

*Synesius of Cyrene*  
***Third Hymn to the Father and Son***

**Two translations**

*by*

**Alan Stevenson and Augustine Fitzgerald**

**Alan Stevenson (1865)**

Come, my soul, to sacred songs  
Give thy strength; and calm to rest

Earth-born passions, and each power  
Be to heav'nly thoughts address'd.  
Stir up, my soul, the heavenly love  
That burns within to God our King.

Offer th' unbloody Host with song  
And full drink-offerings, as we sing.  
O'er the wide sea, in distant isles,  
Over the great and wide-spread land,  
In cities and in rugged hills,  
Where'er our feet securely stand, —  
Maker of all, Thy name we'll sound  
In praise, through every land renown'd.

Upwards to Thee, O King, by night,  
My soul oft soars, in tuneful flight;  
At the pale dawn, at burning noon,  
And at sweet eve, my hymns I tune.

Bear witness, for you know it well,  
Ye glittering stars, for you can tell,  
And thou soft moon, whose gentle ray,  
Yields to the brighter power of day,  
Which rules o'er every lesser light,  
And pious souls doth judge aright.

Lifting my weary wings, away  
From the deep chaos to God's rest,  
O! may I go, in cheerful day  
To His fair courts and to His breast,  
And, bending at His holy shrine,  
Join in heaven's rites pure and divine.

**Augustine Fitzgerald (1930)**

Awake my soul; give thyself unto sacred songs,  
lay to rest the stings that are born of matter.

Arm thou the mighty impulses of mind.  
For the King of gods we are weaving a crown,  
a bloodless offering, libations of poesy.

Thee I invoke in song, Thee in the ocean,  
Thee over islands, on mainlands,  
in cities and on the craggy mountains,  
Thee when'er I rest the twain feet of my limbs  
on the far-famed plains,  
Thee blessed Creator of a universe.

Night brings me, Thy minstrel, to Thee, O King,  
and I lift up to Thee hymns of the day-time,  
of the morning, of the evening.

Thy witnesses are the beams of glittering stars,  
the courses of the moon, and the mighty witness,  
the sun, who presideth over the pure stars,  
the holy guardian of pure spirits.

Lifting up my wing that turns away from far-reaching matter,  
I have advanced and come to Thy dwelling-place,  
Thy bosom, rejoicing.



MYSTIC VERSE AND INSIGHTS  
SYNESIUS' THIRD HYMN TO THE FATHER AND SON

Now to the sacred hills I go,  
Upon those holy heights to pray,  
And to bare Libya's deep defile  
And southern verge I've wound my way.  
Land! not polluted by the godless soul,  
And where no worldly dreamers ever stray,

'Tis there the soul, from evil thoughts made whole,  
From foul desires, from toils and woes set free,  
And wrath and strife,  
which in the heart's core spring,  
With holy tongue, O God, sings hymns to Thee.

O heaven, O earth, a reverent silence keep;  
Stand still, O sea! breathe not, thou silent air,  
And all ye winds be hush'd; ye curling waves,  
Your angry tumults calm; and never dare,  
Ye streams, to flow, nor fountains to well forth;  
Let a deep silence rest o'er Nature's fields,  
While pious tongues to the Lord's praise give birth.

Ye curling snakes! which earth polluted yields,  
Be hid in earth. Go, idol-loving fiend,  
Thou winged dragon, to the desert bare,  
Nor cheer thou on the brood of hell-hounds dire,  
To drown, with yells, each heaven-directed prayer.

O Father blest, drive far away the host  
Of soul-deceiving fiends that fiercely tear  
My trembling soul, corrupting all my deeds,  
And scare my humble soul from earnest prayer.

O let our hearts be soothed by gentle care  
Of holy messengers, who heavenward bear  
To Thee our fervent hymns.

I upward rise

Already to the goal of hallow'd rest,  
Where sacred songs abide. The echo dread  
Of God's voice thrills within my panting breast!  
Forgive me, Father blessed, if too much  
Of Thee I speak, or with unguarded touch  
Thy throne approach. What eye can wisely gaze,  
Or boldly try the holy Lord to see,  
And yet not close, in guilty dread amaze,  
Awed by the holiness they find in Thee?  
Thy fires the shuddering gods of men dispel;

Their eyes from Thee cast down behold the earth;  
Their quaking spirits dare not rise to dwell  
Before Thee; but in awe they are cast forth  
On what they cannot gain, and thus away

They, from Thy watch-tower,  
turn their darken'd eyes  
To pierce the depths of light  
that boundless lies Beneath.

And now even unto the sacred enclosure  
of the Holy Sacrifice am I come, a suppliant.  
Now a suppliant I come to the crests of famous mountains,  
and the great ravine of desert Libya,  
the southern border, which no godless blast of wind sullieth,  
nor is the foot-print graven thereon of men whose cares are of the town.

There, purified of passions, released from desires,  
ceasing to grieve, to rage or to covert,  
may my soul casting off all these things that cause death,  
render the hymn that is due unto Thee  
with a pure tongue and a sanctified mind.

Let earth and upper air be at peace.  
Let the sea be still, let air be still.  
Be still, ye gusts of swift winds;  
be stilled, onslaughts of curling waves,  
mouths of rivers, outwellings of springs.  
Let silence hold the caverns of the universe,  
while these sacred hymns are offered up.

Let the sinuous trend of serpents sink beneath the earth,  
and that winged serpent also, the demon of matter,  
he who clouds the soul, rejoicing in images  
and urging in his brood of whelps against my supplications.

Do Thou, O Father, O Blessed One, keep away from my soul these  
soul-devouring hounds, from my prayer, from my life, from my works.

May our heart's libations be a care to Thy august messengers,  
wise bearers to Thee of holy hymns.

Now am I borne back to the starting point of sacred poesy.  
Already does the oracle echo in my mind.  
Be full of goodness unto me, Blessed One,  
be full of goodness to me, Father,  
if beyond what is ordered,  
if beyond what is destined,  
I touch upon that which is Thine.

Whose eye is so wise, whose so availing,  
that it blinketh not when checked by Thy shafts of light?

Not even for gods it is lawful to gaze steadfastly on Thy flaming torches,  
but Mind, falling from Thy pinnacle,  
is fain to caress whatsoever is near to Thee,  
seeking thus to attain the unattainable, to look upon the light that glitters  
in Thy untiring profundity; and so relinquishing unapproachable ways,  
it fixes the strength of its eye upon the image that first showed itself.



MYSTIC VERSE AND INSIGHTS  
SYNESIUS' THIRD HYMN TO THE FATHER AND SON

There is the seat of winds that play,  
And bear the flowers of light that to Thee pay,  
Offering back gifts which from  
Thee first came forth, —  
For to all things, O King, Thou gavest birth.  
Father of fathers, all things, of Thyself,  
Before Time, came, the Father ever One;  
The One before all Unities, Thou art,  
Having no father, of Thyself the Son,

The Seed of beings, Centre of all things,  
Eternal, unsubstantial Mind, whence springs  
The Universe, — the Light that, e'er the day  
Of things created came, eternal shone;  
The Fount of Wisdom true, the Mind deep hid  
In its own brightness, e'er unchanged and One;

Parent and Life of ages, who dost rule  
All minds and powers, the Maker of the whole,  
Spirits and angels, nourishing all souls;  
Eye of Thyself, Thou thunder dost control;  
Fount of all founts, of all beginnings first,  
O Root, whence every living root hath burst;  
Unit of Unities, of Numbers all  
The Source, the Mind that hast all ever known,  
Both what has been, and what is yet to be;  
One before all ; of all the Sum alone;  
Seed of all things; the Root and highest Branch:

The Mind mysterious that canst all declare,  
And leadest round the depths unspeakable  
Thy circling orbits, through the boundless air:

Thou bringest forth,  
and Thou too forth art brought;  
Th' eternal Father, to all eyes unknown.  
Thy power appears, and Thou art often hid  
In Thine own splendour; in Thyself alone

Thou wert in wonder seen,  
that Thou might'st bring  
Thy Son, true Wisdom, Maker of each thing.

Thee Trinity, Thee Unity, I praise,  
One and yet Three alike in all Thy ways;  
That severance our minds admit is still  
The one and only Person of God's will.

Upon Thee, Son, by counsel wise shed forth,  
(The Natural mind unspeakable), none durst

Of Thee, first of all Natures, dare to say,  
'From Thee a *Second* came, or *Third* from *First*!  
O Child unspeakable! O sacred Birth!

Thence plucking flowers of light to be hymns unto Thee,  
may it stay the blast of fitful winds and give thee back Thine own.  
For what is there, O King, that is not Thine,  
Father of all fathers, Father of Thyself,  
Fatherless Ancestor, Son of Thyself,  
One prior to the One, Seed of existing things,  
Centre of all things,  
Mind that were without substance at the beginning?

Roof of the world, Thou the Light,  
everywhere visible, of primal things,  
wise Certainty and wisdom's Fountain,  
Mind hidden by Thine own bright rays,  
Eye of Thyself, Master of the thunderbolt,  
Father of the ages, Immortal higher than the gods,  
higher than intellects which thou turnest to one side of the other.

Thou the mind's source of intelligence,  
the Creator of divine beings,  
Shaper of the spirit, Nourisher of the soul,  
Fountain of fountains, Origin of origins, Root of roots.  
Thou art the Unity of unities, Number of numbers,  
at once Monad and Number, Mind and Intellect,  
both the knowable and what precedes it,  
One and All, and the One of All, and the One before All,  
that is the seed of all things, the root and the branch,  
and nature in whatsoever is endowed with intelligence  
the female element and the male.

The mind initiated in the mysteries  
says such and such things,  
moving in harmony  
the while around Thy awful abyss.

Thou art the Generator, Thou the Generated;  
Thou the Light that shineth, Thou the Illumined;  
Thou what is revealed, Thou that which is hidden in Thine own beams;  
The One and All, the One Self-contained and  
dispersed through all things.

For Thou wert poured out, ineffable Parent,  
that Thou might'st beget a child,  
to wit, far-famed Wisdom,  
Creator of the world, but so outwelling,  
Thou dost remain once delivered in the divisions undivided.

I sing to Thee, Unity, I sing to Thee, Trinity;  
Thou art One being Three, art Three being One;  
and the intelligible segment holds what has been divided still indivisible.

Thou wert poured out on the Son in Thy wisdom's Will,  
and that Will Itself was then born,  
a nature unutterable, the being pre-existent to matter.

It is against divine law to say that a second one has come from Thee,  
it is against it to say that a third has come from the first.  
O holy Birth, O unspeakable generation;



MYSTIC VERSE AND INSIGHTS  
SYNESIUS' THIRD HYMN TO THE FATHER AND SON

Comprising what does bear,  
and what's brought forth!  
A middle thing (not from *without* pour'd in)  
Within the hidden plan which I revere  
Deeply abides. Th' unspeakable Father's will,  
By wondrous birth, caused Thee to appear  
In light and glory; with Thy Father still  
Thou ever art, — His will and Thine the same.

Nor can time boundless the Son's birth proclaim,  
The Father saw His Son, and He alone,  
Nor oldest time can tell His birth unknown;  
The pre-existent Son, to be reveal'd  
With God the Father came.

O! who will dare  
In things unspoken and from man conceal'd,  
Boldly and wickedly his thoughts declare?  
The blind man's words are blasphemous and bold.  
O! Thou who givest light to souls, withhold  
From craft and crookedness the hearts of all  
Thy saints, lest into hell's deep gloom they fall.

Father of Ages, and of those worlds bright,  
Maker of gods, to praise Thy name is right;  
Thee souls intelligent e'er laud, O King!  
Rulers of worlds, with sparkling eyes, e'er sing  
Thy praise; and souls in stars with joyful voice  
In Thy bright glory, blessed Lord, rejoice;  
Round them, Thy person's glory ceaseless flows.

The whole assembly of the bless'd which rose  
Throughout the universe, from pole to pole,  
In boundless zones, and governing the whole,  
Wise servants, faithful steersmen, who came forth  
From the angelic host, by mystic birth, —

The noble race of heroes that, in ways  
Conceal'd, wrought works of men now dead,  
Thee praise,  
The soul upright, and what is apt to fall  
Into the earth's dark mass adore Thy name;

Thee, happy Nature and her offspring all,  
Which Thou dost feed with genial winds, proclaim  
Thy praise, O bless'd, who,  
from Thine endless store,  
By Thy streams downwards,  
dost Thy bounty pour.  
For Thou the Guide of worlds yet undefiled,  
Nature of natures! Thou wilt foster all  
The race of man (of the eternal Type),  
That thus the lowest mortal yet may fall  
To share his portion of eternal life;

Thou art the boundary of natural forces,  
of the generating and the generated.  
O venerate the hidden ordering of intellectual things,  
but there is some medial element that may not be distributed.  
Ineffable Offspring of a Father Ineffable,  
the birth-pang was through Thee,  
and through the birth-pang Thou didst Thyself appear,  
showing Thyself together with the Father by the Father's Will.

By the Will of the Father Thou, His Will,  
art ever of Thyself beside the Father.  
Even deep-eddying Time knoweth not the inevitable procreations,  
nor did long ages comprehend the tedious birth.  
With the Father He was revealed,  
He that had been for all eternity One  
that was to come into being.

Who has controlled rashness in regard to unspeakable things?  
Godless are the audacities of blind mortals  
with cunningly devised language,

but Thou art Giver of light, the light of intellect,  
and dost bear aloft the minds of holy men away from crooked deceit,  
that they sink not in the dark shades of matter.

Thee, Father of the Universe,  
Father of the ages,  
Creator of the gods,  
it is an act of purity to praise.  
They who have knowledge praise Thee, O King,  
and they who govern the world,  
they of the glittering eyes,  
the stary intelligences sing Thy praises, Blessed One,  
as the glorious mass moves rhythmically around them.

The whole race of the blessed sing to Thee,  
they who about the world, who in the world,  
within and without the zones  
guide in their wisdom the fates of the cosmos,  
protectors they, side by side with the famous pilots  
whom the chain angelic keeps pouring forth.

And the illustrious race of heroes  
that goeth through the works of men,  
works of mortal mold, hidden pathways, (sing praises).  
And the soul at once steadfast  
and bent down to the dark-gleaming  
corners of the earth (sing praises).

Thee blessed Nature hymns aloud,  
and the offspring of Nature  
which Thou, Blessed One,  
urgest on with favouring breezes,  
drawn from Thy channels and rolling onwards;  
for Thou, Leader of immaculate universes,  
art the Nature of natures;  
Thou cherishest Nature, birth of mortals,  
the image of the eternal monad,  
that even the lowest portion of the universe  
may be allotted an alternative lot.



MYSTIC VERSE AND INSIGHTS  
SYNESIUS' THIRD HYMN TO THE FATHER AND SON

Nor wrought God this, in justice but in love;  
Man's dregs to greatest hope he will exalt,

Nor what has lived to hell, will He remove;  
It shall not die;

but each shall have in time  
His coming share of heavenly life sublime.

Of things that perish, the eternal band  
To speak Thy praises ever do command —  
To dance and sing. Maternal mother fair,  
In various works adorn'd and colours rare,

And all that live with different voices sing  
With heartfelt joy, and common praises bring  
To Thee sweet anthems that shall never end;  
Both day and night, lightnings that earth oft rend;  
The sky and ether and the deeps of earth,  
Snow, water, air, all bodies and all souls,  
Seeds, fruits, plants, grasses,  
all things that spring forth.  
Flocks, and all birds that fly between the poles,  
Or crowds of fish that swim where ocean rolls.

Regard this soul, so pow'rless, weak, and spent,  
In thine own Libya, in Thy sacred shrines,  
On holy earnest prayers sincerely bent.  
From me, in whom the clouds of flesh do dwell,  
Thine eye, O God, can them at once dispel.  
Then will my heart by hymns well nourish'd be,  
Sharpen'd its thoughts by powers of fire divine;  
Grant that from flesh and sin I may be free,  
Look down, O King, that light may ever shine.

But, while of forest life I bear the chains,  
Blest God! may gentle dealings soothe my pains,  
And may no angry blast with baneful care,  
Devouring life, from love of God make bare  
My soul, and give woes that shall never rest;  
But by Thy gift, set free nor more opprest,  
From holy meads, to Thee a crown I frame;  
Thy praises, Ruler of pure worlds, proclaim.

For it was not the divine law  
that the less of the universe  
should contend with the summits.  
That which has been wholly ordained  
to the assemblage of real existences  
shall never perish,  
but all find their happiness,  
one from another and each through each.

Of perishable things an eternal circle,  
cherished by Thy breath,  
places choirs to Thee  
throughout all things:  
so doth maternal Nature  
in her proper colours,  
in her proper works,  
embellish them.

And out of living things of varied voices  
she creates one harmony in likeness of sound.  
All things bring to Thee ageless praise,  
even the dawn and the night,  
the lightnings, the snows, the firmament,  
the ether, and the roots of the soil, water  
air, all bodies, all spirits, seeds, fruits,  
the plants and the grasses, roots, herbs,  
beasts and birds, and shoals of the swimming finny creatures.

Behold now in Thy Libya, in Thy august priesthood,  
a soul feeble and exhausted, one given up to holy prayers to Thee,  
but whom a cloud of matter besets.  
But Thine Eye, O Father, pierces matter,  
and now my heart, made fruitful with hymns to Thee,  
has exited my mind with fiery impulses.  
Do Thou, O King, kindle the uplifting beams,  
and grant, Father, that, fleeing the body,  
(the soul) may ne'er again descend to an earthly doom.

But as long as I remain in the chains of a life  
that has commerce with matter,  
may a gentle destiny, O Blessed One, nourish me.  
May it not blow adversely,  
consuming my life with grim cares of the mind,  
so that I may have no time for the things of God,  
nor be involved in such cares;  
but rather fleeing from these, by Thy gifts,  
may I weave for thee this garland  
from the sacred meadows.



MYSTIC VERSE AND INSIGHTS  
SYNESIUS' THIRD HYMN TO THE FATHER AND SON

And to Thy Son,  
whose wisdom Thou brought'st forth  
From Thy deep bosom vast by wondrous birth;  
Though born of Thee, with Thee He dwelleth still,  
That so His Spirit orders at His will  
The depths of ancient ages, and the shores  
Of the vast universe, even to the base  
Of lowest beings; and in boundless stores  
Of glory, pious souls He will encase.

To all the cares and toils of wretched man  
He looks, gives good, and sorrows all dispels,  
Nor should we marvel that the God who made  
The universe, black evils all expels.

King of the whole, I come a vow to pay  
From Thrace;  
for three years there compell'd to stay.  
I dwelt beside the kingly palace hall,  
Suffering sad toil and pains,  
that did appal My heart;  
and on my back my mother-land I bore;

the earth, with daily sweat of toil  
Of wrestling limbs, and from my mourning eyes,  
Through the long night, with tears my couch did  
soil!

But to all Temples, King, my steps me led,  
That in Thy holy service I might toil;  
So bending, with wet eyelids there I lay,  
So that my journey might not useless be.

Praying the angel ministers, whose sway  
Was o'er Thrace's gold land, and where the sea  
Divides Chalcedon's fields, which they too rule —  
Ministers holy, whom Thou, King, hast crown'd  
And with angelic glory dost surround.

Help to my toils and prayers  
these bless'd ones gave;  
But in my life I had no thought of joy,  
For Thou my Fatherland had sorely grieved,  
Thyself, O Ruler, free from all alloy  
Of age.

I bring to Thee this praise, Leader of unsullied worlds,  
and to Thy wise Son, whom Thou has sent forth from Thy sacred bosom  
together with wisdom itself.  
Springing forth from Thee,  
He remains within Thee,  
that He may explore  
all things with subtle breathings,  
that He may rule the profundities of hoary ages,  
and direct the feet of a rugged world,  
even unto the last depth of what belongeth to earthly destiny;  
his light shining in pious hearts  
that He may release living mortals from their labours, from their cares,  
He the Accomplisher of good deeds,

the Chaser away of distress.  
And why should it be a thing to wonder at,  
that the Maker of the universe keeps  
evil destinies from His own works?

I come, O Ruler of the great universe,  
to acquit myself of a vow I made to Thee,  
even from Thrace,  
where for three years I dwelt  
in a way near to the king's palace in that land.  
And labours I endured,  
griefs I endured meet for many tears,  
bearing on my shoulders my mother-city.

The earth was watered with the sweat of my limbs  
that toiled in the contest day by day,  
and my couch was moistened  
with the dropping of tears  
from my eyelids weeping  
from night to night.

And as many temples as were built  
for Thy holy ceremonies, O King,  
to all these I repaired.  
There prostrate, a suppliant,  
I prayed, watering the ground  
with the dew of my eyelids,  
that I might not find my journey vain.

I supplicated gods that labour,  
even as many as hold the fruitful plain of Thrace,  
and those who on the other side  
rule the Chalcedonian pastures,  
whom Thou, O King,  
has crowned with Thy annunciating beams,  
to be Thy sacred ministers.

The blessed ones have indeed  
taken to them my supplications,  
they have engaged in many labours with me.  
My life was not at that time dear to me  
because my fatherland was so tormented;  
but Thou, O King, has lifted it from out its sorrows.



MYSTIC VERSE AND INSIGHTS  
SYNESIUS' THIRD HYMN TO THE FATHER AND SON

While my soul faints and my limbs fail,  
Thou grantest strength and cheer'st me,  
O my Lord,  
From all my toils, and sweet rest dost me give,  
And to all Africans Thou dost afford,  
That for long times our hearts may ever know  
The memory of Thy goodness and our woe.

To him who seeks, O give a holy life;  
Of labours, pains, and cares, O calm the strife  
That gnaws the heart; and to Thy servant grant  
A thoughtful soul; may worldly wealth not dare  
To keep from God; nor poverty that clings  
Round our abodes, cast down my heart with care.  
Whate'er to earth our soul draws down, whate'er  
Forgetful makes of Thee, my Saviour dear,

O Father, wisdom's Fount, dispel with light,  
From Thy breast make my intellect full bright;  
Comfort my heart by wisdom's beam from Thee,  
And give Thy sign and token, for the way  
That leads to Thee; and from my life and prayers  
The spirits of darkness ever drive away.

My body safe from all disease, O bring;  
My spirit unpolluted keep, O King!  
Now indeed Nature's murky stain I wear;  
And shameful lusts, earth's hated chains, I bear.

From disease, ills, and chains, O set me free,  
My Saviour and Redeemer, for from Thee  
Thy seed, a spark of heaven-born soul I bear,  
Deep hid in man's corruption and in fear;  
For on the world my soul Thou placedst low;  
But in my soul Thou, King, my mind didst sow.

Thy child, O Blessed, pity; I from Thee  
Came down to earth, a servant but to be;  
But for a serf, a slave, now do I lie;  
Nature, with magic arts, my heart does tie;

Still in me dwell some hidden seeds and small  
Of strength; nor has it quenched my vigour all;

O Ruler of the universe,  
Thou, the Ageless,  
sustainedest the force of my limbs,  
when my soul was already failing  
and my members already breaking up.  
Thou didst breathe strength into my wretched soul;  
a sweet ending to my labours didst Thou find me,  
O King, and one according to my desire,  
granting to my works a repose from long labours.  
Do Thou, I Blessed One,  
preserve all these gains for the Libyans  
for a long roll of time,  
for the sake of the memory of Thy great goodness,  
and for the soul that has suffered grievous things.

Give moreover to Thy suppliant a life free from harm,  
deliver me from sufferings, deliver me from diseases,  
deliver me from cares that bring death;  
grant Thy servant a life of the intellect.  
Adjudge me not earthly showers of gold,  
O King, that may render me without leisure for the things divine,  
nor let grim poverty attack my house  
and draw down to earth the meditations of my heart,  
for both these weigh down the soul to the earth,  
and both bring forgetfulness of mind, whensoever,  
O Blessed One, Thou offerest not Thy help.

O Father, Fountain of pure wisdom,  
kindle in my mind a flame of intellect  
out of Thy bosom, illumine our heart  
out of Thy strength with a gleam of wisdom.  
Give this as a symbol of the sacred way to Thee,  
even Thine own seal.  
Chase from my life and from my prayer  
the deadly demons of matter,

preserve my body safe and sound  
from the approach of spiteful violence,  
and guard in my safety my spirit unpolluted, O King.

In sooth I carry on me already the darkling stain of Matter,  
and I am held fast by desires, by earthly chains.  
But Thou art my liberator, Thou my purifier.  
Release me from evils, from illness, from fetters.  
I carry in me Thy seed, the spark of high-born Mind,  
but a spark falling down to the depths of matter.

But Thou hast deposited soul in the cosmos,  
and through soul hast down mind in the body, O King.  
Take pity on thine handmaiden, O Blessed One.  
I descended from Thee to be a servant of earth,  
instead of living as a hireling, I became a bondslave.  
Matter fettered me with magic arts.

For all that, there is still some strength  
in the ball of the eye hidden within me,  
it has not yet extinguished all its might.



MYSTIC VERSE AND INSIGHTS  
SYNESIUS' THIRD HYMN TO THE FATHER AND SON

But many an upward billow o'er me bounds,  
And when to God I look, my sight confounds.  
O Father! Thy child pity, who oft tries  
In upward thought, for Heaven; but sad the sighs  
That fleshly lusts oft bring to quench the light.

O King, send forth of heaven a cheering sight,  
Send flame and fire that may sow the seed small  
Within my brain. O Father, place me all  
In the power of the good life-giving Light,  
Where Nature cannot thrust her hands, nor sight  
Of earth shall be, nor the Fate's cords of woe  
Backwards shall draw our souls  
that heavenwards go.

May treacherous men Thy servant leave and flee;  
Father, 'twixt me and earthly fights Fire be!  
O Father, to Thy servant grant to spread  
His wings of thought —  
may his soul suppliant dwell  
Firm on the Father's seal, that mark of dread  
For evil demons, who from earth's deep cell  
Spring upwards,  
godless schemes in man t' expand;  
But a sure watchword to those servants true  
Who in the depths of the great world do stand,  
Key-keepers of high flights to ether blue,  
That they to him may open gates of light.

While on vain earth I creep, may I not cling  
To earth; but here give me the cheering sight  
Of testing fruits,  
true words from heaven that spring,  
And nourish in all souls the hope divine.  
Over this earthly life I do repine.  
Perish ye plagues of godless men, and might  
Of towns, ye soothing snares that graceless smile,  
Whereby the earth the soul deceived holds tight,  
Its own goods it forgets, being so vile,  
Until it fall into an envious share,  
For cozening nature has two portions bare.

He who at table shows his hand to sue  
The honey'd feast, his bitter share will rue;

For weights oppose, and him will downwards pull,  
And from two cups by earth's tyrannic rule  
Pours out his life. Full pure and unalloy'd  
Is God and all He gives. But if I'm cloy'd  
With the sweet tempting bowl, I reach the shore  
Of woe, and fall in snares, and feel the sore  
That Epimetheus felt, and deep deplore.

But a great wave has broken over me from above,  
blinding the soul that seeth God.  
Pity, O Father, Thy suppliant handmaiden,  
whom longing for devouring matter strangles,  
when oftentimes she strives to ascend  
by the paths of mind to thee.

But do Thou, O King, kindle the lights that lead upwards,  
do Thou light the gleam and the beacon  
by augmenting the scanty seed  
in the noblest part of my mind.  
Enthroned me, O Father, in the strength of the life-bringing life,  
where nature advanceth not her hand, whence nor earth,  
nor the fated spinning of Necessity yet makes me recoil.

May false generation leave Thy servant in flight!  
Let fire be between me, O Father,  
and the tumult of the earth Grant,  
O Creator, grant unto Thy minister  
now to spread his wings of Mind.  
Now at last let the suppliant soul  
bear the seal of the Father,  
a terror to hostile demons,  
who dart aloft from deep lurking places of the earth  
to breathe godless impulses upon mortals;  
and let this be a sign to Thy pure ministers,  
who throughout the depths of the august universe  
are keybearers to the fiery ascents,  
that they should open wide to me the gates of light,  
and that while still creeping upon the vain earth,  
I may not be of its soil.

And of the works written in fire give me,  
even here, fruit as a witness, sure utterances,  
and as many tokens as cherish the hope immortal of souls.  
I repent me of this life of clay.  
Hence, eyesores of godless mortals,  
dominations of cities!  
Hence all-sweetened destinies of perdition,  
and grace that is no grace,  
wherewith the beguiled soul is held fast in bondage to earth,  
the soul which drank, in its great cowardice,  
oblivion of its own good,  
until it fell upon envy as its portion.

For debauched matter has twain parts,  
and whoso stretches out his hand to the table,  
to touch the sweet viands,  
will in sooth greatly lament his bitter lot,  
when the hostile elements  
drag him down with them.

Verily this law of earthly necessity pours out a life  
to mortals from two sources,  
and the one is unmixed and is pure good, a god or things divine.  
I have been inebriated with the sweet cup,  
I have touched the lands of evil things,  
I have fallen into the snare,  
I have known the fate of Epimetheus.



MYSTIC VERSE AND INSIGHTS  
SYNESIUS' THIRD HYMN TO THE FATHER AND SON

But the uncertain laws I do abhor,  
And to my Father's meadows free of care  
Stretching my feet in flight I will aspire,  
And shun the double gifts of nature's snare.  
Giver of intellectual life and fire!

Behold me, and regard my soul that cries,  
Which from the earth does upward flights desire,  
Light up, O King, my heaven-seeking eyes.

Cut off all ties; and nimble make my wing;  
Chains of two lusts, by which false nature binds  
Our souls to earth, unloose. May I swift spring  
Up to Thy halls and breast, where my soul finds  
Its Fount.

To earth a heavenly drop I fell;  
Restore me, flying wanderer, to that well  
Whence I was pour'd.

Grant me in first-born light  
To be full mixed; and that my Father's might  
May keep me midst the holy choir, until  
My share in heavenly hymns I may fulfil.

O Father! grant that, in the light array'd,  
No more into earth's vileness I may sink;  
But, while in forest life I am delay'd,  
Let me, O Bless'd, of gentle fortune drink.

So I hate inconstant laws;  
and I hasten to my Father's carefree meadow.  
Thither I spread my wings  
in flight from the twin gifts of matter.

Behold me, Thou who dost order the mind's life.  
Behold Thy suppliant, a soul upon the earth,  
striving towards the ascents by mind,  
and do Thou kindle, O King,  
the lights that lead aloft, giving unto me light wings.

Cut Thou the knot, loose Thou the grip of the twin desires  
by which artful Nature bends down souls to the earth.  
Grant to me to escape the destiny of the body  
and to spring swiftly even to Thy courts,  
to Thy bosom, whence floweth forth the fountain of the soul.

A heavenly drop I am shed upon the earth.  
Do thou restore me to that fountain  
whence I was poured forth,  
a wanderer who comes and goes.

Grant me to mingle with ancestral light.  
And grant that, cared for by Thee,  
the Father, I may with the kingly choir  
bear aloft in sanctity the songs of mind.

Grant, O Father, that mingled with the light  
I sink not again into an earthly destiny,  
but as long as I remain in the chains  
of a material life, may a kindly fortune,  
O Blessed One, nurture me!

