

A Spiritual Psalter, or Reflections on God

Excerpted by Bishop Theophan the Recluse from the works of our Holy Father Ephraim the
Syrian
arranged in the manner of the Psalms of David
translated by Antonina Janda
together with The Life of St. Ephraim translated by Br. Isaac E. Lambertsen

O Lord and Master of my life, give me not the spirit of sloth, idle curiosity/meddling, lust
for power and idle talk.

But grant unto me, Thy servant, a spirit of chastity/integrity, humility, patience and love.

Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see mine own faults and not to judge my brother. For
blessed art Thou unto the ages of ages. Amen.

- Prayer of Saint Ephrem the Syrian

"This publication, which includes selected prayers that St. Ephraim the Syrian offered up to God, is called a Psalter because the Psalter is a book of praises of God; they both contain prayers offered up to God. St. Ephraim was filled with the grace of God and, moved by it, he poured out his heartfelt prayers to God. [...] The number of psalms contained in the God-inspired Psalter served as a guide for choosing the works included here and the list of their contents reflects the contents of the Psalms. In addition to prayers the psalms contain dogma, history, and moral teachings. Works of this nature have been included in the selection of prayers by St. Ephraim."

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1

Blessed is he who has in the Lord become completely free of all earthly things in this troublesome life, and who has loved the one good and merciful God.

Blessed is he who has become a doer of good works and, like a fruitful field, brings forth a great abundance of the fruits of life in the Lord.

Blessed is he who stands at prayer in service to God and, like the heavenly angels, at all times has pure thoughts and does not allow the evil one to approach him, that he may not enslave his soul and lead it away from God the Savior.

Blessed is he who loves sanctity (purity) like light, and has not defiled his body before the Lord with shameful acts of the evil one.

Blessed is he who always retains in himself remembrance of God, for such a person on earth is like a heavenly angel, constantly celebrating the Lord with fear and love.

Blessed is he who loves repentance, which saves all sinners, and does not delight in sin, that he might not appear ungrateful before God our Savior.

Blessed is he who, like a courageous warrior defending heavenly treasures, preserves his soul and body without reproach in the Lord.

Blessed is he who like the heavenly angels, has pure thoughts, and who with his lips sings praises to the One who has authority over all that breathes.

Blessed is he who has become like unto the seraphim and cherubim and is never slothful in spiritual service, who ceaselessly glorifies the Lord.

2

I bow down to Thee, O Master; I bless thee, O Good One; I beseech Thee, O Holy One; I fall down before Thee, O Lover of mankind; and I glorify Thee, O Christ; for Thou, O Only-begotten master of all, O Only Sinless One, wast, for the sake of me, an unworthy sinner, given up to death on the cross in order to free the soul of a sinner from the bondage of sin.

And how shall I repay Thee, O Master? Glory to Thee, O Lover of mankind! Glory to Thee, O Merciful One! Glory to Thee, O Longsuffering One! Glory to Thee, Who forgivest every fall

into sin!

Glory to Thee, Who didst descend to save our soul! Glory to Thee, Who didst take flesh in the womb of the Virgin! Glory to Thee, Who didst suffer bondage! Glory to Thee, Who didst accept scourging! Glory to Thee, Who was made an object of humiliation! Glory to Thee, Who wast crucified! Glory to Thee, Who was buried!

Glory to Thee, Who didst rise from the dead! Glory to Thee, of Whom the prophets spoke! Glory to Thee, in Whom we have believed! Glory to Thee, Who didst ascend into heaven! Glory to Thee, Who didst sit with glory at the right hand of the Father and Who art coming again with hosts of angels to judge every soul that has scorned Thy holy passion!

In that anxious and dreadful hour when the heavenly powers are roused, when all the angels, archangels, seraphim and cherubim will stand with fear and trembling before Thy glory, when the foundations of the the earth will be shaken, and when all that breathes will be terrified by the incomparable greatness of Thy Glory--in that hour mayest Thou take me under Thy wing and may my soul be delivered from the terrible fire and from the gnashing of teeth, from outer darkness and eternal lamentation, that I may bless Thee and say: Glory to Him Who has desired to save a sinner according to the great compassion of His mercy!

3

Make me whole, O Lord, and I will become whole! O only wise and merciful Physician, I beseech Thy benevolence: heal the wounds of my soul and enlighten the eyes of my mind that I may understand my place in Thine eternal design! And in as much as my heart and mind have been disfigured, may Thy grace repair them, for it is as true salt.

What shall I say to Thee, O Knower of the heart who searchest the heart and the inner workings of men? Indeed, Thou knowest that, like a waterless land, my soul thirsts after Thee and my heart longs for Thee. And Thy grace has always saved those that love Thee.

Thus, as Thou hast always heard me, so now do not scorn my prayer. For Thou seest that my mind, like a prisoner, seeks Thee, the Only true Savior.

Send Thy grace, that it may satisfy my hunger and quench my thirst. For insatiably do I desire Thee, O my Master! And who can have enough of Thee if he truly loves Thee and thirsts for Thy truth?

O Giver of light! Fulfill my supplications and grant me Thy gifts according to my prayer; impart to my heart just one drop of Thy grace, that the flame of Thy love may begin to burn in my heart; and, like a fire, may it consume evil thoughts like thorns and thistles!

Give me all this in abundance; grant it to me as God unto man, as the King to His subjects, and increase it as a kind Father.

4

We search for Thee in prayer, O Lord, for all is comprehended in Thee. May we be enriched by Thee, for Thou art wealth which diminishes not with the changes of time.

May Thy loving-kindness come to our aid! May Thy grace defend us! From Thy treasury pour out upon us restoration to heal our sores.

We must seek Thee above all else, and not seek anything else but Thee, for he who seeks Thee finds all in Thee.

In Thee is wealth for the needy, heartfelt joy for the sorrowing, restoration for all the wounded, consolation for all who mourn.

Accept our prayer, O our Lord, and grant us Thyself. May we live in Thee, may we possess Thee instead of all else, for then all is ours.

Grant, O Lord, that we may be Thine. And according to Thy loving-kindness be Thou ours: for the righteous Father gave us Thee for the healing of our sores.

Thou art ours according to the will of Thy Father; and Thou art ours according to Thine own desire. Thou art with us, O Emmanuel! Thou art with us, as our Lord.

Accept these prayers from us, O our God, Who hast descended to us. Accept the tears of sinners and show mercy to the guilty.

According to Thy desire Thou hast been united with us; be the intercessor of our prayer. Raise it up to Thy Father and establish peace in our souls.

5

Like the apple of Thine eye preserve me, O Lord god; defend me and beneath Thy wings shelter me from temptations.

Be the guardian of the eye, that it might not look about in the manner of a thief; be the guardian of the ear, that it might not perceive falsehood.

Be the guardian of the lips, that slander, judgement, criticism and idle words might not come

forth from them.

Be the guardian of the heart, that it might not be inclined to evil and might not work iniquity.

Grant us, O Lord, knowledge, both of what we should do and of how to set about it.

Grant us, O our Lord, that we may be sweeter to Thee than fragrances and perfumes.

Grant us, O our Lord, that we may love Thee and hate the world. Grant us, O Lord, to acquire Only Three rather than all transient possessions. Grant us, O our Lord, to bring Three three choice gifts. Grant us, O our Lord, to burn three aromatic censers before Thee.

Grant us, O our Lord, to light for Thee three brightly burning lamps: the spirit, the soul and the body, these three gifts for the One Trinity.

Let us dedicate the spirit to the Father, the soul to the Son and the body to the Holy Spirit, the Spirit which will raise it again from dust.

O Father, consecrate our spirit to Thyself! O so, consecrate our soul to thyself! O Holy Spirit, consecrate to Thyself our body which is afflicted by sores.

Grant us, O our Lord, to rejoice in Thee, and mayest thou rejoice in us in the last day. To Thee is praise, from the spirit, soul and body. And unto us be Thy mercies.

6

The son of Jesse tunes his pipe and sings: blessed are the blameless who follow in the way of the Lord, who walk in His Law. And our Savior said in the Gospel of life: blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God; blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted; blessed are they who weep, for they shall rejoice.

To those who renounce the world and its vain things, who scorn its lusts and abhor its comforts, is given a promise of recompense in the Gospel of salvation--an everlasting habitation and eternal life.

Out of love for their Lord they have left their families in this world, their parents, their wealth and their possessions; for they heard that blessed are the poor in spirit. And in return for this the heavenly kingdom awaits them.

They have made their bodies into a temple of the Holy Spirit; by their strict way of life they

have overcome lusts, they have borne the yoke of strenuous labor; out of love for their Lord they have despised their own life.

They have crucified their souls and nailed their bodies to the cross, and by their ascetic labors have they moved their Creator to mercy.

They have disdained the desires of the flesh and loved restraint. They have driven away the corruptions of the flesh and loved chastity.

They have chosen for themselves affliction and all manner of privation and have despised rest. They have shed pride and clothed themselves in humility.

They have conquered the enemy and triumphed over him. They have put him to flight and acquired glory for themselves. They have conquered him and they are magnified. They have scorned him and they are crowned.

The Father loves them, and with love the Son embraces them, and the Holy Spirit abides in their pure bodies.

Christ calls to them, saying: come, ye who labored in My name, enter the habitation, from whence those who are called do not go out.

On such as these does the Lord bestow crowns, and they taste bliss in His habitations in place of the sorrows which they bore with Him from morning til night.

The heavenly kingdom awaits those who have gained victory in warfare and have thus acquired glory.

It is habitual for the angels to descend and fortify warriors during battle.

The spirits rush to meet the victors. They call them blessed and say: come, ye who are troubled, and rest from your labors: by your patience in suffering have ye conquered the evil one.

Paradise opens its gates to them; they abide in dwellings of light and there they find repose.

In their mouth is a song of glory and praise to Him Who strengthened them in battle.

7

Thou, O Christ our Savior, hast become for me the path of life which leads to the Father.

There is but one path, and it is my joy, and at the end of it is the heavenly kingdom.

Thou, O Master, Jesus, Son of God, hast become for me the path of life and enlightenment.

In the heart of Thy servant Thy grace has become light and joy, which are sweeter than the honey of the honeycomb to the lips of Thy slave.

In the soul of Thy servant Thy grace has become a treasure, which has made his poverty rich and driven away misery and corruption.

For Thy servant Thy grace has become a refuge, strength, a defense, ennoblement, praise, and food for the whole of his life.

How can Thy servant be silent, O Master, after having tasted the great sweetness of Thy love and grace? How could I dare once again to obstruct the waves of grace which pour forth into the heart of me, a sinner, and which are replete with sweetness according to the multitude of Thy gifts?

I shall sing of the glory of the Master of heavenly powers and shall magnify Thy grace, O Christ our Savior, and my tongue shall not cease to chant of Thy love.

Thy love draws me to Thee, O Savior, O praise of my life.

Thy grace makes it sweet for me to follow Thee with my mind.

May my heart be as a fertile field for Thee, and may Thy grace sprinkle the dew of eternal life upon it.

May Thy grace reap a good harvest on the field of my heart: humility, reverence, sanctity, and all that is ever pleasing to Thee.

Return my soul to the sweet garden of paradise, and may it abide in light that, surrounded by the delights of paradise, I too may say with all the saints: glory to the Immortal Father; honor to Him Who presents heavenly gifts to this worthless one, that he may bring a tithe of glory to the King of all.

8

Mourn over my nakedness, O my beloved brothers! I have angered Christ with my wanton life. For the Good One created me and gave me freedom, but I have abused it and repaid Him with evil, with my lawless deeds.

The Lord of all made me perfect and established me as an instrument of His glory, that I might serve Him and glorify His name; but I, wretch that I am, have made my members into instruments of sin and have used them to work all manner of deceit. Woe is me, for He will judge me justly.

My shameless deeds presage my fate at the judgement, for they will indict my poor soul. Unrelentingly I beg Thee, O my Savior: shelter me under Thy wings and do not expose my defilement at Thy great judgement, that I might glorify Thy kindness.

All manner of evil deeds which I have done before the Lord of all exclude me from communion with the saints. And because I have not served God with my life as they have, I have no share in their good deeds. Alas, I have perished!

Now the grief that I deserve overtakes me. For if I had struggled along with them, then, like they, I would be glorified. But because I was negligent and served the passions, I do not belong to the hosts of victors, but have become an heir of gehenna.

to Thee, O Victor pierced by nails on the cross Who calleth out to sinners saying: come, receive forgiveness freely--to Thee I unrelentingly pray, O my Savior: turn thine eyes away from my lawlessness, and by Thy sufferings heal my sores that I may glorify Thy kindness.

O All-good One, Whose kindness is immeasurably greater than the deceit of the world, strengthen my miserable soul with hope in Thy kindness, for it has been weakened and become exhausted to the extreme by the crushing infirmities of deceit and sin, and it holds on only by relying on Thee, for it hopes to find comfort in Thee!

9

Like the publican I sigh, like the harlot I shed tears, like the thief I call out, like the prodigal son I entreat Thee. O Christ my Savior and Lover of mankind, strengthen my soul which has grown faint, which has been paralyzed with the intoxication of delights; heal its scabs and wash it, blackened with sin, with Thine honorable blood!

According to the multitude of Thy loving kindness, convert me, o only Long-suffering One, and deliver me from all sensual indulgence. Extinguish the furnace of my passions, so that they will not burn me up in the end.

Woe is me! Thou, O Lord, hast given me the light of knowledge, and I have clouded it. Woe is me! Constantly hast Thou visited Thy grace upon me and yet dost Thou visit it upon me, but hourly have I rejected this gift for my healing and yet do I reject it.

What a great multitude of gifts hast Thou bestowed upon me and yet dost Thou bestow them upon me, a sinner, O Master; but I who am wretched have always been and continue to be consciously ungrateful before Thee!

Thy grace comforts me, enlightens me and strengthens me, but I in my negligence turn my attention to vain things and I always sink once again into the bile and bitterness of my passions.

Thou, O All-good One, remindest me of death and of eternal torments and drawest me toward life in order to save me, but I ever shun these saving thoughts. I drive them out and occupy myself with that which is of no benefit to me. Thus have I no justification before Thee.

I knock at the door of Thy loving-kindness, O Lord, that it may be opened to me. I do not cease to pray that I may receive what I request, and unwavering I seek pardon.

Be ever patient with me, depraved as I am; deliver me from the sins which possess me that, having become whole, I may arise from the deathbed of corrupting sin.

Free me from my wanton habits before the end overtakes me, for who will confess Thee in hell?

Make white my garment before the terrible command catches me unprepared and ashamed.

Deliver my contrite soul from the mouths of the lions and save it according to Thy grace and mercy, by the prayers of our All-pure Lady the Theotokos and of all the saints.

10

Before thy glory, O Christ my Savior, I will announce all my misconduct and confess the infinitude of Thy mercies, which Thou pourest out upon me according to Thy kindness.

From my mother's womb I began to grieve Thee, and utterly have I disregarded Thy grace, for I have neglected my soul. Thou, O my Master, according to the multitude of thy mercies, hast regarded all my wickedness with patience and kindness. Thy grace has lifted up my head, but daily it is brought low by my sins.

Bad habits entangle me like snares, and I rejoice at being thus bound. I sink to the very depths of evil, and this delights me. Daily the enemy gives me new shackles, for he sees how this

variety of bonds pleases me.

The fact that I am bound by my own desires should provoke weeping and lamentation, shame and disgrace. And yet more terrible is the fact that I bind myself with the shackles that the enemy places upon me, and I slay myself with the passions that give him pleasure.

Although I know how dreadful these shackles are, I hide them behind a noble appearance from all who might see. I appear to be robed in the beautiful clothes of reverence, but my soul is entangled with shameful thoughts. Before all who might see, I am reverent, but inside I am filled with all manner of indecency.

My conscience accuses me of all this, and I act as if I wish to be freed of my shackles. Every day I worry and sigh over this, yet I ever remain bound by the same snares. How pitiful I am; and how pitiful is my daily repentance, of it has no firm foundation. Every day I lay a foundation for the building, and again with my own hands I demolish it.

My repentance has not even made a good beginning as yet; yet there is no end to my wicked negligence. I have become a slave to passions and to the evil will of the enemy who destroys me.

Who will give the water to my head, and the founts to my eyes for tears, so that I may ever weep before Thee, O merciful God, that thou mightest send Thy grace and draw me, a sinner, out of the sea, furious with the waves of sin, that hourly convulses my soul? For my desires are worse than wounds that cannot be bandaged.

I wait hoping for repentance and deceive myself with this vain promise until my death. Ever do I say, "I will repent," but never do I repent. My words give the appearance of heartfelt repentance, but in deed I am always far from repentance.

What will happen to me in the day of the trial, when God unveils all things at His court! Certainly I shall be sentenced to torment, if here I have not moved Thee to mercy, O my Judge, by my tears.

I hope on Thy mercies, O Lord; I fall at Thy feet and beseech Thee: Grant me the spirit of repentance and lead my soul out of the dungeon of iniquity! May a ray of light shine in my mind before I go to the terrible judgement which awaits me, where there is no opportunity to repent of one's wicked deeds.

No one can heal my disease except He Who knows the depths of the heart.

How many times have I set boundaries for myself and built walls between myself and sin! But my thoughts transgressed the boundaries and my will tore down the walls, for the boundaries were not secured by fear of God, and the walls were not founded on sincere repentance.

And again I knock at the door, that it may open for me. I do not cease to ask that I may receive what I request; and I know no shame in seeking Thy mercy, O Lord.

O Lord, my Savior! Why hast thou forsaken me? Have mercy on me, O only Lover of mankind. Save me, a sinner, Thou only Sinless One.

Wrench me from the mire of my iniquities, that I may not be forever sullied by them. Deliver me from the jaws of the enemy, who roars as a lion and desires to swallow me up.

Rouse thy strength and come, that thou mightest save me. Beam Thy lightning and disperse his power, that he may be struck with fear and flee from Thy face, for he has not the strength to stand before Thee and before the face of those who love Thee. As soon as he perceives a sign of Thy grace, he is taken with fear of Thee and withdraws from such with shame.

And now, O Master, save me, for I flee to Thee!

12

Will it take thee long to repent, O my poor soul? The judgement is at hand, the fire is made ready for thy members.

All the days of my life have I wallowed in the sea of evil, and I did not lament my sins. And all at once death will place its shackles upon me.

Satan has seduced me and, having bound me with my own desires, he has taken me into captivity and ruthlessly cast me to the ground. Alas, what shall I do now?

Do Thou, O righteous Judge, disgrace the evil one who wars against me and who secretly sets out his cunning snares for me when I wish to repent.

Be my helper, O most merciful Lord, and I will rise up and mock him, I will tear apart all his snares. Woe is me in that day when Thou, O Lord, wilt judge sinners! O, may I not then be

ashamed before the hosts of angels!

Be anxious and tremble, O my soul. Pray to thy Lord and say to Him: have mercy on me, O my Savior, and rescue me, for I have wallowed in vice. I am like the harlot and am ashamed to pray to Thee. Save me by Thy grace, O Lord, from gehenna.

The day of the Lord will suddenly shine forth for all creation, and the righteous will come out to meet the Lord with burning lamps; but I am in darkness; there is no oil in my lamp, that I might meet the Bridegroom when He comes.

My spirit trembles when it hears that the day of judgement is at hand; my thoughts become agitated when I consider the fire that awaits the lawless. According to Thy kindness which is merciful to sinners, have mercy on me who have perished--and I will sing Thy praises when Thy kingdom comes.

May Thy cross accompany me during that dreaded crossing, may it drive the powers of darkness away from me; may it be for me the key that opens the gates of paradise, that I may enter into bliss, rejoice and glorify Thy compassion, O most merciful One!

13

Grant us Thy help, O All-good One, and never abandon our race! Vouchsafe us thine all-searching wisdom, that we may know the transience of all things. Heal our sores with repentance.

Visit us, that we might not persist in our sins. Thou Who art most merciful to our souls, instill in us remembrance of good, for much have we loved evil. Dispel all harm from us, O Good One.

Accept whatever good will is in us, and send us a corresponding measure of strength. Our soul is not capable of offering Thee a gift which is as great as Thou art. May Thy marvelous death move Thee to compassion, O Lord.

Our error is much mightier than our prayer. Our prayer is insignificant, but our guilt is great. What sacrifice could we bring to reconcile ourselves with Thee? We have nothing to give to Thee. Thus we ask Thee to reconcile us by Thy blood, O All-merciful One.

Thanks be to the Father Who sent Thee, O our Savior! For by Thee we who are guilty are vindicated. Thou hast taken away our sins by Thy cross; take away our guilt also in Thy coming.

14

Praise be to the Good One Who descended for our sake, became like unto us and healed our sores by His all-sanctifying flesh and His all-sanctifying blood! May all sing praises to Him!

Thanks be to the Kindhearted One Who ever bears our burden, although He knows our wickedness, Who has created us and nourishes us, and commands His sun to shine upon us! May we praise His goodness!

Open to me the door of loving-kindness, O our Lord, Who are full of mercy; stretch out Thine hand to me, O Good and Merciful One, and return me to the fold of Thy sheep, that I may glorify Thy kindness.

My sins are a wall between me and Thy goodness. Tear it down that I might approach Thy loving-kindness; pour out Thy love upon me and exalt me to Thy heights.

But the wall of my sins can be torn down only by tears and contrition; so grant me all the days of my life diligently to lament my sins and to gather the fruits which will serve me well in the day of judgement.

15

The Father exclaimed: this is my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; heed Him. Thus He spoke of the Son, Who is undivided from the glory of the Divinity. For the Father and the Son together with the Holy Spirit are one nature, one force, one essence and one kingdom.

And Mary was called the mother of God by His Son in the flesh, Who was undivided from the glory of His Divinity. for one is god, Who has appeared to the world in the flesh.

His glory proclaimed His divine nature which is from the Father, and His body proclaimed His human nature which was from Mary; both of His natures converged and were united in a single hypostasis.

He was the Only-Begotten of the Father and also the Only-Begotten of Mary. And he who divides the hypostasis in Him will also be separated from His kingdom, and he who conjoins His natures will be deprived of the life that is of Him.

He who denies that Mary gave birth to God will not see the glory of His divinity, and he who denies that he was clothed in sinless flesh will receive neither salvation nor the life which was granted through His body.

His very deeds give witness and His divine strength teach the contemptuous that He is true God. And His sufferings give proof that He is true man.

16

O good lover of mankind! If Thy grace pours forth upon the grass, the flowers and all earthly vegetation in its time, then the more so shalt Thou grant to Thy servant that which he requests of Thee.

For the air becomes clear and the birds adorn their voices with varied melodies, singing glory to Thy great wisdom. Al the earth is clothed with a raiment of many-colored flowers woven without human hands, and is glad and celebrates the holy day.

Water also my heart with the dew of Thy grace, O good Lover of mankind! Just as a sown field cannot sprout and nourish its plants without sufficient rainfall, so my heart is incapable of producing things pleasing to Thee and of bearing the fruits of truth without Thy grace.

Lo, the rain nourishes the plants and the trees are crowned with diverse flowers. May the dew of Thy grace also enlighten my mind and may it adorn my heart with the flowers of contrition, humility, love and patience.

May my prayer draw near to Thee, O Lord! Grant me Thy holy seed, that I might bring Thee a harvest of sheaves abundant in good fruits and say, "glory to Him Who gave me this that I might bring it unto Him," and bow down to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

17

O good Lover of man, Who accepted the two farthings and praised the good will of the widow, accept the prayers of Thy servant; multiply my prayer and grant my requests, that I might become a temple for Thy grace. May it abide in me and itself teach me how to please it. May it strum my heartstrings and play songs of contrition filled with gladness. May it fasten my mind as with a bridle, that I might not sin before Thee by going astray, and might not be cast out of the light.

Hearken, O Lord, hearken unto my prayer, and grant that I who am unclean might become pure, that I who am senseless might become wise, that I who am useless might become profitable in the flock of Thy chosen laborers and of all the saints who have been pleasing to Thee--and that I might be admitted to Thy kingdom.

The glad in paradise intercede for me and cry out to Thee, O only Lover of mankind. Attend Thou to their prayers. Through them will I give Thee glory in return, for Thou hast hearkened unto their prayers and hast been generous to me and not disregarded my prayers.

Thou, O Lord, hast said by Thy Prophet: open thy lips, and I will fill them. Behold, both the heart and the lips of Thy servant are opened; fill them with Thy grace, that I may bless Thee unceasingly, O Christ my God and Savior.

My prayer is powerless, but my iniquities are great and might. Sins overwhelm me and my weaknesses dismay me; Thou art wealthy and good, kindhearted and merciful.

Thou Who didst open the eyes of the blind man, open the eyes of my mind that I may unceasingly contemplate Thy beauty.

thou Who didst establish bounds for the sea by Thy command, establish bounds for my heart by Thy grace, that it might not turn aside to the right hand or to the left from Thy beauty.

Thou Who gavest water in the desert to the people who did not humble themselves and contradicted Thee, give me contrition and grant tears to my eyes, that I might weep day and night throughout the length of my life with meekness, with love and with a pure heart.

Hearken, O Lord, unto the prayer of Thy servant, according to the intercessions of all Thy saints, Thou Who art blessed above all unto the ages.

18

O God righteous and praised, O God pre-eternal: Hearken unto this man, this sinner, in this hour!

Hear me, O God, hear me in Thy fortress, remember not the continual disobedience of my worthlessness.

Answer my prayer with fire, as Thou didst once for Thy Prophet.

O God of Holy powers! O, Creator of the fleshless ones! O, Thou Who didst pronounce: ask, and ye shall receive! Be Thou not repelled by me who am unclean, who have defiled my lips and am covered with sins.

Hear me, Thou Who hast promised to hear those who call to Thee in truth, and direct the steps of Thy servant to the path of peace.

I cry to Thee with all my heart: God, O God, hearken unto me, O hope of all the ends of the earth and of those who travel afar. Banish all unclean spirits that they may flee from the face of Thy servant.

Take up Thy weapons and shield and rise up to help me. Draw Thy sword and imprison them who persecute me. O Lord, tell my soul: I am thy salvation.

May the spirit of fear, the spirit of despondency, and the spirit of pride and of all manner of malice withdraw from my soul. In it may all manner of excitement produced by the workings of the devil be extinguished. May my spirit, soul, and body be enlightened by the light of Thy knowledge. May I come to be a perfect man made unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ with the angels and all who have been pleasing to Thee through the ages, and I shall glorify Thine all-honorable and venerable name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

19

O Lord and Master! O God of heaven and earth! Show Thy favor and open to me the door of repentance, I pray Thee with mine afflicted soul.

Regard me according to Thy great mercy; incline Thine ear to my prayer and forgive me, who am guilty of falling into many sins; forgive me all of the wretched things I have done, for I have been conquered by my own evil will.

I seek peace and do not find it, for my conscience is stained; there is no tranquility in me due to the multitude of my sins.

Hearken, O Lord, to a heart which cries out to Thee with affliction. Attend not to my deeds, but to the affliction of my soul, and hasten to heal me who am cruelly wounded. Grant that I may soon come to my senses according to the grace of Thy love for mankind.

Take from me the burden of my sins and grant me not that which my deeds merit, that I may not perish in the end, and that I may not be altogether deprived of thought and concern for my restoration.

I fall down before Thy compassion; have mercy on me who am cast into the dust by the judgement of my deeds.

O master, summon me, a captive who is held and bound by his deeds as with chains, for Thou alone knowest how to free those who are bound and how to heal the invisible sores that are known only to Thee Who knowest all mysteries.

show Thy favor and stretch out Thine hand to me. Draw me out of the mire of mine iniquities, O Thou Who dost not rejoice at the destruction of man, and Who dost not turn Thy face from those who cry to Thee with tears.

Hearken, O Lord, unto the voice of Thy servant, who cries to Thee; show Thy face to me, for I am beclouded; enlighten me with the coming of Thy Holy Spirit.

Grant me, O Lord, diligence, for I have become defiled, and turn my labor into joy.

Tear up my sackclothes and gird me with gladness; may the door of Thy kingdom open to me that having entered therein, I may glorify Thine all-holy name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

20

Mightily do I magnify Thee, O Lord, Who hast regarded my humility and not delivered me into the hands of mine enemies, and saved my soul from want.

And now, O Master, may Thy hand shield me, and may Thy mercy be upon me, for my soul is troubled and grieves greatly that when it leaves this poor body the cunning hand of the adversary might not find it and keep it back in darkness for the sins which I have committed in this life, both in knowledge and in ignorance.

Be merciful to me, O Master of all, that my soul might not behold the lurid glance of the cunning demons; but may it be received by Thy pure and radiant angels.

Give glory to Thy holy name, and by Thy strength raise me up to Thy divine throne.

When I am judged, may the hand of the prince of this world not seize me and drag me, a sinner, away to the depths of hell. But protect Thou me and be my defender.

Have mercy, O Lord, on my soul, which has been defiled by the passions of this life; and if I have, as a man, due to the weakness of my nature, sinned in anything, whether in word or deed or thought, O Thou Who hast power to release men from their sins, forgive and release me that I might obtain Thy cooling solace and be found without any impurity or stain, without reproach and unsullied before Thee; and my Thy hand receive me, O Master, for Thou art blessed throughout the ages.

21

Thou to Whom the penitent are pleasing, incline Thyself to me, a sinner. Fill me with the crumbs from Thy great banquet; do not let my life perish at the left side in darkness. May Thy truth not behold the terrible impurity of my misery in that great morning when the sentence unto eternity shall be pronounced.

The joy of this world is better. Woe to him who is seduced by it! As a boat is tossed by waves, so is my life convulsed by my misery. Vain joy captures it with the illusion of satisfaction. Be Thou my helmsman and steer my ship to Thy harbor in that great morning when the sentence unto eternity shall be pronounced.

God loves the sinner when he comes to repentance and, with his eyes full of tears, sighing and sobbing, he cries out to Him: O our Lord, deliver me from fire! I pray Thee, accept the tears of my misery. Voluntarily have I sinned before Thee, yet voluntarily do I also repent.

So come forth boldly, O sinner. The door is already open and ready to receive you. Bring the Lord a sacrifice of tears and go freely to Him. He does not demand fits, nor does He have any respect of persons. He is kindhearted to men and willingly forgives the sins of repentant sinners.

22

Blessed is the man who has the fear of God in him, for the Holy Spirit calls him blessed, saying: blessed is the man who fears the Lord.

Blessed is the man who has the love of God in him, for he bears God in himself. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God.

Blessed is he who has attained endurance, for a long-suffering man is great in understanding.

Blessed is he who is a stranger to anger and irritability, for anger does not beget a man of God's truth.

Blessed is he who has loved meekness, according to the Lord's word: blessed are the meek.

Blessed is he who has attained true obedience, for such a man imitates the Lord our Savior, Who was obedient even unto death.

Blessed is he who is a stranger to envy and rivalry, for it was by envy that death came into the world.

Blessed is he who does not defile his tongue with slander, for the heart of a slanderer is full of all manner of defilement.

Blessed is he who has attained abstinence, for this one virtue is a buttress for all the rest.

Blessed is he who is charitable to the poor, for he will find many to defend him at the judgement.

Blessed is he who leads an exalted life yet maintains an humble persuasion: he imitates Christ and with Him he shall sit in glory.

Blessed is he who forces himself to perform all manner of good deeds, for the forceful shall capture the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed is he who walks the straight path, for he will enter heaven bearing a crown.

Blessed are all these, for they shall stand boldly before the Judge and receive a holy reward from His hands.

23

We confess one and the same individual as perfect god and perfect Man. He is God the Word Which was flesh.

For if He was not flesh, why was Mary chosen? And if He is not God, whom does Gabriel call Lord?

If He was not flesh, who was laid in a manger? And if He is not god, whom did the angels who came down from heaven glorify? If He was not flesh, who was wrapped in swaddling clothes? And if He is not God, in whose honor did the star appear?

If He was not flesh, whom did Simeon hold in his arms? And if He is not God, to whom did Simeon say: Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace?

If he was not flesh, whom did Joseph take when he fled into Egypt? And if He is not god, who fulfilled the prophesy: Our of Egypt have I called my Son?

If He was not flesh, whom did John baptize? And if He is not God, to whom did the Father say: This is my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased?

If He was not flesh, who hungered in the desert? And if He is not God, unto whom did the angels come and minister?

If He was not flesh, who was invited to the marriage in Cana of Galilee? And if He is not God, who turned the water into wine?

If He was not flesh, who took the loaves in the desert? And if He is not God, who fed the five thousand men and their women and children with five loaves and two fishes?

If he was not flesh, who slept in the ship? And if He is not God, who rebuked the waves and the sea?

If He was not flesh, with whom did Simon the Pharisee sit at meat? And if He is not God, who forgave the sins of the harlot?

If He was not flesh, who wore a man's garment? And if He is not God, who healed the woman with an issue of blood when she touched His garment?

If He was not flesh, who spat on the ground and made clay? And if He is not God, who gave sight to the eyes of the blind man with that clay?

If He was not flesh, who wept at Lazarus' grave? And if He is not god, who commanded him to come forth out of the grave four days after his death?

If He was not flesh, whom did the Jews arrest in the garden? And if He is not God, who cast them to the ground with the words: I am He?

If He was not flesh, who was judged before Pilate? And if he is not God, who frightened Pilate's wife in a dream?

If he was not flesh, whose garments were stripped from Him and parted by the soldiers? And if He is not God, why was the sun darkened upon His crucifixion?

If He was not flesh, who was crucified on the cross? And if He is not God, who shook the foundations of the earth?

If He was not flesh, whose hands and feet were nailed to the cross? And if He is not God, how did it happen that the veil of the temple was rent in twain, the rocks were rent, and the graves were opened?

If He was not flesh, who hung on the cross between the two thieves? And if He is not God,

how could He say to the thief: Today thou shalt be with me in paradise?

If He was not flesh, who cried out and gave up the ghost? And if He is not God, whose cry caused many bodies of the saints which slept to arise?

If He was not flesh, whom did the women see laid in the grave? And if He is not God, about whom did the angel say to them: he has arisen, He is not here?

If He was not flesh, whom did Thomas touch when he put his hands into the prints of the nails?

And if He is not God, who entered through the doors that were shut?

If He was not flesh, who ate at the sea of Tiberias? And if He is not god, on whose orders were the nets filled with fishes?

If He was not flesh, whom did the apostles see carried up into heaven? And if He is not God, who ascended to the joyful cries of the angels, and to whom did the Father proclaim: sit at My right hand?

If He is not God and man then, indeed, our salvation is false, and false are the pronouncements of the prophets.

24

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, Our Savior! Grant me, Thy servant, contrition and enlightenment of heart, that with an enlightened heart, tears of sweetness might spring forth in pure prayer, that it might not take many of my tears for Thee to erase the record of my sins, and that for the sake of brief lamentation thou mightest extinguish the fire kindled in me. For if, O Master, thou allowest me to weep here, then wilt Thou free me from inextinguishable fire.

I know, O longsuffering and man-befriending Lord, that every day and hour I embitter and anger Thee greatly, but the kindness of Thy endurance will vanquish my malice and bitterness.

O Lord, Who lovest good and art a God of mercy and compassion! Save me from the terrible corrupt enemy, who hourly fetters and persecutes my soul with evil and corrupt thoughts.

Ineffable is Thy strength, O Christ, for it rebuked the waves of the sea. May it rebuke him, may it render him ineffectual, and may it banish him far from me Thy servant.

Every day he renews his treachery against me and he hastens to take possession of my crippled mind and to distance me from Thee and from Thy divine Commandments.

But, O Master, O most merciful Lord, quickly send Thy strength and chase from me, Thy worthless servant, this might serpent with all of his cunning and shameful thoughts, that I might in purity praise Thee with thine eternal Father and Thine all-holy and good and life-creating Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

25

The sinless Lamb of God freely chose to suffer the cross in the flesh and was slain for the salvation of us sinners. In incorrupt flesh did He taste death in order to save our fallen nature. Thou Who art the Wisdom and the Strength of God the Father, the Radiance of His glory, O incomprehensible Jesus, O unfathomable Christ, O only kindhearted Lover of mankind, pour out on me, a sinner, Thy great mercy; and by Thy grace chase away from me all apathy, slothfulness and impatience, that in Thy second coming I might not hear thy terrible denunciation: What didst thou suffer for My sake?

In that terrible and frightening day, O Lord, Thou wilt say to us sinners: you all know well what I suffered for your sake. I, Who am god, took flesh for your sake. I, Who am invisible, visibly dwelt on earth for your sake. For your sake I hungered, thirsted and labored. for your sake I was persecuted and stoned. I, Who am blameless, was struck in the face and spat upon for your sake. I, Who am sinless, suffered a dishonorable death for your sake. For your sake my ribs were pierced with a spear and I was given vinegar mixed with gall to drink. All this have I suffered for your sake, in order to make you saints in heaven. I have given you the kingdom of heaven, I have called you all brothers, I have sent down to you the Holy Spirit. O men, what have you suffered for My sake?

What shall I, who am wretched, wicked, sinful and defiled, say in response? the martyrs will point to their wounds, their torments, their detached limbs, their endurance to the end. The ascetics will point to their asceticism, their lengthy fasts, vigils, nonacquisitiveness, their tears and all their sufferings. But I, who am slothful and sinful, to what shall I point, but the shameful fruits of gluttony, sensuality, somnolence, acquisitiveness, impatience, vainglory and apathy?

If Thou demandest from me, O Lord, an account of the time which I was given for repentance, but spent in negligence, how shall I justify myself? And if I am interrogated about my idle talking, wicked thoughts and desires, then what fear, what confusion will embrace poor me, and what torments will follow thereafter?

Spare me, O Lord! Spare me, O kindhearted One! Spare me, O Lover of man! Spare me, O

only good One! Be merciful and have mercy on me according to Thy singular kindness. Strengthen my soul which has been corrupted by my slothfulness and apathy, O Thou Who exaltest the lowly and rescuest the distressed!

Thou knowest how negligent and wretched I am, Thou knowest how many cunning and evil thoughts war against me, Thou seest the enemy's malice and the many wiles which he uses against me. Help me according to Thy great mercy, make me sober and vigilant, quicken me and save me by Thy grace through the prayers of our most pure Lady the Mother of God and of all the saints.

26

Thou, O Lord of all, according to Thy mercy, be for me a harbor of salvation, a refuge of charity, and save me.

I beseech Thy kindness, O my Savior. From henceforth pour out upon me Thy mercies at that hour and set me far away from those who are to be tormented.

O Christ, Who didst will to become a sacrifice for us, destroy the sin which has stricken all my members. Descend and dwell in my members.

When he hears of this, the teeth of the evil one will be broken and the fire of Gehenna will be extinguished by Thy radiance.

Evil Satan has spewed out his venom on me, he has corrupted me and debased me with sin. But because I follow Thy way, and Thou art omnipotent, in my infirmity I nurture the hope that Thou wilt scorn him and help me by pardoning sins--and then will my corrupter be ashamed.

The princes of evil have blinded me with their passions, and by their cunning have they robbed me of the beauty of my youth. what can I do, now that I have lost my purity? I will cry out to Christ, that He might return my beauty to me--and then will the evil ones be ashamed.

My Savior cries out to me, to His disciple: do not despair of thy salvation; I will restore thee and forgive thee thy sins. I have found thee and I will not leave thee; for I have redeemed thee with My very own Blood.

Cry out, O sinner, with all your might, and spare not your throat: for your Lord is merciful and loves those who repent. As soon as you return, your Father will come out beforehand to meet you. He will slaughter the fatted calf, clothe you in a fine robe and rejoice in you.

27

Do not lose heart, O soul, do not grieve; pronounce not over thyself a final judgement for the multitude of thy sins; do not commit thyself to fire; do not say: the Lord has cast me from His face.

Such words are not pleasing to God. Can it be that he who has fallen cannot get up? Can it be that he who has turned away cannot turn back again? Dost thou not hear how kind the Father is to a prodigal?

Do not be ashamed to turn back and say boldly: I will arise and go to my Father. Arise and go!

He will accept thee and will not reproach thee, but rather rejoice at thy return. He awaits thee; just do not be ashamed and do not hide from the face of God as did Adam.

It was for thy sake that Christ was crucified; so will He cast thee aside? He knows who oppresses us. He knows that we have no other help but Him alone.

Christ knows that man is miserable. Do not give thyself up to despair and apathy, assuming that thou hast been prepared for the fire. Christ derives no consolation from thrusting us into the fire; He gains nothing if He sends us into the abyss to be tormented.

Imitate the prodigal son: leave the city that starves thee. Come and beseech Him and thou shalt behold the glory of God. Thy face shall be enlightened and thou wilt rejoice in the sweetness of paradise. Glory to the Lord and Lover of mankind Who saves us!

28

Do you wish to lead a proper life? Exercise humility, for without it it is impossible to lead a proper life.

do all your work in the name of our Savior Jesus Christ, and thus shall your fruits be carried up to heaven.

A man begins to go astray when he withdraws from humility. He who has abandoned God does the evil spirit oppress, as he did Saul.

The enemy's snares are smeared with honey. He who is attracted by the sweetness of honey becomes caught in the snares and filled with all manner of woe.

Love humility and you will never fall into the devil's snare, for, soaring on humility's swift wings you will always remain above the enemy's snares.

Arrogance is like a very tall but rotten tree. All of its branches are brittle and if someone climbs upon it, he immediately falls from the height he has attained.

Blessed is he who is enriched with good hopes and illuminated with good thoughts: his glory is great and everlasting.

Let us strive for sober attention, that we might recognize our sins and be constantly humbled, that we might not nurture, like the serpent, a high opinion of ourselves or wickedness.

Let us love sobriety, that we might have a pure heart and that we might preserve the temple entrusted to us undefiled by sinful corruption.

Wondrous is prayer accompanied by signs and tears, especially if the tears are shed in secret.

He who prays in his mind with faith beholds the Lord before himself. For in Him do we live, move and exist.

If your heart has been hardened, weep before the Lord, that He might shine upon you the illumination of knowledge and grant that with an ardent heart you might be carried up to Him.

29

He Who is from God, God the Word, the only-begotten Son of the Father, of one essence with the Father, of one essence with the Father, Being from Being, ineffably begotten of the Father without a mother before all ages--the very same is born in the last days to a daughter of men, to the Virgin Mary without a father. God is born incarnate, wearing flesh borrowed from her, having become man, which He was not, and remaining God, which He was, in order to save the world. And He is Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten of the Father and the only-begotten of His Mother.

I confess One and the Same as both perfect God and perfect Man, in two natures, united in one hypostasis or person, recognized as indivisibly, unconfused and unchangeably God Who was clothed in flesh, animated by an intelligent and rational soul, and came to resemble us in every way except sin.

One and the Same is earthly and heavenly, temporal and eternal, both with and without

beginning, timeless and subject to time, created and uncreated, suffering and free of suffering, God and Man and perfect in both. One in two natures, in both Unitary.

30

The time of my life has been squandered in cares and shameful thoughts. Grant me, O Lord, a cure, that I might be completely healed of my hidden sores. Strengthen me, that I might labor diligently in Thy vineyard, if even only for one hour. For my life in its vanity has already reached its eleventh hour.

Direct my ship and its goods by Thy commandments, and grant me, a worthless merchant, the presence of mind to sell my cargo while there is still time.

The time for sailing is already coming to an end; it is as if I could already hear the voice of the Judge saying to me, who am dissolute: show me now, O slothful one, the goods which you have acquired during your life.

The hour of death terrifies me, who am miserable. For I look at my deeds and my soul trembles; I see my apathy and slothfulness, and my bones stiffen.

The hour of departure looms before mine eyes and I am taken with tremendous fear when I think of it. Instead of rejoicing, I have become more afraid, because when I had grace I did no deeds worthy of God.

Woe is me, O my soul! Why dost thou neglect thy life! Why dost thou spend its numbered days in dissipation? Can it be that thou dost not know that thou wilt be called in a moment? What wilt thou do there after leading a careless life here? With what response wilt thou justify thyself when thou standest before the throne of the terrible Judge? The enemy deceives thee and day by day he steals away thine inheritance, but thou dost fail to comprehend this.

Be sober; come to thy senses and pray to God with tears, calling out to Him with heartfelt grief: grant me, O Lord, to love Thee with all my strength and to serve Thee diligently, fulfilling Thy holy commandments, that when my hour of departure arrives, Thou mightest find me ready and waiting to meet Thee with great joy, and Thou mightest lead me into Thine eternal kingdom to rejoice with all the saints who have been pleasing to Thee.

31

Save me, O Long-suffering Lord! Save me, Son of God, sinless Christ! And grant me contemplation of eternal life that, having nothing else than this thought in my heart, I, a sinner, might always do Thy will, assisted by Thy grace; and that I might willingly walk in Thy precepts, that I might use the talent which Thou, O Heavenly King, hast given me to good purpose and, having brought a profit by investing it well, that I might be found worthy to be praised by Thee, O Master. And when Thou comest, O Lord, might I say boldly and with a pure heart: blessed am I, that Thou hast come, O Master!

At Thy wedding, O Lord, clothe me in a worthy garment, which Thy grace will prepare for me while I am still here. Vouchsafe me then to light a lamp, given me by Thy generosity.

Thus with joy will I go out to meet Thee, glorifying and blessing Thee, with the hope that I will be a co-communicant with the righteous and the saints who have been pleasing to Thee through the ages.

32

The debts of those who ask for pardon are forgiven. But see that you do not harbor hatred for your brethren when you ask forgiveness of your debts.

Prayers that are offered up to God remain behind closed doors if they do not contain love, for only love can open the doors for prayer.

If your brother is angry with you, then the Lord also is angry with you. And if you have made peace with your brother below, then you have made peace also with the Lord on high. If you receive your brother, then you also receive your Lord.

Thus, make peace with the Lord in the person of those who are offended; give Him cause to be glad in the person of those who sorrow; visit Him in the person of those who are infirm; feed Him in the person of those who hunger.

In the person of a weary traveler, prepare a soft bed for Him, wash His feet, seat Him at the head of your table, break your bread and share it with Him, and give Him also your cup.

He has already shown His great love for you; He has broken His body for you and given you His blood to drink.

Thus does the Lord speak to every soul: forgive your brother his transgressions, and I will forgive you your sins. You shall forgive minor errors, debts of perhaps a few coins or some three pence, and I will grant you thousands of talants. For you have only to forgive, without presenting any gift; but I will forgive you your sins and grant you healing and the heavenly kingdom.

And I will accept your gift when you make peace with him who is at enmity with you. When you have no malice, when the setting sun does not find you angry, when you meet all with peace and love--then will your prayer be acceptable and your offering pleasing, and your house will be blessed and you also shall find blessing.

But if you do not make peace with your brother, then how will you ask Me for forgiveness? I am your Master; I command you and you do not heed Me. You are a servant; how dare you bring Me a prayer, or a sacrifice, or first fruits of your harvest, if you bear malice toward anyone? If you turn your face from your brother, so shall I turn Mine eyes from your prayer and from your gift.

O Lover of mankind, Jesus Christ our God: hoping steadfastly in Thy mercy I beseech Thee, set me not at Thy left hand with the goats, who have given Thee much grief; say not to me: Amen, amen, I tell you, I know you not. But according to Thy kindness, give me endless tears, give me heart contrition and humility and cleanse it with fear of Thee, that it may become a temple of Thy grace.

Although I am most sinful and unworthy, I ceaselessly knock at Thy door. Although I am apathetic and slothful and take no care about my salvation, I wish to follow Thy path. Save me for the sake of Thy mercy, for in every way Thou art good, O Lord, and Thy compassion is in all Thy works.

Help me, O Master of all, defend the infirmity of my soul, that I might be delivered from sinful corruption and freed from the bonds of the passions. May malice not torment me and may the hostile demon not take me captive, but may the kingdom of Thy divine and venerable Spirit come upon me, and cause the corrupt passions which now possess and reign in me to withdraw from me. For Thou art a God of mercy, compassion and love for mankind.

O most holy Mother of God, O only Lady who art utterly pure in both soul and body, look upon me, abominable and unclean, who have blackened soul and body with the stains of my passionate and gluttonous life. Cleanse my passionate mind/; set aright my blind and wandering thoughts and make them incorrupt; bring my senses to order and guide them; free me from my evil and repulsive addiction to unclean prejudices and passions which torment me; stop every sin that works in me; grant my clouded and wretched mind the sobriety and discernment to correct my intentions and failings that, freed from the darkness of sin, I might be worthy to boldly glorify and praise thee, O only true Mother of the true Light, Christ our god; for all creation, visible and invisible, blesses and glorifies thee, both with Him and in Him.

36

Blessed is he who is every filled with spiritual joy and untiringly carries the Lord's good yoke, for he shall be crowned with glory.

Blessed is he who has cleansed himself of all sinful corruption, for boldly can he receive the King of glory, our Lord Jesus Christ, into his house.

Blessed is he who reverently approaches the most pure mysteries of the Savior with fear and trembling, knowing that he receives into his body indestructible life.

Blessed is he who hourly contemplates death and has rendered ineffectual in himself the shameful passions that nest in the hearts of the careless, for such a man will be comforted at the time of his repose.

Blessed is he who ceaselessly recalls the torments of Gehenna and hastens with tears and sighs to repent sincerely before the Lord, for he will be delivered from all sorrow.

Blessed is he who always humbles himself willingly, for he will be crowned by the One Who willingly humbled Himself for us.

Blessed is he who with all reverence, like Mary, remains at the Lord's feet (in prayer), and, like Martha, hastens to receive the Lord and Savior (with good works).

Blessed is he who, inflamed with the fear of God, always bears within himself the warmth of the Holy Spirit, and has burned up the thorns and thistles of wicked thoughts.

Blessed is he who with spiritual awareness loves meekness, and does not allow himself to be deceived by the evil serpent, but lays his hopes on the good and kindhearted Lord.

37

One person is the Father, and one person is the Son, and one person is the Holy Spirit--one Divinity, one power, one kingdom in three persons or hypostates.

So let us glorify the holy unity in the Trinity and the Holy Trinity in unity. This is the confession of the holy ecumenical Church of God!

In the Holy Trinity does the Church baptize unto eternal life; the Church sanctifies It with equal honor, confesses It indivisibly and eternally, bows to It sinlessly, glorifies It unceasingly.

To this Tri-hypostatic unity--to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit--are due glory, gratitude, honor, power and greatness unto the ages.

38

Lift your eyes to heaven when it, like a clean mirror, gloriously illumines the earth with its stars, and say in awe: if the stars shine with such glory, then how much more so will the righteous and the saints who have done the holy will of God shine with the inexpressible light of saving glory when the Lord comes.

Having called to remembrance that awesome coming, shudder in body and soul and with heartfelt agony say to yourself: what sort of person will I, a sinner, show myself to be in that terrible hour? How will I stand before the throne of the awesome Judge? How could I who am dissolute have a place among those who are perfect? Or how could I, who am a goat, stand among the sheep at Christ's right hand? Or how could I, who am fruitless, be numbered among the saints, who have here brought forth the fruits of truth?

The martyrs will show their torments, the ascetics their good works; but what will I have to show but my apathy and my incessant indulgence?

O sinful soul, shameless soul, O soul which has always hated the God-pleasing way of life! How long will you delight in your wretched addiction to evil thoughts? What do you wait for in your apathy?

Do you think that the Judge will be late in coming? He will not tarry; rather, His coming will be like terrible lightning from the heavens.

Try to be prepared for that terrible hour, that you might not then weep unto the ages.

O kindhearted Lord, spare Thy servant, that I might not be found in fear and great shame at Thy judgement, that I might not be a disgrace to angels and men.

Punish me here, O my Savior, as a tender-hearted Father who loves His children; and forgive me there, as the only sinless and most merciful God.

For if Thou givest not understanding to an unfortunate one and illumine not his heart, that he might daily offer blameless repentance for his sins--what can he do there if he has no means to justify himself?

Before I was on earth it pleased Thee, O Master, according to Thy great compassion, to form me in the womb of my sinful mother. When I was born, according to Thy mercy Thou madest me worthy to become a vessel of grace. But, after I received this gift, I who am weak and sinful was in my slothfulness disinclined to offer recompense for it.

Thus, falling down before Thy kindness, I pray Thee, O Only-Begotten Son, our Savior: sober me and raise me up, and shine Thy grace upon me again, that it might illumine my clouded mind as behooves Thy grace. May it always remain with me, and through its invisible guidance may it make me worthy of the heavenly kingdom. For as Thy grace has been for me, who am unworthy, at all times illumination, protection, a shield, a refuge and joy--so may I then find shelter, O my Savior, from the terrible judgement under its protection; and with its compassion, saved by Thy mercy, may I stand on Thy right hand in Thy kingdom, praising and glorifying Thy long-suffering kindness, O My immaculate Creator: for thou didst not overlook the tears of Thine unprofitable and sinful servant.

40

Stretch forth, O Lord, Thy hand to me who lie in the dust and help me. For I want to get up, but cannot. The burden of sin has crushed me; evil habits hold me chained to the earth, and I am altogether like the paralytic. I vow to change my ways and I fast, but everything remains the same. I am zealous to glorify Thee with my lips, but I have no zeal to please Thee with deeds.

How dare I ask forgiveness of my former sins when I have made no attempt to abandon my former love of sin? Or how shall I shed the old man, when I have not cut off my desire for sinful seductions?

O Lord, raise up me, a paralytic; rouse me who sleep; resurrect me, deadened by sin! Save my

miserable soul from death, O Lord who hast authority over life and death!

Before the end comes, exterminate all sin in me; and grant, O Lover of mankind, that I might shed heartfelt tears fro the cleansing of the stains of my soul all through my short life, that then I might be saved under the shelter of Thine omnipotent hand, when every soul shudders before Thine awesome glory.

O Master, hearken unto me and accept the supplication of Thy sinful and unworthy servant. Save me freely, according to Thy grace, for thou are a kindhearted and man-befriending God, and to Thee do we send up glory, thanks and adoration, to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

41

Woe is me, to what judgement will I be subject, and of what disgrace am I worthy! My inner self is not like my outward appearance: I talk about how to free oneself from the passions, but day and night I myself think about disgraceful passions. I conduct discussions about purity, but myself, I indulge in indecent behavior.

Alas! What trials await me? The truth is that I bear the image of righteousness, but lack its capacity. What face shall I who am guilty of such indecency wear when I approach the Lord god Who knows the secrets of my heart? When I stand in prayer, I am afraid that fire will descend from heaven and burn me up, as it happened in the desert that there came out a fire from the Lord that consumed the men who offered strange incense.

What can I expect, I who am weighed down with such a heavy burden of sin? My heart is consumed with fire, my mind is clouded, righteous thoughts have failed in me: like a dog do I ever return to my own vomit.

I have no boldness before Him Who will try my heart and inner workings. I have no clean thoughts, no tears while praying. Although I sigh and fall prostrate on my shame-filled face and beat my chest--this is a dwelling place of passions, a sweatshop of evil thoughts.

Thou knowest, O Lord, my passions hidden in darkness; the sores of my soul are known to Thee. Heal me, O Lord, and I will be healed. If Thou wilt not build the house of my soul, I labor in vain trying to build it myself.

It is true that sometimes I prepare myself to do battle with the passions when they war against me; but the evil wiles of the serpent paralyze the efforts of my soul with sensuality and I yield to them. Though no one visibly ties my hands, the invisible passions drag me away like a captive.

O Lord, enlighten the eyes of my heart, that I might rightly recognize the deceit and the

malice of the passions. May thy grace shield me, that I might be able to stand firm and resist, having girded my loins with courage.

Once Thou, O Lord, didst provide safe passage through the impassable sea for Thy people. Thou gavest Thy people who thirsted water out of a hard rock. Thou alone, according to Thy grace, didst save the one who fell in with thieves. Have mercy upon me as well, for I have also fallen into the hands of thieves and, like a captive, I am bound by wicked thoughts.

No one is strong enough to heal the passionate temperament of my soul except Thou, O Lord, Who knowest the depths of my soul. Condescend and save me by Thy kindness.

42

Purify me with Thy grace, O kindhearted Father. Wipe away my stains with Thine all-cleansing hyssop and heal my sores, that I might give thanks to Thy grace!

I have fallen: raise me up and strengthen me, O Lord; for Thou raisest up all who have fallen. Stretch forth Thine hand to me and enliven me once again by Thy compassion!

The adversary has deceived me; he has stripped me of my garment and stolen it away. Because of him I remain fruitless and must go to the judgment entirely naked. May Thy mercy be for me a robe in the day of judgment!

What great fear there will be in the day of judgment when every man gives an account of his deeds, thoughts, and even of every time he beckoned with his eyes. Vindicate me on that day, O my Judge, for though I am guilty I wish to repent.

Our hearts will be tormented and suffer exceedingly when all that aroused our desire is reviewed, when every man stands naked and will be called to answer for himself.

On that day, woe to the man who, like me, has committed many transgressions, who has sinned and concealed his sins, that he might escape shame in this world! fingers will be pointed at him in the day of judgment.

My transgressions have multiplied, my days have passed by and vanished; the end is approaching, but there is not repentance to be found in me. If compassion finds no place for me, woe is me in the day of judgment!

Blessed is the man who has labored some in this world, for he will inherit the kingdom in the intransient world to come. In return for small labors, he will acquire a great inheritance.

At Thy judgement, O our Lord, there will be no partiality. Every man will receive what he deserves. He who has done good deeds will receive the kingdom, and he who has done wicked deeds will receive torment.

Open to me the door of Thy compassion, O Hope of the penitent, and stretch forth to me Thine healing hand to bandage my scabs and mend my sores.

My will refuses to follow Thy will. Do Thou Thyself subdue me to Thy will, that I might thereby receive salvation and glorify Thy will, for it is kind to the penitent.

Mercifully receive my prayer to make peace between me and Thee; and, according to Thy kindness, grant me life in Thy coming. Then the evil one will be ashamed when he sees that Thy truth has pardoned me.

43

When you see life's pleasures, beware that they might not distract you, for they conceal death's snares. Likewise a fisherman casts not his hook to no purpose.

As bait for his hook, the enemy uses the delusion of sensuality to arouse desire, that he might thereby catch men's souls and subject them to himself.

A soul which has been caught to serve the enemy's will then serves as a snare for other souls, for it conceals the grief of sin with its apparent delight.

while exercising the virtues, be not dejected by the labors involved, for there can be no virtue without labor.

While laboring, lift up the eye of your soul and, as you contemplate that joy which is on high, you will not shrink from any task.

The labors of the righteous cultivate the fruit of life, but the labors of sinners are filled with ruin. Join yourself to the former and withdraw from the latter; avoid empty labors that do not produce good fruit.

Suffer for God the sorrows of the present life and your hope in the saints will not be in vain.

Those who labor for the vain things in life strive to make those who labor for God's sake stumble, that they might not be confronted with examples that accuse their conscience; but in so doing they only embellish the crowns of conscientious laborers.

Maintain a humble attitude, that you might not lose the fruits of good works. If you cast them away, you will be numbered with those who labor in vain.

Do you want to become a guardian of your soul? Withdraw from every place to a safe harbor, that sensual thoughts might not steal aboard and load your ships.

If you want your harbor to be safe, fence it off with ramparts that cannot be shaken by the storm of passions; otherwise, your harbor will become the site of your downfall.

If passionate words find a place in a soul, they drag it as if by hooks into evil, into the pit of ruin.

Avoid soul-corrupting gatherings and your soul will every enjoy peace.

44

Thanks are due to the good One who has saved our race from enslavement to the devil and from death, and has made peace between us and Thy lofty Truth, which we offended by our deceit.

Blessed is the kindhearted One who has sought us out, though we did not seek Him, who has rejoiced at our salvation and has given us an image of how we have gone astray and been returned, in the parable of the lost sheep.

the Heir and Son cried out and returned our nature which had gone astray; He died and rose again and gladdened the hosts of spirits by returning us and bringing us to repentance.

Inexpressibly great is the love shown by the Lover of mankind; for from our race He chose an Intercessor and through Him made peace between the world and His greatness.

God performed a new miracle in man, great for us and for all creation. For He made our body a temple, and filled it with that which is venerated by all.

Come, O earthly and heavenly beings, wonder and be amazed at this great bestowal of dignity, for our race has been lifted to the immeasurable height of the Divinity.

May heaven and earth and all that is within them sing praises with us to the One Who has magnified our race, for He has renewed His image in us, blotted out our sins, given us His name, and subjected all things to us.

He Who raised us up above all things is deserving of all manner of praise from those who

honor Him. Let us all with one voice sing praise to Him and to the Father Who sent Him and to the Holy Spirit.

Holy, Holy, Holy! Blessed is He Who through His good will chose to humiliate Himself and betrothed the holy Church to Himself!

Thy light, O Jesus our Lord, has shone out over creation and scattered the darkness of error. May Thy light shine now in our souls also, O Jesus our King Who art the true light.

Deliver us from all the ruinous thoughts that trouble our souls. Then will we praise Thee with a pure mind, O Son of the unseen Father, for Thou art the true light.

45

Woe is me! What comforts and delights are prepared for us; but there is no one who has labored for salvation, no one who desires such things. Instead we prefer that which is present, temporary and impermanent. We never even bring these eternal delights to mind. What blindness! What diabolical deceit!

Woe is me! What torments are prepared for the punishment of sinners like me who live carelessly. There is no one among us who fears and trembles. With empty words we honor that which we are taught. We take pleasure in the passions of the flesh, for we are bound by them as with iron chains, and there is no one who fights against them; but rather, we who are bound rejoice.

O the all-ruinous wiles of the unclean serpent! How he has darkened the minds of all men, so that our thoughts are perverted and we love ruin more than the good things to come.

Come, let us bend our hearts to contrition, and we will weep before the Lord day and night. Come, let us remember that hour and how inevitable it is, and contritely will we shed tears. Come, let us recall those inexpressible, indescribable delights, and make our hearts contrite. Come, let us recall the terrible and awesome throne and the shame which awaits us when we stand before it--and we will lament for ourselves.

Come, let us remember how the righteous will shine like the sun and the sinners will be like the soot on burnt pots; and, having made our hearts contrite, let us be zealous in good works.

Come, let us confirm ourselves in the fear of God, that we might be made worthy of eternal bliss.

Come, let us fall down before God in contrition and simplicity of heart, for He is good and kindhearted and saves those who repent.

Let us beg Him to bring us into His kingdom of ineffable bliss that has no end.

46

O Virgin Lady and Mother of God, most blessed and graced by God, incline thine ear and hear my words, pronounced by my defiled and impure lips. Do not despise me, who am miserable; do not let me, thine unworthy servant, utterly perish; but use thy motherly prayers to heal my wretched soul, mercilessly shattered by my evil passions. The wicked enemy has shattered it with the sins of sensuality and trampled it into dust. Therefore, filled with all manner of shame, I dare not; I have not the courage to ask the Lover of mankind, my God, forgiveness for the multitude of my sins, and healing for my incurable sores. For I have defiled the temple of my body; through my indecent desires I have impregnated it with a multitude of impurities; and I have impaired all my senses with illicit acts. Thus I dare not reach up to heaven with my hands, defiled as they are with vile pursuits. Accordingly do I, who am miserable and a prodigal, submit myself to thine ineffable compassion, O immaculate Lady. For I have no other refuge but thee, who art mine only comfort and swift defender. I put my hope in thee, do not abandon me. thy supplications are welcomed by thine only-begotten Son; He rejoices at thine intercession and is quick to grant thy prayers for us. Despise me not who am so miserable; may the indecency of my acts not curtail thy boundless mercy, O Mother of God. Accept this my worthless supplication and by thy motherly prayers make it acceptable to thy Son and God, that He might vouchsafe me the heavenly kingdom as I praise and bless the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

47

Who will not lament for me, who have renounced the eternal kingdom for the sake of meagre pleasures, ignoring the eternal fire? Having surrendered myself to the passions, I have destroyed the integrity of my soul and become like the unreasoning beasts.

At one time I found myself rich with gifts, but now I have come to love the poverty of the passions. I have become a stranger to the virtues and departed for the distant land of corruption. I am half dead; I have only a tiny remnant of life in me.

Because I am this way by mine own free choice, I cannot even raise mine eyes to the kindhearted Lord.

Lament, O blessed and righteous ones, for me who am caught in the embrace of passions and

sin.

Lament, O ascetics, for me who am a glutton and voluptuary.

Lament, O merciful and condescending ones, for me who am hardhearted and cause much grief.

Lament, O God-pleasers, for me who strive to please men.

Lament, O ye who have attained meekness, for me who am irritable and wrathful.

Lament, O humble ones, for me who am pompous and arrogant.

Lament, O ye who have attained the nonacquisitiveness of the apostles, for me who, burdened by my love for possessions, cling to material things.

Lament, O ye who have loved lamentation and hated laughter, for me who have loved laughter and hated lamentation.

Lament, ye who contemplate the judgement that will come after death, for me who affirm that I remember the judgement but act to the contrary.

Pray, O saints of God, for my soul which is convulsed by all manner of passions. Inasmuch as you are able, help me, O saints of God.

For I know that if you beseech God, the Lover of mankind, all will be granted you from the sea of His kindness. And, like our man-befriending God, so also when I, a sinner, beseech you, do not despise my supplication; for I have not the boldness to pray to Him myself because of the multitude of my sins.

Your role it is, O saints, to intercede for sinners, God's role it is to have mercy on those who despair.

O saints of God, pray to the King on behalf of the prisoner. Pray to the Pastor on behalf of the sheep. Pray to Life on behalf of the corpse, that He might lend His hand to aid me and strengthen my humble soul in its feebleness.

48

I fall down before the compassion of Thy kindness, O Master of all! Accept the prayer of a sinner; sweeten my soul which languishes in the bitterness of sin. Give drink to me who am

thirsty from the fountain of life and guide me along its path.

As my Master, rescue Thy slave from captivity, that I might be freed from slavery to the dishonorable passions that have entangled my heart.

May Thy compassion forestall me before I am dragged down to hell together with those who work iniquities.

At that time all that I do now in darkness will be made manifest. Woe is me; what shame will embrace me when those who now think that I am irreproachable see me condemned, when they see then how I, who am miserable, have neglected spiritual deeds and labored for the passions.

Woe is me! O my soul, why is the sun of your mind clouded by the haze of passions? And why does this haze not disappear when rays of light shine forth? Why do you allow the passions to drag you down to earth, and why have you preferred bonds over freedom?

The garment God wove for you have you made unfit for use and unworthy for the royal wedding. Willingly have you given yourself up to sin and enslaved yourself to the enemy of life.

What will you say to the Judge in that day of fear and trembling? Come to your senses, while there is still time. While you are still the mistress of your thoughts, while our mind is still functioning, while there is yet movement in your body, while it is still possible for grace to touch your heart, and while you can still shed cleansing tears--take a brave stand against the passions and, with God's help, valiantly smite Goliath.

Hurry, do not let a thief outrun you, do not let a harlot reach the entrance before you, do not let one of the violent who take the kingdom of God by force block the door.

Hurry, for when the contest is over it is no longer possible to enter competitions. When the market is closed it is not possible to seek goods; and when a transaction is completed, it is not possible to take part in it.

While there is time, hurry to engage in battle, that you might overcome your enemies and show yourself worthy to receive a crown.

Blessed is he whom Thou givest understanding according to Thy love, O Lord, for Thou dost not turn away from those whom Thou lovest. Turn not away from me, either, O Lord, that the evil one might not destroy me.

According to Thy goodness have compassion on me who am infirm, and vouchsafe me forgiveness of my many sins; that, with all who have been pleasing to Thee, I might also glorify Thy goodness.

Have compassion, O Lord, according to Thy goodness; and have mercy on all of us who have been rejected by Thy Truth because we failed to observe Thy word; though, if we had observed it, we would have received salvation.

I too have been spurned with all such men, even more so than they. Yet make me worthy according to Thy grace to receive forgiveness of sins and, on the strength of this forgiveness, hope for salvation.

With love have I daily contemplated Thy word. Make me worthy to exclaim together with the righteous ones this song of benediction: Praise to Him Who had mercy on me! Glory to Him Who has forgiven me!

The heights bless Thee, the depths magnify Thee; all things venerate Thee, for all was created by Thee. Everything sings praises to Thee, O kindhearted Lord!

50

Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy, and according to the multitude of thy compassions, blot out my transgression. For if Thou wilt have mercy on me and free me from the pitiful affliction of the passions--if only Thou wilt have mercy on me, then will I willingly obey Thy grace.

If Thou wilt do this according to the greatness of Thy goodness, then wilt Thou deliver me. If Thou wilt pour out upon me Thy goodness, I will be saved.

I am certain that this is possible for Thee. I know that Thou hast forgiven and dost forgive all who turn to Thee with all their strength.

I confess that I have enjoyed the benefits of Thy grace many times already; but each time I have rejected Thy grace and sinned as no other has sinned.

But Thou, Who hast resurrected the dead, raise also me who am deadened by sin. Thou Who hast healed the blind, enlighten the clouded eyes of my heart. Thou Who hast delivered Adam from the mouth of the serpent, pull me out of the mire of mine iniquities; for I too belong among Thy sheep, though I have by my own free choice become food for lions.

Sins have made of me a dog; but, healed by Thy grace, I will become Thy son. I was thrown out like a corpse, but if Thou so desirest I will be brought to life.

I know that I have sinned consciously, but I have Thy saints to pray for me. I know that I exceed every measure with my sins, but Thy goodness is unsurpassable.

Thou Who hast preferred the publican, prefer also me, who recognize that I have done many more vile deeds than he. Thou, O Lord, hadst mercy on Zacchaeus who was unworthy. Likewise have mercy on me who am also unworthy.

Paul was once a wolf, and chased the sheep of Thy flock; but according to Thy grace he became a pastor who diligently cared for the sheep.

I know that he sinned in ignorance, and that he was vouchsafed forgiveness of his sins and much grace because of his ignorance. But thou, O Lord, condemn my sin committed in knowledge, and have mercy on me according to Thine exceedingly abundant grace.

51

Blessed is he who has illumined the eyes of his heart, and always sees the Lord in himself as in a mirror. Such a man will be relieved of passions and evil thoughts.

Blessed is he who loves good and beautiful speech but hates words that are shameful and corrupting, for he will not be taken captive by the evil one.

Blessed is he who instructs his neighbor in the fear of God and does not seduce his soul, for he is ever wary of the great Pastor's iron staff.

Blessed is he who is obedient to his neighbor in accordance with God's will and gratefully suffers offence, for such a man will be crowned as a confessor of the Lord.

Blessed is he who loves abstinence in accordance with God's will and is not subject to condemnation as a corrupt sensualist on account of his belly, for such a man will be magnified in the Lord.

Blessed is he who does not intoxicate himself with wine, but is ever glad in remembrance of the Lord, in Whom all the saints rejoice unceasingly.

Blessed is he who manages his possessions in accordance with God's will, and does not lay himself open to condemnation from the Savior as a miser lacking compassion for his neighbor.

Blessed is he who is vigilant in prayer, reading and good works; he will be enlightened and will not fall asleep unto death.

Blessed is he who has become a marvelous spiritual net and caught many for the good Master; greatly will he be praised in the Lord.

Blessed is he who has become a marvelous example for his neighbor and has not injured the conscience of his fellow servants with indecent acts; he will be blessed in the Lord.

52

O Judge, Whose judgement is righteous, and to Whom is known all that is concealed: condemn me not at Thy righteous judgement, when all secrets will be exposed!

With the tears that she brought to Thee, the harlot destroyed the record of her transgressions. Behold, I too bring Thee a gift of tears. Accept them from me, O Lord, as Thou didst accept them from her.

The evil one has deceived me with his caresses and has taken my mind captive with his seductions. Drive him away from me, who am miserable, O our Lord; snatch me from his hands, that he might not tear me to shreds.

Judge me, O Lord, and settle my dispute with the merciless enemy. He has made me a target for his arrows. According to Thy compassion, may those arrows gore him instead.

Be my helper, O Lord, for I am miserable and have no other helper. And do not let the enemy see me vanquished and mock me, as he mocked our foremother.

Woe is me if all my secrets are revealed and subjected to scrutiny then, when no justification will be considered. My spirit shudders, O Lord, for I hear that fire will consume the Lawless, and I am straw and haw. And if Thou O Lord wilt regard my sins, I shall perish

May Thy goodness, O Lord, that once lifted Thee onto the cross for the redemption of our race, forestall me who am miserable, that I might be vouchsafed forgiveness of my sins.

Thou, O Jesus, hast redeemed all with Thy blood; and by Thy death hast Thou bound the powerful adversary. Release me from the fetters of the evil one; break his shackles and bonds.

Rebuke him so that he will withdraw from me, who am miserable, that his will might not be realized in me. Bring my will into accord with Thine, O Lord, Who blottest out my sins by Thy loving-kindness.

Do not leave me in the hands of the malefactor, and give him no authority over me; for Thou hast prepared Thy flesh and blood as food for me, and Thy cross is imprinted on my brow.

Strengthen me, O Lord, for I am infirm. Blot out my transgressions, for greatly have I sinned. Make chaste my senses, that they might submissively and unwaveringly follow the royal path.

May Thy light shine in my thoughts; may they be illumined by Thy rays, and may Thy magnificent radiance gladden them, for Thou art the sun that irradiates all.

Cleanse our stains with Thy hyssop, wash our sores with Thy blood, sanctify the secret workings of our thoughts with Thy body.

Praise be to Thee, Who hast redeemed the human race which had perished, lifted it upon Thy shoulders and carried it into the house of Thy Father.

53

My heart is pained, my soul agonizes and my inner parts are torn! Where am I to find the tears, where am I to find the contrition and the signs to rightly mourn our orphaned state and the paucity of sanctity among us?

I see, O master, that Thou takest Thy saints, like choice gold, from the vain world to the resting-place of life.

Like a farmer who sees his fruits well ripened and prudently hastens to gather them that they might not be the least bit spoiled, so dost Thou also, O Savior, gather Thy chosen ones who have labored righteously.

Yet we, who are slothful and weak-willed, remain hardened, and our fruits never ripen; for we have not the resolve to labor without sparing ourselves, in order to ripen in good works and rightly be gathered into the storehouse of life.

Say: woe is me, alas, O soul, and weep; for thou hast been left and orphan so young by the blameless fathers and righteous ascetics. Where are our fathers? Where are the saints? Where are the vigilant? Where are the sober? Where are the humble? Where are the meek? Where are those who vow silence? Where are the abstinent? Where are those who with a contrite heart stood before the Lord in perfect prayer, like angels of God? They have left here to join our holy God with their lamps brightly burning.

Woe is us! What times are these in which we live? Into what sea of evil have we sailed? Our fathers have entered the harbor of life, that they might not see the sorrows and seductions that overcome us because of our sins. They are crowned, yet we slumber; we sleep and indulge in selfish pleasures.

O Lord, have pity on us! Make sober our thoughts which whirl about in vain. Grant us contrition and tears, that they might shed some light on the blindness of our hearts, and we might see that way in which our fathers walked when they followed Thee. Grant us the desire and strength to follow in this same way, so that we too with them might receive the lot of those who are saved, to the glory of Thy name.

Love prompts me to speak to God, but my unworthiness forces me to be silent. Tortuous spiritual afflictions compel me to talk, but sins force me to keep quiet. My soul languishes and my eyes long for tears.

You have sinned, O soul; repent. For our days pass by like a shadow. We will travel through terrible and frightening places. Do not put off turning to the Lord day after day. Become at last contrite, O my soul.

Become contrite at the thought of all the good things that you have received from the Lord, but not kept. Become contrite at the thought of what you have done, and how patient God has been with you. Become contrite, that at Christ's terrible judgement you might not be sent to outer darkness.

Woe is me, a sinner! For because of my weakness I have become defiled, and ever do I defile the purity of my heart. Apathy and slothfulness have shamed the boldness of my heart. Evil desire commands me, like a master commands his slave, and I, like a child, immediately obey with fear. It leads me into sin and this gladdens me.

Woe is me, O Lord! Thy grace draws me toward life, but I instead prefer death. Thou takest pains that I might become as honorable as the angels; but I, in my depravity, debase myself. My sins have multiplied, O Lord, and ceaselessly do they multiply and there is no limit to their multitude.

And who will mourn for me or pray for me? Do Thou, O my Savior, Thyself condescend to have mercy on me through Thy grace and regard me who despair with compassion! For how will I pray to Thee, O master, when my mouth is filled with vile words? Or how will I sing praises to Thee, when my conscience is defiled? Or how will I love Thee, when I am filled with passions? Or how will truth dwell in me, when I have cursed myself with lies? Or how will I call upon Thee, when I have not kept Thy commandments?

After having gained knowledge of the truth, I have become a brawler and an offender. I argue over trifles; I have become envious of and callous toward my neighbor, merciless toward beggars, wrathful, argumentative, obstinate, slothful, irritable. I harbor vile thoughts, I love fancy clothing. And to this day I have many corrupt thoughts and fits of selfishness, gluttony, sensuality, vainglory, arrogance, lust, gossiping, breaking of fasts, despondency, rivalry, and indignation.

I am worthless, but think much of myself. I lie constantly, but get angry with liars. I defile the temple of my body with wanton thoughts, but sternly judge the wanton. I condemn those who fall, but myself fall constantly. I condemn slanderers and thieves, but am myself both a thief and a slanderer. I walk with a bright countenance, although I am altogether impure.

In churches and at banquets I always want to take the place of honor. I see hermits and act dignified; I see monks and I become pompous. I strive to appear pleasing to women, dignified to strangers, intelligent and reasonable to my neighbors, superior to intellectuals. With the righteous I act as if I possess vast wisdom; the unintelligent I disdain as illiterates.

If I am offended, I take revenge. If I am honored, I shun those who honor me. If someone demands of me what is rightfully his, I start a suit. And those who tell me the truth I consider enemies. When my error is exposed, I get angry, but I am not so dissatisfied when people flatter me.

I do not want to honor those who are worthy but I myself, who am unworthy, demand honor. I do not want to tire myself with work, but if someone fails to serve me I get angry with him. I do not want to walk among laborers, but if someone fails to help me in my work I slander him.

I arrogantly deny my brother when he is in need, but when I have need of something I turn to him. I hate those who are ill, but when I myself am ill I wish that everyone would love me. I do not want to know those who are their than I, and I scorn those who are lower.

If I abstain from indulging my foolish desires, I praise myself vaingloriously. If I succeed in vigilance, I fall into the snares of conceit and contradiction. If I refrain from eating, I drown in pride and arrogance. If I am wakeful in prayer, I am vanquished by irritability and wrath. If I see virtue in someone, I studiously ignore him.

I have scorned worldly pleasures, but do not abandon my vain desire for them. If I see a woman, I go into raptures. To all appearances I am wise in humility, but in my soul I am haughty. I seem not to be acquisitive, but in reality I suffer from a mania for possessions. And what good is it to dwell on such things? I appear to have forsaken the world, but in fact I still think about worldly things all the time.

During services I always occupy myself with conversations, wandering thoughts, and vain recollections. During meals I indulge in idle chatter. I yearn for gifts. I participate in the sinful falls of others and engage in ruinous rivalry.

Such is my life! With what vileness do I obstruct my own salvation! And my arrogance, my vainglory does not permit me to think about my sores that I might cure myself. Behold my

feats! See how vast are the regiments of sins which the enemy sends to campaign against me! Yet in the face of all this, I who am wretched endeavor to boast of sanctity. I live in sin, but want others to honor me as a righteous man.

In all this I have but one thing to say in my defense: the devil has ensnared me. But this did not suffice to absolve Adam of his sin. Cain was of course also prompted by the devil, but he did not escape condemnation either. What shall I do if the Lord comes to me? I have no means to justify my negligence.

I fear that I shall be numbered among those whom Paul called vessels of wrath, who will share the devil's fate and whom God, because of their contempt for Him, has committed to the passions of degradation. Thus there is the danger that I will be sentenced to the same fate.

If Thou wouldst save me, who am unworthy, O Merciful Lord, vouchsafe me, a sinner, repentance; enliven my soul deadened by sins, O Giver of Life. Drive out the stony hardness that is in my miserable heart and grant me a fountain of contrition, O Thou Who didst pour forth life unto us from Thy life-creating rib.

56

The evil devil, after he was decisively vanquished by the holy saints and ascetics restrained by God's grace, sat down and railed against himself, weeping and saying: woe is me who am miserable! To what have I been subjected? How did it happen that I lost the struggle and ceded victory over myself? But it is I who have become the author of my own shame, for I started this lengthy battle with them.

After being defeated at the first two battles I should have retreated immediately, seeing that Christ is with them. But since I pursued victory over them, I only increased their reward, to my own disgrace.

I should have realized my error before, when I suffered at Christ's hands, when He overthrew all my power. For I did all I could to ensure His crucifixion, but it was His very death that conquered me.

I have suffered the very same at the hands of the martyrs. I have raised up kings and prepared torments that the martyrs might see these things and become terrified and renounce Christ. Not only have they not been terrified by various forms of torture, but they have confessed Christ right up until their death.

And now again, when I wanted to defeat these struggles in warfare, I had to retreat defeated

and with great shame. I boasted of my clever schemes, but they are all torn to shreds like a spider's web. I wanted to overpower them with various passions, but they have made me turn back and flee by the power of the Cross. And now at last I do not know what to do.

I will leave these courageous strugglers and go to my friends who have chosen a carefree life. Among them I will not have to labor, nor will I need to use any deception.

I can take up bonds and tie them up. And after I tie them with the bonds of which they are so fond, I will have them under my control like slaves who always do my bidding voluntarily.

Thus shall they fling themselves into the abyss, and I will rejoice at their ruin and keep them there, that I might have company in the inextinguishable fire.

In a like manner do we, who are foolish, give authority over ourselves to the enemy by cutting ourselves off from God through our rejection of His commandments. Having found us thus stripped of grace, he freely takes possession of us, and unopposed he leads us along his path--the path of ruin.

O Lord! Grant that we might escape from the evil one, having torn to shreds the bonds with which he has tied us up according to our own choosing. Lay upon us Thy good and easy yoke and send us the strength to carry it, that, traveling along the good path of Thy commandments, we might reach the city which Thou prepared for them that love Thee.

57

If you have not yet become mightily inflamed with the Holy Spirit, avoid listening to the thoughts of others, that what you hear might not arouse passions not yet dead and pervert your soul.

If you are an ardent reader, seek not brilliant and erudite texts; otherwise the demon of haughtiness will strike your heart. But like a wise bee that gathers honey from flowers, through your reading obtain also healing for your soul.

Blessed is he who preaches virtue by means of his deeds. But if you say something that pertains to virtue, but do the opposite, this will not save you.

When you see people dissipated in acts of unclean love, look not at them in amazement, that you might not be seduced by rosy skin which will soon turn to dust. Rather sigh to yourself and cry out: Remember, O Lord, that we are dust--and God's grace will prevent you from becoming a prisoner of the Evil One.

Pray diligently to the Lord, that He might grant you the spirit of perfect chastity, that even as you dream at night you might evade the wiles of the Evil One as a person runs when he sees a wild beast chasing after him; or as a man whose pursuer carries a burning torch runs from room to room, that the fire might not burn him.

Just as one cannot buy education or artistic skills for any price without working at it, so one cannot attain the habit of exercising the virtues without zeal and diligence.

Just as your head takes priority over all other members of your body, and if a stone, stick or sword is aimed at you, you raise other members of your body to deflect the blow from your head, knowing that you cannot live in this life without your head--so may you give priority over all things to faith in the Holy Trinity Which is One in essence, for without this faith no one can live the true life.

With all your heart hope on the Lord, and you will easily evade the wiles of the wicked one, for the Lord does not forsake those who work for Him.

58

With the eyes of my heart have I seen the Lord sitting in great glory and I seemed to hear Him say to my soul: how can it be, O soul, that thou hast found thy heavenly bridal chamber, filled with the light of glory, abhorrent? How can it be that thou wast repelled by the good things that I have prepared for thee in the land of life? How can it be that thou hast become alienated from Me through indecent deeds and thoughts? How can it be that thou carest not to prepare thyself to stand worthily before Me in MY coming? How can it be that thou dost not keep thy lamp ready in expectation of the call: Behold, the bridegroom cometh--so that thou mightest go out to meet Me with joy? How can it be that thou takest no pains to prepare a proper wedding garment? How can it be that thou dost not prepare thyself to enter with joy into the holy, heavenly bridal chamber? How can it be that thou dost not join thyself to Me, Who have redeemed thee from death?

I have partaken of death in order to prepare thee as My bride. I have prepared the eternal kingdom for thee as an inheritance. All My good things have I, as the King, bestowed upon thee. For thy sake I even became a man, for I desired to redeem thy life from corruption. For thee have I prepared a bridal chamber in the heavens and arranged for the angels to lead thee into that bridal chamber, that thou mightest enter therein with joy.

Yet hast thou turned away from me, from thy Groom, and from the ineffable good things that I have prepared for thee.

But who is more desirable than I, Who save all creation through My compassion? What father gives life as I do? Yet thou hast left Me, O soul, and loved another, a despicable stranger.

Who would not begin to tremble in terror upon hearing these words?

Who would not fall down ashamed, shed tears and cry out: for what purpose did I come forth from my mother's womb--to anger the Good, Holy and kindhearted God?

But, O Lord, grant that we may be sobered and detach ourselves es from vain cares, that we may come to our senses and return to Thee, in Whom alone lies all true good for our sake.

59

Hearken, O Master, unto my lamentation, and receive the words of my prayer, which I, a sinner, bring to Thee, Who art longsuffering and all-merciful.

Do not with me according to my deeds; remember not my great transgressions, by which I have embittered Thy grace exceedingly, O all-good Master.

Thy grace endured the sins of my youth, which were great in number. May it endure also my indiscretion, heedlessness, and carelessness.

By Thy compassion hast Thou vowed, O Master and Lover of men, that Thou desirest not the death of a sinner, but that he should return to Thee and live. By Thy compassion mayest Thou be moved to have mercy and compassion also on me who am a sinner.

Behold, O Christ our Savior, the fountains of my tears, the contrition and sighs of my unworthy soul! May thy mercy come and shelter me before the terrible verdict of death finds me unprepared and ashamed.

May Thy grace grant me some time for true repentance. For thy grace is wont to have mercy on every sinner who sheds tears, and to forgive him all the sins he has committed. Do this, that I too might bring Thee the fruit of repentance.

Draw me toward life and save me. Grant that with a pure heart I might serve Thee all the days of my life and that, having pleased Thee well with good deeds, I might be vouchsafed both to pass through this life and to enter into the eternal bliss which Thou hast prepared for all Thy saints who have pleased Thee in every generation.

60

O Virgin Lady and Mother of God, thou who didst bear Christ our Savior and God in thy womb, I place all my hope on thee; in thee do I trust, for thou art higher than all the powers of heaven. Thou, who art All-Pure, protect me by thine all-powerful prayers.

Direct my life and lead me on the path indicated by the holy will of thy Son and our God.

Grant me remission of sins, be to me a refuge, a protection, a defense, and a directress, guiding me along the path to eternal life.

Do not leave me in the terrible hour of death, O my Lady, but rush to my aid, rescue me from the bitter torments of the demons. For if thou so chooseth, thou hast the power to do this, for thou art truly the Mother of God who reignest over all.

Cease not to pray for all of us, thine unworthy servants, that we might be delivered from all the wiles of the Evil One and from all extremity, and that we might remain unwounded by all his venomous attacks.

Preserve us uncondemned to the end by thy prayers that, saved by thy help and intercession, we might forever send up glory, praise, thanks and honor to the One God in Trinity, to the Creator of all.

61

O God Who art above all, Who alone hast authority over life and death: show me, a sinner, Thy great mercy in the hour of Thy terrible coming, that as I stand before Thy throne I might not be a great disgrace and reproach to all who will behold me: the angels, archangels, prophets, apostles, patriarchs, martyrs, ascetics, and all the righteous.

Bring me to my senses here, my Savior, here where I have enjoyed the delusion of sin, as a goodhearted Father Who loves His children, and forgive me there, as our merciful and only sinless God.

I who am wretched have committed every kind of sin. I have surpassed all with my dissipation. I deserve punishment, and if I begin to beg for repentance, I have no tears.

Alas, with what eyes shall I, a negligent sinner, behold the terrible throne upon which Thou,

O Lord, wilt sit as Thou exposest what I have done? the whole of my life have I squandered like a prodigal, wallowing continually in the mire of sensuality.

Thou alone, O my Creator, knowest all my secret falls and the full extent of my sins. No one has ever been such a dwelling-place of sin as I. No one ever embittered Thy grace, O Master, as fully as I, who followed the aims of sin.

But do Thou, Who art a sea of goodness, dry up the ruinous sea of my sins. Do Thou, Who art an abyss of loving-kindness, drown the abyss of my sins.

Repay me not according to the merit of my deeds, and condemn me not to the flames of gehenna. For Thy wrath, O Lord, is unbearable, and who can withstand Thy threats?

62

Fear, O soul, the judgement and gehenna, and drive away the heavy sleep of apathy and the terrible slumber of recklessness. The end is near, the judgement is at the door. What will we encounter after we take leave of this life?

Come to my aid, O saints and righteous ones, who have performed good deeds unto salvation and lament for me as for one deceased, or take pity on me as one who is among the living but half-dead. For I am full of shame and lack boldness because of the sins I have knowingly committed.

Pour out on me your kindness as you would for a prisoner or for one covered with festering sores. Be kind to me, O initiates of the merciful God, our Savior, and pray that He might freely convert me, and that in the hour of His coming I might not be found unworthy and not hear the terrible condemnation: get away from Me, O worker of deceit. I tell you that I know you not.

Grant me, O Son of the Good One, that for which my mind yearns, and join to it that which is pleasing to Thy will.

Grant that I may choose to do good and in no way deviate from Thy will.

Do not permit me to be a wicked and hypocritical disciple who violates Thy commandments.

Protect me from thinking that I can walk along Thy path merely for the sake of appearance and thus by my hypocrisy deceive those who see me, inciting them to proclaim me blessed.

Grant that my heart might please Thy greatness in secret, and that my just life might glorify Thee publicly.

May truth be a mistress to guide Thy worshipper; may it preserve me in chastity both near and far.

Deliver me from the misfortune of knowing Thy law, yet lacking the desire to please Thee.

Vouchsafe me the company of people who are simple, but experienced and wise in the performance of virtues.

My flesh is weak. Fortify it with Thy strength. Help me, break the arrows of the cunning enemy, and number me among the hosts of Thine heirs.

Grant me, O Lord, ever to be among Thy dominion and to do what is pleasing to Thee. And whenever I begin something good, do Thou, O Lord, give me strength to complete it.

I know, O Lord, that I have sinned against Thy will. Clearly do I see that I have transgressed Thy commands. But do Thou, who makest Thy sun to shine on the bad and the good, deign also to shine Thy light in my clouded mind. And sins--those murderers and robbers who have taken up residence inside of me--will be driven out by this Thy light.

The Evil One sees in me no wickedness that did not come from him, for it is because of him that I have become wicked. I am, however, conquered by him through my own free will. The Evil One has entangled me because I myself instructed him to do so.

The slothful and the timid run from Thy yoke; Thy love shames the negligent.

Praise be to Thy goodness, to that mother of all teachers. The blows that they deliver to bring the stubborn to their senses are perhaps quite painful, yet sympathetically do they offer healing to the penitent.

Worthy of veneration are Thy Father and Thy Holy Spirit, Who rejoices at our return!

64

Blessed is he who has become magnanimous and kindhearted and not enslaved himself to untamed vehemence or wicked wrath; he will be magnified by the Lord.

Blessed is he who has been exalted in love and stands like a city built on a mountaintop, for whom the enemy withdraws with terror when he sees him; for he fears a man who is firm in the Lord.

Blessed is he who has shone forth with faith in the Lord like a bright candle on a tall candlestick, and has illumined the souls of those in darkness who followed the teachings of the faithless and the irreverent.

Blessed is he who ever loves truth and does not let his lips bring dishonor with lies, for he fears the commandment that forbids even idle talk.

Blessed is he who does not foolishly judge his neighbor, but rather, as befits a reasonable, spiritual man, tries first to cast out the beam from his own eye.

Blessed is he who has consciously exercised restraint, and who has never been seduced, neither in thought nor in his senses, by skin and flesh which soon pass and putrefy.

Blessed is he who keeps the day of his departure ever before his eyes, and has learned to hate arrogance before our inherent worthlessness is to be revealed by putrefaction in the grave.

65

Fire threatens my members, O Lord; but concealed within me, O my Deliverer, is Thy reconciling blood. Gehenna awaits to torture me, but Thy life-creating body is intimately united with mine. I am clothed in the garment of the Holy Spirit, and I shall not even be singed. When the river of fire begins to rumble, threatening vengeance, then will the fire be extinguished in me, smitten by the scent of Thy flesh and blood.

Thou, our Lord, art the hope of the penitent. Thou art the friend of all sinners. I beseech

Thee, O Lord, by thy holy name: do not punish me with Thy righteous judgement. By the love of Thy Parent, by Thy Mother's bosom, where Thou wast carried, by the spear that pierced Thy ribs on Golgotha, do I beseech Thee: sprinkle me with the dew of Thy loving-kindness, that I might not then languish with thirst.

May thy Cross, O Lord, in which I seek refuge, be for me a bridge across the great river of fire. May I pass along it to the habitation of life.

Jonah called out to Thee in the depths of the sea and so did Daniel in the lion's den. The three Hebrew children called thee in the furnace fired up by the Chaldeans. Thou didst lead Jonah out of the abyss, Thou didst save Daniel, and Thy loving-kindness bedewed and extinguished the flame in the furnace. Have mercy on me also, O Lord, and save me because I have confessed Thee, and, according to Thy grace, forgive me my debts.

Have mercy on me, O our kindhearted Lord, and according to the multitude of Thy compassions, blot out my sins. Wash me from the iniquities of my hands, that I might be purified and cleansed of my stains. I know that I have sinned; my sins are ever before me and I see them. Before Thee alone am I guilty, and against Thee alone have I sinned. Be merciful to me, Lord Jesus, our God.

Three times did Simon deny Thee, O Lord; but he brought Thee tears and Thou didst receive him. Behold: I, too, bring Thee a pure confession. Many are my sins; they are countless. According to Thy compassions, O our Lord, forgive mine iniquities; by Thy grace blot out the record of my stains and remember not my sins.

Praise be to the Lord God Who does not desire the death of a sinner! Praise to Thee, Who hast mercy on sinners! Praise to Thee Who receivest the penitent! Praise to Thee, O Jesus, Who openest Thy door to all who knock at it and beg the forgiveness of their sins! Praise to Thee, O Lord, and may Thy compassion be upon us! Be merciful to us, O Jesus, our Lord.

According to Thy grace that calls us, O God, to approach Thee without perishing, O Good One, Who hast made a covenant with us, proclaiming: Call upon Me and I will hearken unto you--thus do I knock at the door of Thy goodness, O my Deliverer! Hearken unto me according to Thy compassion and regard not mine iniquities. Have mercy on me, O Lord, have mercy on me according to Thy goodness, for I am guilty of much before Thy truth.

Thou didst create me, O Lord, name me in Thine image, and, according to Thy goodness, make me in Thy likeness. Thou didst teach me to recognize the path to the habitation of life and show me the path to gehenna. On account of his envy, the Evil One placed secret ambushes in my way, lured me from Thy path, and sullied me with abominations. Woe is me, O our Lord, for I am guilty of many things! Have mercy on me, O Lord, and save me according to Thy grace.

The thief, the wicked stealer of souls, craftily took my freedom from me, seduced me, and reviled me. By the gave of my eyes did he delude and imprison me and put sinful thoughts in me. I glanced and was filled with desire; I looked on curiously and I sinned. Because I stretched forth my hands to perform iniquity, so have i utterly perished. Alas, now the fire threatens me! Save me, O kindhearted One, that I might not die.

I am the most unfortunate of all who have been born of woman, for by my very own deeds have I made myself an unfortunate and cast myself into ruin. Daily have I sinned and comforted myself by ignoring the fact that death lies in wait for me. Alas, the angel of death sent to take me to the judgement is already at hand. Alas, all that is concealed will be exposed, and I will be covered with shame!

Behold: my deeds are justly recorded; not a single word has been forgotten. In the Judge's great book are all my deeds and transgressions entered. Woe is me, when justice reads there all the sins which I have committed from my youth through my old age! What shall I do in that hour and where shall I run from Thee, O Lord?

Woe is me, O Lord! I am guilty of so many things! Woe is me; I have sinned and not offered Thee repentance! O God who hadst mercy on the harlot, have mercy also on me who am miserable, O our Lord, that I might not perish! In the place of the myrrh that the harlot brought Thee, I have Thy flesh and blood which are united with my members. No, O our Lord, regard not my deeds; may thy grace blot out mine offenses.

Enter not into judgement with me, O our Lord, for no living creature can be justified before Thee. Thou alone, O Lord art pure. Spare me and cleanse me of sins by Thy grace. Vouchsafe

me, O kindhearted One, Thy great compassions, that they might make me rich and I might receive forgiveness, and Thine angels might rejoice according to Thy word, O Thou who art kindhearted towards sinners.

67

I beseech Thee, O true Light, begotten of the blessed Father, image of His hypostasis, Who sittest at the right of His magnificence, O Christ, the praise and joy of those who love Thee: Thou art my life, my light and my gladness!

Despise not me, who am worthless; cast me who am vile not away, for the enemy will be exceedingly pleased if I am plunged into despair because of the fog of error which surrounds me. He will rejoice only when he sees that despair is beginning to make me his captive.

Rather do Thou, according to Thine ardent love, shame his hopes, snatch me from his teeth, deliver me from his crafty schemes, from all that he contrives against me; for greatly does he arm himself to do battle with me.

Grant me, O Lord, enlightenment to recognize the wiles of my adversary, the hater of all good; for he places in my path countless multitudes of seductions and pitfalls--both profits and losses, the comforts of this age and carnal pleasure, the length of the present life, timidity in ascetic labors, slothfulness in prayer, sleep and rest for the body during the singing of psalms.

Inasmuch as the enemy strives for my ruin, so do I, who am miserable, surrender myself to recklessness and apathy. The more snares he sets out for me, the more careless I become.

Be wary, O my soul, watch over thy conscience; pay no attention to the falls of others, but be instead more attentive to thine own falls. Hasten, forestall thy ruin, and be reconciled to Christ, crucified in the flesh for thy sake. If we have condemned ourselves, we will not be condemned then, at the great and eternal judgement.

Be kind to me, O Lord, according to Thy compassion; and save me according to Thy singular goodness, through the prayers of our All-Pure Lady the Mother of God and of all the saints.

68

A soul choked by sorrow approaches Thee, O holy Master, and stands before Thee with tears, leveling accusations against the annihilator, the enemy, and with all humility she falls down before Thee, begging for defense from the adversary that oppresses her.

Inasmuch as this soul approaches thee without shame, be quick to hear her, and visit thine attention upon her, who runs to Thee with live.

If thou wilt despise her, choked as she is by sorrow, she will perish. If Thou hesitatest to hear her, who is deadened, her strength will fail.

But if, according to Thy compassions, Thou wilt visit her, she will be made whole. If Thou wilt regard her, she will be saved. If thou wilt hearken unto her, she will be saved. If Thou wilt hearken unto her, she will wax in strength.

Be jealous over her, for she is betrothed unto Thee, and Paul who betrothed her unto Thee said that Thou art an immortal and jealous God.

Despise not her, that the enemy might not think that Thou hast divorced Thyself from her and sent her away from Thyself. Punish me, O Lord, according to Thy compassion; but deliver me not into the hands of the annihilator.

Lo, I have gathered up all of my thoughts and cannot recall anything good before Thee except the fact that I know no other God than Thee.

69

Behold, again I fall at the feet of my Master, begging, beseeching, worshipping and calling out to Him with fear.

O Master, attend to my lamentation, and accept the words of my supplication that I a shameful sinner bring to Thee.

According to Thy mercy, pour out upon me, who am miserable, at least one small drop of grace to make me understand and be converted, that I might make at least some small effort to correct myself. For if Thy grace does not illumine my soul, I will not be able to see the carelessness and negligence that the passions have produced in me through my apathy and recklessness.

Alas, sin has taken possession of me and found in my a pasture. With each passing day it debases me and plunges me further into its depths. And I, who am wretched, cease not to anger God, neither fearing the inextinguishable fire nor trembling at the eternal torments.

Sin has become a habit and has led me into utter ruin. Although I myself recognize my error and cease not to offer confessions, still I remain in sin. I look and do not see, because I sin even in repentance, for I do not endeavor to scrutinize my deeds.

As a slave of sin, even when I do not want to I perform vile acts. As a warrior under its authority, I obey it: and though I have an opportunity to flee, I pay tribute to this habit which reigns in me. I oblige the passions and bring payments of flesh. I know that corruption is gaining strength in me, and I myself cooperate with it, attracted by some secret force. I would like to flee, but like a dog on a chain, I always return again to the same spot.

Sometimes I come to hate sin and nurture disgust for iniquity, but still I remain enslaved to passion. It possesses unfortunate me, and with sinful pleasure does it lead me into sin. Passion has bought my free will for itself, and spews out sin upon me. The passions boil within me contrary to my reason; they have coalesced with my flesh and will not suffer to be separated from it.

I strain to redirect my will, but my previous state will not allow me any success in this endeavor. I who am miserable try to free my soul from its debts, but immediately does the evil usurer lead me into greater debt. Generously does he grant me loans, never even mentioning repayment. He does not even want to take anything back, for he desires only my slavery. he lends and then does not seek after my debts, that I might be made rich in passions. I want to pay off my old debt, but he adds a new one.

If I force myself somewhat to struggle against the passions, in order to overcome me he adds new passions, and, seeing that my constant indebtedness forces me to sin, he introduces me to new desires; and to keep me from confessing them, he plunges me into the oblivion of my passions.

I encounter new passions and, occupied with them, I forget about former ones. I befriend the passions which reappear and become again a debtor. I run to them as to friends and again my usurers behave toward me like masters. And I, who not so long ago tried to gain freedom, make myself their loyal slave. Again I hasten to tear apart their bonds, and again I put on new ones. I hasten to free myself from the obligation to fight in their ranks, but because I have taken many gifts from them I find myself involuntarily bound to them.

O how great is the authority of the sinful passions over me! O, how great is the sovereignty of the wicked and cunning serpent! Acting according to nature, he too goes to market and offers a deposit in order to sell a mind to sin. He convinces me to please the flesh under the pretense of using it to serve the soul. I am utterly conquered by sensuality, and I straightaway indulge in unrestrained sleep; and thus am I altogether deprived of the function of my soul. When I pray, he inspires me with the thought of some worthless pleasure, and with it he constrains my mind as with a brass chain. My mind cannot loose the bond, try as it may to flee.

Thus does sin keep my mind under guard and lock the doors of knowledge on me. The enemy ceaselessly supervises the mind, that it might not come to accord with God and not obstruct him in selling the flesh. To this end does he employ a multitude of confused thoughts, assuring me that I will not be asked about such trifles at the judgement, that it is impossible even for anyone to know of these thoughts and that all such things will be forgotten. But I imagine in my mind's eye how my error will be revealed, and I know that I am threatened with punishment.

Thus does sin keep me in check; thus does it bind me; thus does it buy and sell me; thus does it lead me into error; thus does it flatter me and subject me to itself for, as the Apostle says, man is carnal, sold under sin. For the sin that is in my flesh reigns over my mind, and through my own fault, it uses my flesh to burden my soul.

If someone undertakes to fast or stand vigil or endure wounds, sin uses the flesh as if it were its own property to burden the soul with chains and, as a sheep for slaughter, it binds her, and uses the flesh also to cut off her hands and feet. I cannot flee, nor can I help myself.

Alas, alive I am a corpse. I look and do not see, I have changed from man to dog and though I have reason I am treated like a beast.

Have mercy, O soul, on thyself, and hasten at last to engage in battle with sin before thou art parted from the body, that we might not remain outside the doors like the foolish virgins; for one dead cannot see life or contemplate righteousness there where there is no battle for life or death, where there is no flesh for the enemy to curse when he is utterly vanquishing by it.

70

A fountain full of waters constantly flowing and abundantly giving drink to all who come portrays the abundance of Thine inexhaustible compassion, O Lord.

Plentifully dost Thou nourish the heavenly powers and provide food for all that breathes on earth. Thy love, which desires our salvation, condescends to us in order to bring us to herself and to save those who come to her.

Thou, O Master, art omniscient and seest the resolve with which a man turns from sin. And before he comes to the door, Thou dost open it for him. Before he falls at Thy feet, Thou dost stretch out Thine hand to him. Before he sheds tears, Thou bestowest upon him Thy compassion. Before he confesses his debts, Thou grantest him forgiveness.

Thou dost not accuse him or say: how did you squander your belongings? Thou rememberest not how he angered Thee with his depravity; Thou reproachest him not for scorning Thy good works. But, foreseeing his humility, lamentation and sincere disposition, Thou proclaimest: take out the best garment and clothe him; kill the fatted calf that we may be consoled and make merry. May the angels gather and rejoice at the son who was lost and has been found, at the return of the prodigal heir.

As people go out to meet a merchant when he comes home with great riches, thus may Thy

grace receive a sinner who returns to Thee with all his soul. For Thy grace loves to see tears, longs to see repentance, rejoices at the ardor of those who strive to repent.

Glory to Thee Who art longsuffering and kindhearted, O master and Lover of men.

71

Frightening and terrible is the day of Thy judgement, O our Savior, when secret sins will be revealed. Therefore I tremble, O Lord, and am embraced by terror, for my sins have exceeded all bounds. Be merciful to me according to Thy compassion, O good and kindhearted One!

I look, O Lord, at my sins and become agitated, seeing their multitude. Alas, how did it happen that such misery has befallen me? My tongue utters marvelous things, but my behavior is shameful and contemptible. Woe is me in that day when secrets will be revealed!

Others find my words immensely beautiful, but my deeds are repulsive. I teach others in the world how to order their lives; but I, who am an unfortunate one, myself indulge in the passions.

All my days have passed and vanished in sin. I have not served truth for even one day. As soon as I began to repent with the intent to sin no more, the evil one always came and trapped me through his hatred. Woe is me, for voluntarily do I land in his snare.

If I go out for a walk, I step out like a righteous man, like a sage. If I see another sinning, I mock and deride him. Alas, my transgressions will likewise be exposed and I will be ashamed!

O, better it were for me not to have been born into this world! Then this transient life would not have corrupted me. If I had not seen it, I would have no guilt, I would not have defiled myself with sins and would not have to fear interrogation, the judgement and torment.

As soon as I vow to repent, I return again and fall into the very same sins. The time I spend in sin gladdens me; I even think that I am doing something praiseworthy. Woe is me! Until now I never considered that gehenna awaits me.

An evil will leads me into sin, and when I sin I lay the blame on Satan. But woe is me, for I bring about my sins myself. The Evil One does not use force to make me sin; I sin according to mine own will.

Be kind to me, O Thou Who art kindhearted to the penitent! Forgive me my transgressions according to the magnitude of Thy goodness. Accept, O Lord, the tears I bring to Thee, and

cleanse me from sin, as Thou didst cleanse the harlot. I realize, O Lord, that I have sinned. Spare me according to Thy compassion.

72

Come, let us find compassion while we may yet seek it. The place for repentance is in this transient life; in the intransient life neither prayer nor tears will be accepted.

With the tears that she shed the harlot destroyed the record of her sins. Likewise, O sinner, bring tears and sighs as an offering and call out to the Lord, and immediately will He forgive you your debts.

As an offering for the Lord Jesus bring tears, O penitent one, and beat your breast like the publican who sighed and prayed, saying: be merciful, O Lord, to me a sinner who have angered Thee.

Behold, the door is open and awaits your return, O sinner. Return to your Lord, leave your indecent ways behind. Get up and step on the path that leads to the kingdom.

You have an open wound, a sore of sin. If you loiter on the way, it will utterly destroy you. Your Physician is experienced. Show Him your sore, lament with tears at His door, arouse His compassion that He might heal you.

O Good One, who gavest Thyself up to crucifixion and death in order to redeem us, deliver the soul of Thy servant from the multitude of his sins, that he might lift up his voice to thank Thee and Thy Father and Thy Holy Spirit.

73

Unto Thee do I cry, O Lord; despise not my pitiful supplication. Unto Thee do I stretch forth my defiled hands. Cast not away me who repent, but regard me with thy love for men and accept me with thine ardent kindness.

I have defiled myself with the sensuality of sin, disgraced the beauty of my soul, enslaved myself to carnal desires, destroyed the former dominion by heeding the libelous enemy, darkened the radiance of my nature: and, though I was honored to be counted as a son of God, I have made myself like unto the unreasoning beasts.

Terror, fear and trembling embrace me when I imagine the harvest of death that

imperceptibly approaches us all; yet I remain incorrigible.

Be merciful to me, O Lover of me! In Thee alone do I lay all my hope. Grant that I might repent and be corrected and bring forth the fruits of repentance, that when the end comes I may not be cut down like a fruitless tree, or thrown into the fire like weeds; but like wheat may I be gathered into Thy storehouse.

I bow my knee and heart, and dare not look upon heaven. Accept the supplication of unclean lips, O my only Sinless Creator! Thou, O King of all, Who hast overthrown mutinous Belial, deliver me from all manner of iniquity. when they behold my conversion, angels and mortals will celebrate Thy glory.

I have scorned Thy life-giving commandments and been seduced by shameful deeds; but, Good Master, disdain not to deliver me from the Evil One's slavery.

I have made myself wholly a slave of the sins of sensuality; I have defiled body and soul. Daily do I cry: I have sinned, yet I cease not to engage in vile acts. And now I stand before Thee as one condemned.

Grant me, O Good One, forgiveness of my wicked deeds, for Thou art a kindhearted and man-befriending God.

74

Who will cure my soul if not Thou, O Christ, the only Physician of souls! Where will I find a remedy for the diseases of my soul, if not with Thee, O fountain of healing! Thou Who didst cure the ailing woman, cure also my soul from the ruin of sin.

May thy compassion descend on me and help me to overthrow my enemy. Fortify me who am infirm by the strength of thine arm, and the Evil One will be ashamed when he sees that I am prepared for battle. Animate me and the Evil One will be humiliated. In shame will he be turned back, and I will glorify thy name.

Accept the tears of my wretchedness and blot out the record of my debts, and again will the enemy be ashamed, seeing that Thy loving-kindness has destroyed the fruit of his wicked deeds and that I will not be punished.

May Thy compassion come to mine aid, that I might pass safely through the realm of temptations, and that I might thereafter be close to Thee, with Thee always.

My sinful soul will glorify Thee and Thy Father and the Holy Spirit, for she has wept and been heard, and, washed with tears of repentance, she has been made a temple inhabited by the Divinity Which has created the world.

75

No advantages do you offer those who love you, O world, you dwelling-place of sorrows. All who draw near to you do you seduce with our treasures and with all your delights, but in the day of death both the fair countenance of the beautiful and the might of the strong will be cast down into the grave. Woe to him who loves you and is loved by you, for his joy will be transformed into cries.

In the world--that sea of sin--all my days have passed in vain. My life has gone by without bringing me any profit. I have even forgotten about the day of death. I have whirled about and gathered a burden of sins, whole sheaves of tares destined to be consumed by fire. And behold--lamentation and sighs await me in that land full of horrors.

Because I have loved you, O cunning world, from my youth through my old age, the time of my life has passed without my notice; and lo, in sin will death steal me away. O, if only I had never set foot in you, O world that deceives all who enter! those who love you enjoy no pleasures, and those who hate you weep not. Blessed is he who has torn your snares asunder--he shall inherit the habitation of joy.

this world deceives even the wise with its appearance, for at times it appears desirable. It even offers benefits and treasures for loan, but in the day of death it will take them back and give in return torment incomparably greater than our sins. for a short while will it let us sin, but as a reward it will give us eternal darkness.

righteous art Thou, O Lord, and righteous is thy judgement that condemns the world and those who love it! therefore do I pray Thee that thy right hand which pulled Simon out of the sea might also pull me out of the waves and the tumult of this world that rise up against me. I have become mired in filth; the waters of the world are drowning me, they do not let me break loose to catch my breath. May Thy Cross, O Lord, be my staff and my support on the path along which I walk.

76

How beautiful the world is, but it is full of death! It is like unto a flower which opens in the spring. It blooms while dew and rain support its life; when the hot weather comes, the flower wilts. Likewise does death cause the cheeks to fade, and in the grave does it destroy the members of the body so beautifully arranged..... Grant us, O Lord, a refuge and defense in

the land where the righteous dwell.

The world has made fools of its offspring. They sin, become distressed, and are convulsed by their own anxieties. How many of them whirl about, giving themselves no peace; yet they only gather thorns for the fire! Deceit arrogantly opens its mouth, but fidelity remains silent and does not speak. Iniquity gives eloquent speeches, but truth hides itself. Only death will silence all who have set foot on earth. Blessed is he who has completed his path in the world untainted.

the world is much stormier than the surging waves, and sin agitates it more than wind does the sea. There are times when the waters of the sea are calm, when the winds are concealed in their hiding places; but in the world waves of desire are ceaselessly whipped up, and the wind of deceit blows against the doors of the world's vessels. Yet the day when it will abate is at hand....Blessed is he who has complete his path in the world without falling into its snares.

Iniquity committed in the world upsets and distresses; burning lust takes on ferocity of a magnitude much greater than that of waves. The snares and traps of the world entangle those who serve it--their evil cargoes are sins and iniquities. But for the virtuous the time will come when their boat shall rest at harbor.

Your times and years are pleasant, O World, but they are like smoke. You are like unto a fleeting dream, and your days are just like shadows. Your evening passes quickly and your morning does not linger. Your hours fly, racing toward the end....Hasten, O sinner, to receive forgiveness while the light of day still shines on you.

Righteous is the judge, and righteous is the judgement of truth--then shall every man's deeds be weighted and rewarded according to his merits. In that day, those who worked iniquity will be tormented by regret, and those who labored virtuously will partake of joy in that land....O Lord, grant that I who am inspired by Thy mercy may be freed from the snares of the world so that I might safely enter the harbor of life.

Joseph, who bedewed his soul with remembrance of the Almighty, was not enkindled by the fire of iniquity; and, having conquered temptation, he became the king of Egypt.

Let us walk the strait path of sorrow, that we might become worthy and have God as our protector.

Pearls are always kept in the innermost vaults, but worthless stones are thrown out in the street as rubbish.

Cleanse yourself from shameful deeds with repentance, and the reproach of the slanderer will not frighten you.

With the help of the Divine fire, we must oppose the fire of passions. Until a brick is fired it is soft and brittle, but when submitted to fire it becomes a barrier against fire and water.

Strive not to be a slave to your own will, but obey those who fear the Lord and, by God's mercy, you will crush the serpent's head.

Endure sorrow in the Lord, that joy might embrace you. Labor, that you might receive abundant reward.

Neither ridicule nor condemn those who fall into temptation; rather pray more frequently that you might not fall into temptation yourself.

A man whose heart is clouded by a storm of thoughts and conquered by passions does not know shame before men, nor does he fear God.

Pray rather with an humble heart, and do not make yourself a den of thieves by indulging in indecent thoughts and desires, that you might not be ashamed in the day of judgement when men's secret will be revealed.

He who is negligent at harvests time will have no abundance for his household. And he who is careless now will find himself without the solace of the righteous in the day of reckoning.

78

O Lord! Show me Thy great lovingkindness and give me relief from the persecutions of the destroyer, for he has covered me with sores and he stands and mocks me.

As Thou didst tame the sea with one word from Thy lips when the disciples awakened Thee, so also hearken unto my groans and cries and tame the waves of the passions that move within me, aroused in my soul by the enemy of my salvation.

As the woman with an issue of blood was healed by merely touching the hem of Thy garment and straightway her blood ceased to flow, so also may my soul from which the enemy ceaselessly draws streams of sinful thoughts be healed by touching Thee just once through faith, O Physician of souls and bodies.

Demonstrate the healing power of faith in Thee, O Healer of all sicknesses, in the healing of my members which the enemy has covered with sores. Make my sores no longer and instead cover them with virtues, that the enemy who has rejoiced at my ruin might then be ashamed.

O sinless Lamb, slaughtered for the salvation of the world and Creator of heaven and earth. Thy slave whom thou hast saved and given cause to rejoice shall ever praise Thy grace.

79

When Thou didst see, our Lord, that I had lost Thy glory, Thy love did not suffer it to be so. thou Who descendedst in Thy birth hast delivered me from Satan by Thy suffering and Thy death on the Cross.

But behold, I have sinned again and angered Thee and offended Thy name with the sins, transgressions and crimes I have committed. Woe is me, for I was ungrateful and have defiled myself with a multitude of wicked deeds!

I have wept and shed bitter tears while meditating on this fact. My meditation has transported me to fire, led me to a land of terror, carried me into a frightening and terrible abyss, cast me into flames and thrust me into darkness. My heart has felt all this, and I have sighed from fear and terror while contemplating this journey.

Carried away by these thoughts I have inspected the dwelling places of darkness. Then, sobbing and weeping, pained and sorrowing, have I condemned myself and bitterly exclaimed: woe is me, exceeding woe. What has justice prepared for me!

In terror I awoke as from a dream, but neither in waking was I delivered from torment of heart. I rent my garment, wept and sobbed: what have I done to my miserable self? I shall uncover my head like the harlot and confess my sins; with sighs shall I pray; I will turn my eyes into fountains of tears, that I might mourn for my unfortunate self.

I shall go to the publicans who are like me, I shall go to the sinners who repented. I will awaken my sleeping heart which has grown old in a multitude of evils. I will unite myself to the publicans and sinners and make myself like unto them. Like them shall I sob over the sins I have committed, that God's judgement might not be upon me and that I might not be tormented in the abyss of gehenna....

Vouchsafe me, O Lord, to love Thy love that comforts the saints and the righteous ones, who love none other than Thee, O God, Who art magnanimous to the penitent, Who lovest the sinner who bedews his face with tears and bitterly mourns his transgression. Vouchsafe me, O Lord, the blessed repose that Thou hast prepared for all the saints.

80

be merciful, O Good One, to us who have freely chosen evil, the cause of all misery. The thoughts of our choosing are secret afflictions, and the deeds thereof are public afflictions. Such a choice brought on the first transgression of the law,, and all sin is a consequence thereof. Do Thou, O Pure One, purify our freedom, for now it is a fountain of turbid waters.

I wonder at our free will: it is strong, and yet it has been overthrown. It is a master, yet it has become a slave. It has the opportunity to conquer, yet it would rather yield and be conquered itself. Although it is free, it gives itself into slavery, like a bondswoman who signs with her own hand the agreement that binds her.

Blessed be the memory of the righteous ones who stood firm. They did not wax and wane like the moon, but were like unto the sun, whose light is always the same. Their spirit was not like rain-fed streams which are at times full, but then suddenly dry up.

Waves of temptations of every sort were aimed at the righteous ones, but they did not grow faint. Glory did not make them haughty, nor did abusive treatment cause them to be despondent. There were always the same; never did the fragrance of their virtues falter.

Blessed is the Good One, Who has poured forth from His vaults the fragrance of their deeds. Blessed is the Just Judge, Who has glorified their feats with crowns.

81

Alas, I am an embarrassment to those who now respect me; may I not be ashamed before them when my hidden sins are revealed. I am an embarrassment to those who bore me; may they not later condemn me, who vowed not to live a worldly life.

I want to become like unto the widow who continually troubled the judge and achieved her goal. Before Thee, my All-Good Master, I want to be like Thine inseparable friend, that Thou mightest return my soul held captive by sins: he asked for bread to alleviate his hunger, and I ask for spiritual comfort. He asked for food for the flesh, and I ask Thee to summon my soul.

Because Thou art All-Good, hearken unto the voice of my tearful lamentation and convert me, that I might bring forth the fruit of repentance. Bedew my burning conscience; renew me who had grown old in sinful passions, that released from their slavery I might gladly breathe the air of freedom and glorify Thy goodness with joy and delight.

Thou knowest, O Master, that I dare thus address Thee, because my soul is prepared to labor if only a little. For I, a sinner, know that Thou art compassionate, O Lord, and that Thou wantest me to change my ways--Thou also desiresst the fruit of good will. Thou art ready to have mercy on me, but Thou awaitest a good disposition in me, for in Thy mercy wouldst Thou teach me good, and in Thy forgiveness dost Thou desire to make me worthy to partake of Thy kingdom.

82

Grant me, O Lord, both in wakefulness to stand pure before Thee, my Redeemer, and in slumber to partake of sleep without sin.

If in wakefulness I commit transgressions, may I be cleansed by Thy grace, O Lord. And if I sin while asleep, may Thy loving-kindness be unto me purification.

With the cross of Thy humility, make my sleep untroubled, preserve me from the iniquitous dreams of sleep and from the impure conjurings of the imagination. Grant that I might spend the whole night in peaceful sleep and that evil and deleterious thoughts might not take possession of me.

With Thy life-creating Body, of which I have partaken, preserve me from impure lust, that I might lie down and fall asleep in peace. May Thy Blood protect me. And grant my soul, that is Thine image, the freedom that is proper to Thine image. And my Thy right arm shelter my body that was made by Thy hands.

Encircle me with the wall of Thy compassions like a defensive shield. And when my body rests and sleeps, may Thy goodness be my guard, that the Evil One might not approach my bed. By the protection of the Mother who bore Thee, by the sacrifice that Thou hast offered for all men, I beseech Thee: drive away Satan, that he might no trouble me.

In me, O Lord, fulfill Thy promise and preserve my life by Thy Cross. I shall praise Thee when I awake for showing me who am miserable Thy love. May both those who sleep, resting in peace, and those who abide in wakefulness, girded by Thine armor, give praise to Thee, O Preserver Who livest eternally and Who hast aroused me to sing Thy glory.

83

Thy lips, O our Lord, have pronounced these promises: call Me and I will hearken unto you; knock at My door and I will open it.

Like the harlot do I call out to Thee: according to the superabundant compassion of Thy lovingkindness, forgive us our debts and our sins.

Like the publican do we beseech Thee, and like the prodigal son who squandered his inheritance do we call out to Thee, repenting in our soul: we have sinned against heaven and before Thee, O Lord.

Accept us, as thou hast promised, that the guardian angels and the archangels might rejoice over us. Thou who didst accept Simon's repentance, accept also the repentance of Thy servants and have mercy on us.

Come, O sinner who have sinned before the Lord, come to Him repenting in your soul, and He will forgive you your debts and your sins.

Shed tears at the Physician's door, sigh and beseech Him, who Him the scabs on your soul.

Preserve your tongue from all manner of evil, and may your lips that were created for praise not pronounce words of blasphemy.

Forgive your brother if he has sinned against you, and Christ will forgive you as He has promised, according to His loving-kindness.

Have mercy on us, O our Lord, forgive us our debts and our sins and vouchsafe us Thy radiant habitation.

84

Before the wheel of time has completed its revolution with me--have mercy on me.

Before the wind of death has blown upon me and ailments have cropped up in my body foreboding the imminent end--have mercy.

Before the magnificent sun on high has grown dim before my eyes--have mercy, and may Thy light shine on me from on high and scatter the terrible darkness of my mind.

Before this dust has returned to the earth and decayed and all its beautiful features have rotted away--have mercy.

Before my sins have overtaken me at the judgement and shamed me before the Judge--have mercy on me, O Lord, Who art full of compassion.

Before the vanguard, preceding the Son of Heavenly King, marches forth to gather our miserable race before the Judge's throne--have mercy.

Before the sound of trumpets resounds portending Thy coming, O Jesus our Lord--spare Thy servants who beseech Thee and have mercy.

Before Thou hast shut Thy door against me, O Son of God, and I have become food for the inextinguishable fire of gehenna--have mercy on me.

85

Blessed is he who contemplates the multitudes who rest in their graves and has rejected all fetid lust, for he will rise in glory when the heavenly trumpet is sounded to rouse all of the sons of men.

Blessed is he who hopes not on man, but on the Lord, Who is coming again with great glory to pass righteous judgement on the universe, for he will be like unto a tree growing by the waterside, and will bring forth fruit without ceasing.

Blessed is he whose mind has through grace become like a cloud full of rain watering the souls of mortals that they might cultivate the fruits of life, for grace will give him eternal

praise.

Blessed is he who ever exercises restraint as God wills, for in the day of judgement God Himself will defend him. He will inherit the bridal chamber and will meet the Bridegroom with joy and gladness.

Blessed is he who has hated and left behind all the secular ways of men, whose every thought is about the one God.

Blessed is he who has hated pernicious sin and been repelled by it, and has loved instead the one good and man-befriending God.

Blessed is he who on earth has become like unto a heavenly angel and imitates the seraphim, whose thoughts are ever blameless.

Blessed is he who has become blameless before God and cleansed of all defilement--of wicked thoughts and deeds.

86

May Thy compassion be praised, O Christ our King, O Son of God worshipped by all! Thou art our King, Thou art our God, Thou art the author of our life and our great hope.

With one soul do both the heavenly hosts and the ranks below praise Thee and sing unto Thee a song of thanks, for Thou Who wast concealed hast in the last days appeared in the flesh of us mortals.

When Thy compassion was aroused and when it pleased Thy love to do so, Thou didst come for our redemption and liberate our race.

Thou didst cure our afflictions, cleanse our sins and, according to Thy Compassion, Thou didst raise those who were dead.

Thou didst establish on earth the holy Church in the image of the heavenly kingdom: Thou didst build her with love, establish her with compassion, and Thou didst spiritually betroth Thyself to her, and gain her by Thy suffering.

But the hater of mankind, in his shameless impudence, attacks her in the person of her servers.

O Lord, do not leave Thy holy Church without Thy care, that the promise that Thou didst utter concerning her invincibility may not be shown false.

Do not let her majestic beauty be disfigured or her wealth be stolen.

Fulfill Thy promise that Thou didst make to Peter; seal Thy words with deeds.

Fortify her gates, strengthen her bars, exalt her horn, raise up her head.

Bless her sons, preserve her children, give peace to her priests and subdue those who wish her evil.

May Thy peace dwell in her and drive away from her all evil schisms.

Grant that we may lead a calm, peaceful life in fear of Thee.

May we maintain our faith with great confidence and perfect love.

May our life be pleasing to Thee and may we find compassion in Thee in the day of reckoning.

May we ceaselessly bring praise to Thee, O Lord, and to Thy Father and to the Holy Spirit.

87

Thou Who art kindhearted to sinners, be merciful also to us in the day of judgement. Forgive us our debts according to Thy loving-kindness and in the day of Thy coming vouchsafe us Thy habitation.

When the multitudes to be judged tremble before the righteous judgement and stand before Thee stripped bare and in fear---then, O my Judge, have mercy on me for I have sung of Thy glory.

When the lips of the wise are stopped and Thy terrifying mighty scepter looms ominously before all, then may my lips be opened, for I have confessed Thee.

When neither friend nor acquaintance can save a man and every man is bought naked to

account for himself--then, O Lord, be my intercessor, for I have hoped in Thee.

When the sound of the trumpet blares out, the nations shudder and every man is to receive reckoning according to his labors--then, O Lord, my helper, for to Thee do I run.

Accept our service, O Lord, hope of those above and hope of those below, and have mercy on us.

Be merciful to us, O Lord, be merciful to our parents; be merciful to our teachers, be merciful to our brethren.

Be merciful to us, O Lord, and give rest to our relatives who have reposed and to all who have died and did confess Thee, believe in Thee and taste Thy flesh and drink Thy life-creating blood.

Vouchsafe us together with Thy sheep to enter into Thy pasture, and together with Thy saints to offer Thee praise in accordance with Thy greatness unto the ages of ages.

88

O Good Mother of the All-O-good God: look upon the prayer of thine unworthy servant with thy merciful eye and grant me the contrition, quietness of thoughts, constancy of mind, chaste reason, sobriety of soul, humble thinking, radiance of spirit, prudent disposition, and spiritual peace that the Lord granted His disciples.

Blot out the record of my falls into sin, cleave the clouds of my sorrow, the haze and tumult of my thoughts. Remove from me the tempest and tumult of passions; enlarge my heart with spiritual breadth, give me joy and gladness and grant that I may walk the right path of Thy Son's commandments and properly pass through life without faltering and with an untainted conscience.

Also grant me who pray before thee pure prayer, that with an untroubled mind and concentrated thought I might always offer prayer to the honor, glory, and magnification of thine only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

O how insensitive I am! How coarse, how earth-like has my soul become! O dissolute heart, O lips filled with bitterness, O throat which is an open grave!

Why dost thou not remember, O soul, that thy departure approaches inescapably? Why dost thou not prepare for this journey? Why dost thou, with no pity for thyself, pursue ruin? Why dost thou bring upon thyself eternal torment? What art thou doing, O soul, that thou livest like a beast lacking reason and understanding?

Alas, how I choose darkness instead of light! How I prefer that pleasure which I have today and which tomorrow will be gone, above eternal and unutterable bliss!

Alas, how I agree to be dressed in a dark and gloomy garment rather than in a robe radiant like the sun! How I prefer the miserable dwelling places of hell over the heavenly kingdom!

Woe is me, a sinner! I on my own, voluntarily, knowingly cast myself into utter ruin.

Come at last to thy senses, O my soul; fear God and bravely take up the journey along the path of His commandments.

Understand, O soul, that this age is like unto a battlefield, and the cunning serpent endeavors to secure victory by any means. He is overthrown and reviled by some, but others does he himself overthrow and subject to reviling.

Some, who are deceived by him, are overcome; and others enter into battle with him and are crowned. Some, having tasted his bitterness, attain the delights of eternal life; and others, who have tasted his sensual sweets, obtain the bitterness of eternal torment.

Some, through their extreme abstinence, readily take the upper hand against him; and others, because of their attachment to earthly things, are easily overcome by him. For those who love God with all their heart, warfare with him means nothing at all; but for those who love

the world it is difficult and insuperable.

Comprehend, O pitiful sou, that the joy, splendor, and leisure of this age are filled with sadness and grief; but sorrows, deprivation and self-disparagement gain unutterable joy and eternal life.

Resolve to step upon the path that is strait and sorrowful and labor in silence, that when the hour of death and departure comes thou wilt not be found unprepared.

90

On my bed I meditated on Thee, Lover of me; and at midnight I arose to glorify Thy goodness. I recalled my debts and my sins and shed streams of tears. They reassured me--the thief, the publican, Mary the harlot, the Canaanite woman, and even the woman with an issue of blood and the Samaritan woman by the well. They said to me: Get up, beg for mercy--your Lord is plenteous in mercy.

David, the son of Jesse, called out to me in his psalms; he awoke me from the sleep that burdened my limbs and said to me: Get up, O man. Why do you sleep? the Judge accepts offerings at midnight. Get up, pray, and ask for forgiveness. The kindhearted Lord will rejoice in you. His door is open to the penitent day and night.

At night, as I rested on my bed, I recalled my debts and sins. Then terror embraced me and I cried out: alas, the terrible night and the darkness void of all light are approaching. Whosoever leads an illicit life shall not rejoice on the day of resurrection, but will ever remain in darkness.

David too lay awake on his bed at night, contemplated his iniquities and confessed his sins. At night he watered his bed with the tears of his eyes, and with sighs he prayed: I know, O Lord, mine iniquity, and my sin is before me continually. Against Thee only, O Lord, have I sinned--have mercy on me.

I call upon Thee, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; Thee do I beseech day and night--spare us. According to the multitude of Thy compassions, cleanse our sins and iniquities. Grant us, O Lord, health of soul and body; deliver us from the evil one and from his power and from his way and from all his snares, and refuse us no Thy compassion, neither by day nor by night.

Let us awake from sleep and with sighs call out to the Lord. Day and night let us labor, attending to our correction while our life still lasts, until the time comes when there will be no more place for repentance. Let us stand vigilant at the Bridegroom's door, that we might enter with the Bridegroom into His bridal chamber and inherit eternal life.

come, let us all sing praises to God at night and imitate the hosts of angels who ceaselessly praise Him. And our Savior, when He arises and comes, accompanied by the angels, and sees our wakefulness and our vigilance, will call us his good servants and will seat us at His banquet.

With the righteous, who have pleased God day and night, let us labor in good things, beg our Lord for mercy; and, singing with David, let us say: at midnight I arose to give thanks unto Thee because of Thy righteous judgements. Spare me and have mercy on me and vouchsafe me the inheritance of Thy kingdom.

I will not cease to praise Thee, O our Lord. Ceaselessly will I sing of Thy glory, that Thy truth might not condemn me. I know the extent of my guilt. I know that if Thou dost punish me according to my sins, then my inheritance will be gehenna. Then all hope will be lost. My prayer will be silenced. Have mercy on me therefore, and forgive me my debts.

I slipped and fell into sin. Extend to me Thy right hand and I will arise, like the harlot in Simon's house, like the thief on the cross. Have mercy on me, Thou Who art kindhearted to sinners.

Woe is me, who am careless! Woe is me, who disregard my salvation! Woe is me, who sin knowingly! I know that I do evil, yet I do not withdraw from evil. Woe is me, for I have no justification! According to my words I am numbered at Thy right hand, but according to my deeds I stand at Thy left.

To Thee, O only Lord Who bearest no grudges, do I confess my sins. Even were I to keep silent, Thou, O Lord, knowest all, and nothing is hidden before Thine eyes. For Thou, O Lord, hast said by Thy Prophet: declare your sins beforehand and you will be justified. And so I will say: I have sinned, O Lord, and I am not worthy to look up and behold the heights of heaven because of the multitude of mine iniquities.

What am I to do, I who am the most miserable of all men? I shall weep over myself day and

night, while there is yet time to offer tears....Grant me tears of contrition, O only good and merciful Lord, that with them I might gain from Thee purification from the defilement of my heart.

alas, thou hast sinned, O my soul! Repent, for our days pass like a shadow. In a short while thou wilt depart from here. Thou shalt pass through terrible places, O my soul. Do not postpone turning to the Lord day after day.

Woe is me, O my soul! thou hast driven God's mercy away from thyself with thy foul deeds. Give thyself no rest; day and night fall down before Him Who is Good and loves mankind, that thou mightest be given grace and mercy from on high.

93

There will come a time filled with fear and trembling, when all that each person has done in secret and in darkness shall be revealed--woe to the soul that does not have the Lord as her helper.

My heart sighs and my eyes long for tears, but my sin holds my mind captive, that I might not feel contrition and beseech the Lord not to cast me not outer darkness.

While we yet have strength, let us work for the Lord in rightness of heart, that in the time of sorrow we might have Him as our helper Who shall deliver us from all misfortune.

Like a man who walks with a candlestick and gives light to those who are with him, so does virtue, which always carries glory with it, also give light.

Until you resolved in your mind finally to leave this life and to consider this world and its glory but a despoiled tabernacle--until such a time, it will be impossible to overcome the earthly passions and worldly lusts that plunge a man into utter destruction and ruin.

It does not take a great effort to lay a foundation, but it is difficult to complete the building. The taller the building, the more work it presents for the builder right up until it is finished.

This is what happens to those who come to work for the Lord: first there is temptation, then sorrows, and next follow labor, despondency, nakedness, suffering, lack of privacy and humiliation. He will prevail who with all his heart dedicates himself to God's guidance and God's will. God requires from us only our consummate determination; it is He Who gives us strength and grants us victory.

94

Praise to the All-good One, Who because of His love has revealed glory to the sons of men! From dust did He create a voiceless being and adorn him with a soul, a proprietress of heavenly treasures.

He gave these lips of dust the capacity to magnify Him, so that through them all creation might sing praise unto Him.

Come, ye who are endowed with speech, let us sing praise unto Him until we repose in the sleep of death.

Every night shall we contemplate death which will stop our lips and lay silence upon us.

The righteous who spent their nights in vigilance live even after death; but the lawless, who reject the glory of the Son of God, are already dead while they yet live.

Let us rouse our bodies with psalms and spiritual hymns that we might join the wise virgins whom our Lord praised, and in vigilance behold His glory in the night that will cause the world to tremble.

Let us not wallow in pleasures, that we might behold His glory in the day of His coming. Let us stand before Him as watchful servants, ready for the hour when He will bring the sons of men to the judgement.

The body that burdened itself with prayer shall soar through the air on the day of the

resurrection; without shame shall it behold its Lord; with Him shall it enter into the habitation of light, where it will be cherished by the angels and by those who here burdened themselves with vigilance and prayer.

Blessed is He Who made us instruments of His glory and put exaltation in our unworthy lips! Praise be to His compassion, for He has made those who were of dust concelebrants with the angels, that every night and at all times they might sing His holy name.

95

Praise God in the morning, ye children of the Church. Every morning let us exalt the Good One and worship Him, Who arranged the luminaries in the day and night skies.

When the veil of night is lifted and God's light has shone forth over creation, the arrival of morning wakes those who sleep. May Thy light, O Lord, irradiate our hearts.

Thyself, O our Lord, teach us to exalt Thee and put life in our souls. As Thou hast let us out of darkness, so also deliver us from gehenna.

According to Thy mercy, nourish the children of the Church, who have cleaved themselves unto Thee. May Thy loving-kindness be our helper, O Lord of the morning and the evening.

May Thy grace, O Lord, accompany us and lead us to the great morning. May Thy generous right hand shower us with blessings and bring us across the sea of fire.

May heaven and earth and all that is within them together exalt Thee at our return. Exaltation to Thee, to the Father Whom we worship, to Thine Only-begotten Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Every evening mayest Thou be praised from the lips of all men! Thou gavest them the day to labor and work to acquire nourishment. Now, exhausted by their heavy labor, they thank Thee for granting them rest.

Who shall not worship Thee, Who carest for us men with such love? Thou leadest out the stars and causest the approach of evening which brings a halt to the day-long labors of those who have exhausted themselves with work.

The evening comes and consoles those who, in their struggle with hunger and thirst, have wearied and exhausted themselves with labor. Evening time comes and gladdens the world and its toilers.

Blessed is Thy greatness, that has from the beginning been ever mindful of us men!

Thou providest rest for both men and beasts in the the evening time. May Thy Cross, O Lord, which is the seal of the Church and protects Here children from Satan and his warriors, be the comfort of Thy sheep, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy life-creating blood!

Send Thy peace, O Lord, to all the ends of the universe, and may the Evil One flee from our midst.

May every tongue and every mouth offer Thee praise from all the ends of the earth.

With them do we also glorify Thee, O Lord, and Thy Father and the Holy Spirit.

97

Accept from all of us, O our Lord, our prayer and service and supplication. Grant us hearts filled with love and the spirit of patience in sufferings.

May our mouths which confess the faith and our voices be lyres of praise. May the vigilance and labor that our bodies endure make Thee merciful in regard to our sins.

May our mouths that serve as lyres for Thee and our tongues that sing Thee praise not issue tormented cries, O Lord, for Thou hast vouchsafed them to sing Thee praise.

May our eyes that kept vigil though they were heavy-laden with sleep and our legs that exhausted themselves in standing before Thee not be deprived of hope, and may they not lose their reward in the day of reckoning.

May the sounds of our mouths and our songs not be turned into sobs and weeping; but according to Thy compassion, loving-kindness and goodness, accept our vigilance.

Vouch that we may stand before Thee with one soul, with a clean heart, and in harmony may we offer to Thee, O Lord, and to Thy Father and Thy Holy Spirit.

98

A mournful soul approaches Thee, O Holy Master, and with tears she falls down before Thy compassion.

Thou hast sworn by Thine Own Self that Thou desirest not the death of a sinner and would rather save him from his sins. And truly Thy goodness daily doth prevail over the errors of men. Thou hast mercy upon sinners just as Thou hast mercy upon those who walk in Thy commandments.

Thy compassion is everywhere declared in the Gospels and in the writings of the apostles. Thy holy fathers and teachers, both those who are named in the Church and those who are not, declare Thy compassion.

I know of the prodigal son, Manasseh, the thief, Zacchaeus, the publican, the harlot, the Canaanite woman, the woman with an issue of blood, the paralytic, the blind man, Jairus, and all whose stories have been written down--and I approach Thee.

Extend thy charity and accept me; quicken my mind and restrain me who often fall into my former iniquities and am mired in corrupt thoughts.

When thy grace comes to my heart she finds there the stench of corrupting thoughts. Therefore she instantly withdraws without finding an entrance or having an opportunity to enter and dwell in me as she would like.

Wash my heart with radiant bliss, that I might come to my senses and that Thy grace might make her dwelling in me, O all-compassionate Lord!

99

In a short time we shall pass through terrible and fearful places, and there is not one here who can avoid walking this path. There will be no one there to accompany and assist us: neither parents nor brethren, nor friends, nor relatives, nor wealth, nor any other such thing.

If at that very hour we find ourselves stripped of God's protection, the princes of darkness shall certainly hold us back. They are unyielding and merciless; they fear not kings, nor do they respect masters; they honor neither the small nor the great. Only from those who live in piety do they withdraw in fear, allowing them free passage.

I imagine what this hour will be like and fall down before thy goodness, O Lord: give me not up to those who offend me, that Thine enemies might not boast that they have taken Thy servant, O good Lord. May they not gnash their teeth and terrify my sinful soul, saying: thou hast fallen into our hands, thou hast been handed over to us. That is the day for which we have waited.

No, O Lord, deal with me not according to mine iniquities and turn not Thy face away from me, Say not to me: Amen, I say to thee, I know thee not. Punish me, O Lord, according to Thy compassion, and may mine enemy not rejoice over me. Extinguish his fury, nullify all his actions, provide for me a path to Thee free from attacks and revilement.

Incline thine ear to my prayer, O good Lord, not because of my righteousness, but because of thy compassion and thy great mercy. Save my sorrowful soul from death. Thou art the Lord of all and Thou hast power over all creatures.

Thou hast said, O Lord: ask, and it shall be given to you: knock, and it shall be opened to you. Lo, I ask and I knock. Before my end comes, O Lord, cleanse me of all sin.

Get up, O soul. Thou hast slept till now in sin; shake off thy slumber; hurry, and seek refuge in repentance--and the Just One will perhaps be moved to mercy by thy tears. Put off from thy mind the veil of corruption, that thine eye might see rightly.

Hourly shed tears of contrition for thy shameful deeds before the Judge. And abyss of torment awaits thee in return for thy deeds and thy depravity. Weep for thyself exceedingly, that the Just One might both hearken unto thee and make peace with thee.

Shudder, O unfortunate soul, and be terrified by the torments which thou hast prepared for thyself. Weep for thyself, thou who hast communed with the unclean powers, for the eternal fire shall follow thee everywhere. Deeply hast thou mired thyself in lust, and never didst thou break away from it.

Thy thoughts are encumbered with thorns and thistles, and thou hast yet to bring forth fruits of repentance. The passions have convulsed thee like waves and drowned thy ship in a sea of sins.

Never didst thou bring to mind that day when all that is hidden shall be subject to scrutiny. What wilt thou do when the voice, demanding that thou go to meet the Bridegroom, causes thee to tremble?

The light of thine eyes shall grow dark and vanish--and thou shalt be left outside with the foolish virgins.

Supply thyself with oil, O miserable soul, while there is still time to justify thyself. Beg for forgiveness of thy sins together with the harlot and heal thy wounds with thine own tears.

The door of repentance is yet open--enter and cleanse thyself from thy corruption.

Thou, who desirest the salvation of the sons of men, have compassion on this soul that has withdrawn from Thee. Accept her, O Lord, with Thy usual mercy. At the righteous judgement, may Thy compassion shelter me, who am sinful, and deliver me from torment.

Thou, who forgivest sins and freely grantest mercy, forgive me the sins of my soul at the righteous judgement! May the prodigals, whom Thou didst gather together and bring to repentance, exalt Thee.

101

Blessed is he who in the Lord has become free of all the affairs of this vain life.

Blessed is he who has in mind the coming terrible judgement and tries to heal the wounds of his soul with tears.

Blessed is he who in tears has become like unto a cloud, and daily uses them to extinguish the fiery flame of the evil passions.

Blessed is he who excels in good measures of ascetic feats, hoping to receive from God the heavenly kingdom.

Blessed is he who like a fire is ablaze with love and has burned up in himself all impure thoughts and corruption of the soul.

Blessed is he who has found a choice heavenly pearl and, having sold all that he had on earth, has bought this one jewel.

Blessed is he who has found a treasure hidden in a field, rejoiced and cast aside all, and acquired this one piece of land.

Blessed is he who ceaselessly remembers the day of his departure and strives to be ready and fearless in that hour.

Blessed is he who finds boldness in the hour of his leave-taking, when the soul with fear and trembling bids farewell to the body, for the angels shall come to take his soul, to separate it from the body and place it before the throne at the immortal and terrible judgement place.

102

Adornment of our prayer, O Jesus, fortify our supplication, that it might ascend with Thee to Thy Father and obtain for us the object of our request!

Through Thy loving-kindness Thou defendest us before Thy Father, for Thou art the chosen sacrifice, offered for the world.

For Adam, who tasted the fruit, Thou didst embrace the pillar at the judgement place. For Adam's children, who sinned before Thee, the executioners pierced Thee with nails.

Thou hast taken upon Thyself the common debt of all in order to pay it back to Thy Father-

-pay back also, O guiltless Lord, those sins with which our freedom has indebted us.

Thou hast redeemed us from the curse of the law by Thy precious blood. Deliver also those redeemed by Thy blood from harsh justice.

May the debts of Thy servants not exceed the compassion of the kindhearted Lord, for no matter how great our errors might be, Thy loving-kindness is yet greater.

It is true that many, many debts are upon us, but Thou hast a multitude of compassions. And if truth itself should weigh them, then all our debts shall be less than Thy compassions.

Who shall set about weighing Thy compassions and comparing them to our iniquities? The mountains can be weighted, but Thy compassions are beyond measure.

Thy compassions are more precious than life, for life has its measure, but Thy compassions are immeasurable. May Thy compassions be also our rampart.

103

Arise, O soul that has grown old in sins, and renew thyself with repentance. From contrition and tears mix thyself an ointment and heal the wounds of the fallen image in thee. Call out from thy heart and expose thine iniquities, for the All-good One will spare thee who art fallen.

Thou hast loved beauty that is deceptive and transitory and ruined thine own beauty, O daughter of the light. The temple of thy body is disfigured with the recklessness to which thou hast enslaved thyself.

Woe art thou, who art miserable! How long shalt thou occupy thyself with things that are transitory? Shudder and be horrified by the fire that thou hast kindled with thine errors.

The hideous sins that thou hast committed from thy youth have accumulated, rising higher than thy head. They have plunged thee into despair, and that is why thou art indifferent to repentance.

Remember that thou art held captive by lust. Remember that desire slew thy mother. How long-suffering the Good One is with thee, yet dost thou wallow in a sea of sin!

Can it be that thou dost not fear the day when thy sores and thy secrets shall be revealed? Who will defend thee in that place where every man will be preoccupied with his own

judgement?

Thy possessions have made thee a hollow image; they have ruined thee and left thee.

O great Hope, Who hast appeared unto us in the last days, spare this soul that has withdrawn from Thee! I am Thy sheep, but long have I wandered far from Thee, serving the evil one. Go forth, O Lord and seek me out. Seek out Thy dominion, for in vain cares have I squandered Thy wealth!

For the sake of sinners didst Thou bear Thy cross, and I am one of them: turn not away from me. We are Thy dominion, but the Evil One has stolen us away. Rebuke him and take from him that which he has capture. Have mercy on me, O Lover of mankind, for I have no other hope but Thee.

Praise be to Thy compassions, O all-merciful Son of God, for Thou art long-suffering toward sinners. Thanks be to Thee from those who had perished, whom Thou didst gather together and bring to repentance.

104

How great is the grace of the God! How great is God's love for mankind! How He desires and encourages all men to save themselves! O Lord, spare also me, Thy useless servant; O merciful Christ our Savior, spare Thy creature.

If Thou, O Lord, wilt not give me who am miserable understanding, nor enlighten my heart, then, due to my great indifference, shall I be unable to recognize my ruin and decay.

Because I am trapped by the merciless enemy who oppresses me, with tears do I ceaselessly cry day and night to Thy goodness to deliver me from his snares. For hourly does he renew the trickery he wields against me; hourly does he disturb my soul with wanton thoughts and desire for pleasure.

May Thy power, O Christ, that rebuked the waves of the sea also rebuke him, that he may have no influence on me, Thy useless servant. Be quick to send, O Master, Thy grace, that it might drive away from Thy servant the great serpent and all his defilements and evil thoughts. For the wounds that his arrows have inflicted on my heart have become fetid sores, and I in my folly try to hide them every way I can.

The good Physician calls me and demands no payment, nor does he spill my blood. But my slothfulness prevents me from going to Him. He comes Himself to heal me, but always finds me engaged in acts and prevent His remedies from rendering me their healing power.

O Lord, enlighten and sober me. Cure me and I will be cured!

105

I entreat the Mother of God: O Birthgiver of the never-setting Light, hear the words that I proclaim before thee!

I who am miserable wallow in mire; I am all covered with impurities, completely blackened. Even the earth have I defiled with the multitude of my sins, O my Lady. And thus, with sighs does she cry out on my behalf to the incorruptible Judge, calling forth both heaven with its stars and the sun as witnesses.

And already the storm of my thoughts plunges me into despair....I, a prodigal, have laid all my hope upon thee, O Mother of God. Thou alone, who didst bear the Deliverer of the world in thy womb, loosen my unloosenable bonds. Whiten thou me, who am blackened and have been turned into darkness, with tears of repentance. Thou, who hast given birth to my life, raise up me who am slain by my carelessness, and lead me who have become alienated from God and the angels back to them, O Mother of God!

Awesome indeed is the miracle! How the Lord has tolerated my sins! How is it that He has not conveyed me who am miserable to the depths of hell while still alive! How is it that He has not sent from on high His invisible staff or His sword to strike me down....Without a doubt, thou, O Lady, hast granted me life by thine intercessions. Thou seekest my repentance--O All-good virgin give it to me, Thy servant--for thou art my wall, my harbor and my rampart.

106

Our Lord Jesus, O venerable King, Who by Thy suffering hast vanquished death the torturer; O Son of God Who hast promised us new life and the heavenly kingdom: removed from us all harm, that Thy grace might dwell in us, so that in the day of Thy coming we might come out to meet Thee in accordance with Thy good will, that we might behold Thee and stand before Thee with you.

Blot out our sins with Thy forgiveness, that we might praise Thy name because of Thine acts of kindness. Vouchsafe all of us, O Lord, according to Thy grace to glorify and worship Thy Divinity.

May the eyes that here have seen Thy glory there behold Thy great mercy. May the ears that

here have heard the sound of thy words hear there also the sounds of rejoicing. May the lips that here have glorified Thee in Thy churches be vouchsafed there also to sing praise to Thee. May the tongue that here has cried "Holy, holy, holy" there also be turned to praise Thee. May the hands that have held Thy flesh and blood receive from Thee pardon from debts. May the feet that have entered the holy temple there also walk about the dominion of life.

Send our congregation, our brotherhood that worships Thy Divinity, the entire fullness of Thy saving gifts. May Thy supreme love remain with us, and may it make us worthy to offer thee due praise.

Open Thy door to our prayer, and may our service be pleasing to Thee.

Turn to us, O Good One, according to Thy compassion; and drive away from us all harm, that we might ceaselessly praise Thee, O Lord, and Thy Father and the Holy Spirit.

107

Cast not aside my supplication, O good Lord! Unworthy lips cry out to Thee, together with an impure heart and a soul defiled by sins.

Hearken unto me, O Lord, according to Thy goodness. Confirm my heart in fear of Thee. Set my feet on the rock of repentance. May Thy goodness, O Lord, vanquish my sinfulness. May the light of Thy grace overcome the darkness that is in me.

Thou, O Lord, Who didst open the eyes of the blind man, open the darkened eyes of my heart. Thou Who didst cleanse lepers with Thy word, cleanse the stains of my soul. May Thy grace, O Lord, be a fire in me, consuming my impure thoughts.

Thou alone art good. Thou art the Light that surpasses all light. Thou art the joy that surpasses all joy. Thou art the Peace that surpasses all peace. Thou art the true Life. Thou art the Salvation that endures unto the ages.

I, who am deserving of every punishment, who merit every kind of torture, fall down before Thee, O Good One, with my supplication. I beseech Thee, O Redeemer, let not the adversary seize me in the end.

But do Thou, O good and merciful Lord, raise up my members paralyzed by sin; enliven my soul slain by iniquity, enlighten my heart clouded by wicked lust, deliver me from every evil deed; implant in me Thy perfect love, O Lord Jesus Christ, Savior of the world; and write the name of Thy servant in the book of life; grant me a good end, that, having secured victory over the devil, I might bow down unashamed with all the righteous before the throne of Thy kingdom.

Woe is me, O soul, for thou dost remain senseless in the present life, daily indulging in selfish pleasures and comforts and leading a dissolute life. In the age to come thou shalt cry like the rich man; thou shalt be tormented in the flames of eternal fire.

Woe is me, O soul, that thou canst not endure any sorrows inflicted by thy brother, nor even a word of insult; rather, thou art quick to contradict and oppose others. For this thou shalt lose the crown of patience and meekness and wilt be judge with those who begrudge others.

Woe is me, O soul, for thou hatest and revilest thy brother and dost allow others to do the same. For this thou shalt be punished with the murderers, for he who hates his brother is a murderer.

Woe is me, O soul, that thou dost scorn God's commandments and presume that salvation comes with the label "Christian" for on that terrible day thou shalt hear the Lord say: Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord," shall enter the kingdom.

Woe is me, O soul, for thou dost love the glory of men, honor, luxurious garments, and material acquisitions. For this in the day of judgement thou shalt be an abomination before God; thou shalt be cast away from His face and numbered with the arrogant demons.

Woe is me, O soul, for thou dost sin daily, yet day after day dost thou postpone repentance. Death will overtake thee suddenly, like a thief in the night, and thou wilt be led away in bonds to gehenna, shedding tears and denouncing thy folly in vain.

Woe is me, O soul, that thou dost tremble not, thinking about the terrible day of judgement, when all the powers of heaven shall be moved with fear, and about how thou shalt appear before the face of God wearing a robe of shame and defilement.

The holy Fathers, who loved God and become accomplished in sufferings and temptations, received from the Heaven King imperishable crowns with glory and praise.

But I, who am miserable, sin without any temptation; I irritate and embitter my Master.

However, having learned through experience of Thy vast and unutterable compassion, O Lord, I beseech the greatness of Thy grace. Save me and grant Thy servant his heart's request, from the treasures of Thy loving-kindness, that Thy grace might ceaselessly stream forth in my heart and lips like a river; that my heart might, through Thy grace, become a pure and undefiled temple that receives in itself the heavenly King; that the finger of grace might set my tongue perpetually in motion, like the string of a lyre, to the service of Thy glory, O Lover of mankind; and that I may ceaselessly, throughout the days of my life, glorify and bless Thee with love with both heart and lips.

O Christ the Savior! Grant me my heart's request, that my tongue might become like unto a sweet-sounding flute; that by comforting, enlightening and educating others I might pay off a small portion of my great debt and, protected by Thy mercy, I might be saved when every soul is set trembling before Thy terrifying glory.

Verily, O Master, only-begotten Son of God, hearken unto me and accept the petition of Thy servant as an offering. I, a sinner, am saved by Thy grace. to Thee Who savest a sinner by Thy compassion, is due all glory unto the ages.

A trumpet will sound from the heavens, saying: Awake, ye beloved of Christ. Lo, the heavenly King has come to give you repose and joy in eternal life in return for your ascetic labors. Awake and behold Christ the King, the immortal Bridegroom, whom you have loved. Behold His kingdom that He has prepared for you. Come and rejoice together with Him in inexpressible joy.

And those righteous and worthy of God shall soar high in the air in unutterable glory, and all the lawless will remain below with great shame. Those who have labored here shall receive bliss and joy; all the sinners shall receive shame and chastisement.

Blessed is he who has labored here to render himself worthy in that hour, and pitiful is he who has made himself unworthy in that hour. the clouds will gather all the saints from the earth and carry them to heaven, but angels will snatch away the lawless and cast them into the oven that burns with unquenchable fire.

Who shall give my head abundant waters and my eyes a fountain ever gushing tears, that I might weep for myself day and night, entreating God that I might not be found unworthy in the hour of His coming, and not hear from my Master the terrible sentence: go away from Me, O worker of iniquity; I know not from whence thou art.

O God on high, only Immortal One! Show this sinner Thy great compassion in that hour, that my hidden deceit might not be made known to the witnesses there: the angels, archangels, prophets, apostles, righteous and saints. Save this lawless one by Thy grace and compassion, and lead him into the sweet paradise together with the righteous who are perfect. Accept the supplication of thy servant, according to the prayers of the saints who have been pleasing to Thee!

111

O Mother of God, who surpasses every mind and word! O virgin who exceedest all earthly virginity, for even before the Divine birth wast thou a Virgin beyond all virgins--and such didst thou remain both during and after the birth!

Thee, O Lady do I beg, thee do I entreat, O merciful and man-befriending Mother of the merciful and man-befriending God: defend me at this hour if ever thou wilt do so, for now am I most in need of thy protection and thy help.

I am all a mire of filth and sin, a dwelling place of soul-corrupting passions. Yet I intend to approach the all-pure and terrifying Mysteries of thy Son and God, and therefore do I suffer fear, and trembling embraces me because of the unbearable multitude of my sins.

but if ever I am to remain without communion on the pretext of my unworthiness, then shall I fall into a great abyss of evil and bring upon myself great chastisement. I anguish over both the first alternative and the second.

to thee do I run; be kind to me, my all-pure Lady. Take advantage of thy motherly boldness before thy Son and god, and gain for me forgiveness of my former sins. Vouchsafe me to be made pure and enlightened by communion of the Mysteries, and show me how to spend the remainder of my life in repentance, purity and humility. Remain always with me in my thoughts, words and deeds, in all the movements of my soul and body, instructing me, leading me and guiding me, deflecting from em all hostile powers, and preserving me and providing thy servant, however worthless, with thy grace in every way.

112

O Giver of all good things, O fountain of healing and treasure of compassion, Thou only good and kindhearted God, Who ever grantest good things to those who ask! I beseech Thee, that thine abundant grace might descend upon me and gather together my mind and heal my hidden sores anew, for distractions and wandering thoughts constantly renew my secret sores.

O long-suffering Lord Who ever curest with grace and compassion, heal the great spiritual infirmities that are within me, a sinner!

I have nothing to give Thee, O Master, in return for Thy cures. And what price could be put on Thy cures? neither heaven nor earth can give a reward worthy of them. It is impossible to purchase these holy heavenly cures, for they are priceless. Thou givest them only in return for tears, O our Savior; and in return for bitter weeping dost Thou grant them to all.

O my Master, grant me who am unworthy daily tears and strength, that my heart, enraptured and streaming forth fountains of tears, might be ceaselessly illuminated by pure prayer, and that a few tears might blot out the weighty record of my sins, and a small measure of weeping might extinguish the fire that burns therein. For if I weep here, there will I be delivered from the inextinguishable fire.

113

Daily do I provoke Thy long-suffering patience, O Master. Before mine eyes are both my wretchedness and Thy loving-kindness.

Because I am in the power of the unclean enemy who ever oppresses me, day and night shall I call upon Thy loving-kindness with tears, that Thou mightest deliver me from his attacks. For who can withstand the Evil One, if Thy grace withdraws from him even for one minute, O Master?

Hour after hour does the enemy oppress my soul with both words and deeds. May thy power, O Christ, that rebuked the waves of the sea, rebuke him also, that he may have no power over me, Thy servant. For daily does he renew his wicked scheming against me, and rush to seize my mind, drawing it away from the sweetness of Thy Divine commandments and the saving teachings they contain. Quickly send Thy grace, O Master, to drive the great serpent and all his defiled and wicked thoughts away from Thy servant.

The offended widow approaches the heartless and unjust judge, that he might defend her from her adversary; but I approach my kindhearted Master Who is long-suffering and good, Who has in His power heaven and earth, that He might be quick to hear me. Thou Who offerest Thy defense to all who hope upon Thee day and night, neither tarry in defending me, O Master. Snatch me away from the enemy and direct my path to Thee that, having conquered the enemy by Thy grace, I might bless Thee, Who are kindhearted and long-suffering, and glorify Thee Who alone desirest the salvation of all men.

114

the good God grants us the enlightenment of knowledge, and His grace ever visits our hearts. If she finds peace there, she enters and dwells constantly in the soul. But if she does not find the heart pure, she immediately withdraws. Yet compassion encourages her to descend anew and visit us sinners, for we are all inconstant because of our free will, but not by nature.

We are always distracted and weak, envious and wicked; often do we think evil of one another; we occupy ourselves with wicked ideas, and are always plunged in a mire of unclean thoughts. Thus when grace comes to visit us and encounters in our hearts the stench of unclean thoughts, she immediately withdraws without seeking an entrance, that she might make her habitation there and dwell in us, as is pleasing to her. She leaves only a trace of her radiant sweetness in the heart, so that one might recognize that grace has visited him but not found an entrance, and, having delighted in grace's radiance, might seek her out.

Do you see God's Providence? Do you see Christ's loving-kindness? Do you see how God Who is Holy ever loves us and wants us to be saved? Blessed is the man who ever strives to prepare a pure heart for grace, that when she comes she might find the fragrance of virtues and a sacred place in the soul and reside therein unto the ages of ages.

115

Up till now and in this very day, with my face ashamed and hung low do I dare to speak to thee, O master of the angels and Creator of all things--I, who am earth and dust, a distance to men and an insult to mankind; I, who am condemned, all covered with wounds and filled with despondency. How shall I lift my gaze to meet Thy grace, O Master? How shall I find the boldness to move my impure, polluted tongue? How shall I begin my confession?

I who am wretched have immeasurably offended Thy name and lived wantonly, more so than the prodigal son. In my person have I defiled and injured Thine image, for I have not heeded Thy commandments.

I know, O Lord, that because of the multitude of my spiritual stains and my impurity I am not worthy to bear Thy holy name; I cannot stand before Thee in prayer; I cannot look up and behold the heights of heaven, for I have opened the door to reprehensible desire and surrendered to unseemly impulses; and thus have I defiled my poor soul with passions and blackened my soul's garment with the immorality of my will. My whole mind is filled with demonic thoughts. By all my deeds and thoughts have I distressed Thy grace, and I continue repeatedly to do so. Yet ever do I please and gratify my enemy who wages war against me.

My conscience exposes my mind's error; in my heart I cover my face with shame. Before the judgement that awaits me I condemn myself.

Triumphantly do the wanton habits that never leave me drag me along. Ever do I soil myself in the mire of sensuality. I am every entangled in defiled thoughts; from my youth have I become a vessel of corrupting sin. And to this day, though I daily hear of the judgement and of the just deserts to be meted out, I have no will to oppose carnal lust. Ceaselessly do I submit myself to pitfalls; ceaselessly do I make myself a prisoner.

Woe is me, O Lord; dreadfully have I squandered Thy long-suffering patience! Woe is me; how many years have I spent offending Thy Holy Spirit! Woe is me; the time of my life has been spent in all manner of vain endeavors!...But, O Lord, do Thou not expose me in Thy fury; do Thou not exhibit my hateful, disgraceful deeds in a place of universal shame before all angels and men, to my dishonor and eternal condemnation, although I do indeed merit every dishonor and condemnation. According to Thy great compassion alone, have mercy on me and cleanse all my sins before the judgement.

116

I reflected upon the day my life will end--and I groaned when I saw the multitude of my transgressions and the heaviness of mine iniquities, and when I considered how my errors will be revealed for all to see. There, there will be no place for repentance, tears and prayers; instead, everyone will receive his reward according to his labors, recompense according to his deeds; and neither weeping nor suffering will incline the just Judge to mercy. Show me Thy kind mercy, O Lover of mankind!

In the day when the graves of the dead are opened, the trumpet will sound. Its voice will thunder, great trembling and awe will embrace the universe, all the angels will descend on Thy command to separate the good from the bad, clouds of fire will appear and carry off the pure bodies of the saints. In that day, may Thy compassion be shown also to me, that I might stand at Thy right hand, O good Lord, and obtain mercy!

In my thoughts I descended into the graves to see our corruption, and when I had examined what lay therein I cried: Turn not away from Thy servant, O Lord! Resurrect me who am perishing, and I will praise Thy dominion; overthrow the Evil One who rejoiced over me in the my day of sorrow and have mercy on me, for I have hoped in Thee.

In the end a merciless judgement awaits those who have sinned and not repented of their wicked deeds. But those who have acted righteously and kept the commandments of their Lord shall receive from Him the good things of heaven and inherit eternal life. There shall the righteous rejoice over their labors; the saints shall delight in the rewards they will receive.

Lodge all of us in Thy bridal chamber, O Lord, Who art kindhearted toward sinners!

117

Know that there are eight evil thoughts that bring about all that is vile: those of sensuality, lechery, love of money, anger, inappropriate grief, despondency, vainglory, and pride. All these conduct warfare with every man.

If you want to conquer sensuality, cherish restraint, have fear of God--and you will conquer it.

If you want to conquer lechery, cherish wakefulness and thirst, ever contemplate death, never converse with women--and you will conquer it. If you want to conquer love of money, cherish non-acquisitiveness and frugality.

If you want to conquer anger, acquire meekness and generosity, and keep in mind how much evil the Jews did to our Lord Jesus Christ; yet He, the man-befriending god, did not become angry with them; but on the contrary He prayed for them, saying: Father, forgive them this sin, for they know not what they do.

If you want to overcome inappropriate grief, never grieve for anything that is transient. If people injure you with words or upset you or dishonor you, do not grieve; but, on the contrary, rejoice. Grieve only when you sin, and even in this case do not go to extremes, that you might not fall into despair and perish.

If you want to overcome despondency, take up some handiwork for a short while, or read, or pray frequently.

If you want to conquer vainglory, love not praise, nor honor, nor fine clothes, nor precedence, nor favor; but on the contrary, cherish occasions when you are reprimanded and

dishonored, when false charges are brought against you--and reproach yourself for being more sinful than any sinner.

If you want to conquer pride, then whatever you do, say not that you do it by your own labors, or with your own strength. But if you fast or stand vigil or sleep on the bare ground or sing psalms, or serve in the altar of do a great number of prostrations, say that it was done with god's help and protection, not by your own strength and effort.

118

Praise to Him Who descended to us in human form! Praise to the Invisible One who became visible for our sake! Praise to the Eternal One Who tasted death for us! Praise to the Mysterious One Whom no mind can comprehend, and Who through His grace made Himself manifest by taking on flesh!

Blessed is He Whose good will brought Him to His mother's womb and bosom, to be born and reared! Blessed is He Who partook of death and thus granted life to mankind.

Blessed is He Who made our flesh a dwelling place for His mysterious being. Blessed is He Who declared to us His mysteries in our own tongue.

Praise to Him Who liberated us, having been bound for our sake. Glory to Him Who is plenteous in mercy, Who has redeemed us without taking anything in return. Praise to the Judge Who accepted condemnation for our sake.

Let us worship Him Who has enlightened our mind with His teaching and laid down a path for His word in our hearing. Let us give thanks to Him Who has grafted His fruit to our tree.

Praise to Him Who invisibly cultivates our spirit. Blessed is He Who attuned the senses of our spirit, that it might ever play songs of exaltation to Him on its lyre.

Approach the compassionate Father, O sinner, and confess your sins, saying with tears: I have sinned against heaven and before Thee, Lord God Almighty, and am no longer worthy to be called Thy son, nor even to pronounce Thy glorious name with my sinful lips, for I have made myself unworthy of heaven and earth by incurring Thy wrath, O good Master!

I beseech Thee, O Lord, cast me not away from Thy face and turn not away from me, that I might not perish. If Thy hand had not protected me, I would have perished already; I would be like dust before the wind: it would be as if I had never appeared in the world. Indeed, from the time that I left Thy path, I have not encountered one good day, for a day spent in sin, though it may seem good, is actually the bitterest of all bitter things.

And from this day forth shall I hope on Thy mercy, that thou wilt give me strength to work out my salvation. Now do I fall down before Thee and beseech Thee: help me, who have strayed from the path of truth. Shower me with Thy compassion like the prodigal son, for I have made a shame of my life and squandered the wealth of thy grace. Have mercy on me and scorn me not, due to the depravity of my life. Have mercy on me, as Thou hadst mercy on the harlot and the publican; have compassion for me as Thou hadst compassion for the thief: on earth he was rejected by everyone, but thou didst accept him and make him an inhabitant of the sweet paradise. Accept also my repentance, for I too have been rejected by everyone. Thou, O Lord, camest not to save the righteous, but to call sinners to repentance—accept therefore also me, who repent before Thee.

Grant forgiveness, O Lord; send also strength. Convert me, that I might live in sanctity, according to Thy holy will. Sanctify my heart that has become a den and dwelling-place of demons.

I am unworthy to ask forgiveness for myself, O Lord, for many times have I promised to repent and proved myself a liar by not fulfilling my promise. Thou hast picked me up many times already, but every time I freely chose to fall again.

Therefore I condemn myself and admit that I deserve all manner of punishment and torture. How many times hast thou enlightened my darkened mind; yet every time I return again to base thoughts! My whole body trembles when I contemplate this; yet every time sinful sensuality reconquers me.

How shall I recount all the gifts of Thy grace, O Lord, that I the pitiful one have received? Yet I have reduced them all to nothing by my apathy--and I continue in this manner. Thou hast bestowed upon me thousands of gifts, yet miserable me, I offer in return things repulsive to Thee.

Yet Thou, O Lord, inasmuch as Thou containest a sea of long-suffering and an abyss of kindness, do not allow me to be felled as a fruitless fig tree; and do not let me be burned without having ripened on the field of life. Snatch me not away unprepared; seize not me who have not yet lit my lamp; take not away me who have no wedding garment; but, because Thou art good and a lover of mankind, have mercy on me. Give me time to repent, and place not my soul stripped naked before Thy terrible and unwavering throne as a pitiful spectacle of infamy.

If a righteous man can barely be saved, then where will I end up, I who am lawless and sinful? If the path that leads to life is trait and narrow, then how can I be vouchsafed such good things, I who live a life of luxury, indulging in my own pleasures and dissipation? But Thou, O Lord, my Savior, Son of the true God, as Thou knowest and desirest, by Thy grace alone, freely turn me away from the sin that abides in me and save me from ruin.

121

How shall I mourn the blindness of my soul? How shall I mourn my calamitous ignorance of my own self? How shall I mourn my passionate and unrepentant arbitrary exercise of my free will? The ascetics are comforted, consoled by the Holy Spirit; but I agonize and complain of the wretchedness that is caused by my own apathy. I have sunk to the level of the senseless beasts and become like unto them. Wretched as I am, I have been stripped by my own laziness, because I alienate myself from those who stand vigil and pray.

Regard me with mercy, O Master, from Thy holy heights. Look upon the impenitence of my poor soul, and by the judgements that Thou knowest, have mercy on me and correct me. As if standing before Thy throne and touching Thine immaculate feet, I beseech and beg Thee with contrite heart: have mercy on me; show Thy loving-kindness to Thy creature; freely convert me by Thy grace.

I know that Thou canst do all things and that nothing is impossible for Thee. Wait not for my corrupt will to exercise itself, for I lack the ambition to correct myself.

May every visible and invisible being weep for me, who have grown old in sins and passions. Weep for me who appear to those who see me to be chaste, yet inwardly am ever adulterous.

Take an interest, at last, in your salvation, O sinner. Seclude yourself, collect your thoughts and say to yourself: how much time have you spent feeding the lusts of your flesh and imagination, and what benefit has it brought you; what have you attained by doing this? Alas, my soul, what a state we have reached, what disorder!

Look--everyone around me is adorned with virtues and truly fears God; but I alone walk in darkness. Early in the morning do I repent of my deeds, yet a short while later I commit even worse errors. The Lord has given me strength and health and lo! I take this for granted and incur the wrath of my Creator.

Why art thou so apathetic, O my soul? Why art thou so careless? After all, thou canst not stay here forever. When the end comes, the Lord will send His angel to get thee and thou wilt have to leave this place whether thou so want or not. What then?

Acknowledge at last your extreme wretchedness, O man, and stop contradicting Him Who created you and opposing His commands. Boldly say to the enemy who seduces you:

You, O devil, made me an object of shame for angels and men when I took your irreverent advice. You inspired me to think: for once I will satisfy my craving and lo! this small act became for me a great abyss and I gave myself up to your shameful desires. The water found a small crack and made of it a big crevice.

You have clouded my mind with impure thoughts and hurls me from sin to sin. You have annihilated my restraint on the pretext of bodily infirmity. You have alienated me from prayer and vigilance. You have implanted in me love for money, excusing this with the approaching long years of old age. You have dried up my tears. You have hardened my heart. You have made me stray from obedience to Christ. You have multiplied my distractions. You have made me insubordinate. I have reached the point where I fail to labor over needful things and occupy myself with vain endeavors instead. You have taught me envy and slander. You have made me haughty, irritable and wrathful. You have taught me gluttony, drunkenness and sensuality. You have trained my thoughts to scatter while I read and sing psalms; thus I pray and do not know for what; I read psalms and meanwhile I surrender my thoughts to unrestrained wanderings.

Having thus exposed the wiles of the enemy, tell him with conviction: I have had enough of you, O devil. And leave the evil one and join yourself to the man-befriending God. Are you wounded? Despair not. Have you fallen? Get up and say bravely: now I have begun. Fall down before your merciful master and confess your sins.

But before you say anything he will already know what you intended to say. Before you open your lips, He will see what is in your heart. You will not be able to say, "I have sinned," before you see Him stretch forth His hands to receive and embrace you.

Approach with faith and He will cleanse you straightway as He cleansed the leper, lift you from your bed as He lifted the paralytic, and raise you from the dead as He raised Lazarus.

123

I who am all covered with sores run to Thy loving-kindness. Accept my sighs as Thou didst accept the tear of the harlot.

Thou knowest, O Master, the failings of human nature. Remember that from his youth evil thoughts press diligently upon a man and be not wroth with me to the end, but open to me Thy hand and the door of Thy loving-kindness. May my recklessness not surpass Thy solicitude.

Accept, O Master, and hearken unto mine impure and unworthy supplication, Thou Who savest those who hope in Thee, Who rejectest not the prayer of sinners, Who stretchest forth Thy hand to those who have been cast to the ground. Guide me in fear of thee and give me tears of contrition.

I have lifted up the mental eyes of my soul to Thee, O Lord. Cast me not away from Thy face, for blessed is Thy name unto the ages.

124

I have incurred Thy wrath with my sins, O Lord; but it is against Thy will that Thou art wroth, for Thou overflowest with abundant mercy and Thy majesty is beyond provocation.

Thou art a sea of compassion and our errors are but a drop of tainted water. Surely one drop cannot disturb and unencompassable sea.

Thou dost not become anxious when Thou art displeased, and Thou art not wroth when Thou punishest. If Thou wert to become wroth when Thou punishest, the world could not withstand Thy wrath.

Thy blows are filled with love. Thy punishment burns with compassion. In accordance with Thy love, even when Thou punishest Thou strivest only for good.

The staves with which Thou punishest are carved from the wood of thy loving-kindness. No

matter what Thy staff touches, the blow brings great benefit.

When a master punishes his pupil, he bats him not out of hatred, but because he wishes to bring him profit; and out of love does he meter out punishment. Thy blow also strikes from love, for Thou dost not punish out of malice. Thou, O Lord, desirest our own good, and Thou showest Thy loving-kindness in many ways.

It is not difficult for Thee to endure our errors, for Thou hast created our nature. Thou art not burdened by Thy creation, for Thou knewest us before we were created.

Who will endure the hardships of caring for a baby if not the mother who bore him? Who will endure the errors of the world, if not the Lord of all?

It is easy for the Creator to endure all the difficulties wrought by His creatures, for if He had not wanted to endure these difficulties He would not have created them.

Will a woman forget her child or fail to love those who issue from her womb? But even if a woman were to forget her child, God will not forget the world He has created.

His natural compassion was moved, and He conceived and bore creation. Like a babe from his mother's womb, so did the world come forth from His will.

And lo, He gather up and carries the world, like a mother carries the fruit of her womb, feeding it with her milk.

The kindhearted father bore us and nourishes us with the blood of His Son. Thus does a mother give her child her paps to suck, in order to feed him.

A babe sucks at the breast and receives from his mother the food that he requires. He draws out all the food he needs from his mother's paps.

A babe does not know how to turn away and search for food anywhere else than at his mother's side. Thus the world also takes life-sustaining nourishment only from Thee, O Creator; and no one but thee alone can feed it.

125

When you stand before God, recall those who serve earthly authorities. take the example of slaves before their masters when considering your position.

Recall your sinfulness and call upon God's assistance. Learn from the saints and ask for God's grace in the fulfillment of any task. Be not proud of God's grace and do not succumb to lawlessness.

If you succeed in doing good, do not praise yourself above men. If you sin through ignorance, do not lose heart because you are a man. Boast not of your successes, and do not despair when you sin.

Actively strive for good and harbor an equal hatred for evil.

Do not pass judgement when you give advice, for you know not God's mysteries.

It is better for you to be delivered to the sword than to succumb to anger. It is better to hide anger in the heart than to express it.

Do not indulge in empty chatter, and do not sit in places where passionate conversation is held. Seek not gratification in laughter and pleasure in jokes, that you might not become distracted.

Be not fond of gatherings teeming with crowds, for they engender commotion in the soul.

Avoid banquets, in order not to become a debaucher even in the absence of women.

Avoid delicacies, that you might not become passionate. Take care to bridle the flesh, that it might not plunge its rider--the mind--into danger.

Master your senses and protect them from corrosion by rust as a warrior protects his weapons.

Spend the better part of your time in seclusion, that you might be able to discern what is and is not beneficial for you when you are in the society of people.

Behold, let no one say: I have committed many sins--there can be no forgiveness for me. He who says this does not know that God is the God of the penitent, that He came to earth not to save the righteous, but to call sinners to repentance, and that when someone repents the heavens rejoice over him.

True repentance consists of withdrawing from sin and nurturing hatred for it. For, lo, when someone says from his heart: I have hated deceit and been repelled by it--then God accepts him with joy.

But behold, also let no one dare to say: I have not sinned. He who says this is blind; he has shut his eyes. He deceives himself and knows not that Satan is robbing him blind--both in word and deed, through all of the senses, sight, hearing and touch, and through thoughts. For who can boast that he has an innocent heart and that all his senses are pure?

No one is sinless, no one is clean of defilement, no man is free from guilt except Him alone Who for our sake was impoverished though He was rich. He alone is sinless Who took upon Himself the sins of the world, wants all men to be saved, desires not the death of a sinner and is a lover of mankind, abundantly benevolent, kindhearted and sincerely loving.

Let us Also run to Him, for all sinners who have run to Him have found salvation.

At the terrible judgement the Lord will say to those at His right hand: come, O sons of My light, blessed heirs of My kingdom. Come, ye who for My sake have been impoverished, hungered and thirsted, who loved not the world nor all that is in it. come, ye who for My sake have left all worldly power and joy, brothers and friends, parents and children. Come, ye who have dwelt in deserts, on mountains, in caves and crevices in the earth together with beasts, and rejoice with the angels in heaven. Come, all ye who are merciful and hospitable. Come, all ye who have walked the strait and narrow path. come, ye who are blessed of My Father; inherit the kingdom that has been prepared for you since the creation of the world.

And to those at His left hand He will say: go away from Me, into the fire that lies without. Go away from Me, ye heartless ones, who have hated both brothers and Christ. Ye were not merciful and neither shall ye obtain mercy. Ye did not heed My noble gospels and My blessed disciples--and neither shall I heed your lamentation. You lived a life of luxury on earth, enjoyed good things in your life, and here there is nothing more for you to receive--you have already taken what is yours. Daily I called out to you through the Scriptures, but when you heard, you mocked those who read them. And now I say to you: I know you not. go away from Me, Ye accursed souls, into the eternal fire that is prepared from the devil and his angels.

And they will enter into eternal torment, but the righteous will enter into eternal life.

128

As the Creator, Thou knowest what Thou hast created. As the Judge, Thou knowest what Thou hast condemned (after the fall). As the One Who become man, Thou knowest what Thou hast designed for our salvation.

Thou gavest me an undefiled nature, but my father Adam has covered it with much impurity and made it infirm. To this impurity have I added enjoyment of vain things--and now I involuntarily endure punishment. Corruption has infected my very nature, and so I am distressed, like one caught in a storm at sea.

Have mercy on me, as my Creator. Be sympathetic toward my infirmity, as the One Who became man for my sake. Reject me not because of my passions, but instead scatter them, in recognition of my will to strive. Do not disdain me on account of my impurity, but instead attend to my contrition and desire to better myself.

If Thou art repelled by my defiled thoughts, turn Thine attention to my lamentation and to the way I condemn myself for my own sensuality.

I have the will but I cannot say that I have the strength. I give what I have. Consider my situation and if it pleases Thee to give me what I lack, grant it to me.

I am a pauper, robbed by the serpent. I am infirm, bound by corruption. I lack strength, for I am overwhelmed by sin. I have lost Thy gift and therefore lack perfect understanding. I have

lost communion with Thee and therefore know not where I am headed.

I have nothing. If anything is found in my possession, it is because Thou hast taken pity on me and given it to me. I am exceedingly poor; if I am to become rich it will all be a gift from Thee. It will all be Thine, just as it was Thine before.

I beg only for grace--I confess that if I am to be saved, I shall be saved through Thee.

129

Come let us make an effort; come let us fall down before God, let us steadfastly lament and shed tears before Him, that He might grant us spiritual enlightenment.

Discern the wiles of our enemy, the adversary who hates all good, who places in our path pitfalls and seductions, ruinous acquisitiveness, commendation of this age, carnal pleasure, as well as the expectation that this life will last for long, fear of ascetic struggles, a slothful attitude toward prayer, drowsiness when psalms are sung, and bodily rest.

We are as apathetic and careless as he is assiduous. We are as inattentive as he is crafty, even though we know that our days have been shortened, that the time has come and the Lord of glory will come in the majesty of His beauty with the terrible powers of His kingdom to reward everyone according to his deeds.

I fear that the Lord's promise might be fulfilled with respect to us: that many shall come from the east and the west, from the north and from the sea, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; but we shall be driven out.

I beseech Thee, O Christ, light of truth, born of the blessed Father, being His image and the radiance of His hypostasis, Who sittest at the right hand of His majesty, Who art my life and the praise and joy of those who love Thee: save me, a sinner, in thy kingdom and reward me not according to my deeds, but save me according to Thy grace and have compassion on me according to Thy kindness, for Thou art blessed and glorified unto the ages.

Why does the image I have taken on mislead me? Why am I a stranger to virtue, committing repulsive deeds before God who sees all?

Justly did the pharisees suffer to have their errors exposed by Christ the Savior, Who labeled their appearances hypocrisy. And I deserve such reproach most of all. But when my conscience exposes my errors I become indignant, for the truth is bitter for those who desire just to make an appearance rather than being.

Indeed, if one were to peel away my appearance, he would find worms inside. If the whitewashed cover is removed, everyone will see what lies in the grave. However, let this not be brought out into the open here; surely the fire will try all and discover what I am at the judgement.

Woe is me! How will I endure the exposure of my lawless deeds and thoughts!....Have mercy on me, O god, according to Thy great mercy and according to the multitude of Thy compassions absolve my iniquities. Hearken unto me according to Thy goodness, O Master, and reject not my supplication; for Thou dost not cast away those who truly repent.

It is true that even my repentance is impure, for I spend one day repenting and two offending Thee. But send my heart fear of Thee and confirm my soul on the rock of true repentance. May the light of Thy grace overcome the darkness that is in me.

Condescend to my prayer, O good Lord, not because I am correct, for in me is no good, but according to Thy compassion and Thy great and unutterable goodness. Raise up my members shattered by sin; enlighten my heart clouded by evil desire; save me from my sinful habits, that the adversary may not overthrow me in the end.

Thy grace has made it possible for me to call upon Thy name, O Lord. O only good One, Who hast created us all, forgive the transgressions and sins of Thy sinful and ungrateful servant.

I know, O Lord, that my sins exceed those of all other men, but I have as my refuge the abyss of Thy compassions which exceeds all things. I am confident that Thou wilt accept and have mercy on all who approach Thy goodness, for it pleases Thee to behold repentance, and Thou rejoicest at the ascetic struggles of Thy servants.

Grant me, Thine unworthy servant, tears, that with an enlightened mind, with love and faith, I may entreat Thine incomparable goodness and be cured of my hidden sores. Show miserable me Thy charity. Deliver me from the torment I deserve. May Thy grace be preached all about, to the benefit both of the countless multitudes who are careless, and me as well.

As Thou didst fill the water pots with Thy blessings, so likewise fill my heart with Thy grace and Thy goodness. When a caring mother is rejected by her child, she does not scorn him, for her motherly care triumphs over all; may my sins likewise not surpass Thy grace.

I know that I will be punished even for idle words, for evil thoughts, for mere desire. Yet as soon as an opportunity to satisfy my pleasures presents itself, I immediately forget everything, and like a fool indulge in all manner of sin. I am a vainglorious, wrathful cripple, a lazy, dissolute glutton, a sensualist covered with impurities who hourly strays into error--and I do not realize it.

Only hope in the manifestation of Thy grace, O man-befriending master, consoles me and keeps me from despair. Whether Thou so desirest or not, save me, O all-good Lord, according to Thy great kindness.

132

As if I were standing before Thy terrible throne, O Lord, I who am condemned see both my deeds exposed and the judgement Thou wilt pass on miserable me, to remove me from Thy holy face and cast me into unbearable torment. and just as I will call upon Thee at that time, so now do I cry out, trembling and with tears: just art Thou, O most just Judge, and just is thy judgement, that commits no error in judging me.

As if I were standing in that place, I address the angels: O kind and most radiant angels, shed tears for me, for I did not even have mercy on myself. I scorned God's mercy, and it is truly fair that I be punished. The Lord offered me mercy, but I lacked discernment and never paid it proper attention; and now with good reason does He turn from me.

Then, of course, the angels will tell me in anger: this is not the time for repentance, but for reckoning. Prayer no longer has any power, and tears of repentance are of no consequence. Here there is an abundance only of tears shed in torment. Here are heard not sighs of contrition, but ceaseless groans and cries of pain. Go and receive the bitter and harsh reward for your deeds. Burn in flames like impure matter, fueling the inextinguishable fire of gehenna. Enjoy, for you are a son of obscurity and love everlasting darkness. Gaze upon the black apparitions for the sake of which you have disdained the eternal light--and be glad.

There, in that place will be endless weeping and fervent gnashing of teeth. Alas, my poor soul stripped of all deeds, how shalt thou gazed upon the impartial Judge, the angels and archangels, and those born on earth there present in infinite numbers?

Alas, how thou shalt suffer then, my soul, but thou wilt not be heard. Everything will change, everything will be different. The righteous will rejoice forever and sinners will endure eternal torment. They brought no joy to the God of all, and shall themselves be alien to all joy unto the ages.

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133

The Lord is an omniscient giver of gifts. He considers what would benefit the supplicant; and when the Lord sees that a man is asking for something harmful or even merely useless, the Lord does not answer his prayer and refuses him that which he thought good. The Lord hears every prayer, and he whose prayer is not answered receives from the Lord the same saving gift as he whose prayer is answered.

If two people approach the Good One, one in need and the other with a debt to pay, He will give to the one and forgive the other. Thus both walk away from the Giver's door with gifts: the one in need receives delivery from necessity, and the debtor receives forgiveness of his debt.

In every possible way God shows that He is a merciful Giver of gifts: He bestows upon us His love and shows us His kindness. And this is why He will not answer even one inappropriate prayer if its fulfillment would bring us death and ruin.

even in this case, however, when He refuses to grant what we ask for, He does not leave us

without a most useful gift, for He removes from us harm and opens to us the door of His compassion.

Therefore be sure that every prayer that is not fulfilled is certainly harmful; but a prayer that is answered is beneficial. The Giver of gifts is just and good and will not leave your prayers unanswered, for in His goodness there is no malice and in His truth there is no envy.

134

Standing by the coffin I gazed therein and beheld the corruption of the flesh. In the grave it had become repulsive--there was nothing to resemble an attractive face; instead dry, crumbling bones covered with corruption were to be seen. With sorrow and grief I withdrew from the coffin, carried by my thoughts to that time when we will be resurrected to the sound of the trumpet and will glorify Thee for the resurrection prepared for Adam's descendants and say: Praise to Thee, O Lord of all!

I heard what is written about the resurrection in the Gospel; I thanked God and exclaimed: praise to the all-holy nature of Thy dominion, that in the beginning adorned our nature and honored it with Thine image, and in the last times sent down Thy Son!....And He saved us from ruin and will come again to resurrect all of Adam's race. He will carry the righteous up to heaven and cast the lawless into gehenna--and they will exclaim: just is thy judgement, O Lord and King! Praise to Thee, O Lord of all!

135

Long-suffering is the Lord, and he draws all of us toward His kingdom; but He requires of us an account for our carelessness during this short time.

He will say to us: for you did I take on flesh, for you did I visibly walk about the earth, for you was I beaten, for you was I struck on the face, for you was I crucified and raised on the cross, for you who dwell on earth was I given vinegar to drink, in order to make you holy and heavenly. I have granted you My kingdom, called all of you My brethren and sent down to you the Holy Spirit.

What more is there that I could do but have not done in order to save you? The only thing I do not want to do is to constrain your free will so that your salvation would become a matter of necessity, not of your own choosing.

Tell me, O sinners who are mortal by nature: What have you endured for My sake, for your

Master Who suffered for you?

Let us all come together to worship Him and weep before the Lord Who has created us, and let us say: How shall this race of sinners repay thee, O incomprehensible, good and kindhearted God? Thou Who hast illumined all the universe with grace, illumine also the eyes of our hearts, that we might love thee, O master, and with love always perform Thy holy writ.

Behold the cup of thy terrifying blood, filled with light and life. Grant us understanding and enlightenment, that with the love and sanctity of faith we might approach it and that it might be unto us for the forgiveness of sins and not for condemnation.

136

Terrible is the approach of death to people who are passionate, sinful and weak, who have not tried to live blamelessly in this vain world.

Those who labor, and accomplished strugglers of piety, rejoice at the hour of departure. seeing before their eyes the great labor of their struggle, vigilance, fasting, prostrations, prayer, tears, and sackcloths, their souls rejoice when they are summoned from their bodies to enter into repose.

but parting with this life gives exceeding sorrow to the sinner, who sees before his eyes his negligence and its bitter fruits....What repentance shall then embrace the heart of him who has here neglected his salvation! Alas, O my soul, alas, why dost thou neglect thy life! All of a sudden thy summons will come--what wilt thou do in that place if thou hast been careless here? What wilt thou do before the throne of the just Judge? How is it that the enemy robs thee, but thou dost not realize it? How is it that the enemy steals from thee heavenly riches, but thou art so distracted that thou dost not know it,

Have mercy on me, O long-suffering Son of god and sinless Christ! Grant me, O my Savior, to contemplate the life to come, that I might perform Thy will. In my old age at least make me a participant in thy grace, that I might at least complete my untoward life with a good end.

How shall I who am negligent stand before Thy terrible throne? How shall I who am impatient and useless enter into the community of those who have here brought forth the fruits of righteousness? by what traits will they acknowledge me when the saints and the righteous upon their heavenly beds recognize each other according to their deeds?

No, you have no cause to flatter yourself! The righteous, the chaste and the humble will walk in unapproachable light, but the sinful, the slothful, the proud, the haughty and those who

carelessly live for their own gratification like I do--will find themselves in the eternal and unquenchable fire.

Be sobered, O my soul, and pray with tears. Cry out from all thy heart that before the end comes thou mightest be converted and make a good start.

Grant this to us, O Lord, by the prayers of our immaculate Lady the Theotokos and all thy saints, for Thou art blessed unto the ages.

137

The days pass and fly away. The hours run without stopping. In the headlong rush of time the world nears its end.

Not one day will allow another to accompany it; not one hour will wait for another that they might fly by together. Just as it is impossible to stop and hold back running water with one's fingers, so the life of one born of woman cannot remain stationary.

The life of each person who enters the world is already weighted and measure--he has neither the means nor the ability to step beyond the appointed limit.

God has determined the measure of man's life, and the days divide this appointed measure into parts. Each day imperceptibly takes its part away from your life and each hour unrestrainably runs along its course with its little share. The days destroy your life, the hours subvert its edifice, and you rush to your end, for you are but vapor.

the days and hours, like thieves and robbers, rob and steal from you. the thread of your life is gradually torn and shortened. The days deliver your life up to burial, the hours lay it in the grave, and together with the days and the hours does your life on earth disappear.

The life that you live today will depart and fly away at the end of this day, for every day takes away its part of your life and leaves with it. Every day delivers its part up to burial; every hour lays its portion in the grave, and in the swift flight of time they depart, disappear and are transformed into nothingness.

So swiftly do the days pass, so quickly too does life fly by--it has no opportunity to stop and stand in one place. If the sun were to stand still in the heights and the moon were to be restrained from its movements, then the time appointed for your life could also stop, could cease rushing to its end.

The kindhearted God gives us what we ask for not because of our prayers; rather does He nourish us according to His compassion, for it is He Who created us.

Without our asking, the Supreme majesty granted us His own Son Who for our sake appeared on earth and, although we did not ask Him to do so, He offered Himself as a sacrifice for our salvation.

For who asked the Father to give His own Son up to death on the cross? Or who entreated the Son to die for sinners?

To which righteous man did the thought occur to ask the Father to give up His Son for transgressors?

It is truly an unprecedented event, and the thought occurred to no one.

The Father gave us His Son to death on the cross, and through His death sinners obtained life. And if He gave away His greatest treasure, can there be any obstacle to prevent a man who asks such a Lover of mankind from receiving all that he needs?

so let us ask Him, for he does give. Let us announce to Him our wishes, for He will not refuse us. Let us entreat Him, for He wants to satisfy our needs in every way possible.

But in accordance with His justice, He expects our prayer to come to His door, and this prayer has reconciled justice and sinners.

If kindness were to forgive transgressions without prayer, it would be a violation of justice, and no one would contemplate justice any more.

Mankind would gradually be given up to lawlessness, for the Judge would fail to apply the staff of correction. Each man would joyfully continue to sin, for there would be no one to correct him.

Such kindness, however beneficial it might be for us, would soon turn to harm, for it would give sinners cause to ever multiply their sins.

And it is a good thing that in the world, also, justice prompts the use of punishment. For punishment causes the sinner to shudder and put an end to his sinful ways. It brings the sinner to contrition of heart, for it is he who has brought punishment upon himself. And thus the sinner puts aside his iniquities, if only for a short while, and seeks forgiveness for his

sins.

Who will not thank Thee, O our Lord? For Thy justice is good and Thy punishment is a gift of grace. Thou art truly good in all Thy doings.

With the staff of justice dost Thou humble the heads of sinners who sin with shameless arrogance and cannot be converted without extraordinary inducement.

May Thy punishment, O Lord, united with Thy loving-kindness, be our mentor. May Thy right hand help us to take advantage of Thy punishment.

139

Lo, I try to gather my thoughts from every corner, but I am unsuccessful, for the things responsible for the passions of my thoughts remain in me. I have not yet been freed from the influence of the evil spirits that will detain me on my upward path toward heaven. I have not yet acknowledged the weight of the multitude of my sins. Those who have plunged me into sin now bear fruit in the flesh of my body.

How long shall I who am wretched continue to become intoxicated in the absence of wine, and neglect my self as if it were alien to me? Like a wicked servant who concocts plots to harm his master, so do I scheme to undermine my own salvation, as if someone else were to suffer the injury my actions produce. I do not want to be vigilant; daily do I offend Thy great patience. My wickedness stands before mine eyes. Yet Thou wilt be patient with me according to Thy kindness.

Grant me, O Lord, the remedy of conversion, that I might be healed of all the evil that is in me. Grant that I might enter the realm of restraint. Grant that I might spend all the days of my life in contrition of heart. Enlighten the clouded eyes of my mind, that I might rush zealously to embark on the path that leads to thy vineyard.

The time of my life has run low, spent in vain cares and shameful thoughts. My life has come upon the eleventh hour. O Lord, steer my ship with its cargo and grant understanding to this powerless merchant, that I might complete my purchase while I still have time. For the hour of departure has arrived--it already looms before my eyes--and I took fright exceedingly when I saw my poverty.

140

I sin and hide so that no man will see me; but the Lord sees me when I do evil. If a man sees me I am ashamed; but I feel no shame before God. Have compassion and mercy on us, O Judge and Master of judges! If a man be converted, whether sooner or later, Thou wilt accept him.

What shall I do with my sins? I do not know. My mind cannot imagine what I might use to wash and cleanse myself. If I took it into my head to wash with water, then the seas and the rivers would not be sufficient to cleanse me. Yet if I wash myself with the blood and water that flowed from the rib of the Son of God, then will I be cleansed, and compassion will be showered upon me.

Tremble, O sinner, at the coming judgement; with tears and sorrow run to repent. While prayer is still accepted, pray here, that you might be accepted there. Pray, while death has not yet come and carried away your soul, for then all prayer and supplication will be in vain, then even tears will be of no avail.

141

O all-praised and all-good Lady, O fountain of loving-kindness, O abyss of love for mankind! Though I am unclean and committed to this adulterous and rebellious world, careless in both word and deed and even in the exercise of my free will, and want only to lay waste to my life, yet thou, who art a loving and sympathetic Mother of God, be not repelled by me, a wanton sinner, and before it is too late accept the supplication presented to thee by my defiled lips and, with thine all-good and pleasing prayers, incline the Judge to be merciful to me.

Open to me the benevolence of thy compassionate Son; entreat Him to overlook my sinful failings, direct my thoughts to repentance, show me to be accomplished in observing His commandments; do not let me become a morsel for the corrupter of souls--the devil. But by thine intercession renew me who have grown old in a multitude of sins. Correct my decrepit life, that I, having thee as mine intercessor, O all-good mistress, might stand fearlessly before the Judge and escape terrible torment. By thine intercession make me an heir of glory; entreat my Creator that I may obtain all this.

142

Woe is he who abides in sin and can find no time for repentance, for in that place shall he repent, mourning his sins to no avail unto the ages.

Woe is he who says: now shall I enjoy the flesh and I will repent in old age--for suddenly death will capture him like a snare and his hope will perish.

Woe is he who knowingly chooses to sin with the intention to repent when morning comes, for he knows not what the coming day or the night that precedes it will bring.

Woe is he who knows what is good but lends a hand to the evil one, for on the day of his exit the wicked angels will take him.

Woe is he who by his evil deeds causes his neighbor to stumble, for in the day of judgement he will give an account for every error that he seduced others into committing with his evil ways.

Woe is he who has renounced the world yet clings to a worldly way of thinking, for the parable about the man who has put his hand to the plough yet looks back pertains to him.

woe is he who follows the desires of the flesh and is loath to attend to his soul, for his life and his hopes will be scattered over the earth.

woe is he who does not make haste and use all his strength to prepare himself here, that he might there be justified.

143

Blessed is the good and Merciful One Who rejoices over us when we repent and without reproach accepts us with joy according to His love.

Blessed is the Good One Who opens His door to the good that they might enter therein, and also does not lock the door of His goodness to the evil if they are converted.

blessed is He Who grants everyone the means to inherit the heavenly kingdom: the righteous inherit it through good deeds, and sinners through repentance.

Blessed is He Who for the sake of sinners gave Himself up to death and revilement, Who

suffered humiliation in order to grant sinners life.

Blessed is He Who created us according to His loving-kindness, Who descended to save us by the cross, and Who is to come again to resurrect us in the great day of His coming.

Vouchsafe me also, O Good One, according to Thy goodness, to behold Thy compassion in the day of judgement, and to sing Thee praise together with the righteous unto the ages of ages.

144

Blessed are they who have loved God, and because of their love for Him have come to despise all that is earthly.

Blessed are they who weep day and night, for they shall be delivered from future wrath.

Blessed are they who willingly humble themselves, for they shall be exalted.

Blessed are they who exercise restraint, for the joys of paradise await them.

Blessed are they who afflict their bodies with vigilance and feats of asceticism, for the delight of paradise has been prepared for them.

Blessed are they who have cleansed themselves of all evil thoughts, for the Holy Spirit dwells within them.

Blessed are they who with all their soul love God more than this world, for they shall be called friends of Christ.

Blessed are they who have willingly borne their cross and actively followed Christ, for they shall attain the Jerusalem on high.

Blessed are they who have girded their loins with truth and keep their lamps ready, expecting the heavenly Bridegroom for they shall reign with Him in the heavenly kingdom.

Blessed is he who has obtained the eyes of the mind and unfailingly applied them in contemplation of future blessings, for he shall inherit those good things to come.

Blessed is he who never fails to keep the day of judgement before his eyes, and endeavors to be found pleasing to God in that day.

Blessed is he who has conquered the carnal pleasures, for at the trial of the last day he shall be made bold.

Blessed is he who has wept for God on earth, for his fruits shall be borne in heaven.

145

The soul says: in the hostel of the body have I lived, and the Master of the house has sent for me. I can stay no longer, for the one who is sent for me urges me to go, saying: come out of your house; leave this dwelling, So remain in peace, O flesh, you temporary dwelling, and may I behold you with you on the day of resurrection.

Those who are to take me came with haste, and I did not know of it. The one sent for me now stands before me, and I had no sense of it. Deliver me, O our Lord, from the condemnation into which the devil fell, that hater of Thy blameless sons, and together with Thy saints lead me into the kingdom, that I might sing praise and glorify Thee with them.

The soul says to the body: How bitter is your cup mingled with death! How terrifying is the time and how difficult is the hour of trial! Take leave of the world, O comfortable dwelling in which I did reside so long as it pleased the Lord.

What sorrow will fill the heart of the sinner in the hour when the Judge Christ sits upon His terrible throne. All generations will stand before Him and all the secrets of the heart shall be exposed! Terrible is the judgement, terrible is the Judge, terrible is that hour!....

blessed is he who is sheltered by Thy goodness at that time, O Lord.

I accepted Thee, O Son of God, to accompany me on my journey, and when I hungered thou didst satisfy me, O savior of the world.

May fire flee from my members; may the fragrance of Thy flesh and blood drive it away. May baptism be for me an unsinkable ship.

May I behold Thee, O our Lord, in that place in the day of resurrection.

146

Woe is me, burdened with unprecedented sins! The number of my transgressions exceeds the number of grains of sand in the sea and they afflict me like so many iron shackles, for I lack the boldness to gaze upon the heights of heaven.

To whom shall I run, if not to Thee, O Lover of mankind? Have mercy on me, O god, according to Thy great mercy, and according to the multitude of thy compassions blot out mine iniquity.

To Thee do I run, according to thy great goodness and thy charity.

Thee have I angered, yet to thee do I run, according to Thy great capacity to forget evil-doing.

Thee have I offended, yet to Thee do I run, according to Thy great love for mankind, and I entreat and cry to Thee: Turn Thy face from my sins and blot out all mine iniquities. Create a clean heart in me, O God, and renew a right spirit within me!

I have nothing to offer thee, neither a good deed, nor a pure heart; but hoping in Thy compassion I lay myself down, that thou mightest bring me to contrition and unwavering observance of Thy commandments, and that I might not fall so easily into sin again, but serve Thee from henceforth in reverence and truth all the days of my life.

147

O Virgin Lady, O Mother of the man-befriending God! Direct my heart to contrition and humble it; fill mine eyes with saving tears and illuminate them with the light of thy prayers, that I might not fall asleep in the sleep of death.

sprinkle me with the hyssop of thy loving-kindness and cleanse me. Wash me with my tears, that I might be made whiter than snow.

O Mother of my Lord Jesus Christ, receive this my shameful confession and mine entreaty. Ravish my mind and keep the remainder of my life in repentance without offence.

At the time when my humbled soul departs from my body, when--woe is me!--I will have to speak with the enemies outside the gates; then, O Lady, regard me with thy merciful eye; free me from all the merciless tormentors and the terrible taskmasters of the prince of this age; be

my defender and destroy all record of my sins. Lead me saved and unashamed to the throne of thy Son and His unoriginate Father and the All-Holy Spirit--the light-creating Trinity, one in essence.

148

Blessed is the man who obtains boldness in the terrible day of judgement and hears with the others: come, ye who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom that has been prepared for you since the creation of the world!

Then each man, when he sees himself in the light, will begin to examine himself and wonder: can this be me? And how did it happen that I who am unworthy have made it here?

The angels will come with great joy and begin to glorify the saints and extol their lives: their struggles, restraint, vigilance, prayers, voluntary poverty, perfect lack of acquisitiveness, tolerance of thirst, perseverance in hunger, constant maintenance of prayerful attention, joy in nakedness endured for the love of Christ--all this shall the angles proclaim with joy to the righteous.

And in answer the righteous will say to them: There was not even one day when we could be found with as much as one good deed.

The angels will remind them anew of the times and places where they performed their deeds, and again they shall marvel at the themselves and begin to glorify god, seeing that their bodies shine in the heavens more than light--and thus are they repaid for the minor deprivations and sorrows they suffered voluntarily on earth.

They found a treasure hidden in a field and, having sold all they had on earth, they acquired it and found a wondrous pearl. By their suffering did they receive and harbor this pearl in themselves and, though they were unaware of it, they prepared themselves an undefiled and incorrupt garment.

The labor of ascetic struggle is not great, but great is the respite it brings. The struggle to achieve restraint is brief, but the repose that is its reward lasts unto the ages of ages.

Christ the Resurrector will appear in the heights with glory. He will bring the dead to life and raise those in the graves. The children of Adam, who was made of earth, will all arise together and give praise to the Resurrector of the dead.

Let not your hearts be sad, ye mortals. The Lord's day shall come and He will awaken and gladden us who have reposed. Those who have kept the law shall be roused before the Lord, and the angels shall rejoice in the day of resurrection.

Let not your souls be sorrowful, ye who were redeemed by the cross and called into the kingdom. The Lord's day shall come; He will give voice to the deceased and the dead will arise and give Him praise.

let us glorify and worship Jesus, the Word of God, Who, according to His love, came to save us by His cross and is coming again to resurrect Adam's children in the great day when His majesty shall shine forth.

Grieve not, ye mortals, over your corruption. Christ the King shall shine forth from on high; He who is omnipotent shall beckon and thus raise the dead from their graves, and clothe them with glory in His kingdom.

If death has reigned and laid waste to our nature because Adam sinned and violated the commandment, then shall we not be justified and saved all the more by the sufferings of Christ Who has vanquished death and vindicated our nature?

Our Lord has granted the deceased hope and consolation, for He Himself rose from the grave, vanquished death, promised resurrection and life, and bestowed great blessings on Adam and all his children.

Praise and glory to the Father Who created us, to the Son Who saved us by His cross, and to the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, to the all-praised and incomprehensible Trinity Who raises the dead and clothes their bodies with glory.

All the deceased will arise at the sound of the trumpet and sing praise to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Resurrector of their bodies.

O Father who created Adam from dust, O Son Who by Thy cross delivered Adam's race from ruin, resurrect me and set me at Thy right hand, that I might glorify Thy name!

Thee do I worship, O Christ our Savior. Thou art the resurrector and savior of all the departed who were baptized in Thy name and confessed Thy cross and Thy death.

Blessed is Christ who promised life and resurrection to Adam's children in the day of His coming. We too shall arise and exalt Him along with the saints who have been pleasing to Him.

Praise to Thee! By Thy resurrection didst Thou grant all the mortal race the hope of life and resurrection. And we offer Thee praise, for Thou art the resurrector of all flesh.

Ye mortals, exalt and praise Him Who by His death emptied the dominion of death and promised all the mortal race life and resurrection.

May the soul that has sought refuge in Thy cross and inherited eternal incorruptible treasure praise and exalt Thee together with the spirits that number her among Thy ranks.

Meet it is to worship the Father Who sent us His only-begotten Son, Who saved our race from death and Satan, and sits at the right hand of His Father entreating His compassion on behalf of all of us.

Ephrem the Syrian

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Ephrem the Syrian

Venerable Monk and Doctor of the Church

Born ca. 306, Nisibis

Died 9 June 373, Edessa