

## Of the Father's Love Begotten

Aurelius Clemens Prudentius  
Translated by J.M. Neale & H.W. Baker



1. Of the Fa - ther's love be - got - ten ere the worlds be - gan to be  
 2. At his word the worlds were fram - èd He com - mand - ed, it \_\_\_ was done  
 3. He was found in hu - man fa - shion death and sor - row here to know  
 4. O that birth for - e - ver bless - èd, when the vir - gin, full of grace,  
 5. This is He whom seers in old \_ time chant - ed of with one ac - cord  
 6. Christ! to Thee with God the Fa - ther and O Hol - y Ghost, to Thee



He is Al - pha and O - meg - a He the source, the end - ing He  
 heav'n and earth and depths of o - ceans in their three - fold or - der one;  
 that the race of A - dam's child - ren, doomed by law to end - less woe,  
 by the Ho - ly Ghost con - ceiv - ing, bore the Sa - vior of \_\_\_ our race,  
 whom the voic - es of the pro - phets pro - mised in their faith - ful word;  
 hymn and chant and high thanks - giv - ing and un - wear - ied prais - es be,



Of the things that are, that have \_\_\_\_\_ been,  
 all that grows be - neath the shi - - - ning  
 may not hence - forth die and pe - - - rish  
 and the babe, the world's Re - dee - - mer,  
 now He shines, the long - ex - pect - - - ed,  
 hon - or, glo - ry, and do - min - - - ion,



And that fu - ture years shall see  
 of the moon and burn - ing sun  
 in the dread - ful gulf be - low  
 first re - vealed his sac - red face  
 let cre - a - tion praise its Lord  
 and e - ter - nal vic - tor - y

—e-ver-more and e-ver-more! —

**O**f the Father's Love Begotten is likely the oldest Christian hymn sung today, predating the Reformation by a millennium and even "Be Thou My Vision" by a couple hundred years.

Around 400 AD in northern Spain, successful Roman judge Aurelius Clemens Prudentius was having a mid-life crisis. At fifty-seven, he looked back at his life and thought it had been a waste. Now, that wasn't a totally fair assessment; he had pursued law and order for decades as a Christian in a Roman empire now tolerant of Christianity after centuries of persecution. But having upheld order for decades, Prudentius now wanted to practice beauty through poetry. He stepped down from his position and spent his final decade writing Christian poems for worship.

All the same, the Lord used Prudentius's legal acumen to craft both order *and* beauty into his hymns. Even as the lines of *Corde natus* (the original Latin title) praise Christ as the Father's begotten, they also defend the sound doctrine that was under attack from various heresies. Rather than wrongly seeing Christ as a created being (like Arius and his followers did), Prudentius wrote, "ere the world began to be / he is Alpha and Omega / he the source, the ending he." These and many other Scriptural truths fill this timeless Advent hymn in praise to Jesus Christ. They remind us that the pursuit of beauty in Christian worship is essential, as it helps capture both our minds and hearts with the truth.

After use for over a thousand years in Latin, *Corde natus* was translated into English in the 1850s, still coupled with the ancient medieval tune "*Divinum mysterium*," an ancient plainchant. Predating modern ideas of meter and rhythm, it uses freer movement between the notes and syllables. In our version, we've attempted to capture a singable version in a modern meter. In rhythm and melody, beauty and order, this hymn reminds us that Jesus Christ is Alpha and Omega, our only Lord and Savior, only begotten of the Father.

### Scripture to consider:

Psalm 2	Luke 1:26-56	Colossians 1:15-20
Psalm 148	John 1:1-18	Hebrews 1
Isaiah 7:14 & 9:6-7	John 3:16-21	Revelation 1:1-8

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