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The *Occupatio*

of

Saint Odo

Abbot of Cluny

An English translation

of the Latin edition of

A. Swoboda (Teubner, 1900)

Peter L. Wood

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Summary of the *Occupatio*

BOOK 1

Lines 1-63 THE CREATION

God created the world and humans from nothing: this is proof that He exists; the design of the universe is like an egg;

God, the potter, integrated many diverse, warring elements.

God and time: why He did not create the world earlier.

Lines 64-120 INHABITANTS OF THE UNIVERSE

God created humans in His own image, His pots.

God created nine ranks of angels, including Lucifer.

Lucifer was given the chance to love God, but rejected it.

We are like gems with pre-drilled holes, ready to accept the

string which is God's love. Arrogance makes many reject Him.

Lines 121-328 LUCIFER

Lucifer's fall; he is still at large as a warning to the faithful.

The meek choose God, the arrogant reject Him and fall.

Lucifer's tricks; with God's help we can resist him.

More of Lucifer's subtle strategies.

Lines 329-end GOD'S HELP

God is our rescue; like a general, He will help weak humans to defeat Lucifer. The weak may surprise themselves and defeat the powerful. Odo prays for the strength to continue his poem.

BOOK 2

Lines 1-109 GOD CREATES ADAM AND EVE

God makes Adam superior to other life forms on earth.

He gives him free will to choose good or evil. We are made in God's image, but are not His equal. We are His pots.

In return for God's many gifts, He expects love and obedience.

The joys of life in Paradise. Adam needs a companion. Eve is created. Happiness at first.

Lines 110-362 THE SERPENT CORRUPTS THEM

Adam foolishly breaks God's command about a particular tree.

Satan corrupts Adam through his spouse: the serpent is very smooth-talking. Adam loses God's protection and is expelled.

Adam is left naked, tainted, ruined: suffers three deaths

May later generations learn from his mistake! Loss of innocence:

Adam and Eve corrupted by lust and feel guilt.

They should have resisted Satan's tricks.

Lines 363-end ADAM'S FAULT?

God gave him free will, but He knew that Adam would fail.

God's judgement. Adam was stupid. This was tantamount to an assault upon Heaven, with very few followers.

Adam's guilt has been transferred to us.

BOOK 3

Lines 1-96 GOD FORGIVES ADAM

Adam ran away in shame, but God,

with great sense of duty

offers him a second chance. Adam

snarls and defends his

folly. God is still ready to forgive.

Lines 97-229 PUNISHMENT

Adam must learn humility if he is to

find salvation.

Life outside Paradise is tough. Eve

is also punished.

Satan is punished. Hard labour for

Adam, in despair,

between Heaven and Hell, still

remembering Paradise.

Lines 230-389 MEMORIES OF LOST HAPPINESS

Spring is fondly remembered in

grim Winter.

The once-rich man; the blind child; the child taken and reared by wolves; the royal infant who is kidnapped and brought up by peasants. Human perception and experience.

Adam gets used to a new life without luxuries.

Lines 390-607 EVIL STILL EXISTS

Satan still seeks to corrupt us: lust and usury.

An attack on the beautiful people who are seduced by finery.

Marriage is for procreation and not for love-making.

Fornication: it was necessary to
send the Flood to cleanse us.
God was compassionate, delayed
His punishment for a time.
The earth still exists, but battered.
God's gifts of food and
drink are still there, but He would
like us to be abstemious.

Lines 608-902 SINS OF THE FLESH

Despite the Flood, homosexuality
has re-appeared.
Paedophilia deserves hellfire and
the whip. The four elements
are in a frenzy. God's warnings to
sodomites. Too much
flesh and wine. God tries to

frighten people, but many are

loathe to give up the pleasures of

sex and gluttony.

Lines 903-1030 A PERILOUS STATE

Free will unfortunately allows the

spread of corruption.

Prosperity is actually harmful.

Sinners are like sick people.

Humans spurn God and are

condemned to a brutish life.

Lines 1031-1103 GOD'S PLAN

He still allows people food, trees

and plants, but uses

punishment in order to redeem us.

Lines 1104-end HUMAN TALENT

Humans have mental energy: they make good builders, artists, musicians, etc. They try to sharpen their minds, but flesh corrupts them. Loss of wisdom, though occasional glimpses of former glory. There is hope that the good may inspire the bad.

BOOK 4

Lines 1-91 CAIN and ABEL

The two brothers represent good and evil, the meek versus the arrogant, Jerusalem versus Babylon.

Lines 92-280 GOOD and BAD EXAMPLES

Cain, Abel, Seth, Enoch, Noah,

Shem, Japheth.

Kings David and Solomon who fell

from grace.

Adultery: the cases of Tamar, king

Abimelech and Isaac,

Joseph, Susannah, Lucretia;

Abraham and Sara;

Isaac willing to sacrifice his son;

Jacob's self-control;

Joseph's mastery of his appetite;

Job's chastity.

Lines 281-543 THE PROPHETS

The fathers of the faith; the law of

nature and written law;

Moses the law-giver; the seven

seals; Samuel; David;

Elijah. They were beacons of

light, but not the Sun. Some

prophets were ignored or

reluctant: Moses and Jeremiah.

Lines 544-710 HUMAN WEAKNESS, GOD'S SOLUTION

There was breast-beating and

lamentation; pride, lust, grief.

After confession, there is some

hope of salvation.

God wants us to be saved: He is

just, merciful, forgiving.

God did not create Death;

humans corrupted themselves.

Lines 711-793 WORDS OF THE HEAVENLY CHOIR

God is just; we are worthless,
ungrateful sinners. Salvation
depends upon God. May He
spare us and free us from sin!

Lines 794-end GOD IS GOOD

God the Creator put humans at the
head of His creation.
Sadly, humans chose eternal ruin.
God gives us a second
chance. He mitigates His anger
and saves the world,
not by force but with justice.

BOOK 5

Lines 1-118 THE COMING OF CHRIST

The age of the prophets is over:
God now becomes human.
An explanation of the
relationship of the Father and the Son.
Judah did not recognise the
prophecy of His coming.
The terms and plan of His
coming. The humble circumstances.

Lines 119-232 CHRIST and JOHN

Images of darkness and light.
John was a harbinger, like the
Morning Star. In fact some
thought he was the Messiah.

The relationship of John and
Jesus. Jesus was the new dawn,
revealing our true “colours”.
We must let in His light.

Lines 233-314 HIS RECEPTION BY THE MEEK and THE ARROGANT

The arrogant do not believe in
Jesus because He is not arrogant.
The arrogant will rot in Hell,
the meek will be comforted.
Pure faith comprehends His
mission, the arrogant are blind.
May the meek recognise
Christ’s humility!

Lines 315-393 THE NATIVITY

Christ is both God and human.
From humble cradle He is able
to summon Persian kings. He
assumes our flesh. He unifies, tames
the proud, brings peace.
Shepherds are the first to know of His
birth: a sign of His humility.

Lines 394-495 KING HEROD

Herod orders the slaughter of
the innocents: grief of their parents.
May Herod suffer in Hell!
Weep not, mothers! Your baby sons
have places in Heaven!

Lines 496-695 CHRIST'S WORK

Why human form was essential

for Him. We may not fully understand all He did. His number one command: be humble!

Feeding of the 5000. His two natures: humble yet divine.

The importance of a visible body. He overcomes Satan.

His mother Mary is also our example: virginity is good.

His choice of ordinary men as His disciples.

Lines 696-762 BAPTISM

Christ's example for baptism, when the Holy Spirit appeared.

The role of the Holy Spirit within the Trinity.

The power of baptism to remove sins, though the Devil still survives to make us wary.

Lines 763-790 HUMILITY OF CHRIST

A carpenter's wife; an animal stall; dressed in rags; rides on a donkey; touches a prostitute and a madman; spat on, etc.

Lines 791-end CHRIST'S MESSAGE

Love one another. Many commands, many miracles.

His mission is to set moral standards, the basis of the faith.

Reject prosperity and worldly goods.

BOOK 6

Lines 1-131 THE LAST SUPPER

Christ's coming as predicted by the prophets. His washing of the disciples' feet is a symbolic act: shows humility and the need for cleanliness, especially at communion. Bread and wine replace ancient rites of animal sacrifice. The miracle of transubstantiation; other miracles of Jesus. Why Judas was permitted to attend the Last Supper.

Lines 132-296 THE CRUCIFIXION

Why Jesus had to die. The

symbolism and power of the cross.

Other wooden images in the Bible.

Jesus on trial, mocked

and suffering for our salvation.

The ungrateful Jews do not

recognise Him. Nature's response

to the crucifixion.

Symbolism of the two thieves.

Stupid non-believers ask

maliciously: "Why don't you come

down from the cross?"

Lines 297-395 THE RESURRECTION

Jesus entombed, arises on the third

day. The Jews deny it,

try to bribe the guards of the tomb

– unsuccessfully.

That glorious third day. Christ appears first to Mary Magdalen, then to the disciples, who have some doubt.

He is a friend to slaves, outcast women, sinners: Peter denied Him thrice!

Lines 396-566 DISCIPLES PREPARE FOR THEIR MISSION

They are sent to all nations to preach the Word.

They will suffer, but be rewarded in Heaven.

They must prepare to receive the Holy Spirit.

Peter chooses Matthias to replace

Judas: the precedent that
Church leaders do not have to be
chosen by God.
They receive the gift of tongues
and amaze all nations.

Lines 567-610 COMMUNAL LIFE OF THE EARLY CHURCH

No personal possessions:
monastic life is the same, though
many people cheat. Ananias, a
bad example of this, was struck
down by Peter. Joseph, a good
example, rejected the world.

Lines 611-658 THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Member of the Trinity; the signs it

can provide.

The power it gave to Peter and

Paul.

Lines 659-720 GOD'S WISDOM

He reveals the hidden mysteries.

Though merciful and

forgiving, He does not save all:

evil sinners will remain

homeless and lawless, while those

who listen will abandon

pagan worship and receive

salvation.

Lines 721-812 HONEYED WORDS AND TRUE

PREACHERS

Beware of poets, dramatists and
preachers who use honeyed
words to attract us into committing
sin.
Many laws are now needed to curb
vice, and true ministers
to reveal the faith, to teach that
Heaven is for all, showing how
to recognise God's gifts and
reform before it is too late.

Lines 813-869 DEATH OF THE FLESH

We must still suffer death of the
flesh. Martyrs.
Evil ones will question baptism's
power, true faith does not.
Death, flesh and the spirit. The

need for suffering.

Lines 870-916 CHALLENGE and ACCEPTANCE

Challenge can often make faith stronger. Condemnation of Arius for his challenge. The world now happily accepts the faith. Examples of joy at rediscovering something lost. Paradise may be regained, so we accept loss of possessions. We gladly accept Death.

Lines 917-949 LEADERSHIP

The prophets are like spiritual captains of the Church's ship. They explained the symbolic

meanings of both the Testaments.

Leaders must set good examples.

Lines 950-974 PEACE

Peace is now established; angry tyrants learn self-control;

warfare is over. Make your peace treaty with Heaven.

Lines 974-end SUMMARY OF THE DISCIPLES' MISSION

To teach people about the path to Heaven.

To warn about future dangers and vices, preventing many

from reaching Heaven, exposing them to the noose of

the Anti-Christ. To warn that God may shorten their days.

BOOK 7

Lines 1-90 SIN STILL EXISTS

Though the Church seems strong, sinners still co-exist with the meek, like weeds in the corn, until the harvest. Baptism hasn't eradicated sin: pride and lust still savage mind and body.

Examples: Lot's daughters and King Nebuchadnezzar.

Lines 91-296 MANY LAPSE AFTER BAPTISM

Sign of the cross on the forehead.

Shocking example of debauchery

of boys in monastic schools.

Lust, incest, sexual depravity widespread among holy people.

Importance of the Eucharist. Satan targets the leaders of the Faith. Kings, priests, women are all prone to showy finery.

Lines 297-459 LUST

Even Joseph and David were tempted, but they were restored after repentance. God will support the weakness of our flesh.

Satan is still active: open your heart to God and drive sin out.

Lust is an unbroken horse. Avoid lust in marriage.

The virgin birth teaches us to prize virginity. We must tend our lamps like the Wise Virgin, be on guard like soldiers, control lustful dreams with flagellation and imitate Joseph.

Lines 460-541 THOSE WHO HAVE LAPSED

We must help them to find grace. God supports and loves them, with a little punishment. Parables of divine help for the lapsed: the Good Samaritan, the Woman Adulterer, the Prodigal Son, the Importunate Neighbour. Sinners must grasp the plank of rescue.

Lines 542-662 THE PURE ONES

Some lead an angelic life on earth, full
of virtue, prone to envy.
May they stay humble and fearful!
God will help them to defeat
Behemoth and evil. Angels will
welcome them into Heaven.
Waste not talent! Holy Mary is their
spiritual leader.

Lines 663-end CONCLUSION

Odo's assessment of his poem: some
reservations about rather
excessive remarks. He hopes, with
God's help, that it will stop
the noble mind being corrupted by the
flesh.

He ends with a vision of Heaven: the sacred choir praising God;

the Celestial City with access for all.

Life of Saint Odo

Odo's origins cannot be described with any great certainty, but various accounts point to a privileged upbringing about 130 miles south-west of Paris. Some say that he was the son of a knight, possibly called Abbo, or Ebbo, or even Ebbes I of Déols near Chateauroux. Other clues to his family's status are that his early education was at the court of William, Duke of Aquitaine, and that Fulk, Count of Anjou, later became his wealthy patron.

At Odo's birth (in 878 or 879), his father dedicated his baby to St. Martin and later, after the fifteen-year-old Odo had been afflicted by a mysterious illness, packed him off to the Church of St. Martin at Tours, where he became a canon or junior cleric. He stayed there for fourteen years, except for a course of study in Paris under the Benedictine monk Remigius of Auxerre, who taught liberal arts, theology, grammar,

dialectics, the nature of the universe and reality, philosophy and music.

Odo quickly became known for his patient study of the Gospels and the prophets,

his zeal for souls, monastic reform, emendation of morals, correction of youth, a life of poverty, abstinence and observance of rules. He gave instruction to visitors on the virtue of chastity and sobriety, the evil of covetousness and the need to avoid gluttony, lust and sexual perversion. His biographer, John of Salerno, says that Odo slept on the bare floor of his small cell and lived on a little bread and a few beans with no oil, fat or wine, devoted to prayer. We can see his creative talent in the three hymns and twelve antiphons which he composed in honour of Saint Martin and the abridged version of Saint Gregory's Moralia which he wrote to help his fellows digest that great work.

When he was twenty-nine, Odo entered the Benedictine monastery at Baume-les-Messieurs in the Jura mountains, about 250 miles to the east, where he served either as superior of the monastery school, or choir-master. There are three strange stories of his time there: firstly

that other monks tried to deter him from joining with a false allegation that Abbot Berno was wont to beat, shackle, imprison and starve his monks. Secondly, Odo is said to have narrowly avoided excommunication for having failed to supply a lighted candle when escorting a boy to the closet during the night. Thirdly, in order to save his parents' souls, Odo is reported to have installed his father as a monk at Baume, and to have persuaded his mother to take the veil.

When – in 901 - William I, Duke of Aquitaine, Count of Auvergne, donated part of his hunting reserve and money for the construction of Cluny Abbey, Berno of Baume transferred there as its first abbot, together with Odo "and a hundred books". In 927, Odo succeeded Berno as Cluny's second abbot. It was his mentor Berno who had had him ordained priest (apparently against his wishes) and had ordered him to write the Collationes, three books of moral essays.

Odo's reform of monastic life was perhaps inspired by the work of St. Gerald at Aurillac, as may be seen from Odo's biography of him. From

its inception, Cluny differed from other monasteries in that it was free from the control of the local aristocracy, and later was placed directly under papal authority, initially that of Pope Sergius III. As head of an independent, self-sufficient institution, Odo was able to enforce a stricter observance of monastic rules, banning, *inter alia*, "coloured and flowing cowls and tunics…shoes coloured and glossy" and the consumption of meat. He no doubt directed building schemes, funded by endowments from aristocrats whose sons were educated there.

Soon, other monasteries and churches asked Cluny to help them with reform, thus becoming members of a Cluniac federated order of subsidiary institutions which became one of the largest religious forces in Europe. By the twelfth century there were 314 Cluniac monasteries in France, Italy, Scotland and Poland; by the fifteenth century over 800. Subsidiary monasteries did not have abbots, but priors, second-in-command subject to the abbot of Cluny. By the time of its third building phase, completed in 1132, Cluny's abbey-church was the largest in all Christendom and possibly the building with the vastest

habitable space on the planet. Cluny also produced three saints (Berno, Odo and Gregory) as well as four popes.

Odo became known as the "restorer of monasteries" and was authorized by Pope John XI to reform ten institutions in France and five in Italy. In Rome, his name is linked with the monastery of Our Lady on the Aventine and St. Pauls's which the Saracens had destroyed, and reform of the convents at Subiaco and Monte Cassino. He was also entrusted with a diplomatic mission to establish peace between Alberic I of Spoleto and Hugh of Arles. His work required several visits to Italy during his last six years, visits which were often dangerous. His biographer records acts of generosity and saintliness in forgiving a mugger and converting a robber leader, and his miraculous survival when his horse stepped off a precipice during a snow-storm.

It was in Rome that he was struck down by the fever which was to kill him. However, he managed the journey home to Tours in time for the annual feast of his beloved Saint Martin on November 11th, 942. He died on November 18th which became his feast day.

Translator's Note

Initially, I had calculated that this translation of 5,500 lines or so of Latin hexameter would be the work of six weeks. Not so. It has taken me almost two years because of Odo's use of obscure Latin words, Greek words, unhelpful word order, loose syntax, curious spellings, vague allusions, Biblical riddles, awkward expressions, punctuation which cries out for correction, third person singular verbs in the God-Satan-Adam story with no obvious subject and a general lack of *le mot juste*. He deserves high marks for the accuracy of his hexameter scansion, though it means that he sacrificed clarity of expression because of it. There are also a few corrections to Swoboda's edition which I have

humbly suggested in Appendix Two.

I undertook this translation in support of the work of my dear neighbour Rita Wood (no relation), who is researching into Cluniac schemes in Romanesque sculpture, with a special interest in Malmsbury Abbey, Wiltshire, England, where the *Occupatio* was applied. I must thank her for her scholarship and perception in helping me to understand Odo's allusions.

P.L.W.

York, England

January 2008

Preface to the *Occupatio*

Greatly beloved brother, holy love fills you, so I rejoice.

A thirst for justice, the heart's honour, is glory

You lament that your heart overflows and so complain of your lot.

You will want a poem then, with which to bind it, to stem the flow.

What you ask is that words strange to you be sown: a great task,

for someone to make acceptable such a thing as novelty of feeling.

But it would be good for me to know of what use it is. You ask of me new ideas

(old ideas would be sufficient for your research, I think, if you did not want my cold talent to grow hot).

Certainly, passionless research chills good men everywhere, too much so now;

everyone desires trifling ideas, no-one seeks honesty. O the pain!

I am glad, then, that your mind longs for these things, as it should.
But where does a stream cautiously begin to flow from dry land?
I will ignorantly tackle the things which you order, as far as I can.
The hero above, as Father, will judge my work of doing what I can.
Rest assured of my compliance in setting this in motion, this I ask.

Book One
Preface

Life and death, good and evil, are placed side by side
in front of people: what chances to please them, is given them.
The law of Moses states this, that sage admits it.
But the good person is on high and the bad burns in the depths.
Discipline treats roughly those who lean towards the basest things
and devotion corrects what would have been full of vice.
Therefore, though the mind may be more open to filth,
it often performs a good deed when driven by force of character.
Whatever one puts into it, one's mind, like a grinding millstone,
stores carefully away and clings to more and more with use.

As we are morally ambivalent, then, prompt to good ideas or bad,

what a heavenly dish of flavours will result!

It may also be like the bait which catches a voracious river-pike,

or as a splintered plank to a sailor shipwrecked on sandbanks.

Indeed it pains me greatly that you are sorrowful; I need your

help more in this because it is medicine for the sick,

and I will strive to be more committed to new ideas, as you ask.

Let Him who gave rock its hard surface, strengthen me, I pray,

because, in order to express its modest ideas, my mind creates verse

so that my wandering brain may fix its ideas therein!

I whisper this in your ear so that no-one may laugh at it.

Let each of us pray to God not to allow sin to exist!

Christ Jesus, I call upon you: as you are generous, have pity!

You make everything good and are the leader of the wise.

Make your flock speak, giving me verbal expression!

If it turns out of little use, let it not prejudice me, I pray!

The invisible King created a visible world so that its wonderful Creator may reveal Himself through His wonderful work.

The world of the things which we see is a very great affair.
It consists of air, earth, sea, sky and ether.
One would think the ether curved, since the flat earth is rounded.
Air and fire go upwards, water and earth downwards.
A heavy insect balances in the air, supported by wings,
lest you doubt that a body can stay up in the air,
something which a perfidious bunch of comics denies to be true.
He who makes different elements, the fertile building blocks,
to inter-react harmoniously, is thus proved to be God
(for cold things fight against hot, wet fight against dry
and those with weight against those without).
Therefore the unseen becomes manifest through the visible,
beginning without beginning, end without end.
This gives things place, substance, beginning and end.
By making tiny things He is not proved smaller, nor bigger by
things great: things may be small, large or even medium-sized,
as He fashions things small, large and medium with sweet influence,
whirling round inside them and moulding them from outside.
What He creates from nothing, He also deploys in wonderful order,
making every single thing grow beautiful with His gifts:
colour adorns this one, a scent that one; taste this, power that.
But also, as some things flourish with different gifts,
so the customs of men may differ with different gifts:
strength, talent, beauty, appearance or eloquence,
different ages and character have their own patterns of behaviour.
Also, the world, being made from nothing, resides nowhere.
If nothing becomes something, it will clearly no longer be nothing.
Every thing has a place outside, not a place inside;
if there is a place inside, the place would be more than its space.
So why is there place for a world which has nothing outside it?
The mechanics of the world may perhaps be clear to you in the design of an egg;
it gives some idea though it is not perfect.
Air encircles the earth, the sky encircles the earth all around.

The egg-shell surrounds the egg-white which encircles the yolk:
the shell thus is Heaven, the egg-white air and the yolk the earth.
As the poetic muse imagines, air and earth direct their own
energies, striving to break into each other.
This lifts, that pushes, their equal masses repelling each other;
the power of each makes it impossible for either to be moved.
Therefore He creates by ordering diverse things at His nod,
establishing a beautiful homogeneous world from diverse elements.
How the Creator shines more wonderfully than His wonders
is proved by all the individual things which shine, being made so.
A water drop exists, smaller than a river, a spark smaller than a fire;
thus all the glory adorning His creations is but modest;
the Potter is the supreme fount and supplier of loveliness.
"Why did the world not exist earlier?" one may perhaps ask.
One could ask this of oneself and one's own failings,
and also of one's body, why it has no eye or ear,
rather than asking that, no matter how important it could be.
Better to have asked this: what is he doing or what is he going to be,
whose impulsive deed remains the cause of eternal retribution!
God's goodwill is everlasting, not suddenly arisen, so that
He may instantly create something He had not created in the past.
He precedes all time because He employs the uses of time.
Species of things which appear in whatever age
the King had already planned deliberately from time immemorial.
Consider some craftsman planning a piece of work:
first his mind imagines it, then hand and skill carve it.
Things which are new to us are therefore old stuff to the Creator,
who made the world and everything in His own good time.
Since God was therefore sufficient in Himself alone,
He preferred the world to exist, to enjoy good in its own time,
knowing itself or Him who had honesty of mind.
He created two beings in His own image,
beings superior to the rest over which they rule by force of reason.
He obtained no benefit for Himself by this, but gave them His gifts.

Embracing Him dearly, nay, tightly with willing arms
in order to be able to worship Him with delightful prayer,
they are blessed with the dowry of both freedom and reason.
Such great favour deservedly ought to nourish a love of the Giver!
There ought to be a reason for the living to owe Him praises in return
and to obey His command fully and enthusiastically,
nay, to desire divine hymns forever,
since it is a very great pleasure for the pious to sing these!
This one thing remains, that the clay should repay the potter;
there is nothing for it to give in return, except that.
Spurning this, people are more inclined to self-love.
O the pain! By loving self, they drive themselves to self-ruination.
First, the King orders the angelic host, which is light, to exist
and He stamped the divine image of Himself definitively on these.
He created them so great and good, having nothing earthly,
and He distinguished **their blessed pedigree with nine orders.**
It is clear that there is no mention anywhere of there being ten;
why, the prophet says that there were only nine names of the rocks;
a doomed lump of rock was set up like a tenth army,
not because the Creator made it, but because strife caused it.
He gives everybody one and the same measure of nature;
some error, not nature, separated fluids from solids.
Lucifer was an archangel and outranked the rest
(there are indeed higher and lower ranks in that place)
and, by the King's indulgence, three heavenly items adorn him.
He was equal in nature, as shown by the words of the prophet
when he struck the savage neck of the Bringer of Darkness.
Referring to his shame, he speaks loftily of it:
"**Have you not a ready-made hole**?"
He shows us that he was created capable of loving the Lord,
if he wanted, like the rest, but he didn't want.
A small gem with a hole in it, joined to others on a string,
could not take that string if it had not been pierced.
How will a gem which has a hole be able to be strung

with the rest, if it perhaps rejects the string?
Lucifer is therefore said to have a hole capable of piety.
But it is open to pride and closed to love.
If, when a gem is threaded onto a golden chain, it takes
up this love, it joins other jewels in Heaven.
Lucifer rejected this and turned to self-love.
It happened also that many stupid ones became arrogant
along with their leader and likewise suffered a swift fall
- o the pain! - forgetting that God had given them their being,
that He had placed them in Heaven, blessed with countless gifts.
Corrupt love and pride are the cause of so great a fall!
Abandoning his Creator, he who was made from nothing is nothing again.
Loving himself, lukewarm in his love of God, he abandoned Him.
By setting examples of arrogance to his followers, he got
the reward of Hell which he deserved,
bringing darkness upon himself instead of light eternal.
Forthwith they exchange their rest for all manner of Gehennas.
Seized with violent rages, he then swells with increased daring
and said that he was going to mount the Arctic regions of Heaven.
Frozen by cold, he is asking for a suitably full flogging:
frozen, though he had been warmed by God's love.
One who falls down the steep flank of a sheer mountain side,
impelled by body weight, is not easily checked.
So while he is itching to further his futile attempts
and boasting that he can climb to the lofty heart of Heaven,
an arrogant urge to rise up against his Creator burns in him:
he now asserts that he will be His equal.
Lo, the coiled one prepares his strength to assault Him
who created all things! This is why he rises up against everything:
he has complaints about everything, even though there are some of
the Almighty's creations with which he dares to associate himself.
The majesty of the Almighty is not harmed, however,
but, struggling to bite Him, he blunts his metal teeth.

The injury lays him low, nay, totally overwhelms him.
In trying to fight with Him, he disarms himself more,
and covers himself with disgrace which will never be removed.
Glory abandons him, everlasting confusion surrounds him.
The rest, retaining their formation, continue to rely on God and
rejoice in the Lord and laugh at the wretch, caring for themselves,
clinging more tightly to the King because of the rebel's fall.
They get angry and cry out as if on the King's behalf:
"You liar, you crazy rebel, origin of death, chief of crime
and inventor of deception, are you equal to God?
You? After He recently made you to exist from nothing,
after He dressed you elegantly and made you a noble,
more honoured than the angelic hosts, will you repay Him thus?
You? Equal to God? You? Good grief! Were you worthy
of keeping the glory which nature gave you?
The honour of majesty no longer suits you, you snake.
Will you set up a God-like throne above God's stars?
Does every precious gem cover you for that reason?
Should not a pine tree be taller than you in stature?
Will you also be deserving of the acres of Paradise
and a lofty throne and a divine sceptre?
Praise allied to love should be due to the Giver of so many gifts!
Instead, you wish to fight an unjust war! You'll not reach
the heights of Heaven, but drown in the Styx whirlpool, unholy one!
Behold, the new king of Heaven – rather, the prisoner of the abyss!
Will you match His lofty throne? You'll be viler than ring-worm!
Can one who itches to make war be a god?
Nature says no; law and right refute this.
You nothing, you imitate the ONE: you deserve nothing for EONs!
God alone has an eternally unchanging being.
Whosoever clings to Him, can share in this being;
but one who goes against Him, loses true being.
No-one may lie and claim to match the deeds of the Creator,
except perhaps you, the father of the lie and His opposite!

If you are a god, you could truly prove it by taking a risk:
it is clear that only God's being can make something from nothing.
So make a turd out of nothing, then, and become a god!
If you moan that this is too big a task, we'll give you an easier one:
convert some rubbish into nothing!
If not, you are guilty of lese-majesty. Die! Why not?
Nay, remain forever drowning in all kinds of punishment!"
They spoke. At once a violent tornado blew him to Hell.
Thus he suffers the eternal darkness which he himself created.
Once higher than those in Heaven, he is now lower than the lowest,
rotting and filthy, burnt by scorching flames.
He suffers all manner of torment, which he himself created.
He does not return for forgiveness, because he never has regret.
He himself invents sin and needs no-one to urge him to commit it
and then grace abandons him – a just judgement, since His good-
will had drained away from the one who had had nothing but that.
The more generous He had been to him, the more He confines him;
the more glory he had, the more severely censure pains him now.
The pure air of Heaven rejects impure ones straightway.
For those averse to staying there, what could remain but a fall?
Indeed, a fall immediately follows pride.
They therefore get their rewards, sent to the doom they deserve.
God blasts them out of Heaven with His winnowing-fan of justice,
to roast them in the eternal fires like bundles of weeds,
and grim Death throttles the life out of them.
However, he suffers no harm; all who lack nothing, lack this.
The whole process of expulsion overpowers him, but harms him not.
I say this, that we must keep an eye open for him. To prevent
the charm of such images making students overconfident,
the Lord reminds them that Behemoth fell from Heaven.
May He give us this reminder to ponder with humble mind!
There's an anvil; on it, God beats out his vessels.
He allows one to rage, but also torments one gently;
justice sets this one free, but dutifully restrains this one.

When a coppersmith is perchance creating something on an anvil,
the anvil is set up, a fleece placed under the vessel.
His blow strikes both: battering the anvil, burnishing that pot.
His hammer beats this thinner and strikes down upon that.
The anvil takes the blows but is not shaped into a vessel.
The enemy is fixed in the earth, remaining down in Hell,
and the divine hand tests His disciples against Lucifer.
He frees him to make them afraid; restrains him, to teach them trust.
May the proud ones quake at the sight of his fall!
A reprobate attempts such a small rebellion and falls.
In both these ways, **the enemy's cunning makes war on the pious.**
Every trick he employs increases the heavy burden on himself,
which flows over him and drowns him.
That Cerberus burns insatiably for their death.
But the heavenly Judge, giving it a soporific,
muzzles the rabid mouth of the gaping monster with a ring,
His divinity hooking its nose and nostrils,
and its madness does not harm them, however insatiably it burns.
He does not punish things which are allowed nor the vilest things,
but makes them a yardstick for illustrating, not how pride drowns,
but how pride takes a fall and how virtue may increase.
What He does is just; what (Lucifer) itches to do is iniquity.
For he sinfully wants everything and is always unjust in his desire.
But he achieves nothing, except what the just Creator allows.
Lo, we see that there is a division in the heavenly ranks!
The earth beneath rightly trembles at the thunder of the heavens:
if there is corruption in Heaven, why not more in men of clay?
All of creation is an unchangeable marvel; and He who
was responsible for its existence, gives Himself immutability.
The arrogant are swept away, the humble remain in strength.
Grace favours the submissive and abandons complainers.
Nature had created for both the ability to know, and to do, good;
different groups, however, have followed their different desires.
This group chooses the Creator, but another thinks itself superior.

That group loves God and this group loves itself alone.
Let us consider what each group has as its own desire,
or the criteria which each seizes as its own.
This group stands firm, that falls: let us see what belongs to each!
As eternal glory remains for these, so sin remains for those,
and nectar refreshes these, confusion scorches those.
What they do and what they fear instructs all the faithful,
to prevent dust blowing up and lungs breathing in its chaos.
O you stars of God, fellow lights of your Sun,
who know through reason how to recognise the supreme good,
adhering to justice, never falling for tricks,
whom piety, the mother of virtues, teaches this one thing –
to opt to love good, which is supreme above all things,
the prudent way in which the clay ought to repay its Creator.
O you lucky ones whom eternal glory secures!
After selective purges of Heaven's rebels, the Potter,
because the meek chose to adhere to true goodness,
applauded generously. He gave them this as a reward:
not to want to sin any more and ultimately to be incapable of it.
Flowing water can quickly become hard ice,
and having now learnt to dedicate their law to the Potter Himself,
which is the pinnacle of justice, they shine bearing every honour.
Moreover, with their authority they restrain the apostatic mobs
which dared to attack nothing but the thing decreed by them.
Thus the holy flock has huge giants under its jurisdiction.
He who presumed to equate himself to God is forced therefore,
against his wish, to succumb to angelic orders
and rein back at the nod of the holy guards!
Though he has been swept away and has lost his happy existence,
yet he remains tough, with enormous talent and natural power;
but at once he turned all his smartness to trickery.
He extorts nothing by force, but persuades very cunningly.
He does not give orders, but achieves all through craftiness,
determined to deceive and rejoicing in nothing but perdition,

laughing with the sure consolation that he takes others with him.
The King has more right to be puffed with pride than the rest of the arrogant ones.
Alas, the arrogant take the King's prize for it!
(Lucifer) is called a mist-shrouded mountain by the voice of God
because pride has puffed him up, not because he is high in virtue,
and because he stands shrouded in perpetual darkness.
He tricks all those carrying grass for themselves into the mountains,
while the proud perform sweet acts of pleasure
and are eager to distend their insatiable bellies with this feast.
The dirtier the places he visits, the more fully he stuffs his belly;
he fills it with offal as plentiful as the deeds with which he is soiled.
One who is willing stands in his way, backed by the Almighty's courage,
for no-one watches out for him on his own.
Our spirit is too capricious; we are human; flesh is dust.
Would the flesh remain steadfast before the hands of so great an enemy,
or could dust repel his huge strength,
unless God Himself wore down such strong arms?
He lays him low before the meek, but lets him attend the proud.
Therefore anyone wanting such a savage, menacing foe to run away,
should be quick to surrender to the one Almighty!
Let the One who alone created him take his sword to him.
Willow trees of a stream are said to cluster around him.
Winter fills a stream and summer makes it dry; this shows
that one may have some blessing, but not extending to the next life.
The willow, fruitless, is soon full-grown from the blessing of the stream,
and enriched because it has no duty to bear fruit.
These "willows" cluster around Satan, watered by this stream.
He reveals his tricks more openly to such as these;
those who struggle for life cling more closely;
he bids them do all evil, this willow-grove such a delight for him.
From all good people, since they are carefully watching for him,
he hides his traps lest they perhaps grow wary if they are revealed.

If one makes a strong case, it is clear to most that there is a need for duty,
while the reward of praise is loved,
and that a deed done sloppily is not worth the full reward,
nor is it when passion goes beyond the correct norm or time.
Virtue becomes vice if it lacks these two things.
The inciter of evil and destroyer of good therefore
always urges the evil ones, like well-known friends, to open acts of evil,
or else urges the good to secret acts, as if ensnaring strangers.
Thus, he either forbids good deeds or wants to corrupt those done already,

but battering-rams will sooner break open forts than these:

using his power he tears asunder those united by a single faith.

As he was the first to dare to shatter the peace of Heaven,

so now he also wants the faithful to rebel, confident of the

absence of good which leads to the abandonment of morals.

He is busy breaking pious hearts with thousands of trespasses,

which a humble person brushes aside easily like spiders' webs.

This beast, as though grazing upon grass in the dark,

licks our soft minds by urging pleasures.

One whom his suggestions please, is now chewed up by his teeth.

It is not possible to live except through God, the root.

From there, one goes on a journey up into a cave-mouth

where the bones of virtue are crushed by depraved use

until Death swallows one into its gullet, to stay there.

However, the Almighty's mercy took care of such people.

He beat (Satan's) jaw and broke his arms.

The wretches may be able to escape from the place in which the

beast pulverised them, if the prisoners recover their senses

and repent that they spurned their Holy Parent

and listened to a criminal to the detriment of their own safety.

Who could evade such cruel gaping jaws

unless that Holy Father, always preferring to forgive, took care

of them so dutifully and unless the fount of piety was there to help?

Look, He drills holes in the grim molars and stops them devouring!

Look, he has a hole by which the prisoners can escape!

This enemy attacked, full of vigour and power, but

our soldier is unfit for war, made of dust and unequal in strength.

The General however is a professional with a powerful sense of duty.

Choosing the weak and shattering whoever are strong,

He uses the humble to lay low the proud and the beautiful people
and makes the meek snatch outstanding triumphs.
In time of war He conceals the terrifying faces of the enemy
so that the soldier, who would abandon hope at that very sight,
thus has greater hope, triumphing over an unseen foe,
who can be defeated so long as he cannot be seen.
The war over, the outcome is a success
and, on the day of judgement, the most merciful King Himself,
appearing to the meek, gave them Heaven as a reward
whilst the arrogant and proud perished with their arrogant king.
Then, secure and fully rejoicing now, they see
against whom they had fought, who it is whom they can beat,
knowing for sure that it was only possible
because God, who alone can defeat him, had become flesh
in order to strip the strong of his spoils, being stronger, and bind him
and He had laid him low before our flesh which is joined to Him.
Once this slave was joined to the Thunderer, it now becomes master!

Then that encircling, massive creature endures eternal fires.

These rejoice, offering up all manner of melody to the Lord forever.

The punishment and sight of the defeated is cause for praise.

What they would be if they lacked grace, they prove by observing

the one they beat: and seeing to whom they owe what they are.

The angelic hosts having been reduced by the fall of the Devil,

the Almighty Father quickly and decisively repairs the losses.

For, the more to thwart the arrogant dragon everywhere,

He ceased to enter a body from which the spirit had flown.

A limping foot has a tendency to tangle its steps.

I too am like an incoherent, wandering with slipping foot,

so may He take pleasure in guiding my lazy steps!

A pause here may re-invigorate my meagre strength!

Book Two
Preface

Behold, that creative hand made everything from nothing
and gave such a thing being, strong in reasoning,

blessed with cognition, in the plan of the King of honours.

There should then be less strife, rather praise to be offered!

May the Creator's great work be imitated?

The enemy is given his reward; the arrogant clay is cracked.

Alone and all powerful, the King claims the ether for Himself.

Pride-swollen chests seek Hell, the meek earth submits to Heaven.

We take a few things from there, like a drop of water from the sea.

May the Fount and Creator of piety not allow this to be a mistake!

For all time the King has existed complete, by His eternal sceptre,
sufficient in Himself and lacking nothing.
When however it pleased Him, He quickly made everything exist:
sky, earth, waters and those things He fills and adorns them with.
But He wanted mortals to be superior to His other creations.
So He made them with a plan (the rest were by order)
To excel in reasoning, honoured with a godly image,
and to be in microcosm what He is in the greater universe.
If you have a good look around, you will see things to prove it.
He teaches them the founding core of the faith:
the foundation is founded on the very number of the founder.
For the scripture says "Let *us* create", which *He* did.
This number reveals a triple Creator and a single one.
His essence never assumes a plural number of person
and what they have is one or common to the three.
The remarkable thing is that the clay is in the image of its potter,
but the Potter is much more of a personality than his pots!
He provides them with everything in union, so He is within them,

claiming them for Himself, putting Himself alone into them.
In order to choose to be good, they are given power of judgement,
as if redeemed by the image of the good Christ of His own free will.
If God, good of His own free-will, compelled by no force or law,
of free-will good, is in essence the same,
not this and this, but the same, alone unchanging,
people would be different if they were not good of their free will.
Or is anyone truly good when forced into doing right?
When I hear the word “like”, I distinguish between the potter and his clay.
For just as He is God, He says that we are Johns.
Will you think for that reason that any of us are equal to God?
For “like” and “as if” are not exactly the same,
but often sound more or less the same.
The sun itself is thus said to appear shining in the mountains.
for being alive depends upon breath, dying upon a corpse.
The immortal part of life is an eternal image.
Life which has its seed from Heaven, carries mud beneath.
Mud weighs down the pure and drags it down.
If however a mistress refuses arrogantly to serve God,
she is placed below her maid, the chaste below the wanton.
And if there is anything below Him above, it is itself supreme.
Because He promotes the first man in a four-season climate,
revealing to him the sum of things and the treasury of wisdom,
so that he grows rich with four-fold wealth gained from interest,
aware of what he has and choosing to live anywhere,
let him not dare to enjoy the law’s favour as if he owned it
and let not the ingrate provoke to anger the One who gives freely,
gives instruction easy in the fulfilment and remembrance, to show that
He regards him as His true heir so long as he obeys Him.
The Almighty lacks nothing, takes nothing, presides over all,
If He is given something , He himself had first given it to the giver.
The grace of justice is His equal and everlasting companion;
thus that grace is a giver, not a taker away of that.

Only one thing was asked of Adam to whom a thousand gifts were given.
The King therefore gives orders to test His own apprentice,
nay, to reveal to Himself who penetrates hearts – not to him –
if He should put the master ahead of the slave or vice versa,
if one has the wisdom and judgement to defer to one's Benefactor.
Adam was given Paradise on the outside and a virago inside,
But still he is chosen to be her prince.
An inferior position does not prejudge her in any way,
Eve is not pictured as more important or in a more sacred position,
no, of lesser importance, evilly persuading and poisoning her man.
So the example is clear, though suppressed by the murmuring of
those who seek the first bishops' thrones in the Pharisee custom
or to be placed first in chronological order, not in merit.
If a youth grows up in the bosom of a holy monastery
and an old man perhaps outside, he may then be a coenobite inside,
the actual place in no way obstructing the old or aiding the young,
unless levity weighs on him and honesty fails the young man.
Honour is based on outstanding morals, not on one's many years.
Then the lucky first man suffered loss of Paradise.
Wondrous land, which his Maker had allotted him!
Here he was settled, not only free of all
sadness, but full of the gift of complete joy,
forbidden to want for nothing, strongly advised to refuse nothing.
This toil does not produce the bored leisure of lotus-eaters,
but it is like spending an agreeable holiday.
The sky does not shake nor the heavens resound with thunder.
What more? No anxiety, pleasure fills all!
The new settler inhabits this new home and the whole grove,
provided he does not take for his food what is forbidden.
God orders him to guard himself and to work,
not because he needs work or that the place fears a thief;
but if he had obeyed, if he had executed His order,
if he had done that, he would still be guarding and working.

Eden is great for indulgence and claims that as its own.
All the gentle animals obey and the fierce ones like griffins.
He himself noted the names for the animals as if his own.
He who created them was able to give each one a name;
but the prince would name them as his own as he wished.
But there is among those animals no-one like or similar to Adam
for him to love like himself, according to nature.
For who rejoices fully except in that which he loves as himself?
Therefore, so that he might have a consort to love or enjoy,
the Creator in some symbolic plan put him to sleep;
thus from his rib was the virago produced.
That sleep, the flank, the bone, the body make an important image.
The Church comes from the flank of Christ, asleep in death;
He gives it strength like bone and joins its blood to His own.
He becomes weak in order to toughen his tender one.
Time was passing by, he survived, clinging on to his companion.
The banquet of the divine table was feeding his mind,
and Paradise gave him food from his labour.
Each of them stood there bearing the likeness of their Creator.
For their Creator alone was sufficiency for them.
His mind accustomed to joining in the discourses of archangels;
nay, he looked on the face of God his Master with rejoicing.
As He had been accustomed to appearing to our forefathers,
He often deigns to visit His raw apprentice.
O happy man, if he had thrown himself totally upon Him!
Thus the King adorns him, enriches him with so many such things,
seeking only this, that he love Him in return.
It is right for one's thanks to match or outmatch the gift;
when you receive and are repaying for great gifts,
it is base to have received a lot of gifts and to forget thank-yous.
It is totally wrong to love the gift one is given and not the giver,
especially when it is a lavish free gift from a loved one.
Receiving so many good things, what should Adam have offered?
Seduced by his love of gifts, he did not give enough in return.

O the pain! Delighted by the bestowed honour
he clung to it as his own, abandoning his love of his Creator.
Then in turn, He too cherished his ungrateful protégée less
because Adam, loved, did not love Him who loved him.
and for this he is stripped of the protection of God's help.
Then Satan, burning with envy, as well as the torments of Hell,
waged war upon the new human being.
For remembering with what plague his arrogant self had earlier rotted,
he secretly launched a deadly dart from the bow of pride.
As it is easy for the side and breast to be pierced when the shield
and breast-plate have been thrown or torn away, so they soon were
taught guilt. It was desire of glory which had put him to the test, I
believe.
So he is persuaded to aim for some high pinnacle,
though certain that he would have to be stripped of his honour
if he himself dared to usurp the godly height.
That stupid woman also croaks with deceitful words:
knowing it is wrong to be like God and therefore immortal.
Like a honey-coated juggler, she utters those words.
The evil woman promises Adam knowledge – enough to fill him and
more –
that he will not feel the threats his Maker had made
but could henceforth obtain an increase of his own glory.
He listens to that; though he wanted to believe what he ought.
He remembers that his warning had been delivered not in a raucous
voice;
so he believes that the word of God, more enduring than the stars,
is not obligatory but the serpent's hiss is so.
Believing, he rejoices, listens to the inciter with gaping mouth.
The guilty mind of the slippery beast is smooth-talking and won.
Adam agrees on the spot as he strove to finalise his desire.
He took what was forbidden, clear that he was committing a sin.
Thus the foul-mouthed woman easily talked the glutton into disgrace.
Ah unhappy father, begetter and punisher of your line,

Ah, are you insane? What madness has got hold of you?
What are you rushing into? Why are you killing us along with you?
The Almighty merely orders you to be subject to Him,
ordering other things to be beneath you or to remain your equal.
If you were a slave to Him, you would be a very free slave.
Now your liberty is slave to vices, most disgracefully.
Your worship displeased Him: your devotion will be shameful.
The planet which the sun cherishes and the swift moon circles -
this he handed to you, but forbade you to touch one tree!
Alas! When he picked from this, he broke the one rule.
As he grew hot with self-love and cold with God's,
he grows stupid, suffering ignorance, full of blindness.
A fog blunts the sharpness of his mind,
so that he willingly believes the deceit, knowing not what he had learnt.
When criminal arrogance is in full flow, behold how
it makes a prudent man crazy enough to prefer harmful things,
trapped by self-love! There is nothing worse than that.
The coiled snake looks for vessels suitable for deception,
a woman, so her husband may trust the snake as though his lover,
so the slippery one may master the weak sex, she the manly sex.
There is a sort, as is clear, which poisons people by deception.
Satan is the snake, the woman is flesh, Adam the spirit:
it suggests, she seduces, and he agrees.
The body usually follows in where the head has entered;
one who lops off the head will crush the whole.
If the first suggestion is brushed off, the operation is stopped.
The head is soft grass, the tail the hardest stone,
so guilt is at first tender and then hard through use.
Most animals know how to seek union with their own kind;
thus a woman could know, without conversing, the intent of
the snake, the crime not yet hiding its cunning.
Not knowing how to detect evil, the woman was seduced,
credulously believing the forked tongue had spoken the truth.
Knowing this, the husband does what the apostle Paul mentions:

biased more than is just, close bound by love of a spouse.
For hope deceived him, imagining his theft to be pardonable,
as though the King's ban was just a threat, not one of vengeance.
But Death proves his edict by devouring everyone redeemed!
Let us the people of earth look at what the clay's presumption does,
what sort of pact with dust one's breath may strike,
just like, of course, the assault upon Heaven from below,
from where the earth thunders at the stars with fiery flashes
and a creature of clay leaps in one bound over the lofty stars!
His missile lands in the throat of the One on high;
thus, relying on strength which he usually does not have,
his catapult hurled a dart at Him.
Now the wind was blowing and stirring up the dust;
now a fever of the heart was inciting an attack on high.
He leaps up, rejoices jubilantly and then makes merry.
Thus, after eating it, he hopes to climb mountain tops.
We are as dust and the Devil our tempter,
who dupes the dust into hoping to be a copy of the Thunderer.
But he falls from Heaven; He does not take him back there;
instead, He immediately drove him away as if into empty space,
and quickly kicked him, deceived, into the abyss.
He learns from his fall that he entered into a silly pact
and, drowning, knows where his presumption is heading.
Therefore he eats it, as if going to float up into Heaven,
enticed by food or having dined more like God,
or because God does not need food and he will soon be like that,
thus making his farewell to food with a final titbit,
thinking he is changing into a god and, astonished, he labours
in vain since he is not changed into his Master's form.
The fool hangs on, neither capable of flight
nor with divine appearance adorning him; nay, he is naked
and stripped of the cloak of honour which he had before.
The fool therefore hangs on, shattered by his failed attempt,
seeing himself crawling along the ground, not climbing to Heaven,

crawling along the ground, naked, with the first feelers.
He blushed, as he secretly hides himself, a disgraceful thief,
and his foul stain now clings to our little white limbs.
As he spurned the cup he had taken, preferring better things,
and is sick of the honours which the Creator gave him,
look, the wretch undergoes great change!
The rich person suddenly becomes poor, the lucky unlucky, and
the honourable person ruined, self-destructing, and
realises the change into an opposite self.
He has lost what he was, and gets what he himself has brought on.
For the wild flesh could soon struggle with the spirit,
and the rejecter of God cannot have self-control
nor can one who tries for undeserved great things master small.
Ah! One who hopes to be polished by assuming God's splendour,
deserved in turn to suffer a suitable repulse;
Adam took something forbidden and soon ruined himself.
Now let us come to the patriarchs whom the lawyer remembers
or the genealogical order counts, collectively and individually,
which bears the Lord like the hook on the end of a line,
and which guts a Leviathan from the waters of our race:
a flock great in number, but feeble and humble of mind,
and the same faith binds them to Christ like two abutted walls.
Eloquent offspring, which the bloodline of the Word adopts,
snow white with lilies, capped with a rose-red garland,
a noble lineage, denounce your degenerate parent!
Let legal minds blame the deed which the dissolute one perpetrated!
Look what that father of yours chose or listened to!
He stood offering up nectar before the very face of God,
which cherub and seraph burn inwardly to see:
the fool gapes to behold a serpent, a horrible creature!
Accustomed to hearing theorematic hymns,
nay rather the voice of God which surpasses every song,
he wastes his time on the hissing filth of a strident serpent!
You, you, the new generation, bearing Christ's likeness,

divested of the squalor of your forefathers at last
and putting on fresh virtue created in Heaven,
taught by Him what it is to ignore an order,
you whom He makes skilful in foreseeing the fate of another,
so that you may be wary of the expert skills of the Devil:
with the gift of fresh sight, enlighten your ancient parent as to
why, after God's words, he desires to listen to the words of a snake,
and why, after seeing such a splendid face which makes the stars shine,
he looks to such a base and pernicious demon!
O intelligent mortal, whither has that famous sense of yours fled?
You weaken your judgement, you befoul your liberty!
The freedom which you assume for yourself is base servitude!
You are denied by God; you will be the evil monster's foot-stool!
You before whom lions lay down will be bitten by fleas;
all the lowest creatures will resist you, to whom the highest were once subject,
scornfully convicting you of having despised God.
This brilliant flatterer did not deceive you entirely!
Granted, he promised he would add increase to your glory:
in the name of Leviathan he announces "an increase of these";
clearly, he is adding diseases, too many to be able to count,
and three deaths: of the soul, of the flesh and in the flames of Hell.
(The first death – of the soul – creeps on as the Lord departs;
Adam brought this on himself as soon as he bit the stolen fruit.
But as his soul dissolves, he then loses his second, bodily, creation.
The third, when he is overtaken by flames in the final payment.)
Sloth deceives virtues, over-imagination deceives minds.
That evil tempter filled you and puffed you up with this!
That stripping of the bashful body had not yet shamed his
chaste appearance, not yet knowing sexual urges;
a woman's navel or loin had not yet burned with the fire of excess,
nor had the eye been seduced by voluptuous flesh or the touch by
feeling beautiful figures, and richness of diet had not yet inflamed
a maiden's part and inspired it to base use.

Before that, each limb had had its own decent use.
Harmony had created this peace in the various limbs,
so that they desired no evil and nothing would make them blush,
but each limb saw itself individually in mutual respect.
What nature gave them reflected only in some other person.
For why would it blush when it bore only decent things?
Sin crept in – a limb is no longer individual or alone.
For an ulcer, disfiguring the face, makes it feel shame
and sin contaminates the limb to which it perhaps attaches;
and if the wound disappears, the face regains its usual glow
and the limbs shine again in their own glory when sin is removed.
After a fall, lust bores into the senses like leaven;
it seduces, it entices, it feeds with an intoxicating contagion.
But reckoning the first human to be of little importance,
woman would take in what a man gave, so that what he was going to beget
established a throne there, whence would come offspring,
so that none would emerge without being branded with the crime.
So the first ones born also blushed the more for this member,
each one shunning the sight of it and what it does.
Other limbs move under our control;
their movements we employ usefully and decently;
this is the only limb not in our power to move,
because the will of its own reduces all our control of it.
Therefore this act is marked as shameful and disgraceful,
always loving the shades of Hell which it now samples.
Lo! Promised advancement, the divine summit, gives a boost!
This is the sublime glory with which the lying go-between fills us!
When sufficient splendour was polishing each limb, mortals
were urged to remove what is inborn and to court the foreign.
It was able to slip in through these tricks, all of which Adam would have quickly spat on, if he were not sleepy with arrogance of heart.
It opens doors, getting inside as if known as a friend.

If his heart were not now willingly wasting with this contagion,
Adam would not, of course, drink in diabolic suggestions;
though they ring in the ear, they would not penetrate to the heart.
That tempter had promised him that he would be like God.
Through these very tricks, then, he was well able to show contempt
and his feverish brain connives like a puffed up snake!
For he himself knows full well there are no gods but One.
But perhaps he wants to signify angelic forms!
But he knows he was created by the Creator of the number of those.
Is it right that a worm should teach him his fill of reason?
Is it agreed that the Lord cannot rule unless a viper says so?
If animals decline to eat it, would he be like them, but for a worm?
But the snake goes on to another victim which it is itching to corrupt.
It persuaded another to rot with the same contagion:
swollen with the knowledge of how to exceed the proper limits,
reckoning as worthless this glory which nature brings!
Let people realise that they do not deserve the archangelic heights,
unless their presumption has made them the image of their Maker!
Therefore it hisses this, urges Adam to pursue this:
to strive to use force against God Almighty,
knowing that he is clay, that everything should tremble at His power,
but to struggle to be god-like against the Creator's wish.
It tries to talk about gods, their triple form, one glory and one power,
so that Adam may stray more treacherously;
there are three persons and God is one essence;
that which the persons have in common, remains one
nor can it be called plural nor ever be divided.
If he did not know this, it would be wrong to learn it from a snake;
mortals are strong in reasoning and the snake is devoid of it.
Justice does not allow what the Potter has made to be His equal.
Striving for that, the demon Lucifer will become dark in the East.
He ought at least to have restrained his rash attempts
and controlled his mocking assaults, is it not true?
If Adam lacks reasoning power, the aforesaid reason is in vain!

He had been educated with advice, was skilled in reasoning,
fortified with warnings and counselled with threats;
knowledgeable, he ignores what he knew and was also prey to lies,
seduced by the tricks which a snake devised!
The man in his arrogance prefers to believe such a worm
and trusts it, knowing it had fallen because of its own daring,
believed it believable though all others refuse to believe!
Everyone perchance asks why it happened thus;
for God sees the things to come as those of the present,
and by His power everything in Heaven and on earth is made,
and nothing is certain to happen except by His nod,
which is revealed when all things know Him to the full.
Therefore He knew that Adam would fall by the Devil's urging.
Why did He allow the fierce enemy to battle with the weak?
Firstly, it is clear that the earth from which we are said to come
cannot join with the lofty centre of Heaven
nor can we, being dust, penetrate the mind of the Almighty.
But there is something which may be termed "by gift",
which the forefathers understood and descendants learnt from them.
He established all things with His judgement and just order.
In His lofty plan, grace glues certain ones to Him
and allows certain ones to have the will to behave justly.
It inspires devotion and aids the willing follower.
That person takes the gift given and trains with it;
this person ignores the gift and, deprived, goes backwards,
others hang on to what they love, or reject what they do not.
Therefore it is a matter of the will, which one grace helps, which one not.
If God knows a person's destiny, he does not fix it.
For the Creator never plans a destiny for what He did not create;
indeed, who ever believed that God created evil,
when all the things He created are, on the contrary, very good?
For nothing comes from Him which is evil or not natural.
As darkness is nothing but merely the absence of light

and silence will not exist except by the cessation of noise,
thus virtue, by departing, creates vice, and health disease,
thus evil is nothing except a melting away of goodness.
We were created righteous and righteous will was given to us,
which we could make a decision to turn into ill-will.
To prevent ignorance in its ambiguity perhaps fooling us,
we were first taught with warnings and made reliant on reason,
so that we would be good and true more through will,
choosing better things by His will and avoiding the harmful.
Is anyone truly good, not out of a love of goodness,
but because of some other cause which may exist,
mainly by tasting, as we say, a good wine?
What reward shines with gold, what with a bronze colour?
When in a will a modest fortune is left by someone,
gratitude is not felt for the thing bequeathed, but for the giver.
The meek person has merit, the fierce wild beast has sin.
Thus a person would be without praise, if incapable of free-will.
If we did not act freely, what praise of our own would we have?
It is accepted as praiseworthy to know evil but to prefer good.
For what the King established can be forced from no-one.
Therefore, because the Creator planned our destiny, are we guilty
because we cannot avoid it, or because the just Judge requires
that only our audacity is a sin, since He is usually forgiving?
But Adam never did evil deeds which had been destined.
Ignorant, he had no foreknowledge of any things of the future;
and he was forced into no deed by foreknowledge.
If a doctor can have foreknowledge, from some symptom,
as often happens, of the moment at which the sick may die,
do they die because of this? If he did not know this, they would still die.
Therefore God, from whom nothing is hidden, knew Adam would fall;
yet He did not burn him or wish to support his fall.
For Adam himself, responsible for the blame, hid himself away
and knowingly disobeyed God's command, forced by no-one.

He said “Does anyone honour those who do not honour themselves?”
Therefore he urged God, who looks for such things, at least to control
him by force, as if he were not a man but an animal,
one who ought to be controlled by reason or self-honour,
seeing that someone saintly could love nothing unclean,
nay, would with open mouth love goodness, being good by nature.
The blame for our fall is Adam’s, not God’s.
For the holy potter gave no unbearable order, and, being just,
does not punish a deed unless people knew it was avoidable.
It is often said that because Adam committed the sin willingly
he rightly gets his just punishment for what he did.
Human salvation is a compact of two things:
grace and judgement; one inspires, the other aids or supports.
Grace inspires everything good and demands our enthusiasm;
grace gives knowledge and free-will and indeed the power to act.
For it is attracted by enthusiasm and repelled by laziness.
For something works upon us without our knowing it,
circumventing the lazy ones and making them enterprising,
and we are to some degree companions of that grace in our zeal.
It increases in the ardent and is full of yawning in the slothful.
Grace prevents; praise must then be given to Him who gave us it,
and a reward is owed for the zeal of the One creating the plan.
God therefore rewards the faithful freely and justly.
But we strive for lofty things, trusting in God’s generosity,
bursting to show that the Lord is just and kind,
and that humans are guilty and freely willing to sin;
but now I plan to return to the forgotten tragedy.
Who can satisfactorily explain little Adam’s woeful error here?
For he falls for obvious tricks, even though fully educated;
he thinks he is God’s equal, fed by the animals,
and thinks it a great good or profitable to know evil,
and that God’s warnings can disappear at the words of a snake.
Shipwrecked, he needs to reach out his hand for a plank;

but this man, for whom there is help on every side – in vain –
does not admit his sins, wandering here and there.
Do we read that he repented or prayed for forgiveness?
No, but as danger beset him, he was without a plan.
Remaining stupid, he shows the usual feelings:
he covers the infamous part of his body with a loin-cloth.
for this member, by which we are sown, would indeed be honourable
if savage lust, residing there, did not make it foul.
O, if only he had said "I have sinned". O, if only!
What a yoke he would then remove from our neck!
If he piously ignored the arrogantly talking despiser
who proved so often harmful, how merciful
God would have been to the meek and to one seeking forgiveness!
He did not want to be very hard, but rather was ready to forgive,
nor had human confusion made Him confused, and Adam
does not remain confused but cares to rise after his fall.
Adam was dumb-struck and daring at the command from a snake
which sneered that he should choose to spurn God's order,
and, in his confusion, does not know how to form a plan,
such as when a slave calms his angry master with pleasure and
asks him to be good, as proved by so many good deeds,
and he does nothing to help himself, being prepared to die.
I shall use words which are ridiculous but painful.
Father, if betrayed posterity wants to rage sadly
because it is impoverished, allow them to weep for the fallen!
Seeing in advance what its actions will lead to, it has
wisely become accustomed to thinking of the consequence of an action.
If you are strong in reason, I admit, you must try it, though hard.
You enter a struggle too great; calculate carefully what the battle order
demands! Lo, you appear almost equal in strength;
He claims for Himself the heavenly heights;
but you crawl on the ground; nor is your war proved to be just;
for what you are and what you have, came to you by His gift.
Why do you then struggle in vain to compare yourself to God?

If you devote yourself to breaking nature's law,
to the Creator of which you refuse to be subject,
and you want to wage an unjust war so savagely upon the Father,
mixing right with wrong, breaking ranks,
not caring for justice but being guilty of violence,
you would, in your bestial attack, not be abiding by the law.
If a sense of shame and piety and honesty are thought to be nothing
(for in your audacity you will appear to have spurned all of them),
confess, I ask, with what accomplices you attempt such great deeds,
and who your fellow conspirators are, implicated in the plot!
These things require an enormous, violent band of body-guards;
they leave just you and the serpent to fight this duel!
When indeed you climb the vast citadel of Heaven,
how does the serpent accompany you without feet?
The serpent itself will not make swift leaps to Heaven,
and your inciter rushes on, never to return thence willingly;
therefore he himself will not aid those futile attempts of yours!
So a four-legged lizard or some bird of ill omen
or a hopping little bird or a buzzing, biting mosquito
- these at least will accompany you as you go to Heaven, so that
greater divine strength may be added to your ranks,
a huge phalanx to walk hand-in-hand with you to the lofty throne!
I'm talking nonsense, of course, but your attempt is more so!
The Creator made many species of things subject to Him;
all things push against the same Creator.
It is all right that He should want to create with His own gifts,
unless a similar power is fashioning a parallel universe for itself,
which may favour it, prepared to obey it as its own.
Adam is guilty by his chosen act: he attempts other things in vain.
Some reprobates, nothing but worthless, were helping him.
Others, opposing him, will show that they know the Potter better,
so that each may destroy the Lord's common enemy.
We laugh at the fool, but he is free to weep for his deed!
We say this, not as mimics, following a theme,

but we weep that our parent was caught, disastrously for us,
because through him we are sad, and his pain hurts us in turn.
He punished himself, with his innocent offspring also punished.
Then we were all inside him in essence, as he is our begetter;
so he subjects us to death, like himself,
and sprays us with the shower of vices with which he is drenched.
We are born by transmission of seed, via an inserted penis;
we suffer this like the man who suffered the bandits of Jericho,
being left half-dead from the blows rained upon us.
We are partly dead, not seeing the spiritual,
just clothed perhaps in a corporeal cloak,
and partly alive, being still strong in reason,
since we know how to censure our crime and recover with caution.
That pain creates lethargy, this creates arguments;
this elicits groans, that stirs those whisperings.
With rustic pen I force an urban Muse to sing,
re-echoing the primordial glories of the First Potter,
then, as Adam's innate glory removed itself,
disgracing him so that he was ashamed to look at himself
(and fled hence in panic to a shadowy hide-away).
Next, I am going to tell what the Holy Creator did for him.
I finish, preparing my strength for a third little book.

Book Three

Preface

Now the first man languishes in shadow

as if his sin is shrouded by a dark cloud.

That heavenly passion of his has cooled,

demonic coldness has taken over.

Stripped of the honour he rejects,

he struggles in vain against the Almighty.

Surely he does not aim for the heights? He heads for the depths!

He heads for the dark which befits his base deeds!

He gives birth to something which afflicts everybody,

and the disease is passed on from him to his descendants.

All his progeny, catching this plague

and being heir to his morality, is worthless.

O Holy Potter, this clay which

you created in your image is cracked!

Created from nothing, it was assembled by Him.

May it stay intact, since it arises from you.

Thus I will speak a few words with rash daring,

if you will show me the means or some kindness.

Have pity on those revealing these things!**G**od therefore knew what poor daring Adam had done,
and watches the wretch in his stupid attempt to ruin himself,
he who had robbed himself of His gifts because of his presumption,
helpless, weak and feeble, confusedly sending himself into darkness.
But with God watching over him, everything seems to remain good.

Would his life be a happy one, then, if it lacked His supervision?
But look! He is afraid to be seen as the first of creatures!
Loving good, he robs himself of a thing we share. Through his
bad example, he shows what we are and that we come from God.
He alone runs away from what makes all other creatures happy;
our inglorious leader shuns the brilliance of the gifts he received.
When, a little earlier, he was glorious and in charge of all things,
and saw things in the condition nature in which had ordered them,
but saw himself as degenerate and full of shame,
it is clear that he blushed at his sudden defects,
no longer daring to look upon the injured face of the Lord,
and he fled in fear to caves and sought a hiding-place.
O, what humiliating confusion to be abandoned by the Lord!
O, the devastating distress – to remember, most cruel thing of all,
that one had lost God by committing a sin
and had lost everything good by briefly enjoying one's desires!
Then the Holy Father pitied the wretch more
and, omitting to punish him, returned to the forgivable clay,
examining not its crime but its goodness,
and is shocked by the action of His creation, though the creation
He made is pleasing, and He is sad that Adam had a sudden fall,
for He preferred to grant him a happy and eternal life.
He sees that there is nothing left which may give him salvation,
except Himself, who alone could produce him from nothing.
As if His power had not been scorned or injured,
He is swayed and the force of duty motivates Him
to seek out the runaway who is less desirous of complaining,
however much troubled and swollen with fear!
For he runs away in fear, is arrogant in excusing his guilt, trying
to bring this woman's contribution to the Creator's attention.
But the King still courteously mitigates His righteous anger.
Adam contradicts the One he has hurt and who wants to help him,
and the Judge is still in no way swayed, but prowls around him,
trying to provoke the accused into confessing his sins.

Deigning to speak with His creation, He urges him to have faith.
Conversation between them could calm most points of disagreement,
but Adam did not want to, and prolongs his audacity the more.
For everyone makes a sin worse by defending it.
Rebuked courteously, he replies with vicious snarling.
Supported by God's sense of duty, let him joyfully marvel
that God Himself went out to search for a guilty runaway.
What is God? What is a human? Who could hope for this, unless he
knew it to be, that His sense of duty could have been so great?
But yet God receives unjust complaints from him.
But God does not abandon one who runs from Him!
It is right that the one in the wrong should be the first to apologise
but He himself is first to seek out the accused and speak to him: no reply;
yet He does not hesitate; first He asks him where he is.
Surely God is not unaware of the tree-roots in which he is hiding?
But He advises him to consider what he is, whence he flees, where he is.
For Adam walks along, never affected by place or time;
walking in liquid, because he does not stay fixed of heart;
a warm breeze makes him aware that his passion has grown cold.
In a father there is established the model for future offspring.
He intimates that, coming into the world to humans in the future,
He will pay the price in order to return to the flock the lost sheep
which no longer knows how to love its own safety,
but moreover grows wild and frantic at the friendly vet
and repays with death the medication it was given.
Our forefather sows this example, showing that it must be followed,
excusing his crime and striving to ascribe it to the Lord.
This root germinates black shoots all over its stem,
so that people prefer to defend themselves
or to diminish their sin or blame it on someone else.
In covering up his sins, our forefather increases them.
Now at last the anger of a peaceful dove moves Him,
and now He punishes the accused, now His censorial power rages.

Tilting the twin pans of justice and duty on this side and on that,
He raises uppermost the pan of duty.
He did not want to punish to the full the fool's sin
for in the anger alien to His own goodness
He is mindful of the fickle deceit and tricks which corrupted him.
He reduces His censure, taking into account the Devil's cunning.
The clay which He ordered to have eternal glory
grieves to have incurred, on the contrary, eternal disgrace
and that he remains worthless and without His guidance.
Lamenting, he runs back to the support of His goodness;
he sees that he is a poor wretch to be treated with medicine
by the kind Creator after languishing from a blow,
so that tribulation may lift him up after prosperity laid him low.
He indeed is saved by the duty of forgiveness, but by the
same pact he must live amid countless misfortunes,
wherein a worthless trifle overwhelms the first of creatures,
that is, the worthless hissing of a snake and the bite of its mouth,
his life battered by a thousand uncertain dangers,
a life cut off by certain death in an uncertain end.
As for God protecting him through His duty of forgiveness alone,
the prophet mentions it, referring to this in an orgy of praise.
He says "If you observe in us something considered unjust, who would tolerate it? Thus, God, it remains for you alone to forgive."
The rest of his speech proclaims this in other words.
Then because he was naked and no Indian ascetic in dignity,
questioning dogma, robbed of the prize of dignity,
(for genuine dignity of the flesh and liveliness of mind
had left him open now to suffering and full of shame),
he is clothed in mortal skin akin to an animal's;
he stands clothed in this skin, obviously in imitation of God,
or rather, forced by God to know now what he was.
The Creator had said – but ironically – that this man was like Him.
More like an ass, no match for Him in honour!
As for the disgraceful acts of pride in which he got involved,

the Holy Avenger – through prayer – gives him a chance to end them,
so that he may thus be less proud, thus learn to grow meek,
humbly restrain himself, until his chest fills with wonderment and sighs,
substituting the manna of salvation in place of disgrace.
Moreover, grimmer things will henceforth torment him, if too unrestrained, and eternal punishment will follow his brief sins,
and because he had not ceased to be arrogant after his fall
and did not reply to the mild One getting angry,
the earth is full of sweated labour in thorn bushes for him
and will burden him with barren fruits and plants.
The woman, who persuaded her husband to be gullible about his food,
was ordered to undergo punishment shared with her mate,
ordered also to bring forth her offspring in sorrow and to bear the
yoke of a husband to whom she passed on the urge to transgress.
One punishment is shared, the other is especially hers.
Because the Devil will never be called to forgiveness
he is trapped in darkness, being the deadly creator of these things;
censure shatters him, he lacks no manner of beating.
The King, about to decree that anyone was worthy of adoption,
was always accustomed to pardoning, His strictness mixed with a sense
of duty, condemning not the person but rather the earth
and not aiming His dart at the one He knew to have sinned,
but striking an inanimate object, though the sin was Adam's.
Why the surprise if He blames our sins upon the earth,
preferring to hand Himself over for us
paying off the debts of our sin by His death,
and through His bruises recovering our lost salvation?
Meanwhile, entangled, he panics in fear of death,
after the tribulations of a life which the Judge threatened,
because he rashly presumed to touch the forbidden tree,
and with equal daring would partake of the tree of life.
At once He exiles the glutton from the sanctuary of Paradise;
if exiled, he would languish forever in those punishments,

as his soul remains in the flames of Hell and burns.
Therefore the King does this both justly and with a sense of duty;
restored, Adam takes up family life with joy,
just as a dying vegetable root is rejuvenated and grows tall again.
He who, if obedient, would go to Heaven to join the angels
disappointingly clings to the hovels of people of clay, the equal of animals – but his labour to produce food is less sweated
because animals get their allotted daily food easily.
So the guilty one, while not knowing how to comprehend his sin,
then complaining with arrogant words, wearies the calm One
and then provokes dove-like responses from Him.
He is forced into exile and forced at last to understand what it means.
What the new arrival did later on earth or what followed this
is obvious in the following generations begotten by him.
He, to whom the whole of Eden was subservient, forages hungrily
and, after the feast of Paradise he suffers famine, sweating;
he feeds on anxiety and drinks hard labour;
for, deprived of food, he sighs at its exhaustion.
Compelled to plough the earth with criss-cross furrows
he bears the loss of his home because, turning it over in his mind
with clenched fists, he is accustomed to weep
and to fall on the ground and utter words of grief,
then to sit down and hug his knee and wag his head,
and break out in sobs and tear his hair and breast,
then consider whither and whence he has dragged his race,
how many good things he deprived them of, how many bad things
he inflicted; clearly, homeless, he was recalling what he had lost;
assailing himself from all directions with countless questions,
accepting his current lot and taking up the plough again,
he barked at Him, as if giving vent to howling,
the ploughing oxen perhaps imitating him as they work.
(We don't usually hear such sounds at any other time,
except when the wailing ox-driver does his ploughing.)

The reader will have seen this: it is certain that heavy anxiety
will overwhelm him when he recalls how fortunate were the good
things of old he lost, and how many ills he brought upon himself,
and that it was he who injured the Creator of everything good.
This is the greater pain, the one which torments him worse:
to have willingly lost God and to know that he is abandoned.
He who had the fortune to taste of God's love
and is deprived of the same by committing some guilty act,
knows from experience that this pain torments more.
To know God and to hold Him is, in a word, the greatest good;
but, on the contrary, there is nothing at all worse than losing Him.
Therefore, lacking rest and burdened with toil,
he exchanges heavenly joys for all manner of grief.
He is put in a small place between Paradise and Hell,
living between the two and directing his gaze at them both
so that here he sees what he loves, and there what he fears,
and looking at this one, he finds the stimulus to redeem himself,
looking at that one, he wants to haul himself back to the same.
So, let him spend his time there, soon to be placed in another region!
He will either go to Hell or enter Heaven, according to his desert.
Therefore, full of these tribulations through a thousand burdens,
his lacerated breast gnawed by biting anxiety,
with guilty feelings about the tree encircling the poor wretch,
he now understands how bad it is for one to abandon God,
and the difference between toil and rest, strife and peace, night and day
as well – which is brighter when compared to
the other.
For with experience of daylight, he knows how to judge darkness;
absinthe and bile are appreciated through the sweetness of honey;
in heat, a cool breeze is pleasant; cold makes sunshine agreeable.
Therefore he is compelled by evil to appreciate the good he loses.
He is faced with this so that he may lament for Eden more bitterly.
Also, as for what he might have remembered about the past,
he was always pondering with gawping mouth what he had seen.

Would he condemn to oblivion these species of things so precious
or seemingly so especially propitious as well?
Therefore, to remember was to grieve with continuing sorrow,
to recall the face which rejected the sanctuary of Paradise,
the rosy Spring in that place to fill his nectared years,
that grove of his Master bearing manifold fruits,
producing lilies and violets across grassy meadows,
the whole earth adorned with every kind of flower,
always wafting their perfumes into the scented air.
People who have lived for many years within city walls
or have grown up in an ancestral mansion,
and enjoyed princely banquets in some vast hall,
and the entertainments which can be elegantly devised
by talent, strength, industry, the skilled hand and the five senses,
but then some chance or fortune drives them into exile
or shut them up in a prison cell
(our destiny is hazardous and strewn with a thousand dangers)
- do they forget themselves, unaware of what they were recently
or what style of life or custom they had, or where? They lament
for the sweet things as much as they experience the nasty.
The more they love prosperity, the more misfortune wearies them.
Thus Adam, weeping in exile, recalls what joys he is losing;
gazing at them, he says there is nothing beautiful, gentle, sweet
or decorous which a mortal has for human enjoyment.
Now in good weather, wintry cold having been put to flight,
when the sun, closer, brings calm breezes,
and earth shows its beautiful face everywhere in new Spring,
relaxing its womb everywhere for a variety of growth,
happy furrows grow the seeds entrusted to them,
the various flowers color the verdant meadows,
the branches of trees replete with leaf or fruit,
the twittering of birds echoes through the valleys,
the fawn sucks on the teats of its caring mother,
the mother ewe knows its own lamb by its bleating,

grassy pastures nourish the pregnant cows,
and little lambs sample the luxuriant crops.
What more? Every thing pleases the gaze of the onlookers!
The different face of Winter appears in due course:
everything becomes a bog and one would believe the world to crack
or return to its former chaos, the primordial state of things,
unless one remembers that fortune has a way of changing things;
snow, ice, then stiff frosts appear across the landscape.
One who sees this, remembers what it was like when last seen,
preferring it to stay just as it had been then.
Just as a beautiful woman pleases, so an ugly one repulses.
As sad things may be happy news to happy people,
so happy events of the past bring sorrow to sad people.
A once-rich person blushes more than one always in need, and one
stripped of glory more than one who had not had it to start with.
Adam laments that he is now as unhappy as he was once happy;
unhappy, he reckons these things as sad as, and as ugly as,
the sight of things in Paradise was beautiful.
If a mother gives birth to a blind child in prison
or even outside to a child who cannot see – it often happens -
if she explains to it when grown up, what things exist in the world,
or what the sky looks like and what things adorn the sea and land,
rivers or mountains, and plains, farmland or cities,
the aerial courses of birds, and horses,
and what appearance, colour or form beautifies individual things,
the child may believe it all, but cannot know them as they are.
Suppose a wolf seized an abandoned young boy,
which the wolfish beast later left uneaten.
Having already eaten, wolves lick their prey as if in play,
because wolves are not driven to destroy a young child.
They fear the sight of humans instinctively,
as if believing that the power of a prince should be revered,
and will not dare to harm one whom their hunting did not harm.
One would think they remembered what Adam was before his sin;

in any event, it happens that the wild beast retains this instinct.
God puts this in place at his nod, as with everything;
now He binds shut the mouth of the wolf and the mouths of lions.
Now therefore the she-wolf is keen to feed the abandoned boy;
as she gives her teats to her own cubs, so she gives him some titbits.
Thus he grows up imitating the ways of the she-wolf,
completely forgetting reason and with no knowledge of himself,
his movements totally changed into the alien ones of an animal;
only his appearance betrays his humanity, the rest is wild animal;
he does not need the charms of human nature;
he does not want a cloak for his back or shoes for his feet
nor does he feel the pain of stepping on thorns,
or the wounds of hooks which tear his tender skin;
he does not care to cover his chaste member with a loin-cloth,
nor cares he for the warmth of a fire or coolness in the sun's heat,
but covered with a hairy skin as if with wool
he prefers the form of a beast, which he thinks that he is,
and performs no bodily functions in a human way,
screeching with wild howling by way of voice.
He has a less inhibited urge to devour bloody flesh;
he does nothing with restraint, but everything like a beast,
and forgetful of who he is, he does not know the rewards of nature.
When someone wants him to return to his parental home,
he runs away and hides secretly in a dense forest.
If a royal infant is taken as booty by enemies,
the kidnapper threatening him with distant shores,
where a peasant nurse puts him in with her own children,
he believes therefore, when grown up, that he is one of them
and quickly acquires peasant manners like theirs;
sadly, he does not remember that he comes from a lofty line,
nor that he is in exile, nor that he has a titled father.
His head which should bear the honour of jewels, is bare;
his arms shine with no rings, his right hand with no sceptre,
no torque adorns his neck, no purple his torso,

no crown encircles his brow, no diadem his temple,
no scarlet or white buckskin covers his legs.
What more? Sheepskin is the dress-code of his realm,
and a hut is enough, for he does not look for fancy palaces;
he misses none of these, for he does not know they were owed him,
nor laments the loss of titles because he did not know himself.
I have said that it is obvious how forgetfulness is our ruin,
how base custom corrupts natural honesty
and every single innate good quality is thus lost.
Human nature is now like a dividing path,
lively with genuine power but slowed by the weight of merit.
We gawp at strange things and cling tenaciously to the familiar,
and we are happy with the things of which we have experience,
the familiar becoming naturally pleasing to us.
A thing may be perfected by good use;
what nature created ugly, hard work can make beautiful.
This is evident in the various species we have changed with our skill.
Skill mastered the untamed grin of the snake,
the all too wild tiger often becomes tamed too,
the left hand and more so the right get stronger through exercise.
Therefore nature and usage alternate throughout;
the stronger, indeed hardly the weaker, overpowers the lesser.
To add a touch more to the examples above,
although it is beyond human perception to experience
the pleasures of the flesh and the joys of the mind
of which the presumptuous one deprived himself and his race,
Adam himself however was able to understand fully what they are,
as he had recently enjoyed these to the full,
and, as experience taught him insights into the past,
he was also used to passing these on to posterity, but badly now
because his mind and perception grow feeble and sluggish.
A thing heard is proved to be understood less than a thing seen.
As it is possible for a drunk or a sleeper to speak of
what he once saw, he itches to explain what he remembers.

But their descendants are brutes, not spiritual;
but Adam and Eve understand less what things are like
because they merely hear of them; both are now animals like the donkey.
Therefore it is rather like the braying of a donkey which he utters.
If his children could hear their father speaking,
none would fully understand what things are like
for they do not retain the experience of the past, like him;
therefore something of which one lacks experience is unknown.
Thus that wolf, burning to corrupt our souls,
snatched the first man out of Paradise, as if from his mother's lap;
thus was he snatched by that wolf which the gentle lamb strangles.
Divine power, however, protecting us, ties up our enemy,
though it cannot exterminate him with blows.
Imitating a cub, he sucks the wolf's teats;
he drinks its milk and is exposed to the vices of the world,
making it grow dark with the blackness of his heart,
urged to marvel at what is outside but not to know what is inside.
Therefore, pursuing earthly things, he gets used to those customs,
which he first stumbled with, unaware of the gifts of nature;
deep oblivion soon ruins all which nature gave him;
degenerating with his peasant habits, he becomes sluggish.
Thus the genuine honour, with which the Creator had dutifully adorned him, flags within and is put to sleep by a funeral draught.
Piety therefore had ebbed away from most people;
but though that race had now developed corrupt ways,
the dregs of evil had not yet grown to full size.
A certain natural law had imbued a few with traces
of virtue, with which people are rarely indeed adorned;
wrong-doing inundates the rest like a whirlpool.
Evil therefore did not hold sway with such loose rein;
crude existence did not train itself for sober acts then.
The gullet did not stimulate the appetite to such varied dishes,

not knowing how to create gourmet dishes for banquets,
(Apicius had not been hot at work in his kitchen,
armed with that talent which he had been the first to develop)
nor had the gullet grown used to arousing a greedy palate so often;
a river perhaps was the source of drinking water;
one did not love the gifts of Bacchus when one's lips were dry;
at dusk hunger was easily satisfied with acorns
and vegetables used to grow from the earth;
Doric woman had not yet woven things with yellow thread of gold
nor had she dyed silky fleeces with the produce of the murex shell,
nor embroidered cloaks with circular patterns,
and natural colour had not yet given way to Tyrian purple;
shade gave sleep, no soft pillow for snoring on.
Who would want to risk the sea and danger to life
for love of profit, when there was no reward in dying?
Surely they would not desire something at the risk of trouble?
Thus that age was content with its trustworthy fields.
Luxury did not know how to soften manly minds,
nor had study made their strength womanish;
experience had enhanced the blessings of nature.
But that impostor, who first urged the evil deed,
burns insatiably to suck the human race in;
he demands interest, which Adam accepted to pay,
chosen to eat the tempting fruit of the forbidden tree,
in his desire to force our forefathers to corrupt their descendants;
he could not tolerate peasants leading a blameless life.
He knew they were like cattle because he made them so;
animal-like men with brutish movements he drives hence;
as is normal with young goats, they were riven by quarrels
and butted each other with hatred as if with goats' horns.
Setting a fire to burn with the stinking heat of lust
he thus goads Cain to have reason for butting his brother.
It is merely a matter of hate, because the Creator loved him more,
because he sacrifices dutifully, offers greater devotion,

because the Judge of men's hearts accepts his gifts,
because he proves that he has the gift of fair judgement,
because in His eyes this brother is pleasing, that one displeasing.
O Cain, who but you makes Jesus hostile toward you?
God looks upon them both and knows what each is like inside;
He sees that this one is harmless and that you are evil.
If you want to be a wrong-doer, you will rob yourself of reward.
Was that kind man worthy of hatred or death?
The flame of envy, however, is never controlled by reason,
the virus having now spread through his whole breast.
That same envy is a personal vice born of one's self;
the flame of this fire-brand burnt our forefathers
and now burns savagely to scorch our whole race;
it cannot be extinguished, being too powerful with its hidden fire.
A live victim is the best example, showing us what we are;
the Creator rejected gifts of the fruit of the earth as dead;
yet both are good; He finds those offerings of equal merit.
Through Cain, therefore, Satan scatters the weeds of vice
and furtively mixes darnel with the wheat crop.
Therefore, although there are a few good men like certain seeds,
whom the example of justice adorned perfectly,
they grew up with ears of corn and were mixed with the chaff.
Trying to pick a single stalk from these two,
He made the worse one first and the better one last.
Therefore it is wrong for anyone to presume how people will act,
to reckon nothing of importance, to by-pass reason,
to live confused, out of control, like a peasant, like an animal;
that race goes through morality like a beast up a slope.
The stain of guilt thus besmirches honest nature,
and gets worse as habits degenerate.
Beauty of the flesh usually excels in reprobates,
as they have not been blessed with mental talent.
Absalom, Goliath, Alcheus, Saul, the five giants
are outstanding with their bronzed skin or large body;

all slim women are said to have been Cainite.
When therefore we happen to read of the attraction of evil people,
the writer indeed is also living a reprobate existence.
Rather than extolling that gift with praise, they belittle it
and prove the oxymoron that they get used to having such a gift.
God often gives reprobates the worthless gift which they desire;
hence, those devoid of virtue frequently cling to the flesh;
but whether one is beautiful or ugly,
that blessing given by the Creator does not do enough for them.
They are all arrogantly ambitious to exceed the limits set for them
and to enhance their beauty through the truly vain cult of clothes
(it is shameful and one may see men of the cloth coveting this),
for the enemy has such snares for those with cow eyes,
driven by animal instincts, not by the force of reason,
that they willingly besmirch themselves like a filthy sewer.
The enemy, using familiar arguments in order to entrap them,
puts these forward in the usual form of a woman to trap a man.
How badly does presumption turn his cause to adversity!
The virago was created for man, joined to him to people the earth.
O, the pain! She ruined her man, his seed and his land!
When perchance someone shines under the banner of goodness,
the face shines with the wisdom of understanding;
often external glory produces inner glory.
Cain therefore does not procreate beautiful little women
just so that they may make the sight of flesh grow vile to the holy.
These beauties obey men and the act makes the men effeminate.
He who has strength of mind sees nothing beautiful in women;
he can see inside them the shit lurking with the phlegm.
The holy race however, called the offspring of the Divine Parent,
drawing in the lottery a blessed angelic name,
will become mixed up with – o, the pain! – the she-wolves of Cain
and try to conceal their wrong-doing with the name of marriage.
An honest title with legal status will conceal a depraved work!
But the Judge of our heart assesses our enthusiasm in the act;

it is a good act, as He himself gave us it, not because lust excites it;
He wants purity, for something stained does not please Him,
such as one who loves love-making rather than procreation.
Therefore huge bodies with gigantic members
take on in their plan too much self-indulgence, as it were,
so that it is clear to future generations what sort of crime this is.
Why, it is reported that God felt regret and grieved that
He had created one who would do such a thing,
befouling the specimen groomed in the image of its Maker.
Adam had now sinned, deceit had now doomed Eve;
both of them had compounded their crime by replying arrogantly;
guilty Cain had wickedly killed his innocent brother.
How serious do you think the crimes now committed world-wide are,
crimes which would severely arouse the Judge's blazing anger?
But He said that He did not yet regret having made humans:
that one thing alone would be worse than all others,
if for that reason the sublime work of God were thought worthless!
Regret, grief, concern for the future had this result:
that the Father burst forth with a voice of rebuke.
The Creator regrets having made something which obstructs Him
and regrets Adam's lack of devotion which followed.
God therefore wanted humans to remain blessed but
that hope faded because Adam did not follow His will,
because he surrendered his salvation of his own free will,
and regretted having made him because an enemy perverted him
and he did not reach the stage his Lover wanted.
What a thing to say about the supposed morality of human beings!
Things which happen in various ages He had created all together
centuries before, for to Him past, present and future are one;
He knew in advance that Adam would fall and He would redeem him.
He does not think that this came about otherwise, by chance,
but He makes it clear that He punishes the one and only crime,
which causes Him to regret revealing it should be more serious.
Each age, sex, race - the whole world – knows this

and is shocked at the dispensation for so great a crime,
which caused God to admit that He felt regret and grief,
on account of which the cataclysm resulted!
Not only does He exterminate fornicators in the waters but the one man
who had fathered them and the animals made for them.
Let him who can, then, assess the crime by the weight of the waters!
The promiscuity of the flesh deserved the torrents of the Flood,
that huge vengeance punishing this huge wrongdoing.
He made the abyss boil with great whirlpools,
so that the vast tide of corruption is killed off by a greater wave.
The polluted earth was in need of such a great washing
and the very space of the air which the wild beast had polluted.
It is Satan's strength, with which he overwhelms the world
and quickly softens minds and burns them fiercely;
with this thick smoke he obscures the eyesight of the world.
Let everyone in all ages hear this and quake:
if the world is beaten by such a great rod of punishment,
when written warnings fail to discourage and vengeance fails to frighten,
after so many promulgated laws and examples,
how great an anger will strike one who does such a thing after that?
Therefore the Potter grieves because His pots destroy themselves;
but He pities their hurt because compassion fills Him;
He senses their mood, compassion makes Him pliant.
But He punishes in order to curb such deeds, wary for the future,
lest impiety should mount too high, as if unaware of its guilt.
This is not much help to them, but more to those of the future.
Therefore it pains Him to teach them by overturning their world;
He did not say this until after lust had entered their hearts.
Now we are called flesh – a great disparagement – flesh which
is of no use, says He who knows everything.
We had been called earth, which is often an honourable name;
the spirit is willing, but flesh forces it to languish and grow sick;
one whose flesh was spiritual develops a mind of flesh;
the qualities which existed in the meek start to rage in the rebel.

Though He sees the hill of their sins grow into a mountain, yet
He is not quick to turn upon the proud the anger they deserve;
moreover, for a hundred and twenty years He dutifully holds back,
lest someone may perhaps complain that His judgement is hasty.
But as He delays, seeing the outrageous abuse,
and that sin has instead increased over the course of time,
He calls an end to the allotted limits which He sees do not work,
since evil deeds are not reduced but are growing worse.
For all flesh had deeply corrupted its deeds,
and all human sense was heading for the depths.
Now therefore the long delayed censure blazed forth, and though
impassionate and devoid of anger, He is moved and inflamed
so that He strikes at last, having long dissimulated.
Their ignorant impiety demands to be stopped and punished,
being for some time now unchecked by the threats of the Almighty.
He is thought to care nothing for threats made to deter
with intent to terrorise – and to care nothing for punishment –
as if, forgetful of justice, He is letting crime go unavenged
or, lacking virtue, is unable to stop what is happening.
But they prove by their demise that His threats are not empty,
and their ruination is a lesson to them, justice striking all asunder.
Therefore He punishes Adam, the earth and all He made for him,
and the sense of duty owed to him perishes with him;
the characteristics of the meek begin to rage within the rebel,
and the world fights against the stupid.
This destruction is enough to ensure the fall of all the rest;
but the earth, which He vowed to destroy, stands eternal.
How does it perish, then, when His holy voice admits it to exist?
But it does perish, and the True One is proved to have spoken truly,
and it stands the same, as true reason affirms:
it perishes, having lost its former power of rebirth;
although it remains in essence, languishing in its duties,
because earth born of earth is now devoid of merit,
it cannot bring forth fruits in its usual amount.

The Judge's sense of duty mixed with censure restores it.
Just as a caring mother looking after her son, perchance wounded,
concerned that the victim get better through her nursing him,
likewise God, deigning to withhold his strict whip,
gives us for our enjoyment more and better things to eat,
so that these comforts outweigh the punishment inflicted.
The All-producing One always has this way of working,
in that He re-creates more bounteously what fate restricts.
Neither treatment of meat nor the sweated concern of cooks,
nor anything mixed with cider, nor a simple cod-fish
were ever a feature of existence in the afore-mentioned era
and no-one over-ate or became tipsy; but later when the earth,
which earlier had produced things of its own accord,
became barren through excessive sin and went unploughed,
the Holy Father indulgently gave them things for their use,
being generous and prepared to cherish the afflicted. He provides such things
helpfully and providently, lest their dissolute minds gawp at things usually forbidden,
claiming that poverty compels them especially,
seeing that the things initially given to them were cut off.
Wealthy, Adam had presumed upon paradisal feasts.
How much more would he have done this, if need had forced him?
So He gave them meats and did not forbid them when they
wanted to eat them, lest their bold presumption make it a crime.
But indeed, for the abstemious there remains their own reward,
as, with their love of virtue, they do without the permitted food.
He heaps merit upon them and removes the guilt from gluttons.
The marriage pact comes in a similar category,
because it is all right for anyone to submit to begetting children
unless it is perhaps forced by rank or some pledge.
O the pain! Impiety is cutting loose again
and foul lust makes its flame burn hot again.
No longer content to cremate hearts on the usual pyre,

it dares to fire up a sin not seen for centuries.
One would believe it to be a three-headed chimera!
Not completely doused, this suddenly flares up more vigorously.
Although the weight of the Flood overwhelmed Olympus
and wiped out all flesh which did not escape its waters,
and came because of that sin, destroying all of it,
it could not however destroy this one scorpion.
The world does not recall why it was very recently flooded.
This viper, dying, brings forth twin offspring;
for it is very filthy and dirty with grime old and new.
When it takes on a male use, it also retains the female one.
This viper would be emasculated and burnt out
if men did not corruptly feed its fires with dry tinder,
and if they did not willingly throw themselves into them, like chaff.
It has therefore created a sin contrary to the laws of nature.
Alas, human kind rushing headlong into harmful ways!
Alas, the urge to make love raging through brutish hearts!
Alas, the minds of men wanting to be filthy in their love-making!
This custom, the one set up for procreation by the provident
Creator, does not seem to be contrary to nature.
When, however, someone dares to cross the permitted limits
and feels a greater itch in that act,
this crime, a scandal for centuries, deserves the cataclysm.
He vigorously punishes His new little world with a penalty;
it is easy to be told later that heavier punishments were deserved.
Now as for a man who is aware that he is committing a devious sin
with his lust aflame at the touch of a woman,
judge from it how he takes the level of his depravity to the depths.
It is something which nature forbids and what no age has known.
Do you think that the crime which a man commits will be
in conflict with the nature of coupling, and not the done thing,
illogical, when he goes beyond natural laws,
committing an outrage not known for centuries? One's tongue
should rather keep quiet, not knowing how to describe it as it is!

Is one right and correct to abhor and curse it?
Male flesh – o the shame! – enduring a female use;
enjoyment of effeminate intercourse - pitiable to relate!
Each one is equal in wrongdoing, if each is equally willing;
that man corrupts his fellow, this man crazily accepts it.
If the spirit were willing to be subject to God, why, a man
should then offer his flesh to Him as his tribute;
when the spirit is puffed up, he knows at once the flesh is likewise.
It overwhelms him totally, and he knows it is nothing but brutish.
All things have been ordered to be subject to the kingdom above;
His law governs everything and no-one can rescind it.
The method of procreation, and whom it concerns, was established;
He alone, in charge of everything, gave us His laws,
all of which endure and do not change to the contrary;
but this insane man, alone, offers for sale external use of his body.
What wild beast, what sort of worm or animal,
what is there so base as ever to couple male with male?
Men alone, blessed with the power of reason, commit that act!
Their aim is to offer resistance to the Creator of things,
and to want to overthrow the stable laws of nature;
the impostor, the author of all crime, urges them on,
his thirst for evil always raging thus,
so that, once subverted, we fall into worse ways,
into a well of crime and cannot reach the bottom,
but, in offering themselves for sale, they fall straight into Hell.

Thus the Devil treats human minds like saddles
and with his spurs, as it were, drives them on to worse deeds,
so that they are hateful while the Creator abandons them.
Firstly, Adam told a lie that he is considered to be equal to the Potter,
then, not getting what he craved, he deservedly lost what he had,
and then the Devil urges worse deeds to make him worse,
until he reaches the stage where he can no longer be called human.
Thus he loses the gift of reason for these two reasons:

either aiming for things too high, or stooping too far to the depths.
Now he thinks it worthless, if he – doomed - obtains all the
things which the plunderer orders, befouling natural laws.
What? He kindles the flame of a crime worse than all others,
so that by his actions he causes nothing human to remain!
He is a wild boar, a butting goat, a plover, a sparrow,
nay, worse: which of these ever lusted after such a practice?
Run through histories and flip through poets of yore:
there has not been one in all the world who knew of a boys' brothel,
nor any historian who ever told of such.
Punishment has failed to check the flame of raging lust;
this had made man like a mule some time ago
urging him like a brutish animal into the embrace of the flesh,
so that he thinks of sex rather than of procreating children;
this is bestial and alien to human nature;
but it should be considered nothing compared with paedophilia.
The whirlpool and fire punish that sort of adultery:
water either washes clean or nourishes what it has deluged;
what the flame licks becomes either consumed or burnt.
It shows that atonement for adultery can be made with water
and that this sort of thing deserves eternal burning by fire,
which is a punishment greater than a quick whipping,
or Tartarus where everlasting fire is available instead,
which eternal torment can never exhaust,
but the sin is rightly more worthy of eternal Gehenna,
unless it is alleviated by the piety always extolled by the Judge
who lets one off great debts for a small payment.
Thus it had not been necessary for God to punish at first,
except that vengeance acts to discourage such wrongdoing,
so that the plague does not infect future men, ignorant of it.
The more serious it is for others, the more it is to be expiated,
and because the clever work of the Devil may mean worse sin,
unless the Judge thus punishes that crime in some part.
Thus vigorous punishment destroys the authors of crime,

and a new and most filthy lust burns the unchaste.
Thus He decides to condemn this crime with a new punishment,
raining down sulphur and flames upon the obscene “butters”.
stench upon stench, heat consuming passion.
The cleft earth produced wrongdoing which it could not tolerate;
until then it could bear all evil, but the torn earth screams
that she cannot bear this one sin, though she tolerates all others
and is about to explode from this sin alone which she has sucked in.
If you do not know why the Creator has punished this crime,
you will see the four elements seriously damaged by it:
water and earth are in a frenzy, the air rains sulphur and fire,
in order to strike this in unison, but injuring each other.
Earlier, water on its own punished female impurities,
but now they all join together in the battle plan,
so that a shared vengeance punishes a common crime.
When fools want to raise a tower skywards,
as if to foil some heavenly plan,
in order to be higher up in case a flood were to happen again,
He does not drown them with the waters or burn them with fires,
since this would indeed be a great and huge presumption,
but He halts their ridiculous work with mockery,
making one unable to understand the speech of the other.
What united action strove for, language problems ruined.
Look: punishment teaches what it is the Judge most abhors,
and that the punishment is different to the sin.
Let not some feeble voice play down the weight of this sin,
being unable to utter out loud the word for it.
Anyone, in the words of the Scripture, can grasp its meaning:
you, with your expertise and grasp of knowledge, consider deeply
what it is and how much more than detestable it is; know that
I wanted to utter the word rather than just have the power to!
God knew in advance that this was a consuming cancer
and that, although it may be exterminated by the fear of death,
He knows that many will willingly be devoured in its jaws.

He takes action to let the world know it is a horrible sin;
He reveals the abyss of shadowy Hell to those on their way,
so that the sight of the chasm may force them to turn back.
Ever unaware, anyone may by chance run into this trap;
thus, fruit which grows in Sodomitic regions
is said to be full of dust at harvest time;
though they have shiny skins, they betray the crime themselves.
Thus they are warnings to beholders of the crime and its punishment,
so that one who believes a viper's venom to be incurable
and also dragon's poison, the bitter grape of Gomorra,
may not let limbs dedicated to God be gnawed by a snake.
Let one who can, take note what the Creator shuns as too bitter!
A new punishment struck when the world was barely adult:
what, then, may He do to a youngster doing such a thing?
The notion of punishment together with the charisma of faith
teach us that everlasting Gehenna remains for the fallen,
so let us feel ashamed to violate the Lord's sacred temple!
Flesh and wine are considered to be two bloodsucking offspring;
they are surfeit of food and drunkenness and their mother is lust.
Fed on blood, she is aptly called the bloodsucker of the mind,
and her offspring feed excessively on food and drink;
one overdoes the flesh, the other the consumption of wine,
and they cry out "Bring me, bring me" because they are not full.
Telema ("the will") gives birth to them, sweating with their heat;
the stuffed mother is as wet as her offspring are fat.
Now because meat-eating and wine did not exist before the Flood,
perhaps because of this she did not rampage with such loose rein;
but after gorging herself, she burns and blazes more vigorously.
The founder of all species of things, seeing everything,
He who alone knows what each person wants at heart,
or whence all evil springs, or where it should be lopped off,
warns us to sever our evil deeds at the root,
exhorting us not to let over-eating and intoxication burden our hearts,
and to cut out these two, the rest being easily avoided.

The branch of a corrupt work droops when cut off at the root.
The world is drowning amid a sea of sins in a thousand ways;
these two offspring, however, and the mother who produced them
stain this world with filth and strip it of the gift of reason,
so that such a devotee of the stomach is a beast, not human.
Thus the flesh takes a fall, thus it alienates the poor mind;
thus the pot – cracked, alas! – had acted corruptly.
Whoever you are, therefore, in whom some reason remains,
despise the beauty of skin with which the whole world is obsessed!
Everywhere people are slaves to young skin, beyond moderation,
and everywhere foul lust is preferred to God.
We all have a god, something we love more than Him,
and because of which we have chosen to spurn Him,
as the catechist of the world says when speaking about the stomach.
How crazy is the person who abandons Him for the flesh
and worships and delights in horse-like motions instead of God
and is not ashamed to be taking to doggy stimuli!
Therefore they retain little care for themselves or their safety,
or to recover their former selves and reconsider their well-being,
or to consider whose likeness they have or in whose image they shine,
and whence they come here, or where lies their hope of returning!
Let them not think their worth so little that they sell it for skin!
Rather let them see what such things will get them!
The itch which burns and is scratched in a brief moment
earns everlasting flames – the torment of Hell.
Though the flesh is alive through breath, the flesh kills breath;
the lowest destroys the highest, the worthless destroys the precious.
When however this breath dies, with its life-giving self cut off,
they die together, drowning and doomed forever.
While there is still time therefore to change one's course,
let us make a u-turn and not run willingly toward Hell,
and consider what it means to lack joy and to weep forever,
or what we are allowed to do, just as in some sort of contract!
The Judge had decided to soften His anger;

He did not want to condemn the arrogant utterly,
or to punish them forever for some spur-of-the-moment sin.
He did not suffer them to be deprived totally of His heart's light;
though they keep intact the gift of judgement and mental acumen
in order to be able to recognise their Creator again in the end,
to rise after their fall and to go on their way with caution.
Let them also learn to fear the Lord through a taste of the whip.
As a craftsman refines gold or silver by smelting,
so He placed the wretches in the furnace of this exile,
to cleanse them quickly and avoid perpetual punishment,
and so that brief censure might obviate eternal whipping.
But they prefer exile, willingly courting the furnace.
How crazy the villain who does not know how to escape prison!
They are sorely lacking in wisdom if they yearn to be imprisoned!
They are not without metal slag, but become worse in it
and, turning into lead, as it were, corrupt that very thing
and exile themselves and befoul themselves with a sprinkling of crimes.
This race, led astray, believes poison to be the antidote,
because it stupidly and willingly licks the sugar mixed with it.
This race, totally unaware of reason, is addicted to this;
it licks it as if it were honey; yet it is bitter beeswax.
Look! perhaps one may see love of this life for what it is:
it entices, it ensnares and then hurts its softened-up victim.
As a tit-bit lures birds willingly into a snare,
so are these people lured into degeneracy, enticed by sweetness,
so that they cannot spread their wax-smeared feathers
and lack the appreciation of virtue, as a wing lacks flight,
and their quick snack makes them feel eternal hunger.
Shamefully, they are slow to give up their favourite linctus;
it inflames, stimulates and exacerbates their hunger and thirst.
Whoever loves the world is not filled with love of the Father.
Love of the world makes them worthy of the Judge's anger because
they prefer the base to the beautiful, the worthless to the precious.
For a friend of the world is an enemy of the Father, as the Holy

Scripture says, and the prophet also said that humans lick the dirt.
To righteous people, licking the dirt seems disgusting;
it is not something suitable for the tongue of humans, but of a dog.
The prophet therefore preaches about the action of a stupid dog,
and about the filthy animal's love of the world.
Some people are shown up by their action in imitation of a dog;
the way a dog licks shows that it is disgusting.
One who licks the earth stoops down to the lowest point, forgetful
of the heavens, though created upright to look at the heights.
Other animals, face down, look at the ground, the human design
alone showing that they are raised to the stars,
so that their mind is directed to where design points their face;
but that love of the ground bends them down low like hunchbacks.
Whoever you are, then, see what you deserve if you love the world!
Consequently, Moses was ordered to exterminate the Amalekites,
whose name, in Latin, means the people who love to lick, and this
remains the fate marked out for those desirous of the earth.
This does not normally fulfil one, but delights with base pleasure.
Who would be wont to lick, except one who behaves like a glutton?
This disgraceful mentality indicates one who wants earthly things,
and the dirt shows how dirty they are who pursue such things,
so that baseness betrays the base and worthlessness the worthless,
and a thing which does not fulfil but which they pursue like gluttons,
- the prophet preferred to speak of them by such a name,
people whom that love burns, urging them to love the transitory.
Therefore he noted those as truly degenerate, these as worthless.
When he says licking, he shows what they are and what they love.
The mind therefore chooses evil in order to drown in Hell;
the mind provokes the grim axe to cut itself down and kill itself.
The gorge is proved to have been the cause of this great sin
and through it lust, stuffed with meat and wine.
The Devil thus drives his gluttonous captives on to worse deeds.
First he makes them eat excessive foods without limit,
thus stimulating the flesh which feeds on evil and kills the mind;

what it does then is against the law;
it then becomes sick and makes a favourite new pool of filth
and – the crime! – pursues liaisons contrary to nature,
shameful to hear of! A male with a passion for a male.
It is a practice of insane possession, full of madness,
without judgement and unworthy of reason;
they perform and desire something which bestiality perhaps urges;
they do this blithely and mindlessly, unaware that it is disgusting.
Also, they rage, in the grip of such great insanity,
and stupidly engage in something which animals never do,
which is shameful to hear, a man longing for a man.
They are bereft of reason, stupid and feeble of mind,
their lust not driven by any natural instinct.
This is worse than disgrace; the perpetrator who drew up
the small print for the procedure is therefore despicable:
the one who abuses the perpetrator commits an offence on him.
He would not do this willingly unless trapped by a demon.
Is this lust? It seems, I admit, far from it;
it seems to exceed lust and its tricks
and to take upon itself an external, demonic force, as it were;
such a person now becomes not human, but a slave of the enemy!
  Therefore, because the Holy Father has indulgently given
us free will, evil presumption by the depraved has turned to crime.
So it deserves to bear a heavy yoke from beginning to end;
for the flesh, riddled or ploughed, as it were, with corruption,
hacking with hoes at these things which it foolishly desires,
brings forth things which corrupt, its seeds of course sown by lust.
Now apart from diseases unknown to Hippocrates,
and apart from the gnawing and devouring anxieties thereof,
our very salvation, although it seems to be safe,
is more fragile than glass, in doubt and teetering in the balance.
Evil is spreading of its own volition because it finds free access
and, because it is useful, it is planned with rather serious effort
and, if it should happen to die, it re-grows without hesitation.

Foolish presumption creates this for arrogant wretches,
and by these steps they succeed in hastening their own ruin.
When thirst, hunger, cold or heat weary people
and other things which stir their basic passions,
one clearly needs to look for means of holding them in check.
However, remedies which are taken to cure this
may themselves make it worse, if applied too little.
They long to stand up, lie down, walk, stay awake, sleep,
or to relieve their sore limbs with various activities;
but soon this very activity is seen to be counterproductive,
and they suddenly feel that which gave a little relief to be harmful.
The flesh, which gloats at the success of sin,
and the wanton mind, cause health to suffer through worthy cures
which, turning bitter, harm the greedy more than the just.
Thus it is fitting that they should be punished who do not know how
to defer to the Parent or to love the Father or value love of
the Almighty or to take care to fear His gentle threat,
which they disregard; but soon their flesh is yielded to the enemy,
they lose self-control, denying that they are the Creator's;
they who choose nothing, are nothing and lose true existence.
Thus they are censured and struck by a certain hammer, so that
they may learn from their beating not to puff up about what they have
or to presume to injure Him above with their gifts.
Not only does adversity harm them, but also prosperity.
When pain attacks sick people and they feel the smart of it,
they ask if there may be relief for them from various treatments;
they put a poultice on their side, back or face,
then move it to their feet or wherever else the fever dictates;
but nothing proves to be soothing or brings relief;
there is no rest to make the discomfort go away.
In the sick, the five senses usually waste away,
so that they grow weak and feeble in all they feel,
and they can get no great pleasure from anything.
No light pleases their eyes, no ringing voice their ear,

fruit has no flavour, their nostrils lose the sense of smell,
their whole body loses the feel of the soft things around it;
although things may be real to the touch,
the sick person feels no pleasure in them.
Thus Adam, after his crime, drifted towards goodness as though
languishing, unable to make out the causes of deeds of merit;
and he does not know how delightful or beautiful they are;
the talent of his race for meritorious action is diminished.
The basic tenet had been this: the slave should love his Master
and rejoice in true and eternal goodness on high,
through which he would have complete rest without end.
But when he turned away from His love, looking at other things,
and was exiled outside, he knows not what is wise inside.
Therefore he looks everywhere for rest in various amusements;
he finds everything hard; there is nowhere for him to rest,
until he returns to Him who was the source of his innate power,
so that he who had been created by the Lord may find rest in Him.
The Creator Himself orders what His creation should be like and for how long,
and all things retain a little of their God-given nature
and His nature or order or design draws up the details.
When Adam gave these up, he harmed himself first and foremost.
Can a fire last without heat or snow without cold?
Can an animal which breathes air live underwater?
Nothing which is exiled from nature's design can last long.
God therefore gave him the chance to be blessed by loving Him,
except that, in spite of that love, he obstructs the laws of nature.
As he spurns nature, he is not where he may now rest;
thus a wanderer, unsettled, shattered, powerless and worthless,
he becomes changed in mind through the influence of the flesh.
He hates the things he once loved and often loves what he hated
and, as unsubstantial as wax, his will keeps changing;
he wants one thing, then quickly changes his mind and rejects it;
his mind is prey to ignorance, though it thinks it is wise,

and it shrinks from toil, returning to it with difficulty when forced;
in prosperity it puffs up, but pines away from anxiety in adversity
and is scarred by worries in a thousand ways.
Pride, not a thing of natural origin, has infected it.
He desires to be glorious, a thing which naturally appeals to him;
worried, he yearns for that and searches for it as hard as he can;
but he cannot be glorious here whence he has sadly exiled himself.
He works to prepare everything, but soon his plans fall apart;
his credit balance becomes worthless, clearly in the red and falling,
and he cannot rid his mind of its distressing obsession with crime.
Yet he does not cease to court things he knows are stupid.
He yearns to think good of things which make up his whole life;
he would like all to be well in a way suiting his own nature;
he does not know where he is, where to look or where he has left;
so he tries various things, panting after this and that.
But nothing can satisfy him except the Creator Himself,
and the drink he has drunk in his dreams does not satisfy his thirst;
the fires of his fever do not recede before the coolness of water.
Often, a thing which seemed just now to help is instead harmful.
Nature granted him that his Creator would satisfy him.
But if he were to amass for himself mountains of pure gold,
and every kind of gem and choice stone,
or if he ate enormous meals for a thousand years,
whatever the whole world has, scattered throughout its regions,
or what every person has, if totally enslaved to one thing,
the things which exist or can be named or imagined,
they will not fully be able to satisfy nature’s demand,
until he returns to Him he fought against with arrogant heart.
But although the fool grows excessive and inflated by these,
he crawls across the earth and will in the end prove he is a worm.
He who had granted to Adam the foods of Paradise,
forbids them because of the guilt of a sinner who ate the forbidden.
Is it right for a bad slave to take the goods of a good master?
Is a content person equal to an ingrate or the proud to the humble?

With what effrontery may one take the gifts of a hated master?
They who want to be independent should use their own talents.
But he has nothing of his own, no self except, of course, sin.
Do they who stand contrary to themselves have a self?
Rightly should the Judge take away from whingers all they have.
Reptiles, quadrupeds and birds bear a likeness to human beings.
What humans do which is similar to animals is as follows:
humans, who desire only the earth, crawl across it like reptiles;
bearing some burden, good for praise, they are like cattle,
because they do not cling to the earth nor fly up to the stars;
and birds seeking the heights are like humans dutifully doing right.
Following their falls, therefore, men are like reptiles,
prostrate on their belly, although they were made to be upright.
A life brutish in every detail is unworthy of human beings.
But His sense of duty won: He did not take everything from the fallen;
they partake of the food of the earth, but not quite enough,
food fit for animals, they had not adapted themselves to that;
but He established in this, as right and justice demand,
that if people are willing to obey the Power above, they may learn
that the goods of the earth are given them in return.
This then is good, that they may partake of the food if they obey,
but on the contrary it is unjust if He denies them those things.
Nevertheless, people break the pact which is in their interest.
Therefore, censorial power would soon remove the gift,
if His sense of duty, excelling above all, had not left them that.
One might believe that those two were being balanced in Adam's case and one would see the Judge's right hand tilting the scales;
though that pan held many things, this one also yields much.
Because the sinner kills off the seeds of virtue within himself,
it is just that the earth repay him with thorns and thistles,
and, because the power of justice flags because of love of the flesh,
he is lethargic and obstructive in his judgement of things sacred,
as when a seedling pops up, harmful, well known to be useless.

Look what the soil is like and all it produces everywhere!
Useful things are usually produced by a serious passion;
things spring up on their own, not because they are for human use:
on their own up spring the cowslip, burr, nettle and thorn, and
with a bill-hook the peasant's hand scarcely stops the thorn-bush;
it is hardly years of toil which cause vines to produce grapes
and toil is hardly able to deter ferns and harmful plants,
darnel growing on its own or the many clearances of the harvest,
and hardly constant toil which brings corn to a farm's granaries.
Poplar, hypericon, box-tree, sumacha and cypresses
and trees which are suitable for human uses
grow by themselves and are a law unto themselves.
A bent hunchback transports their timber in a cart or barrow,
working at them with adze, axes, rouncey and chisels,
to make whatever human need demands.
The earth bears very many plants which many hoes cut back,
plants for our good, but it is our toil which adapts them for our use.
A multitude of free gifts benefit the guilty and the innocent,
provided for free to ingrates by His love of duty.
Sun, air, earth, sea do not refuse His order to obey.
O how great the things they control or have to soothe our senses!
Things soft, scented, harmonious, tasty, beautiful,
which give joy to the soul which is fed by their variety of pleasure!
They all show that their Creator is wonderful and kind,
because He creates such wonders and provides them for ingrates.
A cataract does not blind them with dense clouds:
wanting to open their sleepy eyes to the light
they desire to recover gradually their mental acumen.
For the sweet Judge, overflowing with His usual sense of duty,
slow to apportion blame and quick to forgive, beats them
in order to spare them and save them for forgiveness.
Though people have made themselves beasts of burden,
they could not however bear to lose this human feeling.
Theoretically, though not knowing honour on a daily basis,

they are very good at handling things of the earth:
marble, silk, gems, glass, bronze or gold.
They suspend the ceilings of lofty buildings upon arches
and plinths with columns and cross-beams set upon a base,
or engrave the floor with a pattern or adorn a wall with plaster
or objects beautifully carved or sculpted from clay,
fitting square mosaic pieces into sapphire frames,
getting marble letters to adhere with glue,
and instruments making sweet music: organs to sort out discord,
the faithful musician shaking his harmonious cymbals,
military equipment which either brings death or prevents it
(shields, greaves, helmet, breast-plate, cuirass to avert death,
lance, hilted sword, catapult, axe to bring death), offensive and defensive,
and things to carry food and drink:
dishes, plates and cruets, cooking pots, vinegar-bowls, goblets,
sop trays; or weaving belts and veils,
weaving lots of clothes with hair girdles;
the wrestling coach, practising his feints and postures.
Who will explain all these things which indicate mental energies?
The idea of these, visualised in the mind, they make reality outside.
Without doubt, mental power can be both lively and inert:
you could think that nothing emerges from the mind;
you have a strong idea that its sharpness is equal to its stupidity,
which is clearly so if you perchance equate skilled people to brutes.
It is inert in those above, on the decline in those willing to fall,
in whom it is on fire, as it no longer ponders the mysteries.
It does not gaze fully at the stars and the earth at the same time;
for more or less everyone looks at one of these,
gaping at it more or less, ignoring the other. Therefore, when tepidity
besets the mind, the flesh's activity increases,
and is expert in application and skill when it focuses its passion,
and the hopes and allurements of a promise excite each person.
Often the energy of the flesh robs the senses of their keenness;

conversely, the mind's virtue is dulled by the power of the flesh;
hence, Jacob is wanting, but the energy of Nimrod is great.
In the old, knowledge of the flesh is hazy, but of the mind quick;
in the young, knowledge of the flesh is strong, of the heart weak:
thus infants recognise their nurse by scent alone;
the tranquillity of Barzillai is said not to calm people's minds,
since the five senses of the old are proved to be feeble;
thus, Shammah wants to be David's young attendant.
Both mind and flesh take control in turn, and have their time.
Indeed, though few were aroused by love of praise
or by quick wits, because laziness had not completely
swamped them, aroused as if walking through a cavern,
looking at the path in the light of lamps shining from above,
they search for something a little better suited to their morals,
to sharpen their minds and force them to stir themselves,
and to explore the arts which are called Liberal,
because these are wont to advance mental capacities.
For although the mind reels, submerged in deep sleep,
seeing in dreams what nature has given,
it may however feel the light with a sort of numb cheek
and consider the causes of things with sharpness of reason.
Such people raise their sensitivity to things to a higher level.
But although some may perchance be wise and sharp-witted,
when they think they have penetrated something subtle or deep,
they are like the shadow of a thing rather than a vision of truth.
No-one - not a teacher or a lying prophet, not Apollo or Hermes –
can be all-knowing and penetrate the profound points of wisdom.
Not only are people stupid in not wanting to explore the wisdom
which popular acclaim and favour laud,
favour which they may employ to win worthless praise,
using any means to get that praise,
but they are also unworthy in not seeking wisdom for themselves
in not knowing what is inside them or what they know inside.
If they blow away its aroma, they do not know how to taste its content,

- such a person not only does not receive secret treasures,
but none of those whose intention is pure,
(what the Lord calls a simple eye
which sees purity more clearly with a pure eye)
none drinks deeply of this but is apt to pour it away.
No-one is lofty of vision, with passage through Paradise,
with sole access to the third door of Heaven,
nor a Heaven-dweller hearing the message to be told to mortals.
This person sees things obscurely and prophesies only part of them.
When Solomon wanted to be wise, wisdom shrank far from him.
Teachers, therefore, dream of these skills, as if snoring,
but awake or asleep can see them differently;
they see the truth and the thing appears substantial;
nothing which they see crosses over totally into fantasy.
By recalling the things they experienced and fixed in their mind,
they create the visions which fantasy shapes for them.
Knowing God, they know that He knows everything well enough.
The first man, before his crime, stood awake and clever,
oppressed neither by the weight of the flesh nor of the mind,
seeing things as they are in clear daylight.
When attracted to forbidden things, he obscures his ray of light
and becomes drowsy and lazy, as if devoid of reason;
therefore his vision is either doubtful or shallow,
but although the power of nature is scarcely mindful of itself,
he recalls the knowledge known to him as if for a long time;
he dreams of these very skills which he tonguelessly prattles about
and partially remembers the lost wisdom which he has forgotten.
Such people discover and imagine very many things
which benefit the studies of those whom grace has chosen;
they sharpen their mind's cutting edge like axes on a whetstone.
They make the meek humbler and make the proud swell up;
thus they harm these whilst helping those.
They plunder Egypt and dress themselves becomingly,
as the Holy Scripture says; the fool is slave to the wise,

as bees have honey or sheep have fleece – not for themselves,
and the slander of humans ceases and the turtle-dove coos.
Sense of duty therefore spared the guilty who attack those things.
With such a great pruning, how little of knowledge survives?
How would we know, think you, if it survived safe and sound?
For a long time like a well painted picture, but now obscured by smoke,
it reveals by its own evidence what it was, when intact,
and the skilled hand of the Painter and His former glory.
Thus Adam shows by his own testimony who he was before his sin,
having the likeness of his Potter, though that honour later went.
But who was sane who remains so languid?
What had the Creator, who reserves so much for a complainer,
given to the content? He will spend freely, for He thinks of both.
I have long found certain habits of brutish people to be partly
barking, people who show through slightly better deeds,
when paying attention, that they could understand wisdom
and, something which may be closer to their nature,
how the stupid can be slaves to the wise,
in whom ingenuity has made their intellect sharp.
An eloquent tongue polishes them, but a worthless life sullies them;
their mind crawls on the ground, but their sense seeks the heights;
nor does it help them that they look into the unknown with little interest,
nay, it hinders them, since they are unable to know God,
whom the details of creation retain in their orderliness,
though omitting to provide a divine cult.
They also get no pleasure from faith, which they clearly lack.
Though they are of the clay which is rightly beset by His anger,
and they have a vacuum, which they got from love of praise,
seeing as they are uncivilised, though eloquent when they speak,
they rate therefore as less disgusting in the list of the depraved,
because they have studied something not disgusting but useful,
and doing something less adverse is clearly good for their salvation
- provided however one does not enjoy this love too much.
For it harms most people, whom it caresses with its alluring ways,

and who find doctrine nauseous and feed upon worthless poetry.
But though they seek these skills with all their heart,
breaking into and surrendering their private free time,
though they penetrate many ideas and pretend they know the unknown,
and are thought to have a steady, honest moral base,
it is of no help to them because they have neglected the one worship
to which all things must deservedly be made subject.
A flint struck to make a hot fire does not illuminate itself;
it produces sparks, but gives them out to others, and does not
own what it gives to them, and administers light, though blind.
People who are keen to plough up veins of wisdom from faith,
thus, by remaining firm, make the pious learned;
though they do nothing for themselves, they confer much on them.
Such people are not excluded from divine benefaction;
certainly, wisdom has given partial approval to the unworthy,
so that it indeed transfers itself through them to the wise.
The sun thus shines on the wicked, the Creator rains on the unjust,
and He will not desert the human race in any age.
But He keeps for Himself a few grains of the scorched chaff
which lie underneath the ears of corn, concealed by them;
birds would have them, if they had not been covered.
Thus repression of the wicked preserves the good, and indeed the
reprimanding of those who might become too proud of their work.
The wise person with his knowledge and the crazy unjust one
therefore soldier on to be of use to those who are wisely wise.
Mention of the stupid, like the sad wolves of the world,
long read about in poems, saddens the palate;
one longs therefore hungrily to taste something sweeter.
Thus, my Muse has touched the good with rash daring,
and she goes round whispering her song of ancestral fathers
who pour forth from Heaven’s windows upon the abyss a light
from the true sunlight of the shining human heart,
so that it rebounds powerfully upon those worthy of mention.
But my pen, its blunt nib, grows weary.

Let me stop here so that a break may refresh my withered strength!

Book Four

Preface

My unhappy Muse has long been recalling
the sad works of people who,
by shunning the sweet Father, have handed
themselves over willingly to rotten sins.
Their wicked race, like a slave to Venus,
has increased many times over;
but the more numerous it became,
the more and more it polluted itself.
That crop is worthy enough of being burnt
although it has produced some grain worth storing.
Their ancestral pedigree, put in order,
according to the teaching of a Church leader:
he put the animalistic first,
then the spiritual.

So my Muse sadly makes it a priority
to sing happily about that.
If only she may inspire the words of the sinner
who has dedicated his foolish mouth to speaking!

When the whole mechanism of the world was in place
and its individual parts flourished in their own way,
humans, alas, ahead of the rest, went backwards, willingly,
as my wordy Muse has barked about too much above.
The Almighty Censor, however, totally abounding in sense of duty,
though rejected, did not forever reject Adam who rejected Him
or let him be deprived completely of His indulgent gift
or return to the former chaos, though the things He made for him
would suffer this destruction on account of his sin.
If, in His very fair judgement, many pots were rejected,
grace selected a few of them, though not obliged to,
to be wise enough to realise the debt which pots have to the Potter,

and the glorious nature of the gift of a mind, and of reason,
on which humans rely, fashioned in the image of their Maker,
and how foul a yoke it is to be a slave to the tricks of vice
and how beautiful is the coverlet laid before us by God.
These made a mental decision to cling to the greatest good
and to remain humble rather than to rebel against the light.
God therefore sees them and dutifully directs their deeds;
He cherishes or harasses them, feeding them rough or smooth;
He sends them adversity to stop them becoming arrogant in success,
not too much, however: being kind, He moderates both.
He makes them run life's course along with the reprobates;
lilies grow up with the thorns, weeds with corn,
and grains of wheat are beset by chaff,
as the colour white shines out more against a black background,
so honest people shine in the midst of a corrupt nation;
and as the brown earth has produced gold,
that nation is really two peoples with two minds

very remote from each other in custom and interests.
One half worships God, the other insanely worships the world;
one half rushes into crime, multiplying its sins,
preferring not what the Creator orders but what the impostor wants,
and, rejecting medication, prefers its sores to rot;
one half, having now learnt how harmful the easy route is,
chooses righteousness, avoiding things bad for its safety,
cautious about its deeds as well as the danger to itself,
wary of delighting in tricks suggested by the Devil.
The first two brothers were prototypes for these.
Lack of virtue is represented by the evil Cain,
and innocent Abel, dying, represents Jesus. Moreover,
each of them have their own king, kingdom, pay and city.
Exposed to vices, to which that one is a willing slave, his king
is Satan, his city Babylon, his pay death, his kingdom Hell;
necessity prompts one to return to the bosom of his father,
for he has a horror of having to eat pigswill, so his King

is God, his city Jerusalem, his pay life, his kingdom the stars.
That one is wary of the Devil's tricks, lusting after males;
this one is afraid, that one arrogant; this returns, that goes off;
this one, meek, is made to quake at the threats of the whip,
that one, unmoved by whips, knows not what punishment means,
and samples the troubles of life and the punishments of Hell
which God sometimes imposes now, sometimes just threatens;
God strikes him with moderation, not beating him hard forever,
because hearts are not softened by brief whippings.
He will fully punish and keep watch over hearts softened by Hell;
that one falls headlong and his fate restrains the other one,
so that he becomes used to sober behaviour, wary of slipping.
One is staggering drunkenly, bent upon ruin,
which makes this one cautious, though the impact smashes that one;
this one, beaten with whips, learns to fear savage punishments;
but that one becomes harder, making worse stupid mistakes;
this one considers returning, that one insanely seeks the depths.

The life of the citizens of Babylon is like life in Jerusalem;
they follow a common course, alike,
and have certain things the same, other things uniquely their own.
Sadness, prosperity, dispute, plenty, peace or want,
rough and smooth, health and sickness - all the alternatives
in human experience of life, with varying fate, -
to each his own foible; I shall say no more.
Some are chosen for their humility or rejected for arrogance
though the "colour" of their fortune may be the same
(it has a palette of colour when prosperity benefits someone,
but is more like nakedness when adversity strikes),
but fortune laughs more at these who are corrupted by bad deeds.
As fortune flows from a horn of plenty upon those who are worthy,
so the bad are unworthy of enjoying life in Heaven;
harsh on the fallen, fortune does not enrich outcasts from Heaven.
Being able to taste here the silly things which they desire,
they are sucking the teats of a hyena as if those of their mother.

But their long hate relationship wearies them.
May my weary Muse, who once inspired the dutiful,
devote herself to the same and toil to make mention of those
whom the Provider of things has supplied since the world's origin!
The whirlpool of crime could not suck them in completely
nor was any sin able to eclipse their glory of mind,
but the light of faith always glowed bright within them;
the meek, the chaste, the sober and the patient ones flourished,
establishing many lights of virtue in the world,
used to setting standards in dutiful work for their followers,
whom the dark cloud of countless sin had covered.
Firstly patient Abel who did not resist dying.
He represented a lamb, a sacrificial offering,
for whom it is possible to take away the sins of the world.
His brother had persuaded him to go outside, to kill him:
evil men make mundane suggestions to make the just perish.
That simple man, therefore, overcome by death,

teaches us that good people may kill reprobates and stay innocent.
It goes by the name “grief” in the Hebrew tongue,
referring to those who fill their years with weeping.
When Seth was born, he began to worship the Lord above in prayer.
Enoch was translated to God, attracted by mental power;
things they had in common attracted each other;
he dwelt in the paradise he deserved, in the flesh, never dying.
And Noah, posthumous father of the world, survived the Flood.
He was chosen to save the doomed world – with a twig –
and, knowing how to sail, built an ark on God’s orders
and doomed sinners chose to laugh at one who was to be saved.
Building it, he prevents the world being destroyed by the waters.
Adapting his triple-decked ship to the three orders of the Church,
he shows us that people of different cultures will be as one,
since his ship’s hold enclosed various life-forms,
the ship’s look-out symbolising the waters of baptism,
and that the meek are to be mocked but that they remain faithful,

and the faces of these are to be filled with joy, of those with grief.
How dutifully were Shem and Japheth bound by respect for their father!
They covered up his nakedness which Ham mocked with derision,
symbolising those to whom the cross is a joke, an insult to God,
but these sons symbolise those fearing loss of majesty,
as, with faces averted, they do not see the shameful things
which He endures, overcome by love of us,
but they do see the divinity with which God is forever filled,
as they gaze upon the heavenly mysteries of the faith in the cross,
certain that their eternal salvation depended on this.
What shall I say about the countless people outside the law
of the faith, attracted to the work of the faith by genuine will,
and whose inborn sense of duty directed them to the study of virtue?
They have indeed fathered children, and not in their juvenile years;
for how they spurned lust in their younger days!
The age at which each is said to father children is indicative,
since they lay with a woman for pleasure, not by some ceremony,

paying the dues owed to a wife, not taking them.
A man who acts through Venus is perverting a legitimate act.
And because quite often they tend to have a conjugal bond,
they want to procreate, to produce divine offspring,
as promised by the forefathers of their faithful race.
Because it is not about love-making but for the sake of children,
it is thus clear that the promise was made to men only,
for whom it is possible to sow their seed in many women,
but no woman is allowed to marry many men;
for, taking the seed of one man, she does not bear children
until conception is finally successful.
When someone fell, overcome by lust perhaps,
when someone fell (for the weak are often tempted) that person
becomes, upon rising again, an example of fall and forgiveness.
David falls in this way, prompting forgiveness by his recovery.
And Solomon was scarcely out of boyhood, when as a youth,
after love-making, he fathered a child – a bad omen;

soon he is giving out his first orders in his first command,
and is undone by this – a profane ruler constructing holy temples,
when he was building a wonderful temple for the Lord,
and could access the treasure-stores of holy wisdom
and held power by the right of his body.
How evil was the lust which so prostrated Solomon,
in giving holy places to harlots after the temple's construction!
How unspeakable is adultery or one punished for it in those days,
except when no law of nature forbids it.
Tamar, pregnant, is said to have been sentenced to burning
and King (Abimelech) to have complained of Isaac that he said that
his wife was his sister, admittedly in fear of the Gittites,
which became a great scandal for the king and his kingdom.
And Joseph, called Zaphnath-Paaneah, is willing to be imprisoned
rather than to give in to dishonour, and Susannah to be put to death;
Lucretia also preferred to avoid this shame by death.
Woe, if that was thought so great an evil, with no law against it!

After a law was passed, after the Flower born of a virgin,
who came by virgin birth to atone for the world,
I ask this: are you counting how it swells the great mounds
with limbs, especially those of devoted Christians
who were sacrificial victims, to ferment and rot?
The Great Teacher ordains that the bodies of a husband
and his wife shall be in control of each other mutually,
the one being under the other's conjugal constraint.
The chaste patriarch (Abraham) thus obeyed Sara completely.
Through these actions, therefore, they prove to have pleased the Lord,
doing as they were ordered in order to beget a race.
An example of faith to those who followed, he dutifully offered his son;
as a chaste belt girds his loins like a garland,
reducing through virtue the rash excesses of Venus.
Circumcised, he has offspring which will cleanse generations
and purify those He joins to Him when He becomes flesh.
So he leaves his homeland, clinging prudently to the Lord

to show us that anything must be left behind because of Him alone,
so that he soon rejects the world in which he is engaged
and shuns the attraction of earth, blessed with love of Heaven,
and he casts off nature's chains because of his love of the Creator.
Worthy of entering a covenant with God and discussing with Him,
he runs to a herd and personally prepares a bullock,
being great in eloquence and no less in serving.
Thus, raised high, he admits that he is dust,
remembering what he is, lest someone take the gift as his own
and forget himself and become swollen with pride.
Isaac spent forty years unmarried, then was
finally content with just one woman, whom he married.
Born by God's promise, the son was then asked for by the Giver.
He willingly accepts that his father wants to sacrifice him;
the young man does not resist the old man in killing him. Though he is
twenty-five now and the stronger, he does not obstruct the old man.
Because dogma is silent on this matter, it seems like darkness perhaps.

Could he be overpowered and placed on a pyre against his will?
He is a good example of how fitting it is for someone to revere his
father in small matters, for he did not resist his father in death.
Jacob, running away, was in service for twenty years,
soaked by rain, enduring frost or scorched by heat,
so the race of Adam does not consider rustic life odious
since the patriarch sweated so much in that state for a long time.
When the angel bound his breast with elbows spread,
that part of him, located far below his heart, was weak
- foul lust frequently stimulates it –
and burns, delighting him with many compulsions;
it proves that this lust grows cold in men associated with the Lord.
By running away, he quenched the flame of a brother's envy
so that it blazed less fiercely, because fate had exiled him, hated,
so that we might mitigate our fired-up fury.
Anger rages afresh, but often weakens in the course of time,
as that man proves who later placates his brother.

And Joseph, growing up, is the son older than the rest
and sweeter to his father, though clearly hated more by them;
a good man, he endures the envy of his evil brothers.
Dreams terrify minds eaten away by hatred;
he had been looked up to because he was their leader.
He is sold into slavery by a trick, not what the Creator had planned,
cunning trying to overturn the divine plan.
He thinks about opposing this, but His order is fulfilled
and, the more to amaze you, he completes what is thought impossible.
Therefore, what the Lord cleverly planned is not resisted.
A free man undergoes servitude maintaining the highest virtue;
the champion of justice is ordered to be a slave to vice;
but he spurned the advances of his mistress, a slave of free love.
In short, she had cast lustful eyes upon him;
he shrank from dishonouring the loveliness offered him
(his honour is the greater because it came from the lovely Creator),
so that she, avoiding the flesh, is not forever empty of mind.

Restored to his position, he is ordered to obey the Lord,
because there is no power except by the nod of God;
but no order can be given which is contrary to justice;
so someone ordering unjust acts should be resisted;
Joseph may therefore reject what his mistress orders. He teaches us
to bear our yoke, to keep the faith, to do our duty to evil-doers
and that contempt for the Lord is not to be pardoned without some
punishment – this by tricking his brothers; he forces them to admit
their crimes so that there may at last be a place for forgiveness;
then he falls on their guilty necks with tears and caresses each one,
founding the world through many symbols of virtue.
Firstly he mastered his appetite, then he performed other noble deeds.
Job, the like of whom, it is said, there was no-one on earth,
completes his duties though bound by no precept;
he reveals clearly that law is based upon nature.
At the peak of virtue, he was carried away too high
living among those which he calls ostriches and dragons,

which try to block his way in reality or perhaps figuratively.
Staying calm through all this, he is comforted by God,
but he argues that the world was not tamed by God's patience
when a sinner feels the whips but does not complain,
when the just man is quiet and praises his beater.
A certain charisma was also full strong in him,
so that you would see something in him you would think special;
thus a pagan claims for himself evangelical gold;
this confounds us passive Christians very much.
He is placed beneath his servants if legal cause demands,
accustomed to smashing the rabid jaws of robbers.
Why, he is so chaste that he does not think about young women.
He had made a pact with his eye, not to bring hurt to his heart.
Heart and eye admit their mutual love of each other; for the eye
recalls things seen and the heart demands objects to love through it.
But Job ties them both up, lest this and that unite with each other.
Nevertheless he talks of this great evil fire

which gnaws at or burns all the seeds of virtue.

What, I ask, does a pagan feel about the same crime?

What does it teach of such importance, except that it shows

the Devil's talent, by which he prevails most, is getting worse?

If he continues to fear too much and God's trumpet makes nothing

in him holy and he panics because no law had yet forbidden it,

weigh up what is it, for limbs blessed by holy baptism to drown

in mud after the evangelical thunderclaps!

All his life he lived so that his heart would not blame him;

but there would be no place for God, if he were an adulterer.

In face of honest deeds of duty, he was afraid and panicking

lest God should see that people would reject these fine things,

and some just people might tremble at just deeds.

God sent these prophets and more such at various times,

to make future generations aware of these examples.

But seeing where people's presumption would lead,

He gave them prophets to be shepherds of the holy flocks,

lest impiety with loose rein should become more puffed up,
if the **nobility** of the flesh should establish the origins of law
or bear the first formations of an honest life. Therefore
it is a **rustic** mob instead which teaches us the path of salvation;
however many kings there were, they admit that they were lacking.
Thus were races born of faith rather than of seed,
by shining bright not for neighbours so much as future generations;
for as a sunken root grows up and down,
producing beautiful things above and ugly below ground,
thus they carried ideas not so much for now as for the future;
their effect is worthless for the present but beautiful for the future.
Thus they run through the centuries, as stars through the zones of
Heaven, leading exemplary lives in the dry tinder of nations
to set them on fire with their sparks.
The law of nature, supported by them with the help of morals,
had grown spontaneously among good people by healthy custom.
When it inspired the rest, who were encouraged by written law also,

these two types of law influenced their deeds as early as possible:
in order not to impose on someone something one does not want,
creating for one's fellow what one really wants for oneself.
Robust law grew strong in them over many years
and conversely grew weak in reprobates, then gradually cold
and has now begun to lose its strength completely.
As evening gradually yields to the coming night,
the light of justice is repelled by the night of guilt,
saddening as many as were lovers of piety.
For although the stars fill the heavens, night besets the earth,
and although such prophets shine through their dutiful work,
they were not able to convert embittered minds.
A denser cloud of impiety has gradually enveloped the world
and has nowhere reserved a place for justice,
as the dark sky with over-dense air at approach of night
grows shadowy and black with clouds pressed against it,
so that scarce any ray of virtue may shine through it,

nor the splendour of light penetrate the innermost heart.
And yet the examples of our forefathers are of benefit to some.
Though stars often shine here and there among the clouds,
and radiant stars appear as if through tubes,
thus virtue, through those whom restraining grace adorned,
has made the shadows of perfidy somewhat less dense.
The earth therefore has as many holy ones as Heaven has stars,
prophets who, by the example of their works, light those who follow.
But more people are everywhere rejecting the cult of justice.
As a pearl is rarely seen in thick sand,
rare is the character of the good in a heap of the depraved.
God therefore, being ever mindful of His duty,
when He sees men tearing up natural law,
considers and recollects and obstructs those with a death-wish.
Though they may flee from Him and prefer to die, He wants to
counter the venom of their guilt with the antidote of discipline.
He promulgates a law which threatens the stupid with torments,

and checks brutish minds with the whip, at least.

Moses the Law-giver, sent as the first faithful scribe,

brought forth what are the first principles;

he was the first to set out doctrines in writing. Humans had not existed at the time when these things which Moses relates happened.

That power which natural law suggests for the people of earth,

which orders what they each want for themselves, as for others,

and, feeling ashamed, wants things to be openly decent and honest,

gradually suppressed, had weakened through depraved use.

This power revives it, slapping legal orders on it,

and brings back God's word, as if to people very far away now,

and the Epistle tells those distant ones what He orders.

He spoke long and fully through the personae of the prophets,

speaking as if to neighbours and close bystanders,

bringing forth sealed documents as if for those far away.

Not in a physical way, but in a cerebral way,

everyone is either far from, or close to, the Lord.

Therefore, those whom impiety relegates further from Him
He calls through the enigmas sent in sealed writings.
However, there is no need to break the impressed seal,
for that people carries the dogma concealed in the symbolic images
which He gave to the Church; although not knowing the cause,
the unwitting carrier, Judaea, brings these things to the nations
and carries messages harmful to itself, just like Uriah.
He who opens the seven seals reveals these things.
He reveals them to the meek, but they stay sealed for the arrogant.
This produced guilty feelings but did not remove them.
He signals these mysteries of the faith in symbolic ritual;
He wants them to wipe out whatever sin there is.
Although this produced a natural slumber with age-old torpor,
it made many grow warm for years,
and full of great enthusiasm and decent habit.
This man Moses, destined to be a great leader of a great nation,
and going to work great miracles, renowned for centuries,

takes up his sublime throne over the flock which he feeds.

Ah! God, seeing lofty things from afar, raises him on high,

calls him out of the depth; the poor man rises from the excrement!

First under chieftains, then kings, with prophets as well,

that nation ran its mortal course.

Little Samuel becomes elected as the people's first unofficial leader.

He shone more with this virtue than with charisma,

speaking out in place of a bad king and his complaining cohorts,

showing that it is a great evil not to love one's enemy.

King David, fleeing though innocent, driven out by his enemies,

was following a gentle path, however, in his crisis.

But the boy, chosen to rule because of his divine roots

was soon no longer in exile, but did not want to assume the throne.

Instead he returned to his folds, feeding his sheep according to custom

and slaughtered fierce bears and lions

and with the virtue of faith he defeated a huge giant.

Trained by many tribulations and dangers,

scarcely yet grown up, he took the throne and ruled.
Through it all, he remains humble and worthless in his own eyes;
he does not recall the lofty triumphs which he often won, because
God had ordered him to be anointed by his rejected brothers.
He remains humble from boyhood to saintly old age;
he does not repay evil deeds, but repaid hatred with friendly love.
In noble manner, he improved the cult of the law.
Full of charisma, he benefited the world in all ways.
He gave real hope of forgiveness by supporting their fall,
when the peak of his kingship had finally earned him praise,
centralising most things now under his command.
He had been an exile with no auspicious expectation;
he had been troubled, but could now have peace to the full.
How mixed with earthly dangers is prosperity!
It is clear that he soon began to embrace foul sin.
For a volcano burned him with such great passion for love-making
that he seized for himself a companion by slaying her husband;

not having a normal enemy, he is consumed by a grimmer ancient one.
Born into the privileged classes, his guilt would have exiled him
had not the old whip been quick to punish him, and had not
magisterial strictness brought him back with a beating.
But later he arose and reassumed the divine charisma
which Christ, all goodness, would have generated for him.
For it is agreed that every rank has its own mentors,
through imitation of whom everyone may behave well;
Prince David therefore sets nobles the standards for excellence!
Elijah controlled the skies, controlling the uncontrollable,
where unknown elements buffet lumpish masses,
elements which refuse to be controlled by evil blasphemers.
Whenever he wanted, he made the skies snow through force of prayer.
However, to tell his story, a little woman terrifies him,
forces him to take flight and undergo the dangers of begging.
A bit of meat is given him, provided by ministering ravens,
yet later only bread is provided by the service of an angel.

An angelic servant is provided for bread to eat,

and ravens alone provide meat – I don't know why;

in such a holy meal there was lacking a drink;

having eaten the bread, he survives and,

consuming lamp-oil, he stays healthy for forty days,

showing that a lean diet is better for health.

This holy generation produced many prophets,

as noted in the faithful relation of sacred history,

though more in this category have been omitted;

for History recalls only as many as it is necessary to,

adding up a great number of the creators of the faith,

and the dogma on which they found the pillar of the Church.

The line of prophets continued thereafter one by one.

Each in his time shone for duty done.

As the radiant stars adorn the face of the sky,

making dark night glimmer with their comings and goings,

as it is possible for stars to pour forth light,

just as the sun itself shines, which shines everywhere on its own,
from the reflection of which shine the rest of the stars,
thus the Provider prepared these from the start of the world,
so that each in its turn illuminated the abyss of crimes.
A sense of duty therefore shines within those men, our fathers.
Sin began to disappear, right and justice gradually to rise again,
the long-scorned cult of justice to grow strong again,
faith long weakened to regain its strength,
and goodwill to be urged on again by force of nature.
As a yacht navigates across the Aegean guided by the stars
and the sailor steers familiar routes through unknown wastes,
thus these men are leaders of righteousness, advising those who follow,
and a beacon to guide our steps.
God therefore gave us prophets to set standards for the faithful,
and to adorn the face of the earth with a ray of virtue.
These, by their coming and going, adorned earth for so long,
as the stars do the sky, until the real Sun arrived,

so that the dim dawn might turn into full-blown day

and the shining light-house of justice might gleam everywhere.

Stars twinkle with this light, the just with that light.

These, although full of light, cannot blot out the night;

but the Sun is this powerful, scattering its golden rays everywhere;

the Sun is so powerful that it lights up the darkness of black Hell,

alone able to drive off the night of crimes.

All who partake of His gift He has made holy;

it is not possible for one to shine by one's own lantern,

but to take a free ticket to glory, and willingly pay it back.

Anyone may be helpful in ability, or duty done,

or beneficial not just to oneself but to one's comrades.

But though they shine, though they gleam with sunlight,

none of the prophets, however, could change the world

or could dispel the grim shadows of perfidy.

The evil cohort, of course, flooding in like a whirlpool,

as black night prevails over the stars with its interposed clouds,

was gradually making the rays of virtue dim,
weakening the law, removing the force of custom,
preferring to change Heaven's law by people's surrender.
The conflict between day and night is seen at dusk,
while the world is everywhere growing dark at day's decline;
the action of the depraved in smothering the work of the holy
had spread their arrogant sceptre through all corners of the world,
and though written law, good and sacred, promotes wholesomeness,
and is real, it nevertheless fell into decline, neglected by them.
For although the crash of thunder and lightning's fire
deliver portents, and these are glorious to the prophets
and shine with symbolic rituals, laden with images,
and though evil people also know that these were Heaven-sent,
they were not afraid to subordinate them to the teaching of humans
who were unable to understand any symbolic meaning in them.
For the Creator had made it different from pagan ritual:
a people unholy with demons, alas, had made His gifts sacred,

preferring hateful things to become popular through complainers;
yet if you look closely, they are each full of images,
suitable for the ministry which the faithful celebrate world-wide.
Each of the prophets in his own age insisted on correcting this
or perhaps a good king (for often they had been profane)
striving to organise the return of religion.
But the corrupt people go backwards, prone to worse.
Scorning and abandoning their Maker, the people seek idols again
. . . . . (line missing in MS) . . . . . .
not paying attention to the words of the prophets,
scorning orders which are usually instilled in them by prophets,
dying a grim death because they wanted to give themselves life
and obsessively devoted to profane augury and groves.
The prophets therefore see that the law is despised
and that it could convert that one nation
though it had been given an angelic mission from Heaven
with fire-belching clouds and the shuddering crash of thunder,

and see that, as a result, no-one may fully escape from sin
and that no-one can be brought to the perfect state.
Indeed, nobody is so clean in heart, mouth or hand
that the Prince of the world does not obstruct him in many ways.
For anybody, even the noble, may be damaged from birth
Since everybody, though lofty, was born from the transfer of guilt.
The wild race of Adam wants to trust none but themselves, and
no-one, though pure, would they consider worthy of reverence.
Thus also the Judaean race resists Moses;
neither his own sister nor brother listened to him enough;
the world therefore considered no-one to be so blessed
none to be clean either in thought or deed.
No prophet therefore was created to be a popular choice,
though he be honoured with praises and lofty title,
with the wild race of Adam subservient to him
obeying the word of a very lofty one,
since no-one is good, except He who alone creates everything.

Drawing back from those things, they began to lose confidence in
the prophets, adding that they never had any hope in them,
that it was something far different that the world needed
that prophets on a mission do not want to strive for such things,
which no-one could bring to full effect.
They had preferred to sit and weep at the river of Babylon
rather than to play a divine hymn, and did not want
organ music to echo through the willows of the brook.
Moses therefore pretends that he is slow of speech and begs:
“Do not send me, I pray, but Him whom you are going to send,
who by His will makes the tongue-tied and the brutish eloquent”;
A pagan may listen to him but the Hebrew does not obey!
The other one says “I am a child and don’t know how to speak”,
and tries to prove his point with a triple “Ah”.
He takes flight, the other one denies he is a prophet,
saying “Send me” and offers himself to the heathens,
knowing that the Church will come about from such.

They teach many things on which they pin their hope, the gift
of hope at which they stand and marvel, and in which they trust.
For only hope of salvation had been their means of communicating,
for the Father had promised this in words and images.
Therefore they see that it could not be done by any others,
who had been branded by their own backgrounds or deeds,
that the world may be restored to the life taken away
and Death, handled by the One, may lose its yoke over the rest.
They throw themselves into prayer, their sighs increased by
breast-beating
and they weep for justice, each one as part of a group,
recalling their injuries while lying at the feet of the Judge
with entreating vows; great emotion produces this,
so greatly do they desire this or gasp something while beating,
their lamentation unfolding in sorrowful words.
For they see the whole human race overcome by vice,
and nowhere a refuge; they feed on tears as if on bread

and spend their days in grief and their years in lamentation
hoping that one thing may remain of their salvation,
to be able to mitigate the response of the Judge,
if a kneeling confession admits to mountains of crime,
if presumption of one's merits trusts in no lie.
So they blame themselves, admit and beseech Him to be just.
This prophet grieves because impiety tends to blow everyone,
pride to blow everyone as the wind snatches a leaf,
and another laments there is not even one person doing good,
and that, corrupted by passion, everyone is useless,
another because one cannot side with both God and mortals
and no-one could be a servant of both,
for one either pleases Him or He sets one a standard,
and one's work should please the Father or censure the world.
He says "We are whirled around as if full of dizziness
and we do not know that there is grief amid our tribulations,
but conversely rejoice in them as though we are happy.

Thus we are without sense, happily tolerating the deplorable".

And it makes this pile of grief grow worse

that no-one has a care for himself or prefers the cure,

- why, he mocks it instead and runs away from it, when offered.

And what will the doctor do now, spurned by the sick?

Who may heal one who challenges the jaws of a shark?

Wisely, they denounce their crimes for a fitting judgement,

so that He may spare those who refuse to spare their own guilt.

So they groan, remembering their crimes, confessing to the Lord:

"You are our father, for Abraham did not know us.

But you rightly abhor base people, being yourself most beautiful.

Look upon the outcasts, made into saddles for vices;

and as if you did not create us and were not our Lord,

they thus made themselves the slaves of an alien lord

and willingly drive themselves on like abandoned wretches.

You are too angry. Alas, what king is worthy to rise up

and have the right to restrain you or calm your anger?

Sin envelopes each of us tightly.

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

This inspires them and urges them to hope for great things,
because the Holy Judge restrains His deserved anger so
that their guilt does not provoke His anger's full force,
but may preserve its dignity through many painful times.
So they talk of the glory of the Potter in subduing His clay,
whom He puts, wonderfully, first in the order of things
as an image of Himself, whom He wants to endure for ever
and hold power over the rest of the creatures in the world.
Human beings now partially reveal how great they used to be
because, though cast down, they are great in strength, as it were.
They have much physical power which no beast can match,
because, of course, they have limbs equipped for doing tasks.

Their mind, uncultured and impaired, can be improved by study,
to sharpen its limited vision to comprehend difficult things too.
If that mind is so strong now in seeing various things,
what would it know and be worth if at full power and healthy?
If the advantages of a life not so worthy appear so great,
what would they be if supplied with a calm life? If God supplies
such great things to the arrogant, what would He give the innocent?
Adam was settled in place in a sacred Paradise,
when foolishly he desired to overstep the amount given to him
and lost what he had, becoming famed as a bed-mate and
exposed to vices and troublesome toil.
The Judge however did not suffer everything to be taken away:
Adam's many sins do not strip him completely of his original gifts.
For nature protects his ability to procreate:
though we are begotten full of corruption and spattered with crime,
nature nourishes us beneficially with all manner of fuel;
a mother's teats flow with milk as long as babyhood needs it;

and nature continues to give gifts at other points in life.

The mind, the intellect, and also the five senses start to function;

even the world serves human uses:

stars, sea, earth serve various uses,

day and night alternate in their turn to refresh the rebels.

Who can say how long a life He gives for ingrates to enjoy?

What would our nature be like if it remained pure?

With what great titles and great honours would a man blush

if he did not corrupt himself with his degenerate penis?

How would he shine if cleaned up, when he can shine through filth?

But He would be content to cherish those who run away

From Him, if a little care for their own safety remained.

He wants to protect this, looking after us with a sense of duty,

showing us this by sending holy prophets early on.

When however these people prefer to despise their recovery,

He is tolerant at first and then threatens punishments.

The world laughs at both responses by hindering holy ministers.

Let people weigh up how dutiful God is, how evil the world,
how grave their error, how justly the Creator punishes,
how evil lurks and how He saves them by beating them.
If He made clay devoid of breath come to life,
if dust were blessed with divine image or appearance,
if people were given whatever things are contained in the world,
did the Potter deserve that the dust be made equal to Him
and should wish to spurn all His orders?
He is completely dutiful, and just in a very appropriate way.
A weighing-scale should balance its two pans
so that the heavier weight of one does not overcome the other,
merciful forgiveness lightening the pan of justice,
the severity of this one not overcoming the mercy of that one.
It therefore befits God to be fair in the performance of His duty.
So that kneeling confession may produce prayers,
the Creator did not reject these, screening them for merit,
for they do say that the deeds of evil ones are His responsibility.

Now indeed they have felt the Lord's favour upon them,
and hope and belief may grow now in the timid, so that,
standing before the face of the Judge, however vexed they are,
they dared to request also the great things they want,
remembering what He himself had promised them.
Likewise He had promised to show Moses everything good.
He said "I will not be the one who plants the seeds of crime".
(The words show that He produces children who are equal,
His great mercy restraining His great anger.)
"If some olive-trees bear a rather modest crop
and if blight leaves just one grape in a cluster,
whoever does not lose, says rather "It's a blessing!"
Thus I separate out the off-cuts of the human race,
which may grow to the number of the grains of thirsty sand,
from which a mason makes a fair amount of cement,
separate them from the majority of the clay and set them free
and I ask, through my people's prayers for me, for a huge slave,

like a tower, to guard so that I do not lose all the clay."

Many such examples show that He is inclined toward mercy,

overcome by a sense of duty to temper His roused anger.

The prophets felt this and therefore pray joyfully.

Whoever seeks the promised common good,

asks for it with onerous vows and deep sobs.

They carry concealed in their voice and written figures the things

which the dutiful Father Himself had been wont to promise,

and everyone tried to reveal them to the destroyed world.

But people do not care for a doctor, donot know how to diagnose

Their illness, unaware of the madness which has overtaken them.

The Creator may reply to them like students with these words:

"I did not create death nor am I happy that the monster wins:

the wickedness of crimes has brought dearth upon the ungodly.

Adam was a willing sinner and rightly bound by that covenant,

under Death's rule because he corrupted himself,

as he went astray after some small tit-bit.

For I exercise the just duty of a judge justly,

I cherish justice, I do not abandon the correct path,

I repay sinners their due, I do not attack them in anger.

Rather it is their guilt which makes me turn, though I prefer

to spare them if they are willing to restrain themselves.

Your guilt may have lasted long, but I do not stay angry forever.

People are slaves to sin and have committed it willingly; they fall

as a result of their wish, but will not rise quickly as they wished.

One can sell oneself and have no desire to get free,

for slavery weighs upon those who sell themselves into it.

Therefore, unless they are deemed, they remain slaves.

Do people fall willingly just to be able to pay off a slave-bond?

How I wish that prisoners had some way out open to them!

Whoever exists, who pays the dues of Death,

should owe nothing to that tax-collector

and One who is without sin should set sinners free!

Indeed, no-one should blame someone doing what is just,

or think me to be harsh if I judge justly!" If the Creator
did not actually say this, His deeds however spoke for Him.
The suppliant choir of the holy reply to Him as follows:
"You are just, o King, and your judgement is also just.
Yours is the praise, ours the shame and great confusion,
we have no voice, no sense, no chance to open our mouths,
but we are all confounded like an arrested thief!
What could a sinner offer the Almighty in defence?
No sinner can ever make a just person, no just person a sinner
and no-0ne involved in crime can ever justify the same.
Hands which wash off the dirt ought to be clean.
None of us who is free has the power to resist Death,
and people cannot unchain not only others, but themselves.
We see, as it is possible, because you overflow with goodness,
how ungrateful and evil we are in return.
O God, if we are therefore unable to offer you anything worthy,
please do not think this creature alien to you!

Look upon us kindly, the work which you the Potter create!
We offer just this, which we pray that you notice, this being the
only remaining thing we have to show you which is worthy,
that your creation may please you, though its deeds displease,
or that the pot's deeds may be pleasing in the eyes of the Potter.
We know that there is no salvation for us from ourselves,
and that you are dutiful and Almighty,
the supreme good, all powerful and bounded by no law; for you
make everything in Heaven, on sea and land, as you wish,
and you desire our cure a thousand times more than we do.
For, being divine, you dutifully have mercy on human deeds
and hate none of them, but think they should be supported,
you, God! What then remains for you but to spare your creatures?
Spare your anger, calm your rage, though it is deserved,
look at the great riches which fill your grace!
For although evil is enormous and sin has made huge heaps
and crimes have made lofty mountains,

it is a short-lived accumulation, very poor and weak,

o King, compared with the treasure-store of your great goodness,

and as a tiny drop in the vast ocean

and as a thin little cloud evaporating in the fire-belching sun

(for you say: "I shall destroy evil for my sake like a cloud")

thus, dutiful King, may you destroy great sin!

Your peace and spiritual feeling casts out all sins.

Though you are also terrible, as we deserve, in your decisions,

yet you call us with the comforting words "My plan is for peace".

This may persuade the hateful ones to hope for kindness;

For duty, not knowing the outcome, is greater than their guilt.

Where have your many bowels and zeal gone?

Do you spurn this work which you wanted to endure forever,

and which you dignified with your own image?

Lo, we are as nothing, yet you have given us eternal life,

because, as nothing, we are clear that you are true.

You had foreknowledge that humans would fall into death

because of sin, but mighty grace foreknew also their recovery.
Mercifully fill your work with what you hold in your heart,
revealing what your majesty has sanctified for our peace!
Look: you are the Father, you may consider that we are mud;
let not, Father, your great indignation go on raging!
You are great, for you spare the unrighteous, merciful to forgive;
you say this about yourself, you urge us to hope for this.
O would that you might now, now, burst from the skies,
dutiful King, to show mercy and pity for the wretched earth!
As you descend the slopes from Heaven to touch the mountains,
hard hearts will melt at the sight of your countenance;
and let your hand which made the earth be sent down
from Heaven to reform what it has made!
All is possible for the Supremely Good and Almighty;
we seek your goodwill, we do not doubt your power.
If you want to save us, there is no difficulty to hinder you;
as you created everything, so you must wish it to last forever.

For who will be the one you seek, just and free from sin,

to release those in chains, rightly, deservedly, freely,

and willingly to grant them redemption,

when there is no-one good except you alone, good King,

when not even sacrifices are enough to help the saintly,

and justice is like filthy rags?

Nowhere, then, is there a way out for those shut in on all sides,

unless you make them free from the squalor of sin, and justly

and freely want to devote yourself to the redemption of sinners."

Therefore that suppliant choir of the holy asks this of God;

with voice and binding vow, it resounds in heavenly ears

- the greater the love, the louder the sound –

that He is Master of what is the pinnacle of salvation.

Time separates them, but one love unites them,

past, present and future attending upon Him.

They call on Him in unison, as they pray to Him as one,

and ask that He show the same goodness and equal concern for them.

God then sees that everything is surrounded by great danger;
but that creative hand is not however surrounded,
for it could produce two types of matter from nothing
- one being matter which can reproduce, the other not –
and had brought forth species to fill Heaven and earth
and He places humans at the head of things which reproduce,
as He wants them to have eternal happiness.
He is upset that they have instead earned eternal ruin,
because nowhere is recovery open to them, shut in on all sides.
The Fount and Origin of goodness, flowing with an everlasting
sense of duty, special and unique in His eternal mercy,
His hand does not hold back nor is His ear deaf
to stop Him saving them or hearing the prayers of suppliants;
He does not want to be angry perpetually and forever
to get revenge upon us for our sins,
nay rather, by giving them a chance to fear Him,
He looks down from heaven and revisits the earth from above.

He does not now close His sacred heart to suppliant vows,
but is inclined to peace, preferring to soften what is rigid.
Therefore, though He sees the world piling up sin,
He is considering how to restore salvation to runaways,
thinking of the riches of His own goodness and contemplating
whether He should balance out the huge pile of their crimes;
He is disposed to forgiveness and suppresses His roused anger.
He who cursed the earth, finally blesses it,
all indignation ceasing and sins glossed over
and He dutifully visits those He sees abandoned by Him.
Now He decides to reveal to the world the eternal secret,
the plan for peace which He had once sealed up,
which has mystified our forefathers since the world's beginning.
But what? Duty never deserts justice.
What will the one be if not supported by the other?
They are like comrades to each other: the Almighty Banker
has two pans on his scales in which to weigh the deeds of men.

One pan however rises, always putting sense of duty uppermost.
This therefore is uppermost if He has been merciful.
He who founded the world will willingly save it,
and will create what we need for the glory of His own name's sake,
and because His sense of duty is strong, not because of our guilt,
may bring gifts to a world which does not want or deserve them.
May the dutiful Potter therefore consider this and review it
and hold on to His plan for creation: He had seen
it collapse of its own accord and decided to repair it for free.
The sinner is not obstructive, nor an enemy, to the eternal plan.
Then He decides that His work on earth is wonderful to relate.
For the Father's handiwork, His offspring, wisdom, virtue
and goodness are as great as His power.
He is upset that His sublime work has been reduced to nothing.
His rich treasure-stores, amassed by eternal grace,
riches which no sin may exhaust,
all manner of peace which exceeds all understanding,

these He thinks those wretches deserve, and He mitigates His anger.
When the whirlpool of crime was drowning all human beings
and harsh impiety with excessively profane behaviour
was overwhelming the whole world, blazing vigorously,
the world never abounded in the treasures of His goodness,
but though made richer by this gift, was made poorer by sin.
Not through virtue alone, however, but through reason
He wants to overcome and save the enemy, dutifully and justly;
as is manifestly obvious, He does not use force
so much justice, because He pays a ransom for the prisoner.
My pen has thus far wandered freely in its humble work;
but the papers to be bound together mount too high.
Let my weary Muse rest awhile to undertake this!

Book Five

Preface

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

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

What my rude Muse is now composing
one would think a sort of game; but it is important
that some structure connect it, as the vine provides
support for the grape and willow for the olive.

The Lord came down to earth from Heaven,

hears our cries, sees our toil,

binds the cruel tyrant of Egypt

and rescues His people.

Because He supports the wretched, some people burn

to speak in praise of Him, because He is the dutiful

Redeemer, humble indeed but also mighty,

as Paul trembles to say.

Moses stutters and hides his face,

another prophet says he cannot speak,

running away from such a great duty. What will he

rightly produce from that, if far away?

Emmanuel gave the dumb power to speak;

may He who once gave power of speech to Saul

also give it to the unworthy, so that a wretch (like me)

may sing something sacred now!

Meanwhile the era about which Daniel's trumpet resounds
and the days of the weeks of which he sang were complete,
and the sacred line of prophets, full of symbolic undertakings,
had begun to be filled. It is clear that all things have their time;
Scripture admits allotting a time to each thing:
all things have a time, but a time does not have all things.
Therefore the completion of an era duly proves the case
that the Almighty follows the plan He once decided in Heaven,
and the faithful throng marvel at Him with astonished hearts,
cleansed by purity of faith and simplicity of action,
deserving to know in spirit such a great cause,
trusting that they can escape from their long exile.
Who will raise the joyful cry of that people's triumph?
Looking upon ancient and modern centuries together,
our present King led us by His intervention to salvation,
which He foreknew had to be achieved in the midst of the earth.
Now, in the evening of the century, God becomes human, goes out
and performs that work by which the face of the earth is renewed.
This work is not His own, but rather is foreign to Him;
but yet He performs it as His own, thus undertaking the foreign;

it is the Lord's own nature to save, and suffering is alien to Him.
God therefore – He who created everything – is born and created,
and He who made the world exist, is made and exists.
While the rules of the mid-night curfew were in force for all,
they were astonished to see the arrival of the King of kings,
and while the night was in mid course, as Scripture says,
there suddenly came the voice of the Almighty from His seat on high
and it gave light to drive away the pitch-black shadows.
In the beginning the Word was with the Father;
the Father is the beginning, the Son is also the Word,
before time was created, all things being created by Him;
the Son is in the Father, and one is held within the other.
True faith demands that we understand two persons
in one Being, which is the only thing worth understanding,
that He is connected to the Father as a Son and to us by His body,
believing as we will that He is covered by a veil of flesh!
The almighty Word of the Almighty Father comes down from
His heavenly seat to revisit the runaway earth
which He calls back from behind, admonishing it,
as if looking for a lost coin in a valley or seeking a lost sheep
in the lofty mountains, leaving the other ninety behind.
It is clear, then, that the world, knowing that it is loved,
may with that knowledge run back to its Creator for His blessing.
That age when the sceptre held power in Judah has gone,
which the high priest Jacob prophesied would last until
there comes One who had to be sent, for whom every nation longs.
False Herod rules Israel, the first to try such a thing,
not as a king but more in the manner of a tyrant.
That nation should have been able to tell the time of His coming
from a sign given by the tongue of the prophet,
had it not preferred to close its eyes through perfidy of heart.
God became human, but via a virgin's womb, as it is right
that His birth should transcend ordinary human birth.
If His clemency upheld human laws,

whatever He did as a human shone out.
He reconciles all things in one person, different to us because
He deigns to take as His real form that of a slave;
in His every deed, He stands out above all other mortals;
He was born to a plan, which Job proves not to know,
He alone, born where and when He wants and without precedent.
Nourished by a virgin's breast, He is totally without sin.
The Sun allowed setting to overcome it,
willingly laying down His life, which He soon resumed at will;
in death, He killed Death and chewed up Hell;
the former He kills totally, the latter He disembowels partially.
He rescued his followers from Hell, rightly abandoning the evil ones.
The equal of His father in hand, word, wisdom and virtue,
to which Job thinks pure gold cannot compare,
wisdom which neither Hell nor the depths know.
When He preached, revealing how He excels in spirit,
though a little less when dying, He teaches us
that He should not be compared to any of the prophets,
although He says that He is imitated in their handiwork.
This is a common good by whose fountain they are watered,
since anyone may be trained by it in words and deeds.
All these centuries they clamour for Him, making vows,
that He may come to redeem their end.
Behold now, all ye who are free from the drowsiness of sleep,
the splendid light which spreads over the world!
Open your minds' eyes, long closed!
Whoever you are, cast off now the darkness of faint heart!
Lo, a new offspring is visiting earth from the sky!
Anyone with a sense of wisdom may – it is possible – understand this:
what His great sense of duty or worthiness is,
who is coming or when, the sort of people He seeks or how dutifully!
Let Adam recognise the Lord he had seen in Paradise!
When well, he saw Him, but could not bear Him when he was ill.
But look, He conceals His true form so that he can see Him,

not keeping His real appearance but hiding His real glory;
He comes reviled, for indeed He is looking for the reviled;
He made Himself like electrum in order to free the world;
God headed for the earth so that mortals may climb to the stars.
The compassionate Samaritan tended the wound of one half dead;
a Levite priest, going along this same road, did nothing
of merit for the wounded man; they both were close;
but it was that Samaritan, travelling on his own,
who alone through his virtue heals him and them.
News! Adam, in need of redemption, sees his King in one of them:
let him marvel, praise, be stunned, venerate, worship,
rejoice, exalt, be happy and of good cheer in his triumph!
For He who walks on high on the wings of the winds,
whom neither the heights of the sky nor the depths of the abyss
can encompass, nor the East, the rainy West or the northern regions,
and who is not fully detected by any sense of the spirits,
and on whom the angelic cohorts thirst to look,
whom only the Father and the Holy Ghost know completely,
- for nothing in the whole of creation knows Him completely –
He came into human view under a covering of flesh
and makes Himself visible to the holy, nay to the evil ones too!
He is shut in a narrow stall and in His mother's womb,
He who made everything, He who flies around and fills the skies,
and who adorns, clothes and decorates things with His gifts.
He who has ceased to sleep in Heaven, or to sing of its harmony,
in whom the morning stars rejoice with eternal praise,
now wails in a manger in which cattle are fed,
though foxes have their dens and birds their nests.
He thus undertook to make His own a task which was alien,
undertaking this because He is bound by love of us!
Suddenly, like a lantern happening to shine in black darkness,
by its influence making grim night vanish,
undimmed, spreading its bright light everywhere,
He produces the colours which all things have,

and silences the serpent hissing in the night-time,
a true, shining Eli set in our flesh,
covered by a light cloud, not daubed with guilt,
entering Egypt which is called the earth's darkness,
thus He penetrates the chaos and dark recesses of the mind,
and all His radiance puts to flight the night of error;
and this radiance shows up minds with the colours of perfidy
and those whose hearts hide the faith,
and forced the tongue of the Egyptian sea to be silent.
When the prophets noted down the message of the Word,
preceding the true Sun like twinkling stars,
John became more famous than the rest, being closer to Him.
As the morning star, high in the sky, is a herald for the sun,
so this man, last of the prophets, is a witness to Christ's coming,
becoming the more splendid the closer he is to Him.
Striking sleeping eyes, he makes them awake,
because his star shines brighter among the stars;
moreover, this star casts a shadow where there is usually none,
and the appearance of it is a symbol for John:
there are many who thought that John himself was the eternal Sun.
As the morning star makes ploughmen leave their beds
(they all think it is dawn or soon will be;
they go to feed the animals and do the work to be done pre-dawn;
they wash their faces and shake off idle sleep;
arriving for work, they all are ready for their various jobs).
Thus the star rouses unseeing minds, sleepy from a night of crime,
and by its quick motion makes them awake,
so that they learn to lean towards the true light.
As its splendour shines through the hearts of the people,
it opens their mind's eye with a jolt.
The instinct of the pupil of the eye is to want to blink;
shaded, it opens to the light, but it closes when exposed to it;
however, when the eye is weary, it immediately responds with
opened lids if there is a light shining close to it,

eyelids which try to focus their gaze upon it, however poorly;
but the light which made them open, forces them to close.
Sometimes they open thus, sometimes they close
and eventually they get used to looking at the flashing rays,
and the pupil, restored, seeks what it had at first shunned.
The human race is blind concerning the transfer of merit:
it no longer knows how to look upon a light from outside
which shines inside; thus it does not know itself and its inner soul.
But the dutiful Judge, ever ready to forgive,
has not allowed our mental spark to grow completely dim.
For, although blows were landed, the fierce robbers cannot
extinguish him whom they captured in the Jericho valley.
Therefore He helps him to be able to feel the light upon him
and his doomed eyes to get used to loving the idea of being saved.
When that last morning star shone among the other stars,
with some men strangely mistaken in thinking that he was Christ,
some good however came of it, because, by gazing at his lamp,
they were made somehow to gaze assiduously at the Sun Himself.
For when His brilliance suddenly shone forth,
the morning star now appears to have a very small lamp;
it is the true Sun instead which attracts all faces toward it
with a certain power; the world began to understand its Potter
and to turn from a small light to the greatest one,
so that no-one now cares about the former light-bearer.
Though he is called an angel and more than a prophet
and inferior to no-one born from congress with woman
and anointed with divine spirit in his mother's womb,
he denies this, rejects this, forbids all thought of it,
bans it, showing the people what they ought to believe:
the pot dare not show any connection to God the Creator,
nor a slave to his lord, nor the clay to the Potter,
not even though he is a pure man excelling in honours,
born of a virgin mother, rich in powerful virtue,
born with wondrous omens and full of life,

with fully everlasting deity for a virgin's offspring.
Not only does he not think himself equal, but also unworthy
to carry His shoes or unfasten their laces.
He professes however to be a loyal friend of the Promised One,
promised to be a blazing, shining lantern.
The sun may be a symbolic image for Christ
and the stars symbolic of these holy men whom Christ sent.
He, when present, eclipses the stars which He lit up when absent:
When Christ arrived, no-one looked for prophets.
The stars, being weak, cannot drive away the night:
only the true Sun was able to banish perfidy;
He put to flight, through the splendour of faith, slothful
darkness, long concealed, and the chaos of perfidy.
This new dawn forces sleepy-heads to abandon their beds,
and likewise, in His sunshine, the guilty abandon their dreams.
One who closes his mind's eye in such a bright light,
is not asleep but rather is thought to be dead:
He rouses the sons of Abraham and makes them His rocks.
The Sun makes all things show their colours:
He produces states of mind which are like certain colours
and reveals each person's mental colour, as it were,
while teaching us what each one's attitude or will is.
For He came as wondrous scales to weigh merit,
so that many people fall who were thought to be stable,
and others who were thought to be nothing rise up,
so that the blind can see and the deaf hear.
For good nature allots each person a good "colour";
but lack of "colour" produces certain lax attitudes;
for these people, vice makes their colour degenerate.
Hence the words of the prophet "Where has excellent colour gone?"
The visible sun scatters its golden rays everywhere;
but it penetrates no house unless a crack opens up:
Christ in His wisdom scatters His light everywhere;
but a closed mind, devoted to evil, shuts itself to the light,

and, like a house's cellar, is penetrated by no ray of light,
which would however shine in if some passage were open.
Whoever you are, therefore, unlock the doors of your heart
and do not prohibit the light which freely wants to enter!
For if it tried to take itself away, it would be in demand;
but as it comes willingly, consider what it is to reject it!
Behold, it knocks at the doors of the heart, urging us to eat,
and when spurned, it will lament the reasons for its rejection.
He therefore, arising, as the Father had once promised,
alone outshone and repelled the darkness of Hell.
But though He surpasses the prophets, doing greater deeds,
which He fills with His own virtue, and rebukes the stars,
- neither the force of the stars nor the light of the moon help Him –
He performed things which prove He is God.
The insane clay of the arrogant cast a veil over Him, and do not believe
Him to be the Sun, because a small cloud covered Him,
although they could see Him shining beneath the cloud;
but seeing Him covered by the body, they say He is not God,
and think it all worthless because they do not find Him arrogant,
like the slave of a master who sees everything to be sublime!
They suppress their mental sight behind pride-swollen eye-lids
like a slave-girl, so that they cannot recognise the humble Potter,
not understanding and blind to the merit of the wise plan by which
the King, who does lofty deeds, has meekly done humble ones,
and does whatever they require in Heaven and on earth,
so that the meek are given access to the life above.
Because the King came down from on high, and was despised,
the stupid ones laugh at Him, not recognising the truth,
as if their delusion is wiser than the Potter Himself,
giving their advice to Him whose wisdom founded the world.
Will puny little man therefore teach Him?
And as for the arrogant who are intolerant of humble sorts,
let them be a little more tolerant: for they will see Him awesome
in majesty and more than anyone will be able to bear,

when they will see thrones panicking, no matter how secure,
and will follow their arrogant king into Hell
and the humble King will be glory everlasting for the meek!
Therefore that arrogant lot is left to its darkness,
and pleasant medication is supplied to the meek of the faith.
Moreover, as for the mission which behoved Him to visit
the wretched world as a human being and to heal it,
pure faith understands this and, through faith, so do the faithful.
Faith enjoys something great which it alone deserves to know.
In Paradise, Satan made Adam become arrogant, so that,
though standing blessed in his condition, he fell, being full of pride;
therefore, while arrogance was able in that place to snare the fool first,
it spreads through him to all the rest of us.
This mange diffuses its poison everywhere;
it is like a queen who subjugates the world to her servant vices.
The Lord, in order to tear down her citadel,
get rid of her empire, deflate her arrogance,
gave us many mystic examples through the prophets of old,
by which He may teach people not to be arrogant.
In those days, however, few accepted these examples with meek heart
and none of the prophets could root out this disease,
because the race of Adam, blinded by the ancient stain of crime,
could not see the wound, nor sought the aid of salvation.
White spot disease clouded their vision, arrogance their minds;
the more each grows, the more each blinds what it encounters.
One who is arrogant is blind, and deserves to become lost,
and should follow by touch a humble person who can see.
Standing in the light, one can see if there is any dirt on oneself;
but in darkness, one does not know how to see one's filth.
Light closely attends the humble, but a fog envelopes the proud.
One bathed in light, therefore, sees by it reason to be afraid, and
so remains humble, even though shining with virtue, whereas
the arrogant one, though worse, usually is confident of being better,
not knowing the level of uncleanliness because of blindness.

Moreover, the censure of the Almighty always stands in the way
of the proud and resists them, so Holy Scripture says,
and His sword overwhelms them in the very heavens,
striking even the angelic hosts if they become arrogant.
Grace attaches itself to the meek who spurn such things.
When therefore the false king subjugated the world
and a frenetic whirl spun round all the crazy ones,
so that their wild race rejected the prophets, men of purity,
God's sense of duty never grew weary or was withdrawn,
in a covenant under which His clemency aids the wretched,
and He takes care of a world which has been subjected to evil.
Thus the reality of His wise plan is understood:
that it is something new, wonderful, sublime and heavenly,
that in the guise of a slave there appears the ruler of Olympus,
a divine human who should be worshipped by the world as God,
while He teaches us externally to fill our minds internally,
and whose command no-one has dared to scorn,
knowing that He, though human, is King over everything.
Let earth and dust learn to curb their pride,
so that, when the meek Christ has performed His humble deeds,
the world will base its heart's belief on Him; for the world
could change its belief by the same power it used to form it.
However, while He was doing things required for our
salvation, things which are natural or of human scope,
because He assumed our limbs on our behalf, showing them to us,
arrogant hearts reject His heavenly mission.
Circumspect faith knows what His condescension achieved,
or what His majesty and planning established,
and what action is special to His divine or His assumed form,
or what things are achieved, worthy of God, in His divine person,
and what one person in two forms achieves:
He cries out and makes terrible thunderclaps boom;
lying in a cradle, He quickly sends a star from the constellations,
which attracts suppliant Persians to His holy cradle;

and the hosts of Heaven sing, instead of lullabies,
"Glory on high, peace upon earth"
which is granted only to those who dutifully possess goodwill.
Faith believes in both the man and the God and admits it;
for He performs as a man, but proves that He is Almighty.
He who holds the heavens and the earth in the palm of His hand,
measures the hills, calculates the weight of mountains,
suspended the earth and positioned the world in space,
counts the raindrops and grains of sand
how many days, hours and minutes the centuries have,
the number of atoms and particles in an indivisible entity,
and the number of hairs a blond has on his neck.
He who precedes the centuries, as He made all of them,
deigns to devote a short time – a few years –
to getting to know our make-up by implanting Himself,
so that our flesh may be free of sin through the flesh of the Thunderer
and holy blood-offering may sanctify the whole pot.
Look at the importance of the act, therefore, mortals!
If the Word becomes flesh, it is God and reigns for ever;
He is lying in a stall because He provides the fodder of life,
and does those things which our faith or salvation require.
When a corner bore this stone with a top to it,
a double wall soon abutted it, so Scripture teaches.
The ox and lion come together and the wolf and lamb run together;
the rhinoceros, which present glory makes swell with pride,
He chains up, its neck submissively put in His noose,
though it shatters the sods of the valleys with its terrifying bellow.
So that the Church's power on earth may master the indomitable,
groups with opposed customs are made one with a joint and herded
by that boy through the pastures of life towards His kingdom.
All around, the world flows by, as if constrained by some force,
deciding I don't know what about that divine person.
He is a human, imbued with this power, and not an animal.
Watchmen in their huts were keeping guard over their folds

by chance, and to them the heavenly angels spoke those tidings.
For it was first told by them to shepherds.
There was a king and high priests and wise scribes;
but to none of these does that band of angels wish to announce this,
thinking the sacred message should be given instead to the poor,
so that the powerful deserve to learn of it through outcasts.
That hymn-singing host already knew then
that their meek Creator could lay low the necks of the proud,
and that, by offering His body, which He did most humbly,
He sets standards for the meek and strives to master the proud.
Therefore they reveal great tidings to people on high
but first of all report the deeds of the Lamb of God to shepherds.
Then a sign is given which befits the greatest King:
they say He is to be found in a stall, wrapped in swaddling-clothes!
When the mechanism and every species of the created world
teach us, upon examination, that He is the King or the Almighty,
and the stars of Arcturus, Hyades, Orion and regions of the South
and the twelve signs of radiant Heaven also profess it
and the storms of the wave-pounded sea, controlled by His law,
and all other things which are in a different world scheme,
proving by their testimony that this child is their Creator,
nonetheless He prefers this evidence to be revealed as if in private,
so that He may show the faithful that He is very humble.
Peace therefore was promised to the earth by God at His birth:
it is the intermediary binding humans to the angelic choirs.
Poor singers have long thought themselves fellow citizens of theirs;
the very clean ranks, clinging to the Creator of cleanliness,
had rejected the foul world as though spattered with sin.
That peace turns the repentant into loyal comrades.
Though this peace re-united some reprobates,
Ethiopians however do not care to change their skins, and
black skin does not turn white when washed in bean-meal lotion,
and it is a leopard with spots training in a cage-wheel.
Word of mouth gradually spread the news of the child's power

and eventually it reached the unfortunate ears of Herod.
The peace shown to the holy soon puts fear into the heart of the
tyrant who at once fears losing the kingdom which he usurped.
Did you ever hear some such thing, which rightly made you panic?
Lo, the child was lying in a cradle – in a stall –
for there is no room elsewhere! He is believed to be the offspring
of a carpenter, and a poor little virgin mother suckles Him,
a cheap baby rattle completing her son's babyhood!
You would expect nothing but the symbol of a sceptre for the child,
if perhaps your faith failed to open the eyes of your heart.
What foreboding does Herod have, then, and why his panic?
There is in Him divine power, before which that criminal trembles;
his guilty mind therefore already senses the Judge's tribunal.
That's new! A cradle makes a king sitting on a lofty throne panic,
and his diadem begins to tremble before a child!
The peace lavished on the holy is believed to be strife for the evil.
The cruel tyrant therefore quakes when the King appears,
and impiety groans in the presence of the glory of justice;
the sly one produces trickery in the guise of a friend: he pretends
that He should be worshipped, but deceitfully plans to kill Him.
The fool struggles to lift his neck against the Almighty,
as if a puny human may change divine power.
Why do you rage, Herod? Why are you motivated by suspicion?
Why does an excess of fear shred your timid sensibility?
He doesn't want a kingdom on earth, but prepares one in Heaven.
It is pointless to struggle to overturn the divine plan:
divine power will never be altered by your trickery;
what has once been fixed, remains totally irrevocable.
It came about by His decision that you are king,
and because there is no power except by His nod.
If you are a king, subject yourself totally to the King of kings!
He has given you the power to do something, whenever He wants;
you fulfil His wish more in trying to turn away from it.
He therefore orders a dreadful crime, cruel and savage,

the like of which, it is agreed, no pagan frenzy has ever committed,
frenzy to which divine law had fixed no limits.
He massacred thousands of little ones, not yet talking!
No historical account tells of such a deed,
that an enemy could use violence on so many little boys,
except for those who perhaps were rebels along with their fathers.
What was Herod's madness, to spill a lake of blood,
when there was no guilt or reason to prompt the evil deed,
to have handed over for slaughter so many of tender age?
Legal precedent in a public conflict did not allow children to be
put to death; that king snatched the innocents from their parents'
homes, dragging them from their mothers' breasts and killing them,
and butchered so many milk-white limbs among his own citizens,
which no tyrant is read to have done even against foreigners.
He who ought to care for the good and terrify the bad,
not only preserving peace but driving out the plague of war,
befouls his kingdom and undoes the restraints of the laws.
Where is the judgement, the sense of duty, the fairness of action,
the bonds of nature which bind even the animals
bringing up their tender young with tender affection?
The king has no feelings which are human or worthy of reason,
but duty, law, justice and honour have died under him!
As rumour began to spread the news of this bloody edict,
the hearts of fathers quake and mothers' insides grow weak.
They ask where the malice behind this grim order comes from;
they learn that it is nothing but the savage order of a harsh tyrant.
Hence their tears, sighing, weeping and, more than this, grief,
because they find there is no reason for them to lose their children.
Who may adequately describe the anguish which envelopes the mothers,
or the great sobbing which shakes their sad bosoms,
as the executioner pulls the suckling babes from their laps or arms
and butchers them before their very eyes?
A mother tries to hide her baby somewhere, but the little boy,
unaware of the danger, gives himself away by crying, and

when a soldier picks him up, he thinks it is his mother and laughs,
while the mother, overcome by a spasm of breathlessness,
asks “Kill me first and mutilate me with your sword, so that I may
not witness the murder of my son, whom I love more than myself!”
It is clear, Herod, that you know no scruple,
since, gripped by fury, you do not understand what you are doing.
Perhaps you think it is nothing to butcher tiny limbs!
As for those whom you killed for no reason and thought to be worthless,
wait a little and you will see them reign forever as
fully grown men, strong with the power of their virtues,
sitting as kings on the thrones of kings and with the King!
They are kings, nay gods, with God in the midst of them!
When so many thousands of kings will together accuse you,
what will you do then? Suffer forever the Hell you deserve!
Spare your tears now, you sad mothers,
spare them and tolerate the heavenly plan for a little while,
which necessitates the enemy’s guile making war on the chosen!
He is employing evil itself in a mainly benign way.
You want to nurse them in your sweet laps, and lament their
deaths, being mothers; but wait a little while:
behold them in radiance, following the Lamb and singing!
Understand how he who did this is helping them to reach the stars!
For the Boy, at whose name the tyrant raged,
arranges everything in a wondrous, ordered plan;
He wants the tears of death to take on the joys of life.
It is often said that one is not suitable for a place in Heaven
unless prepared for it by the regimen of the whip.
This butcher therefore victimises innocent cohorts;
he wants them to die because of Him alone, as was the case:
He laid low his enemy, drawing praises from the mouths of babes,
revealing that the innocents are to be given places above the stars.
You mothers who weep tears will thus measure out lengthy joys.
These innocents are the first-fruits or the plan of a future people,
just as if each were born with understanding and followed this Boy,

doing it with the enthusiasm which nature gives to a little one.
It is a very wonderful thing, to be seen through the eyes of faith,
that the invisible King appears on high and in the depths.
Happy faith desires to know in part
why the Almighty, Creator of the world, was also
born a small child in Sion, which He had already founded.
But the faith, secure and thus well known to itself, rejoices,
so that it has no doubts about its secrets; it believes everything too,
not knocking those mysteries, but denying they are above them.
He was set up as a rock, to distinguish the deeds of men:
for the good it is a climb, and for the bad a stumbling-block;
Simeon says that many fall and rise up upon it.
Although He could sustain all He wanted in Heaven, on earth,
in the sea, in a word the world, in whatever way or order He wished
and could create so great a mass from nothing,
what He did instead was what our redemption requires,
or which teaches redeemed people to continue in humility,
lest they fear that they may lose again the medicines given them.
Thus it was decreed in a wise plan
that He should accept His present body and become visible.
For He had to be seen; from being seen it comes about that
He sets an example for the world to follow.
Our salvation would not happen through any other intermediary,
and our proud race would not bear to have another teacher.
Long ago our race had sanctified its dogmas in words alone,
and established them through the prophets and holy men;
but these had not given medicines to a sick world.
As God, He dispensed these, but quickly urged them to be copied.
So it was necessary for Him to stand face-to-face with his pupils.
It is a law of nature for like to associate with like
and for no animal to imitate in all ways one different to it.
Thus He becomes human, so that they may be quick to imitate a
human and think a thing possible if they have proof He did it too.
Therefore He gave them not an archangel to imitate, but Himself.

Many things He did on earth may be unworthy of God,
but instead act entirely for our salvation.
When God therefore does things which do not seem worthy of Him,
and human sense cannot see a reason for them,
let people know that wisdom always acts wisely, and thus
understand what they have learnt, to respect truly the mysteries;
let them know this, which is possible but not enough, and believe it!
Doctors often do something which a patient dislikes or scorns;
but they are only doing what their medical skill deems necessary.
There are two things which the mind's eye ought to distinguish,
that the King has this sense of duty towards us,
bearing such great burdens on behalf of His ungrateful servants,
and that such great chains hold the world bound fast,
that it cannot be freed except by the death of the Creator.
So let us love Him and beware of losing so great a prize!
If you think your talent small, do not attempt great deeds!
He who made everything judges the differences in things,
or the greatness of the wisdom of those things His wisdom created.
People know many things which animals do not, and many things
are hidden from them, which only the heavenly order knows.
You see how wise people differ from each other; this one knows
more than that one, and each one is ranked higher than the other.
Which people can know themselves completely?
Who knows clearly the nature, power or appearance of the soul?
Line 554
Can they who do not know themselves fathom the Creator's secrets?
We are said to come from earth. May earth or dust then know us?
Paul himself had only partial knowledge and preaches it partially.
People will be able to know only as much as grace has given them.
Being humble, He chose to cure this arrogant world,
and came to rid that arrogance of its strength,
arrogance which plunges us into the seven sins, like a despot.
But Christ came full of the Spirit, seven-fold, so that
a counter-blast of virtue may blow away the unspeakable plague.

He makes up an antidote against one sin in particular:
through His example He teaches His followers to be humble; line 565
thus He achieves all the orders He was going to give them.
This instils the rest of the virtues and guides them;
He inculcates this more by doing all He did in a humble way,
saying “I am humble; learn this from me, the rest of you!”
What He does to restore our lost life
the pious should venerate, though it is scorned by the arrogant.
Strong in creating all, He shows by His peace that He will be
merciful, for His sense of duty is as great as His power.
But He does things which our life and salvation require, so that
deeds which may seem pointless are brilliant in their symbolism.
He does these things to show that He is human as well as Almighty.
His divine power as much as His flesh help us to believe;
one who denies one of these clearly loses Him completely.
Thus it is necessary to recognise fully and by such evidence
that some things show Him to be God, others to be human. line 579
Faith knows how to recognise both and loves them both truly.
So, to give you some example of this:
a woman gave birth to the man, a virgin to the Almighty;
He is wrapped in swaddling-clothes, music echoes among the stars;
He is hungry and yet satisfies so many thousands with plain bread.
There were five thousand, the fragments fill twelve baskets.
Let the band of teachers and all attendant philosophers be amazed,
being used to tearing divine works into pieces!
What sort of food, they pronounce, has grown in our mouths?
If they cannot be wise, let them shut up and keep it to themselves!
He is hungry: angelic servants provide things to eat;
the journey tires Him, a cloud lifts Him into the air.
He is thirsty, and hands out water which leaves none ever thirsty;
He pauses, weary, and plants His footsteps on the waters;
He has no ship, He falls asleep; He quells the sea, He stills the winds;
Death besets the man, God Himself destroys Death;

He hangs on the cross, an innocent between guilty thieves,
but being God, He promises Paradise to one of them; they are alongside
Him because they are considered believers in two ways,
who, by believing in Him, share the same compassion;
one worships Him in action, the other denies Him by what he does.
One person does these things in two natures.
He performs countless miracles all powerfully all the time;
however it was this alone which confounded the oracles of the prophets:
that He was made man, flesh having soul, because He was thus
taken up and united with God, so that the two are fully One.
It was not the flashy ornamentation of earth, sea and sky,
nor the make-up of the wondrous world with its individual items,
which His majesty and power changed – but Himself,
majesty inserting itself, totally enclosed, into the womb of a mother,
while He lies, the Almighty, in the midst of animals,
and moreover suffered death between two thieves,
though eternal sweetness comes from tasting this bitter drink, -
that throng is amazed at this or quaking at such things,
that it is possible for a man, although He is the supreme Creator,
to be also in contrast an abject human being, and that choir shouts:
"O God, after Adam spurned you in Eden
and went into an exile which deserved never to be rescinded,
what is he that you should remember him and look after him?
Why is he an exile? He ought to know you,
because cherubim from Heaven shout "Sanctus" thrice on earth,
because he returns to forgiveness and acquires the honour of faith,
establishing on earth a people angelic in appearance,
the sight of which makes him steadfast and blessed."
He satisfies us also on earth with His visible body,
being wondrous on high and equally to be wondered at below.
For His great rank surpasses all things,
while He performs sacred mysteries in their appropriate time.
He bountifully gives His visible self to us His followers,

so that we may live forever by eating living bread.
Thus the Father comes down and takes us back up.
For He willingly bears these things which we rightly suffer,
such as the traps which the persuasive one has set.
As he once tripped up the first man with three tricks,
overcoming him with appetite, greed and false pride,
he itches to overcome successive people with these very snares;
but he is defeated, driven away along the very path he crept in by.
Thereafter, temptation becomes less of an enemy to us;
for when it gnawed at the clay, the snake broke its teeth,
making it less able to mutilate our soft parts.
He was quickly able to drown it by the force of His majesty;
but He repelled evil suggestions more by the word of the Scriptures,
which is important for mortals because, lacking virtue,
they may act with His help, hoping in Him who protects them.
The persuasive one suggested all manner of crime therefore,
but who would strive to oppose what his training has taught him?
He presses no-one with force, merely persuading with trickery.
May everyone resist him, warned by his menacing tone of voice!
Jesus entered a virgin's womb, to make it holy,
so that virginity can be created in a mother's womb.
He said to wives "Grow and fill the earth!"
May their virginity fill the halls of Heaven! That is to say,
may fruitfulness come from such seed - an idea which He loves!
Marriage is therefore ascribed to earth, but this to the heavens.
Worthless semen usually produces precious offspring.
As a rose usually grows on a slender stalk,
so the honour of virginity is eaten away by the husband's usage.
It had not been counted as an honour under ancient law.
Jephthah's daughter thus complains that she knows not a man.
What does this virgin complain about except not having children?
Mary is therefore said to have been the first to make this promise
to the Lord and to be worthy of bearing divine offspring.
Mary was therefore the first to sow the chaste little lily

which through her grew everywhere in countless multitudes.
This queen gives the first lead to throngs of virgins.
Now boys, girls, young women, old men and old women,
both sexes and all ages everywhere take care of this gift.
As the earth produces stars as if by virgin birth,
virginal jewels with which to beautify Heaven,
why wonder if the earth sends stars up to Heaven,
when it rejoices that the true Sun was born upon it,
so that Heaven and earth may give each other stars reciprocally?
The Boy who had adorned Heaven therefore is born to adorn earth,
and also sends other boys from here to the Father as first-fruits.

He chooses disciples who have no reputation of their own, line 675?

and they were summoned mainly from humble backgrounds.
When Job refers to his followers earlier, he calls them handmaids,
since handmaids seem to belong to the weaker sex;
(yet) they bind Leviathan and cut off its limbs.
A store of treasure was entrusted to earthenware jars,
so that, when humble people do great deeds and achieve greatness,
it can be clear that they cannot do such things by themselves,
but rather that divine power within them performs it all:
for example, a lowly person vanquishing terrible tyrants,
his feeble hand violating shrines of sacred objects,
small temples constructed in some great age,
shrines which had been decorated with such passion,
or some bumpkin wearing the strait-laced shoes of professors,
carrying his peasant cap across the frontiers of the world.
That barking of poets, like a croaking frog,
used to chattering everywhere, surrenders its noise before them,
and they force the tongue of the Egyptian sea to be silent.
It is therefore the work of God doing such through such people,
and not the virtue of these who have little strength of their own;
but He makes ordinary people overcome the world and the proud.

This Prince of Peace, ruling with the restraint of the Father's

line696?

law and making strict measures seem sweet,
and in order to show that His yoke is light, as He Himself said,
ordered nations to be immersed in baptism,
curing some old wound by so simple a ceremony,
shattering Hell's kingdom and revealing the kingdom of Heaven.
By this water that fickle sword is removed,
for this water can drown its fire-belching flames.
What, I ask, is simpler, or can be more brilliant,
than that these waters purify souls and cleanse bodies?
He Himself underwent baptism, which blessed Him with such honour that the waters,
by penetrating the grains of earth it touches, can bestow a gift, given in all places,
to cleanse whosoever is anointed with the virtue of faith.
Look! It is clear that water is of no little importance.
There are four elements from which all things are made:
air and fire, earth, water, but water's power is the greatest.
With some water, earth grows fertile, air damp, fire cooled,
and water alone supports as many things as the other three.
Without water, these three are often harmful; with it, helpful.
The Spirit of the Almighty, setting the first example,
demonstrates the mystical sacrament of future baptism;
for He allows holy water to be poured over Him.
Four rivers water the sacred places of Paradise and meander
after humans to redeem them by cleansing them, so that they
may rediscover the washing which they rejected by leaving
and so that there may be a place to wash in the place of exile also.
Moses speaks of this, for he taught baptism.
Surely, it would not have been important or worthy of holy teaching,
to relate where rivers run to or come from,
unless Moses knew that some symbolism was hidden in this?
Those whom Christ bought with His blood, He washed in baptism
(because He washes and redeems them, water and blood pour from His

side),
so may they wish to continue free from the world's bonds!
The organisation of the faith becomes clearer at His baptism.
The Father speaks from Heaven; as He address His Son,
and the other, the Son, underwent a sacred washing in a river,
a third person, the Spirit of them both, remained in Him
and the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove.
The nature of this bird presents a beautiful image;
there are seven types of bird generally,
which represent the same number of the loving reasons for piety,
heard in the speeches of the prophets, not in poetic metres.
According to them, all people will shine when washed in baptism
and will maintain a dove-like attitude in their behaviour.
The Holy Spirit comes therefore in the form of a dove,
entering into whomsoever wants to accept it.
Something to amaze you, for you must marvel at it even more:
the Lord wishes to be touched in baptism by the hands of a slave,
so that no-one should perhaps spurn a minister as unworthy.
For ministers sanctifying or performing baptism do not diminish
the Holy Spirit, if they are sinners, nor increase it, if upright,
because they baptise in the name of the Holy Trinity,
and since Jesus is doing the baptising through their hands,
lest there be as many ministers as there are baptised ones.
Now the one God and baptism and faith are one.
The Father intoned this, then the Baptist learns this,
that Jesus Himself established holy baptism through His own.
Thereafter the King allows the Devil to spar with Him,
so that, reborn, they are taught to be wary after their washing.
For after Pharaoh was drowned, the people had been set free;
but they could not immediately obtain the promised land;
indeed at first they wander wearily mostly across desert regions;
but after countless tribulations, they occupy their land in peace.
The snake also created all manner of tricks for the inexperienced,
so that they warily become involved in struggle and fear,

in order to win many triumphs after many battles.
In teaching the rest of His ideas by word and deed,
He created a way of making His followers remain humble.
He came as a man, new, to give new orders to an old world.
So that His skill might cure the diseases of pride through opposites,
He faced the arrogant with a Self meek in words and deeds.
He wants therefore to be born to a poor carpenter's wife,
although virginity and royal lineage graced her;
He lies in a stall, wrapped in cheap rags;
some peasant deserves to see Him first;
a rather poor animal is offered Him; the Creator accepts it;772
He sits not on the armoured back of a foaming stallion,
but on a little donkey, a worthless animal, used to lots of food;
He deigns to speak to a woman and to ask for water;
He is touched by a prostitute, He Himself touched a leper;
when some mad peasant with sacrilegious words spewed forth
that outcry which our ears cringe to hear,
He persuades him at once to learn of the demon which he had,
but did not say he was full of demons, when He could have;
He asks the Father to forgive someone who caused a death;
assailed with insults, He endures an excruciating death;
He was struck by blows, spittle and the whip and finally
ordered to carry His own cross, that worst of punishments;
He ran the gauntlet of all the whips which criminals deserve;
and God Himself bore it because He ceases to be a man;
lest the arrogant swell up, He therefore takes back what God does!
He teaches His people this and they taught those who followed,
that they should strive to live like slaves, by the example of the Lord,
whom no-one follows unless he walks where He did.
He adds also a certain final special order,
that one should always be bound by love of others
and thus love God more than oneself, and one's fellow as oneself,
and bestow upon one's fellow all that one wishes for oneself,
and not to attack someone for taking refuge in Him,

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

Book Six

Preface

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

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

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

"Tell the nations that God rules from the cross!" it is said.
That cross is like a key, to reveal things hidden for centuries.
May it speak for itself!

Struck by the cross, stone yields water; may it water us inwardly!

May the cross which parted the sea for the Hebrews guide us

across the world's seas when we have killed the enemy!

The people therefore now intone the very triumph of the cross;

manna feeds His followers, set free from Pharaoh;

the cross achieves that.

As King Jesus had always decreed, therefore,
and had signified in countless parables,
so that the world might quickly recognise Him as the One foretold,
since all the predictions of the prophets referred to Him,
that He would fulfil them by His deeds, He hosts a symbolic supper
for His disciples, seeing that the time was near
for a new light to replace the old or to complement it.
Adjusting the covenant according to the age, this old, that new,
while fulfilling the old, He gave birth to the new;
He not only reveals the face of truth but unfolds the past.
In order to teach the guests at His heavenly banquet to be clean,
the Lord washes the feet of the disciples
and is not too proud to show obeisance to them
or to wash the feet bearing the influential power of peace.
How remarkable is this and beyond celestial mystery
that He washes their feet, that God Himself becomes a servant,

and obeisance is done by Him to whom the height of Heaven is enslaved!
Peter was aware of this; he shrank back, shocked, saying:
"Do you, God and Lord of mortals, wash the feet of a slave?
Do you wash my feet with the hands with which you create all things?"
He teaches the minds of His followers such a duty;
He sanctified the example, which He orders to be maintained thereafter,
that a slave wash the feet of another slave.
This was a great gesture; but He behaved even more humbly.
He does not refuse kisses to that wolf, Judas, for He Himself is
humble and innocent; Jesus provided Himself as an example.
Moreover, as He promised, He simplifies the message;
having rejected many, various ceremonies,
He prefers this one idea to all the rest - bread and wine.
He makes this sacred, so that it is very brief and very holy,
so modest in cost and so easy to prepare,
yet so sublime that it sums up the whole deity.
This alone is enough to purge the sin of the world;
they no longer slaughter steaming cattle on altars
nor is the bellowing of a bull or the bleat of a lamb heard,
nor does it please or concern them to mutilate a red heifer,
nor is a hairy scapegoat dispatched in order to expiate sin,
nor does a priest excoriate sheep or wash their intestines.
God had ordered that race not to tolerate sacrificing
these creatures to demons. All that He ordains, however,
should signify that it will be sacrosanct that what people
have learnt through symbols may make them well-behaved.
Does God miss these things? Surely He doesn't miss a bloody feast?
He says that He does not eat flesh or drink blood.
Surely cattle could not bring eternal salvation?
Surely the nature of cattle cannot save the nature of man?
That is why this offering pleases Him, that it is the one from many,
bread and wine, in addition to baptism,
so that through these the seven churches are united as one;

thus the body is connected to the head, and the head to the body.
This one sort of offering pleases Him, and it will endure forever;
it is easy, brilliant, simple and full of godliness.
He said, “Unless you have my flesh to eat
and my blood to drink, you cannot have life.”
Their immediate thought was that this was inhuman and inane,
so that many shrank away and recoiled from it.
The Almighty, however, behaves wisely, as always:
He establishes for our use this neat equation,
that bread is His body and wine His blood, but in order that
they may be consumed, the smell, colour and taste are unchanged.
It becomes the prize of the faith, having very great virtue,
because it glorifies the true partaker in believing the mysteries.
Thus the faith of Abraham is perceived to have merit,
because he believes that God can do what nature cannot.
Therefore God, who created everything, held up bread
and said that it was His body and He would give it to the world:
“I will give you this wine too; for it is my blood.”
The law of nature is changed into what the Creator ordered;
nature follows His command, to change at once into what
the Almighty orders, turning things into miracles.
Nature therefore changes its accustomed role at once:
flesh at once becomes bread, and then blood becomes wine.
And He gives all the priests, whom He joins to Him, the power
to perform these mysteries through Him, and He through them.
Have people on their own ever changed the nature of anything?
Have they ever transformed bread into something divine?
But the voice which founded all things can do such a thing.
For as He once ordered the earth to grow grass,
which it has done ever since throughout all the rolling centuries,
so He also ordered this to happen, the transubstantiation,
and this ritual of a meal is observed everywhere through Him.
He always performed His many works with visible virtue;
as when the sea parted and a staff turned into a snake,

and rock pours forth water, and a cloud provides food,
and a column bears fire or pumps out steam,
those things are obvious to the eye, His virtue is seen clearly;
those things He did openly Himself, but this He does secretly,
this hidden work which is revealed through manifest signs;
for God made things manifest for the sake of credibility,
so that the eye, while seeing those things, sees also visions of a faith
which does not doubt that He is real and Almighty.
He says "What of this will be beautiful or precious?
Bread and wine generating chastity."
These two things produce multitudes graced with chastity;
many young people choose to be seen to keep their virginity,
so that He makes chaste those whom He adopts from the cohort;
corn fills the granaries, this wine fills the cellars;
the latter makes one's *coeur* happy, the former makes it strong;
in this way, therefore, these two create virginal *choeurs*.
It is necessary that those who partake of the chalice stay clean;
It was for that reason that, at supper, He washed their feet,
for His disciples, urging them to lead a clean life,
so that partakers of the divine sacrament should be cleansed
and not, like Judas, suffer loss of salvation,
the result of the unclean daring to take the clean sacrament.
For He teaches that there will be certain partakers of the chalice
who bring judgement on themselves through the sacred mysteries.
Therefore, among the friends who are at the feast,
He allows that dog, Judas, to taste the heavenly banquet.
He serves up for the sick what is good for the healthy.
He rains on the unjust and provides sunshine for the iniquitous
and wants them all to be saved and to recognise the truth,
lavishing this upon them as a common good for all to enjoy.
Let everyone see, however, what type of person takes which gifts,
and who gets the rewards of life, who the rewards of Hell.
Although all the demands of this cause are sanctified by law,
He gives this priority and orders all those devouring the Lamb

to be assiduous in girding up their loins;
in putting this first, He makes clear what is more important.
He teaches that guests at the heavenly banquet are chaste.
A priest who makes sacrifice or libation in some ancient ceremony
washes and removes himself from the permitted conjugal contact,
permitted at the time because one tribe provided the priests.
In the Old Testament, that sort of burnt sacrifice was acceptable.
How more glorious ought one be who adheres to such rites?
One who broke this ancient code was put to death; so work out
what is in store for one who perchance profanes the real thing!
Since crime is getting worse, defilement is much worse;
nothing is more adverse to chaste offspring than that,
and the scale of it, if not spotted, is a hazard;
as they say, "He who has no judgement, faces judgement".
Victim, King, Hero, Judge, altar, priest,
seeing that the hour of which He had foreknowledge had come,
He suffers death in the end, sacrificing Himself,
but with that part of Him which He wanted to share our form.
His divinity could feel no hurt,
nay rather, He kills Death which besets Him in His fleshly form;
thus mortals and God Himself in the end suffer no suffering.
He therefore suffered the cross; for it was necessary to set cause
against cause, because, as Death came from a tree,
the cross ought to drive it away, thus death ousts Death.
He chose this way because it would be harder and more shameful;
this was so that His followers do not spurn dryness in green wood
and may bear the insults of every punishment.
The shape of the cross fits in well with the things we must do.
What sort of punishment could be undergone which is so fitting?
Its four limbs equate to the four parts of the world;
it points to these, holding the sky, the North, the South, the abyss.
Thus Christ, as if holding out His arms to the world, stands in the way,
to pin down any who run headlong towards Hell.
Not only is it strong in virtue, but it adapts itself to everything;

for it has breadth, length, height and depth.
The cross marks foreheads, fortifies the heart and routs enemies.
Could anything be depicted more beautiful than this, or more readily useful?
Because of it, our sword, lance, helmet,
shield become lovelier to us, more respected by our enemy.
Those four creatures in flight make the sign of the cross
(these four spread their six wings in the shape of a cross),
and a cherub gives shade to this ark with outspread wings;
and all birds in flight bear a likeness of this.
Whoever seeks the skies, climbs up there on wings,
an image which is suitable for praise.
It is necessary for every believer to bind his limbs to the cross,
as if held on to it, crucified, by means of those limbs
as if the cross was rescuing those bound limbs from all vices.
Also, prophets' deeds and words have the cross as their banner.
Bitter waters are sweetened by Moses with this wood;
there is also the image of Noah's ark, and the olive branch,
the staff which twice struck the rock to give water
(so many signs bear a cross, signs striking the rock, Christ),
the two sticks with which the widow provides food for Elijah,
the staff bearing the snake used for healing those who beheld it,
the pole bearing grapes from the country of abundant fertility;
the first nation does not see Him, the second sees and believes Him;
the Jewish people, the first in time, turn their back on Him,
but heathen people who came next finally turned their face to Him.
Though it may be said to be something new for a king to suffer on the cross,
this cross was promised for centuries in earlier images,
and it was promised that God would renew the old world through it.
He therefore suffered the cross, as the work of salvation demands.
When people want for nothing, they repay Him with nothing.
As they can and do, people renounce His cause,
or the goodness which inspired Him, that is, His sense of duty,

because He endures such insults in battling the arrogant!
The deceitful one whips the truthful, the guilty whips the innocent,
the Judge of the centuries stands before a governor's tribunal,
a legal expert questions the Founder of Peace,
chaff gets among the corn, thorns encircle the grape,
criminals also mock the King of Kings.
He who gave light from His own saliva, is spat upon;
a little earlier He had removed someone from a tomb after four days,
but now they fix Him to a cross, the wood of life.
The living Fount not only satisfied our salvation,
but bread satisfied our hunger, the whip our discipline,
as travel feels fatigue and virtue feels toil,
the vineyard does not produce grapes, but vines with bitterness.
He endures this to console His people beset by a deserved crisis.
Suffering on their behalf, He is said to grow weary and afraid;
He endured all this which He did not deserve, but to help us.
The whale had been accustomed to swallowing humans.
When it sees a man of great corpulence, it thought
that this pure man should be quickly devoured, as per usual.
It therefore opens its mouth; but the Lord's hook caught it.
The fishing line He used was the line of Jewish prophets;
those things were introduced by that nation, more especial to God,
which begat our forefathers like grain in ears of corn,
for whom He parted the sea, for whom He did such great things,
to amaze the world so that it may know its Creator.
But that race always behaved in an ungrateful and profane way;
it always despised heavenly things and loved things earthly.
What race is given more care or greater gifts for free,
even though it spurns them all, or rather, insults the Giver?
Therefore, although God had given to no nation such gifts
as He gives to this one, being bound by His love of our holy fathers,
even though it worshipped idols and rejected things spiritual,
and allowed itself to be swamped deservedly by sin so great
that it suffocates itself, He opens airways for the world,

to save the world, but the crazy nation commits suicide
and a nation which did not know God, finds Him.
The rejected gifts He therefore offers to pagans;
the husbandmen perish for murdering the son of their landlord,
--- for the Son is willing to die, so that the world's dead may live ---
and the father rents this vineyard to people who give him fruit.
How good the Father proves to be, and with what a sense of duty:
He hands over his only Son for death like a criminal!
How submissively the Son Himself obeys the Father
and is willing to die so that the world may live!
Redemption comes at a price for He does not know how
to cling to life and, hating Himself, would rather perish!
The handsome one loves the ugly, making the foul one beautiful!
Thus, by redeeming the world, He taught it how much He loves it;
and by the price He paid how much the buyer loved its beauty.
Let His beloved world at least admire or love its Redeemer!
When He mounted the cross, the whole of nature shook;
the Sun raced away into the dark to avoid witnessing such a crime,
as if refusing to shine on those who commit parricide,
and the stars fled away, dreading to witness this crime;
the earth is fearful and shaken, leaving tombs open;
rocks crack, the veil is rent and hidden things revealed,
and bodies rise up, proving that Death has died.
Rocks, rent asunder thus, make nations grow soft;
but wretched Judah remained harder than rocks;
the hearts of reprobates grow harder than rocks.
As the psalmist said long ago, everyone was afraid:
"the man who showed fear" is one who stayed a beast no more.
Then the darkness gave way to an eternal light:
as it knows the sunset of morals, it also provides the dawn.
His action proved how His suffering saved the world:
before the crucifixion, Abraham himself did not go up to Heaven;
but after the incident of the cruel thief, he could not avoid it.
For the thieves hang there, alike in punishment, but not in heart;

one is filled with piety at the moment of death,
the other remained foolishly determined in heart.
That one expresses evil ideas, this one changes his mind at the end.
The latter therefore gets to Heaven, the foolish one is buried in Hell
and he who chose to follow the crucified one, of course,
has compassion and seems to take up the cross.
But many people love earthly things in the name of the faith;
though there is faith on their lips, their inclination forsakes faith;
true faith and love make true slaves.
To endure the cross, therefore, is not to have immediate salvation,
unless a sense of duty graces one adorned with the gift of faith.
Indeed, the evil cohort, when all the elements are afraid,
when the nature of things trembles, when the moon stands still,
when the sun itself weeps and grows dim with a dark cloak,
refusing to provide its usual light for the stars,
the evil cohort rejoices as if victorious, laughing hysterically;
they ask if He could perhaps come down from the cross,
unaware of the plan by which He was sent to them
to prepare sacrilegious hands for the death of the Creator,
to perpetrate a crime such as no-one has done before or since,
to bring death upon Himself, but to ensure salvation for the world.
Some celebrate His death madly (evil bravura) and others are
triumphant.
Treacherous, bastard race, surely God will not change His
divine plan because of your insults, so that He may be proved
to be the Son of the Father, if He prefers to submit to punishments?
You seek such a sign, which would not free the world if He did so!
Unless Death beset Him, the world would not be free from Death.
Thus, He would teach His followers to suffer punishments;
He would reduce the power of those whom the victor arms.
From that, you will be proved to be a child of Satan, rather,
because you urge Him, like Satan, to climb down;
it befits the Son of the Almighty rather to climb up high.
Wait a little: a sign will be given to you, Jonah!

You reckon the many things He did to be contrary to nature,
and you ask that He actively allow the world to be abandoned!
If you want signs for yourself (things which you always seek, being
not of the faith), do not keep asking for what is bad for all nations!
He will give a sign, not to you, but to the redeemed world;
for He will quickly arise, trample down Death, and triumph.
You would know how to give this sign greater significance
if you were willing to consider it without the cross.
Remain stupid, head always for the depths!
Keep your asininity, evil one, and sink down under;
Isaac will climb the mountain, fulfil the Father's order on the top:
the King will do His work on the cross, where your hands put Him!
The cruel things, then, which the people want to inflict on God,
nay rather the things which He willingly suffers for our salvation,
He endured and is now placed in the flesh in a sacred sepulchre.
Heading for the depths, His soul had broken the chains of Hell.
Although the new light then shone brightly in Hell's blackness,
the same people could not be corrected by whips or by Death itself,
but still perpetrate fresh crimes. They gnash their teeth
at the buried dead One and try to harm Him;
they appoint guards and calculatingly seal the tomb,
as if they could imprison the omnipotence of Christ.
He turns this around to serve His heavenly mission;
the more they rage, the more in the end they betray their cause.
There is a soldier on guard there, forced to be a witness,
to report the truth to us and prove them liars.
How clever they are! Knowing the truth, they deny it
and know that what they foolishly want to reject is God's work.
Unaware that no-one can alter Heaven's plan,
they tried to corrupt with a bribe the guards who are witnesses;
that is to their shame, for the guards tell the truth as it is.
Supposing that they could imagine they were thus far ignorant,
complaining that God cannot be believed to exist in our frail body,
there is nothing left for them to say, now that He is risen.

They are convicted of deliberate malice, resisting the Almighty
and corrupting those very witnesses whom they persuade
with a bribe, well aware that they know the truth.
They are therefore left tied up by the knot of perfidy,
wickedly refusing to believe in so many omens and in the prophets,
when they know well enough that it is He whom orthodoxy
proclaims to bear the same cross like a shield for the heart, and the
temptations deeply felt by the holy ones: the essence of salvation.
The King headed for Hell and seized His chosen ones for raising;
the rest of the crowd suffers Hell without end.
That band of holy ones has now deserved to see His face,
for which it has thirsted with all its heart since the world began.
Who can adequately describe how happily the holy race rejoices,
when their hopes are fulfilled and their King's face shines on them?
When He removed from prisoners such long-tied bonds,
how beautifully He makes the coffin rise up with Him from there,
to teach us that bodies may live again after being dust and that
we may believe that people rise up intact from their tombs!
Therefore, having given these and others a place in Heaven,
He returns to those above all glorious with flesh.
He did not keep in suspense for long the desires of the holy ones,
who long with aching hearts to see Him.
Indeed, the third day, which is the starting-point for all other days,
revealed the Lord of the earth, the sea and the heavens.
For His disciples who were worthy of knowing the sacred mysteries
that was a happy day, nay, it redeemed all the centuries!
For although He Himself made all the days generally,
He is said to have made this one specially,
which surpasses the rest and prompts us to rejoice,
because the world takes the greatest happiness from it.
A happy day which made the birds of the sky fly so swiftly,
which unlocked the kingdom of Hell and revealed that of Heaven,
and found its pinnacle in the hosts on high!
On this day the tax-collector is silent and does not push his greed,

and now begins to complain about his loss of interest,
because something from which he gets no profit hurts him sorely.
This day urges every creature to rejoice
and makes the whole world suddenly regain its strength:
the earth is coloured with various flowers,
and the warm dew makes barren vines swell up;
one sees the leaves of trees revive with sap,
and a warbling note makes certain birds melodious;
the earth is fertile, the sea calm, the air still.
You think little of this perhaps, but the Creator reveals them on that day;
every thing rejoices, as it were, for the common good.
That day can therefore drive away our earlier grief;
it is that day alone which restores heavenly joy to people on earth;
we are told to exalt in this day and rightly celebrate it.
He wanted to show Himself first to a prostitute
(this woman reports that death had given way to life),
and then He gives His disciples many signs that He is alive.
At first they all quake in amazement, struck dumb with fear;
for they cannot quickly grasp so great an event.
But He gradually makes their doubtful minds understand;
He soothes their concern and appears more often to them;
He says “Peace be unto you! Do not be afraid! You can see,
behold, it is I! Put away your fear; know the truth now!”
At once they recognise Him, admitting He is their Lord and God
and that He truly retains His own very body.
At table, He offers His flesh and bones, ordering them to touch
and He allows a doubter to verify Him by touching
so that, in reassuring this man, He may strengthen us with faith
and the scars He revealed may cure our mental wound.
Behold, I pray, how dutiful and kind He proves Himself to be!
He does this to make trust grow great in sinners;
in order to reassure slaves, look, He calls them brothers,
saying “Greetings!”; unclean women touch His feet;
He allows Peter, rock of the Church, to deny his Master,

so that he may learn how He forgives by His nod;
and the evangelical succession thereafter names women,
whose deeds let them down, but who are chosen for moral dignity:
Ruth the Moabite, Tamar, Bethsheba and Rahab the look-out;
thus He recruits well-known sinners to evangelise His deeds;
thus He entered the house of Zacchaeus at his invitation.
Faith, love and hope grow strong in this way;
from this it is clear that grace removes our shame.
May the world to which He sends great gifts love Him the more!
He tells His faithful missionaries what they must say.
He says He has been given some of the whole power, less than the Father's;
when He had removed the loathsomeness of Death with it,
He is then given the full power to equal the Father.
The plan demands suffering, but then being taken up in glory.
He then orders them to depart unto all nations
and teach them the faith, eventually being baptised
in the name of the Trinity, and He orders them to continue all this.
Because these people stand by their firm covenant with the King,
and did not give in to evil nor were broken by temptation,
He rewarded them with gifts, ones which were not fleeting,
not with gold or precious jewels or riches, but instead
He showers on them the royal sceptres of the kingdom above.
Because they tolerate being stripped of temporary honour,
He gives them the means to unlock or lock Heaven, as they will.
But under the terms on which the Father sent His beloved Son,
He sent those He loved to suffer degradation in this way,
firstly to sow tears and then to harvest sheaves with rejoicing.
Finally, His majesty and power are apparent from this,
because He gave His servants such promises and commands.
One can see none of the great prophets speaking in this way:
they do not dare to promise Heaven to their followers,
or to speak of what they think is linked or not linked to Heaven,
or say that the Father gives them all they wish in His name,

or that the character of Satan and snakes lies within them, or that
they are the light of the world, salt of the earth, friends of the Creator,
to free the world or condemn it at the last judgement.
Moses does not say this to Joshua, nor Elijah to Elishah,
nor do they send missionaries all over the world.
The one mountain, which others carry on their peaks, does this.
For the Spirit, sending itself, spread this message over the earth.
In order to show that it was equal to the Father, it said to Him:
"Glorify me, Father, so that I may glorify you!"
He did not gird them fully with a heap of virtues;
but the holy Protector fills in what they lacked,
so that the Heavenly Spirit and the Word of the Lord grace them,
and their every action is proved to be linked to the Three Persons.
In the case of Peter, a maid revealed how afraid they were;
Peter himself revealed how the Spirit made them strong after this,
by reprimanding a magistrate.
He promised them this Spirit and told them to expect it,
to teach people everything, to reveal everything openly;
He also promised that He would be with them always.
He took them outside and lifted up His hands to bless them.
Having completed all the things which salvation requires,
He ascends into the highest reaches of Heaven by His own right.
It is clear that His holy mother Mary was on the spot,
to watch her son being carried up above the sky,
Mary who is rightly called blessed among all mothers.
He thus entered among the stars, witnessed by His disciples,
whom He orders to cross the frontiers of the whole world,
so that they may tell of the certainty of the triumph they had seen,
and at the same time He reveals that angelic servants attend them,
to bear witness, as He departs, that He will return.
These appear to their fellows and do their duties for their Lord.
Who can imagine this, much less put it into words,
the amazement and wonder which strikes the heavenly squadrons,
when they see a human being on high, King over all,

so submissively humble, so sublimely Almighty,
returned from the redemption of earth and the crushing of Death,
and how festively the host of Heaven ran to meet Him,
all ranks ready with His praises,
and with what jubilation all the halls of Heaven are filled
and the heavenly ones everywhere sing divine hymns?
A most wonderful thing, that flesh joined to the Almighty
reigns over Heaven with all high virtues!
How every power prays joyfully and trembles,
how it marvels in amazement at God's gift of such piety,
and praises and celebrates with vows eternal,
because He wishes to help the world with such wondrous order
that it does not destroy itself, but elevates the assumed flesh,
and just flesh purifies sinful flesh, clean flesh the flesh full of vice!
Flesh of sin is now blessed by the flesh of the Lord.
If the Son of the King has performed an outstanding deed,
through which He may appear to be strong or kind,
all decent people happily report and celebrate
how much they love the King and strive to extol His Son.
What joy then do you think the heavenly hosts get
because this Son, King of kings and Lord of lords,
did such work so bravely and so kindly,
in order to save His creations with mercy and omnipotence?
In a word, our flesh is joined to Him in a profound plan.
Lo, He bravely attacks the brave enemy, strips and binds him
and removes his power completely.
With Himself as ransom, He redeems those bound by their own guilt,
and our innocent Lord bears the sins of the guilty slave.
He makes up the number diminished by Satan's fall
and on His own shoulders carried the sheep to heavenly folds.
The angels rejoice when one sinner happens to repent.
O how happy they are when the world is everywhere set free!
They see this man and marvel that He is the only one
whom the Father rightly admits to have pleased Him,

as He had once said that He had driven mortals to repent.
For this, they bring eternal praises for the Lamb and the Father.
The disciples hold their faces and arms up to the sky
and with their eyes follow His departure for as long as they can.
As the air encloses Him and a cloud carries Him into the ether,
they track Him, out of range now, with the eyesight of the heart
and upon Him as God in Heaven, whom they see through love,
they learn to focus their devotion whole-heartedly.
Although the great force of love stirred them to tears,
hope and faith nevertheless rendered them swift
to recall that they are the servants of the true Master,
who had sown true salvation everywhere through them.
They stood there, worshipping, reluctant to return.
Later, in the heart of the upper room,
they prepare themselves as receptacles for the Holy Spirit to come,
so that when the Spirit comes, it may have a refuge it loves.
Meanwhile Peter makes the number up to twelve.
It is usually wrong to go above ten;
Peter did not want the number to fall below twelve,
whom the coming Spirit might send out to wander the world,
so that thrice four might travel through the same number of regions
and spread the Three-fold faith, offering the seven gifts.
They proposed little Matthias and Joseph surnamed Justus;
but the grace of God chose the little one.
O how different are our judgements from divine ones!
Often what is high to us is low to God,
and He considers precious what is worthless to us.
The one whom Peter chose, therefore, had the same status
as they had whom the Lord Himself had chosen:
so that it is shown to be a sound decision of the Church.
On that basis has our Supreme Leader been chosen ever since.
Thus, He did not choose all those leaders Himself,
to show that the whole process of the succession is sound,
and that He Himself sanctifies forever the Church’s traditions.

The day therefore had come, shining sevenfold in number,
on which a true and jubilant world mystically returns.
The Holy Spirit, which fills the corners of the world,
and is spread more widely than space itself,
filling it all, deigns to accost the cowardly sea-monster
and to reveal itself to the world with visible evidence.
It strengthens weak ministers and makes them brave,
its grace appearing in little tongues of flame,
so that, by their words, they may make frozen minds catch fire.
The third hour makes the bearers of the faith eloquent, so that
their holy cause may be revealed by the very number of the hour,
or because there are three persons in one Deity,
or the mysteries of the New Testament are revealed.
The Spirit "sits" on each of them, because it rests in peace on them;
"sitting" implies staying upon them is a very peaceful way,
and that none of them trouble it with a love of evil.
This guest, the Spirit, is repelled when passion for the flesh prevails.
But it is jubilant when it revisits rejected hearts,
to make those with divided loyalty seek their former Lord again.
If it panders to each person's evil desire; it sells itself, as it were,
but it accepts the price which it had perhaps wanted.
It says "Whoever does that is a slave to sin".
But this oil makes the slave-chain rot away,
and the freed man jubilantly regains the justice he had lost.
The Holy Spirit gives the gift of tongues when it appears.
What is more in harmony with the Word than speaking in tongues?
The Spirit gave them these to show that it is at one with the Word;
it speaks through it, admitting unity with the Word.
And by the gift of tongues, it shows it gives a speaker the words,
unless an ineloquent person already had those languages.
It therefore gives new bottles for the new wine to ferment in;
they cannot be sealed now; they all pop their corks now,
no longer tolerating being laid down or fancying dark cellars,
and they spring forth abroad and dare to push their way into crowds,

preaching heavenly ideas in all manner of tongues.
News of this rapidly spreads everywhere and inspires others;
they all run together, marvelling in open-mouthed amazement,
and nations were dumbstruck at such ideas of new portent,
nations which by chance were then present from the world over:
standing around, they each recognise their own language.
Although there was just one voice, of one person, at one time,
each of them believed that the language was their own.
Immediately, this message was reckoned to be of such great import,
that three thousand underwent the sacred baptism of the faith.
After this, many thousands decided to accept the kingdom above.
For those upon whom this vision of true love first shone,
the result was that they had minds which were simple, sociable, at one,
and none of them would now claim anything a personal possession.
They spurned things which tend to produce serious greedy disputes;
for the ability to spurn possessions removes the causes of dispute.
This illustrates the honest nature of the early Church,
that the faithful let go of their possessions and bound their hearts;
all the things which each of them owns become common property.
Such was the virtue of property registration: communal usage was assured;
if united, there are none in need and no greedy misers.
One body is made from several limbs,
each limb doing something for, and serving, the rest.
A miser is therefore not attached to the limbs of the Church,
keeping as personal property what should be common property.
Earthly things were therefore of no value to the early saints,
so that those who had one faith had communal wherewithal.
This is the way for monks who are united in a communal life;
there are a few adhering to this, but many in name only.
The way of life of the two of them, then, marks each type,
one of whom renounces the world truly, the other falsely.
One is called a “sheep”, the other a “son of consolation”;
for Christ says one is a wolf in sheep’s clothing;

one who is proved to be greedy-minded is often a smart dresser,
and the name and work of Ananias the apostate adhere to him;
Joseph is an example of the other type to whom Christ gave consolation:
he rejected the earth, having comfort in the stars:
however, one who imitates Ananias, preferring to be a wolf,
will see how Peter punishes this so quickly!
Peter, of course, was undone by his recent triple denial.
He knew that it was God whom he denied with the voice of a maid;
he said: “You are the Son of the Almighty Father”,
for he had heard the Father calling in divine form.
So many times he had been ordered to forgive his brother.
He also urges Simon the sorcerer to repent; Paul welcomes
him back after he had done what no pagan had done.
Ananias received no warning but was struck down immediately,
and lost no time at least in dying.
Peter knew that many would be stained by this disease;
so he strikes quickly, because he wants to stop it quickly,
to show future generations what sort of crime this is,
to break the social contract and lie to God,
and to show also how joyful it is if fellows are treated as one.
The holy flock therefore maintains a communal life in all things;
they all now love every fellow as themselves.
Having been weaned on the taste of divine honey,
they refuse now to lick earthly nipples.
This Spirit, which fills the breasts of ancient prophets,
proves to be God, filling the breasts of new prophets.
Like God, it transforms and feeds them with the gift of salvation;
inspires when it wishes and enriches with whatever gift it wants;
just like their one Father, it glorifies Christ;
it fills the world, something which only that power can do,
and gives the holy ones a gift, reducing the crimes of sinners;
like the Father and the Son, it blesses those bathed in baptism.
The third divine person proceeds from the other two.
Who may tell what sort of procreation process is involved,

or what the progress of this Spirit may be? No-one.
It is however accepted that there is one substance in three persons;
Each of them has all power because all are as one.
I offer an example which is not totally, but partially, coherent:
when you number them, the first one is from nothing, and then
the second one comes from the first, so that the first is not from it;
the third one is produced from the first one and the second,
but neither the first nor the second are from the third.
For the Father comes from nothing, the Son from the Father alone,
and from these two proceeds this Holy Spirit;
it is the love of them both, the perfect result and separate;
true love continues, ceases to be finished.
At the present time, the word used should be "proceeds"
and not "proceeded", to avoid implying that it has finished.
That Spirit raises new clouds into the air
and makes them fly with thunder over the whole earth.
They rain, sowing dogma, and they flash, giving signs.
Blinding bolts of lightning strike the high mountains;
all the powerful tremble when they behold powerful signs.
Through new signs the new preachers confirm their new ideas;
for they are doing things never seen before.
The shadow of Peter and the aprons of Paul thus cure all types of
diseases, and achieve much more with easy nod.
Thus, because they taught the truth, they inspired faith in all.
The signs may make grim tyrants panic
so that they meekly bow their proud necks to the humble yoke.
When it sees such things, the world is struck dumb with wonder,
when a poor little peasant does what none of the princes has done
in previous centuries, nor kings besides,
nor a huge standing army of all nations.
Who has brought some dead person back to life
or driven out demons, though he rules a whole kingdom?
Peter's shadow does this; tyrants therefore yield before him.
The peace, which God had sown in a barren world,

rained down from these clouds, producing many crops.
All things pour down, therefore, from salvatory clouds.
God's wisdom calls them handmaids and uses them to bind
Behemoth and builds the Church by hewing out seven pillars
and leads them to the citadel above.
Trusting in God's strength, not in their own,
these men are alone able to convert the world, as no-one before.
For they explain dogma which is covered in obscure figures,
first revealed to them by the dutiful Creator Himself.
One God, as two, laid down the Testaments,
and thus revealed them, through Himself, to His disciples
and revealed the hidden mysteries through the new, to the old.
No-one other in Heaven or earth or taken by the abyss, can unlock
these seals, except the murdered Lamb,
and that appears to be a wheel in the middle of a wheel;
for the new conceals the old, and this reveals that.
He therefore gave His followers these things, and they passed them on
to future descendants, as they had learnt them.
The faithful flock is therefore fed by two teats;
from them flow all the orthodox ideas that each of the prophets
pronounced, like a hen sheltering her chicks with its pair of wings.
He, called Father and Prince of time to come,
though rejected, did not reject, but sought to attract runaways
and orders the parricidal mob to call these back
and is not reproachful if they perhaps reform in the end.
He gathers to His peace those who spilled His blood.
Clean people now drink what perfidious people recently spilled.
Anyone who sees them obtaining forgiveness thus
should not despair of salvation because of some crime!
Of the thousands enticed back by the words of these men,
an unholy group reckon that they are unworthy of everlasting life.
God therefore abandons some, saving the rest, and, as it were,
saves for Himself a little of the countless grains of sand.
He orders the clouds not to pour rain on the others

since they show no concern for their great crime or the sweet calling
of the Father or for fear: censure abandons such people.
Soon, as the prophet said, the holy mission spread to foreign
nations: the Lord directed them to nations where
He was unknown before, deigning to show Himself for the first
time, reducing evil and promising the heavenly kingdom.
Moreover, the evil mob, lacking all goodness
and now abandoned, switched to animal behaviour,
so that one might be truly shocked to examine their deeds.
What salvation would be left for them if Christ departed?
Nothing human or worthy of reason remains for them,
but turning to madness, they now murder each other;
they are left homeless, wandering from land to land,
driven from their abode, no roof over their heads;
no longer are they bound even by ancient law.
The mission He sent hence now preaches the whole world over.
Unhoped-for salvation makes the nations rejoice,
and they recognize that it is the Word of God which they hear,
which is in accord with human nature and is called
rational and justly, piously, soberly and honestly teaches
whatsoever had poured forth upon the nations as apostolic rain.
When truth-telling priests promulgate true dogma
and faith, they reinforce the new ideas with new signs.
As they illuminate ideas with signs and speak of them soberly,
one might see nations standing astonished at both.
They know the signs are the work of God working through them
and their message is in harmony with customs and laws of nature.
They are at last happy to get to know the true path;
they now mock long-worshipped idols and defile their shrines
and reckon that their old gods should be considered shit.
They also avoid the words of poets as though inane,
and see how weak a message there is in drama,
how preachers make up their songs with puffed cheeks,
making minds weak, though they soothe the ears with their sound.

They therefore lead the so-called intellectuals into hatred
with their weaving of comments into complicated dramas.
They wanted their songs to be seen as God speaking through them,
like a cup coated with sweet honey offering poison
and they want vice described in honeyed speech to please,
and also so that they may forcibly inculcate sin into worshippers.
They exhibit wildness, savagery and wantonness,
so that anyone who merrily copies their example
will please them and also perform worse crimes.
The world is therefore especially crazy because of preachers,
who urge the crimes which they say have been done by them.
The teachings of holy men have no influence on their behaviour;
the simple path, through the simple Word, lay open to the simple,
the lye-soap of piety making the eyes of both of them open.
As a few little seeds are wont to grow great crops,
if they are entrusted to the best furrows at the right time,
so the Word they hear quickly fills their faithful hearts.
The inquisitive flock, accustomed now to listening to instruction,
thirsts for justice, on which they live rather than bread.
Kings also run up from the South, bringing food;
for it is clear that the breasts of kings give milk to the Church.
Most of them multiply their talent by teaching
and reveal symbolic meanings by explaining the words,
and the flat plain gives birth to lofty potentates,
and history feeds the little ones, allegory the vigorous ones.
In a word, they give many commands to stop the many vices
with which we have been infected, deservedly, by the first beings.
God gave one command to that first sane human.
By observing this command Adam could guarantee salvation,
but he languishes in this old contempt of body and mind;
for disease troubles his flesh and suggestion his mind.
So that he could opt for, and maintain, salvation safe and sound,
the skilful Doctor taught him to avoid harmful things,
and urges him to beware only of what can injure;

beset now by various chronic diseases
he lacks the various medicines for the disease he has,
lacks the means to be able to regain his full strength sometimes;
medical skill prevents what he desires, forcing what he dreads.
The first man was just one thing short in proving his obedience
to the Lord's command: he would then be totally free;
now there is a need to constrain him with many commands,
so that there are as many corrective orders as vices to trouble him.
True ministers therefore taught the true faith, which is known
to grow stronger with effort, but to be almost dead without it.
They reveal every plan and ritual of God's worship;
they hide nothing, but rather provide all things useful.
They say that the Church consists of various limbs,
with three ranks in it, distinguished by different duties,
the third superior to the middle one, the middle one to the first,
but all made into one body by the one faith.
Heaven's mansion welcomes the weak along with the great;
the greater ones lead the other lesser ones,
but both may say that they have a heavenly Lord,
who exalts the humble and puts down the mighty!
To preserve carefully the gifts given them, they say prudently
that the world was sent for them in an earlier time,
and that unholy hearts were abandoned in an awesome plan.
In so teaching, they warn people to consider what was given them,
to realise that the gifts are great, so that they love the Giver,
He who by dying made sinners the inhabitants of Heaven.
Whatever they were born with, whatever later behaviour added,
He washes clean by this covenant, which gets rid of their old ways.
They who are new should do what His new law demands,
and know that they belong to Him by whose blood they were saved,
and should now follow Him who buys them with His blood.
Enough of the world living in a time of sin,
when error or unclean desire gripped the nations!
Lo, because He comes with the morning and drives night from the

world,
all good people should strive to arise from their long sleep
1 the time has come - only the last hour of the day remains!

Finally, there is soon to come a universal judgement,

in which everyone will be paid the full reward for work done,

though not everyone may be repaid further with forgiveness!

Not to know the path of salvation is better, to my mind,

than to learn of it, but to turn back from it wilfully,

in the end picking up infections, as a dog its vomit.

Let them know why Jesus rejected prosperity!

He stands before His murderers, to deny that He is a king.

No-one has any doubt that He wants to be followed,

and that soldiers must follow the path which their general takes.

If people love the world or any of its lovable contents,

they do not know yet how to marvel at the heavenly Father's love

and do not copy Him who taught them to reject the world.

No-one indeed can be a slave to two masters,

no-one can love God and the world, His enemy.

All things which are suited to our nature
should not stir in us a feeling of desire but should be put to use,
though not greedily, but according to necessity.
Although baptism and faith secure our salvation,
they do not secure a person so that no harm may strike,
but Death still ravages and destroys the flesh of those re-born.
Though Death may frequently be overcome by the holy ones,
so that they, whom that devourer had consumed, get to Heaven,
they still suffer death of the flesh, which they routed by their virtue.
Not to be able to die, this is the gift of the Lord's kingdom,
when a person does not sin and is not deserving of punishment.
Now, however, though we all trespass in many ways,
merit builds up in the holy ones and cleanses sin.
If Christ wanted to free them completely from Death,
would a rose bloom therefore for a martyr,
suffering Death and in turn repaying Christ for His suffering?
Dying for Him, martyrs show how much they love Him,

and, after a thousand tortures, all their limbs shattered,
sharers of His punishment, they become fit to reign with Him.
But because there is death of the flesh for those reborn after baptism,
a perfidious voice sets a trap here for our faith,
to lessen the meaning of holy baptism, mocking it:
“If water washes away sin into which Death had crept,
it follows that if baptism is scrapped, then Death itself likewise.
What now is blamed for the sins formerly removed by baptism?
Since the flesh later dies, there is no proven gain in baptism,
nor is there gain for the spirit, not driven out of the flesh.”
So babbles perfidy, bleary-eyed in the daylight,
while it tries to fix its swollen eyes upon the rays of the sun.
But cautious true faith retains its own yardstick,
growing stronger by believing ideas rather than refuting them;
it knows that it is clear that all things are made at divine nod
and is not without reason, because the wise act wisely.
When therefore something is done, untouched by resistance,

it is enough that He who does everything, as He ought, does it.

There are some cases, however, in which there is refutation.

For God Himself admits that flesh is worthless;

however, when the spirit makes that weak flesh come alive,

we do not preserve the honour appropriate to the spirit,

but neglect the spirit and worship excessively its slave, the flesh;

the spirit, neglected, declines; the flesh, corrupted, grows arrogant.

God therefore wants to curb the flesh with various punishments,

as a furnace makes molten gold grow beautiful;

He sets the spirit free and abandons the flesh to Death.

If death or diseases could be removed by baptism,

everyone would seek it, just as a sick person would want a doctor,

not because of faith or Christ's honour and name,

but rather so that one's wretched life might be prolonged.

If the flesh, beset by so many ills, so often shaken by danger,

grows arrogant and itches to promote itself in a vain struggle,

what would it dare to do, if no-one were to curb it?

Generally, prosperity does us harm and adversity is good for us,

as King David made clear to us by word and by deed.

When he was suffering adversity, he was keen to save Saul;

and it was reported that prosperity was his undoing.

Correction by the whip, however, called him back to the chosen ones.

Indeed, grace saved Paul himself with cuffs around the ear.

God also restrains His special friends tightly, like this:

Job lies in excrement and John dies surrounded by revelry,

for the more important their mission, the graver their suffering.

They also foretold of crimes in the future.

When enemies see the crop of the faith start to grow,

they strive to vilify it with countless trespasses,

so that the faith, corrupted by their deeds, renders us worthless.

There were preachers the people believed to be learned;

when they were sent, the people put more stumbling-blocks in their way,

to stop their enticing words capturing the hearts of the pious.

Some, however, who thought it offensive to obstruct, were helpful.
When they finally force our fellows to reply to their trivialities,
a mystical thing was revealed in the war being waged:
the more the faith is challenged, the stronger it makes the faithful.
Signs quite often help our fellows and also restrain those.
The heretic Arius fills the public latrine with his bowel contents,
proving by his empty stomach how misguided he was in heart.
The world is now bound to the faith, rejoicing and attentive,
the nations rejoicing in it and performing acts of duty freely.
As the divine voice of God says that all people are well-behaved,
there exists in them the grace to accept the Word with the heart's ear,
so that they know through it that Christ Himself truly exists,
whom the Father once promised as a leader for the nations,
who so loves the human race that He became that very thing
which we are, and reckons that sinners are worthy of this gift,
that He should be willing to die and they live up to His sacrifice.
As a blind person rejoices to see a lantern once lost sight of,

and a prisoner rejoices to revisit his homeland after long exile,
and a sick person rejoices to get better after despairing about illnesses,
so the nations are happy in the end to have salvation,
because the light is shining on them after lengthy darkness
so that the splendor of the faith may light up the labyrinth of sin,
their former hardness being softened before the face of God,
the yoke which restricted the world from its origin having rotted,
and a place in Paradise, so long closed to humans, is now open.
This love so sweet, on which this Mediator insists,
urges us to love Him in return and to shun earthly prosperity.
It is now important to enjoy the heavenly gift, but also
the earthly one, and also follow God who is responsible for both.
With joy, they tolerate the loss of their possessions,
because they know that they will have instead riches above.
They quickly decide to give up not only all possessions for His sake,
but themselves as well, to Death, thinking nothing of tortures.
They laugh at the executioners and are happy to end their lives,

in order to look happily upon their Lord's face as soon as possible.
Therefore, as the new born thirst for a spiritual lake,
and grow out of deceit and get used to challenging the Father,
they know how wrong it is not to reply to His call,
and how dreadful it is to submit to Death again,
and how stupid to have taken as worthless the gift of grace.
None of the Lord's commands should be thought of lightly,
for neither the greatest of them nor a jot of them can be ignored.
If a wretched little servant scorns a command given,
Death often strikes; a just judge sanctioned this. How more would
the judge condemn if it was an order given by the Son Himself?
The prophets have a line of succession of such descendants,
to steer the boat of the Church through later centuries,
to cut through the waves, to stand up to the gales with foresight.
They fulfil the captaincy of the ship spiritually, performing
all tasks with prudence, until they bring the ship to shore.
These men reveal the Old Testament and the New

as if firing the stout arrows of their message from a bow.

For as a bow is made from horn and soft bowstring,

so the two Testaments are one instrument;

like a new bowstring, it is soft and flexible;

like an old one, it is hard and strict in plucking guilt.

The string however becomes all taut when pulled back;

but the horn works together to help the job of the string;

thus the instructions of the New Testament are all about salvation

but not on their own: they work with the same ideas from the Old.

Over the centuries therefore they set up a regime for people;

these men reveal the symbolic meanings of both Testaments.

If the devil tries to recruit corrupt preachers,

to violate the work of the faith or pull holes in the dogma,

the Lord also prepares recruits whose voice will rout them.

These books therefore were opened in the voice of John, and their

contents reveal what following generations should do or avoid.

As the face of a beholder is wont to appear in a mirror

and ugliness or beauty is perhaps revealed in that face, so the life
of leaders should reflect what should be the deeds of their followers.
These men are mountains which provide pastures for their sheep.
Whoever will submit to the judgement of these men,
they are not the saintly ones, because they follow, copying.
The peace, granted by the King at His birth or left at His going,
residing upon the peak of virtues, makes them one;
this Prince of virtues feeds and adorns all the rest.
In peace, the limbs are in harmony with their head, Christ,
through whose judgement the disciples are known.
This peace had united and joined in love the very tyrants.
Though rare is the tyrant who rages with Assyrian anger,
policing cases of justice with the sword,
any prince can suppress his uncontrollable frenzy.
The forehead learns now to get used to the sign of the cross on it
and brutish breasts learn to restrain their animal instincts;
fierce nations now learn not to make war, when in the past

so many thousands have so often been reported slain.

Peace holds a place on high, to encourage the rest.

We keep, none of us, an everlasting peace treaty with ourselves,

unless we are in harmony with orders from on high.

Therefore they observe and obey God's orders first and foremost,

binding them to themselves with cords which no schism can untie.

And as the sons of Korah survived after their father's death,

so those in holy harmony are not allowed to become worthless.

What the prophet proclaimed, now happens in the name of Christ:

the lance turns into a scythe and the sword into a hoe,

and the shameful tongue becomes accustomed to holy discussion,

so that it removes vice and sweetens hardened hearts.

With these as leaders, peace is created in time of war.

Christ therefore gave the world His disciples as leaders,

and they and their successors taught those who were failing.

These men created a path, to lead the people to Heaven.

They predicted the demonic tricks to come,

and how they might do harm in peace-time or in war,

and how vice is harmful to every virtue,

and with how many dangers later ages would be ablaze,

and that countless people, loving themselves more than Christ,

will be followers of pleasure, spurning their Creator,

urged by self-love – o, the pain! – to wicked deeds,

(for, because they were able to know God but then abandoned Him,

they are deservedly left to the noose of the Anti-Christ),

and that holy ones falter, but are to be watched over in Heaven,

and that, because they are faithful, God shortens their days.

Book Seven

Preface

What mortals put in place or arrange
most often turns out other than they want or expect.
Scripture tells of this and custom affirms it;
that is what has befallen this work of mine.

The final judgement, because the King has come!

My pen has reported critically, as it has been able.
I had hoped to finish my poetic lines here,
but the sequence demands that I add something.

The Hebrew people set the Church's framework.
The sea gives them passage, the Pharaoh is drowned;
but two kings still terrify them and the great struggle
for a homeland where they may find peace.

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

King Og and King Bashan suggest this symbolically,
obstructing the people which seeks a homeland.
After baptism, these two enemies harm very greatly
the holy ones and weary them.

Some overthrow the kings and take their sceptres,
clearly signifying the glorious humble ones,
while the lustful wickedly make a calf.
This urges my little poem to continue.

The whole body of the Church was strong within,
although it appeared on the outside to be in tatters.
Being lovelier within than it seems without, shining with
honesty in the midst of a corrupt nation,
just like a fragrant meadow, which a cloud waters from the sky:
where lilies and violets, the rose with nard oil and balsams,
and all the other plants which add colour from their own hues.
These signify souls blessed with different talents;
many have turned red as if with a martyr's garland of roses
others are white like pure lilies.
Quick to do what the law orders, they were therefore faithful.
One would think they lived in Heaven, clothed with morality.
But what happens? Temptation troubles our life.
Neither sea nor sky nor earth remains calm;
they turn to wintry rain or waves and frost;
likewise people falter whose life is temptation.
That peace which Christ left to His followers on His departure

may it remain forever with those whom inner grace strengthens,

though it is known to be necessary for scandals to arise.

Therefore battles rage outside and fears inside,

and sore temptation has sown its seeds without and within;

hardship overwhelms those, temptation these;

with these two things that perfidious serpent harms the faithful.

Although a field may be sown with wheat seed,

an enemy also sows weeds in it;

both grow together until threshing time,

when corn fills the granary but the weeds fill Gehenna.

This life passes with the meek and the wanton mixed together;

though what they profess may unite them, harvest will sort them.

Because the early deeds of our fathers set us our example,

the journey of the people from Egypt becomes a symbol for us.

Then the people departed, freed by the drowning of the Pharaoh;

God himself kills the fierce enemies whom they cannot overpower.

These are like powerful lords created first by right;

against these, as against masters, slaves cannot fight;
Christ therefore, without us, drowns these in the wash.
God therefore drowns in the sea the armies of Memphis,
washing every deed, according to the betrayed people's desert.
The descendants of Pherez now trouble the Hebrews over the sea,
to stop them becoming lazy should they happen to be enemy-free.
Thus, although baptism has removed earlier sins,
the yearnings of the flesh are not suppressed completely,
but the flesh whispers ideas to the spirit, daring to resist it.
After the font and the food of manna, people fight back;
after baptism the pious struggle to avoid laziness in their free time,
struggle against the vices which hinder those seeking the kingdom,
so that the praises of the Lord remain the reward owed us.
Therefore the pious fight and triumph with the Lord's help,
winning, either by His gift or by our courage.
Kings Sihon and Bashan resist after the Pharaoh was drowned;
these kings attempt to delay the travellers.

For it is said that, in Latin, Sihon means “lofty”
and Bashan means “baseness”; pride and lust thus fight,
and these two plagues block our way like two kings.
For one ravages the flesh and the other the mind;
one incites the wanton desires of the flesh,
 the other persuades us that it is good to love applause.
What Lot’s daughters do to their father, these two also do:
the first seeks sex with her father, then persuaded the second;
the first, arrogant, debauches the mind, then lust the flesh.
The first daughter does what the second also underwent;
the bed of the first is therefore laid out for the second.
Hence lust perverts chaste old age very often;
when lust swells within, virtue therefore rushes out.
These block those seeking a homeland after Egypt:
often a good man, while sleeping, may become weak at heart,
when grabbed by the daughters which he had procreated.
A holy house totally rejects such things.

It is told in countless tales, through the deeds of the ancients,
that it is indeed necessary for temptation to test us.
For a Babylonian king beset them with the same plagues.
He erected here an image; there he set up a furnace.
The king is a satan and his image is pride, his furnace lust.
He makes people bow to his image and casts them into the flames;
those who spurn his image will also overcome the flames.
Then that fire consumes the Chaldaeans, subject to the image;
but it dared to do no harm to the boys.
As the people of Babylon run with the people of Jerusalem,
behold, the image and the furnace stand nigh for both.
For arrogance and lust shake them both together.
However, the same fire does not consume both.
Vain gluttons and the bibulous suffer from this,
as the furnace devours these servants prostrate before the image;
but the sober and meek, like the three boys, deservedly escape
victorious, because first they mastered their own appetite.

Finally, they have a fourth companion, one armed with purity,
who protects the meek; the furnace therefore devours them not.
It destroys the Chaldaeans who are dragged willingly into it;
it does not harm the abstemious; it burns but is subject to chains.
So let it not smash them because they are battered by evil ideas.
The letter Tau is the sign of the cross marking the forehead of the
faithful who know that others lament for the spread of crime.
And these, weeping with love of peace, are called angels;
Scripture was wont to call these people grieving.
Such are masters and a mark burns the rest,
whom the beast has captured and branded as his.
Those bearing the T on their forehead therefore weep for others,
grieving a little because excess abounds everywhere.
O, the pain, because the world, washed clean, is dirty again!
Many have suffered shipwreck on the shore;
lust makes reprobates of those reborn after chrism.
Neither the Flood nor Gomorra's flames have beaten this.

Would that baptismal water could extinguish them!
But one may see that few vapours of this survive
which can restore a lost sense of decency;
but only some of them have these in their body.
They abandon the gift of cleanliness as worthless;
without it no-one at all is going to see the Lord.
Those He redeems with His blood and washes in baptism
chain themselves up again and strive to be led back into lust.
What good is grace? What does redemption give them?
Rather, it is a hard task for them to give up their free gifts.
Of course, they prove that the path of Christ displeases them,
and that they prefer to run along a wide road,
they whom that prison of Gehenna restrains tightly.
The holy flock therefore does not cease to lament such times,
because in almost all the world evil lust rages.
Paul says that there will be many such people in the end,
and Peter asserts that the eyes of these are full of lust.

Therefore they grieve that many have lapsed after baptism,
because a mother clothed in sunlight gives birth but Satan sucks
them in because a serpent tears the light-giving stars from the sky,
because it has the power to lay down gold for itself, like mud,
because it treads the very rays of the sun under its feet.
It chases out people who shine with virtue,
while lust makes those who resist behave like pagans.
Often many people, lofty in wisdom and deeds,
are wont, like the eagle, to fix their gaze on the sun,
while they perform pious deeds but subjugate themselves wickedly
to the flesh, as if they abandon the upper air and seek the body
in the lowest regions, or through lust pervert all things good,
so that one sin can destroy many good deeds.
But the Judge reproves what the mixture of crime befouls.
He can be swayed by prayer but not by money; He says:
“Let them not vainly think they can be redeemed at any price!”
God admits to spitting out these lukewarm ones quickly.

He rejoices at this and cleverly wears down those satans.
Reckoning the stupid worth little, Satan, as if sucking up rivers,
is confident that he can devour even the holy, like the Jordan.
The stupid rot in their own excrement like donkeys;
this would be vile; but as for those on whom grace shines,
they are content to be able to die because of their wish to grieve.
But, in fact, Satan has power even over the abstemious and the wise!
Alas, the shame! Once in cloisters devoted to study,
where a shared cell may better serve the brothers,
and each one is in turn a sort of guard to the other,
it is disgraceful that a sin be committed in a brotherhood, and
that he who is regarded as the school's master behave badly.
When a boy is sent to a monastery, like Samuel, to be brought
up to be able take part in holy disciplines, like a pot
retaining its flavour from what was its first contents,
and as the curved cane may teach through good use,
someone debauches this boy and profanes Christ's gift.

Christ drowns him who took him to be brought up in the Lord.
He whom Satan inflames, he who debauches the boy – how much
better is his soul than his body; so much worse is he than Herod:
one destroys the conquering spirit, the other the perishable flesh.
Sophar drove away Nabuzardan, tutor of novices.
Saying such things, I shock chaste ears.
Paul says that his revelations may shock.
That trumpet which resounds in all parts of the world,
he who reveals all the mysteries of the Church,
announces that there will be countless such in the end;
finally, people's worthlessness, retelling it, repeating it,
finally finds a place for it, teaching of its great importance.
If perchance the number of faithful people is like grains of sand,
only remnants must be chosen, says the prophet.
The famous salesman preaches that there will be such people,
and that the final days will be full of many dangers, and there
will be countless people who love themselves more than Christ,

who abandon His love because of lust.

The King says that such times will become more frequent in

the end, and that the flesh could be saved if these were reduced.

That serpent makes leisure time allowed for performing

holy pursuits seethe with unspeakable pastimes.

The more time each is allowed, the dirtier the things played with.

Hence the words of the prophet, that the enemy mocks the Sabbath.

“The ungodly has performed iniquities in the land of the holy”;

but follows with: “They will not see the glory of the Lord”.

Since this disease holds sway far and wide with loose rein,

they are wretched and languid, longing for Egypt in their heart,

nor do they feel shame for perverting the innate laws of nature,

or that those whom Christ freed with His blood are taken prisoner.

The mind is enslaved; the flesh holds power, like a prince;

our five senses obey the rule of lust; the more one is affected

by this lust, the more one is interested in the flesh and goes on

to incest, perverted intercourse and all sorts of depravity.

Each one's conduct goes downhill because lust is persuasive,
cutting the limbs of Christ, creating a whore's body.
Now it fills the whole world, not just a part of it,
so that one would believe the world to be like one great Gomorra.
It also rages even among the rich, the needy, the old.
And as if there will be no judgement to come at any time
for all that each has done with the body,
everyone therefore commits sin with enthusiasm.
There is great sin inherent in limbs cleansed by chrism
(and a certain part of the Church dies because of it) that one
whom Christ has redeemed is later devoured by the terrible beast,
when the Bride of the Groom has neither stain nor wrinkle.
It is important for ministers themselves to serve at altars,
because there are people ignorant of the offspring of the Virgin,
who are aroused with the passion of a horse, even, or a mule.
Who will satisfactorily explain what damnation waits for these?
Without doubt, such a harsh penalty restrains such people,

whom the sacred reverence of a holy place does not, nor ranks
of office nor the heavenly work of consecration, whereby
they enlarge their knowledge of the mysteries of so great a matter,
that is, that angel-servants stand at the altar and the right hand
of God is with them administering the holy sacraments.
As the majesty of this grows worthless in the people's eyes,
an example will be provided to most by an act of atonement,
which the stupid may easily be able to understand, that the
duties of the altar are not to be performed for the profane.
They who go with whores remove themselves from the body of Christ;
they must see this: if a body is that of a whore, it is therefore profane.
The King, seeing his guests, utters these words:
"You, friend, lacking a marriage robe, why do you enter here?"
He is dumbstruck and goes off in chains to outer darkness.
This wild beast thirsts for subjects, or rather, for their leaders,
as every army is lost when its general is beaten. A keen general
makes his troops keen, the feeble general makes them idle;

so the enemy concentrates its attack on the standard-bearer or
the general, to cut him down or make him fear for his life
and unable to support his comrades.
This happens in a physical duel and also in a spiritual one
that the fall of the general is the cause of collapse for the rest.
Because enemies may do harm more often through the fall
of princes, they are depicted as vipers biting the hand of Paul.
Each follower of Paul is immediately inspired by the flame of love;
consequently, a prelate or other cleric,
quick to adopt and use Paul's example,
knows that the snares of Beelzebub must be faced,
all of whose armed guard beset one sorely. For the sake of all
his men, let the general therefore understand victory and defeat!
He, in his elevated rank, easily becomes more harmful to people;
for example, being afraid for himself and the many he supports
and trembling that many may be ruined by his own fall!
An incompetent general disarms, and an inexorable one arms, as

many men as the hells he knows how to feel or the crowns to wear!
People who understand somewhat the feelings of brotherly love,
are capable of lamenting human downfall,
which they see as receiving a heavenly gift in vain, and preferring
to pursue a life of crime and to abandon the defence of virtues.
Such people are fulfilled by abandoning spiritual decency
with reprobate feeling, and by following falsehoods.
The wretches are empty of heart; and they seek to be “polished”
in the flesh, “unpolished” in morals or beautiful in dress;
as if they attempt to display a beauty which has to be improved,
as if they dare to tart up God’s creation with beautiful cosmetics.
This vice grips men and women alike.
It is sickening to reveal the mindless obsessions of these women,
their many different outfits with bits of cloth,
just to please men, whom they could often shut out,
if dressed in the morals which the Apostle ordered them to be.
How basely affected one would see men! As if they who

who are now bent with old age were to wear fine attire
upon their trembling limbs and become wanton of spirit!
But why do we complain that brutes seek such things,
brutes who do not deserve to have found spiritual glory,
when ordained ministers are not ashamed to court this?
Ministers too parade about in silly outfits,
so that what one lacks in merit, power-dressing may make up for,
and they gleam with the skill of the weavers, not with the moral code,
that garment of Christ they had worn across the sea. They ought
to break down the walls of Jericho or drown the pride in their voice,
an example to the world. Instead they submit to the profits of
mammon, attempting to climb the peaks of wind-puffed reputation.
Thus the two kings, after the waters, overpower our armies.
Envy, adultery, trickery, disparagement, theft,
anger and uproar accompany such kings like army columns.
Here, here, pain urges us to weep over sad quarrels.
Treachery - Jewish, it seems – clings to such things!

That nation reckons worthless the gifts and teachings of God,

desiring instead earthly things, not valuing heavenly.

So they cling to people of earth, rightly deprived of the heavenly ones.

Also, these degenerates, rich with divine gifts,

given liberty and redeemed by holy blood,

later run back into slavery to the servile yoke of the flesh.

Alas, the guilty minds of people, their brutish hearts, feeble senses!

They fear not the anger so often experienced by sinners

nor do they fear the deed in return for which the cataclysm strikes

or the sulphurous paths offered by hellish Gomorra,

the deed for which Satan loses Heaven and goes to Hell. Alas, too

many such examples of the pitiable insane deeds of the depraved!

They want to be like a horse or mule, lacking sense,

and their flesh, after baptism, deserves to be called donkey flesh!

We are therefore forced to banish their sad brayings for a long time.

Ignoring these, who burn with the kindling-wood of the flesh,

whom arrogance buffets and puffs up and bends low,

who think nothing of losing the honesty of their minds,
who give all to the flesh and nothing to the mind, like a beast,
nor are afraid to abandon, willingly, their own salvation,
and grab the ideas and generous dowries of these Jews,
plus the Ethiopians who do not want to change their black skin
when God whitens them and loves them with His own blood, -
therefore, ignoring these, the pen – as it can – preaches unto those
who are afraid of slipping or who try to rise up after a fall!
All through our life temptation runs deep.
Consequently, lust very often tempts good men like Joseph
and David; one ran away from it and the other clung to it.
By fleeing, this man shows us that everyone should flee this beast,
such being the advice of Paul, the eloquent catechist of the world,
that no-one should be eager to fight it in hand-to-hand battle,
for often it overwhelms even those blessed with great courage.
And the King taught that downfall was swift for the courageous
so that none with courage should dare to fight,

but their eyes should avoid lust and their thoughts avoid touchings
while those not chosen prefer not to address moderation.
One however who is tempted may be restored after repentance.
It is clearly necessary, when temptation besets us,
that His divine sight sees us, even though hidden,
so that it is clear to us who He is, and He is revealed to each of us.
But God makes those things the cause of salvation to his followers;
Peter is holier when he becomes more critical of himself;
for he knew who it was in whose strength he might trust;
all people, while they appear humble, are possessed of justice.
Therefore, not knowing how to recognise the danger which
threatens them, they neglect to ask for help from above,
without which no-one could retain eternal salvation.
Thus God Himself advises with what prayer each person should
approach Him, so that one who deigns to take up our faith
is provided with a defence so that temptation may not defeat us.
Therefore He sees how great is the presumption of our mind,

and how few are keen to fight like that Joseph,

thwarting the Egyptian queen by running away;

but instead desire to consort with Madianite whores.

He takes care of His people, tempering adversity with success,

while shaking them so that arousal ceases to swell their senses.

Therefore let Him not crush them because evil ideas beset them,

for in almost all the world that lust rages!

May the cowardly flesh, becoming braver, be eager to fight!

But, though beaten, this terrible beast is preparing war again:

the shaven hairs grow again on the skin.

Thus the Nazareans were ordered: just to shave the hairs,

not to pluck them, and to dedicate the shaven hair to the Lord.

Because the flesh generates this or gets the idea from the enemy,

let not soft flesh make the senses grow soft.

The mind must cut off all of that with swift enthusiasm.

Then one whom pleasure touches does not die from it;

pleasure taken consumes us, but pleasure rejected crowns us.

Each person is said to deny God by committing sin.

This happens in a young horse, as a result of lust:

this one rejects it because of the carrots, that one because of the sticks.

What is the difference do you think? Both denials are damning;

this one whom pleasure overwhelms, behaves worse than

the one who stops struggling, beaten by punishments.

If a laurel wreath rightly adorns the tamer of a young horse,

whom the animal cannot defeat, rightly does the garland adorn him.

When the flesh delights one, though the mind resists with logic

and may fear its master, like him or love him,

it sees it is not a crime to perform audacious deeds.

One who is burning from the bite of a fiery serpent,

may see the cross and retain its golden image!

That lust urges the opening of the door of the heart;

God also knocks at the door and, shown in, wants to dine with you.

The mind must therefore see to whom it opens or closes its door!

No-one can serve two masters equally.

Light does not exist in darkness; a nail drives out a nail;

in one breast there is no room for God and lust together;

He plucks out biting flies from human eyes.

Thus may fear be able to undo sin in the presence of God!

See what it is for God to dine with a mortal,

and also how wretched it is for anyone to prefer to eat dirt!

By night and day the faithful must study the law of God.

We are also ordered to taste how sweet the Lord is,

to delight in Him, not to do evil, always to seek His face with ours,

nay also, ordered to bless the Lord at all times.

When may we therefore be free from foul urges?

A very beautiful bride may shine brightly for her handsome groom!

A draught of stale air usually is bad for the health;

a very slight spot spoils a beautiful face.

So the face of the soul must be wary: thus the fear of the groom!

May he fear removal from God's body because of his love of the flesh!

Let him not violate the temple which the Holy Spirit graces!

Let no-one think it little to condone the crime!
When a corrupt mind sketches for itself obsessive ideas,
it defiles its own purity by condoning the sin,
if it desires to complete the mental urge with the deed.
Women should have no impure thoughts hidden away in their minds,
and their naked bodies should be hidden from chaste eyes.
God teaches that virginity is precious
and that He wants us to be truthful and pure.
He puts all good deeds into the twin pans of a balance,
as it were, ordering us to gird ourselves with chaste loins
and to hold in our hands red warning lamps,
valuing the prize of purity as the same as other virtues.
What value do other virtues have if not graced with purity?
There is no use in carrying countless lamps
unless girded loins make them shine brightly.
As the heat of the blood usually grows cold in old men,
so the elderly world must have therefore grown tepid,

getting blinder, seeing its own end near,

sometimes washing its defiled old age with tears.

For it had always been foreseen from its beginning

in laws and signs or in the words and deeds of our forefathers,

whence it can later restore its former splendour,

to be wiser and saner and trying to rise again some day.

Finally there came a God born of a virgin,

to make the world new in the end – He who created it,

and whom it should fear as its Lord. Therefore – unthinkably! –

when evil desire suggests that maybe He should not be followed,

the mind should be balanced in understanding what the urge is,

what satisfies moderation and what causes weeping for centuries!

He whom God teaches will therefore never go astray like a mule!

As a soldier at war, knowing what will soon happen,

screams and panics with doubt and trusts in victory,

the armed Christian is ordered to be likewise,

whom God has ordered to gird his loins

to drive off nocturnal fears with the sword at his thigh.

With the mention of loins He signals a special danger;

for it is clear that this vice is more harmful than the rest,

for it delights us longer and tires us more,

because it usually has flesh as its helper,

and this soft flesh very quickly softens one's senses.

Consequently the limb of Christ embodies this more for the enemy.

Let each one master the flesh, not make peace as with an enemy!

But not too much, as flesh may become a bit of a helper.

The law orders the Israelite to consider the Idumaean an ally;

as a wanton woman is a bad thing, so she is good in moderation.

So, control your horse with the rein or urge it on with the spur!

Nobody, however, may subdue the flesh well by force;

the Creator subdues it with much whipping;

though exhausted, it dared to resist the spirit.

How safer do couches make the rebel!

So hunger and thirst tax one's strength, then refreshment.

The holy are not strong in the courage they desire;
fearful, they rightly have doubts about what will become of them.
There are uncertainties about how holy courage works in them,
so they should hold one thing certain above all, a merciful heart,
and may they remain steadfast by always dreading ruin.
A mind beset by so many ills, so often hounded by dangers,
when uncertain safety and ruin are always feared,
when it dies so many times and death, so often near, is dreaded,
what if it is weakened and proud? What if it would have been
safe, if it were willing to ask for things to save itself?
So that lust and arrogance may not overcome the flesh or mind,
punishment coerces them and wearies them both on this account.
There's an order to how things happen, why and when.
First, the soldier takes up arms and then wages battles.
So let those who desire to conquer lust control their appetite.
Yielding to appetite, one is disarmed and the enemy stronger.
I admit this is true of one who copies Joseph's flight.

It shows him to be free-born, whom the Egyptian woman believes
a servant. He whom the evil woman accosts appears an unarmed
servant; he remains free-born and thwarts her in manly manner.
As Joseph must adopt a sparing appetite, able, when imprisoned,
to check the urges of the flesh, so may we tie ourselves to the cross
with a cord and imprison ourselves, like Joseph!
Then five kings tried to imprison Joseph in a locked cell,
with the result that a mind free of the flesh controlled his senses.
Saying this, I aim to give advice to those who are standing by,
that they should stand thus: let them have eyes front and back
lest the terrible beast enter through a secret door,
and not let lust perchance stain limbs pledged to God,
carefully recalling at what price they were redeemed, so that they
are now not slaves but honoured with the title of His children.
Now let me speak a little about making peace with the lapsed!
For we are, as Christians, fragile and lacking in sense of duty.
Let us make peace with the lapsed like supporting limbs!

Therefore, given enough time, they will find grace.
God does to them what they themselves did to Him;
He honours those to whom He reveals the secrets of the faith;
as for those who hurt the Lord and arrogantly prefer to reject Him,
let them consider what they must receive in return for that.
As Scripture says menacingly, then later reassuringly,
let them remember that hope and fear are together within them,
and remember the examination with which the Judge shatters the world,
and that a false word will not go completely unavenged.
“What the ungodly think, will be shattered”, it says.
So let them be afraid to have hopes about the generosity of Him
who speaks of peace to the heart of all who revert, but does not
return their scorn, for He promises gifts to those returning.
So, let those who convert to Him tremble and fear, to feel
that He is just, strict and loving unto them.
Those whom baptism washes, whom Christ now adopts to Him,
whom He places on the citadel of Jerusalem, a vision of peace,

are leaving Jerusalem and prefer to go down to Jericho!
They give up their safe seat and suffer dangers through their
own doing, soon running into fierce bandits, a wretched fate!
They stripped them and beat them, the law being powerless,
nor could a Levite priest help them.
These are not much different from those bandits,
seeming to choose almost the same path.
The Lord gives them the same journey, a Samaritan has pity:
He sees and supplies what they need and attends sufficiently.
Yet no-one is said to have swayed Him with prayers, so that it
is clear that He was wont to support the lapsed willingly.
One who falls therefore may know that Christ's rescue is swift!
Ungodly people cunningly led Him to a prostitute;
the prostitute asks for nothing; yet at once He offers her all.
The returning prodigal son teaches us by his father's reaction:
the father runs up to him and greets him with long embrace,
adorning the returning recreant with his best robe and ring.

He came forced, not willingly, to pay back debts like a slave;

at once the master took pity and offers him so much.

We say the sense of duty with which the King abounds is clear:

He does not reproach, but quietly supports those returning.

It is clear therefore that God rejoices at the lapsed returning,

asking His heavenly friends to rejoice with Him.

He calls them rebels and delights them with the title of children.

“Please, return”, he says, “I shall convert you, child.

Why die? I do not want the death of the dying.

Nay rather, I want life to return, not for there to be ruin”.

A man begs at a barred door at midnight. A friend inside says

he won’t give him the three loaves out of friendship;

he persuades him with much haggling over price. Out of friendship

he supplies as much as he needs, donating them himself.

People’s haggling becomes sickening, but pleases them.

Let a father soothe a tough mind with sweetness or let his child,

upon eventually returning, live as though done with vices.

May the Devil's offspring be able to become the co-heirs of Christ.

Also, pride itself may be making stupid men arrogant and
fornicators may have a taste of their beloved darkness to come,
and God may see that such people are rebels against the light,
yet He does not allow all their senses to become benighted.
They stripped him naked and left him for dead but still alive
so that the Samaritan was able to perform his rescue;
thus God leaves the sinners their senses and time,
so that those who want to, can revive and come back to Him.
Let the lapsed therefore be careful after their crimes
and consider this life short and their weeping to be momentary
because He raises them to the shores of light!
Consuming lust pursues them for a very short time
but then suddenly it prepares eternal fires for the dying;
it removes the delights which the King reserves for their end.
One whom the flesh entices and conceited pride has puffed up
and is made to forget Christ, sweet above all things, -

may the wretch dread rotting in filthy, putrid gore!
Rather, let them taste how very sweet the Creator is,
who by His love was able to control the flesh!
Let them see what rotting flesh, becoming putrefaction, is like,
and, were they pure, how beautiful they would be upon rising!
Thus they will easily reject what now urges dark deeds.
Let them know that the Lord is now ready to forgive,
but that, if scorned, He quickly turns to sudden anger.
The longer He has to wait for someone, the more He condemns!
Let it be a concern then for the lapsed to win back salvation
and at last grasp hold of a plank after shipwreck!

Now I will say a few words about celebrating in honour of the pure who struggle to maintain the decency and mercy of their minds, not debauched by flesh but kept shining with purity.
Joined by a certain contract to the offspring of the Virgin,
they are keen to separate the precious from the dross.
These have been called heavenly like the Lord in appearance

and rightly assume the appearance of the angelic hosts above,

because, of course, they lead an angelic life in the body.

I admit that no words can do full justice to their virtue;

but I will speak about them with rejoicing, like Paul:

“Remain thus in the Lord and beware of a fall

because it is your duty to stand firm as it is ours to live!”

We ask that these shining ones stand by all their vows,

and be eager to set aside the wild urges of the flesh,

so that the Virgin’s offspring may make them kings in Heaven.

That title is promised them inside the star-clustered city walls,

this title for a musical son or a splendid daughter,

with which they may sing or be able to hear new songs.

While we rejoice, we fear the dangers round about them.

Indeed it is not safe to feel confident about fear.

Injury is swift to harm something which is rather dear.

Frost upon the grape or warmth upon an olive is like this

and it is also clear that nettles will prove safe…at a distance.

The greater one's virtue, the more an enemy envies one,
in most cases generating arrogance from that very virtue,
and sometimes one who is proud of virtue falls.
They who know how to stay humble are therefore steadfast.
Therefore let them struggle to avoid a diabolic downfall!
A lamp which a foolish virgin looks after does not shine;
she who rejoices in the gift of praises, has no oil;
lilies do not keep their bloom if they wilt;
if pure people become arrogant, then they are no longer pure.
There are just a few with the gift of feeling shame for the flesh,
as the offspring of the Virgin urges us to learn from Him;
let them be humble and not forsake the gift of such a talent,
and let them not allow their heart, eyes, ears to be wanton,
and let them foresee the last day which faces the world,
and see how fleeting all this is, which seems so lovely here,
that there may be eternal retribution for our momentary deeds,
that the whole form of the world will soon change,

that the Judge will arrive unexpectedly, gleaming in the flesh,
and that His great majesty and lofty power will appear,
His courage going hand in hand with His heavenly mercy.
He provides Himself, visible in the flesh, to reprobates,
His form threatening to them, but very comforting to the just:
as for those who fear Him, they come faithfully to meet Him,
and those who despise Him are plunged in panic into Hell.
One who loves or worships this world, will remain in it;
one who gazes at things on high, will float up into the air.
As the devouring flame swiftly consumes the whole world,
it burns reprobates but will not be able to touch the meek.
That king of evil, Behemoth, is led into the middle;
it is clear to the meek and the arrogant what sort of beast he is,
what strength he has, how wild his threats;
no-one can overcome him, except He who created him.
Then great amazement arises from the astonished meek
that they could defeat such a one, but they thank

the Almighty who has subjected their great enemy to restraints.
If this had been foreseen, who would have dared to fight?
When the war was won through Christ's moderation, we see
that they praise the Lord through whom they won the triumph,
marvelling greatly to see whom they have defeated.
The wicked now see to whom they prefer to subject themselves;
a strong sense of anguish, late though it is, encompasses them;
they repent having abandoned the Lord and chosen Behemoth,
whom they knew fell from Heaven and was plunged into Hell.
Then pain and groaning, eternal tribulation and grief
trouble them within and fire burns them without, and they
also take unto themselves what Scripture says about this.
How does that pride help the wretches or the unbridled lust
in which the flesh rejoices, in which the stupid find pleasure?
Pleasure passes quickly, scarcely tasted, but the whip endures.
In no way is it possible to excuse one's recklessness.
As the just have obtained sunshine, the bad have rain;

both groups have tasted the reward for their present life;
what mind or body lacks, God supplies to them in like manner;
but they have enjoyed their reward in different ways.
As Holy Scripture says to shameless subjects:
what is the scent of death for those is salvation for these.
He says to them “I do not know you. Get away from me!”;
He says nothing of what they have done, as if their deeds were
unworthy of divine mention; He complains that brothers were not
allotted their duties, as He himself orders and nature itself urges.
Fearlessly and arrogantly they excuse their guilt
and their preference for clinging to demonic urges.
They bear bitter critical censure forever, so that they suffer
the flames of Satan, blazing without end. Satan himself falls
along with those he joined to him in crime, and is consumed
by the same fire for they had been infected by the same arrogance.
Then he reckons that they are just like strangers to him
who do not avoid evil because of him and do no good in his name.

He reproves these and their behaviour as not done for him.
Then the wicked, driven by great stupidity, were drowned along
with their fierce chief, witnessing those things, fear and terror!
How these spectacles are to be feared by the many holy people!
If there is any blame in this, let fear purge them of it!
He remembers, and is kind to, some for what they do for the needy;
He does not mention all the evil deeds overshadowing their holy work
nor does He focus attention on what pious action masks.
When He speaks to them, they say they have done nothing,
that what they do is normal custom and nothing wrong.
Angelic squadrons rejoice to welcome companions;
glory remains for those on the right, punishment for the left –
seeing this, they give everlasting praise to the King for both,
gladly because He is justly kind to these and severe on those.
Also, Satan is said to be the eternal slave of God;
indeed, flexibility is made a matter for praise to those set free.
Such things must be treated with a flexible heart,

so that such meditation may create an open mind,

and so that they all think that judgement is so close

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

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

To the offspring of the Virgin and His holy mother

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

That Virgin is humble and visits the chaste and humble

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

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

so that by his lead he may obtain a triumph;

likewise a pure life may look to holy Mary for help,

because she is the special leader of the meek and chaste

and favours them as her own because of their virtue.

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

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

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

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

If people were perchance to read these words and blame me
or my work as the product of levity of mind or lack of purpose,
they will know from this that I want to master this rebel,
to stop the custom of people gaping at the fall of the good,
and may they reveal the excess so that I may eliminate it,
and let them know that I want to atone for the sin rather than
to defend it! In human affairs nothing is said to be perfect;
priests are ordered to wash the holy Eucharist;
there is therefore a need for good people to fear even good deeds;
saintly Job fears all the good deeds he did; if steadfast saints
do that, what of us as we rush through many deeds?
Therefore let us ask for the help of the Holy Judge,
and may it be possible for Christ to return for the common good,
He who approves or disapproves of each person's behaviour,
being kind to the ignorant who are driven by presumption,
as we believe that He puts help before sin!
Christ will be the end, revealed in His own plan,

appearing in His glory to the holy in His own age.
Therefore I am writing a modest little book, trying to complete it,
my heart always intent on sensitive matters, to prevent
the slavish flesh by chance debauching the noble mind.
Indeed, both flesh and mind take on the form of a slave;
reprobates will be removed so that they do not see the Lord's face.
This pyre will ravage them and He will cleanse them by
re-ploughing the fields, and also washing them with the divine rain
of Heaven and all this world will be like the Paradise of the Lord.
Their present slavish form will change to a divine one.
God, pitying them, will give them permission to remain.
How very happy they will be because they will then see clearly
that God reveals Himself, and they will know that God is life.
This vision will wipe dry all the tears of the holy!
For the memory of grief will no longer be recalled to mind,
because the vision, once seen, will drive away all troubles;
their faces will fill with the smile of the just, as He had promised.

Then may the mysteries of our faith be clear to see.
The Son, as He promises, is open and clear about the Father,
just as the Father bore Him as an equal,
because a similar Spirit also proceeds from them
and God is a single entity, full of all things.
He does not have a number because they share but one.
There is honour and glory, deity, essence, virtue;
each one can be the total of what they all are;
we worship three persons and honour three gods.
The Son therefore reveals the Father to His followers,
who now discern with eyes and ears three supreme beings and,
as far as is possible for His creatures, they are clearly known.
No-one, however, knows the Lord as He knows Himself.
When He reveals Himself, He fulfils promises a hundredfold.
That sacred choir, satiated by the sight of God, recounts
what He has done, what He is, and triumphs with wonder;
it is vigorous in its praises and never fails to praise.

That celestial city which is called a “vision of peace”
gathers in only those chosen after selective purges.
No-one alive can know all its glory or what great joy
fills their sacred processional hymns without end.
A heavenly home is created for them, in different ways;
though they will receive one coin alike, in the same way:
as a grand person has grand things and a small person small,
great love exists for those who unite the small and the grand, so
what grand people have, small people may believe they have too.
Paul, who has access to the three Heavens above, does not know
what great glory adorns a small person also up above,
but the message can go out through him to all the world:
the eye does not see nor the heart or ear hear what the Creator
prepares for those whom He judges to have loved Him.
May the mind therefore long for such things with all its might!
This city however is deemed to be like glass or gold,
because one person sees everything in the heart of another;

and one who is without baseness or stain will enter into it;

corruption never has corruptibility.

Like people on trial, we are afraid of being rejected by Him;

yet there is hope because the King governs small things also.

It pleases Him to see the imperfection of the Church as well.

He has decreed that the small may be blessed with the grand

and the slave, free from the master, may also rejoice in Him.

The Scripture states this and urges us to hope for this;

so we may seek to be placed finally in this city.

The King, flesh joined with God, can achieve this at once,

His sense of duty working to help the poor arise from the mire.

May He give the poor the right to deserve places on high!

The city has nothing foul, nothing that is not precious,

without darkness but shining with fresh light.

It has no need of the rays of the moon or the light of the sun,

for the Lamb is one day of this and its eternal lamp.

Here the meek could overcome the fierce lion; sheep also

could do the same, strong with the courage of the Lamb,

and then throw their crowns at His feet.

The unwarlike, if armed, can defeat the strong,

by giving to the Father and to the Lamb every sort of paean.

Let the city be full of hosts singing orgies of praise,

and its citizens, seeing Christ, exult without end.

Living in the city, they are blessed for century upon century;

the Lamb is eternal salvation and every good thing for them.

So this city has peace and He is called the Lord in that place.

Appendix One: Biblical References

Book I

Lines 294-99 Cf. Job 40, 22

Book II

Cf. Genesis, chapters 2 and 3, the basis for this book

Book III

Line 472 Cf. Judges 2 and 3

Line 1118 Cf. Genesis 32, 7-10 and Genesis 10, 8-9

Line 1122 Cf. II Samuel 19, 31-39

Line 1124 Cf. II Samuel 23, 25

Book IV

Line 101 Cf. Genesis 4, 25-26

Line 102 Cf. Genesis 5, 24

Lines 116-7 Cf. Genesis 9, 21-23

Line 158 Cf. II Samuel 13, 1-22

Line 159 Cf. Genesis 20

Line 162 Cf. Genesis 41, 45

Line 177 Cf. Genesis 22

Lines 217-225 Cf. Genesis 37, 11

Lines 227-234 Cf. Genesis 39

Line 260 Cf. Job 31, 13 and 29, 17 and 31, 1 and 31, 7-12 and 40, 11

Line 359 Cf. II Samuel 11, 14

Line 360 Cf. Revelation 5

Lines 379+ Cf. II Samuel 2

Line 385 Cf. I Samuel 17

Line 403 Cf. II Samuel 11, 1-5

Lines 413-4 Cf. I Kings 18-45

Lines 420-425 Cf. I Kings 17, 3-7

Lines 532-3 Cf. Exodus 4, 10-16

Lines 535-6 Cf. Jeremiah 1, 6

Lines 562-3 Cf. Isaiah 64, 6

Lines 668-9 Cf. Isaiah 65, 8

Line 746 Cf. Isaiah 55, 7; Isaiah 63, 15; Isaiah 64, 6

Line 754 Cf. Isaiah 65, 15

Line 782 Cf. Isaiah 64, 6

Book V

Preface line 21 Cf. Exodus 4, 10

Preface line 22 Cf. Jeremiah 1, 6

Lines 40-41 Cf. Luke 15, 3-10

Line 59 Cf. Job 38, 21

Line 68 Cf. Job 28, 15

Line 350 Cf. Isaiah 65, 25

Line 351 Cf. Job 39,10

Lines 391, 394 Cf. Jeremiah 13, 23

Line 505 Cf. Luke 2, 34

Line 659 Cf. Judges 11, 37-40

Lines 677-679 Cf. Job, 41

Line 801 Cf. John 13, 34-35

Book VI

Lines 82-85 Moses' miracles:

Red Sea cf. Exodus 14, 22+

Serpent from his rod cf. Exodus 4, 3+

Water from rock cf. Exodus 17, 5-7

Manna cf. Exodus 16, 4+

Column of cloud and fire cf. Exodus 13, 21+

Line 143 Cf. Luke 23, 31

Lines 157-160 Cf. Revelation 4, 8

Line 170 Cf. I Corinthians 10, 4

Lines 169-173 Poles and sticks:

Brass serpent on a pole cf. Numbers 21, 8-9

Widow with two sticks cf. 1 Kings 17, 8-13

Grapes on pole cf. Numbers 13, 23-27 and Deut. 1, 22-25

Line 191 Cf. John 11, 37-44

Line 196 Cf. Isaiah 5, 1-7

Line 200 Cf. Jonah 1 and 2

Line 221 Cf. Luke 20, 9-16

Line 245 Cf. Psalms 25, 12

Line 298 Cf. Genesis 22

Line 391 Cf. Cf. Matthew 9, 9; Luke 5, 27; Mark 2, 14

Line 428 Cf. John 17, 1

Lines 436-9 Cf. Acts 1, 8

Line 500 Cf. Acts 1, 10-13

Line 510 Cf. Acts 1, 23-26

Line 530 Cf. Acts 2, 14

Lines 558-561 Cf. Acts 2, 5-12

Line 587 Cf. Acts 4, 36-37

Line 590 Cf. Acts 5, 1-5

Line 598 Cf. Matthew 17, 5 and 18, 22

Line 600 Cf. Acts 8, 9-22

Line 644 Cf. Acts 5, 15 and 19, 11-12

Line 671 Cf. Ezekiel 1, 15-16 and 10, 10

Line 677 Cf. Matthew 23, 37

Line 745 Cf. Isaiah 60, 16

Line 868 Cf. Matthew 14, 6-8

Book VII

Preface 9-10 Cf. Exodus 14, 17-28

Preface 17 Cf. Joshua 9, 10 and Deut. 3, 3

Preface 23 Cf. Exodus 32, 4

Lines 24-27 Cf. Matthew 13, 24-30

Line 39 Cf. Ruth 4, 12 and 18

Line 50 Cf. Joshua 9, 10

Lines 58-62 Cf. Genesis 19, 30-38

Line 71 Cf. Daniel 3

Line 96 Cf. Revelation 13, 16-17

Line 121 Cf. Revelation 12, 1-4

Lines 138-9 Cf. Job 40, 23

Line 158 Cf. Jeremiah 52, 12-30

Line 163 Cf. Romans 1, 26-27

Lines 166-7 Cf. Isaiah 10, 20

Line 168 Cf. II Timothy 3

Lines 178-9 Cf. Isaiah 26, 10

Line 228 Cf. Acts 28, 3-6

Lines 324-5 Cf. Genesis 39

Line 334-5 Cf. Numbers 6, 5

Line 353 Cf. Numbers 21, 6-9

Lines 385-9 Cf. Matthew 25, 1-13

Lines 442-450 Cf. Genesis 39

Lines 480-87 Cf. Luke 10, 30-35

Lines 504-7 Cf. Luke 11, 5-13

Lines 567-8 Cf. Matthew 25, 1-13

Line 618 Cf. Matthew 25, 12

Line 720 Cf. Matthew 20, 9

Lines 746-7 Cf. Revelation 21, 23

Appendix Two: Text Emendations

I would like to suggest the following changes to Swoboda's edition:

Book I

Line 161 caetus: captus

Line 170 aethimon: an attempt at antichthon

Line 178 Dixerat: Dixerant

Line 192 doma: dona

Book II

Line 29 nostrumque: nostrum quem

Line 56 ipsam: ipsum

Line 75 loetargum: an attempt at lotophagorum

Line 395 lieum: Lyaeum

Line 430 nostras: nostrum

Book III

Line 863 Lacio: Latino

Line 1029 drictus: directus

Line 1122 Berzilla: Barzillai

Line 1124 Sharma: Shammah

Book IV

Line 482 esset: essent

Line 773 summe: summo

Book V

Line 40 hoc: hac

Book VI

Line 194 cum: tum

Line 431 caelos: caeles

Line 558 iniantes: hiantes

Line 611 nusticus: nutritus

Line 742 aurire: audire

Book VII

Line 93 amare: amore

—

Dedicatory preface to fellow monk who had asked for something new.

Summary of Book 1

Lines 1-13	musings on creation – four elements, opposites
Lines 14-27	sizes all wonderful; things with different gifts
Lines 28-41	places; heaven, air and earth compared to the egg
Line 43	creation integrates diverse things
Line 44	the Creator shines; water drop shines
Line 48	first mention of the divine potter
Line 67	two beings created in his own image
Line 70	their delight: to worship him… or
Line 80	deviate to self-love
Line 82	**light created**, that is, **angels are created**
Line 92	Lucifer their chief …
Line 109	turns to self-love image of mankind as drilled beads, and the string of God's love.
Lines 110-140	fall of the rebel angels
Lines 141-177	the loyal angels mock Lucifer
Line 177-195	Lucifer blown to Hell, with his followers
Line 202-209	God beats out his vessels on an anvil
Lines 218-222	'That **Cerberus'**, the enemy, 'burns insatiably for their death. But the heavenly judge, giving him a sedative, Muzzles the rabid mouth of the gaping monster with a ring, His divinity hooking his nose and nostrils, [also Book VI, lines 200-4] And its madness does not harm them, however insatiably it burns.'
Line 229	a division has arisen in the heavenly ranks – so what happens on earth?
Line 235	there are two groups of men – submissive to God, and complainers.
Line 238	some chose the Creator and love him, others think they are superior and love themselves alone
Lines 247-253	invocation of the stars, 'fellow lights of your sun' – that is, again, the angels.
Line 258	"Flowing water can quickly become hard ice."
Lines 254-266	the power of the loyal angels
Line 267	Lucifer's trickery and activity on earth
Lines 284-293	'A willing volunteer stands in his way'
Line 317	Lucifer wants the faithful to rebel
Lines 321-327	sinners eaten by unidentified herbivore: 'This beast, as though nibbling grass in the dark, Licks our soft minds by urging pleasures. He whom his suggestions please, is now chewed up by his teeth. (it is not possible to live except through God, the root.) From there, one goes on a journey up into a cave-mouth Where the bones of virtue are crushed by depraved use Until death swallows one into its gullet, to stay there.'
Lines 328-338	God's mercy enables escape from the place of pulverisation if there is repentance.
Lines 339-352	the soldier is weak, of mud, but the general (God) has a powerful sense of duty, enabling the soldier to triumph over an unseen foe. The meek will receive heaven as a reward at the day of judgement.
Lines 353-364	they see the 'slave joined to the thunderer*' – the incarnate Lord – has triumphed.

* Thunderer: Christ. Also Bk.II, line 201. See H Mayr-Harting, I, 103, title used in Pericopes book of 1000-20.

Lines 365-6	loss of numbers in heaven made up.
Line 368?	

Ends at line 372.

References in passing to common Romanesque imagery (I). For example, Odo equates angels with light, so that the orders of stars alongside, or countering, beakheads could be an arrangement with spiritual force. The passages talking of evil spirits, or the devil, chewing up gullible sinners is pictured on thousands of corbels and voussoirs. The singular image of Cerberus (= guardian of Hell) involves the old hook allegory (pictured in the HD). The same passage also mentions muzzling, so common in Romanesque sculpture.

Correspondence with Malmesbury porch, section on outer archway.(I)
The book concentrates on angels and the fall of angels. The giving of sedative to Cerberus (= the enemy) or the muzzling may be shown in XXXII, and a Carolingian source has been identified. It would be rare evidence for Christ as Hercules. Added personnel in heaven may be shown in VII and XV; Odo mentions the making up of numbers briefly in lines 365-6.

Summary of Book 2

Preface

Everything from nothing! The king alone all powerful: we take a few things from creation and recount them.

Lines 1-2	the king all sufficient
Line 3	creates everything
Line 5	and man
Line 16	in the image of God
Line 80	He only forbids the fruit of one tree to man
Line 111	God only seeks love in return
Lines 57-61;	Eve mentioned
Lines 90-95	Eve created: 'thus **from his rib** was the virago produced'
Lines 110-120	Adam loves the gift more than the giver
Line 124	Satan envious
Lines 134-139	Eve mentioned again
Lines 124-139	**the Fall**
Lines 149-233	the wretchedness of man's condition
Line 201	God again called the Thunderer
Lines 387-427	Free-will is necessary for man's love to be valid, however disastrous.
Lines 428-443	Grace inspires everything good.
Lines 444-471	man falls for tricks and is unrepentant
Lines 484-515	man and the serpent fight an unjust war, a puny army against God
Lines 516	man is free to weep for his deed
Lines 520-532	we suffer this too, Adam subjects us to death, like himself.

Content of Malmesbury medallions

1 **God creates Adam from dust**
2 **God created Eve from Adam's rib**
3 **God tells them not to eat of the tree**
4 **They eat of it**
5, 6 They hide and God calls them

Correspondences with Malmesbury, medallions 1-5 in first order of figurative carvings.
Adam is modelled from mud; Eve is made from a rib, these are in the poem.
The fall and their debasement are illustrated.
Medallion 6, Christ calling to them where they hide, is not mentioned in the poem, but the unrepentance of Adam, and of course of Eve, is repeatedly mentioned.

Summary of Book 3

Preface: man languishes, stripped of honour; the disease (of original sin, not so named); God as the potter with a cracked pot.

Lines 1-2	God watches the wretch, but man runs away from what makes other creatures happy.
Lines 31, 45	God's 'force of duty'; 'divine sense of duty'. [pietatis; pietas]
Line 59	"In the father there is established the model for future offspring"
Lines 94-95	if one should mark what is done amiss, who shall stand? Paraphrased
Lines 117-21	**Eve's fate**
Lines 151-203	**Man's labourious life**…
Line 186	… in a small space between paradise and hell
Lines 204-249	remembers Paradise, its contrast with the present
Line 250	"just as a beautiful woman pleases, so an ugly one repulses"
Line 339	"A thing heard is proved to be understood less than a thing seen."
Line 349	"something of which one lacks experience is unknown."
Lines 365-70	Natural law; line 368 a certain natural law prevailed
Lines 405-437	**Cain (slays Abel)**
Lines 438	handsomeness of evil
Line 479-81	"... huge bodies with gigantic members/ take on in their scheme too much self-indulgence, as it were."
Line 495-577	God regrets, eventually, and sends the Flood
Lines 608-726	an old sin, a three-headed chimera, impiety, foul lust [homosexual acts]
Lines 727-734	Babel
Line 735,	again sodomy.
Lines 763-779	flesh and wine
Line 781-813	multiplicity of sin and doom
Line 780	"the branch droops when cut at the root"
Lines 968-9	all things retain a little of their God-given nature and His nature or order or design draws up the details
Line 1050	products of the soil and man's hand
Lines 1126-1137	the dull try to rouse themselves
Lines 1168-1177	'Adam' tries to recall half-remembered knowledge.
Line 1177	knowledge used well and ill.
Line 1190	describes what was once possible
Line 1197	the Creator spends freely
Lines 1198-1225	even brutish men have moments of light, but worship and faith still lacking.
Line 1237	"a few grains of the scorched chaff" kept protected –
Line 1239	"birds would have them, if they had not been covered"

Content of Malmesbury medallions 7 to 11:

7. Expulsion by Christ;
8. Angel gives spade to Adam and distaff to Eve;
9. **Adam and Eve labouring**;
10. **Eve nursing Cain**;
11. **Sacrifice of Cain and Abel**.

Occasionally, sayings or mottos seem to be quoted by Odo, and in book 3 are two which have their counterpart in sculpture. At line 250, Odo writes:

"just as a beautiful woman pleases, so an ugly one repulses".

Repulsion is sometimes suggested to be one of the reasons that sheelas are made so grotesque, it counteracts their sensual attraction, and shows their true nature. A similar passage which also might apply to exhibitionists is in Book 3, lines 479-81

"... huge bodies with gigantic members" indicate self-indulgence.

See also Book 6, line 505 for another saying.

Summary of Book 4

Preface: the human race multiplies but, a slave to Venus, becomes more and more polluted.
Lines 11-14:
A line of patriarchs was established
As the/a teacher of the Church says:
He put the "animal" (adj.) first,
The spiritual took over thereafter.

Lines 10-16,	precis of Book III.
Lines 11, 17, 18	a 'few', the honest men.
Lines 19-58	the course of honest men among chaff.
Lines 39, 40	Cain and Abel prototypes for these.
Lines 40-64	contrasting lives, nudged by a patient God
Lines 101, 102	mention Seth and Enoch briefly
Lines 105-124	**Noah**; father of the world, survived the Flood. Built an ark (model of the church; the ship's lookout symbolising the waters of baptism); the drunkeness of Noah (Ham derided as laughing at the cross)
Lines 125-145	the countless men … directed to the study of virtue.
Line 146-	**David**
Line 147-	Solomon
Line 171-203	**Abraham and Isaac**
Line 217-245	Joseph
Line 246-	Job, not bound by Jewish law, line 247
Line 281	these men, and others sent by God
Line 299	the law of nature, ie. Pre-Mosaic law
Lines 314-326	**Good men like stars** shining in a dark night
Lines 330-7	God; and **Moses** the law-giver
Lines 373-4	chieftains (ducibus) [=**judges**]; kings and prophets lead the chosen race.
Line 375	Samuel elected as leader
Line 379-412	**David**, a model for kings especially
Line 413-426	Elijah... consumes lamp-oil??
Line 427	many fathers omitted;
Lines 433-446	**prophets like stars**
Line 457	or like guiding lights to mariners
Line 458	**the sun the light**
Lines 470-507	the law watered down, line 505 refers to Sinai
Lines 532-3	**Moses'** felt inadequate on being sent to Pharaoh
Lines 537-9	Jeremiah says he is 'a child'
Line 562	Impiety drives everyone
.. line 596	but God is patient, restrains his deserved anger
Lines 609-10	Man powerful now, what could he have been?!
Lines 630-3	ditto
Line 641	God 'dutiful' [pius]
Line 649	God 'dutiful and just', [pius] again.
Line 687	Death man's fault, 'the monster'
Line 767	'come down' etc, only God is good enough to free man. The Incarnation hinted at.
Line 794	God considers the prayers and the condition of the world.
Line 822	the plan for peace
Line 832	'sense of duty' = [quod havet pietas]

Content of Malmesbury medallions 12 to 25:

12-14 **Noah** (God warns Noah; Noah builds the Ark; Noah in the Ark)
15-17 **Abraham** (Abraham offers Isaac; Abraham finds the ram; **God shows the stars to Abraham**)
18-20 **Moses** (Moses and the burning bush; Moses strikes the rock; Moses receives the Law)
21-23 Samson (Samson and the lion; Samson and the gates of Gaza; Samson destroys the Temple)

24-25 **David** (David rescues the lamb; David kills Goliath)

Samson is not in the poem, which briefly mentions ‘ducibus = judges’ lines 373-4 but none by name.
David is said to be a model fit for kings to follow; he has only two medallions here, the four other characters all have three each. Perhaps because a pilgrims’ porch, and kings not expected, the number was reduced.
Stars in Book IV are good men, or prophets; they are not overtly connected in the text with **Abraham.** When in the OT, God shows the stars to Abraham, it is to console him that his seed will be many. This is interpreted in the spiritual sense in Odo’s poem, to mean that the number of good men will be multiplied.
In Book I, at creation, heavenly lights are angels.

Summary of Book 5

Preface: This composition [is] suddenly becoming awesome… the Lord came down to earth…

Lines 1-13	the time is fulfilled…
Lines 22-29	**God is born and made**; a virgin's womb, a virgin's breast [but little other 'scenery']
Lines 29-43	theWord
Lines 44-51	the Jews could have known
Line 52	God therefore became a man
Lines 62	Sun (Christ) sets
Lines 64-66	Death, Hell. Rescue (resume of Incarnational programme)
Lines 78-82	Light
Lines 132-142	**John (the Baptist**) herald for the sun; last of the prophets
Line 143-	Dawn. The Light
Lines 153-159	the reactions of the eye to light
Lines 178-195	**John the Baptist** again
Lines 196-234	Christ the Sun, a symbolic image; colour
Line 239	the insane clay
Lines 246, 253	the humble potter
Lines 263, 265, 514, 523, 766	Christ as doctor/medicine. And see line 564 and Book VI
Lines 282-292	white spot disease (cataract); blinds man as does Arrogance
Lines 293-	God is humble: Arrogance and Pride think they are better
Lines 323-347	what the one person in two forms achieves…
eg. Line 325-6	lying in a cradle, He quickly sends a star from the constellations, which attracts **suppliant Persians** to His holy cradle
Line 342	The Thunderer (Christ)
Lines 348-359	the larger results of this Incarnation for peace and unity
Lines 347, 249, 512, 574	the verb 'require' is used
Lines 360-374	**Annunciation to the shepherds**
Lines 394-470	**Herod**
Lines 471-497	the Innocents' reward
Lines 507-508	Nunc Dimittis* quoted, Simeon (**Temple**) not quite, *Luke 2.34
Line 555	who knows the… appearance of the soul?
Line 564	Antidote to Arrogance and Pride: humility
Lines 579-602	some things show him to be God, others to be a man. Feeding of 5000
Lines 603-631	Prophets and angels amazed at the Incarnation. [ref. Fishlake?]
Lines 632-	Christ was tempted: temptation becomes less of an enemy to us (line 638).
Lines 649-674	Virginity, said to have been first vowed by Mary (line 660); the Innocents again, line 674
Line 675-695	Christ's disciples, friends. Humble people, to show it is the work of God not their virtue.
Lines 696-753	Baptism, water, the minister, humility etc.
Lines 763-790	lowly **birth**; allows himself to be touched and to meet disreputable people (resume of life)
Lines 772-774	donkey – 'a rather poor animal is offered him' (the only ref. to the **Entry**)
Lines 791-799	Commandment: Love one another
Line 821	his followers should reject this life, seek out that life.

Ends, line 827

Content of Malmesbury medallions 26 to 31:

25 Annunciation
26 **Nativity**
27 **Annunciation to the shepherds**
28 **Adoration of the Magi –** KJG, p.53, mentions that only the Magi are shown: the poem does not speak of them arriving, but having the star to follow. Space was short in the arch for this section, and it need not be 'the result of a miscalculation or miunderstanding on the part of the sculptor.' Herod is the focus of interest in poem
29 **Presentation in the Temple** or, rather, KJG suggests **the Journey to the Temple**.
30 **Baptism**
31 Entry into Jerusalem

in the poem:
The Annunciation by the angel is not mentioned, though the prophets are.
The Nativity is not dwelt on, the shepherds are mentioned as humble, the first to hear. Herod and the Innocents have a long passage, not much is said about the Magi, except as the baby sends a star to bring them to him. The Temple is a fleeting reference to the words of Simeon. The baptism gets a long discussion. The Entry into Jerusalem is only mentioned in the words about the humble donkey.

Summary of Book 6

Preface The weary Muse has a harder task as her ship nears the end. To proclaim that God rules from the cross. That cross is like a key, to reveal things hidden for centuries.

Lines 1- 10 symbolic **last supper** for his disciples held by 'king Jesus'
Lines 11-26 washing their feet, Peter protests; Jesus is humble, even to accept the kiss of Judas.
Lines 27-32 the message (of the past) now abbreviated, simplified to bread and wine
Lines 33-131 long passage on the Eucharist:
Lines 33-46 the bloody sacrifices of the OT
Lines 47-52 one simple sacrifice
Lines 53-60 body and blood, yet still bread and wine to the senses; 'this neat equation' (line58)
Lines 61-82 the change of transubstantation
Lines 73-81 enabled by priests;
Lines 82-91 OT types of transformation (82-85) were obvious to the eye, now secret, visions of faith
Lines 92-99 the necessity for clean priests, multitudes graced with chastity
Lines 100-120 Hence the foot-washing; however, he allows the unjust and unclean to partake, like Judas, in the hopes they will recognise the truth.
Lines 121-131 the chastity of the priesthood, important in OT, moreso now. *Lines 128-131 difficult!*
Lines 132-144 Victim, king, hero, judge, altar, priest, **he suffers death**: but his divinitas cannot be changed
Lines 145-162 The imagery of the cross, its shape, colour; it marks foreheads, fortifies the heart (153) and routs enemies. The four living creatures, and birds, fly in the shape of a cross (157). Whoever seeks the skies, climbs up there on its wings (161).
Lines 163-4 it is necessary for every believer to bind his limbs to the cross, as if held on to it, crucified…
Lines 166-173 'prophets' deeds and words have the cross as their banner': typology of the cross in the OT.
Lines 174-199 the Jews turn their back on him,.. thorns encircle the grape (line 198) Christ endures this
Line 200-204 the Lord's hook catches the whale
Lines 205-223 the 'crazy nation' (218) rejected his gifts, which are given to pagans
Lines224-234 obedience of the son in giving his life: we should admire or love the redeemer!
Line 234-243 when he mounted the cross, the whole of nature shook; but wretched Judah remained hard
Lines 244-296 the Crucifixion; the darkness, the theives, the 'evil cohort' laugh hysterically;
Lines 297-326 **burial with guarded tomb**; entanglement of guards in deceit
Lines 327-338 harrowing of Hell, bodies may live again after being dust (335)
Lines 339-354 **the resurrection**: shows himself to the disciples, no particular event described
Lines 355-366 this is the day when the whole world suddenly regains its strength... the warm dew makes barren vines swell up; the leaves of trees revive with sap.. you think little of this perhaps, but the Creator…
Lines 367-381 shows himself to the disciples, in detail.
Lines 382-403 sends missionaries of the faith, including women (OT) and well-known sinners
Lines 404-439 the king commissioned these men, his command greater than any before, the Spirit aiding.
Line 425 'the one mountain that others carry on their peaks' Christ carried by the apostles???
Lines 440-450 **Ascension in presence of disciples and Mary**
Lines 451-459 the festivities in heaven
Lines 460-468 the God-Man idea, just flesh purifies sinful flesh.
Lines 469-489 continues same two themes.
Lines 490-503 the apostles watch as Jesus ascends
Lines 504-521 Peter makes the number up again to 12 (3, 4 number symbolism); his successor popes implied, line 518. Numbers also significant in lines 522, 531-534. Line 505 has perhaps a sarcastic reference to illiterates' counting abilities: 'it is a sin (or, a little wrong) to go further than ten'.
Lines 522-582 **Pentecost and the Spirit** animating the church
Lines 583-608 Common property, etc, the way for monks: some are apostate. Peter (595) recent triple denial
Line 600-1 'Paul welcomes him back after he had done what no pagan had done.'? *WHAT IS THIS??*
Lines 609-643 the flock filled with the Spirit, proceeding from Father and Son. Trinity (621-636).
Lines 644-665 the shadow of Peter (Acts 5:15) and the girdle/apron of Paul heal; they 'convert the world'
Lines 666- the two testaments, nurturing the flock like a hen with its pair of wings.
Line 671 a wheel in the middle of a wheel: Ezekiel 1.15; 10.10 May apply to vision a few lines earlier Lines 678-696 God sends preachers to the Jews, then (693-6) to foreign nations

Lines 697-704 the evil mob… switched to animal behaviour
Lines 706-720 the whole world happy to receive the word
Lines 718- believers shun idols, drama and intellectuals (their works, 727-735)
Lines 736-743 the teachings of holy men
Lines 744-749 '*kings also run up from the South*, bringing food'; lofty potentates, teachers; history, allegory.
Lines 750-766 since the 'first sane human' fell, man needs the skilful Doctor; many corrective rules.
Lines 767-778 ministers provide all things useful; the Church has three ranks but one body
Lines 779-789 previously, 'unholy hearts were abandoned': if now cleansed, follow carefully
Lines 790-800 this is the last hour (parable of the vineyard), soon universal judgement.
Lines 801-812 love and follow the king, not the world
Lines 813-822 death still ravages those reborn, but 'not to be able to die' - this is the gift of the kingdom
Lines 823-828 the martyr shows how he loves Christ
Lines 829-844 a heretical argument against baptism is derided*: God's order to be followed by the cautious;
Lines 845-869 the flesh is weak and condemned to death; if baptism removed death, everyone would want it 854-5). Adversity for the flesh is good for it, even Paul (866) and other friends of God. 'John dies amid revelry' may be John the Baptist (863). Line 846 'God himself admits that flesh is *worthless'*? nearly Manichean.**
Lines 870-883 crimes, stumbling-blocks, challenge the faith
Lines 884-903 the nations are happy in the end to have salvation, light after darkness; Paradise is now open
Lines 904-911 use the earthly gift, so many give up possessions, and give themselves up as martyrs as well.
Lines 912-921 ***unclear***
Lines 922-949 the patriarchs, captains, the Old and New testaments like bow (of horn) and bowstring; John opened, or interpreted, these books,
Lines 950-974 peace within the church, the shameful tongue becomes accustomed to holy discussion
Lines 959-960 relevant to Dijon, capital with 'helmeted' man. Cross sign made on forehead and breast [also mouth if priest]; also mentioned in line 153.
Lines 975-988 Christ gave the world his disciples, they and their successors created a path to Heaven; holy ones falter but are watched over in Heaven. God shortens the days.

End of Book 6

*__heresy__. Malcolm Lambert, *Medieval Heresy*, 3rd edn, p. 32, says 'in the renewed period of disorder which followed the death of Louis the Pious [840] and the breakdown of the Carolingian Empire, we meet no recorded case of heresy at all in the West for a period of one hundred years (Russell, Dissent, pp. 17-8)… by the late tenth century there was no-one among them [Western churchmen] with any personal experience of a living heresy.' [Odo died in 924] Is this an unknown local heresy, or is Odo referring to some earlier widespread heresy? Donatists has questioned the validity of the sacraments if the minister or recipient was unworthy: Augustine had answered them (*de Baptismo*, iv.16,18).

The heresy is perhaps connected with line 882, where **Arius** is mentioned: Arianism said JXt was not divine. Any heresy which denied that Christ was God would make the three-fold baptism formula obsolete

Donatists had queried the validity of sacraments with impure ministers.

At a trial in 1025 in Arras, the bishop's arguments used to refute the heretics' views on baptism were taken from Radbert and Hrabanus Maurus (Lambert p. 28). The heretics rejected the sacraments and marriage. They gave their reasons they had no need of baptism, as because ministrants were evil, sins renounced would be repeated later, and it was impossible for an adult to promise for an infant.

**The reforming zeal of Gorze and Cluny was itself a renunciation of the world; heretics of this [Manichean] kind were extending the monks' own enthusiasm. (Lambert p. 38). [Odo himself makes God say the flesh is worthless in Book VI, 846]

Items in the sculpture, medallions 33-38 and the two lunettes.

All the scenes pictured in the right side of the third arc are in the text, that is, **Last Supper, Crucifixion, Entombment, Resurrection, Ascension and Pentecost**. The long section at the end, lines 609-988, is on the mission of the Church, and expands on the two lunettes inside the porch.

Summary of Book 7

Preface: Old Testament provides types for the Church: the final justice still to come

Lines 1-68 Red saints, white saints, and Satan. The harvest will sort out everything, meanwhile, this life passes by with the meek and the wanton mixed together. The trials of the baptised. Pride and Lust ravage flesh and mind; Lot's daughters.

Lines 69-158 Temptation tests each one of us. The fiery furnace, the fourth companion, a helper.
The tau cross marks the just, a type of baptism. The pious flock laments the lapsed, Paul and Peter also grieve. Hypocrites perform pious deeds but inwardly are perverted. In cloisters men worse than Herod make their fellows want to die of grief.

Lines 159-198 Paul says there will be countless such, only remnants will be chosen. The world is like one Gomorra. A great crime for this to happen in those cleansed by chrism.

Lines 199-218 The Eucharist should be celebrated as an act of atonement.

Lines 219-239 A keen general inspires his men, so the devil attacks him more: the leader needs special fortitude.

Lines 240- 296 Temptation of finery on women; clergy also like finery, power-dressing. Thus the two kings, Pride and Lust overpower our army. Like the Jews, desiring earthly things, they loose heavenly things. Leave those who do not want to change their black skin.

Lines 297-333 Odo's pen now preaches to those who are afraid of slipping, or who try to rise up after a fall. In temptation, run away like Joseph or stand like David (who sinned). One should flee, no-one should be eager to fight, because even the blessed can fall. Our strength is in the strength God gives, one should meekly acknowledge this. Ask for help from above. The 'Our Father'.

Lines 334- 382 Nazarite vows, but the hair grows again; how to control lust, then? It is like a horse that must be broken by chastisement and exhaustion. Who is master, Lust or God? Constantly look at God, not diverting the eyes. A very little defilement spoils the whole.

Lines 383-391 Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins. Hold glowing lamps.

Lines 392-406 The ageing world, tepid, ever blinder. The virgin's son came to make the world new in the end.

Lines 407-459 How does the armed Christian drive off nocturnal fears? Master the flesh as a horse is reined or spurred, with moderate force (flagellation as practised by monks?). The holy rightly doubt their strength. Control the appetite, flee, as Joseph fled Potiphar's wife. Remember the cost to Christ.

Lines 460-514 Making peace with the lapsed, support these, as fellow members of Christ's body. Let the lapsed consider what they must receive in return for spurning the lord. Generosity to those who return. Why do some leave Jerusalem to go down to Jericho? Parable of the Good Samaritan; incident of the Woman taken in Adultery. Parable of the Prodigal Son. God rejoices at the lapsed returning, delights them with the title of children. The Parable of the importunate neighbour, God is the bread that is given to them.

Lines 515-541 Pride makes the stupid arrogant, but they may come to their senses, so that the Samaritan is able to perform his rescue. God waits. Consider this life is short, though! The creator is sweet, sin putrefies. If shipwrecked, grasp the plank offered.

Lines 542-580 A few words about celebrating in honour of the pure. Adopted by the Father. They lead an angelic life in the body (monks, *vita angelica*), but even so dangers are round about them, the greater one's virtue, the more the enemy is envious. The foolish virgin has no oil. Small things can spoil them. The Virgin's son urges us to learn

humility from him. Let them foresee the last day which faces the world and how fleeting all this is that seems so lovely here.

Lines 581-662 (the text switches mid-sentence into) the arrival of the judge, emphasising unexpectedly. The remainder of the poem details the astonishment of the meek, and the anguish of reprobates. The foolish virgins are told 'I do not know you.' Line 649 etc, consider this judgement to come, pray to the Virgin and her son, promise to keep the talent received.

Lines 663-760 Odo's apologies for long text and levity or lack of purpose. The vision of heaven, the trinity, the sacred choir, the city, *orgia laudis*... indescribable.

Possible references in Book 7 to the sculpture at Malmesbury abbey

Tympanum and inside porch

Peter and Paul are mentioned several times in the poem, and flank the doorway. According to me, the tympanum shows Christ *on his way* to earth for Judgment Day, imminent. Odo says 'a judge will arrive unexpectedly, gleaming in flesh and that his great majesty and lofty power will appear', Lines 582-3. Morghen translates as:

'Soon will this whole world's aspect fade away,
Our Judge shine forth resplendent in the flesh;
His towering majesty and might revealed...'

Inner Jambs

Line 28, Odo says 'this life passes by with the meek and the wanton mixed together' (and, as in Augustine, that they will not be separated until Judgement day; 'chaff' used in Books III and IV). The mixture of 'good' and 'bad' characters in the surviving medallions on the lower jambs is very noticeable.

Lust and pride, the two kings often mentioned as troubling the faithful on the way to the promised heaven, are both symbolised: Lust as the 'femme aux serpents' no. VI, and Pride as the peacock no. XIII. Perhaps the dancer, no. XIV, would be included. Whether the seated figures nos.XXII and XII represented evil kings is uncertain.

Lines 558-559 speak of monastics elevated to heaven, having persisted in all their vows. Christ has made them kings, this title is given by the Virgin's son to a musical son or splendid daughter, and they can sing or be able to hear new songs:'*Filius hoc quod habet melicus uel filia splendens, Quo noua uel cantent audire aut cantica possent*.' It is tempting to think that the musician no. V may be this son, but, according to me, as the figures in this area are still on earth, perhaps he is the musician for the dancer.

Monks live the *vita angelica* on earth, lines 548, 549. (Hallinger p. 40-1). Perhaps in heaven monks will replace fallen angels exactly, this could to be the meaning of lines 643-4, that 'the angels rejoice to obtain companions', though probably it refers to anyone on God's right hand, for all the blessed share heaven with the angels. In either case the figures without wings in the upper part of the jambs, no. VII, could represent the blessed (as Odo meant, monks) alongside angels.

Angelicae sociis turmae letantur adeptis
Gloria quae dextris maneat, quae pena sinistris...

Odo three times refers to the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins. Lines 383-391; 570-1; 621. In the first passage, the chaste are to hold shining lamps, to be adorned with purity. The shorter references are to the Foolish Virgins, their lack of oil and their banishment by the Lord when he arrives in Judgement. Medallions nos. XXX and XXVIII, from their familiarity to other carvings, are likely to be Foolish and Wise virgins respectively.

Metaphors used by Odo that occur in English Romanesque sculpture other than at Malmesbury.

1. The long passage on not trusting in one's own strength, the advice to run away from temptation, to beg God for strength, Lines 303-333. This is relevant to the boar-hunt carvings of the literal breaking of the eager dog by the boar, but the careful chasing, at a distance, by the obedient dogs.

2. The horse features in two passages: Lines 286-8, where the depraved are like a horse or mule, lacking sense, and Lines 407-428, where a monk who cannot sleep at night for lustful dreams is told to tame his flesh, perhaps the monastic practice of flagellation is understood here. 'Control your horse with the rein', this reminds me of sculpture on a corbel at Kirkburn and on a door post at Barton-le-Street. A horse's head is sometimes used (two are gagged on a corbel at Edlington) but notably on a whole voussure somewhere in France, the horses bite the roll-moulding of the arch (illus. in Seidel).

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