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**Songs and Hymns  
of the Earliest  
Greek Christian  
Poets**

**Allen W. Chatfield**





## Songs and Hymns of the Earliest Greek Christian Poets

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**Author(s):** Chatfield, Allen W. (1808-1896) (Translator)

**Publisher:** Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library

**Description:** A skilled poet and one of the most talented Greek scholars of his time, Chatfield took it upon himself to translate some of Christianity's earliest hymns. His translations exhibited a rare elegance that other translators may have lost, and they still appear in modern hymnals. "Lord Jesus, Think on Me" is perhaps the most well-known, although several others at least equal it in beauty.

Kathleen O'Bannon

CCEL Staff

**Subjects:** Practical theology  
Worship (Public and Private) Including the church year,  
Christian symbols, liturgy, prayer, hymnology  
Hymnology  
Hymns in languages other than English

# Contents

Title Page	1
Preface	2
Songs and Hymns of the Earliest Greek Christian Poets	4
Synesius, Bishop of Ptolemaïis	4
Ode 1	7
Ode 2	12
Ode 3	15
Ode 4	37
Ode 5	46
Ode 6	49
Ode 7	51
Ode 8	53
Ode 9	55
Ode 10	57
Gregory, Bishop of Nazianzus	59
Hymn to Christ	60
Hymn to God	64
Hymn to Christ on Easter Day	67
To His Own Soul	70
A Morning Prayer	80
A Hymn at Night, After Failure to Keep Vow	81
An Evening Hymn	82
Admonitory Address to a Virgin	84
The Naasseni	92
A Psalm	93
Methodius, Bishop and Martyr	94

The Virgins' Song	95
Clement of Alexandria	105
Hymn to Christ	106
Postscript	108
Hymns of Unknown Authorship	109
A Morning Hymn	110
An Evening Hymn	112
A Hymn at Lamp-Light	113
A Prayer at Dinner-Time	114
Indexes	115
Subject Index	116
Index of Scripture References	117
Index of Pages of the Print Edition	118



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SONGS AND HYMNS  
OF  
*Earliest Greek Christian Poets*  
BISHOPS AND OTHERS  
*Translated into English Verse*

BY  
ALLEN W. CHATFIELD, M.A.  
VICAR OF MUCH MARCLE

RIVINGTONS  
WATERLOO PLACE, LONDON  
*Oxford and Cambridge*  
1876



## PREFACE

Four years ago the *Anthologia Graeca Carminum Christianorum* (Leipsic, 1871) was put into my hands by a friend, to look for hymns, Eucharistic especially, which, when rendered into English, might be suitable for the general use of the Church. Of Eucharistic hymns I did not find one in the volume. But I lighted frequently on detached passages here and there, which might form the groundwork of useful and popular hymns for general Christian worship. I did not then know that the late [Dr. J. M. Neale](#) had applied his magic wand to several of such passages which are to be found in the later portion of the *Anthologia*.

My attention, however, was at once arrested by the beauty and majesty of the earlier portion of the volume, which contains the Odes of Synesius, the Hymns and Songs of Gregory Nazianzen, a Hymn of Clement of Alexandria, and the Bridal Song of the earlier Methodius. In my humble opinion there is nothing in the second, the later, and by far the larger portion at all comparable in point of spirit or originality with what I have specified in the first short portion of the book. Moreover, all, or almost all, the later Greek Church poetry, or harmonious prose, which gradually took the place of the old poetry, is full of Mariolatry, of which I find nothing in the older portion referred to.

Such is the marvellous versatility of the Greek language and its power of *wort-bilden*, or compounding of words, that in or before the sixth century such words as θεοτοκος, θεομητωρ, θεογεννητωρ, came into general use; grammatically and beautifully formed, and logically too, so far as school logic is concerned; for if the Blessed Virgin is the mother of Him who is also God, she is, says such logic, the mother of God. Thus, by the genius of the language, aided by miserable school logic, the Blessed Virgin, the mother of the Man Christ Jesus, is made the mother of God; and as darkness and ignorance rapidly prevailed, so the worship of the Blessed Trinity is literally capped by the worship of the θεοτοκος, the prayer or doxology to the Virgin in each case forming the grand climax.<sup>1</sup>

Rome, as always in the old times, borrowed from Greece, and then stamped these and other monstrous departures from primitive truth with the seal of her own falsely assumed authority, and it became law like that of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.

But let the descendants of the once noblest people on earth, the inheritors also of the glorious and divine treasures preserved in the old language--the finest ever spoken--let the Greek people and the Greek Church think and act with the mind unfettered; let them go back to the pure fountain and drink for themselves. The eye of the mind will be enlightened; they will see that neither Mariolatry, nor saint worship, nor angel worship, has any place in God's own truth. "See thou do it not," said the angel to St. John,<sup>2</sup> when he was about to fall

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1 See, for example, throughout the "Great Canon," by St. Andrew of Crete, the last stanza of each of the nine Odes, pp. 147-157.

2 Rev. xxii. 9.



down and worship (only προσκυνησαι) before his feet. Oh that in obedience to such divine injunction the great Eastern Church would arise and shake itself from the dust; would cast to the moles and to the bats such relics of past darkness and idolatrous practice!

I was attracted also to the first part of the volume by the grand old Greek metres. To me they are vastly to be preferred to the later metrical or harmonious prose, or the mediaeval and modern jingle. This last form of poetry may be required by the English and other modern languages which have not the metrical perfection natural to the old Greek and Latin tongues; but to adopt the modern fashion in reference to the ancient Greek and Latin seems to me an unnecessary and miserable distortion. That the old metres can express sublime thought and divine truth is abundantly attested by the Anacreontics of Synesius and Gregory. The dactyls also of the latter, his hexameters and pentameters, as well as his iambics, bear the same evidence.

How the change gradually took place in Greek poetry, how accent strangled quantity, and how harmonious prose succeeded to the grand old poetry, is elaborately set forth in the preface of the learned editors of the Greek *Anthology*. The same contains also a masterly essay on the music of the Greek Church.

I follow their order as convenient, though chronologically the reverse of what it ought to be, and place Synesius first.

MUCH MARCLE VICARAGE,  
*September 1, 1876.*

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**SYNESIUS**  
**BISHOP OF PTOLEMAÏS**

(Born circ. A.D. 375, Died 430).

Synesius was a man of mark in his day, and would have been a man of mark in any day.

To begin with the advantages which belonged to him by birth, he could boast a pedigree such as, says Gibbon, "could not be equalled in the history of mankind," of seventeen centuries from earliest heroic times, down through the kings of Sparta, and the founders of Cyrene: "all the names recorded in the public registers of Cyrene;" and he was well worthy of his "pure and illustrious pedigree."<sup>3</sup>

As a philosopher, his merits, measured by the standard of the age in which he lived, are of high order. Otherwise, it is easy, in our age, to condemn the whole Neoplatonic philosophy as "tumid, inflated, and false."

As a statesman and patriot, he deserves the highest praise. For three years (A.D. 397-400) he toiled, as he himself tells us in his third Ode, and strove and wept at the court of Arcadius, endeavouring to stimulate his degraded and degenerate countrymen to worthy efforts against the Goths, who were threatening not only his own beloved Libya, but the whole empire. His noble appeal, and his continued exertions, called forth abundant commendation and praise, but no permanent results. "The court of Arcadius indulged the zeal, applauded the eloquence, *and* neglected the advice of Synesius."

But there must have been some lull in the rising storm, or some partial success; for Synesius expresses, in the ode referred to, his heartfelt thankfulness for the same. Certainly within the three following years considerable victories were gained by Stilicho in Italy. Hence may have arisen relief to Libya. And Synesius may have composed the Ode, or added the part referred to, after those events.

With regard to his Christianity and theological views, it seems to me Synesius has had scant justice done to him. The learned editors of the *Anthologia* (see Prolegomena, p. x, lib. i., where *sex* must be a misprint for *quinque*) think that he had not yet even professed Christianity when he wrote *five* (viz. I. II. III. IV. VI.) out of the *ten* hymns or odes; that in the third, the very long one, he speaks of going round to *pagan* temples in supplication to the gods. But I would ask, had not pagan temples been put down *finally*, at least some years before Synesius visited Thrace? Whatever new life paganism may have received during the short reign of Julian (A.D. 360-363), it was crushed out during the reign of Theodosius the Great (A.D. 382-395). His sons divided the empire, Honorius reigning in the West, Arcadius in the East. It was to the court of Arcadius that Synesius went as a deputy from Cyrene.

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3 See The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. Oxford edition, 1827, vol. ii. p. 446, and the foot notes. Also vol. iv. pp. 38, 39.



Again, may not Synesius be understood as speaking of Christian churches or temples, Christian ministers or guardian saints (in the growing notion of the day), and Christian rites and ceremonies, though employing in his poetry terms that in pagan times might have been applied to pagan worship? I am persuaded that it is so; and that, if not always orthodox, he yet shows himself in all these poems to be a reverent and sincere Christian.

I cannot enter at length into the famous dispute as to what Synesius held, or did not hold, on the doctrine of the Resurrection. It has been commonly said that he did not accept it at all. Gibbon reiterates the same; and in reply to Bishop Jeremy Taylor and others, who, I believe rightly, qualify this, thinking that Synesius dissembled, or represented his difficulties too strongly, in order that he might not be forced into the holy office, Bingham<sup>4</sup> quotes and interprets, but I think not fully nor fairly, the words of Synesius himself: την καθωμιλημενην αναστασιν ιερων τι και απορρητον ηγημαι, και πολλου δεω ταις του πληθους υποληψεσιν ομολογησαι . . . Surely there is much qualification here. "The every-day-talked-of resurrection I have regarded as a sacred thing, and that cannot be spoken of." He does not say that he does not believe it at all, but that, whereas it is in every one's mouth, stated and defined, he has been in the habit of regarding it as a sacred and ineffable mystery; and that he is far from acceding to the notions of the multitude (on it or other points).

That he held the doctrine itself is to me clear, from what he himself says, both elsewhere, and particularly in his beautiful tenth Ode. He believes in, and adores, the *risen* Saviour, and looks forward with longing desire in the future state to be with Him, and to "sing His praise who is the Healer of souls and the Healer of limbs, with the Great Father and the Holy Spirit." I know not how Mosheim can call such a man a semi-Christian.<sup>5</sup> Mosheim's translator and annotator<sup>6</sup> does something in the way of correcting or qualifying such judgment.

It is certain that, when later in life (viz. A.D. 410) he was made Bishop of Ptolemaïis, Synesius acquitted himself nobly and faithfully in the sacred office to which, entirely against his will, he had been appointed. "The philosophic bishop supported with dignity the character which he had assumed with reluctance."<sup>7</sup>

All admit that he was a man of learning and wisdom, of excellent character, and blameless life. His refinement of mind, his delicacy of feeling, and his loving disposition, as well as his zeal and energy, must strike every attentive reader. I would specially refer to his eighth Ode, in which is presented to us a picture of conjugal, parental, and domestic tenderness, that nowhere can be surpassed.

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4 Christian Antiquities, vol. i. pp. 464-5, London edition, 1843.

5 See Ecclesiastical History. London edition, 1845, vol. i. pp. 310, 439.

6 See the Notes, *ibid*.

7 Gibbon, Decline and Fall, vol. ii. p. 446.

His poetry in the original Greek will be allowed by all scholars to be pure, varied, sweet, and beautiful.

Much must be lost in any translation whatever. If I may have had only slight success in attempting to reproduce to the English reader the mind of this good and great man, I shall indeed be thankful.

***Odes:*** [\[1\]](#) [\[2\]](#) [\[3\]](#) [\[4\]](#) [\[5\]](#) [\[6\]](#) [\[7\]](#) [\[8\]](#) [\[9\]](#) [\[10\]](#)

**Synesius.****I.**

'Αγε μοι, λιγεια φορμιγξ,  
(*Anacreontic: Dimeter ionic.*)



Wake, wake, I pray thee, shrill-toned lyre!  
 No more to fan the Teian<sup>8</sup> fire,  
 No more the Lesbian<sup>9</sup> strain to raise,  
 Wake, wake to hymn of nobler praise!  
 Sound Dorian<sup>10</sup> ode, in other guise,  
 Than once to maid with laughing eyes,  
 Or youth whose form and golden tresses  
 Might woo the wanton air's caresses!  
 A better theme inspires my song,  
 10And bears my soul far hence along.  
 A Virgin's God-conceiving throes,  
 Wisdom's own cure for mortal woes--  
 This bids me now my harp-strings ply,  
 And earth's black loves and miseries fly.  
 For what is strength, or beauty's sway,  
 Or gold, or fame--what doth it weigh--  
 Or royal honours--in the scale?  
 What these 'gainst search for God avail?  
 Let this man urge the well-horsed car,  
 20That shoot the true-aimed arrow far;  
 Another watch o'er golden heap,  
 And safe his hoarded treasure keep;  
 To one be pride of glossy hair  
 Flowing o'er neck in wavelets fair;  
 Another court the favouring glances  
 Of boys and girls in hymns and dances.  
 Not such for me! But this I pray,  
 Unknown to spend life's quiet day;  
 To this vain world unmarked, unknown,  
 30But God's truth knowing as my own.



8 Anacreon was of Teos.

9 Sappho of Lesbos.

10 The Dorian dialect was generally used for graver and sublimer subjects.

Wisdom present herself to me!  
Good guide of youth and age is she,  
Of wealth good stewardess and queen,  
Alike in poverty serene;  
Beyond earth's sorrows smiling gay,  
To calm content she points the way.  
That priceless wisdom first I ask,  
To guide and sweeten all life's task,  
And then sufficient humble store  
40 To keep me from my neighbour's door;  
That I may ne'er, oppressed with need,  
Harbour dark thoughts of selfish greed.



Hark! 'tis the sweet cicada's song:  
He drinks the dew, and chirps along.  
And, lo! my strings unbidden sound,  
And here and there a voice around!  
What in the world--what melody  
Will pang divine bring forth to me?

'Tis so! Self-sprung Beginning He,  
50 Father and Lord of all that be:  
Not made, not born, on high alone  
He hath o'er lofty heaven His throne.  
There glory changeless He displays,  
And sceptre there eternal sways;  
Of unities pure Unity,  
And Sole of sole existence He!  
High ether pure He did combine,  
And quicken into Life Divine.  
He then, ere yet the ages ran,  
60 In mode ineffable to man,  
The Godhead through the Firstborn poured:<sup>11</sup>  
Hence Three, yet One, the Triune Lord.



---

11 Lit.: The Sole Unity poured forth through the first-sown Form in an ineffable way had a threefold supreme help.

And now the heavenly fount around  
Behold, with children's beauty crowned,  
Forth from the centre as they spring,  
Or round it flow in joyous ring.

But stop, rash lyre, thy lofty flight,  
Nor touch things hid from mortal sight!  
To men below it is not given  
70To tell high mystic rites of heaven.  
The things beneath do thou reveal;  
The things above let silence seal.

But Mind now cares for worlds alone,  
In which reflected mind is shown:  
A good beginning this we sing,  
For thence man's spirit hath its spring:  
For now to matter came there down  
Mind incorruptible, high crown,  
Severed in each, and fragment small,  
80Yet true descent from God of all.  
This whole, in every part one-centred,  
Whole into whole as it hath entered,  
Takes station at the eternal poles,  
And heaven's resplendent circle rolls.  
Divided next, to those again,  
In given form who yet retain  
Their dowry unimpaired of mind,  
There are high offices assigned;  
The chariot race of stars one guides,  
90One o'er the angelic choir presides.  
But, ah! another, empty, vain,  
Self-dragged by down-inclining chain,  
Hath found a form of lower earth,  
Deep fallen from his heavenly birth:  
From home apostate far he flew,  
And cups of Lethe's darkness drew;  
Of eyeless soul and murky mind,



To heaven's true joy and glory blind;  
Fain he to joyless earth repaired,  
100A god by mortal things ensnared.  
All dark! yet, lo! to mortal eyes  
A ray of cheering light doth rise!  
A door of hope is opened high,  
And helping hand is stretched out nigh,  
To lift the fallen here on earth  
Back to the honours of their birth,  
When they, emerging from the strife  
And din and cares of storm-tossed life,  
To holy paths have turned indeed,  
110Which to their Father's palace lead.  
Blest he who from the entangling mesh  
Of matter and of greedy flesh  
Hath fled, and on with springing bound  
The upward way to God hath found!  
Blest he who, after fates severe,  
And toils and many a bitter tear,  
And all the crowd of anxious cares  
Which earth to all her votaries shares,  
To mind's true course at length restored,  
120Hath God's own shining depth explored!



A task it is, to lift above  
Whole outstretched soul in new-born love  
Yet only make determined start,  
With wings of mind and honest heart,  
And nigh to thee will He appear  
With stretched-forth hands, thy Father dear.  
Before will run a shining light,  
And all thy upward paths make bright:  
Fields of sweet thought thou now shalt tread,  
130Pledge of true beauty, for thee spread!  
Come, O my soul, and drink of this,  
A fountain flowing with all bliss;  
And to thy Father, lifting prayer,  
Without delay, up-mount the air.



Leaving to earth the things of earth,  
In God assert thy godlike birth;  
And mingling with thy Father, Friend,  
Taste joys above that never end.

---

**Synesius.****II.**

Παλι φεγγος, παλιν αως,  
 (*Anacreontic: Dimeter ionic.*)



Again we hail the opening morn,  
 Again breaks forth the day new-born,  
 Which, rising in victorious might,  
 Chases away black-wandering night!  
 Again, my mind, in early songs  
 Praise Him to whom all praise belongs;  
 Who gave to morning dawn the light  
 Who gave the glittering stars to night,  
 Which to their Maker and their King  
 10 Around the world in chorus sing.  
 For o'er prolific matter, high,  
 Moves ether pure in fiery sky;  
 Where glides the moon in glorious trim,  
 Cutting the last encircling rim:  
 For to the eighth revolving stream  
 The star-borne courses brightly gleam.  
 But now beyond the starry poles  
 A counter sea of glory rolls,  
 Unbosomed; and with dance divine  
 20 Doth the Eternal Mind enshrine,  
 Which covered hath with hoary wings  
 The palace of the King of kings.  
 What is beyond none may relate,  
 Nor mind of man can penetrate:  
 Eternal severance restrains,  
 And happy silence ever reigns.  
 From Root, or Spring, or Fountain one  
 A threefold lighted Form hath shone:  
 For where the Father dwells above,  
 30 There dwelleth too His own heart's love,  
 His glorious Son, wisdom perfect,  
 And of all worlds the Architect:  
 And in the Unity combined  
 The Spirit's holy Light hath shined.



One Root of Good, one Fount of Love,  
 Whence sprung the bliss supreme above:  
 And the bright holy lamps divine  
 In equal glory ever shine.  
 And thence in this fair world of ours,  
 40 With high-born intellectual powers,  
 A chorus now of deathless kings  
 The Triune glory ever sings.  
 And near the Fount of Love and Truth  
 Angelic band in changeless youth,  
 Guided by holy Wisdom's mind,  
 Immortal wreath of beauty find.  
 But some with dark averted eyes  
 Fall mindless from the lofty skies  
 Downward the gloomy depths among,  
 50 And bring the higher world along;  
 Down, down to Matter's utmost bound,  
 Where, settling in the depth profound,  
 Nature assigns them birth and place,  
 A God-like,<sup>12</sup> though God-fallen race.



Hence giant heroes took their birth,  
 The mighty conquerors of earth;  
 And hence Breath sown o'er all the ground  
 Each varying type of life hath found.  
 But all things to Thy counsel hold,  
 60 Things past, or present, new or old:  
 Whate'er we have, whate'er we share,  
 Of all from Thee the sources are.  
 The Father and the Mother Thou,  
 Male, female, unto Thee we bow:  
 Or voice be heard, or all be still,  
 'Tis just as ordered by Thy will.  
 'And Thou or Nature Thyself art,  
 Or Nature is Thy counterpart:  
 And Thou art King; and ages all




---

12 Lit: A much-talking and much-plotting crowd of demons (i. e. demigods).

70 Within Thine age unmeasured fall.  
 May I my song aright renew,  
 O Thou! the Root whence all things grew!  
 Hail! Thou, the world's Original;  
 Hail! Thou, the Spring, First Cause of all.  
 All numbers blending into one,  
 The Uncreated, God alone!  
 All hail, all hail,<sup>13</sup> Thou One Divine!  
 All joy, all happiness be Thine!  
 Bend Thou, O bend propitious ear,  
 80 And this my hymn of praises bear,  
 Speed on true Wisdom's opening day,  
 Pour blessings down in rich array:  
 Yea, grace-distilling streams pour down,  
 That I may win contentment's crown  
 In life's sweet calm; the happy mean  
 Give me, riches and want between.  
 Off from my limbs diseases ward,  
 My soul from stormy passions guard:  
 Let no dark thoughts my steps attend:  
 90 My life from biting cares defend;  
 Lest, mind, borne down by earthly ill,  
 To soar should find nor time nor will.  
 But grant me with free wing to rise,  
 And join the chorus of the skies,  
 And there with Thine for ever sing  
 The glories of my God and King!




---

13 χαιρε--χαιροις--χαιρειν. We cannot imitate in English the beautiful play on these words.

*Synesius.*

III.<sup>14</sup>

Ἄγε μοι ψυχα

(*Anapaestic monometer.*)



---

14 In the Greek, however short the metre and however long the ode, there is no weariness from monotony; for the interchange of anapaest, dactyl, and spondee, in the lines of from only four to six syllables each, makes a constant and pleasing variety. But this being impossible in an English translation, I have adopted the measure which Milton so beautifully employs in the Hymn of the Nativity. For the convenience of those who may wish to refer to the original, I mark the lines at the head of each stanza.

- I. (1-11).
- II. (11-22).
- III. (23-36).
- IV. (37-50).
- V. (51-67).
- VI. (68-75).
- VII. (76-85).
- VIII. (86-94).
- IX. (95-107).
- X. (108-117).
- XI. (118-125).
- XII. (126-137).
- XIII. (138-146).
- XIV. (147-157).
- XV. (158-165).
- XVI. (166-173).
- XVII. (174-183).
- XVIII. (184-190).
- XIX. (191-198).
- XX. (199-209).
- XXI. (210-216).
- XXII. (217-224).
- XXIII. (225-231).
- XXIV. (232-240).
- XXV. (241-253).
- XXVI. (254-265).
- XXVII. (266-275).
- XXVIII. (276-285).

- XXIX. (286-300).
- XXX. (301-311).
- XXXI. (312-319).
- XXXII. (320-328).
- XXXIII. (329-334).
- XXXIV. (335-342).
- XXXV. (343-357).
- XXXVI. (358-367).
- XXXVII. (368-374).
- XXXVIII. (375-380).
- XXXIX. (381-391).
- XL. (392-400).
- XLI. (402-409).
- XLII. (410-416).
- XLIII. (417-427).
- XLIV. (428-440).
- XLV. (441-454).
- XLVI. (455-462).
- XLVII. (463-473).
- XLVIII. (474-489).
- XLIX. (490-497).
- L. (498-505).
- LI. (506-523).
- LII. (524-532).
- LIII. (533-543).
- LIV. (544-553).
- LV. (544-563).
- LVI. (564-574).

- LVII. (575-585).  
LVIII. (586-592).  
LIX. (593-602).  
LX. (603-611).  
LXI. (612-627).  
LXII. (628-635).  
LXIII. (636-645),  
LXIV. (646-653).  
LXV. (654-661).  
LXVI. (662-670).  
LXVII. (672-683).  
LXVIII. (684-693).  
LXIX. (694-703).  
LXX. (704-713).  
LXXI. (714-725).  
LXXII. (726-734).

Lift up thyself, my soul,  
Above this world's control!  
Spend and be spent in holy hymns of praise:  
Be armed with pure desire,  
Burn with celestial fire:  
Unto the King of gods our voice we raise:  
To Him a crown we weave, and bring  
A sacrifice of words, a bloodless offering.

Thee on the troubled deep,  
Thee o'er the islands steep,  
Thee through the mighty continents of land,  
Thee in the city's throng,  
Or mountain tops along,  
Or when in celebrated plains I stand,  
Thee, Thee, O blessed One, I sing,



Thee, Thee, O Father of the world, Eternal King!

Thy praise I hymn by night,  
Thy praise at morning light,  
Thy praise by day, Thy praise at eventide.  
This know the hoary stars,  
And moon with silver bars,  
And chiefly he that doth on high preside  
O'er all the host of heaven, the sun,  
Who measuring time for holy souls his course doth run.

Fain to thy folds I sped,  
And to Thy bosom fled,  
Winging my steps from Matter's wide-spread rule:  
Now on famed mountain peak,  
Thy face alone to seek;  
Now on the plain I hailed thy vestibule.  
A suppliant thus to many a shrine  
Of sacred rites I came, and mysteries divine.

And now to southern land,  
And Libya's desert strand  
I roamed, where neither godless spirit reigns,  
Nor teeming cities' strife  
Calls men to busy life;  
That so my soul, from woeful toils and pains  
And passions' war and groans set free,  
And all the ills of fate, might harmonize with Thee.

And might, in blest relief,  
Unshackled now from grief,  
With lips and tongue all cleansed, and hallowed mind,  
Repay the hymn to Thee,  
The hymn full due from me.  
Be Earth and Ether holily combined  
And Air and Sea with one accord  
Be still, and join in adoration to the Lord!



Swift breath of winds, be still,  
And whirling pool and rill,  
And floods that are at rivers' mouths forth hurled;  
And streams from fountain-heads  
That rush down rocky beds:  
And hushed be ye, deep hollows of the world;  
While breath in holy hymns is spent,  
And sacrifice of praise in upward strains is sent.

Down sink the serpent's trail!  
Nor let their craft prevail!  
Down sink the wingèd dragon underground;  
Who loves to cloud the soul,  
The god who doth control  
This lower world, and idol-worship found,  
And urgeth on the dogs of hell  
Against God's praying people, His true Israel!

O blessèd Father, Friend,  
My soul do Thou defend.  
From soul-devouring dogs; defend my prayer,  
Defend my deeds, my life,  
From their destructive strife  
And charge Thy holy angels, that they bear  
To Thee this offering of my mind:  
For hymns they carry that with Thee acceptance find.

Now am I borne along  
To lists of sacred song:  
Now holy words in streams spontaneous flow:  
A voice within me rings,  
And toucheth my heart-strings:  
But unto me, O Father, mercy show;  
Forgive, O Blessèd, if I stray,  
In theme divine, and miss the rightful ordered way.

What eye can steadfast gaze,



When Thy dread beacons blaze?  
What eye so wise, so strong, of mortal man,  
That it unclosed may bear  
Thy vivid lightning's glare?  
E'en of the mighty ones on high none can,  
However strong, however bold,  
The glorious brightness of Thy Majesty behold.

Now aims the mind too far,  
And finds repelling bar,  
Nor can it penetrate by utmost strain  
The depths so dazzling bright,  
Where Thou dost dwell in light:  
So, falling back from efforts feebly vain,  
It courts within its proper scope  
An object known whereon to fix the eye of hope;

That for Thy hymns it might  
Thence pluck fair flowers of light,  
Nor leave to thankless winds an offering:  
But render back to Thee  
Thine own, for Thine they be;  
For what of all things is not Thine, O King?  
O Father of all fathers, Thou!  
To Thine eternal Fatherhood all beings bow!

But Father Thou hadst none;  
Thou art the self-sprung One,  
Before all worlds the sole great Mind existing:  
Germ of whate'er we see,  
Spur of all things that be  
Root of first worlds, by Thee alone subsisting:  
Light of all light, Truth's basis sure;  
And Wisdom's everflowing stream, and fountain pure.

O Mind immutable!  
O Light inscrutable!



Thine is the eye that guides the lightning fire:  
    In Thee the ages live,  
    Thou dost their limits give;  
Who can Thy praises reach, Eternal Sire?  
    Thou art beyond the dreams of men;  
Beyond the reach of mind, or highest angel's ken.

    O'er all Thy rule is spread,  
    The living and the dead;  
To minds that be, the parent Mind Thou art;  
    All heaven Thou dost control,  
    Thou nourishest the soul,  
And dost to spirit energy impart;  
    The Spring Thou art whence all things flow,  
And from eternity the Root whence all things grow.

    The only One, yet all;  
    In Thee all numbers fall;  
The only One, yet countless evermore:  
    The self-existent Mind,  
    Yet mind with law combined;  
Mind's realm, yet all the realm of mind before:  
    Through all, yet all beyond, art Thou:  
To Thee, the Seed of all existing things, we bow.

    Thou art the Eternal Root,  
    Thou art the spreading Shoot!  
Or male or female Thou be called, 'tis one;  
    To mind Thou nature art,  
    And dost Thyself impart,  
But mind enlightened ne'er can say, 'tis done;  
    But here and there a word outpours,  
While feebly it the unfathomed depth around explores.

    Thou art the Parent Tree,  
    All have their life from Thee,  
Or stem or branch, whatever is, is Thine.



Thou art the Light of light,  
 The Light of day so bright,  
 The Light that shineth evermore Divine:  
 Thou art, again, the hidden Light,  
 By its own glory hidden far from mortal sight.

Yet one, yet all, one Lord,  
 One only, yet forth poured,  
 Through all forth poured in holy Mystery:  
 Of Thee thus sprung the Son,  
 Wisdom, the glorious One,  
 Creator of the universe to be.  
 The Godhead severed into twain  
 By birth ineffable, unsevered doth remain.

Yet One, though Twain, though Three:  
 Mysterious Trinity!  
 For Thou art One in Three, and Three in One.  
 I sing Thee, Unity!  
 I sing Thee, Trinity!  
 The Triune King, the Father, Spirit, Son!  
 The Light divided is not spent,  
 The One pervading mind, though parted, is not rent.

Thy holy Will is done,  
 'Tis through the Eternal Son;  
 And from the outpoured Godhead forth there springs,  
 Which cannot be exprest  
 In words, the Spirit Blest,  
 The Uncreated! we of wondrous things  
 Have spoken; but we speak not *there*:  
 We dare not if we could, we could not if we dare.

Who knows the Eternal Laws?  
 Who knows the First Great Cause?  
 We may not say a Second, or a Third.  
 O Birth beyond our reach;



O Spring defying speech!  
What mortal to the task himself could gird?  
O matchless Holy One, between  
The Father and the Son Thy Light doth intervene.

All reverence to Thee,  
Eternal Spirit, be!  
Thou of the Three the middle rank dost hold.  
And now, most glorious Son,  
Thy praises be begun!  
Thy birth, thy generation, is untold:  
The Father's Son, the Father's Will,  
With Him Thou present wast, and present Thou art still.

Thou with the Father art,  
And ever next His heart;  
Nor can deep flowing Time Thy birth reveal;  
Nor aged Aeon say  
When was Thy natal day;  
He never learned, nor could remove the seal.  
Son with the Father! He the same  
Who should hereafter give to Aeon birth and name.

Who hath adjudged the eye  
Into God's depths to pry?  
The subtle tongue will dare, but man is blind.  
Such daring is in vain,  
'Tis godless, and profane.  
Thou dost to Thine pour light upon the mind,  
And guard their hearts with holy care,  
That they in darkness sink not through gross matter's snare.

To Thee all holy praise  
It well befits to raise;  
For Thou of all art Father, all are Thine:  
Thou all the worlds didst found,  
Thou dost all ages bound,



Thou framedst all the host of heaven divine;  
To Thee all minds of light do sing,  
And starry spheres intelligent hail thee their King!

While round in holy choir  
Dance their bright orbs of fire,  
The blest ones all do shout and sing before Thee;  
The world within, around,  
They all Thy praise resound,  
All in their stations evermore adore Thee:  
Those in the zones; and those outside,  
Who yet their several posts assigned in wisdom guide.

These come to guard, or tame,  
Earth's helmsmen, sons of fame;  
Of link angelic, and who draw their birth  
From old heroic race;  
Who ever take their place,  
By hidden ways, o'er men and things of earth:  
And though of an unyielding will,  
To dark-rayed worldly glories ever yield they still.

To Thee blithe nature sings,  
And all from her that springs:  
For Thou with heavenly breath dost them renew,  
Forth pouring from above  
Thy stores of grace and love,  
Which ever fresh descend in showers and dew;  
Thou to all nature nature art,  
O Lord of worlds unstained! and dost Thine own impart.

For nature Thou didst train  
And school, that she again  
Might parent be of every mortal thing;  
The faithful counterpart  
Of all that Thyself art,  
Of life and health the everflowing spring!



That to the world's extremest bound  
Each part in turn with living beauty might be crowned.

For it were never right  
That things should jar and fight,  
Or dregs of earth with excellence contend;  
But all by Thy decree  
Is wrought in harmony;  
Nor aught shall perish, nor the chorus end;  
But each from other takes its share,  
And all through one another taste Thy loving care.



The eternal wheel revolves,  
And the dark riddle solves;  
Things die; Thou sendest forth Thy breath, they live,  
And in fresh glory bloom,  
Renewed from mortal doom.  
Thus nurtured nature nurturing doth give;  
And she doth sing a deathless song  
To Thee by all her children through the ages long.

In colour or in skin,  
Without, or life within,  
And deeds, however varied they may be,  
Yet nature moulds them all  
Obedient to her call;  
And links them fast in holy unity;  
And from all creatures thus doth raise  
Of differing voices one harmonious hymn of praise.



To Thee, their Lord and King,  
All things their tribute bring  
Of ceaseless praise; the night, the morn, the sky,  
The lightning flash, the snow,  
And things that spring and grow;  
All bodies and all spirits; birds that fly,  
And beasts that graze; seeds, plants, and roots;

The sea with all that swims, and earth with all her fruits.

The waves of trouble roll;  
Look Thou upon my soul,  
To act so powerless, to learn so slow,  
Where on Thy Libyan sands  
The mystic temple stands;  
For hither I, Thy holy will to know,  
Oppressed with grief, my steps have bent,  
On prayer and supplication unto Thee intent.



Before Thy favouring eye  
Earth's gloomy vapours fly:  
Look Thou on me, and bid my sorrows cease.  
'Tis so! e'en now my heart  
Through food Thy hymns impart--  
For Thine they are--hath nourishment of peace,  
And points my mind with keen desire  
To rise afresh to thoughts and words of heavenly fire.

But send, O King, Thy light,  
To quicken my dull sight,  
And guide me on the road that leads to Thee.  
And, Father, grant, I pray,  
That from the body's sway  
My better part, escaping, may be free,  
And not again be downward hurled  
Beneath the floods and eddies of this troubled world.



Yet here, while in the strife  
Of world-enchainèd life,  
O Blessèd, may kind fortune smile on me;  
Nor stormy tempest blow  
To check the holy glow,  
Or rudely break the mind's tranquillity;  
Lest inrush of the worldly flood  
Should leave to me no leisure for the things of God.

And whereto I have striven,  
By grace which Thou hast given,  
(For all good gifts of help and strength are Thine),  
May I the ground retain,  
Nor e'er fall back again.  
For which Thy gifts this humble wreath of mine  
From holy fields to Thee I bring,  
O Thou of all creations pure the Eternal King;



To Thee and to Thy Son,  
Thine own, the only One,  
Alone of Thee begotten, the All-wise,  
Whom from eternity  
Thou hadst, and hast, with Thee,  
Though forth from Thee He came to harmonize  
All things, and fashion, form, and guide,  
By wisdom's breath outpoured, and over all preside.

The hoary ages wake,  
And their due course take,  
At his command; and of His matchless skill,  
And workmanship divine,  
As if by plumb and line,  
This rugged world He mouldeth to His will,  
Whate'er exists above the ground,  
Or on its surface, or within its depths profound.



And merciful and kind  
He shines with holy mind  
On toiling mortals; and doth bring relief;  
For He doth loose the chain  
Of toilsome care and pain;  
Effects their good, and drives away their grief.  
The God who did the world create,  
What marvel that His own He guard from whelming fate?

And hither southward now,  
That I might pay this vow  
To Thee the mighty world's eternal guide,  
I came from northern Thrace,  
Where three years' dreary space  
Near the Imperial Court I did abide,  
In toil, with tears and anguish sore,  
For on my shoulders I my mother country bore,



And well Thou know'st, good Lord,  
How from my limbs was poured  
A sweat of agony from day to day:  
Nor rest had I by night  
In that dire mental fight:  
But watered was the couch on which I lay  
From streaming eyes. Then to and fro,  
To every shrine a suppliant I made haste to go.

To all in turn I bring  
Prayer, chaplet, offering,  
And water with my tears each sacred floor,  
That I might not with pain  
Have journey made in vain,  
But that Thou wouldst wide-open hopeful door.  
Thus in my own and country's need  
I with Thy holy ones through fruitful Thrace did plead;



And who across the main,  
Guard Carthaginian plain,  
I sought them all, if they might succour me,  
Throughout the region round,  
Whom Thou with rays hadst crowned  
Angelic, Thine attendant saints to be.  
The blest ones helped my eager prayers,  
They helped my many toils, and soothed my many cares.

Life did no pleasure yield,  
While my poor country reeled  
Half stunned: but Thou hast righted her, O King!  
The Rock of Ages Thou,  
To whom the world doth bow!  
Crushed were my limbs, my soul a lifeless thing:  
But Thou from Heaven hast breathed at length  
New vigour on my soul, and on my limbs new strength.



For Thou hast-brought relief,  
And stayed o'erflowing grief:  
Toils have an end, the wearied soul hath rest.  
'Twas by Thy wisdom planned,  
'Twas wrought out by Thy hand.  
Thou to my mind hast given refreshment blest.  
Now, O my God, do Thou ordain,  
That to the Libyans these Thine own sweet gifts remain;

Of our long tribulation,  
Of Thy so great Salvation,  
A lasting record! Hear Thy suppliant's prayer;  
And henceforth may my life  
Be safe from harmful strife.  
Loose me from toil, disease, and deadly care.  
Thus to Thy servant bow Thine ear,  
And grant my mental life be ever bright and clear.



I would not showers of wealth  
To try the soul's best health,  
And leave no leisure for the things divine;  
Nor poverty would I,  
With downcast sullen eye,  
Black spectre to the house, prone to repine,  
Bowed down to earth with earthly cares.  
Both grovel on the ground, and both are dangerous snares.

And both forgetful are  
Of better things by far,  
The mind, and all that to the mind doth cling,  
Unless, O heavenly Friend,  
Thou shouldst Thy help extend.  
Yea, Father, wisdom's holy self and spring,  
Upon this faltering soul of mine  
The light of mind from Thine own bosom cause to shine.



And on my heart, I pray,  
Turn Thou blest wisdom's ray,  
With helping hand, and point the holy road  
That leadeth unto Thee;  
And set Thy seal on me,  
And let me have the token of my God;  
And from my life, and from my prayer,  
Drive earthly demons of presumption and despair.

And may my body be  
From all dishonour free,  
As fortress unassailable to foe;  
And may my spirit pure  
Unto the end endure  
By Thine all-saving help. Full well I know,  
That I do bear dark worldly stain,  
And held in bondage am by earthly passions' chain;



But Thou deliverer art,  
And cleanser of the heart.  
From evils circling round escape afford,  
And from diseases all,  
And bonds that fret and gall.  
I bear Thy seed, of noble mind, good Lord,  
A spark that issued forth from Thee,  
And flashing down through depths of matter lit on me.

For in the world, O King,  
Thou mad'st a soul to spring,  
And in the body, through the soul, a mind:  
O pity then Thine own,  
The handmaid from Thy throne:  
From Thee descending, hapless I did bind  
Myself as labourer free to earth:  
Not labourer now, but slave, downfallen from my birth.



For, me the world around  
With witchery hath bound,  
Some little strength may yet remain in me  
Of secret inner light,  
Not yet extinguished quite:  
But o'er my head is rolled a mighty sea,  
That doth make blind the mental eye  
That would its God and things of heavenly worth descry.

O look with pitying eye,  
And hear the mournful cry  
Of Thine own child, O Father good and kind:  
Whom oft when she would rise  
Up to her native skies,  
Impelled by holy efforts of the mind,  
Yet fascination of this world  
Hath choked, and back to earth's dark mazes hurled.



But O! send forth Thy light,  
A beacon fire through night,  
To guide' and cheer me on my upward way;  
And may that seed take root,  
And, striking out its shoot  
From small beginning, bead of flower display.  
O Father, such Thy help divine,  
Enthroned me in the light of life above to shine;

Where nature cannot clasp  
 With her resistless grasp:  
 And whence no longer earth, or web of fate,  
 Can back recall to woe  
 And vain desires below.  
 Let brood deceitful that I scorn and hate  
 Of worldly passions scattered be,  
 And leave thy servant, O my God, at peace with Thee!



Me and earth's din betwixt  
 Be fiery barrier fixed.  
 Thy grace, O Father, to my soul reveal;  
 And let thy suppliant find,  
 With outspread wings of mind,  
 The ascending path, and bear aloft Thy seal,  
 A terror to the up-springing foe,  
 Who breathe to mortals godless thoughts from depths below;

But badge and token known  
 To those about Thy throne,  
 The holy ones, who all the heights survey  
 Of Thy bright world, and stand  
 As guards in high command,  
 Bearing the keys of upward fiery way,  
 That they may give an entrance free,  
 And open wide the gates of heavenly light to me.



But still while creeping here  
 Upon this empty sphere  
 Of earth, yet not of earth grant me to be;  
 But from a better root  
 E'en here attesting fruit  
 To bear of fire-proved deeds, my God, to Thee;  
 And Thy true voice to hear and know,  
 And whate'er warms and makes in souls blest hope to grow.

It doth me now repent  
Of life on earth ill-spent:  
Begone, the blear-eyed haze of godless men,  
And built-up cities' strength  
Begone, ye breadth and length  
Of worldly aims, nor harass me again,  
Ye sweet calamities, ye toys  
Of mighty seeming, bootless boons, and joyless joys.



Tranced by your bravery  
The soul in slavery  
To earth is held; and wretched is indeed;  
For of her own good things  
This cup oblivion brings:  
And things, wherewith to satisfy her need  
She hoped, are forthwith snatched away;  
And from vain dream she wakes to envy's shaft a prey.

For fortune here below  
A double face doth show,  
False queen: whom if you haply win and trust,  
And in her livery shine,  
And at her table dine,  
Soon rue your lot with bitter tears you must,  
When down from pedestal so high  
You fall in widespread ruin, and neglected lie.



For here, from adverse sides,  
Now good, now ill, betides:  
To mortals such is life's necessity.  
To God, or what hath birth  
From God, but not to earth,  
Is good unmingled with adversity.  
Did cup of sweets intoxicate?  
Ensnared I learnt by crop of woes a lesson late.

I hate these laws of change  
And hence now upward range,  
With wings expanded, to the peaceful sky:  
To bright ethereal plains,  
Where my dear Father reigns,  
From earth, and earths two-sided gifts I fly.  
O Steward of the life of mind,  
To Thee I look; with Thee may I acceptance find.



My soul doth hang on Thee:  
Heed Thou Thy suppliant's plea,  
Bound here on earth, yet struggling to ascend  
The upward paths of mind:  
As Thou thus far hast shined,  
O shine yet more: light wings of succour lend  
Snap double passions' bond, and chain  
Of earth unloose, and let my soul her freedom gain.

For nature by these chains  
Her treacherous power obtains,  
And binds me down to earth a helpless prey;  
But from the body freed,  
And all its direful need,  
Grant me to take swift flight to realms of day,  
To Thine own halls and Thine own breast,  
Whence flows the Fountain of the soul; and be at rest.



A drop from Fountain Head  
Poured, forth, to earth I sped,  
An exile and a wanderer from Thee;  
Me now, I pray, restore  
To where I was before:  
With light ancestral may I mingled be!  
Tune Thou my mind with Thine own choir  
In holiness to sing the hymns Thou dost inspire.

Once saved from mortal plight,  
Once mingled with the light,  
O Father, grant I never enter more  
Within earth's black domains  
Of penalties and pains;  
But while I yet am chained to this dark shore,  
And bear life's drudgery below,  
Bid Thou that fortune's breezes on me gently blow.

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**Synesius.**

**IV.**

Σε μεν αρχομενας,  
(*Anapaestic monometer.*)



- VIII. (68-79).  
II. (10-17).  
III. (18-27).  
IV. (28-37).  
V. (38-48).  
VI. (49-59).  
VII. (60-67).  
VIII. (68-79).  
IX. (80-88).  
X. (89-95).  
XI. (96-109).  
XII. (110-124).  
XIII. (125-135).  
XIV. (136-146).  
XV. (147-159).  
XVI. (160-170).  
XVII. (171-180).  
XVIII. (181-192).  
XIX. (193-212).  
XX. (213-226).  
XXI. (227-237).  
XXII. (238-250).  
XXIII. (252-259).  
XXIV. (260-274).  
XXV. (275-280).  
XXVI. (281-290).  
XXVII. (291-299).

To Thee at evening gray,

To Thee at growth of day,  
To Thee at noon, to Thee at vesper hour,  
And when now fades the light,  
And poured forth is the night,  
(Both night and day are Thine, and show Thy power),  
I sing, O Healer of the soul,  
And of the body too: Thou only mak'st it whole.

And wisdom's spring Thou art,  
And dost of it impart;  
And Thou dost drive diseases far away,  
And unto souls dost give  
Untroubled life to live,  
Which earthly care may not stamp down nor sway,  
Who mother is of pain and woe,  
And all the thousand ills that culminate below.

From which O grant to me  
My life be ever free!  
That I may praise in thankful hymn and song  
The hidden Root of all,  
Nor severed be, nor fall  
From God, through ills that to this world belong.  
To Thee, O Father Blessèd, I will sing,  
Who art of this great universe the glorious King.

Hushed be the world, and still,  
While I my task fulfil,  
And lift to Thee, Supreme, the hymn divine;  
And while my prayers I pour,  
Let all on earth adore!  
For earth, and all her workmanship, is Thine.  
Let blustering winds their tumults cease,  
And rustling trees and shrill-voiced birds be all at peace.

Let ether listener be  
To holy psalmody:



Let air be silent too: and rapid streams  
    Adown the earth that pour,  
    And waves that lash the shore,  
Let all be stayed, as it in prayer beseems.  
    And demon foes to holy strain,  
Who haunt recesses dark, and in the tombs remain;

    Fly they--far, far away--  
    While I my offerings pay:  
But all the good, throughout creation's range,  
    The happy ones who serve,  
    Nor from the precepts swerve  
Of the Great Parent, now in interchange  
    Of holy thought and mind may they  
Befriend, and upward these my hymns and prayers convey!

    The One, the only One,  
    The Father Thou alone,  
The One beginning whence all else began;  
    The Fount whence all founts flow,  
    The Root whence all roots grow;  
The Good whence good in all its channels ran;  
    The Star that to all stars gave birth;  
The World whence sprang all worlds from highest heaven to earth.

    The Form of all forms known:  
    All beauty is Thine own:  
The hidden Seed, the ages' Parent Prop:  
    Of worlds intelligent  
    The Father, whence forth sent  
Ambrosial Breath, and floating drop by drop  
    Upon embodied bulk, combines  
A second world, which in reflected glory shines.

    O Blessèd, Thee I praise,  
    Or whether voice I raise,  
Or solemn silence keep; for to Thine ear



Not more the uttered speech  
 Than Mind's still voice doth reach:  
 Unuttered though the word, yet Thou dost hear.  
 With Thee I praise the First-born One,  
 The First-sprung Light, Thine own Begotten only Son.

Thou Lord of power and might,  
 Light of the Father light,  
 Of the Ineffable the glorious Word;  
 With the great Father Thee  
 I hymn in unity;  
 And Holy Spirit too in blest accord,  
 Who did Himself divinely spring  
 Forth from the Father and through Thee, with Thee I sing.

True counsel He unfolds  
 And middle rule<sup>15</sup> He holds:  
 Breath holy! Spur of Father, Spur of Son!  
 Self-Parent, and Self-Kin,  
 Self-nurtured Root within,  
 The Uncreated, Unbegotten One.  
 The Eternal glory is out-poured  
 Upon the Son: through whom forth springs the Spirit Lord.

God and of God is He,  
 Mid light in Trinity.  
 Thee Trinity and Unity we name;  
 For Thou art Three, yet One,  
 The Father, Spirit, Son:  
 Though severed, yet unsevered, One the same.  
 Forth went the Son to do Thy will,  
 And yet with Thee the Father He remaineth still.

Thy rule to bear He goes,  
 And upon worlds bestows,



15 Middle Rule. See note on line 57, Ode V.

Whence He Himself received, life's happy store.  
The Word! to Thee I raise  
With the Great Father, praise.  
The Mind of the Ineffable, before  
All worlds, did Thee beget; and Thou  
Begotten art the Father's Word, to whom all bow!

Thou first from the first Root  
Didst spring, the glorious Shoot;  
And since Thy birth all things have birth from Thee.  
The Eternal One, the Seed  
Of all things, so decreed,  
That Thou, first-sown, the Seed of all shouldst be.  
For Thou dost all in all fulfil;  
And 'tis by Thee that nature lived and liveth still;

Where she is highest seen,  
Where in the ranks between,  
Where lowest: all good gifts of quickening powers  
From God the Father she  
Doth taste and hold through Thee.  
Guided by Thee, this ageless sphere of ours  
Turns her strong wheels on easy poles,  
And seventh in the dance of stars unwearied rolls.

The many lights on high  
One surface beautify  
In Thy great world: for Thou dost so ordain:  
And Thou, God's glorious Son,  
Didst make the ages run,  
And in unbroken course dost them sustain.  
All in this globe Thou dost survey,  
And all in circuit tend; and all Thy laws obey.

And in the depths of sky  
Unfathomed we descry  
Thy ruling hand and power; for it is there



That Thou the stars dost lead,  
And in Light's pastures feed  
The glittering host, with a true Shepherd's care.  
To all in heaven, in earth, below,  
Thou dost their tasks assign, and life on all bestow.

To gods and mortal kind,  
Whoe'er have quaffed of mind,  
By kindly fate, the intellectual shower,  
Thou Lord and Steward art:  
And soul Thou dost impart  
To those whose life hath nought but soul for dower,  
And nature's unrestrained control  
For hangs on Thee the growth of even eyeless soul.

And things that lack Thy breath  
Are yet upheld from death;  
For Thou hast linked them to the One Supreme:  
Whence flows to earth by Thee  
Life's channel still kept free  
Through trackless worlds; and the descending stream  
Of good doth mould this world of ours  
To form of unseen world of highest mental powers.

A second sun hath shone  
This lower world upon:  
Parent of later light: and bright-eyed lord  
Of what doth live to-day,  
To-morrow to decay,  
Base matter: he doth yet to us afford  
All world-born good, by Thy decree;  
And is, O Thou God-born, type visible of Thee.

Beyond mind's utmost reach,  
Beyond all power of speech,  
Ineffable, unknown, O Father dread!  
Thou art of mind the Mind,



Of souls the Soul combined,  
Of natures all Thou art the Fountain-head.  
Behold! Thy servant bends the knee,  
And down on earth a poor blind suppliant falls to Thee.

But Thou the light dost give,  
The light for mind to live;  
To suppliant soul, O Bless'd, pity show:  
Diseases chase away,  
And cares the soul which slay,  
And shameless earthly dog, and fiendish foe:  
Far from my soul and from my prayer,  
Far from my life and deeds, chase every hurtful snare.

Armed may my body be  
Against the enemy,  
And armed my spirit, and whate'er is mine;  
Nor may he entrance find  
Within my heart or mind.  
Out be he cast, and out, by help Divine,  
Remain, and leave me, and take flight,  
The worldly fiend, who gives to passions strength and might.

And who obstructs the road  
Which upward leads to God;  
And quencheth aspiration's holy flame.  
But, O great King, give me,  
Companion meet to be,  
An angel of Thine own, of holy name,  
Of holy aid, an angel friend,  
Who may God-lighted prayer, and all good deeds defend.

A guardian may he be  
Of soul and life to me,  
And to my prayer and deeds protection yield;  
My body may he save  
From trouble's rushing wave,



And sickness; and from harm my spirit shield,  
And o'er my soul oblivion pour  
Of earthly passions which disturbed my peace before.

So may I spend my life  
All calm and free from strife!  
So may my soul, in hymning Thy high praise,  
Mount up with strengthened wing  
From earth, and heavenward spring!  
So may I cleanse from worldliness my ways,  
Till I, set free from earth-bound chain,  
No longer subject am to Fate's imperious reign;

But gain those halls above,  
And Thy blest folds of love,  
Whence forth doth flow the fountain of the soul!  
But Thou propitious be,  
And helping hand give me!  
Call me, O Blessèd! all my ways control!  
Hear Thou Thy humble suppliant's cry,  
And lift my soul from earth to native realms on high!

---



**Synesius.****V.**

Ἕγνων κούρον ηυμφας,  
*(Tetrapod: spondaic: catalect.)*



Awake, our lute, the child to sing  
 Of bride unwedded, holy maid;  
 True Son of the Eternal King,  
 4Ere earth's foundations yet were laid.

Ineffable Thy counsels, Lord,  
 Father of all, by which was born  
 The Christ! a virgin's throes afford  
 8The Light of Life to world forlorn!

A Man! and yet of ages gone,  
 And of all ages yet to come,  
 Throughout eternity, the One  
 12Upholder, Perfecter, and Sum.

Thyself, O Christ, art Fount of Light,  
 Light of the Father's Light, bright Ray!  
 Dark matter thou didst burst; and night  
 16To holy souls Thou turn'st to day.



Yea! Founder of the world Thou art,  
 And moulder of each starry sphere:  
 To earth her spurs Thou dost impart;  
 20While men hail Thee their Saviour dear.

For Thee his chariot Titan drives,  
 The quenchless fount of morning light.  
 From Thee the bull-faced moon derives  
 24Her power to loose the gloom of night.

By Thee the year with fruit is crowned:  
 By Thee the flocks and herds are fed:  
 Productive Thou dost make the ground;

28And to the poor Thou givest bread.

For Thou from Thine o'erflowing store  
Of grace ineffable and love,  
O'er surface of all worlds dost pour  
32The fertile sunshine from above.

And from Thy bosom forth did spring  
To life both light, and mind, and soul:  
O pity then Thine own offspring  
36Imprisoned under hard control,

By mortal limbs, by flesh and blood,  
Coerced, and measures stern of fate:  
O save Thine own, Thou great and good,  
40Nor let sick mind sick body hate!

Persuasion to my words nod Thou,  
And to my deeds such honest fame,  
That truth I never disavow,  
44Nor Sparta<sup>16</sup> nor Cyrene shame!

But may my soul, unbowed by grief,  
Draw all her nourishment from Thee,  
Stretching both eyes, in calm relief,  
48Up to Thy light, from sorrow free!

That, cleansed from dregs of worldly soil,  
I may by straight course upward mount,  
And 'scaping from earth's care and toil,  
52Be mingled with the soul's own fount!

Life such of pure content and praise,  
Do Thou to Thy poor harper grant,  
While still to Thee the hymn I raise,




---

16 Synesius was a native of Cyrene, which was an ancient colony of Sparta.

56And glory to the Father chant,

And Spirit,<sup>17</sup> mid-enthroned compeer,  
The Parent Root and Branch between!  
Be such on earth my bright career,  
60Nor sin nor sorrow intervene;

Until, within the courts above,  
The travail of my soul shall cease,  
Still singing hymns of heavenly love  
64In glory and in perfect peace.

Thee, Thee, the Fount of love, we bless,  
O Father, rock and strength of Thine;  
And Thee alike, His form express,  
68And seal, all beauty, Son Divine;

And Holy Breath, of both the crown,  
Whose quickening gifts like billows roll:  
Thou with the Father, send Him down  
72To cheer and fertilize my soul!



---

17 Here, as elsewhere, Synesius represents the Holy Spirit as seated between the Father and the Son, or holding the middle rank; cf. Ode III. l. 220; Ode IV. l. 97, in which latter place, as if to mend Synesius' theology, some sciolist has made additions contrary to the context, which additions I follow the learned editors in rejecting. In the New Testament the sacred order given in Matt. xxviii. 19, is not strictly or always followed; e. g. 2 Cor. xiii. 14, 1 Pet. i. 2, Rev. i. 4, 5. May this help to explain the difficult passage Heb. xii. 23, 24?

*Synesius.*

## VI.

Μετα μαγας αγιας αυτολοχευτου

*(Trimeter ionic.)*

Thee, with the holy self-sprung Fount, we sing,  
 Who art from all eternity great King,  
 God and of God, immortal, glorious One,  
 The, only Father's true and only Son!  
 To Thee, with Him, our praises all belong;  
 Thee will we crown with choicest flowers of song.  
 Son of the Father, Thou by birth Divine!  
 In Thee all bright the Father's glories shine.  
 And from the Father and through Thee, behold!  
 10The spirit issues--mystery threefold!  
 And takes the middle place<sup>18</sup> of light and mind,  
 In Trinity and Unity combined.  
 Poured was the sacred Fountain into Thee;  
 Yet One it was, and is eternally.  
 The Father's Wisdom, Mind, and beauteous Ray,  
 Eternal Son, Thou dost to all display.  
 Of hidden Deity the outstanding light,  
 In Thee the purposes Divine are bright;  
 For thus the Eternal Father did decree,  
 20That Thou Beginning to all worlds shouldst be;  
 And bring to bodies shape and form combined  
 With powers, from highest source, of thought and mind.  
 The orb of heaven in wisdom Thou dost guide,  
 And shepherd o'er the flock of stars preside.  
 Thou leader art of angels' choir and band;  
 Thou dost the phalanx of God's hosts command.  
 And Thou too dost the mortal race befriend,  
 And all their paths and wandering steps attend.  
 The Spirit undivided Thou dost spread  
 30O'er earth, and gather back to fountain-head  
 Thy gifts unwasted; for Thou dost unchain  
 Death's captives, bringing them to life again.




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18 See note on Ode V. 1. 57.

Accept, my King, this wreath of hymns, from me;  
And O! propitious to Thy servant be!  
Grant Thou calm life: and stay the wandering tide,  
And bid the flood through worldly straits subside;  
From soul and limbs diseases dire repel;  
And all pernicious rush of passions quell.  
Or wealth or poverty extreme forefend;  
40And to just deeds fame honourable send.  
Among the people good report accord;  
And with persuasion crown the gentle word;  
That waveless thus my mind may reap repose,  
And I ne'er groan oppressed with earth's dark woes;  
But watered from thy heavenly-flowing rill,  
My mind I may with wisdom's produce fill.

---



*Synesius.*

## VII.

Πρωτος νομον ευρομαν

*(Logaoedic.)*

I first invented in Thy praise,  
 O Blessèd, these new metric lays.  
 Immortal Thou! of virgin mild  
 The holy ever glorious Child:  
 Hope of the world, salvation's stem,  
 O Jesus of Jerusalem!  
 To Thee I raise the song on high;  
 To Thee my harp-strings joyful ply.  
 O show me favour, heavenly King!  
 10Accept the music which I bring  
 Of holy melodies; for Thou  
 Art He to whom my soul doth bow,  
 God over all, God's mighty Son,  
 The ever blest Immortal One!  
 The Eternal Father gave Thee birth;  
 Birth Thou hast given to heaven and earth.  
 All worlds are Thine; all nature Thine;  
 And wisdom infinite, divine.  
 In heaven, as God, Thy fame is spread;  
 20Below, as mingled with the dead.  
 But when the blessèd day had shone  
 That Thou shouldst mortal flesh put on  
 Of virgin mother, then the star,  
 Seen by the magi from afar  
 In eastern clime, perplexed their mind  
 And varied skill; nor could they find  
 Or who, or what, the child might be,  
 Or what the hidden deity;  
 No answer could their wisdom bring;  
 30Or God, or doomed to die, or king.  
 'Tis well! meet be your offerings:  
 Bring myrrh for death's last sufferings:  
 Bring royal presents of fine gold;  
 And gifts of frankincense unfold.



My God! here frankincense behold!  
My King! deign to receive the gold!  
And O! Thou Saviour born to die,  
Myrrh, for Thy tomb let me supply!  
And cleansèd was the earth by Thee,  
40And cleansèd were the waves of sea;  
And all the paths which upward bear,  
In slender element of air;  
And dark recesses underground,  
In succour to the dead there bound,  
By Thee, great Conqueror, were trod;  
And Hades stood aghast at God.  
But O! propitious be, great King!  
Smile on the tribute which I bring  
Of tuneful songs and measured lays  
50Designèd for Thy holy praise.



*Synesius.*

## VIII.

Ἵπο δωριον αρμογαν  
(*Logaoedic.*)


 81

O! 'Tis no theme of common things  
 That wakes my ivory-fastened strings!  
 To Thee, in solemn Dorian<sup>19</sup> strain,  
 I lift my heart and voice amain,  
 O blessèd, O Immortal One,  
 The holy Virgin's glorious Son!  
 But, O great King, save Thou my life  
 From cares and woes and worldly strife,  
 That from calamity all free  
 10Both night and day I may praise Thee.  
 And to my mind mayst Thou convey  
 From mind's own fount, a clear bright ray.  
 Unto my youth mayst Thou impart  
 Soundness of limbs and manly heart:  
 And may my deeds reflect Thy light  
 In honour, truth, and glory bright.  
 And on the ripeness of mine age  
 Mayst Thou the wisdom of the sage  
 Bestow, with health, the blessed mead  
 20Of harvest rich from well-sown seed.  
 And on that darling son of mine  
 May Thy preserving mercy shine,  
 Whom, when just passing gate of death,  
 Thou didst restore to vital breath.  
 O Lord of life, 'twas Thou didst wrench  
 From Death's firm grasp, his prey, and quench  
 My burning grief in floods of joy;  
 For Thou didst give me back my boy;  
 And tears, O Father, Thou didst dry,  
 30In answer to Thy suppliant's cry!  
 May son and daughter, much loved pair,  
 Thy kind protection ever share,


 82

19 He uses the epithet Dorian in a general sense, to express that which is grave and sublime.

And all my house, in happy calm,  
Be sheltered by Thine hand from harm!  
And, O my Saviour King, bless Thou  
The partner of my wedded vow;  
From sickness and from sorrow free,  
Faithful, one-minded, may she be,  
Preserved by Thee from thought of sin,  
40 All bright without, all pure within!  
Untouched by roving passions' tide,  
My honoured wife, my love, my pride!  
Loose Thou my soul from baneful chains  
Of worldly life, its cares and pains,  
And floods of dismal grief and woe,  
Which overwhelm this earth below.  
O! thus prepared may I be found  
With holy worshippers around  
To lead the choir, and chants to raise  
50 To Thy all-glorious Father's praise;  
And to Thy majesty, great King,  
Loud hymns again I hope to sing;  
Again in voice of praise Thy name  
To bless, Thy honours to proclaim;  
May be, my harp I shall again  
Tune all-unhurt to highest strain.

---



*Synesius.*

## IX.

Πολυηρατε, κυδιμε,  
(*Logaoedic.*)



To Thee, much loved, be honour paid,  
O glorious Child of Hebrew maid!  
To Thee I raise the hymn anew,  
Who didst the serpent's wiles subdue,  
And drive afar the infernal foe  
That filled e'en Paradise with woe:  
For, subtle with forbidden fruit,  
Of woeful knowledge nurse and root,  
Our primal founder he o'ercame,  
10And smote the world with death and shame.  
All-glorious Thou with many a crown!  
Thou didst to wretched earth come down,  
To dwell with man by death assailed,  
Thyself in mortal body veiled;  
And Thou dark Tartarus didst tread,  
Midst countless nations of the dead,  
Then Hades, ancient-born, amazed,  
Did shudder as on Thee he gazed;  
And the all-devouring savage hound<sup>20</sup>  
20Backward recoiled with frightened bound.  
But lo! to holy souls, oppressed  
With direful woes, Thou gavest rest,  
That they in chorus led by Thee,  
To praise the Father might be free.  
And from below when Thou didst rise,  
The demon-hosts beneath the skies,  
Unnumbered, quaked, O mighty King,  
To hear the judgment Thou shouldst bring.  
Then did the stars, immortal band,  
30Gazing at Thee, astonished stand.  
But Ether laughed, the father he--  
The father wise--of harmony;



20 The fabled Cerberus, Janitor Orci.

And mingled from his seven-toned lyre  
 Bright notes of music's holy fire,  
 Raising to Lord of earth and sky,  
 The song of victory on high.  
 And Lucifer, the guide of day,  
 With smiling countenance was gay;  
 And golden Hesperus afar  
 40 Shot beams, the Cythereian star.  
 And shepherdess of right, the Moon  
 Filled her bright crescent with festoon,  
 And flowering wreath of liquid fire,  
 And led her peers in joyous choir.  
 And through the trackless paths of air  
 Titan spread out his flaming hair:  
 For God's own Son, the master Mind  
 Which did all things create and bind  
 In mutual law, full well he knew,  
 50 From whom his primal fire he drew.  
 But Thou, as plying heavenly oar,  
 Or wing of bird, didst upward soar  
 With holy feet; and o'er the skies  
 And dark-blue-vaulted heaven didst rise,  
 Up-mounting to the spheres of light,  
 The realms of Mind for ever bright.  
 There goodness from the Fountain-head  
 In bliss through silent heaven is spread;  
 There nor deep-flowing restless Time  
 60 Drags earthborn children through the slime  
 Of coarser matter, nor hard fates  
 Roll turbid floods o'er mortal states;  
 But Age himself, the ancient-sprung,  
 Is ageless, old at once, and young;  
 And in the unfading courts of love  
 is steward to the blest above.



**Synesius.****X.**<sup>21</sup>

Μνωεο Χριστε,  
*(Anapaestic monometer.)*



- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.

Lord Jesu, think on me;  
 And this poor offering,  
 Which I do humbly weave for Thee,  
 Accept, O Christ, my King.

Lord Jesu, think on me,  
 And purge away my sin:  
 From earthborn passions set me free,  
 And make me pure within.

Lord Jesu, think on me,  
 With care and woe oppressed;  
 Let me Thy loving servant be,  
 And taste Thy promised rest.



Lord Jesu, think on me  
 Amid the battle's strife:

---

21 In translating this ode I have given my spirit more liberty. It may be considered as a paraphrase or amplification, rather than an exact translation of the original. A brief form of it appears in Hymns Ancient and Modern.

In all my pain and misery  
Be Thou my Health and Life.

Lord Jesu, think on me,  
Nor let me go astray:  
Through darkness and perplexity  
Point Thou the heavenly way.

Lord Jesu, think on me,  
When flows the tempest high:  
When on doth rush the enemy,  
O Saviour, be Thou nigh.

Lord Jesu, think on me,  
That when the flood is past,  
I may the Eternal Brightness see,  
And share Thy joy at last.

Lord Jesu, think on me,  
And grant me my desire,  
That I, with mind and limbs set free,  
May join the heavenly choir.

Lord Jesu, think, on me,  
That I may sing above  
Praise to the Father, and to Thee,  
And to the Holy Dove.

---



**GREGORY**  
***BISHOP OF NAZIANZUS***

(Born A.D. 325. Died, 389).

This eminent man needs no introduction from my humble pen. His praises are, and always have been, in the Church. Born near Nazianzus in Cappadocia, he succeeded his father in that episcopate. He cultivated his natural gifts, and increased his learning, at Athens. Thence he went forth to be a champion of the Christian faith, and a luminary in the great Church constellation of the fourth century. After the deliverance from the last effort of paganism contrived and led by the Emperor Julian, who had once been his friend and fellow-collegian, he displayed his great talents and eloquence at Constantinople, of which great Eastern capital for a time he became bishop. But soon he retired to the solitary cell, which he had before loved and frequented, near his native place, Nazianzus; and there renewed and exercised his gift of sacred poetry, of which, to name but one, his Hymn to God is an undying record, and may bear comparison with any similar composition in any age.



## Gregory Nazianzen.

### I.

#### HYMN TO CHRIST.

Σε τον αφθιτον μοναρχην  
(*Dimeter ionicus.*)



- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.

O Thou, the One Supreme,  
O thou, the deathless King,  
Be Thou my only theme:  
Grant me Thyself to sing.  
To Thee the hymn, to Thee the praise,  
Celestial choirs for ever raise.

For Thee the ages run  
In order as was given;  
For Thee shines forth the sun,  
The day-born eye of heaven:  
For Thee the moon, and grand array  
Of stars, hold on their nightly way.

With reasonable soul  
For Thee learns favoured man  
His passions to control,  
And the Divine to scan;  
For Thou of all Creator art,  
Thou madst the whole and every part.



All march in ordered band:  
O'er all Thou hold'st the reins:  
All creatures of Thy hand  
Thy Providence sustains.  
For Thou the word didst speak--'twas done--  
That Word of Thine is God the Son.

For of same honour He,  
Thine own begotten Son,  
In form and quality  
With Thee the Father one:  
Who placed all things in harmony,  
That over all He King might be.

And all Thy works infolding  
In bonds of love and truth,  
The Spirit all-upholding,  
Renews creation's youth  
Foreseeing, He for all provides,  
And Guardian over all presides.



Thee, Thee, the Triune King,  
The One Eternal Lord,  
Thee evermore I'll sing,  
By earth and heaven adored,  
The Three in One, the One in Three,  
The ever-living Trinity.

Immovable of mind,  
Of ways past mortal ken,

The boundless, undefined,  
Wisdom's deep origin,  
Upholder of the heavenly towers,  
Ruler of all created powers.

Beginning none, nor end:  
The self-sprung Light art Thou:  
We cannot comprehend,  
But to Thy Brightness bow,  
Whose eye, repelling mortal gaze,  
All things above, below, surveys.

Unseen, yet ever near,  
Father, propitious be:  
This my petition hear,  
This boon accord to me:  
That Light to serve through endless day,  
And have my sins all washed away;

That I, with conscience clear  
From every evil thought,  
May love with filial fear,  
And worship as I ought,  
Pure holy hands and heart upraising,  
And Christ the Lord for ever praising.

To Thee I bend the knee;  
When He shall come, grant me,  
That I His glory see,  
That I His servant be:  
When He shall come--shall come again;  
When He shall come--shall come to reign.

Father, propitious be!  
On me Thy mercy show!  
Bow down Thine ear to me,  
On me Thy grace bestow;



For Thine the glory, Thine the grace,  
While countless ages run their race.

II.  
HYMN TO GOD.

Ὡ παντων επεκεινα &#38;&#35;183; τι γαρ θεμις αλλο σε μελπειν;  
(*Dactylic hexameter.*)



- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.

O Thou, the One Supreme o'er all!<sup>22</sup>  
For by what other name  
May we upon Thy greatness call,  
Or celebrate Thy fame?

Ineffable! to Thee what speech  
Can hymns of honour raise?  
Ineffable! what tongue can reach  
The measure of Thy praise?

How, unapproached, shall mind of man  
Descry Thy dazzling throne;  
And pierce, and find Thee out, and scan,  
Where Thou dost dwell alone?



---

22 Or, O Thou beyond the range of all--παντων επεκεινα.

Unuttered Thou! all uttered things  
Have had their birth from Thee:  
The One unknown! from Thee the springs  
Of all we know and see!

Mindful, and mindless, all things yield  
To Thy parental sway  
For Thou to all art life and shield:  
They honour and obey.

For round Thee centre all the woes  
Of night and darkling day,  
The common wants and common throes;  
And all to Thee do pray.

And all things as they move along  
In order fixed by Thee,  
Thy watchword heed, in silent song  
Hymning Thy majesty.

And lo! all things abide in Thee,  
And through the complex whole,  
Thou spread'st Thine own Divinity,  
Thyself of all the goal.

One Being Thou, all things, yet none,  
Nor one nor yet all things;  
How call Thee, O mysterious One?  
A worthy name who brings?

All-named from attributes Thine own,  
How call Thee as we ought?  
Thou art unlimited, alone,  
Beyond the range of thought.

What heaven-born intellect shall rend  
The veiling clouds above?



Be Thou propitious! ever send  
Bright tokens of Thy love!

O Thou the One Supreme o'er all!  
For by what other name  
May we upon Thy greatness call,  
Or celebrate Thy fame?

---

III.

**HYMN TO CHRIST ON EASTER DAY**  
**(AFTER LONG SILENCE),**

Cristi anax, se prvton, epei logon heri dvka,  
dhnaion katecwn, fqegxom apo stomatwn,  
*(Dactylic hexameter, and pentameter.)*



O Christ the King! since breath pent up so long  
I have outpoured, Thou first shalt be my song;  
May this my word, the current of my mind,  
If lawful thus to speak, acceptance find,  
And unto Thee as holy incense rise  
Of holiest priest, a grateful sacrifice!  
The Father's Brightness, Word of the Great Mind,  
Who cannot be by power of speech defined,  
High Light of highest Light, the Only Son,  
10Image and Seal of the Immortal One,  
Without beginning; from same Fount of Light  
With the Great Spirit; infinite in might:  
All-glorious Thou, and Author of all good:  
From age to age Thy truth hath firmly stood.  
Enthroned Thou reignest high in heaven above,  
Almighty Breath of Mind and Lord of Love.  
Throughout this framèd universe Divine  
Whatever is, or shall be, all is Thine:  
Thou madest all, to all Thou givest life,  
20And all Thou guidest: nowhere fault or strife,  
Nor error in Thy workmanship is found:  
The whole in willing chain to Thee is bound.  
Thou laid'st the world's foundation: and Thy nod  
All things obey, and own their Sovereign God.  
For Thee the lofty sun, the king of day,  
Quenching the stars, holds on his fiery way.  
For Thee, for so Thou bidst, the eye of night,  
The moon, waxes and wanes, full orb of light.  
For Thee the belt of heaven, all-dancing ring,  
30And seasons kindly mingling, laugh and sing.  
For Thee the fixèd stars and planets shine  
In course, and speak Thy wisdom all divine.



Thy light they are, the heavenly minds that be,  
All sing on high the glorious Trinity.  
Man is Thy glory too, angel below,  
Here placed to sing, O Light, Thy beauteous glow.  
Immortal, fleshless, glory's highest ray,  
Who mortal flesh yet took'st, man's woes to stay,  
For Thee I live, for Thee my songs arise,  
40For Thee I am a breathing sacrifice;  
For this, of all things once possessed by me,  
Alone remains, and this I give to Thee.



I tie my tongue, and loose it at Thy will;  
In either, what Thou wouldst may I fulfil,  
Speak what is right, nor think aught else beside:  
From mire select the pearl, with Thee my Guide;  
Gold from the sand, the rose from thorny brake,  
From straw-encumbered ears the pure grain take.

To Thee, O Christ, this wreath of uttered praise,  
50As firstfruits of my loving toil, I raise.

For from the dead, with whom He mingled lay,  
Great Christ arose, upon this gladsome day;  
Gates of grim Hades He did open fling;  
And broke death's power, and robbed him of his sting;  
Rushed from the tomb, appeared to speaking men,  
For whom, once born, He died and rose again;  
That we new-born might rise, from death set free,  
And ever live, ascending Lord, with Thee.  
This day glad Heaven with acclamation rings,  
60And choir angelic crowning anthem sings.  
This day my closed lips I loose in song  
To Thee, to whom my lute and breath belong.



Of mind to Mind, of word to the true Word,  
I here have offered what I could afford:  
Hereafter, if He will, I hope to bring

To the Great Spirit worthier offering.

IV.  
"TO HIS OWN SOUL."<sup>23</sup>  
τι σοι θελεις γενεσθαι;  
(*Iambic dimeter catalectic.*)



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23 The original is one of the most spirited pieces anywhere to be found, truly forcible and racy.

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EPILOGUE.

51.

52.

O soul of mine, repining,  
What wouldst have done for thee?  
Speak, great or small defining:  
Granted thy wish shall be.

Of all bright things, prized highest,  
    Beneath the rolling sun,  
Tell that for which thou sighest;  
    For thee it shall be done.

Wouldst thou assume the measure  
    Of Gyges, Lydia's king,  
To hide or show at pleasure  
    By power of magic ring?

Wouldst thou rich Midas follow?  
    "All gold I touch," he cried:  
'Tis given! e'en gold to swallow:  
    So all of gold he died.

Wouldst shine in brilliant trammels,  
    With pearls and jewels grand?  
Have flocks, and herds, and camels,  
    And acres of fat land?

Such things we will not barter:  
    To thee they were a snare:  
They are not in our charter,  
    Nor would I have them there.

For since to God advancing  
    I came at His own call,  
Such cares the soul entrancing,  
    I have abandoned all.

Wouldst have the nations bending  
    Beneath thy yoke to day,  
To-morrow thyself lending  
    To grace another's sway?

The sway of one, once marching,  
    It might be, at thy side;



Or menial base, now arching  
His neck in lofty pride?

Wouldst thou in Love's sweet anguish,  
In indolence and ease,  
Let truth and honour languish,  
And change with changing breeze?

Wouldst wed a fair Heth's daughter,  
Fair progeny to see?  
Ah me! of woes and slaughter  
Progenitor to be!

Wouldst have the commons sounding  
The greatness of thy fame,  
And theatres rebounding  
With echoes of thy name?

Wouldst thou in courts o'erflowing  
With legal mockery,  
Justice and truth o'erthrowing,  
Pillage, and pillaged be?

Wouldst take a martial bearing,  
And sport with blood and gore?  
Or, Pythian garlands wearing,  
Defy the lion's roar?

Wouldst have the town applauding,  
And statues reared to thee?  
The world thy merits lauding,  
Wouldst thou its idol be?

Vain wish! a shadowy dreaming,  
A moan of wind hence bound,  
Whiz of an arrow gleaming,  
A hand-clap's dying sound.



Such things will fade to-morrow,  
    However bright to-day:  
And he must sleep in sorrow  
    Who makes them his heart's stay.

Toys common! bad men's heaven!  
    And ah! when hence they go,  
To none is it then given  
    To carry aught below.

What then, O soul repining,  
    Since these things nothing be,  
Substantial good defining,  
    Wouldst thou have done for thee?

Wouldst be a god, presiding  
    At God's own side most high,  
Angelic chorus guiding,  
    All radiant o'er the sky?

Go thou, on pinions gliding  
    Of vehement desire,  
On rapid whirlwind riding  
    Whither thou dost aspire.

To plume thy wing I'm trying,  
    Nor spare the friendly goad:  
Mount upward, bird-like flying  
    On thine ethereal road.

But earth's own child on crutches,  
    Since, I am yoked to thee,  
As queen in butchers' clutches,  
    Just tell how this must be;

Whom wilt thou have abettor,  
    To be upheld in breath?



For I'm no more thy debtor,  
Nor heed vain threats of death.

Or wouldst thou perfumed table,  
With dainties covered o'er,  
So art cuisine be able  
To stimulate thee more?

And lyre, and whirl so maddening  
Of rapid foot and hand,  
And things to tell too saddening,  
Known to the revelling band?

Art thou for such things wrangling?  
Have thy desire!--but wait:  
Such things, not life, but strangling,  
To friends insatiate!



For thee, a house abideth,  
A rock with self-formed dome;  
Nature herself provideth:  
We give thee such a home!

Or if thy fancy leadeth  
To build thyself a cell,  
But little toil it needeth,  
Where thou mayst safely dwell,

The body claims small payment,  
Ere it returns to dust:  
Skins, camel's hair, for raiment  
Sufficed of old the just.

And grass, or straw, as chances,  
Make thou thy humble bed:  
And purple heath, or branches,  
Thy coverlet be spread.



Such for my guests is meetest:  
No fear to great or small:  
Plain table: odours sweetest,  
Kind earth's free gifts to all.

Thus housed, we will thee nourish,  
As best we can afford:  
Wouldst eat? take bread and flourish:  
Take meal, if on the board.

Here's salt: and thyme we scant not:  
Such source no toil requires:  
More luxuries we want not,  
Whate'er the world desires.

Or drink wouldst thou? there springeth  
An everflowing bowl:  
No bane the fountain bringeth,  
Bright cheerer of the soul.

But wouldst unbend in season,  
And not, o'erstrained, repine?  
We grant in this is reason,  
Nor grudge the rough-made wine.

But thou dost spurn all measure,  
And wouldst the vessel bore,  
And take huge draughts of pleasure  
Till thou couldst hold no more.

Then seek another helot,  
All lengths with thee to go,  
No idler I, nor zealot,  
To nurse domestic foe.

A frozen reptile taken,  
And with fond warmth caressed:



See! it to life doth waken,  
And wound me in the breast.

Wouldst boundless gold-roofed mansions,  
Gemmed paragons of art,  
And master-piece expansions,  
To life which almost start?

Colours with colours blending  
In opposite array;  
Rare tablets, softness lending,  
Or shining bright as day?

Dost long for robes wide-flowing,  
Pride of the untouched great;  
And wealth on fingers glowing,  
Incredible to state?

Art thou at beauty aiming?  
The wise would scorn to win:  
More I than all, proclaiming  
That beauty is within.

Thus I to men benighted,  
of earth the creatures fond,  
For time alone quick-sighted,  
With not a thought beyond.

But ye who soar up higher,  
A noble life to live;  
Who would to heaven be nigher,  
Behold what God doth give!

In poorest clay there dwelleth  
That which can never die:  
With this my bosom swelleth:  
For this I food supply!



God-minded, thyself harden!  
Meet calm the flashing sword!  
Plant trees for God's own garden!  
Be worker, with the Lord!



Up! living words be building,  
In God's blest truth secure.  
Not robbed by foe's false gilding  
Through pleasure's baneful lure!

Again of life eternal,  
Approach the blessed tree  
The way, O Thou Supernal,  
I've found in knowing Thee.

Past, present, never-ending,  
The One great Light in Three;  
To whom all things are tending:  
To Thee, all glory be!

To self the wise thus speaketh,  
Turning his eyes within;  
And eager there he seeketh  
To find out lurking sin.



But who to speak refuseth,  
Will pass his days in vain:  
Nay, more! the ease he chooseth,  
May end in greatest pain.

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V.

**A MORNING PRAYER.**

Ὁρθρος<sup>24</sup> δίδωμι τῷ Θεῷ μου δεξιάς,  
(*Iambic trimeter.*)



'Tis dawn: to God I lift my hand,  
To regulate my way;  
My passions rule, and unmoved stand,  
And give to Thee the day:

Not one dark word or deed of sin,  
Nor one base thought allow;  
But watch all avenues within,  
And wholly keep my vow.

Shamed were my age, should I decline;  
Shamed were Thy table too,  
At which I stand:--the will is mine:  
Give grace, my Christ, to do.

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24 Ὁρθρος violates metre; I would retain the reading ορθρος, and put a colon. Thus, as it seems to me, grammar, sense, and metre, may be all satisfied.

VI.

**A HYMN AT NIGHT, AFTER FAILURE TO KEEP VOW.**

εψευσαμην σε την αληθειαν, λογε,

*(Iambic trimeter.)*



O Thou, the Word of truth divine!  
All light I have not been,  
Nor kept the day as wholly Thine;  
For Thou dark spots hast seen.

The day is down: night hath prevailed:  
My Lord I have belied;  
I vowed, and thought to do, but failed;  
My steps did somewhere slide.

There came a darkness from below  
Obscuring safety's way.  
Thy light, O Christ, again bestow;  
Turn darkness into day.

VII.  
AN EVENING HYMN.

Σε και νυν ευλογουμεν,  
(*Semi-iambic.*)



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And now again at night,  
O Christ, the living Word,  
Thou Light of the Eternal Light,  
Be Thou by us adored.

Thou dost the Spirit give,  
Third Light, in glory one;  
His grace, by whom alone we live,  
Thou dost refuse to none.

Thou didst the darkness scatter,  
Thou mad'st the light to shine,  
That now through all primeval matter  
Might spring delight divine.



It, a rude mass before,  
From Thee took order new;  
And shapely form, and steadfast law,  
So beautiful to view.

And mind of man with light  
From heaven Thou didst endow,

By word and wisdom that he might  
Thine image bear below;

And lighted in his soul,  
Thine own great Light might see;  
And thenceforth not in part, but whole,  
Himself all light might be.

And heaven Thou didst array,  
With those bright orbs above;  
And day to night, and night to day,  
Proclaim Thy law of love;

Yielding in turn; the one  
To worn-out flesh brings rest!  
The other calls, "Let work be done!"  
Such work as Thou lov'st best.



VIII.

ADMONITORY ADDRESS TO A VIRGIN.<sup>25</sup>

Παρθενε, νυμφε Χριστου,

(*The Greek is of varied metre, arranged in lines of generally seven syllables each.*)

O bride of Christ on high,  
Thy Bridegroom glorify!  
Always thyself keep pure,  
In word and wisdom sure,  
That bright with Him all-bright  
Thou e'er mayst dwell in light.  
Far better spouse is He  
Than earthly spouse could be:  
Thy union happier far  
10 Than mortal unions are.  
In bodily estate  
Thou yet didst imitate  
The intellectual powers,  
Giving to Him thy hours:  
And didst acquire on earth  
The angels' right of birth.  
'Tis "bind and loose" below,  
Bodies from bodies grow:  
Above each stands alone,  
20 Nor loosing *there* is known.  
Of pure existence, they  
First bear the ethereal ray,  
Spirit and fire: none rests,  
Doing great God's behests.  
But now wild matter found--  
All nature flowing round  
With unresisted force--  
A mingled intercourse;  
But God the flood restrained,



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25 This poem, though lacking the spirit and vigour of the Address to his Soul, may yet find acceptance with some; and though the times are utterly changed, and what in an age of pagan persecution "was good for the present distress" (1 Cor. vii. 26) may be so no longer, yet there is much in it of good instruction: the style is pretty and occasionally elevated.

30And marriage laws ordained.  
But thou hast hence escaped,  
And upward thy course shaped;  
From matter's base alloy  
To spirit's holy joy.  
Mind harmonized with mind,  
Doth truest pleasure find:  
Such harmony is thine,  
A harmony divine.  
With flesh thou war dost wage,  
40And helpst God's image:  
For thou art God's own breath,  
With body yoked till death:  
That out of wrestling sore,  
At length the battle o'er,  
And earth well beaten down,  
Thou mayst receive the crown.  
To marriage also raise,  
But only second praise.  
That is for passion given,  
50This is bright light of heaven:  
That founds a pure offspring,  
This is self-offering.  
This honoured was, we hold,  
At seasons marked of old.  
To this in Paradise  
Lo! Adam testifies:  
For this on Sinai's peak  
Doth Moses also speak;  
And Zachary the priest,  
60Of God's true saints not least,  
And whom we hail the rather  
As the Forerunner's father.  
But marriage hath its need:  
Hence springs a holy seed:  
And hence the virgin<sup>26</sup> bride,



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26 Virgin bride--that is, the Church. So Methodius in his *Virgins' Song*, and all the early Christians. See Rev. xxi. 2, 9, etc.

Honoured at God's own side.  
Yet of the flesh it is, and earth,  
All earthly from its birth.  
When law and shadows ruled,  
70And we were sometime schooled,  
Marriage held sceptre mild,  
Yet like a little child.  
But when the letter died,  
The Spirit was supplied:  
For Christ had come and borne  
In flesh our woes and scorn:  
Had brought Redemption nigh,  
And then ascended high:  
Christ, sprung from Virgin's womb,  
80Christ, Conqueror o'er the tomb.  
Then continence did rise,  
And this base world despise,  
Which should its course have mended,  
And high with Christ ascended.

Thou journey'st well! but haste!  
Behind is fiery waste:  
Take to thy steps good heed,  
And to the mountain speed.  
Cast not one backward glance  
90On Sodom, lest perchance  
Thou, fixed upon the ground,  
A pile of salt be found.  
In battling with the flesh  
Take ever courage fresh,  
Neither by terror bent,  
Nor over-confident.  
Faint not, for He is nigh  
Who will all strength supply.

A spark may kindle hell:  
100Water the flame cloth quell.



Full means to thee are lent  
For good self-government.  
Let thou the fear of God  
Freeze the rebellious blood:  
Fasting the flesh control:  
Keep watches o'er thy soul,  
And pour it forth in prayer:  
Such thy true weapons are.  
Add tears: and lowly bed,  
110With reeds or rushes spread:  
One constant flame of love  
Rising to God above,  
And lulling all desire  
Which doth not up aspire.  
The fallen rise by thee!  
The shipwrecked pitied be!  
Thyself live out the gale,  
Expanding Hope's bright sail.



They fall not who ne'er rise,  
120But they who try the skies.  
Few mount on pinion wings:  
Straight course to humbler things.  
Fell Lucifer through pride  
Angels in heaven reside.  
One, traitor, sunk in night:  
The eleven are stars of light.



Be pure, be wholly pure,  
Of this make ever sure,  
Lest thou, by heeding not,  
130Christ's spotless robe shouldst spot.  
Let modest be thine eye:  
Thy tongue speak maidenly:  
Thy mind not pandering,  
Thy foot not wandering:  
Nor loud laugh marking thee,

As one we blush to see.

Thy poor and tarnished wear,  
Thy unadornèd hair,  
I honour more than pearls,  
140 Or silken dress, or curls.

Fair flower is modest face,  
And paleness is true grace:  
And virtues plentiful  
Are braid most beautiful.  
With paints let others dress  
The living God's likeness;  
Live tablet they of sin,  
And all that's base within.  
Whate'er thou hast of beauty,  
150 Die let it all to duty:  
But beauty of the soul--  
'Tis God's--*it* keep thou whole.

Of men, though good they be,  
The sight 'twere best thou flee.  
Some cheat might thee entrance,  
Or be entranced perchance:  
Eye now with eye bespangling,  
And word with word entangling,  
Then cheek with cheek o'erglowing,  
160 And mutual passion flowing.  
'Tis well: but not for thee:  
Not thine the accursed tree:  
The tree of Life thy care;  
The serpent's guile beware!

O maiden, hear my word,  
Have thou no other lord;  
Thy Bridegroom reigns above  
And bids thee faithful prove.



Thou from the flesh hast fled,  
170And it to thee is dead,  
Why turn to it again,  
And make thy work all vain?  
That singleness of thine  
Is a rare gift divine:  
Few they whom it adorns,  
As rose among the thorns.  
Such grace'tis thine to know:  
High o'er the snares below,  
By which the wicked fall,  
180Thou safely passest all.



Lo! one no sooner builds,  
And bridal chamber gilds,  
Than she with mournful gloom  
Forth bears him to the tomb.  
Felt one a father's pride?  
At once the loved child died.  
And oh! the mother's pain  
Of travailing in vain!

And jealousy, ah me!  
190How frightful 'tis to see,  
When each the other taunts,  
Where stolen friendship haunts!



What wormwood and what gall,  
Worst recompence of all,  
To rear up family,  
And then dishonoured be!

One care is thine, one call,  
To look to God in all!  
But little thou dost need:  
200That little God will speed.

Shelter and barley cake  
Sufficient wealth will make:  
Nor shall dire need impart  
Keen edge to tempter's dart,  
As when Christ, hard bestead,  
He bade turn stones to bread.

By thee, however tried,  
Be all base gain denied:  
Fowls of the air God feeds,  
210 Sure then His saints He heeds.

Of oil, if faith prevail,  
Thy cruse shall never fail.  
By Cherith's desert brook  
At the great Prophet look!  
To feed him ravens sped:  
So too shalt thou be fed!

How Thecla from the flame,<sup>27</sup>  
And lions, unscathed came,  
Thou know'st: and how great Paul,  
220 Preacher of truth to all,  
Bore hunger, thirst, and cold,  
Through death's worst forms still bold;  
That thou might'st look, O maid,  
To God alone for aid,  
Who in the wilderness  
With food can myriads bless.

Lo! beauty fadeth fast,  
Nor will earth's glories last:  
Wealth is a failing stream,  
230 And power an empty dream.



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27 Thecla, see *The Virgins' Song of Methodius*, p. 141.

But thou, faith's sail unfurled,  
Hast fled this erring world,  
Steering thy course on high  
To realms beyond the sky.  
There in the holy shrine  
Thou shalt for ever shine:  
And there with angels raise  
The song of endless praise!

A better portion far  
240 Than sons and daughters are!

But maidens, be ye wise,  
And watch with longing eyes,  
That when Christ shall return  
Your lamps may brightly burn:  
That with the Bridegroom ye  
May enter in, and see  
The beauty and the grace  
Of His own dwelling place,  
And share in truth and love  
250 The mysteries above.

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**PSALM OF THE NAASSENI.<sup>28</sup>**



(THE AUTHOR UNKNOWN.)

Νομος ην γενικος του παντος ο πρωτιστος νοος·

((*Anapaestic logaoedic.*)

The first Eternal Mind was law to all,  
And did the Universe to being call:  
Next, of the First-born forth was chaos spread  
And thirdly, soul on task of labour sped:  
But it in vesture thin, and slight array,  
O'ercome with toil, to death becomes a prey.  
At one time regnant it beholds the light;  
Then soon laments, cast down in piteous plight.  
'Tis hazard all: now joy, now grief, befalls;  
And now it dies, and now fresh life recalls.  
In never-ending labyrinth of woes  
It, wretched, hither now, now hither goes.  
Then Jesus spake: On earth, O Father, see  
How things have strayed in dire perplexity  
Far from Thy Breath: how floods of evil roll,  
And in base matter overwhelm the soul!  
Escape it seeks from bitter woe all round,  
But knows not where a passage may be found.  
O Father, Me upon this errand send:  
Bearing Thy seals, I will the depths descend;  
Throughout whole ages I will make my way,  
All mysteries of darkness turn to day;  
And godlike forms I thenceforth will display:  
Forth Knowledge I will call to quell all strife,  
And upward show the holy paths of life.



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28 For a full account of the Naasseni, who they were, and what were their opinions, I would refer the reader to Hippolytus, *Antenicene Christian Library*, vol. i. book v. Suffice it here to say that they were a learned sect of Gnostics; that they held very strange opinions; but were great hymn makers. A translation of this particular Psalm may be found in the same volume, p. 153. I had made my translation before I was aware of this.

**METHIDIUS**  
***BISHOP AND MARTYR***

(Died about A.D. 311).

Methodius, a father of the Church, and a martyr, was Bishop of Olympas or Patara, in Lycia, and afterwards of Tyre in Palestine. He lived during the last half of the third century, and died a martyr at Chalcis in Greece, probably A.D. 311, during the Diocletian persecution. Jerome<sup>29</sup> ranks him among the popular writers, and commends him especially for the neatness of his style.<sup>30</sup>

This Virgins' Song of his composing is in twenty-four parts, or strophies, each beginning with a letter of the alphabet in order from A to Ω.<sup>31</sup> Ten virgins are supposed to be present. Thecla<sup>32</sup> leads, giving the strophy in each case, the rest join in chorus, singing the burden or refrain (εφωμνιον). The learned editors refer to the Συμποσιον of Plato, also to the Παρθενια of Alcman and Pindar; which Methodius may in part have imitated.

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29 De Viris Illust. c. 83.

30 MOSHEIM, Eccl. Hist., vol. i. pp. 236-7.

31 Cf. Psalm cxlv., with the letters in order of the Hebrew alphabet. In Greek poetry many instances of the same thing occur. It was useful as an aid to the memory.

32 See in Gregory's Admonitory Address to a Virgin, above, p. 125: also in the Anacreontic Ode of Sophronius, in which the praises and exploits of this first female martyr are set forth, pp. 32, 44-5, of the Greek Anthology.

**THE VIRGINS' SONG.**

Ἄνωθεν, παρθενοί, βοῆς ἐγερσινεκρός ηἶχος  
(*Iambic metre, varied.*)



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THE REFRAIN.

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THE REFRAIN.

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THE REFRAIN.

The Bridegroom cometh! overhead  
The shout descending wakes the dead!  
Go forth to meet the King,  
The gates just entering!  
Virgins, white-robed, with lamps haste eastward forth to meet Him,  
Haste ye, O haste to greet Him!

With holy feet, and lamps bright burning,  
I go to meet my Lord returning.

Earth's mournful bliss I left, and toys  
Of wanton life, and foolish joys:  
To Thee alone I cling:  
Thou art my Life, my King:  
Grant that I may, O Blessèd, ever close to Thee,  
Thy royal beauty see!



With holy feet, and lamps bright burning,  
I go to meet my Lord returning.

Thou art my wealth: for Thee I fled  
All worldly lure; and upward sped;  
And come in spotless dress  
Of Thine own Righteousness,  
With Thee to enter in the bridal chamber gates,  
Where perfect bliss awaits.

With holy feet, and lamps bright burning,  
I go to meet my Lord returning.

Saved from the dragon's myriad wiles,  
By which the simple he beguiles,  
I bore the dreadful fire,  
And wild beasts' savage ire;  
Waiting till Thou from Heaven, O Hope of all creation,  
shouldst come to my salvation!



With holy feet, and lamps bright burning,  
I go to meet my Lord returning.

My home and country for Thy sake,  
And maiden dance, I did forsake,  
And mother's pride and race,  
And thoughts of rank and place;  
For Thou, O Christ the Word, art all in all to me:  
I long for naught save Thee!

With holy feet, and lamps bright burning,  
I go to meet my Lord returning.

Hail! Christ the Life, unchanging Day,  
Accept this humble virgin lay:  
    To Thee our song of praise  
    With heart and voice we raise!  
In Thee, O Thou perfection's flower, O Word Divine,  
    Love, joy, mind, wisdom, shine.



With holy feet, and lamps bright burning,  
I go to meet my Lord returning.

O Bride, triumphant now in light,  
And clad in robes of purest white,  
    Sweet-breathing, sinless, free,  
    Ope wide the gates to me:  
Sit we in self-same company near Christ above,  
    And sing thy marriage, Love!

With holy feet, and lamps bright burning,  
I go to meet my Lord returning.

Ah me! some virgins vainly pour  
Their sobs and cries outside the door:  
    Their lamps are quenched, and they  
    No burning light display:  
Their error they would mend: but ah! they come too late,  
    And closed is the gate.



With holy feet, and lamps bright burning,  
I go to meet my Lord returning.

For they a foolish part had played,  
And from the sacred pathway strayed;  
    Oil, they had purchased none:  
    Ah! wretched and undone!

Forbidden with dead lamps the home of bliss to see,  
They wail their misery.

With holy feet, and lamps bright burning,  
I go to meet my Lord returning.

Lo! goblet filled with sweetest wine:  
Drink we, O virgins, 'tis Divine;  
And forth-set for our need:  
Lo! this is drink indeed;  
This for the guests, who to the marriage bidden are,  
The Bridegroom doth prepare.



With holy feet, and lamps bright burning,  
I go to meet my Lord returning.

First type, O Blessèd One, of Thee  
In Abel shining bright we see:  
To heaven he lifts his eyes,  
Blood-dripping, and thus cries:  
"Me, by my cruel brother slain, receive, O Lord,  
O Thou the Eternal Word."

With holy feet, and lamps bright burning,  
I go to meet my Lord returning.

Joseph, another type of Thee,  
Won highest prize of purity:  
Whom Thou wouldst own Thy child:  
He scorned to be beguiled  
By, shameless woman; stripped, he yet her wrath defied,  
And straight to Thee he cried:



With holy feet, and lamps bright burning,  
I go to meet my Lord returning.

A lamb for sacrifice is sought:

A lamb-like victim Jephthah brought:  
For rash-made vow he cared,  
Nor virgin daughter spared:  
A type, O Blessèd One, of Thy humanity,  
She poured her soul to Thee:

With holy feet, and lamps bright burning,  
I go to meet my Lord returning.

In valour Judith holds high post:  
The leader of the oppressing host  
She smote by beauty's lure,  
Herself a type all pure:  
He headless lay; and unto Thee the conquering maid  
Her love in song displayed:



With holy feet, and lamps bright burning,  
I go to meet my Lord returning.

The Judges twain, by passion's flame  
Enkindled, and all dead to shame,  
Would chaste Susannah bind  
To their unhallowed mind:  
To their proposals base she gave a just reply:  
And raised her voice on high:

With holy feet, and lamps bright burning,  
I go to meet my Lord returning.

'Twere better far that I should die,  
Than traitress be to marriage tie,  
And yielding to your will  
Both soul and body kill:  
Base men! God's fire of wrath eternal would me seize:  
Save me, O Christ, from these!



With holy feet, and lamps bright burning,

I go to meet my Lord returning.

And he who thousands washed from sin,  
Of Thy true light the bringer-in,  
For virtue's cause alone  
Is into prison thrown  
By wicked king: and staining now the ground with gore,  
He cried to Thee the more:

With holy feet, and lamps bright burning,  
I go to meet my Lord returning.

And Thy blest Mother, spotless maid,  
Was thought her vows to have betrayed,  
When travailing with Thee,  
O Lord of purity:  
And found with child of transcendental heavenly birth,  
She raised her voice from earth:

With holy feet, and lamps bright burning,  
I go to meet my Lord returning.

Thy saints, all eager that they may  
Behold the glories of the day  
Of Thine espousals high,  
With holy gifts draw nigh:  
For Thou, O Word, hast called them, Thou the angels' King:  
White-robed to Thee they sing.

With holy feet, and lamps bright burning,  
I go to meet my Lord returning.

O holy Church, O heavenly Bride,  
With hymns, attending at Thy side,  
We yet on earth below  
Thine honour thus forth-show:  
All snow-white thou, all beauteous spouse of Christ above,



All purity, all love.

With holy feet, and lamps bright burning,  
I go to meet my Lord returning.

Past are corruption, sickness, pain;  
Nor tears shall ever flow again;  
For troubles all have fled;  
And death himself is dead:  
And sin and folly with dark dismal train are gone,  
Since grace in glory shone.

With holy feet, and lamps bright burning,  
I go to meet my Lord returning.

No longer Paradise of men  
Is void; for *there* God wills again  
That man should safely dwell;  
Yea, man the same who fell  
Beneath the serpent's wiles: now in the promised rest,  
Immortal, fearless, blest.



With holy feet, and lamps bright burning,  
I go to meet my Lord returning.

Thou now to heavenly places raised,  
By all the virgin choir art praised,  
O Bride of Heavenly King:  
And song all new we sing:  
With lighted torch in hand, with snow-white lilies crowned,  
Thy praise in Christ we sound.

With holy feet, and lamps bright burning,  
I go to meet my Lord returning.

Father of heaven, supreme in might,  
Dwelling in pure eternal light



With Thine own Son most dear,  
Admit--for we are here--  
E'en us within the gates of life, to sing Thy love  
In Thy blest courts above.

With holy feet, and lamps bright burning,  
I go to meet my Lord returning.

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**CLEMENT  
OF ALEXANDRIA**

(A.D. 170-220).

This is probably the oldest hymn in the volume, as Titus Flavius Clement, the Presbyter and illustrious head of the Catechetical School at Alexandria, flourished towards the end of the second and the beginning of the third century. I had completed my translation of this celebrated hymn, before I was aware that it had been translated by Dr. W. L. Alexander.<sup>33</sup>

In my translation I have followed the arrangement of the learned editors of the *Anthologia Graeca*, beginning with what in other editions stands as the ninth line.



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33 See Writings of Clement of Alexandria vol. i. pp. 341-345, Antenicene Christian Library.

**HYMN TO CHRIST.**

βασιλευ αγιων, λογε πανδαματωρ  
(*Anapaestic dimeter.*)

O Thou, the King of saints, all-conquering Word,  
Son of the Highest, wisdom's Fount and Lord,  
The prop that doth uphold through toil and pain;  
The joy of ages through immortal reign;  
Yet born of mortal flesh for life's brief span,  
O Saviour Jesus, Shepherd, Husbandman;  
Helm Thou to guide, and bridle to restrain,  
Wing of the holy flock that heaven would gain;  
Catcher of men from evil's whelming sea,  
10The holy fishes, saved that are to be,  
Drawn from the billowy deep with sweetest lure  
Of life that shall for evermore endure:  
O holiest Shepherd of enlightened sheep,  
Lead Thou Thy flock the upward heavenly steep:  
O King of holy children, lead the way,  
And pure may they both follow and obey!  
Thou art, O Christ, the living heavenly Way,  
The ever-flowing Word, unchanging Day,  
Eternal Light, and mercy's healthful Spring;  
20The Perfecter of every virtuous thing;  
Pure Life of all the happy ransomed throng  
Who hymn their God through all the ages long:  
The heavenly<sup>34</sup> milk, from holy breasts that flows,  
By which the infant Church in wisdom grows,  
And graces rare, as it befits the Bride,  
Adorned, O Jesu Christ, for Thine own side.  
Thy feeble children gather with sweet smile,  
To sing with holy mouth, and free from guile,  
Thyself, in songs and praises without end,  
30The children's leader, and the children's friend.

O little children, thus so gently led,

---

34 In this disputed passage, which I have ventured to render freely, I take the γαλα to be Christ Himself, in same way as βιοτε, πηγε, &c., above, and read εκθλιβομενον.

So tenderly with truth and reason fed,  
And filled with the Holy Spirit's dew,  
Our hymns and praises feeble, yet all true,

In grateful homage unto Christ the King,  
Who taught us life, let us together sing:  
A peaceful choir, Christ-born, and undefiled,  
A people wise, sing we the strong-born child;  
Sing we with heart and voice, and never cease  
40To praise with one accord the God of Peace!

---



## POSTSCRIPT

The task which I had set myself to do is completed. Whatever may be the fortune of the little work, I have had much pleasure, and, I hope, some profit, in the accomplishment of it.

At intervals from parochial visiting and ministerial duty, on a walk, or reclining by the Wye side, or on the ridge of Marcle Hill, I have made, bit by bit, the translation of the first, the earlier and shorter, part of the *Anthologia Graeca Carminum Christianorum*. I have had no other edition, no explanatory notes, no help or guidance--nothing but the text of the beautiful Leipsic volume, edited in 1871 by the eminent scholars, W. Christ and M. Paranikas. Under such circumstances, it can hardly be otherwise than that I have made blunders which the learned reader will detect here and there, yet I trust the errors will be few and pardonable. Owing to the difference of idiom, and the exigency of metre, some additions, some omissions, there must be. Yet I hope to be able to claim the credit of having fairly and faithfully reproduced the poetic thoughts and holy aspirations of the grand old Greek Christians whose songs and hymns I have ventured to take in hand.

There remain four short hymns of unknown authorship (ὑμνοὶ ἀδεσποτοὶ), not in verse, but measured prose. These I now render into plain English, line for line and word for word. They are, I doubt not, true specimens of the "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs"<sup>35</sup> of the earliest Christians, portions of the divine poetry of the Old Testament combined with the glorious facts and truths of the New. They show also the great antiquity of parts of the Church of England Liturgy and Communion Service, and may well be used now in the way they were designed of old.




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35 Eph. v. 9; Col. iii. 16.

**HYMNS**  
***OF UNKNOWN AUTHORSHIP.***



I.  
A MORNING HYMN.

Glory to God in the highest, and upon earth peace,  
    Good-will among men:  
We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we give thanks to Thee,  
    We worship Thee, we glorify Thee,  
    For Thy great glory.  
O Lord the King in heaven, God the Father Almighty,  
    O Lord the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ,  
    And Holy Spirit:  
O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
    Who takest<sup>36</sup> away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us:  
    O Thou who takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer:  
    O Thou who sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy upon us:  
For Thou only art holy, Thou only art the Lord,  
    Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father.  
    Amen.

Every day will I bless Thee,  
    And praise Thy Name for ever,<sup>37</sup>  
    And for ever and ever.  
Vouchsafe, O Lord, through this day also  
    That we may be kept without sin,  
Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers,  
    And praised and glorified be Thy Name  
    For ever and ever.<sup>38</sup> Amen.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord: teach me Thy judgments.  
Blessed art Thou, O Lord: teach me Thy judgments.  
Blessed art Thou, O Lord: teach me Thy judgments.  
O Lord, Thou hast been our refuge from generation to generation:  
    I have said: O Lord, have mercy upon me,  
    Heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee.

---

36 αρεις, takest away, or bearest.

37 Lit.: For the age, and for the age of the age.

38 Lit.: For the ages.

O Lord, to Thee have I fled for refuge: teach me to do Thy will,  
For Thou art my God,  
For with Thee is the fountain of life.  
In Thy light shall we see light:  
Extend Thy mercy to them that know Thee.

---



II.  
AN EVENING HYMN.

Praise the Lord, O ye His servants,<sup>39</sup>  
Praise the Name of the Lord:  
We praise Thee, we hymn Thee, we bless Thee  
For Thy great glory.  
O Lord the King, the Father of Christ, the Lamb without blemish,  
Who taketh away the sin of the world,  
To Thee belongeth praise, to Thee belongeth the hymn, to Thee belongeth glory,  
The Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
Throughout all ages.<sup>40</sup> Amen.  
Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart, O Lord,  
According to Thy word, in peace:  
For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation,  
Which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people,  
A light to lighten the Gentiles, and (to be) the glory of Thy people Israel.



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39 παιδες, servants, or children.

40 Lit.: For the ages of ages.

**III.**  
**A HYMN AT LAMP-LIGHT.**

Propitious Light of holy glory,  
Of the immortal Heavenly Father,  
Holy, blessed,  
O Jesu Christ,  
Having come to the setting of the sun,  
Having seen the evening light,  
We hymn the Father, the Son,  
And the Holy Spirit, God.  
Thou art worthy at all seasons  
To be hymned with thankful<sup>41</sup> voices,  
O Son of God, who givest life;  
Wherefore the world glorifieth Thee.

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41 αἰσιας, lit. auspicious.

**IV.  
A PRAYER AT DINNER-TIME.**

FINIS.

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Thou art blessed, O Lord, who nourishest me from my youth,  
    Who givest food to all flesh.  
Fill your hearts with joy and gladness,  
That at all times having all sufficiency,  
    We may abound to every good work  
    In Christ Jesus our Lord:  
With whom to Thee (be) glory, honour, and might,  
    For ever and ever. Amen.

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# **Indexes**

## **Subject Index**

Clement of Alexandria, [105](#)  
Gregory of Nazianzus, [59](#)  
Methodius, Bishop and Martyr, [94](#)  
Naasseni, [92](#)  
Synesius, Bishop of Ptolemais, [4](#)

## **Index of Scripture References**

### **Psalms**

145

### **Matthew**

28:19

### **1 Corinthians**

7:26

### **2 Corinthians**

13:14

### **Ephesians**

5:9

### **Colossians**

3:16

### **Hebrews**

12:23-24

### **1 Peter**

1:2

### **Revelation**

1:4-5 21:2 21:9 22:9

## **Index of Pages of the Print Edition**

i v vi vii viii ix 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29  
30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60  
61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91  
92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100 101 102 103 104 105 106 107 108 109 110 111 112 113 114 115 116  
117 118 119 120 121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131 132 133 134 135 136 137 138 139  
140 141 142 143 144 145 146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162  
163 164 165 166