to the dust from whence it came,
  The spirit to its heavenward flight.

  For all created things must wane,
    And age must break the bond at last;
    The diverse web that Life held fast
  Death’s fingers shall unweave again.

  Yet, gracious God, Thou dost devise
    The death of Death for all Thine own;
    The path of safety Thou hast shown
  Whereby the doomed limbs may rise:

  So that, while fragile bonds of earth
    Man’s noblest essence still enfold,
    That part may yet the sceptre hold
  Which from pure aether hath its birth.

  For if the earthy will hold sway,
    By gross desires and aims possessed,
    The soul, too, by the weight oppressed,
  Follows the body’s downward way.

  But if she scorn the guilt that mars—­
    Still mindful of her fiery sphere—­
    She bears the flesh, her comrade here,
  Back to her home beyond the stars.

  The lifeless body we restore
    To earth, must slumber free from pain
    A little while, that it may gain
  The spirit’s fellowship once more.

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  The years will pass with rapid pace
    Till through these limbs the life shall flow,
    And the long-parted spirit go
  To seek her olden dwelling-place.

  Then shall the body, that hath lain
    And turned to dust in slow decay,
    On airy wings be borne away
  And join its ancient soul again.

  Therefore our tenderest care we spend
    Upon the grave:  and mourners go
    With solemn dirge and footstep slow—­
  Love’s last sad tribute to a friend.

  With fair white linen we enfold
    The dear dead limbs, and richest store
    Of Eastern unguents duly pour
  Upon the body still and cold.

  Why hew the rocky tomb so deep,
    Why raise the monument so fair,
    Save that the form we cherish there
  Is no dead thing, but laid to sleep?

  This is the faithful ministry
    Of Christian men, who hold it true
    That all shall one day live anew
  Who now in icy slumber lie.

  And he whose pitying hand shall lay
    Some friendless outcast ’neath the sod,
    E’en to the almighty Son of God
  Doth that benignant service pay.

  For this same law doth bid us mourn
    Man’s common fate, when strangers die,
    And pay the tribute of a sigh,
  As when our kin to rest are borne.

  Of holy Tobit ye have read,
    (Grave father of a pious son),
    Who, though the feast was set, would run
  To do his duty by the dead.

  Though waiting servants stood around,
    From meat and drink he turned away
    And girt himself in haste to lay
  The bones with weeping in the ground.

  Soon Heaven his righteous zeal repays
    With rich reward; the eyes long blind
    In bitter gall strange virtue find
  And open to the sun’s clear rays.

  Thus hath our Heavenly Father shown
    How sharp and bitter is the smart
    When sudden on the purblind heart
  The Daystar’s healing light is thrown.

  He taught us, too, that none may gaze
    Upon the heavenly demesne
    Ere that in darkness and in pain
  His feet have trod the world’s rough ways.

  So unto death itself is given
    Strange bliss, when mortal agony
    Opens the way that leads on high
  And pain is but the path to Heaven.

  Thus to a far serener day
    Our body from the grave returns;
    Eternal life within it burns
  That knows nor languor nor decay.

  These faces now so pinched and pale,
    That marks of lingering sickness show,
    Then fairer than the rose shall glow
  And bloom with youth that ne’er shall fail.

  Ne’er shall crabbed age their beauty dim
    With wrinkled brow and tresses grey,
    Nor arid leanness eat away
  The vigour of the rounded limb.

  Racked with his own destroying pains
    Shall fell Disease, who now attacks
    Our aching frames, his force relax
  Fast fettered in a thousand chains:

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  While from its far celestial throne
    The immortal body, victor now,
    Shall watch its old tormentor bow
  And in eternal tortures groan.

  Why do the clamorous mourners wail
    In bootless sorrow murmuring?
    And why doth grief unreasoning
  God’s righteous ordinance assail?

  Hushed be your voices, ye that mourn;
    Ye weeping mothers, dry the tear;
    Let none lament for children dear,
  For man through Death to Life is born.

  So do dry seeds grow green again,
    Now dead and buried in the earth,
    And rising to a second birth
  Clothe as of old the verdant plain.

  Take now, O earth, the load we bear,
    And cherish in thy gentle breast
    This mortal frame we lay to rest,
  The poor remains that were so fair.

  For they were once the soul’s abode,
    That by God’s breath created came;
    And in them, like a living flame,
  Christ’s precious gift of wisdom glowed.

  Guard thou the body we have laid
    Within thy care, till He demand
    The creature fashioned by His hand
  And after His own image made.

  The appointed time soon may we see
    When God shall all our hopes fulfil,
    And thou must render to His will
  Unchanged the charge we give to thee.

  For though consumed by mould and rust
    Man’s body slowly fades away,
    And years of lingering decay
  Leave but a handful of dry dust;

  Though wandering winds, that idly fly,
    Should his disparted ashes bear
    Through all the wide expanse of air,
  Man may not perish utterly.

  Yet till Thou dost build up again
    This mortal structure by Thy hand,
    In what far world wilt Thou command
  The soul to rest, now free from stain?

  In Abraham’s bosom it shall dwell
    ’Mid verdant bowers, as Lazarus lies
    Whom Dives sees with longing eyes
  From out the far-off fires of hell.

  We trust the words our Saviour said
    When, victor o’er grim Death, he cried
    To him who suffered at His side
  “In Mine own footsteps shalt thou tread.”

  See, open to the faithful soul,
    The shining paths of Paradise;
    Now may they to that garden rise
  Which from mankind the Serpent stole.

  Guide him, we pray, to that blest bourn,
    Who served Thee truly here below;
    May he the bliss of Eden know,
  Who strayed in banishment forlorn.

But we will honour our dear dead
With violets and garlands strown,
And o’er the cold and graven stone
Shall fragrant odours still be shed.

XI.  HYMNUS viii.  KALENDAS IANUARIAS

  Quid est, quod artum circulum

sol iam recurrens deserit?
Christusne terris nascitur,
qui lucis auget tramitem?  Heu quam fugacem gratiam 5

festina volvebat dies,
quam pene subductam facem
sensim recisa extinxerat!

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    Caelum nitescat laetius,
  gratetur et gaudens humus, 10
  scandit gradatim denuo
  iubar priores lineas.

    Emerge dulcis pusio,
  quem mater edit castitas,
  parens et expers coniugis, 15
  mediator et duplex genus.

    Ex ore quamlibet Patris
  sis ortus et verbo editus,
  tamen paterno in pectore
  sophia callebas prius. 20

    Quae prompta caelum condidit,
  caelum diemque *et ceter*a,
  virtute verbi effecta sunt
  haec cuncta:  nam verbum Deus.

    Sed ordinatis seculis, 25
  rerumque digesto statu
  fundator ipse et artifex
  permansit in Patris sinu,

    donec rotata annalium
  transvolverentur milia, 30
  atque ipse peccantem diu
  dignatus orbera viseret.

    Nam caeca vis mortalium
  venerans inanes nenias
  vel aera vel saxa algida, 35
  vel ligna credebat Deum.

    Haec dum sequuntur, perfidi
  praedonis in ius venerant,
  et mancipatam fumido
  vitam barathro inmerserant:  40

    Stragem sed istam non tulit
  Christus cadentum gentium
  inpune ne forsan sui
  Patris periret fabrica.

    Mortale corpus induit, 45
  ut excitato corpore
  mortis catenam frangeret
  hominemque portaret Patri.

    Hic ille natalis dies,
  quo te creator arduus 50
  spiravit et limo indidit
  sermone carnem glutinans.

    Sentisne, virgo nobilis,
  matura per fastidia
  pudoris intactum decus 55
  honore partus crescere?

    O quanta rerum gaudia
  alvus pudica continet,
  ex qua novellum seculum
  procedit et lux aurea! 60

    Vagitus ille exordium
  vernantis orbis prodidit,
  nam tunc renatus sordidum
  mundus veternum depulit.

    Sparsisse tellurem reor 65
  rus omne densis floribus,
  ipsasque arenas syrtium
  fragrasse nardo et nectare.

    Te cuncta nascentem puer
  sensere dura et barbara, 70
  victusque saxorum rigor
  obduxit herbam cotibus.

    Iam mella de scopulis fluunt,
  iam stillat ilex arido
  sudans amomum stipite, 75
  iam sunt myricis balsama.

    O sancta praesepis tui,
  aeterne rex, cunabula,
  populisque per seclum sacra
  mutis et ipsis credita. 80

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

    Sed cum fideli spiritu 85
  concurrat ad praesepia
  pagana gens et quadrupes,
  sapiatque quod brutum fuit:

    Negat patrum prosapia
  perosa praesentem Deum:  90
  credas venenis ebriam
  furiisve lymphatam rapi.

    Quid prona per scelus ruis?
  agnosce, si quidquam tibi
  mentis resedit integrae, 95
  ducem tuorum principum.

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    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 inritus
  plangens reatum fletibus:

    Cum vasta signum bucina 105
  terris cremandis miserit,
  et scissus axis cardinem
  mundi ruentis solverit:

    Insignis ipse et praeminens
  meritis rependet congrua, 110
  his lucis usum perpetis,
  illis gehennam et tartarum.

  Iudaea tunc fulmen crucis

experta, qui sit, senties,
quem te furoris praesule 115
mors hausit et mox reddidit.

XI.  Hymn for Christmas-day

Why doth the sun re-orient take
A wider range, his limits break?
Lo!  Christ is born, and o’er earth’s night
Shineth from more to more the light!Too swiftly did the radiant day
Her brief course run and pass away:
She scarce her kindly torch had fired
Ere slowly fading it expired.

  Now let the sky more brightly beam,
  The earth take up the joyous theme:
  The orb a broadening pathway gains
  And with its erstwhile splendour reigns.

  Sweet babe, of chastity the flower,
  A virgin’s blest mysterious dower!
  Rise in Thy twofold nature’s might:
  Rise, God and man to reunite!

  Though by the Father’s will above
  Thou wert begot, the Son of Love,
  Yet in His bosom Thou didst dwell,
  Of Wisdom the eternal Well;

  Wisdom, whereby the heavens were made
  And light’s foundations first were laid:
  Creative Word! all flows from Thee!
  The Word is God eternally.

  For though with process of the suns
  The ordered whole harmonious runs,
  Still the Artificer Divine
  Leaves not the Father’s inmost shrine.

  The rolling wheels of Time had passed
  O’er their millennial journey vast,
  Before in judgment clad He came
  Unto the world long steeped in shame.

  The purblind souls of mortals crass
  Had trusted gods of stone and brass,
  To things of nought their worship paid
  And senseless blocks of wood obeyed.

  And thus employed, they fell below
  The sway of man’s perfidious foe:
  Plunged in the smoky sheer abyss
  They sank bereft of their true bliss.

  But that sore plight of ruined man
  Christ’s pity could not lightly scan:
  Nor let God’s building nobly wrought
  Ingloriously be brought to nought.

  He wrapped Him in our fleshly guise,
  That from the tomb He might arise,
  And man released from death’s grim snare
  Home to His Father’s bosom bear.

  This is the day of Thy dear birth,
  The bridal of the heaven and earth,
  When the Creator breathed on Thee
  The breath of pure humanity.

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  Ah! glorious Maid, dost thou not guess
  What guerdon thy chaste soul shall bless,
  How by thy ripening pangs is bought
  An honour greater than all thought?

  O what a load of joy untold
  Thy womb inviolate doth hold!
  Of thee a golden age is born,
  The brightness of the earth’s new morn!

  Hearken! doth not the infant’s wail
  The universal springtide hail?
  For now the world re-born lays by
  Its gloomy, frost-bound apathy.

  Methinks in all her rustic bowers
  The earth is spread with clustering flowers:
  Odours of nard and nectar sweet
  E’en o’er the sands of Syrtes fleet.

  All places rough and deserts wild
  Have felt from far Thy coming, Child:
  Rocks to Thy gentle empire bow
  And verdure clothes the mountain brow.

  Sweet honey from the boulder leaps:
  The sere and leafless oak-bough weeps
  A strange rich attar:  tamarisks too
  Of balsam pure distil the dew.

  Blessed for ever, cradle dear,
  The lowly stall, the cavern drear!
  Men to this shrine, Eternal King,
  With dumb brutes adoration bring.

  The ox and ass in homage low
  Obedient to their Maker bow:
  Bows too the unlearn’d heartless crowd
  Whose minds the sensual feast doth cloud.

  Though, by the faithful Spirit impelled,
  Shepherds and brutes, unreasoning held,
  Yea, folk that did in darkness dwell
  Discern their God in His poor cell:

  Yet children of the sacred race
  Blindly abhor the Incarnate grace:
  By philtres you might deem them lulled
  Or by some bacchic phrenzy dulled.

  Why headlong thus to ruin stride?
  If aught of soundness in you bide,
  Behold in Him the Lord divine
  Of all your patriarchal line.

  Mark you the dim-lit cave, the Maid,
  The humble nurse, the cradle laid,
  The helpless infancy forlorn:
  Yet thus the Gentiles’ King was born!

  Ah sinner, thou shalt one day see
  This Child in dreadful majesty,
  See Him in glorious clouds descend,
  While thou thy guilty heart shalt rend.

  Vain all thy tears, when loud shall sound
  The trump, when flames shall scorch the ground,
  When from its hinge the cloven world
  Is loosed, in horrid tumult hurled.

  Then throned on high, the Judge of all
  Shall mortals to their reckoning call:
  To these shall grant the prize of light,
  To those Gehenna’s gloomy night.

Then, Israel, shalt thou learn at length
The Cross hath, as the lightning, strength:
Doomed by thy wrath, He now is Lord,
Whom Death once grasped but soon restored.

XII.  HYMNUS EPIPHANIAE

  Quicumque Christum quaeritis,

oculos in altum tollite,
illic licebit visere
signum perennis gloriae.

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  Haec stella, quae solis rotam 5

vincit decore ac lumine,
venisse terris nuntiat
cum carne terrestri Deum.

    Non illa servit noctibus
  secuta lunam menstruam, 10
  sed sola caelum possidens
  cursum dierum temperat.

    Arctoa quamvis sidera
  in se retortis motibus
  obire nolint, attamen 15
  plerumque sub nimbis latent.

    Hoc sidus aeternum manet,
  haec stella nunquam mergitur,
  nec nubis occursu abdita
  obumbrat obductam facem. 20

    Tristis cometa intercidat,
  et si quod astrum Sirio
  fervet vapore, iam Dei
  sub luce destructum cadat.

    En Persici ex orbis sinu, 25
  sol unde sumit ianuam,
  cernunt periti interpretes
  regale vexillum Magi.

    Quod ut refulsit, ceteri
  cessere signorum globi, 30
  nec pulcher est ausus suam
  conferre formam Lucifer.

    Quis iste tantus, inquiunt,
  regnator astris inperans,
  quem sic tremunt caelestia, 35
  cui lux et aethra inserviunt.

    Inlustre quiddam cernimus,
  quod nesciat finem pati,
  sublime, celsum, interminum,
  antiquius caelo et chao. 40

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

    Aequanda nam stellis sua 45
  cognovit olim germina
  primus sator credentium,
  nati inmolator unici.

    Iam flos subit Davidicus
  radice Iesse editus, 50
  sceptrique per virgam virens
  rerum cacumen occupat.

    Exin sequuntur perciti
  fixis in altum vultibus,
  qua stella sulcum traxerat 55
  claramque signabat viam.

    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.

    Agnosce clara insignia 65
  virtutis ac regni tui,
  puer o, cui trinam Pater
  praedestinavit indolem.

    Regem Deumque adnuntiant
  thesaurus et fragrans odor 70
  turis Sabaei, ac myrrheus
  pulvis sepulcrum praedocet.

    Hoc est sepulcrum, quo Deus,
  dum corpus extingui sinit
  atque id sepultum suscitat, 75
  mortis refregit carcerem.

    O sola magnarum urbium
  maior Bethlem, cui contigit
  ducem salutis caelitus
  incorporatum gignere. 80

    Altrice te summo Patri
  haeres creatur unicus,
  homo ex tonantis spiritu
  idemque sub membris Deus.

    Hunc et prophetis testibus 85
  isdemque signatoribus,
  testator et sator iubet
  adire regnum et cernere:

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    Regnum, quod ambit omnia
  diva et marina et terrea 90
  a solis ortu ad exitum
  et tartara et caelum supra.

    Audit tyrannus anxius
  adesse regum principem,
  qui nomen Israel regat 95
  teneatque David regiam.

    Exclamat amens nuntio,
  successor instat, pellimur;
  satelles i, ferrum rape,
  perfunde cunas sanguine. 100

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

    Suspecta per Bethlem mihi 105
  puerperarum est omnium
  fraus, ne qua furtim subtrahat
  prolem virilis indolis.

    Transfigit ergo carnifex
  mucrone destricto furens 110
  effusa nuper corpora,
  animasque rimatur novas.

    Locum minutis artubus
  vix interemptor invenit,
  quo plaga descendat patens 115
  iuguloque maior pugio est.

    O barbarum spectaculum!
  inlisa cervix cautibus
  spargit cerebrum lacteum
  oculosque per vulnus vomit. 120

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

    Salvete flores martyrum, 125
  quos lucis ipso in limine
  Christi insecutor sustulit,
  ceu turbo nascentes rosas.

    Vos prima Christi victima,
  grex inmolatorum tener, 130
  aram ante ipsam simplices
  palma et coronis luditis.

    Quid proficit tantum nefas,
  quid crimen Herodem iuvat?
  unus tot inter funera 135
  inpune Christus tollitur.

    Inter coaevi sanguinis
  fluenta solus integer
  ferrum, quod orbabat nurus,
  partus fefellit virginis. 140

    Sic stulta Pharaonis mali
  edicta quondam fugerat
  Christi figuram praeferens
  Moyses, receptor civium.

    Cautum et statutum ius erat, 145
  quo non liceret matribus,
  cum pondus alvi absolverent,
  puerile pignus tollere.

    Mens obstetricis sedulae
  pie in tyrannum contumax 150
  ad spem potentis gloriae
  furata servat parvulum:

    Quem mox sacerdotem sibi
  adsumpsit orbis conditor,
  per quem notatam saxeis 155
  legem tabellis traderet.

    Licetne Christum noscere
  tanti per exemplum viri?
  dux ille caeso Aegyptio
  absolvit Israel iugo. 160

    At nos subactos iugiter
  erroris inperio gravi
  dux noster hoste saucio
  mortis tenebris liberat.

    Hic expiatam fluctibus 165
  plebem marino in transitu
  repurgat undis dulcibus,
  lucis columnam praeferens:

    Hic praeliante exercitu,
  pansis in altum brachiis, 170
  sublimis Amalech premit,
  crucis quod instar tunc fuit.

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    Hic nempe Iesus verior,
  qui longa post dispendia
  victor suis tribulibus 175
  promissa solvit iugera.

    Qui ter quaternas denique
  refluentis amnis alveo
  fundavit et fixit petras,
  apostolorum stemmata. 180

    Iure ergo se Iudae ducem
  vidisse testantur Magi,
  cum facta priscorum ducum
  Christi figuram finxerint.

    Hic rex priorum iudicum, 185
  rexere qui Iacob genus,
  dominaeque rex ecclesiae,
  templi et novelli et pristini.

    Hunc posteri Efrem colunt,
  hunc sancta Manasse domus 190
  omnesque suspiciunt tribus
  bis sena fratrum semina.

    Quin et propago degener
  ritum secuta inconditum,
  quaecumque dirum fervidis 195
  Baal caminis coxerat,

    fumosa avorum numina
  saxum, metallum, stipitem,
  rasum, dolatum, sectile,
  in Christi honorem deserit. 200

    Gaudete quidquid gentium est,
  Iudaea, Roma, et Graecia,
  Aegypte, Thrax, Persa, Scytha,
  rex unus omnes possidet.

  Laudate vestrum principem 205

omnes beati, ac perditi,
vivi, inbecilli ac mortui:
iam nemo posthac mortuus.

XII.  Hymn for the Epiphany

Lift up your eyes, whoe’er ye be
That fare the new-born Christ to see:
For yonder is the shining sign
Of grace perennial and divine.What means this star, whose piercing rays
Outshine the sun’s resplendent blaze?
’Tis token sure that God is come
In mortal flesh to make His home.

  No courtier of the realms of night
  Nor monthly moon’s bright acolyte,
  This star directs the course of day,
  Sole sovereign of the heavenly way.

  Although the Bears their track retrace,
  Nor wholly their clear beams efface,
  Yet ofttimes ’neath the dun cloud’s haze
  They hide themselves from mortal gaze.

  But yon Star’s glory hath no end,
  Nor to the depths can it descend:
  It ne’er is whelmed by envious cloud
  That seeks its beauty to enshroud.

  Now let the baleful comet die,
  The brood of blazing Sirius fly:
  God’s orb shall quench their sultry heats
  And drive them from their haughty seats.

  Lo! from the regions of the morn
  Wherein the radiant sun is born,
  The Persian sages see on high
  God’s ensign shining in the sky.

  Soon as its rising beams prevail
  The starry hosts in order pale:
  E’en Lucifer durst not upraise
  The silvery splendours of his face.

  Who is this sovereign (they enquire)
  That lords it o’er the ethereal choir?
  ’Fore whom the heavens bow down afraid,
  Of all the worlds of light obeyed?

  Sure ’tis the sign most reverend
  Of Being that doth know no end:
  Of One in state sublime arrayed
  Ere sky and chaos yet were made.

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  This is the King of Israel,
  Of all in Gentile lands that dwell:
  The King to Abram and his seed
  Throughout all ages erst decreed.

  To him ’twas given his progeny
  As stars innumerous to see:
  First of believers! moved to slay
  His only son, so God to obey.

  Behold the Flower of David shine,
  Of Jesse’s root the Branch benign:
  The sceptre spread with blossoms rare
  Wields o’er the world its lordship fair.

  Roused by the portent of the sky
  The sages fix their gaze on high,
  And speed them ’neath the furrowed way
  Marked by the star’s effulgent ray.

  At length its flaming steps it stayed
  Poised over where the Child was laid:
  Straightway with downcast mien it shed
  Its splendours on the sacred Head.

  Whereat the travellers outpour
  Of Eastern gifts their treasure-store,
  Myrrh and sweet-smelling frankincense,
  Gold meet for regal opulence.

  Behold herein the triple sign
  Of Thy pure being, King divine:
  Seeing the Father willed in Thee
  To plant a threefold majesty.

  The gift of gold thee King proclaims:
  Thee God the fragrant incense names:
  The myrrh declares that Death shall thrust
  Within the tomb Thy body’s dust.

  Ah! that dark sepulchre, whose fold
  God’s body quenched in death doth hold:
  Yet shall He from that durance wake
  And Death’s strong prison-fetters break.

  O Bethlehem! no longer thou
  The least of cities:  all shall vow
  That thou art greatest on the earth:
  For thou man’s King didst bring to birth.

  Yea thou didst on thy bosom bear
  The All-loving Father’s only heir:
  Man of the Thunderer’s Spirit made
  And God in human flesh arrayed.

  The prophets witnessed to the bond
  Which sealed to Him the realm profound:
  The Father’s Kingdom He received
  And the vast legacy perceived.

  All things are His in sea and sky,
  In hell beneath, in heaven on high:
  From East to setting sun, in fee
  He holds the earth’s immensity.

  Distraught, the tyrant base doth hear
  That now the King of Kings draws near
  To reign in David’s seat of state
  And Israel’s empire dominate.

  “Betrayed are we,” he maddened cries,
  “Our throne’s usurper doth arise:
  Go, soldiers, go with sword in hand
  And slay all babes within my land.

  “Spare no male child:  each nurse’s robe
  Your scrutinizing steel must probe:
  Spare not the suckling infant, though
  O’er mother’s breast its life-blood flow.

  “On Bethlehem our suspicion falls,
  On every hearth within its walls:
  Lest mothers with love’s tender zeal
  Some manly scion may conceal.”

  With daggers drawn the infuriate crew
  Upon their murderous errand flew:
  Each latest offspring of the womb
  To bloody death they foully doom.

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  Ah tiny limbs! ’twas hard to know
  How best to strike the fatal blow:
  Too wide the sword-blades are to smite
  Those throats so silken-fragile, slight.

  O horrid sight! the tender bones
  Are dashed against the jagged stones:
  Sightless and mangled there they lie,
  Poor babes! untimely doomed to die.

  Perchance the still deep river laves
  Their bodies thrust into the waves:
  The current with their sighing sighs,
  Sobs with their latest, broken cries.

  Ye flowers of martyrdom, all hail!
  Of rising morn pure blossoms frail!
  By Jesu’s foe were ye downcast,
  Like budding roses by the blast.

  Lambs of the flock too early slain,
  Ye first fruits of Christ’s bitter pain!
  Close to His very altar, gay
  With palms and crowns, ye now do play.

  Of what avail is deed so vile?
  Doth Herod gain by murderous guile?
  Of all to death so foully done
  Escapes triumphant Christ alone.

  Amidst that tide of infant gore
  Alone He wins the sheltering shore:
  The virgin’s Child survives the stroke,
  When every mother’s heart was broke.

  Thus Moses ’scaped the mad decree
  Of evil Pharaoh and set free
  The flock of God, prefiguring so
  Christ spared from fate’s malignant blow.

  Vain too the king’s hostility
  Who framed the pitiless decree
  That Israel’s mothers should not rear
  To manhood’s strength their offspring dear.

  Quickened by love, a woman’s mind
  Found means to thwart that law unkind,
  And, falsely true, the child concealed
  Destined to be his people’s Shield.

  On him it was that God did place
  The august priesthood’s holy grace,
  The law on stony tablets writ
  Did to his trembling hands commit.

  And may we not with prophet’s eye
  In such a hero Christ descry?
  The proud Egyptian’s might he broke
  And freed his kinsmen from the yoke.

  So we by Error’s might hemmed round
  Were by our Captain’s strength unbound:
  His foe He wounded in the fight
  And saved us from Death’s horrid night.

  Cheering by sign of flame their feet,
  Moses renewed with waters sweet
  His folk, albeit purified
  From stain, what time they crossed the tide.

  And he, remote on peaceful height,
  Amalek’s banded hosts did smite:
  He prayed with arms stretched out above,
  Foreshadowing the Cross of Love.

  Yet truer Jesus surely he,
  Who after many a victory
  And labours long the tribes’ renown
  With promised heritage did crown;

  Who when the waters rose on high
  And now the Jordan’s bed was dry,
  Set up twelve stones of memory,
  Types of apostles yet to be.

  Rightly the Wise Men said, I ween,
  That they Judaea’s King had seen,
  Since noble deeds of other days
  Prophetic chant the Saviour’s praise.

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  Of those old rulers He is King
  Who did to Jacob judgment bring,
  King of the Mother Church divine,
  God’s ancient and God’s present Shrine.

  Of Ephraim’s sons He is adored:
  Manasseh’s sacred house as Lord
  Reveres Him:  to His might the seed
  Of brethren twelve their fealty plead.

  Nay, each degenerate race hath fled
  Its shameful rites and orgies dread:
  Grim Baal in glowing furnace cast
  Sinks to the earth, forsook at last.

  Idols smoke-blackened, wooden-hewn,
  Of brass and stone, in dust are strewn:
  The chiselled deities downtrod:
  For all confess in Christ their God.

  Rejoice all peoples, Jewry, Rome,
  Fair Hellas, Thrace, Aegyptus’ home:
  Persians and Scythian land forlorn,
  Rejoice:  the world’s great King is born!

  Behold your Chief!  His praise forth tell:
  Ye sick, ye hale, all heaven and hell:
  Ay, you whose vital spark hath sped:
  For lo! in Him e’en Death is dead.

Epilogus

  Inmolat Deo Patri
    pius, fidelis, innocens, pudicus
  dona conscientiae,
    quibus beata mens abundat intus:
  alter et pecuniam 5
    recidit, unde victitent egeni.
  Nos citos iambicos
    sacramus et rotatiles trochaeos,
  sanctitatis indigi
    nec ad levamen pauperum potentes; 10
  adprobat tamen Deus
    pedestre carmen, et benignus audit.
  Multa divitis domo
    sita est per omnes angulos supellex.
  Fulget aureus scyphus, 15
    nec aere defit expolita pelvis:
  est et olla fictilis,
    gravisque et ampla argentea est parabsis.
  Sunt eburna quaepiam,
    nonnulla quercu sunt cavata et ulmo:  20
  omne vas fit utile,
    quod est ad usum congruens herilem,
  Instruunt enim domum
    ut empta magno, sic parata ligno.
  Me paterno in atrio 25
    ut obsoletum vasculum caducis
  Christus aptat usibus,
    sinitque parte in anguli manere.
  Munus ecce fictile
    inimus intra regiam salutis; 30
  attamen vel infimam
    Deo obsequelam praestitisse prodest.
  Quidquid illud accidit,
    iuvabit ore personasse Christum.

**EPILOGUE**

  The pure and faithful saint, whose heart is whole,
    To God the Father makes his sacrifice
  From out the treasures of a stainless soul,
    Glad gifts of innocence, beyond all price:
  Another with free hand bestows his gold,
    Whereby his needy neighbour may be fed.
  No wealth of holiness my heart doth hold,
    No store have I to buy my brothers bread:
  So here I humbly dedicate to Thee
    The rolling trochee and iambus swift;
  Thou wilt approve my simple minstrelsy,
    Thine ear will listen to Thy servant’s gift.
  The rich man’s halls are nobly furnished;

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    Therein no nook or corner empty seems;
  Here stands the brazen laver burnished,
    And there the golden goblet brightly gleams;
  Hard by some crock of clumsy earthen ware,
    Massive and ample lies a silver plate;
  And rough-hewn cups of oak or elm are there
    With vases carved of ivory delicate.
  Yet every vessel in its place is good,
    So be it for the Master’s service meet;
  The priceless salver and the bowl of wood
    Alike He needs to make His home complete.
  Therefore within His Father’s spacious hall
    Christ fits me for the service of a day,
  Mean though I be, a vessel poor and small,—­
    And in some lowly corner lets me stay.
  Lo in the palace of the King of Kings
    I play the earthen pitcher’s humble part;
  Yet to have done Him meanest service brings
    A thrill of rapture to my thankful heart:
  Whate’er the end, this thought will joy afford,
    My lips have sung the praises of my Lord.

*This edition of the* Cathemerinon of Prudentius *has been prepared for the Temple Classics by* Rev. R. *Martin* *Pope*, M.A. (*St John’s College, Cambridge, translator of the* “Letters of John Hus"), *who has done the translation of the* Praefatio *and* Hymns i., ii., iii., viii., xi., xii., *with notes thereon and the note on* Prudentius. *For the rendering of* Hymns iv., v., vi., vii., ix., x., *and the* Epilogus *with notes thereon,* Mr R.F.  *Davis*, M.A. (*St John’s College, Cambridge*), *is responsible.  The text, with some minor alterations in orthography and punctuation, is that of* Dressel (Lipsiae, 1860). *The frontispiece is due to the kind suggestion of* Dr SANDYS, *Public Orator of Cambridge University, to whom the thanks of the translators are hereby presented.*

TRANSLATOR’S NOTE

AURELIUS PRUDENTIUS CLEMENS (to give his full title) was born, probably at Saragossa (Caesaraugusta), in Spain, in the year of our Lord 348.  The fourth century exercised a profound influence alike on the destiny of the Roman Empire and of the Christian Church.  After a long discipline, strangely alternating between fiery persecution and contemptuous toleration, the Church entered upon a new era, when in 323 Constantine, the first Christian emperor, became master of the Roman world.  Two years later the Council of Nicaea met to utter its verdict on the Arian controversy and to establish the terms of the orthodox symbol.  A generation later Julian took up the reins of empire and commenced his quixotic and fruitless attempt to revive the glories of Paganism.  Athanasius died in 373:  but fourteen years later Augustine, his successor in the championship of the faith, was baptized, and in 395, at the death of Theodosius, when the Empire was divided between Honorius and Arcadius, he became Bishop of Hippo, and was marked out by his saintliness and learning as the leader of the Western Church, which he shaped by his splendid ideal of the *Civitas Dei* into unity and stability, when the secular empire was falling into decay.

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We know little more of the life of Prudentius than he himself has disclosed.  The *Preface*, which stands as an introduction to his poems, is a miniature autobiography of great interest.  M. Boissier in his *Fin du Paganisme* calls it *melancolique*:  though it is rather the retrospect of a serious and awakened, but not morbid, conscience.  Prudentius views his past years in the light of that new spiritual truth to which he has opened his soul.  We gather that he received a liberal education and was called to the bar.  We need not misunderstand the allusion to the deceitfulness of the barrister life, seeing that the ordinary arts of rhetoric stand condemned by his recently adopted ethical standard.  He held two important judicial posts and was promoted to a high position, probably in the civil service and not outside the limits of his native province, the *provincia Tarraconensis*.

He speaks of himself as having reached the age of fifty-seven, which brings us down to 405, and as intending to consecrate his remaining years to the poetic treatment of religious subjects.  When and how he became a Christian we do not know, and it were vain to guess, although the suggestion that he may have owed his conversion to the influence of some Christian family of his acquaintance is at least interesting.  It is unlikely that he took up poetry for the first time in his old age.  His mastery of all kinds of metre—­heroic and lyric—­prove the practised hand.  The probability is that in the years of repose after a busy career his desire to redeem an unspiritual past suggested for the exercise of his natural gifts a field hitherto unoccupied by any of the writers of his age.  Why not consecrate his powers to the task of interesting the literary circles of the Empire in the evangel of Christ?  Why not present the truths of Christianity in a poetic guise, wrought into forms of beauty and set forth in the classical metres of Roman literature?  This became the passion of his life, and however we may view the results of his toil, the spirit in which he went to work, as described in the touching *Epilogue*, cannot but evoke our profound admiration.  He is but a vessel of earth, but whatever the issue may be, it will be a lasting joy to have sounded forth the praise of Christ in song.

This then is how Prudentius becomes the first poet of the Christian Church, or, as Bentley called him, “the Virgil and Horace of the Christians.”  Doubtless there were other influences at work to determine the sphere to which he was naturally attract.  Ambrose, who was Bishop of Milan when Prudentius was twenty-six years of age, had written the first Latin hymns to be sung in church.  Augustine in a familiar passage of the *Confessions* (ix. 7.) describes how “the custom arose of singing hymns and psalms, after the use of the Eastern provinces, to save the people from being utterly worn out by their long and sorrowful vigils.”  “From that day

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to this,” he adds, “it has been retained and, many might say, all Thy flocks throughout the rest of the world now follow our example.”  To Ambrose and Augustine the Church of Christ is for ever indebted:  to the latter for a devotional treatise which is the most familiar of all the writings of the fourth century:  to the former for the hymns of praise which he composed and the practice of singing which he thus inaugurated in the worship of the Western Church.  But the Church owes something also to Prudentius, a much more gifted poet than Ambrose.  The collection of hymns known as the *Cathemerinon* or *Hymns for the day* is as little adapted for ecclesiastical worship as Keble’s *Christian Year*, although excerpts from these poems have passed into the hymnology of the Church, just as portions of Keble’s work have passed into most hymn books.  For example, seven of these excerpts in the form of hymns are to be found in the Roman Breviary, and thus for centuries the lyrics of Prudentius have been sung in the daily services of the Church.

Seeing that Prudentius must address himself to most English readers through the imperfect medium of a translation, it may be well to remind those who make their first acquaintance with him that a historical imagination is an indispensable condition of interest and sympathy.  If Prudentius has a habit of leaving the main issue and making lengthy and tedious *detours* into the picturesque parables and miraculous incidents of the Old Testament, there is method in his digressiveness.  He knows that one of the charms of Paganism lies in its rich and variegated mythology.  Yet Christianity also can point to an even nobler inheritance of the supernatural and the wonderful in the mysterious evolutions of its history.  Hence the stories of the early patriarchs, of the Israelites and Moses, of Daniel and Jonah, are imported by the poet as pictorial illustrations of his theme.  If occasionally the details border on the grotesque, he certainly reveals a striking knowledge of the Old Testament.

The New Testament is also adequately represented.  In one poem (ix.) the miracles of Christ in His earthly ministry and His descent into Hades are narrated with considerable spirit and eloquence.  Besides being a student of the Bible, Prudentius is a theologian.  His theology is that of the Nicene Creed.  The Fall of man, the personality of the Tempter, the mystery of the Trinity and of the Incarnation, the Virgin-birth, the Death and Resurrection of Christ, the pains of the lost and the bliss of the saints, the resurrection of the Body and the life everlasting—­these are the themes of his pen, the themes too of the theology of his age.  If the poet’s treatment of these truths occasionally appears antiquated and crude to modern ideas, it is at least dignified and intelligent.  His mind has absorbed the Christian religion and the Christian theology, and he not unfrequently rises to noble heights in the interpretation of their mysteries.

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His didactic poems, the *Hamartigenia* or the *Origin of Evil* and the *Apotheosis*, a treatise on the Person of Christ, prove him to be a theologian of no mean calibre.  He is also an allegorist, as is proved by the *Psychomachia* or the *Battle of the Soul*, a kind of *Holy War* which was very popular in the Middle Ages.  He is a martyrologist:  as witness the *Peristephanon*, a series of poems on Christian, principally Spanish, martyrs.  Moreover, he is an undoubted patriot, and in the *Contra Symmachum*, which he wrote on the famous affair of the Altar of Victory, he proves that, while a Christian, he is also *civis Romanus*, loyal to the Empire and the powers that be.  He is a skilful versifier, and in this connection the quatrains of the *Dittochaeon*, verses on themes of the Old and New Testaments, may be mentioned in order to complete the list of his works.  His mastery of his very varied metres—­hexameter, iambic, trochaic and sapphic—­is undoubted:  everywhere we note the influence of Virgil and Horace, even when these poets are not recalled by echoes of their diction which are constantly greeting the reader of his poems.

Reference has already been made to the influence of Ambrose of Milan upon the thought and style of Prudentius.  But there is a second and even more powerful influence that deserves at least briefly to be noted—­namely, the Christian art of the Catacombs.  Apart from such definite statements as *e.g.* are found in *Peristephanon* xi., it is obvious that Prudentius had a first-hand knowledge of Rome and particularly of the Catacombs.  Everywhere in his poems we find evidences of the deep impression made upon his imagination by the paintings and sculptures of subterranean Rome.  The now familiar representations which decorate the remains of the Catacombs suggested to him many of the allusions, the picturesque vignettes and glowing descriptions to be found in his poetry.  Thus, the story of Jonah—­a common theme typifying the Resurrection—­the story of Daniel with its obvious consolations for an age of martyrs, the Good Shepherd and the denial of Peter may be mentioned among the numerous subjects which were reproduced in early Christian art and transferred by the poet to his verse.  The symbolism of the Cock, the Dove, and the Lamb borne on the shoulders of the Good Shepherd is a perpetually recurring feature in the lyrics and martyr-hymns of Prudentius, who thus becomes one of our most valuable authorities on the Christian art of the fourth century.

The poems, of which a new English rendering is presented in this volume, are acknowledged by most critics to illustrate some of his best qualities, his brightness and dignity, his touches of nature-painting and his capacity for sustained and well-wrought narrative.  As we study these lyrics of the early Church, we feel anew the mighty change that Christianity wrought in Roman life by its doctrine of immortality, and we note

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the curious fascination which the circumstances of the Nativity and especially the Adoration of the Magi had for the Western world.  Prudentius had a great vogue in the Middle Ages, and the modern renewal of interest in mediaevalism invests with fresh dignity a poet whose works at the Revival of learning provoked the admiration of Erasmus[1] and the researches of numerous scholars and editors.  But it is undoubtedly to the student of ecclesiastical history and dogma and to the lovers of Christian art and antiquities that Prudentius most truly appeals.  He claims our interest, not merely because he reflects the Christian environment of his days, but because his poetry represents an attempt to preach Christ to a world still fascinated by Paganism, while conscious that the old order was changing and yielding place to new.

[1] *Prudentium, unum inter Christianos vere facundum poetam.*

NOTES

HYMNS

THE TITLE

The word *Cathemerinon* is taken from the Greek and is the genitive of *chathemerina* “daily things”:  the whole title *Liber Cathemerinon* is equivalent to “Book of daily hymns,” and may be rendered “Hymns for the Christian’s day.”

THE PREFACE

In one or two of the MSS. this introductory poem is stated to be a preface of the *Cathemerinon* only:  but the great majority of the codices support the view which is undoubtedly suggested by internal evidence, that the poem is a general introduction to the whole of Prudentius’ works.  It is inserted together with the *Epilogus* in this volume, because of the intrinsic interest of both poems.

Line

8 The reference is to the *toga virilis*, the ordinary
     white-coloured garb of a Roman citizen who at his sixteenth year
     laid aside the purple-edged *toga praetexta*, which was worn
     during the days of boyhood.

16 ff.  The cities referred to are unknown:  but it is probable that
     they were two *municipia* in Northern Spain, and that the office
     held by Prudentius was that of duumvir or prefect.  Provision was made
     by the twenty-fourth clause of the law of Salpensa (a town in the
     *provincia Baetica* of Spain) by which the emperor could be elected
     first magistrate of a *municipium*, and could thereupon appoint a
     prefect to take his place.  This would explain the language of the
     text as to the semi-imperial nature of the post.  The phrase
     *militiae gradus* need only be taken to indicate advancement in the
     *civil* service.  But the words have been interpreted in accordance
     with the more familiar and definite meaning of *militia*, and
     understood to refer to a purely military post.  Dressel thinks that
     Prudentius was a *miles Palatinus*, that is, a member of the
     best-paid and most highly-privileged

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imperial troops, who furnished
     officers for some of the most lucrative posts in the provinces.
     Though in the translation the usual meaning has been given to
     *militia*, it must be regarded as uncertain in the absence of
     more definite information regarding the office held by Prudentius.

24 The consulship of Salia (or Salias) belongs to the year 348, the
     date of the birth of Prudentius.  An inscription (quoted by Migne from
     Muratorius, *Nov.  Thes.  Inscrip.*, i. 379) has been found in the
     monastery of St. Paul’s outside the city bearing the words

FILIPPO .  ET .  SALLIA .  COSS

I

1 Of this poem lines 1-8, 81-84, 97-100, were included in the Roman
     Breviary as a hymn to be sung at Lauds, on Tuesday.

2 The allusions to the cock in this and the following poem (ii. 37-55)
     were doubtless inspired by the lines of Ambrose in his morning hymn
     beginning *Aeterne rerum conditor*.  Cf. ll. 5-8 and 16-24:

*"praeco diei iam sonat noctis profundae pervigil, nocturna lux viantibus a nocte noctem segregans.*

\* \* \* \* \*

*surgamus ergo strenue:  gallus iacentes excitat, et somnolentos increpat:  gallus negantes arguit.gallo canente spes redit, aegris salus refunditur, mucro latronis conditur, lapsis fides revertitur."*

*Translation.*

“Dawn’s herald now begins to cry,
Lone watcher of the nightly sky:
Light of the dark to pilgrims dear,
Speeding successive midnights drear.

\* \* \* \* \*

Brisk from our couch let us arise!
Hark to the cock’s arousing cries!
He chides the sluggard’s slumbrous ease,
And shames his unconvincing pleas.At cock-crow Hope revives again,
Health banishes the stress of pain,
Sheathed is the nightly robber’s sword,
And Faith to fallen hearts restored.”See also Ambrose, *Hexaem.*, v. 24, for an eloquent passage in the same strain.  The cock was the familiar Christian symbol of early rising or vigilance, and numerous representations of it are found in the Catacombs.  Cf. the painting from the Catacomb of St. Priscilla reproduced in Bottari’s folio of 1754, where the Good Shepherd is depicted as feeding the lambs, with a crowing cock on His right and left hand.  It is also a symbol of the Resurrection, our Lord being supposed to have risen from the grave at the early cockcrowing:  see l. 65 *et seq.* In l. 16 the first bird-notes are interpreted by the poet as a summons to the general judgment.  Cf.  Mark xiii. 35:  “Ye know not when the lord of the house cometh, whether at even, or at midnight, or *at cockcrowing*, or in the morning.”  This

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passage serves as a kind of text for Prudentius’ first two hymns, and perhaps explains why he has one for cockcrowing and another for morning.

26 A common idea in all literatures.  Cf.  Virg., *Aen.*, vi. 278
     (taken from Homer), *tum consanguineus Leti Sopor*, and Tennyson’s
     “Sleep, Death’s twin-brother” (*In Memoriam*, 68).

44 Cf.  Augustine, *Serm.* 103:  “These evil spirits seek to seduce
     the soul:  but when the sun has arisen, they take to flight.”

59 The denial of Peter forms a subject of Christian casuistry in
     patristic literature, and this passage recalls the famous classical
     parallel in Euripides (*Hipp.* 612), “the tongue hath sworn:  yet
     unsworn is the heart.”  Cf.  Augustine, *cont. mendacium*:  “In that
     denial he held fast the truth in his heart, while with his lips he
     uttered falsehood.”  For a striking representation of Peter and the
     cock, on a sarcophagus discovered in the Catacombs and now deposited
     in the Vatican library, see Maitland’s *Church in the Catacombs*,
     p. 347.  The closing words of the passage in Ambrose’s *Hexaemeron*,
     already referred to under l. 2, may here be quoted:  “As the cock
     peals forth his notes, the robber leaves his plots:  Lucifer himself
     awakes and lights up the sky:  the distressful sailor lays aside his
     gloom, and all the storms and tempests that have risen in fury under
     the winds of the evening begin to die down:  the soul of the saint
     leaps to prayer and renews the study of the written word:  and
     finally, the very Rock of the Church is cleansed of the stain he had
     contracted by his denials before the cock crew.”

81 ff.  The best commentary on these words is to be found in the
     following passage from the second epistle of Basil to Gregory
     Nazianzen:  “What can be more blessed than to imitate on earth the
     angelic host by giving oneself at the peep of dawn to prayer and by
     turning at sunrise to work with hymns and songs:  yea, all the day
     through to make prayer the accompaniment of our toils and to season
     them with praise as with salt?  For the solace of hymns changes the
     soul’s sadness into mirth.”

II

1 This poem furnishes two hymns to the Roman Breviary, one to be sung
     on Wednesday at Lauds, and consisting of ll. 1-8, 48-53 (omitting l.
     50), 57, 59, 60, 67 (*tu vera lux caelestium*) and 68:  the other
     for Thursday at Lauds, consisting of ll. 25 (*lux ecce surgit
     aurea*), 93-108.

17 Cf.  Ambrose, ii. 8, *de Cain et Abel*:  “The thief shuns the day
     as the witness of his crime:  the adulterer is abashed by the dawn
     as the accomplice of his adultery.”

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51 The practice of praying on bended knees is frequently referred to
     in early Christian writers.  Cf.  Clem., 1 Ad.  Cor. cc. xlviii.:  “Let
     us fall down before the Lord,” and Shepherd of Hermas, vis. 1. i.:
     “After I had crossed that river I came unto the banks and there
     knelt down and began to pray.”  Dressel quotes from Juvencus (iv.
     648), a Spanish poet and Christian contemporary of Prudentius,
     *genibus nixi regem dominumque salutant*, “on bended knees they
     make obeisance unto their King and Lord.”

63 The Jordan is a poetical figure for baptism, suggested doubtless by the baptism of our Lord in that river.  Cf. vii. 73-75.

67 Cf.  Milton, *Paradise Regained*, i. 293:  “So spake our Morning
     Star, then in his rise.”  The figure is suggested by Rev. xxii. 16:
     “I am ... the bright, the morning star.”

105 The conception of God as *speculator* may be paralleled by a
     passage in the epistle of Polycarp *ad Philipp.* iv., where God is
     described as the Arch-critic (*panta momoschopeitai*) and subsequently
     (vii.) as *ton pantepopten theon*, “the All-witnessing God.”  The
     last verse contains a distinct echo of the closing words of the
     fourth chapter of Polycarp:  “None of the reasonings or thoughts,
     nor any of the hidden things of the heart escape His notice.”

III

2 *Word-begot.* The original *verbigena*, on the analogy of such
     words (cf. *terrigena*, *Martigena*, *etc*.), can only mean “begotten
     of the Word.”  It is evident, therefore, the “Word” in this connection
     is not the Johannine Logos or Second Person in the Trinity.
     Prudentius cannot be guilty of the error which he expressly
     condemns (*Apoth.* 249) as *perquam ridiculum* and regard the
     Logos as begetting Himself.  Consequently, both in this passage and
     in xi. 18 (*verbo editus*) the “Word” must be taken as approximating
     rather to the Alexandrian conception of the Logos as the Divine
     Reason.  In this way Christ is expressly described as the offspring
     of the *Intellectus Dei*, the immanent Intelligence of the Deity.
     If this conception is considered to be beyond Prudentius, we can only
     suppose that both here and in xi. 18, his language is theologically
     loose.  Some excuse may be offered for this on the ground that the
     Latin language is ill-adapted for expressing metaphysical truths.
     The late Bishop Westcott remarked on the inadequacy of the Latin
     original of “the Word was made flesh” (*verbum caro factum est*),
     both substantive and verb falling short of the richness of their
     Greek equivalents. (*Vid.* also note on iv. 15.)

11 Cf.  Ambrose, *Hymn* vii.:—­

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*"Christusque nobis sit cibus Potusque noster sit fides; Laeti bibamus sobriam Ebrietatem Spiritus."*

*Translation.*

          “May Christ be now the Bread we eat,
          Be simple Faith our potion sweet:
          Let our intoxication be
          The Spirit’s calm sobriety.”

The idea is familiar to readers of Herbert and Herrick, though it
is elaborated by them with quaint conceits somewhat foreign to the
Latin poet.  Cf.  Herbert, *The Banquet*:—­

“O what sweetnesse from the bowl
Fills my soul!

\* \* \* \* \*

Is some starre (fled from the sphere)
Melted there,
As we sugar melt in wine?

\* \* \* \* \*

Doubtless neither starre nor flower
Hath the power
Such a sweetnesse to impart:
Only God, Who gives perfumes,
Flesh assumes,
And with it perfumed my heart.”

Also Herrick, *A Thanksgiving to God*:—­

“Lord, I confess too, when I dine,
The pulse is thine.

\* \* \* \* \*

’Tis thou that crown’st my glittering hearth
With guiltless mirth,
And giv’st me wassail bowls to drink,
Spiced to the brink.”

28 The original *dactylico* refers to the metre of the Latin of this
     poem.  For a rendering of ll. 1-65 in the metre of the original see
     Glover, *Life and Letters in the Fourth Century*, pp. 267-269.

58 This and the following lines should satisfy the most ardent
     vegetarian who seeks to uphold his abstinence from animal food by
     the customs of the early Church.  In Christian circles, however, the
     abstinence was practised on personal and spiritual grounds, *e.g.*,
     Jerome (*de Regul.  Monach.*, xi.) says, “The eating of flesh is the
     seed-plot of lust” (*seminarium libidinis*):  so also Augustine (*de
     moribus Ecc.  Cath.*, i. 33), who supports what doubtless was the
     view of Prudentius, namely that the avoidance of animal flesh was a
     safe-guard but not a binding Christian duty.

75 *Unwed.* Prudentius thus adopts the view of the ancient world on
     the question of the generation of bees.  Cf.  Virgil, *Geo.* iv. 198,
     and Pliny, *Nat.  Hist.*, xi. 16.  Dryden’s translation of Virgil
     (*l.c.*) is as follows:—­

          “But (what’s more strange) their modest appetites,
          Averse from Venus, fly the nuptial rights;
          No lust enervates their heroic mind,
          Nor wastes their strength on wanton womankind,
          But in their mouths reside their genial powers,
          They gather children from the leaves and flowers.”

86 Cf.  Ps. liv. 18, 19 (Vulg.):  *Vespere et mane et meridie narrabo
     et annuntiabo et exaudiet vocem meam.* “In the evening and morning
     and at noonday will I pray, and that instantly and he shall hear my
     voice” (P.  B. Version).

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127 This is, strictly speaking, an error:  it is the woman’s seed
     which is to bruise the serpent’s head.  The error was perpetuated
     in the Latin Church by the Vulgate of Gen. iii. 15, *ipsa conteret
     caput tuum*, where *ipsa* refers to the woman (= she herself).

157 The epithet “white-robed” refers to the newly-baptized converts
     who received the white robe as a symbol of their new nature.  Cf.
     *Perist.* i. 67:  *Christus illic candidatis praesidet cohortibus*,
     and Ambrose (*de Mysteriis*, vii.):  “Thou didst receive (that is,
     after baptism) white garments as a sign that thou hast doffed the
     covering of thy sins and put on the chaste raiment (*velamina*) of
     innocence, whereof the prophet spake (Ps. li. 7), ’Thou shalt purge
     me with hyssop, and I shall be clean:  thou shalt wash me, and I
     shall be whiter than snow’” (Vulg.).

199 Phlegethon (rendered “Hell"), one of the rivers of the Virgilian
     Hades, is used to express the abode of the lost.  Cf.  Milton, *P.  L.*,
     ii. 580:—­

                “... fierce Phlegethon,
          Whose waves of torrent fire inflame with rage.”

The subject of the *descensus ad inferos* was evidently a favourite one with Prudentius and his contemporaries.  It has been suggested that apart from the scriptural basis of this conception Prudentius was influenced by the so-called *Gospel of Nicodemus*, which embodies two books, the *Acts of Pilate* and the *Descent into Hell*.  The latter is assigned by several critics to 400 or thereabouts, and gives a graphic account of Christ’s doings in Hades.  Synesius deals with the subject in one of his hymns (ix.), and Mrs Browning’s translation (see the essay on *The Greek Christian Poets*) of a passage in that poem may be quoted:—­“Down Thou earnest, low as earth,
Bound to those of mortal birth;
Down Thou earnest, low as hell,
Where Shepherd-Death did tend and keep
A thousand nations like to sheep,
While weak with age old Hades fell
Shivering through his dark to view Thee.

\* \* \* \* \*

So, redeeming from their pain
Chains of disembodied ones,
Thou didst lead whom thou didst gather
Upward in ascent again,
With a great hymn to the Father,
Upward to the pure white thrones!”

For a modern treatment of the theme see *Christ in Hades*, by
Stephen Phillips.

202 The words suggest the Catacombs, and perhaps refer to the custom
     of placing in the tomb a small cup or vase containing spices, of
     which myrrh (a symbol of death, according to Gregory of Nyssa, cf.
     xii. 71) was most usually employed.  Or the allusion may be to the
     practice of embalming.

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(See note on x. 51.) The body was placed
     not only in an actual sarcophagus or stone coffin, as expressly
     mentioned in the text, but in hollow places cut out of rock or
     earth (*loculus*).  The *sarcophagus* method seems to have been the
     earlier, but was superseded by that of the *loculus*, except in the
     case of the very wealthy.

205 The concluding line is beautifully illustrated by the epitaph
     on the martyr Alexander, found over one of the graves in the cemetery
     of Callixtus in the Catacombs:—­

ALEXANDER MORTVVS NON EST SED VIVIT
SVPER ASTRA ET CORPVS IN HOC TVMVLO
QVIESCIT ...

“Alexander is not dead, but lives above the stars
and his body rests in this tomb.”

IV

15 Prudentius here, as again in v. 160, emphasises his belief in
     the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son.  The
     “filioque” clause was not actually added to the Nicene Creed till
     the Council of Toledo (589 A.D.), but the doctrine was expressly
     maintained by Augustine, and occurs in a Confession of Faith of an
     earlier Synod of Toledo (447 A.D.?), and in the words of Leo I.
     (*Ep. ad Turib.*, c. 1), “*de utroque processit.*” The addition
     was not embodied into the Creed as used at Rome as late as the
     beginning of the ninth century. (*Vid.* Harnack, *Hist. of Dogma*,
     iv. 132.) Prudentius probably followed, as regards the Trinity,
     the doctrine generally held by the Spanish Church of his day; in
     many points it is difficult (cf. note on iii. 2), but appears to be
     derived partly from Tertullian and partly from Marcellus.

59 The identification of the Habakkuk of this legend (*vid.* the
     Apocryphal “Bel and the Dragon”) with the O. T. prophet is erroneous.
     This version of the story of Daniel is sometimes represented in the
     frescoes of the Catacombs, where the subject is a very favourite
     one, as is natural in an age when the cry “*Christiani ad leones*”
     so often rang through the streets of Rome.

V

1 There has been much doubt as to the title and scope of this hymn.
     Some early editors (*e.g.*, Fabricius and Arevalus) adopt the title
     “*ad incensum cerei Paschalis*,” or “*de novo lumine Paschalis
     Sabbati*,” and confine its object to the ceremonial of Easter Eve,
     which is specially alluded to in ll. 125 *et seq.* Others, following
     the best MSS., give the simpler title used in this text, and regard
     it as a hymn for daily use.  This view is supported by the weight
     of evidence:  the position of the hymn among the first six (none of
     which are for special days), and the fact that the Benediction of
     the Paschal Candle was

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not in use, at any rate in Rome, in the
     pontificate of Zacharias (*ob.* 752 A.D.) point in this direction.
     In the Spanish Church particularly the very ancient custom of
     praying at the hour when the evening lamps were lighted had developed
     into the regular office of the *lucernarium*, as distinct from
     Vespers.  The Mozarabic Breviary (seventh century) contains the
     prayers and responses for this service, and the Rule of St. Isidore
     runs:  “In the evening offices, first the lucernarium, then two
     psalms, one responsory and lauds, a hymn and prayer are to be
     said.”  St. Basil also writes:  “It seemed good to our fathers not
     to receive in silence the gift of the evening light, but to give
     thanks as soon as it appeared.”  It is probable, therefore, that
     Prudentius intended the hymn for daily use, and that after speaking
     of God as the source of light, and His manifestations in the form
     of fire to Moses and the Israelites, his thoughts pass naturally,
     though somewhat abruptly, to the special festival—­Easter Eve—­on
     which the sanctuaries were most brilliantly illuminated.  The
     question is fully discussed by Brockhaus (*A.  Prudentius Clemens
     in seiner Bedeutung fuer die Kirche seiner Zeit*), and Roesler (*Der
     catholische Dichter A. Prudentius*).  Part of this hymn is used in
     the Mozarabic Breviary for the First Sunday after Epiphany, at
     Vespers, being stanzas 1, 7, 35, 38-41.

7 The words *incussu silicis* are perhaps reminiscent of the Spanish
     ceremonial of Easter Eve, when the bishop struck the flint, lighting
     from it first a candle, then a lamp, from which the deacons lighted
     their candles; these were blessed by the bishop, and the procession
     from the *processus* into the church followed.

21 Cf.  Vaughan, *The Lampe*:—­

                    “Then thou dost weepe
          Still as thou burn’st, and the warm droppings creepe
          To measure out thy length.”

119 The *folium* here is probably the ancient *malobathrum*, generally
     identified as the Indian cinnamon.  The Arab traders who brought this
     valuable product into the Western markets, surrounded its origin with
     much mystery.

125 The following stanzas, in which Prudentius elaborates the
     beautiful fancy that the sufferings of lost spirits are alleviated
     at Eastertide, have incurred the severe censure of some of the
     earlier editors.  Fabricius calls it “a Spanish fabrication,” while
     others, as Cardinal Bellarmine, declare that the author is speaking
     “poetically and not dogmatically.”  That such a belief, however, was
     actually held by some section of the ancient Church is evident from

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     the words of St. Augustine (*Encheiridion*, c. 112):  *Paenas
     damnatorum certis temporum intervallis existiment, si hoc eis placet,
     aliquatenus mitigari, dummodo intelligatur in eis manere ira Dei, hoc
     est ipsa damnatio.* “Let men believe, if it so please them, that at
     certain intervals the pains of the damned are somewhat alleviated,
     provided that it be understood that the wrath of God, that is
     damnation itself, abides upon them.”

140 It is somewhat startling to find Prudentius speaking of the Holy
     Eucharist in terms which would recall to his contemporary readers
     Virgilian phraseology and the honeyed cake (*liba*) used in pagan
     sacrifice.  It must be remembered, however, that in the early days of
     the Church paganism and Christianity flourished side by side for a
     considerable period; and we find various pagan practices allowed
     to continue, where they were innocent.  Thus the bride-cake and the
     bridal-veil are of heathen origin; the mirth of the Saturnalia
     survives, in a modified form, in some of the rejoicings of Christmas;
     and the flowers, which had filled the pagan temples during the
     Floralia, were employed to adorn God’s House at the Easter festival.

141 The brilliant illumination of churches on Easter Eve is very
     ancient.  According to Eusebius, Constantine “turned the mystical
     vigil into the light of day by means of lamps suspended in every
     part, setting up also great waxen tapers, as large as columns,
     throughout the city.”  Gregory of Nyssa also speaks of “the cloud
     of fire mingling with the rays of the rising sun, and making the eve
     and the festival one continuous day without interval of darkness.”

153 Cf. *Paradise Lost*, iii. 51:—­

“So much the rather thou, Celestial Light,
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate.”

VI

The last seven stanzas of this hymn are used in the Moz.  Brev. at
Compline on Passion Sunday, and daily until Maundy Thursday.

56 Cf.  Job. vii. 14:  “Then Thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest
     me through visions.”

95 In the translation of this stanza the explanation of Nebrissensis
     is adopted, an early editor of Prudentius (1512) and one of the
     leaders of the Renaissance in Spain.  He considers that “the few of
     the impious who are condemned to eternal death” are the incurable
     sinners, *immedicabiles*.  Others attempt to reconcile these words
     with the general belief of the early Church by maintaining that
     *non pii* is not equivalent to *impii*, but rather refers to the
     class that is neither decidedly good nor definitely bad, and that
     the mercy of God is extended to the majority of these.  A third view
     is that the poet is speaking relatively, and means that few are
     condemned in proportion to the number that deserve condemnation.
     In whatever way the words are explained, it is interesting to find
     an advocate of “the larger hope” in the fourth century.

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105 Cf.  Rev. xvii. 8:  “The beast that thou sawest was, and is not;
     and is about to come up out of the abyss, and to go into perdition.”

109 Cf. 2 Thess. ii. 4:  “The son of perdition, who opposeth and
     exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped;
     so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that
     he is God.”

127 The phrase *rorem subisse sacrum* would suggest baptism by
     sprinkling, except that Prudentius uses the word loosely elsewhere.
     Immersion was undoubtedly the general practice of the early Church,
     “clinical” baptism being allowed only in cases of necessity.

128 The anointing with oil showed that the catechumen was enrolled
     among the spiritual priesthood, and with the unction was joined the
     sign of the Cross on the forehead.

VII

1 This entire hymn is used in the Moz.  Brev., divided into fifteen
     portions for use during Lent.

27 The word *sacerdos* here, as in ix. 4, is used in the sense of
     “prophet”; but in both passages there is some idea of the exercise
     of priestly functions.  Elijah may be called “priest” from his having
     offered sacrifice on Mount Carmel, and David from his wearing the
     priestly ephod as he danced before the Ark.

69 The old editors discuss these lines with much gravity, and mostly
     come to the conclusion that “locusts” were “a kind of bird, of
     the length of a finger, with quick, short flight”; while the “wild
     honey” was not actual honey at all, but “the tender leaves of
     certain trees, which, when crushed by the fingers, had the pleasant
     savour of honey.”

76 A gloss on one of the Vat.  MSS. adds:  “This is not authorised; for
     John merely baptized with water, and not in the name of the Father,
     Son and Holy Ghost; therefore his baptism was of no avail, save that
     it prepared the way for Christ to baptize.”  Many of the Fathers,
     however, while expressly affirming that John’s baptism differed
     from that of Christ, allowed that the stains of sin were washed
     away by the former.  St. Chrysostom draws this distinction:  “There
     was in John’s baptism pardon, but not without repentance; remission
     of sins, but only attained by grief.”

100 The story of Jonah, as a type of the Resurrection, is one of the
     most frequent subjects of the frescoes of the Catacombs.  In one very
     ancient picture, a man in a small boat is depicted in the act of
     placing the prophet in the very jaws of the whale.

115 Two stanzas are omitted in the text, which depict the sufferings
     of Jonah with a wealth of detail not in accordance with modern
     taste.  For the sake of giving a complete text, we append them here:—­

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“*Transmissa raptim praeda cassos dentium eludit ictus incruentam transvolans inpune linguam, ne retentam mordicus offam molares dissecarent uvidi, os omne transit et palatum praeterit.Ternis dierum ac noctium processibus mansit ferino devoratus gutture, errabat illic per latebras viscerum, ventris recessus circumibat tortiles anhelus extis intus aestuantibus.*”

194 Prudentius appears to have believed that the mystery of the
     Incarnation was concealed from Satan, and that the Temptation
     was an endeavour to ascertain whether Jesus was the Son of God
     or no.  Cf.  Milton, *Par.  Reg.* i.:—­

          “Who this is we must learn, for Man he seems
          In all his lineaments, though in his face
          The glimpses of his Father’s glory shine.”

VIII

9 The day of twelve hours appears to have been adopted by the
     Romans about B.C. 291.  Ambrose (*de virginibus*, iii. 4), commenting
     on Ps. cxix. and the words “Seven times a day do I praise thee,”
     declares that prayers are to be offered up with thanksgiving when
     we rise from sleep, when we go forth, when we prepare to take food,
     when we have taken it, at the hour of incense, and lastly, when we
     retire to rest.  He probably alludes to private prayer.  The stanza
     here indicates that the second hour after midday has arrived, when
     the fasting ended and the midday meal was taken.

14 The word *festum*, as in vii. 4, indicates a special fast day.
     Until the sixth century, fasting was simply a penitential discipline
     and was not used as a particular mode of penance.  In the fourth
     century it was a fairly common practice as a preparation for Holy
     Communion.  Fasting before Baptism was a much earlier practice.
     The stated fasts of the Western Church were (1) *annual*, that
     is, ante-paschal or Lent; (2) *monthly*, or the fasts of the four
     seasons in the 1st, 4th, 7th and 10th months; (3) *weekly*, on
     Wednesday and Friday.  There was also the fast of the Rogations and
     the Vigils or Eves of holy days.  It is doubtful whether all these
     were in vogue as early as Prudentius.

33 This passage on the Shepherd reminds us of one of the most common
     pictorial representations of the Catacombs.  Christian art owed
     something to paganism in this matter; ancient sculptures represent
     the god Pan with a goat thrown across his shoulders and a Pan’s
     pipe in his hand; while the poets Calpurnius and Tibullus both
     refer to the custom of carrying a stray or neglected lamb on the
     shoulders of the shepherd.  Going further back, the figure is common
     in the O. T. to express God’s care over His people.  Our Lord
     therefore used for His

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own purpose and transfigured with new
     meaning a familiar figure.  The gradual transition from paganism
     to Christianity is curiously illustrated by the fact that in several
     of the Catacomb bas-reliefs and paintings the Good Shepherd holds in
     His outstretched hand a Pan’s pipe.  See Maitland’s *Church in the
     Catacombs*, p. 315, for a woodcut of the Good Shepherd with a lamb
     over His shoulders, two sheep at His feet, a palm tree (or poplar)
     on either side, and a Pan’s pipe in His right hand; and also the
     frontispiece for a reproduction from the Cemetery of St. Peter and
     St. Marcellinus.

IX

1 This hymn, which first introduced into sacred song the trochaic
     metre familiar in Greek Tragedy and the Latin adaptations of it,
     supplies the Moz.  Brev. with some stanzas for use during Holy Week.
     The lines selected are 22-24, 1-21.

11 The use of the symbol *O*, (pronounced here as a single
     syllable), appears to indicate that the names Omega and Omikron
     came into use at a later date than Prudentius’ time.  In Rev. i. 8,
     the best MSS. read *ego eimi to alpha kai to o*.

33 The words *vulnerum piamina* are generally supposed to refer to
     the “gifts which Moses commanded” to be offered by those healed of
     leprosy (Lev. xiv. 2).  If so, Prudentius’ language may imply that
     the cure was not actually complete until the offering of these gifts,
     and is at variance with St. Matthew, viii. 43, “and forthwith his
     leprosy was cleansed.”  Probably, however, his idea is rather that
     the gifts to the priest formally marked the leper as a clean man.

71 Cf. note on iii. 199.

X

1 Parts of this hymn are used in the Moz.  Brev. in the Office of the
     Dead, being ll. 1-16, 45-48, 57-68, 157-168.

The burial rites of the primitive Church were simple, and marked by an absence of the ostentatious expression of grief which the pagan peoples displayed.  The general practice of cremation was rejected, partly owing to the new belief in the resurrection of the body, and partly from a desire to imitate the burial of the Lord.  At Rome, during the first three centuries, the dead were laid in the Catacombs, in which Prudentius took conspicuous interest (see Translator’s Note), but after 338 A.D. this practice became less frequent, and was completely abandoned after 410 A.D.  Elsewhere, from the earliest times, the Christians purchased special enclosures (*areae*), which were often attacked and rifled by angry mobs in the days of persecution.  The body was frequently embalmed (*cf.* ll. 51, 52), swathed in white linen (l. 49), and placed in a coffin; vigils and hymns continued for three or four days, but hired mourners were forbidden (l. 113), and instead of the dirges

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of the heathens, chants expressive of triumphant faith were sung as the body was carried to the grave, where a simple service was held, and evergreens and flowers were strewn about the tomb (ll. 169, 170).  The earliest inscriptions are often roughly scratched on plaster, and consist merely of a name and age, or simple words like—­

          GEMELLA DORMIT IN PACE

     but later (cf. l. 171), they were engraved on small marble slabs.

25 In both thought and language this stanza, as vii. 16 *et seq.*, is
     evidently reminiscent of Horace (*Sat.* 2, ii. 77):  *Quin corpus
     onustum*, *etc*.

          “The Body, too, with Yesterday’s excess
          Burthened and tired, shall the pure Soul depress,
          Weigh down this Portion of celestial Birth,
          This Breath of God, and fix it to the Earth.”
                        (Francis).

51 Boldetti, in his work on the Catacombs (lib. i. cap. 59), says
     that on many occasions, when he was present at the opening of a
     grave, the assembled company were conscious of a spicy odour
     diffusing itself from the tomb.  Cf.  Tertullian (*Apol.* 42):  “The
     Arabs and Sabaeans knew well that we consume more of their precious
     merchandise for our dead than do the heathen for their gods.”

57 Prudentius’ firm faith in the resurrection of the body is also
     nobly expressed in the *Apotheosis* (ll. 1063 *et seq.*):—­

“*Nosco meum in Christo corpus resurgere; quid me
Desperare iubes? veniam, quibus ille revenit
Calcata de morte viis:  quod credimus hoc est.*

\* \* \* \* \*

*Pellite corde metum, mea membra, et credite vosmet Cum Christo reditura Deo; nam vos gerit ille Et secum revocat:  morbos ridete minaces:  Inflictos casus contemnite; tetra sepulcra Despuite; exsurgens quo Christus provocat, ite.*”

*Translation.*

“I know in Christ my body shall arise;
Why bid me, then, despair? for I shall go
By that same path whereby my Lord returned,
Death trodden ’neath His feet:  this is my creed.
Banish, my limbs, all terror; and believe
That ye with Christ our God shall yet return;
He beareth you and with Himself recalls.
Laugh at the threats of sickness; scorn the blows
Of fate; despise the horrors of the tomb;
And fare ye where the risen Christ doth call.”

61 The poet expresses as a duty owed to Christ Himself the heathen
     obligation of casting three handfuls of earth upon a body discovered
     dead.

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69 For the incident referred to in these lines, see the Apocryphal
     book of Tobias, cc. ii. and xi.  Tobit, a pious Israelite captive
     in Nineveh, was reduced to beggary as the result of his zeal in
     burying those of his countrymen who had been killed and exposed by
     royal command.  He also lost his sight, which was eventually restored
     by the application of the gall of a fish which attacked his son
     Tobias, and was killed by him.  The “fish” of the legend is probably
     the crocodile, whose gall was credited with medicinal properties by
     various Greek and Latin writers.  Cf.  Pliny, *N.  H.* xxviii. 8:  “They
     say that nothing avails more against cataract than to anoint the eyes
     with its gall mixed with honey.”

113 Cf.  Cyprian (*De Mortal.* 20):  “We must not lament our brethren
     whom the Lord’s summons has freed from the world, for we know that
     they are not lost, but gone before.  We may not wear the black robes
     of mourning while they have put on the white raiment of joy.  Nor
     may we grieve for those as lost whom we know to be living with God.”

171 Cf. *Perist.* vii.:—­

          “*Nos pio fletu, date, perluamus
          Marmorum sulcos.*”

The early Christian epitaphs, of which many thousands exist, are instinct with a faith which is in striking contrast to the unrelieved gloom or sullen resignation of paganism.  We may compare with the common

          AVE ATQVE VALE

          “Hail and farewell”

or inscriptions like

INFANTI DVLCISSIMO QVEM DI IRATI AETERNO SOMNO DEDERUNT

“To a very sweet babe, whom the angry gods gave to unending
sleep.”

the Christian

DVLCIS ET INNOCENS HIC DORMIT SEVERIANVS SOMNO PACIS CVIVS
SPIRITVS IN LVCE DOMINI SVSCEPTVS EST (A.D. 393)

“Here slumbers in the sleep of peace the sweet and innocent
Severianus, whose spirit is received in the light of the Lord”

or

NATVS EST LAVRENTIVS IN ETERNVM ANN.  XX.  DORMIT IN PACE (A.D. 329)

“Laurentius was born into eternity in his twentieth year.  He
sleeps in peace.”

See also note on iii. 205.

XI

1 Virgil’s Fourth Eclogue known as the “Pollio” has undoubtedly
     influenced the thought and style of this poem:  the more noticeable
     parallels will be pointed out as they occur.  In Milton’s ode *On
     the Morning of Christ’s Nativity* there are several passages which
     recall Prudentius’ treatment of the theme in this and the succeeding
     hymn; but curiously enough, the Puritan poet in alluding to the
     season of the Nativity takes an opposite line of thought, and
     regards the diminished sunshine of winter as a veiling of an inferior

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     flame before the light of “a greater Sun.”  Prudentius proclaims the
     increase of the sun’s light, which begins after the winter solstice,
     as symbolic of the ever-widening influence of the True Light.  The
     idea is given in a terse form by St. Peter Chrysologus, *Serm.* 159:
     *Crescere dies coepit, quia verus dies illuxit*.  “The day begins to
     lengthen out, inasmuch as the true Day hath shone forth.”

18 For the somewhat obscure phrase *verbo editus*, see note on iii. 2.

20 For “Sophia” or the Divine Creative Wisdom, see Prov. iii. 19, 20,
     and especially viii. 27-31, where the language “has been of signal
     importance in the history of thought, helping, as it does, to make
     a bridge between Eastern and Greek ideas, and to prepare the way
     for the Incarnation” (Davison, *Wisdom-Literature of the O. T.*, pp.
     5, 6).  In Alexandrian theology the conception of God’s transcendence
     gave rise to the doctrine of an intermediate power or *logos*, by
     which creation was effected.  In the Prologue of the fourth Gospel
     the idea was set forth in its purely Christian form.  See 1, 3, where
     the Logos or the pre-incarnate Christ is described as the maker of
     all things—­an idea which is also illustrated by the language of St.
     Paul in such passages as Col. i. 6.

59 Cf. for the conception of a golden age, Virg., *Ecl.*, iv. 5
     *et seq.*:  *Magnus ab integro saeclorum nascitur ordo*, *etc*.

65 Reminiscences of ancient prophecy appear to be embodied in this
     and following lines.  Cf.  Joel iii. 18:  “And it shall come to pass
     in that day that the mountains shall drop down sweet wine and the
     hills shall flow with milk.”  Amos ix. 13:  “The mountains shall drop
     sweet wine and all the hills shall melt.”  But cf. especially Virg.,
     *Ecl.*, iv. 18-30:  *At tibi prima, puer, nullo munuscula cultu*, *etc*.

“Unbidden earth shall wreathing ivy bring,
And fragrant herbs (the promises of spring)
As her first off’rings to her infant king.

\* \* \* \* \*

Unlaboured harvest shall the fields adorn,
And clustered grapes shall blush on every thorn;
The knotted oaks shall showers of honey weep,
And through the matted grass the liquid gold shall creep.”

                            (Dryden’s Trans.)

81 The legend of the ox and ass adoring our Lord arose from an
     allegorical interpretation of Isa. i. 3:  “The ox knoweth his owner,
     the ass his master’s crib.”  Origen (*Homilies on St. Luke* xiii.)
     is the first to allegorise on the passage in Isaiah, where the word
     for “crib” in the Greek translation of the O. T. is identical

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with
     St. Luke’s word for “manger” (*phatne*).  After referring to the
     circumstances of the Nativity, Origen proceeds to say:  “That was
     what the prophet foretold, saying, ‘The ox knoweth,’ *etc*.  The Ox is
     a clean animal:  the Ass an unclean one.  The Ass knew his master’s
     crib (*praesepe domini sui*):  not the people of Israel, but the
     unclean animal out of pagan nations knew its master’s crib.  ’But
     Israel hath not known me:  and my people hath not understood.’  Let us
     understand this and press forward to the crib, recognise the Master
     and be made worthy of his knowledge.”  The thought that the Ox = the
     Jews and the Ass = Pagans, reappears in Gregory Nazianzen, Ambrose
     and Jerome.  See an interesting article by Mr. Austin West (*Ox and
     Ass Legend of the Nativity*. *Cont.  Review*, Dec. 1903), who notes
     the further impetus given to the legend by the Latin rendering of
     Habb. iii. 2 (LXX.) which in the *Vetus Itala* version appears as
     “in medio duorum animalium in notesceris,” “in the midst of two
     animals shalt thou be known” (R.V., *in the midst of the years make
     it known*).  The legend does not appear in apocryphal Christian
     literature earlier than in the *Pseudo-Matthew Gospel*, which
     belongs to the later fifth century.  It is interesting to note that
     with St. Francis and the Franciscans the ox and the ass are merely
     animals:  the allegorical interpretation of Origen had vanished from
     Christendom:  and in its place we find St. Francis (see *Life of St.
     Francis* by St. Bonaventura, “Temple Classics” edition, p. 111)
     making a *presepio* at Greccio, to which a living ox and ass are
     brought, in order that a visible representation of the manger-scene
     might kindle the devotion of the Brethren and the assembled
     townsfolk.  This act of St. Francis inaugurated the custom, still
     observed in the Roman Church, of representing by means of waxen
     images the whole of the Nativity manger-scene, Mother and Child
     together with the adoring animals.

97 For the *obstetrix*, cf. *Proto-Evangelium of the Pseudo-James* (a
     Greek romance of the fourth century), Sec. 18 *et seq.*, where Joseph
     is represented as seeking and finding a Hebrew midwife.

100 Cf.  Milton’s *Ode on the Nativity*, ll. 157-164:—­

“With such a horrid clang
As on Mount Sinai rang
While the red fire and smould’ring clouds outbrake:
The aged earth aghast
With terror of that blast,
Shall from the surface to the centre shake;
When at the world’s last session
The dreadful Judge in middle air shall spread his throne.”

XII

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1 This poem has given four hymns to the Roman Breviary:—­
     (1) For the Feast of the Transfiguration, Vespers and Matins
     consisting of ll. 1-4, 37-40, 41-44, 85-88.
     (2) For the Epiphany at Lauds, beginning *O sola magnarum urbium*,
     ll. 77-80, 5-8, 61-72.
     (3) For the Feast of Holy Innocents at Matins, beginning *Audit
     tyrannus anxius*, ll. 93-100, 133-136.
     (4) Also the Feast of Holy Innocents at Lauds, beginning *Salvete
     flores martyrum*, ll. 125-132.

5 For a curious parallel to these opening lines see Henry Vaughan’s
     *Pious Thoughts and Ejaculations* (the Nativity):—­

          “But stay! what light is that doth stream
          And drop here in a gilded beam?
          It is Thy star runs Page and brings
          Thy tributary Eastern kings.
          Lord! grant some light to us that we
          May find with them the way to Thee!”

12 Cf.  Ignatius, *Ep. ad Ephes. xix.*:  “All the other stars, together
     with the Sun and Moon, became a chorus to the Star, which in its
     light excelled them all.”

15 Prudentius mentions the constellations of Ursa Major and Ursa
     Minor (to which latter the Pole Star belongs) as examples of stars
     in constant apparition.  All the Little Bear stars are within about
     24 deg. from the Pole; hence, if viewed from Saragossa, the birthplace
     of Prudentius, the lowest altitude of any of them would be 18 deg.
     above the north horizon.  The same applies to the majority of the
     stars in the Great Bear.  Some few would sink below the horizon
     for a brief time in each twenty-four hours; but the greater number,
     especially the seven principal stars known as the “Plough,” would
     be sufficiently high up at their lowest northern altitudes to be in
     perpetual apparition. [My friend, Rev. R. Killip, F.R.A.S., has
     kindly furnished me with these particulars.] Allusions to the Bears
     are constantly recurring in the classical poets (cf. *e.g.* Ovid.,
     *Met.* xiii. 293, *immunemque aequoris Arcton*, “the Bear that never
     touches the sea").  The idea that these stars are mostly hidden by
     clouds, though perpetually in view, is a poetic hyperbole intended
     to enhance the uniqueness of the Star of Bethlehem.

49 Jerome (*ad Eustoch.* Ep. 22) commenting on the passage in Isa.
     xi. 1, “And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse,
     and a flower shall rise up out of his root” (Vulg.), remarks:  “The
     rod (*virga*) is the mother of the Lord, simple, pure, sincere ...
     the flower of the rod is Christ, who saith, ’I am the flower of the
     field and the lily of the valleys.’”

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69 This symbolism of the gifts of the Magi is also found in Juvencus
     (I. 250):  “Frankincense, gold and myrrh they bring as gifts to a
     King, a Man and a God,” and is again alluded to by Prudentius in
     *Apoth.* 631 *et seq.* The idea is expressed in the hymn of Jacopone
     da Todi, beginning *Verbum caro factum est* (Mone, *Hymni Latini*,
     Vol. 2):

          “Gold to the kingly,
          Incense to the priestly,
          Myrrh to the mortal:”

and it has passed into the Office for Epiphany in the Roman Breviary:  “There are three precious gifts which the Magi offered to their Lord that day, and they contain in themselves sacred mysteries:  in the gold, that the power of a king may be displayed:  in the frankincense, consider the great high priest:  in the myrrh, the burial of the Lord” *et passim*.

172 The idea that Moses defeated the Amalekites because his arms were
     outstretched in the form of a cross is found also in one of the hymns
     (lxi.) of Gregory Nazianzen.  The symbol of the Christian religion,
     the cross, “was fancifully traced by the Fathers throughout the
     universe:  the four points of the compass, the ’height, breadth,
     length and depth’ of the Apostle expressed, or were expressed by,
     the cross....  The cross explained everything” (Maitland, *Church in
     the Catacombs*, p. 202).

193 The discomfiture of the heathen gods wrought by the Incarnation
     is elaborated by Milton, whose lines recall this and similar passages
     in Prudentius:—­

“Peor, and Baaelim
Forsake their temples dim

\* \* \* \* \*

And sullen Moloch fled,
Hath left in shadows dread,
His burning idol all of blackest hue.

Our Babe, to show his Godhead true,
Can in his swaddling bands control the damned crew.”

FINIS