

**0160-0220 – Tertullianus – De Iudicio Domini [Incertus]**

**A Strain of the Judgment of the Lord**

**(Author Uncertain.)**

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Not e'en thus softened, he unto the fields  
Conducts his brother; whom when overta'en  
In lonely mead he saw, with his twin palms  
Bruising his pious throat, he crushed life out.  
195 Which deed the Lord espying from high heaven,  
Straitly demands "where Abel is on earth?"  
He says "he will not as his brother's guard  
Be set." Then God outspeaks to him again:  
"Doth not the sound of his blood's voice, sent up  
200 To Me, ascend unto heaven's lofty pole?  
Learn, therefore, for so great a crime what doom  
Shall wait thee. Earth, which with thy kinsman's blood  
Hath reeked but now, shall to thy hateful hand  
Refuse to render back the cursed seeds  
205 Entrusted her; nor shall, if set with herbs,  
Produce her fruit: that, torpid, thou shalt dash  
Thy limbs against each other with much fear.".....

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#### 4. A Strain of the Judgment of the Lord.

(Author Uncertain.)<sup>1281</sup>

Who will for me in fitting strain adapt  
Field-haunting muses? and with flowers will grace  
The spring-tide's rosy gales? And who will give  
The summer harvest's heavy stalks mature?  
5 And to the autumn's vines their swollen grapes?  
Or who in winter's honour will commend  
The olives, ever-peaceful? and will ope  
Waters renewed, even at their fountainheads?  
And cut from waving grass the leafy flowers?  
10 Forthwith the breezes of celestial light

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<sup>1281</sup> The reader is requested to bear in mind, in reading this piece, tedious in its elaborate struggles after effect, that the constant repetitions of words and expressions with which his patience will be tried, are due to the original. It was irksome to reproduce them; but fidelity is a translator's first law.

I will attune. Now be it granted me  
To meet the lightsome<sup>1282</sup> muses! to disclose  
The secret rivers on the fluvial top  
Of Helicon,<sup>1283</sup> and gladsome woods that grow  
15 'Neath other star.<sup>1284</sup> And simultaneously  
I will attune in song the eternal flames;  
Whence the sea fluctuates with wave immense:  
What power<sup>1285</sup> moves the solid lands to quake;  
And whence the golden light first shot its rays  
20 On the new world; or who from gladsome clay  
Could man have moulded; whence in empty world<sup>1286</sup>  
Our race could have upgrown; and what the greed  
Of living which each people so inspires;  
What things for ill created are; or what  
25 Death's propagation; whence have rosy wreaths  
Sweet smell and ruddy hue; what makes the vine  
Ferment in gladsome grapes away; and makes  
Full granaries by fruit of slender stalks  
distended be; or makes the tree grow ripe  
30 'Mid ice, with olives black; who gives to seeds  
Their increments of vigour various;  
And with her young's soft shadowings protects  
The mother. Good it is all things to know  
Which wondrous are in nature, that it may  
35 Be granted us to recognise through all  
The true Lord, who light, seas, sky, earth prepared,  
And decked with varied star the new-made world;<sup>1287</sup>  
And first bade beasts and birds to issue forth;  
And gave the ocean's waters to be stocked  
40 With fish; and gathered in a mass the sands,  
With living creatures fertilized. Such strains



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<sup>1282</sup> Luciferas.

<sup>1283</sup> Helicon is not named in the original, but it seems to be meant.

<sup>1284</sup> i.e., in another clime or continent. The writer is (or feigns to be) an African. Helicon, of course, is in Europe.

<sup>1285</sup> Virtus.

<sup>1286</sup> Sæculo.

<sup>1287</sup> Mundum.

With stately<sup>1288</sup> muses will I spin, and waves  
Healthful will from their fountainheads disclose:  
And may this strain of mine the gladsome shower  
45 Catch, which from placid clouds doth come, and flows  
Deeply and all unsought into men's souls,  
And guide it into our new-fumed lands  
In copious rills.<sup>1289</sup>

Now come: if any one  
Still ignorant of God, and knowing naught  
50 Of life to come,<sup>1290</sup> would fain attain to touch  
The care-effacing living nymph, and through  
The swift waves' virtue his lost life repair,  
And 'scape the penalties of flame eterne,<sup>1291</sup>  
And rather win the guerdons of the life  
55 To come, let such remember GOD is ONE,  
Alone the object of our prayers; who 'neath  
His threshold hath the whole world poised; Himself  
Eternally abiding, and to be  
Always for aye; holding the ages<sup>1292</sup> all;  
60 Alone, before all ages;<sup>1293</sup> unbegotten,  
Limitless God; who holds alone His seat  
Supernal; supereminent alone  
Above high heavens; omnipotent alone;  
Whom all things do obey; who for Himself  
65 Formed, when it pleased Him, man for aye; and gave  
Him to be pastor of beasts tame, and lord  
Of wild; who by a word<sup>1294</sup> could stretch forth heaven;

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<sup>1288</sup> Compositis.

<sup>1289</sup> I have endeavoured to give some intelligible sense to these lines; but the absence of syntax in the original, as it now stands, makes it necessary to guess at the meaning as best one may.

<sup>1290</sup> Venturi ævi.

<sup>1291</sup> "But in them nature's copy's not *eterne*."—Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, act iii. scene 2.

<sup>1292</sup> Sæcula.

<sup>1293</sup> Sæcula.

<sup>1294</sup> *Sermone tenus*: i.e., the exertion (so to speak) needed to do such mighty works only extended to the uttering of a speech; no more was requisite. See for a similar allusion to the contrast between the making of other things and the making of man, the "Genesis," 30–39.

And with a word could solid earth suspend;  
And quicklier than word<sup>1295</sup> had the seas wave  
70 Disjoined;<sup>1296</sup> and man's dear form with His own hands  
Did love to mould; and furthermore did will  
His own fair likeness<sup>1297</sup> to exist in him;  
And by His Spirit on his countenance  
The breath<sup>1298</sup> of life did breathe.

Unmindful he

75 Of God, such guilt rashly t' incur! Beyond  
The warning's range he was not ought to touch.<sup>1299</sup>  
One fruit illicit, whence he was to know  
Forthwith how to discriminate alike  
Evil and equity, God him forbade  
80 To touch. What functions of the world<sup>1300</sup> did God  
Permit to man, and sealed the sweet sweet pledge  
Of His own love! and jurisdiction gave  
O'er birds, and granted him both deep and soil  
To tame, and mandates useful did impart  
85 Of dear salvation! 'Neath his sway He gave  
The lands, the souls of flying things, the race  
Feathered, and every race, or tame or wild,  
Of beasts, and the sea's race, and monsterforms  
Shapeless of swimming things. But since so soon  
90 The primal man by primal crime transgressed  
The law, and left the mandates of the Lord  
(Led by a wife who counselled all the ills),  
By death he 'gan to perish. Woman 'twas  
Who sin's first ill committed, and (the law  
95 Transgressed) deceived her husband. Eve, induced

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<sup>1295</sup> Dicto.

<sup>1296</sup> i.e., from the solid mass of earth. See Gen. i. 9, 10.

<sup>1297</sup> Faciem.

<sup>1298</sup> "Auram," or "breeze."

<sup>1299</sup> "Immemor ille Dei temere committere tale!

Non ultra monitum quidquam contingeret."

Whether I have hit the sense here I know not. In this and in other passages I have punctuated for myself.

<sup>1300</sup> Munera mundi.

By guile, the thresholds oped to death, and proved  
To her own self, with her whole race as well,  
A procreatrix of funereal woes.  
Hence unanticipated wickedness,  
100 Hence death, like seed, for aye, is scattered. Then  
More frequent grew atrocious deed; and toil  
More savage set the corrupt orb astir:  
(This lure the crafty serpent spread, inspired  
By envy's self:) then peoples more invent  
105 Practices of ill deeds; and by ill deeds  
Gave birth to seeds of wickedness.

And so

The only Lord, whose is the power supreme.  
Who o'er the heights the summits holds of heaven  
Supreme, and in exalted regions dwells  
110 In lofty light for ages, mindful too  
Of present time, and of futurity  
Prescient beforehand, keeps the progeny  
Of ill-desert, and all the souls which move  
By reason's force much-erring man—nor less  
115 Their tardy bodies governs He—against  
The age decreed, so soon as, stretched in death,  
Men lay aside their ponderous limbs, and light  
As air, shall go, their earthly bonds undone,  
And take in diverse parts their proper spheres  
120 (But some He bids be forthwith by glad gales  
Recalled to life, and be in secret kept  
To wait the decreed law's awards, until  
Their bodies with resuscitated limbs  
Revive.<sup>1301</sup>) Then shall men 'gin to weigh the awards  
125 Of their first life, and on their crime and faults  
To think, and keep them for their penalties  
Which will be far from death; and mindful grow



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<sup>1301</sup> These lines, again, are but a guess at the meaning of the original, which is as obscure as defiance of grammar can well make it. The sense seems to be, in brief, that while the vast majority are, immediately on their death, shut up in Hades to await the "decreed age," i.e., the day of judgment, some, like the children raised by Elijah and Elisha, the man who revived on touching Elisha's bones, and the like, are raised *to die again*. Lower down it will be seen that the writer believes that the saints who came out of their graves after our Lord's resurrection (see Matt. xxvii. 51–54) did *not* die again.

Of pious duties, by God's judgments taught;  
To wait expectant for their penalty  
130 And their descendants', fruit of their own crime;  
Or else to live wholly the life of sheep,<sup>1302</sup>  
Without a name; and in God's ear, now deaf,  
Pour unavailing weeping. Shall not God  
Almighty, 'neath whose law are all things ruled,  
135 Be able after death life to restore?  
Or is there ought which the creation's Lord  
Unable seems to do? If, darkness chased,  
He could outstretch the light, and could compound  
All the world's mass by a word suddenly,  
140 And raise by potent voice all things from *nought*,  
Why out of *somewhat*<sup>1303</sup> could He not compound  
The well-known shape which erst had been, which He  
Had moulded formerly; and bid the form  
Arise assimilated to Himself  
145 Again? Since God's are all things, earth the more  
Gives Him all back; for she will, when He bids,  
Unweave whate'er she woven had before.  
If one, perhaps, laid on sepulchral pyre,  
The flame consumed; or one in its blind waves  
150 The ocean have dismembered; if of one  
The entrails have, in hunger, satisfied  
The fishes; or on any's limbs wild beasts  
Have fastened cruel death; or any's blood,  
His body reft by birds, unhid have lain:  
155 Yet shall they not wrest from the mighty Lord  
His latest dues. Need is that men appear  
Quickened from death 'fore God, and at His bar  
Stand in their shapes resumed. Thus arid seeds  
Are drops into the vacant lands, and deep  
160 In the fixt furrows die and rot: and hence  
Is not their surface<sup>1304</sup> animated soon

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<sup>1302</sup> Cf. Ps. xlix. 14 (xlvi. 15 in LXX).

<sup>1303</sup> i.e., the dust into which our bodies turn.

<sup>1304</sup> i.e., the surface or ridge of the furrows.

With stalks repaired? and do they<sup>1305</sup> not grow strong  
And yellow with the living grains? and, rich  
With various usury,<sup>1306</sup> new harvests rise  
165 In mass? The stars all set, and, born again,  
Renew their sheen; and day dies with its light  
Lost in dense night; and now night wanes herself  
As light unveils creation presently;  
And now another and another day  
170 Rises from its own stars; and the sun sets,  
Bright as it is with splendour—bearing light;  
Light perishes when by the coming eve  
The world<sup>1307</sup> is shaded; and the phoenix lives  
By her own soot<sup>1308</sup> renewed, and presently  
175 Rises, again a bird, O wondrous sight!  
After her burnings! The bare tree in time  
Shoots with her leaves; and once more are her boughs  
Curved by the germen of the fruits.

While then

The world<sup>1309</sup> throughout is trembling at God's voice,  
180 And deeply moved are the high air's powers,<sup>1310</sup>  
Then comes a crash unwonted, then ensue  
Heaven's mightiest murmurs, on the approach of God,  
The whole world's<sup>1311</sup> Judge! His countless ministers  
Forthwith conjoin their rushing march, and God  
185 With majesty supernal fence around.  
Angelic bands will from the heaven descend  
To earth; all, God's host, whose is faculty  
Divine; in form and visage spirits all  
Of virtue: in them fiery vigour is;  
190 Rutilant are their bodies; heaven's might



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1305 i.e., the furrows.

1306 "Some thirty-fold, some sixty-fold, some an hundred-fold." See the parable of the sower.

1307 Mundo.

1308 Fuligine.

1309 Mundo.

1310 Virtutibus. Perhaps the allusion is to Eph. ii. 2, Matt. xxiv. 29, Luke xxi. 26.

1311 Mundi.

Divine about them flashes; the whole orb  
Hence murmurs; and earth, trembling to her depths  
(Or whatso'er her bulk is<sup>1312</sup>), echoes back  
The roar, parturient of men, whom she,  
195 Being bidden, will with grief upyield.<sup>1313</sup> All stand  
In wonderment. At last disturbed are  
The clouds, and the stars move and quake from height  
Of sudden power.<sup>1314</sup> When thus God comes, with voice  
Of potent sound, at once throughout all realms  
200 The sepulchres are burst, and every ground  
Outpours bones from wide chasms, and opening sand  
Outbelches living peoples; to the hair<sup>1315</sup>  
The members cleave; the bones invoven are  
With marrow; the entwined sinews rule  
205 The breathing bodies; and the veins 'gin throb  
With simultaneously infused blood:  
And, from their caves dismissed, to open day  
Souls are restored, and seek to find again  
Each its own organs, as at their own place  
210 They rise. O wondrous faith! Hence every age  
Shoots forth; forth shoots from ancient dust the host  
Of dead. Regaining light, there rise again  
Mothers, and sires, and high-souled youths, and boys,  
And maids unwedded; and deceased old men  
215 Stand by with living souls; and with the cries  
Of babes the groaning orb resounds.<sup>1316</sup> Then tribes

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<sup>1312</sup> Vel quanta est. If this be the right sense, the words are probably inserted, because the conflagration of "the earth and the works that are therein" predicted in 2 Pet. iii. 10, and referred to lower down in this piece, is supposed to have begun, and thus the "depths" of the earth are supposed to be already diminishing.

<sup>1313</sup> I have ventured to alter one letter of the Latin; and for "quos reddere jussa docebit," read "quos reddere jussa do/ebit." If the common reading be retained, the only possible meaning seems to be "whom she will teach to render (to God) His commands," i.e., to render obedience to them; or else, "to render (to God) what they are bidden to render," i.e., an account of themselves; and earth, as their mother, giving them birth out of her womb, is said to teach them to do this. But the emendation, which is at all events simple, seems to give a better sense: "being bidden to render the dead, whom she is keeping, up, earth will grieve at the throes it causes her, but will do it."

<sup>1314</sup> Subitæ virtutis ab alto.

<sup>1315</sup> Comis, here "the heads."

<sup>1316</sup> This passage is imitated from Virgil, *Æn.*, vi. 305 sqq.; *Georg.*, iv. 475 sqq.

Various from their lowest seats will come:  
Bands of the Easterns; those which earth's extreme  
Sees; those which dwell in the downsloping clime  
220 Of the mid-world, and hold the frosty star's  
Riphæan citadels. Every colonist  
Of every land stands frightened here: the boor;  
The son of Atreus<sup>1317</sup> with his diadem  
Of royalty put off; the rich man mixt  
225 Coequally in line with pauper peers.  
Deep tremor everywhere: then groans the orb  
With prayers; and peoples stretching forth their hands  
Grow stupid with the din!

The Lord Himself

Seated, is bright with light sublime; and fire  
230 Potent in all the Virtues<sup>1318</sup> flashing shines.  
And on His high-raised throne the Heavenly One  
Coruscates from His seat; with martyrs hemmed  
(A dazzling troop of men), and by His seers  
Elect accompanied (whose bodies bright  
235 Effulgent are with snowy stoles), He towers  
Above them. And now priests in lustrous robes  
Attend, who wear upon their marked<sup>1319</sup> front  
Wreaths golden-red; and all submissive kneel  
And reverently adore. The cry of all  
240 Is one: "O Holy, Holy Holy, God!"  
To these<sup>1320</sup> the Lord will mandate give, to range  
The people in twin lines; and orders them  
To set apart by number the depraved;  
While such as have His biddings followed  
245 With placid words He calls, and bids them, clad  
With vigour—death quite conquered—ever dwell  
Amid light's inextinguishable airs,  
Stroll through the ancients' ever blooming realm,

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1317 i.e., "the king." The "Atridæ" of Homer are referred to,—Agamemnon "king of men," and Menelaus.

1318 Or, "Powers."

1319 Insigni. The allusion seems to be to Ezek. ix. 4, 6, Rev. vii. 3 et seqq., xx. 3, 4, and to the inscribed mitre of the Jewish high priest, see Ex. xxviii. 36; xxxix. 30.

1320 I have corrected "*his*" for "*hic*." If the latter be retained, it would seem to mean "hereon."



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Through promised wealth, through ever sunny swards,  
250 And in bright body spend perpetual life.  
A place there is, beloved of the Lord,  
In Eastern coasts, where light is bright and clear,  
And healthier blows the breeze; day is eterne,  
Time changeless: 'tis a region set apart  
255 By God, most rich in plains, and passing blest,  
In the meridian<sup>1321</sup> of His cloudless seat.  
There gladsome the air, and is in light  
Ever to be; soft is the wind, and breathes  
Life-giving blasts; earth, fruitful with a soil  
260 Luxuriant, bears all things; in the meads  
Flowers shed their fragrance; and upon the plains  
The purple—not in envy—mingles all  
With golden-ruddy light. One gladsome flower,  
With its own lustre clad, another clothes;  
265 And here with many a seed the dewy fields  
Are dappled, and the snowy tilths are crisped  
With rosy flowers. No region happier  
Is known in other spots; none which in look  
Is fairer, or in honour more excels.  
270 Never in flowery gardens are there born  
Such lilies, nor do such upon our plains  
Outbloom; nor does the rose so blush, what time,  
New-born, 'tis opened by the breeze; nor is  
The purple with such hue by Tyrian dye  
275 Imbued. With coloured pebbles beauteous gleams  
The gem: here shines the prasinus;<sup>1322</sup> there glows  
The carbuncle; and giant-emerald  
Is green with grassy light. Here too are born  
The cinnamons, with odoriferous twigs;  
280 And with dense leaf gladsome amomum joins  
Its fragrance. Here, a native, lies the gold  
Of radiant sheen; and lofty groves reach heaven  
In blooming time, and germens fruitfullest  
Burden the living boughs. No glades like these

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<sup>1321</sup> Cardine, i.e., the *hinge* as it were upon which the sun turns in his course.

<sup>1322</sup> See the "Genesis," 73.

285 Hath Ind herself forth-stretcht; no tops so dense  
Rears on her mount the pine; nor with a shade  
So lofty-leaved is her cypress crisped;  
Nor better in its season blooms her bough  
In spring-tide. Here black firs on lofty peak  
290 Bloom; and the only woods that know no hail  
Are green eternally: no foliage falls;  
At no time fails the flower. There, too, there blooms  
A flower as red as Tarsine purple is:  
A rose, I ween, it is (red hue it has,  
295 An odour keen); such aspect on its leaves  
It wears, such odour breathes. A tree it<sup>1323</sup> stands,  
With a new flower, fairest in fruits; a crop  
Life-giving, dense, its happy strength does yield.  
Rich honies with green cane their fragrance join,  
300 And milk flows potable in runners full;  
And with whate'er that sacred earth is green,  
It all breathes life; and there Crete's healing gift<sup>1324</sup>  
Is sweetly redolent. There, with smooth tide,  
Flows in the placid plains a fount: four floods  
305 Thence water parted lands.<sup>1325</sup> The garden robed  
With flowers, I wot, keeps ever spring; no cold  
Of wintry star varies the breeze; and earth,  
After her birth-throes, with a kindlier blast  
Repairs. Night there is none; the stars maintain  
310 Their darkness; angers, envies, and dire greed  
Are absent; and out-shut is fear, and cares  
Driven from the threshold. Here the Evil One  
Is homeless; he is into worthy courts  
Out-gone, nor is't e'er granted him to touch  
315 The glades forbidden. But here ancient faith  
Rests in elect abode; and life here treads,  
Joying in an eternal covenant;  
And health<sup>1326</sup> without a care is gladsome here

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<sup>1323</sup> Or, "there." The question is, whether a different tree is meant, or the rose just spoken of.

<sup>1324</sup> This seems to be *marshmallows*.

<sup>1325</sup> Here again it is plain that the writer is drawing his description from what we read of the garden of Eden.

<sup>1326</sup> "Salus," health (probably) in its widest sense, both bodily and mental; or perhaps "safety," "salvation."

In placid tilths, ever to live and be  
320 Ever in light.

Here whosoe'er hath lived

Pious, and cultivant of equity  
And goodness; who hath feared the thundering God  
With mind sincere; with sacred duteousness  
Tended his parents; and his other life<sup>1327</sup>

325 Spent ever crimeless; or who hath consoled  
With faithful help a friend in indigence;  
Succoured the over-toiling needy one,

As orphans' patron, and the poor man's aid;  
Rescued the innocent, and succoured them  
330 When press with accusation; hath to guests  
His ample table's pledges given; hath done

All things divinely; pious offices  
Enjoined; done hurt to none; ne'er coveted  
Another's: such as these, exulting all

335 In divine praises, and themselves at once  
Exhorting, raise their voices to the stars;  
Thanksgivings to the Lord in joyous wise  
They psalming celebrate; and they shall go  
Their harmless way with comrade messengers.

340 When ended hath the Lord these happy gifts,  
And likewise sent away to realms eterne  
The just, then comes a pitiable crowd  
Wailing its crimes; with parching tears it pours  
All groans effusely, and attests<sup>1328</sup> in acts

345 With frequent ululations. At the sight  
Of flames, their merit's due, and stagnant pools  
Of fire, wrath's weapons, they 'gin tremble all.<sup>1329</sup>

Them an angelic host, upsnaatching them,  
Forbids to pray, forbids to pour their cries  
350 (Too late!) with clamour loud: pardon withheld,



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<sup>1327</sup> Reliquam vitam, i.e., apparently his life in all other relations; unless it mean his life *after his parents' death*, which seems less likely.

<sup>1328</sup> i.e., "appeals to." So Burke: "I *attest* the former, I *attest* the coming generations." This "attesting of its acts" seems to refer to Matt. xxv. 44. It appeals to them in hope of mitigating its doom.

<sup>1329</sup> This seems to be the sense. The Latin stands thus: "Flammas pro meritis, stagnantia tela tremiscunt."

Into the lowest bottom they are hurled!  
O miserable men! how oft to you  
Hath Majesty divine made itself known!  
The sounds of heaven ye have heard; have seen  
355 Its lightnings; have experienced its rains  
Assiduous; its ires of winds and hail!  
How often nights and days serene do make  
Your seasons—God’s gifts—fruitful with fair yields!  
Roses were vernal; the grain’s summer-tide  
360 Failed not; the autumn variously poured  
Its mellow fruits; the rugged winter brake  
The olives, icy though they were: ’twas God  
Who granted all, nor did His goodness fail.  
At God earth trembled; on His voice the deep  
365 Hung, and the rivers trembling fled and left  
Sands dry; and every creature everywhere  
Confesses God! Ye (miserable men!)  
Have heaven’s Lord and earth’s denied; and oft  
(Horrible!) have God’s heralds put to flight;<sup>1330</sup>  
370 And rather slain the just with slaughter fell;  
And, after crime, fraud ever hath in you  
Inhered. Ye then shall reap the natural fruit  
Of your iniquitous sowing. That God is  
Ye know; yet are ye wont to laugh at Him.  
375 Into deep darkness ye shall go of fire  
And brimstone; doomed to suffer glowing ires  
In torments just.<sup>1331</sup> God bids your bones descend  
To<sup>1332</sup> penalty eternal; go beneath  
The ardour of an endless raging hell;<sup>1333</sup>  
380 Be urged, a seething mass, through rotant pools  
Of flame; and into threatening flame He bids  
The elements convert; and all heaven’s fire  
Descend in clouds.

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1330 Or, “banished.”

1331 I adopt the correction (suggested in Migne) of *justis* for *justas*.

1332 This is an extraordinary use for the Latin dative; and even if the meaning be “*for* (i.e., to suffer) penalty eternal,” it is scarcely less so.

1333 Gehennæ.

Then greedy Tartarus  
With rapid fire enclosed is; and flame  
385 Is fluctuant within with tempest waves;  
And the whole earth her whirling embers blends!  
There is a flamy furrow; teeth acute  
Are turned to plough it, and for all the years<sup>1334</sup>  
The fiery torrent will be armed: with force  
390 Tartarean will the conflagrations gnash  
Their teeth upon the world.<sup>1335</sup> There are they scorched  
In seething tide with course precipitate;  
Hence flee; thence back are borne in sharp career;  
The savage flame's ire meets them fugitive!  
395 And now at length they own the penalty  
Their own, the natural issue of their crime.  
And now the reeling earth, by not a swain  
Possess, is by the sea's profundity  
Prest, at her farthest limit, where the sun  
400 (His ray out-measured) divides the orb,  
And where, when traversed is the world,<sup>1336</sup> the stars  
Are hidden. Ether thickens. O'er the light  
Spreads sable darkness; and the latest flames  
Stagnate in secret rills. A place there is  
405 Whose nature is with sealed penalties  
Fiery, and a dreadful marsh white-hot  
With heats infernal, where, in furnaces  
Horrific, penal deed roars loud, and seethes,  
And, rushing into torments, is up-caught  
410 By the flame's vortex wide; by savage wave  
And surge the turbid sand all mingled is  
With miry bottom. Hither will be sent,  
Groaning, the captive crowd of evil ones,  
And wickedness (the sinful body's train)  
415 To burn! Great is the beating there of breasts,  
By bellowing of grief accompanied;  
Wild is the hissing of the flames, and thence

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<sup>1334</sup> Or, "in all the years:" but see note 5 on this page.

<sup>1335</sup> Mundo.

<sup>1336</sup> Mundo.



The ululation of the sufferers!  
And flames, and limbs sonorous,<sup>1337</sup> will outrise  
420 Afar: more fierce will the fire burn; and up  
To th' upper air the groaning will be borne.  
Then human progeny its bygone deeds  
Of ill will weigh; and will begin to stretch  
Heavenward its palms; and then will wish to know  
425 The Lord, whom erst it would not know, what time  
To know Him had proved useful to them. There,  
His life's excesses, handiworks unjust,  
And crimes of savage mind, each will confess,  
And at the knowledge of the impious deeds  
430 Of his own life will shudder. And now first,  
Whoe'er erewhile cherished ill thoughts of God;  
Had worshipped stones unsteady, lyingly  
Pretending to divinity; hath e'er  
Made sacred to gore-stained images  
435 Altars; hath voiceless pictured figures feared;  
Hath slender shades of false divinity  
Revered; whome'er ill error onward hath  
Seduced; whoe'er was an adulterer,  
Or with the sword had slain his sons; whoe'er  
440 Had stalked in robbery; whoe'er by fraud  
His clients had deferred; whoe'er with mind  
Unfriendly had behaved himself, or stained  
His palms with blood of men, or poison mixt  
Wherein death lurked, or robed with wicked guise  
445 His breast, or at his neighbour's ill, or gain  
Iniquitous, was wont to joy; whoe'er  
Committed whatsoever wickedness  
Of evil deeds: him mighty heat shall rack,  
And bitter fire; and these all shall endure,  
450 In passing painful death, their punishment.  
Thus shall the vast crowd lie of mourning men!

This oft as holy prophets sang of old,  
And (by God's inspiration warned) oft told

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<sup>1337</sup> "Artusque sonori," i.e., probably the arms and hands with which (as has been suggested just before) the sufferers beat their unhappy breasts.

The future, none ('tis pity!) none (alas!)  
455 Did lend his ears. But God Almighty willed  
His guerdons to be known, and His law's threats  
'Mid multitudes of such like signs promulged.  
He 'stablished them<sup>1338</sup> by sending prophets more,  
These likewise uttering words divine; and some,  
460 Roused from their sleep, He bids go from their tombs  
Forth with Himself, when He, His own tomb burst,  
Had risen. Many 'wildered were, indeed,  
To see the tombs agape, and in clear light  
Corpses long dead appear; and, wondering  
465 At their discourses pious, dulcet words!  
Starward they stretch their palms at the mere sound,<sup>1339</sup>  
And offer God and so—victorious Christ  
Their gratulating homage. Certain 'tis  
That *these* no more re-sought their silent graves,  
470 Nor were retained within earth's bowels shut,<sup>1340</sup>  
But the remaining host reposes now  
In lowliest beds, until—time's circuit run—  
That great day do arrive.

Now all of you  
Own the true Lord, who alone makes this soul  
475 Of ours to see His light<sup>1341</sup> and can the same  
(To Tartarus sent) subject to penalties;  
And to whom all the power of life and death  
Is open. Learn that God *can* do whate'er  
He list; for 'tis enough for Him to *will*,  
480 And by mere speaking He achieves the deed;  
And Him nought plainly, by withstanding, checks.  
He is my God alone, to whom I trust  
With deepest senses. But, since death concludes  
Every career, let whoe'er *is* to-day  
485 Bethink him over all things in his mind.  
And thus, while life remains, while 'tis allowed

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<sup>1338</sup> i.e., the "guedons" and the "threats."

<sup>1339</sup> "Ipsa voce," unless it mean "voice and all," i.e., and their voice as well as their palms.

<sup>1340</sup> See note 1, p. 137.

<sup>1341</sup> Here again a correction suggested in Migne's ed., of "*suam lucem*" for "*sua luce*," is adopted.

To see the light and change your life, before  
The limit of allotted age o’ertake  
You unawares, and that last day, which<sup>1342</sup> is  
490 By death’s law fixt, your senseless eyes do glaze,  
Seek what remains worth seeking: watchful be  
For dear salvation; and run down with ease  
And certainty the good course. Wipe away  
By pious sacred rites your past misdeeds  
495 Which expiation need; and shun the storms,  
The too uncertain tempests, of the world.<sup>1343</sup>  
Then turn to right paths, and keep sanctities.  
Hence from your gladsome minds depraved crime  
Quite banish; and let long-inveterate fault  
500 Be washed forth from your breast; and do away  
Wicked ill-stains contracted; and appease  
Dread God by prayers eternal; and let all  
Most evil mortal things to living good  
Give way: and now at once a new life keep  
505 Without a crime; and let your minds begin  
To use themselves to good things and to true:  
And render ready voices to God’s praise.  
Thus shall your piety find better things  
All growing to a flame; thus shall ye, too,  
510 Receive the gifts of the celestial life;<sup>1344</sup>  
And, to long age, shall ever live with God,  
Seeing the starry kingdom’s golden joys.

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## 5. Five Books in Reply to Marcion.

(Author Uncertain.)

Book I.—Of the Divine Unity, and the Resurrection of the Flesh.

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<sup>1342</sup> “Qui” is read here, after Migne’s suggestion, for “quia;” and Oehler’s and Migne’s punctuation both are set aside.

<sup>1343</sup> Mundi.

<sup>1344</sup> Or, “assume the functions of the heavenly life.”