

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.".....

4. A Strain of the Judgment of the Lord.

(Author Uncertain.)¹²⁸¹

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

¹²⁸¹ 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 lightsome¹²⁸² muses! to disclose
The secret rivers on the fluvial top
Of Helicon,¹²⁸³ and gladsome woods that grow
15 'Neath other star.¹²⁸⁴ And simultaneously
I will attune in song the eternal flames;
Whence the sea fluctuates with wave immense:
What power¹²⁸⁵ 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 world¹²⁸⁶
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;¹²⁸⁷
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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¹²⁸² Luciferas.

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

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

¹²⁸⁵ Virtus.

¹²⁸⁶ Sæculo.

¹²⁸⁷ Mundum.

With stately¹²⁸⁸ 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.¹²⁸⁹

Now come: if any one
Still ignorant of God, and knowing naught
50 Of life to come,¹²⁹⁰ 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,¹²⁹¹
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 ages¹²⁹² all;
60 Alone, before all ages;¹²⁹³ 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 word¹²⁹⁴ could stretch forth heaven;

¹²⁸⁸ Compositis.

¹²⁸⁹ 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.

¹²⁹⁰ Venturi ævi.

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

¹²⁹² Sæcula.

¹²⁹³ Sæcula.

¹²⁹⁴ *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 word¹²⁹⁵ had the seas wave
70 Disjoined;¹²⁹⁶ and man's dear form with His own hands
Did love to mould; and furthermore did will
His own fair likeness¹²⁹⁷ to exist in him;
And by His Spirit on his countenance
The breath¹²⁹⁸ 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.¹²⁹⁹
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 world¹³⁰⁰ 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

¹²⁹⁵ Dicto.

¹²⁹⁶ i.e., from the solid mass of earth. See Gen. i. 9, 10.

¹²⁹⁷ Faciem.

¹²⁹⁸ "Auram," or "breeze."

¹²⁹⁹ "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.

¹³⁰⁰ 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.¹³⁰¹) 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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¹³⁰¹ 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,¹³⁰²
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*¹³⁰³ 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 surface¹³⁰⁴ animated soon

¹³⁰² Cf. Ps. xlix. 14 (xlvi. 15 in LXX).

¹³⁰³ i.e., the dust into which our bodies turn.

¹³⁰⁴ i.e., the surface or ridge of the furrows.

With stalks repaired? and do they¹³⁰⁵ not grow strong
And yellow with the living grains? and, rich
With various usury,¹³⁰⁶ 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 world¹³⁰⁷ is shaded; and the phoenix lives
By her own soot¹³⁰⁸ 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 world¹³⁰⁹ throughout is trembling at God's voice,
180 And deeply moved are the high air's powers,¹³¹⁰
Then comes a crash unwonted, then ensue
Heaven's mightiest murmurs, on the approach of God,
The whole world's¹³¹¹ 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 is¹³¹²), echoes back
The roar, parturient of men, whom she,
195 Being bidden, will with grief upyield.¹³¹³ All stand
In wonderment. At last disturbed are
The clouds, and the stars move and quake from height
Of sudden power.¹³¹⁴ 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 hair¹³¹⁵
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.¹³¹⁶ Then tribes

¹³¹² 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.

¹³¹³ 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."

¹³¹⁴ Subitæ virtutis ab alto.

¹³¹⁵ Comis, here "the heads."

¹³¹⁶ 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 Atreus¹³¹⁷ 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 Virtues¹³¹⁸ 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 marked¹³¹⁹ front
Wreaths golden-red; and all submissive kneel
And reverently adore. The cry of all
240 Is one: "O Holy, Holy Holy, God!"
To these¹³²⁰ 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,

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 meridian¹³²¹ 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;¹³²² 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 fruitfulest
Burden the living boughs. No glades like these

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

¹³²² 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 it¹³²³ 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 gift¹³²⁴
Is sweetly redolent. There, with smooth tide,
Flows in the placid plains a fount: four floods
305 Thence water parted lands.¹³²⁵ 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 health¹³²⁶ without a care is gladsome here

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

¹³²⁴ This seems to be *marshmallows*.

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

¹³²⁶ "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 life¹³²⁷

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 attests¹³²⁸ 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.¹³²⁹

Them an angelic host, upsnaatching them,
Forbids to pray, forbids to pour their cries

350 (Too late!) with clamour loud: pardon withheld,



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

¹³²⁸ 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.

¹³²⁹ 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;¹³³⁰
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.¹³³¹ God bids your bones descend
To¹³³² penalty eternal; go beneath
The ardour of an endless raging hell;¹³³³
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.

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 years¹³³⁴
The fiery torrent will be armed: with force
390 Tartarean will the conflagrations gnash
Their teeth upon the world.¹³³⁵ 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,¹³³⁶ 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

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

¹³³⁵ Mundo.

¹³³⁶ Mundo.



The ululation of the sufferers!
And flames, and limbs sonorous,¹³³⁷ 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

¹³³⁷ "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 them¹³³⁸ 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,¹³³⁹
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,¹³⁴⁰
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 light¹³⁴¹ 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

¹³³⁸ i.e., the "guedons" and the "threats."

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

¹³⁴⁰ See note 1, p. 137.

¹³⁴¹ 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, which¹³⁴² 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.¹³⁴³
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;¹³⁴⁴
And, to long age, shall ever live with God,
Seeing the starry kingdom’s golden joys.



5. Five Books in Reply to Marcion.

(Author Uncertain.)

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

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

¹³⁴³ Mundi.

¹³⁴⁴ Or, “assume the functions of the heavenly life.”