

A Prayer of St. Simeon Metaphrastes (tenth century)

As though I stood at Thy dread judgement-seat that hath no respect of persons, O Christ my God, awaiting judgement, and rendering an account of the evils committed by me: even so to-day before the appearing of the day of my condemnation, I stand before Thy holy altar in thy sight and in the sight of thy dread and holy Angels, and, bowed down by my own conscience I offer up my wicked and lawless acts, triumphing over them and publishing them. Behold, O Lord, my misery, and remit, O Father, my sins. Behold, my iniquities have increased above the number of the hairs of my head. For what wickedness have I not done, what sin have I not committed, what evil have I not imagined in my soul? Already in my works I have practised fornication, adultery, arrogance, imposture, railing, blasphemy, foolish talking, drunkenness, gluttony, greediness, hate, envy, avarice, cupidity, graspingness, self-love, self-vaunting, robbery, injustice, covetousness, jealousy, slander, lawlessness; all my perception and every member have I polluted, corrupted, and disabled, and am become wholly the workshop of the devil.

And I know, O Lord, that my iniquities have gone over my head: but immeasurable is the multitude of Thy loving-kindness, and the mercy of Thy goodness and forbearance beyond telling; and there is no sin that conquereth Thy love toward all men. Wherefore, O King, all-marvelous, forbearing Lord, cause the wonder of Thy mercy to lighten even me, a sinner; shew the power of Thine excellence, manifest the strength of Thy kindly condescension, and, as I return to Thee, receive me, the sinner, receive me, as Thou didst receive the Prodigal, the Thief, and the Harlot. Receive me who have sinned against Thee exceedingly in word and in deed, in foolish desire, and in thought without reason.

And as thou didst receive those that came at the eleventh hour and had done nothing worthy, so also receive me, a sinner. Much have I transgressed, and offended, and grieved Thy Holy Spirit, and provoked Thy loving-kindness toward all men, in deed and word, and thought, by night and by day, openly and secretly, wittingly and unwittingly: and I know that Thou wilt set these my sins, which have been committed by me, before me, and require an account from me of the sins which I have knowingly and unpardonably committed: but, O Lord, convict me not with exact judgement, neither chastise me in Thine anger: have mercy upon me, O Lord, for not only am I weak, but also I am the work of Thy hands.

Thou, O Lord, hast laid Thy fear upon me, but I have wrought evil in thy sight. Against Thee only have I sinned, but I ask of thee, enter not into judgement with Thy servant, for if thou, O Lord, wilt be extreme to mark iniquity, who shall abide it? For I am a sea of sin, and I am not worthy, neither sufficient, to behold and to gaze upon the height of heaven, for the multitude of my sins, of which there is no number. For every work or evil, and every guile, and craft of Satan, corruption, instability, effeminacy, seduction, remembrance of wrong, counsel toward sin, forced laughter, and a thousand other passions beside have I not put aside from me. For with what sins have I not been corrupted? In what evils have I not been occupied? Every sin have I practised, every prodigality have I set before my soul, I have become unprofitable both to Thee, O my God, and to men: who will raise me up who am fallen into such evils and such transgressions?

Upon Thee, O Lord, have I hoped; O my God, if I have hope of salvation, if Thy

love toward all men conquereth the multitude of my lawlessnesses, be my Savior; and according to Thy loving-kindness and Thy mercies, remove, remit, and pardon all things wherein I have sinned; for my soul is filled with many evils, and in mere there is no hope of salvation. Have mercy upon me, O God, after Thy great mercy, and requite me not according to my deeds, but convert, uphold, and deliver my soul from the evils implanted in it, and from the dread projects. Save me for Thy mercy's sake, that where sin filled full measure, Thy grace may also abound; and I will praise and glorify Thee all the days of my life. For thou art the God of those that repent, and to thee we ascribe glory, with thy eternal Father, and with thy all-holy, and gracious, and life-giving Spirit, now, and forever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.