

A
PLEASING MEDITATION
AND
Devout Contemplation,

TOGETHER WITH

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES FOR A TROUBLED AND ANXIOUS CONSCIENCE,
WHICH IS OPPOSED BY THE WORLD, FLESH, HELL,
DEATH AND THE DEVIL.

ON THE TWENTY-FIFTH PSALM,

CALLED IN LATIN

Ad te levavi animam meam,

EXPLAINED BY WAY OF SUPPLICATION.

BY

MENNO SIMON.

"Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you," Matt. 5: 11, 12.

"In my distress I cried unto the Lord, and he heard me. Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue," Psalm 120: 1, 2.

"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ," 1 Cor. 3: 11.

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P R E F A C E.

It is evident, dear reader, that I am clandestinely, slandered and belied by the envious; therefore have I, briefly and prayerfully sought to express the feelings of my heart, grounds, spirit, faith, doctrine, object, &c., after the tenor of the twenty fourth psalm according to the Latin, and the twenty fifth, according to the Hebrew; not in words of human wisdom, nor in great logic and rhetoric, but in a plain narration as dictated by my heart, to show the different dispositions of a true and of a false christian, together with all the grounds and hope of my faith; what I maintain concerning Christ Jesus, his doctrine, baptism, Holy Supper, ordinances, commands and prohibitions; my disposition towards lords, princes and all who are, as yet in the darkness, of unbelief and know not the light of truth; to show that I seek, and by the grace of God shall seek nothing upon earth but the unadulterated word of our Lord Jesus Christ; and this according to Scripture.

If I do err in some things, which I hope, by the grace of God, is not the case, I pray every one, for the Lord's sake, that I may not be put to shame; if any one has more powerful writings and convincing truth, that he through brotherly exhortation and instruction would assist me, I desire with my heart to accept of it, if he is right. Deal with me as the Spirit and word of Christ teach; if any one can convince me of an error by the Scriptures, and if I will not renounce it, but continue obstinate to the word of God and brotherly admonition, then practice upon me the tyranny of Nero, Diocletian, or Maxeritius, as an obdurate and ungodly heretic; for this I stand prepared, although this would be contrary to the usages and doctrines of the first church; for it is evident, that they persecuted not on account of faith, much less did they kill them, but the erring and heretical they faithfully admonished, and those who would not return were then excommunicated.

Afterwards, in the time of Arius, they exiled them. Ultimately the bloody tyranny of anti-christ generally prevailed. All had

to suffer who did not agree with the Pope in his abominations. It is yet the case, which alas! may be plainly seen in many places.

Many who have neither seen nor heard me, call me a deceiving heretic. This must be all endured. I am no better than the pious fathers, who had to hear and suffer; nevertheless, I feel disposed to give my life, if it would induce the world rightly to understand my seeking, faith and doctrine; for I assuredly know that I have the word of God. My reader, pervert not what I write. I desire nothing else, before God, who created me, than to deal plainly, with a living voice, before every one, as one willing to be overcome by the Spirit of Christ, or to overcome; for my desire is that I and many with me be saved; hence, it is unnecessary to use the sword against me; If I have not the truth, I desire with all my heart to be instructed in it; but if I have, you then do not persecute me, but him, who is the truth, Christ Jesus.

Again, I say, with the Spirit and word of Christ, I desire to overcome, or to be overcome; in this I appeal to all the world. But it is in vain, the truth they will reject, and maintain and defend lies with the sword; for it is the true disposition and manner of anti-christ to defame, slander, apprehend, torture, burn and murder, contrary to the Spirit and word of God. But the Lord will see and judge it.

I would, therefore, faithfully admonish the reader, to zealously and earnestly strive after the kingdom of God, and examine this *Psalms* with assiduity; every word of it, with a submissive, humble heart; I hope he will find, through the grace of God, that it is replete with consolation in persecution, and that it clearly points out the difference between a believer and an unbeliever.

May God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, grant the reader a zealous, ardent heart, a sincere, active faith, unfeigned, christian love, and obedience to his holy word, through Christ Jesus, his beloved Son our Lord, to him be everlasting praise, Amen.

THE TWENTY-FIFTH PSALM

EXPLAINED BY WAY OF SUPPLICATION.

Verse 1. UNTO THEE, O LORD, do I lift up my soul, O my God, I trust in thee; let me not be ashamed. O Lord, thou that bearest rule, Lord of heaven and earth, I call thee Lord, though I am not worthy to be called thy servant; for from my youth I did not serve thee, but thine enemy, the devil; him I served diligently; nevertheless, I do not doubt thy grace; for I find in the word of thy truth that thou art a bountiful, rich Lord to all those who call upon thee. Therefore, I call unto thee, O Lord hear me, hear me, O Lord! With full confidence and assurance, I lift up, not my head or my hands as the hypocrites do in the synagogues, but my soul. I lifted up my heart, not to Abraham, for he never knew us, nor to Israel, for he never had knowledge of us, but alone to thee, for thou art our Lord and Father, thou art our Redeemer, this is thy name, from days of yore. Hence it is, dear Lord, that I trust in thee, for I truly know that thou art a faithful God over all who trust in thee. If I am in darkness, thou art my light; am I in prison, thou art with me; am I forsaken, thou art my comfort; am I in death, thou art my life; if they curse me, thou dost bless; if they grieve me, thou dost comfort; if they will slay me, thou wilt raise me up; and if I walk in the dark valley, thou wilt ever be with me. It is right, O Lord, that I lift up my grieved and miserable soul to thee, trust in thy promise, and am not ashamed.

2. *Let not mine enemies triumph over me; yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed.* O Lord of hosts, Lord of lords, my flesh is weak; my misery and necessities are great; nevertheless, I fear not the sensual scoffing of my enemies; but I fear greatly, lest I

deny thy adorable and revered name, and depart from thy truth, and that they rejoice over my weakness and the transgression of thy will, and mock me and say, Where is thy God now? Where is thy Christ? And that thy divine honor be thus reproached through me. O Lord, preserve me; keep me, O Lord! for my enemies are strong and many; yea, more numerous than the hairs of my head, and the spears of grass in the fields; my unclean flesh is never at rest; satan encompasseth me as a roaring lion, that he may devour me; the blood-thirsty, revengeful world is determined upon my life; they also hate, persecute, burn and murder those who seek thy praise. Wretched man, I know not whither to go; misery, tribulation, fear and dread are on every side; strife within, and persecution without. I say with king Jehoshaphat, If I know not whither to go, I lift my eyes unto thee, and depend only on thy grace and mercy, as Abraham in Gerar, Jacob in Mesopotamia, Joseph in Egypt, Moses in Media, Israel in the wilderness, David in the mountains, Hezekiah in Jerusalem, the young men in the fiery furnace, Daniel in the lion's den; yea, all the pious fathers trusted in thee, and were not made ashamed.

3. *Let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.* O Lord, thou that bearest rule, even as thy merciful grace is over all who fear thee, so also is thy fierce wrath over all who despise thee; who walk after their lusts, and dare to say with all fools, "There is no God;" we have made a covenant with death, and with hell an agreement; God knoweth not what we do; thick clouds are a covering to him that he seeth not the works of men; we will eat and drink,

for to-morrow we die; for our life is short and full of trouble, and there is no consolation when we have gone hence; we will live in affluence, while we yet can and use the creatures as we desire; we will oppress the poor, defraud the righteous; we will condemn him with the most disgraceful death. O, dear Lord, thus does the world err, and live every where in the lusts of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and in the pride of life; it is mere deceit, unrighteousness and tyranny, wherever we turn. Few are they who fear thy name. Paul says, "To be carnally minded is death;" sentence is already passed; if we live according to the flesh we must die, so teach the Scriptures; if we do not repent there is nothing more certain than fierce anger. Therefore, dear Lord, threaten thou, reprove, admonish and teach, perhaps they may yet repent, know the truth and be saved; they are the works of thy hands, created after thine image, and dearly bought; let them not be confounded like Cain, Sodom, Pharaoh and Antiochus with all those who have transgressed without a cause.

4. *Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths.* O Lord of hosts, I know through the word of thy grace that there is but one way which leadeth to life, which is strait and narrow for the flesh, beset with thorns and dangers all around, and is found by few, and still fewer walk therein; it is like a treasure hid in a field which none can find but he to whom it is shown by the Spirit. Dear Lord, there is no way but thou alone; all who walk through thee will find the gates of life. There is another way which seems very pleasant to the flesh, which appears soft, smooth and broad, strown with roses, pleasant and agreeable to the eye, but its end leads to death. On this way the whole world walks, unconcerned and without fear, and prefers things perishable to imperishable, evil to good, and darkness to the light of the world. They all walk on the perverse, broad and crooked way; they become faint in the way of unrighteousness, and know not the way of the Lord. It is true, the way of error seems right in the eyes of fools, but I know through thy Spirit and word that it is the certain road to the abyss of hell. Therefore, I entreat thee, dear Lord, be mer-

ciful to me a poor sinner; show me thy path, and teach me thy way; for thy way is the right way, godly, pleasant, humble, chaste, full of peace and of all good, and will lead my soul to eternal life.

5. *Lead me in thy truth and teach me; for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.* O Lord! Lord! "My tears," says David, "have been my meat day and night." My heart within me quakes, my strength forsakes me, and the light of my eyes is dim, and this on account of the innumerable dangers and snares which beset my soul. I am in constant fear lest I be led from the way of truth by misapprehension or through the deceit of satan. O Lord, the subtlety of the learned is great; satan uses his wiles artfully; some teach but the doctrine and commandments of men which are fruitless and corrupt trees. Some cry only grace, spirit and Christ, and daily trample on thy grace, grieve thy Holy Spirit, and crucify thy Son with their vain, carnal life, as is evident. Some who had before escaped Babylon, Egypt and Sodom, and taken upon them the yoke and cross of Christ, are again devoured by satan, and so deceived by the false prophets, as if they had never known thy word and will. Yea, seven spirits, alas! worse than the former, entered them, although they cloak themselves under thy word and ordinances, and pretend that it was thy pleasure, word and will; although thou never didst think of it, much less didst thou desire it; on account of which I am much grieved and full of sorrow of heart, well knowing that thy true word is no deceiving lie, as they teach, but it is the truth which thy infallible mouth taught here upon earth and in this grievous world. All who are of the truth hear thy voice, as the voice of their only Shepherd, and the true Bridegroom; but from the voice of a stranger they flee, always fearing lest they might be deceived. O Lord, remember thy afflicted and poor servant; thou art a Searcher of all hearts, thou knowest me that I seek nothing but thy will. Therefore, dear Lord, direct me to thy truth, and teach me; for thou art the God of my salvation; besides thee I acknowledge none other; thou only art my hope, my comfort, shield, defense and fortress upon which I depend with

confidence, and wait upon it in fear, misery, tribulation and need.

6. *Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies, and thy loving kindnesses, for they have been ever of old.* O Lord of hosts, when I am buoyed up in the waters of thy grace, I find that I cannot fathom or measure them, for thy mercies are greater than all thy works. Who is it, dear Lord, that ever came to thee with a pious heart that thou didst reject? Who ever sought thee and found thee not? Who did ever desire help of thee and did not obtain it? Who ever prayed for thy grace and did not receive it? And who ever called upon thee that thou didst not hear? Yea, dear Lord, how many didst thou accept in grace, who, according to thy strict justice, merited otherwise. Adam departed from thee and believed the counsel of the serpent; he broke thy covenant and was found a child of death before thee; thy paternal kindness did not reject him, but thou didst seek him graciously, thou didst call and reprove him, and his nudity thou didst cover with coats of skin, and so graciously comfort him with the promised seed. Paul, thy chosen vessel, raved like a roaring lion and a devouring wolf in thy holy mountain, nevertheless, thy grace shone around him in his blindness and illuminated him; thou calledst him from heaven, and didst choose him as an holy apostle and as a servant of thy house. I also, dear Lord, the greatest of all sinners, and the least among all the saints, am called thy child or servant, for I have sinned against heaven and before thee; although I did resist thy precious word and thy holy will, with all my powers, before this with open eyes; and with full understanding I disputed, taught and lived after the ease of the flesh, and sought my own praise more than thy righteousness, honor, word and truth; nevertheless, thy paternal grace did not forsake me, a wretched sinner; but received me in love, converted me to another mind, led me with thy right hand and taught me by thy Holy Spirit, till I voluntarily fought against the world, flesh and the devil; renounced all my pleasure, peace, glory, lust and the ease of the flesh, and willingly submitted to the pressing cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, that I may inherit the promised kingdom with

all the valiant of God and the disciples of Christ. Again, I say, Thy mercies are greater than all thy works; therefore, dear Lord assist me, stand by me, comfort me, a poor sinner; my soul is in great distress, and the dangers of hell surround me; help Lord, and preserve me, and be not angry; remember, O Lord, thy great mercies, of which all are made partakers who have graciously waited upon thy holy name, and remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies, and thy loving kindness, for they have been of old.

7. *Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; according to thy mercy remember thou me, for thy goodness' sake, O Lord.* O Lord, thou that bearest rule, "I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me," I am of sinful flesh; Adam's corrupt seed has been sown in my heart, from whence so much misery has grown up. I, a miserable sinner, did not know my infirmities, so long as they were not manifested to me by the Spirit. I thought I was a christian; but when I saw rightly, I found myself, without thy word, altogether earthly, and carnal; my light was darkness, my truth was lies, my righteousness sin, my worship open idolatry, and my life, certain death. O dear Lord, I knew myself not till I viewed myself in thy word: then I learned to know, with Paul, my blindness, nakedness, uncleanness, depraved nature, and that nothing good dwelt in my flesh. I was full of wounds, and bruises and putrifying sores from the sole of the foot even to the head. Ah, alas! my gold was dross; my wheat, chaff; all my services were deceit and lies. I walked before thee in the flesh; my thoughts were carnal, my words and works without the fear of God; my watching and sleeping were unclean; my prayer hypocrisy. In short, I did nothing without sin. O Lord, remember not the sins of my youth, so often committed knowingly and unknowingly, nor my daily transgressions, of which I am guilty in my great weakness, but remember me according to thy great goodness, I am blind, enlighten thou me; naked I am, clothe thou me; I am wounded, heal thou me; dead I am, raise me up. I know of no light, medicine, or life except thee: accept of me graciously, grant

me thy mercy, favor and faith, fullness, and thy good will, O Lord.

8. *Good and upright is the Lord; therefore, will he teach sinners in the way.* O Lord of hosts, although I have walked so unrighteously before thee from my youth, that I am ashamed to lift my eyes to thee in heaven, nevertheless, I appear at thy throne of grace; for I know that thou art merciful and kind, and desirest not the death of the sinner, but that he repent and live. Thou didst send forth thy faithful servant, Moses, who gave Israel the law by the disposition of angels, also thy servants and prophets who preached the way of repentance, and broke the bread of life for the people; sin they reproved earnestly; proclaimed thy grace far abroad, and taught the truth; thy sharp piercing word was in their mouth, their light shone as the golden lights; they were as flowering olive trees, as a sweet smell of costly perfumery, yea, as the fair mountain strown with roses and lilies; nevertheless, they did not desire them, but thrust them out furiously, derided, persecuted, and delivered them unto death; still the wells of thy mercy flowed; thou didst send thy beloved Son, the dear pledge of thy grace, who preached thy word, fulfilled thy righteousness, accomplished thy will, bore our sins, blotted them out with his blood, and brought about reconciliation; conquered the devil, hell, sin and death, and obtained grace, mercy, favor and peace for all who truly believe on him; his command is eternal life; he sent out his messengers, ministers and apostles of peace, who spread this grace abroad through the whole world; who shone as bright, burning torches before all, that they might lead me and all erring sinners into the true way. O Lord, not unto me, but unto thee be praise and honor; their words I love, their usages I observe; thy Son, Christ Jesus, whom they preached to me, I believe; I seek his will and way; thy abundant, great love I acknowledge, not through me, but through thee, for thou art good, and I am evil; thou art true, and I am deceitful; thou art righteous, and I am unrighteous; instruct me, dear Lord, teach me in the right way; foster me for I am of thy pasture; take me into thy care, under the shadow of thy wings;

protect me, for I am greatly tormented; I am poor, wretched, and grieved unto death.

9. *The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way.* O Lord, thou that bearest rule, thy divine grace has shone around me, thy word has taught me, thy Holy Spirit has influenced me till I forsook the course of the ungodly, the way of sinners, the seat of scornors. I was ungodly, and carried the banner of unrighteousness for many years; I was a chief one in all manner of folly; idle words, vanity, gambling, drinking, eating to excess were my daily pastime; the fear of God was not before my eyes; besides, I was a lord and a prince in Babel; every one sought me; the world loved me and had my affections. I had the first place at feasts and in synagogues; I had the preference among all men: I was respected of the aged, and every one revered me; when I spoke, they were silent; when I nodded, they came; when I bid them depart, they went; what I desired, they did; my words prevailed in all things; the desire of my heart was granted; but as soon as I, with Solomon, saw that all was vanity, and with Paul, esteemed all as nothing, I renounced the ungodliness of this world, sought thee and thy kingdom which will abide in eternity. I have found everywhere the counterpart and reverse; before, I was honored, now I am dishonored; before, all was love, now hatred; before, I had friends, now they are my enemies; before, I was considered wise, now a fool; before, pious, now wicked; before, a christian, now a heretic; yea, I have become an abomination and evil-doer to all. O Lord, comfort me, preserve thy troubled servant; for I am exceedingly poor and wretched, my sins rise up against me, the whole world hates and mocks me; lords and princes persecute me, the learned curse and slander me, my dearest friends forsake me, and those who were near to me, stand aloof; who will have mercy on me and receive me? Miserable am I, dear Lord; have mercy on me and receive me with honor; for there is none that can preserve me, but thou; therefore, I entreat thee, Lord, vouchsafe thine ear to supplication; lead me by the right hand, lead me in the right way lest I stumble upon the dark mountains. I see that the children of men do neither teach

nor do right; deceit and hypocrisy are in all flesh; the deceiving sects are great and many; every one avers his as if it were built upon a rock, yet they have not thy truth. Therefore, dear Lord, teach me thy truth and cast me not off from thy presence, for I am miserable; I am in the midst of lions and bears, which seek to destroy my soul, and thrust me from the way of truth. O Lord, strengthen me, keep me in thy way for I assuredly know that it is the infallible truth and the sure way of peace.

10. *ALL the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.* O Lord of hosts, they all boast of thy grace and favor, although they, in all their works, prove themselves children of wrath; they lie, cheat, eat, drink, are guilty of adultery and fornication, they covet and hoard, curse and swear without bounds, and all this they cloak with thy grace and the blood of Christ; every one sings lustily; the mercy of the Lord is great; Christ died for our sins; our doings are unjust, sinful and fruitless. It is true, dear Lord, in the true sense of the word, that they have no lot in thee, their hope is vain, their labor is without fruit, and their works, useless; yea, their hope is like this-tle-down before the winds; they will have no part in thy kingdom, for they are still impenitent, and believe not thy truth. Alas! they know not that thy mercy is forever over those who fear thee and keep thy covenant. Thy goodness, says David, is extended to the saints; thine eyes are upon the righteous, and thine ears are open to their cries; but thy face is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. I am thy friend if I do what thou hast commanded. It is true, dear Lord, that Christ was given to us, and died for us, yet not for such a purpose that we are to live according to our wicked lusts, and sinful will, but according to thy good will, word and command. Lord, I know that thou art no less righteous than good, that thou hatest the evil, and lovest the good; to the good thou art kind, but to the wicked thou wilt in due time appear as a righteous Judge. What did the pure blood of the eternal covenant demand of Cain and Judah, because they despised thy grace and

excluded themselves from the merits of thy Son? What does it profit Pilate, Herod, Anas, and Caiaphas to have seen thy fountain of grace, Jesus Christ; nay, touched him, and yet condemned to the accursed death of the cross, the immaculate Lamb, the King of glory! But they who keep thy covenant and preserve thy testimony like Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did, to them thy ways are peace and joy; yea, altogether mercy, kindness and truth.

11. *For thy name's sake, O LORD, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.* O Lord, Lord! I pray thee with holy David, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure; for my loins are filled with a loathsome disease, and there is no soundness in my flesh; my sins have borne me down; there is no peace in my bones. From the bottom of my heart I humble myself with beloved Daniel. O dear Lord! O thou great and terrible God! I have sinned, and done unjustly, before thee I have been ungodly, I wandered from thee, and walked not in thy commands and statutes; thy preferred grace I rejected; thy holy word I thrust from me; thy beloved Son I crucified, I grieved thy Holy Spirit, I acted unjustly in all my doings. O Lord, the multitude of my sins frighten me; there is no evil but what I am guilty of. I was as envious as Cain; proud and unchaste as Sodom; unmerciful as Pharaoh; refractory as Korah; lascivious as Simri; disobedient as Saul; idolatrous as Jeroboam; hypocritical as Joab; haughty as Nebuchadnezzar; covetous as Balaam; drunken as Nabal; insolent as Sennacherib; blasphemous as Rabsaces; blood-thirsty as Herod; lying as Ananias. Yea, I say with king Manasseh, That my sins are more numerous than the sands of the sea shore and the stars in the heavens; they trouble by day and by night; nothing good dwells in my flesh. All that I seek is unrighteousness and sin; that which I would not that I seek and do; I, miserable man, know not whither to go; if I go into myself, I find great faults, impure desires, a vessel of sins; if I go to my neighbor, he has nothing to give me, so that here nothing else avails, but thy word. The wages of sin, says Paul, is death; but thy

grace is eternal life. This grace I seek and desire; for this is the only ointment which can heal my soul; the sinful woman availed herself of this, Luke 7, as soon as she was sensible of her wants; David availed himself of this when he disgraced Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, and slew him; great was his distress, he saw his wickedness and said, "I have sinned against the Lord." He desired balm; "O God!" said he, "according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions, wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin," Ps. 51: 1, 2. In the same hour he heard the gracious word of the prophet, "The Lord also hath put away thy sin." His troubled heart was quieted; he praised his name, proclaimed his mercy, and exalted his grace above all his works. O Lord! O dear Lord! I a grieved sinner, have the same disease, I desire the same balm, and I desire help from thee; I seek only comfort with thee. O Lord, for thy holy name's sake. Help me, that I may eternally praise thee. Wash me from all my sins, and be merciful to me in all my transgressions, for they are great.

12. *What man is he that feareth the Lord? Him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.* O Lord, thou that bearest rule, thy path is the path of peace; blessed is he that walketh therein; for we find mercy, love, righteousness, humility, obedience and patience in her ways. She clothes the naked, feeds the hungry, gives drink to the thirsty, entertains the needy, reproves, threatens, comforts and admonishes; is sober, honest, chaste and upright in all her ways; none takes offense at her; her goings forth are to eternal life, but few there are that find her. Yea, I fear dear Lord, that there are scarcely ten of a thousand that find her, scarcely five who cherish her; it continues as it was from the beginning, when there were but four upon earth: of whom the Scriptures testify that two were disobedient, and a third one slew his brother. There were eight righteous when the world was drowned, and one of them mocked his father. In Sodom and Gomorrah, with the adjacent country, there were four righteous persons, one looked back and was changed into a pillar of salt. About six

hundred thousand valiant men left Egypt, of whom but two entered the promised land; not, dear Lord, that all were damned who died on the way, but they did not, on account of their unbelief, inherit the promised Canaan. Thus also, dear Lord, is the eternal land promised us, if we walk the way which thou hast chosen for us. But now they walk the crooked way of death; and even as those did not inherit the temporal, so will also these not inherit the eternal Canaan. O Lord, well may I sigh and say, Where is he who fears the Lord? Where is he, who has understanding? Where is he, who seeks God? "They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; their feet are swift to shed blood, destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace they have not known; there is no fear of God before their eyes," Rom. 3: 12—18; all that is among them is infidelity and lies; they despise and blaspheme thy righteousness, yet they sing and speak much of thy truth, and glory in thy great name, although there is not one ripe grape on their vine, nor any good fruit to be found with them. But those who fear thee, O Lord, depart from all iniquity; For thy fear, says Sirach, dispels sin, and is the beginning of wisdom. Thine eyes are upon those who fear thee, thy Holy Spirit leads them, thy gracious hand preserves them; they will not fear nor tremble; for thou art their protector and shelter against intense heat; thou didst pardon their sins; rescue them; thou dost enlighten them, makest glad their souls, givest them grace, blessing and peace. He that fears thee, walks uprightly in all his ways, for thou teachest him in the way that thou hast chosen.

13. *His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth.* O Lord, thou Lord of hosts! those who acknowledge thee shall be blessed in the paradise of their God, upon Mount Zion, in the heavenly Jerusalem, in the church of the living God, in the assembly of the righteous whose names are written in heaven. They are released from hell, sin, the devil and death, and

they serve before thee in peace and joy of heart through life. They repose without fear, for thou art their strength and shield. They rest under the shadow of thy wings, for they are thine. They fear not, for thou warmest them with the beams of thy love; they hunger not, for thou feedest them with the bread of life; they thirst not, for thou givest them to drink of the waters of thy Holy Spirit; they want not, for thou art their treasure and their kingdom. They dwell in the house of thy peace, in the tabernacles of righteousness, and in sure peace. They have pleasure in thy law, and speak of thy word day and night, amongst all the people. They wash their souls in the clear waters of thy truth. They view their consciences in the clear mirror of thy wisdom; their thoughts are upright, their words are words of grace, seasoned with salt. Their works are faithful and true. The light of their piety shines around them; what they seek they find; what they desire they obtain; their souls dwell in the fullness of thy goodness; the dew of thy grace has besprinkled them; the soil of their consciences bears wine and oil without measure, and although they must endure, in their flesh for a time, much misery, suffering and trouble, yet they know well that the way of the cross is the way of life. They are not ashamed of the way of the cross and the weapons of the Lord. They patiently go with Christ to the conflict, and contend valiantly, till they have reached the boundary of life, and have received the crown. Nothing can hinder them, since they have become partakers of thy Spirit, and have tasted of thy sweetness. They neither waver nor turn aside; their house stands firmly upon a rock: they are as the pillars of the holy temple; they have eaten of thy hidden manna. O Lord, to thee be praise! Thy fear abides continually before their eyes. They walk in thy way, therefore, shall their souls be blessed, and their seed, if born of the Holy Spirit and word, will enjoy the land of everlasting life, wherein thou, and thy chosen shall reign in endless glory.

14. *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant.* O Lord, Lord, the thoughts of my heart terrify me, and my heart trembles

within me; because, with Ezra, I perceive that so many are born in vain. What shall I say, dear Lord? Shall I say that thou hast ordained the wicked to wickedness, as some have said? Be that far from me; I know, O Lord, that thou art eternally good, and that nothing wicked can be found in thee. We are the works of thy hand, created in Christ Jesus to good works, that we should walk therein. Water, fire, life and death, hast thou left to our choice. Thou wilt not the death of the sinner, but that he should repent and live. Thou art the eternal light, therefore hatest thou all darkness; thou desirest not that any should perish, but that all repent, come to the knowledge of thy truth, and be happy. O dear Lord, so grievously have they blasphemed thine unspeakably great goodness, eternal mercy, and almighty Majesty, that they, O gracious God, Creator of all things, have made thee to be as a cruel devil, by saying that thou art the source of all evil, thou who art the Father of days and of lights. It is plain that evil cannot flow from good, light from darkness, nor life from death; yet must their stubborn hearts and carnal minds be attributed to thy will, in order that they may continue upon the broad way, and have a cover for their sins; and this, because they do not acknowledge thy divine goodness, nor their own inbred wickedness. O Lord God, thou hast loved us with an eternal love, thou hast chosen us before the foundation of the world, that we should be unblamable, and holy before thee in love, not regarding what we find written by the faithful Paul concerning Esau, Pharaoh and Israel; he hath done all for us, for the best, in order that we should give the honor to thy name, and not to ourselves. What have we miserable sinners, of which we may boast? What have we that we have not received from thee? All that we have is of thy fullness. For this, all who know thy word thank thee. O dear Lord, the mystery of thy holy word is not revealed to the rich, the honorable, or the wise, but to the poor, simple children. Yea, Father, said Christ, such was thy good pleasure. Isaiah says, Thou wilt look upon the miserable, and those who are of a broken spirit, and who fear thy word. Therefore, dear Lord, we

miserable sinners pray thee to lead us in thy truth; to teach us thy mysteries; to enable us rightly to know the power of thy covenant, that thou art ours, and we are thine; that covenant which thou hast made with us in Christ, without any merit on our part. For thy mystery will be found with those who fear thee and those to whom thou hast made known thy covenant.

15. *Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord, for he shall pluck my feet out of the net.* O Lord! thou who bearest rule! I say with the prophet, If thou shouldst mark iniquity, who could stand? I, a miserable, great sinner, have, with the full lust of my heart, turned to all folly, to gold, silver, pride, haughtiness, to strange and forbidden flesh. I have turned mine eyes to open idolatry, to wood and stone, and have served them many years, upon high mountains and under green trees, as the prophet said, My idolatry was according to the number of my days. I have bowed my knee before the graven and molten images, and said, Save me, for thou art my God. I sought sight from the blind, life from the death, and help from those who could not preserve themselves from dust, corruption, thieves and worms. Yes, I have said to a weak, perishable creature, that grew out of the earth, was broken in a mill, baked by the fire, chewed with my teeth, and consumed by my stomach, to a mouthful of bread: Thou hast released me; as Israel said to the golden calf, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt," Ex. 22: 4. O God! thus have I, a miserable sinner, courted the whore of Babylon for many years, for I supposed that she was modest, honest and chaste; a queen of righteousness, who was glorious, holy and acceptable before thine eyes, for I saw her adorned with purple and scarlet, with gold and precious stones, and pearls, a golden cup in her hand, powerful over all kings upon earth. Therefore, I knew not that she was so very loathsome and polluted; that there was in such a splendid cup so much abomination; that she was such an unblushing, impudent whore and murderess; that deceived the world, persecuted the chosen, and drank the blood of the saints. But now I have seen her abominations, and I quake,

because I left thee, the living Well, so long, and comforted myself with useless pools, that can give no water; that I gave thy honor to images and other creatures; and worshipped the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. This happened, in part, through the deceitfulness of my eyes, because I was bewitched in my heart, by the goodly appearance of the woman. But now, dear Lord, my eyes are constantly directed unto thee, till thou hearest me; they are directed to thy mercy seat, till I obtain grace and mercy from thee, for thou alone art he, who can help me in the time of my temptation, and pluck my feet out of the net of sin.

16. *Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted.* O Lord of hosts, my sins and transgressions I do not hide from thee, but unreservedly acknowledge that I spent my former days after the will of the heathen, and walked with them in all manner of ungodly lusts, pride, wantonness, in eating and drinking, and in abominable, blind idolatry. I did all that pleased my wicked flesh, I was a child of wrath, even as others; thy holy name I held in derision; thy word was as a fable to me; in reliance upon thy grace, I did all manner of evil; I was as a white-washed sepulcher; outwardly in behavior, I was moral, chaste and mild, there was none that reproved my conduct, but inwardly I was full of dead men's bones, stench and worms; my platter was clean on the outside, but within, was full of rapine and lust. What I did privately is a scandal to mention, all my thoughts were unclean, vain, proud, ambitious and ungodly; my heart was full of disaffection, hatred, envy, vengeance and dislike; my thoughts were bent upon all manner of wickedness; I sinned without bounds; I neither feared God, devil, law, gospel, heaven nor hell; there was nothing that could deter me; I neither regarded thee nor thy word; my course was onward to all wickedness; I sought nothing but the friendship and love of this world. I did not commit adultery, fornication, and such like other abominable sins, before men, only because I feared to lose their favor and my reputation, and not because I feared thee; yet, my vanity, merriment, drunkenness, sinful lusts, open sins,

weakness, pride and idolatry were called the true worship; yea, all my transactions, private and public, were not concealed before thine eyes. Thus did I, a grieved sinner, spend my days, and did not, O God of grace, acknowledge thee as my God, Creator and Redeemer, till thy Holy Spirit taught me, through thy word, made known to me thy will, and gave me a partial knowledge of thy mysteries; now I know how dishonorably I have walked before thee, not otherwise than if I had spit in thy face, treated thee with indignity and derided thee as foolish. O Lord, have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted; my sins are great and many; my conscience troubles me; my thoughts cause me to quake; my heart laments and sighs, because I sin so heinously before thee; my sins have separated me from thee, hid thy countenance from me, and excited thy wrath. I have become a prey and brand of the burning pool, although the longer, the more I was grieved, the more I was consoled by thy word, for it teaches me concerning thy mercy, grace and favor, and the remission of my sins, through Christ, thy beloved Son, our Lord, not regarding that I neither knew nor feared thee. This promise pacifies and gladdens me; it leads me, with the sinful woman, to thy blessed feet, with full confidence and clear conscience, well knowing that thou wilt not cast off from thee thy returning son, although I have spent thy paternal inheritance and possessions dishonorably, with harlots and rogues, in a strange country, devoured it in my unrighteousness. My God, turn the pleasing countenance of thy peace unto me, I have sinned before heaven and in thy sight; lay thy hand of grace upon me; have mercy upon me, a poor sinner; for I am desolate and afflicted.

17. *The troubles of my heart are enlarged; O bring thou me out of my distresses.* O Lord, Lord, my heart weeps and sighs, my conscience quakes and trembles, my soul is as a grieved mother deprived of her only child, and cannot be comforted, since I, an ungodly sinner, neither sincerely sought, acknowledged nor appreciated thy godly love and paternal kindness. I have lived more disgracefully than the irrational creatures, for they, in eating, drinking and oth-

er things do not go beyond their instinct, and do not transgress the laws of nature; but I have lived more uselessly, sinfully, intemperately and unrighteously against the laws of nature, than my ungodly flesh naturally desired; I was conscious that the desires of my flesh were death; thy Spirit warned me of my evil doing; yet, my flesh suppressed all warning. I was in all things a servant of sin, and sworn unto unrighteousness. I drank down sin as water; my delight was in all manner of folly; the outstretched arm of thy grace, I saw not; thy calling voice, I heard not; thy inviting love, I regarded not. In short, I hated thy knowledge, and thy fear I cast behind me; and this is not all, dear Lord, that I acted so lamentably in my ignorance, but I daily find, that my righteousness is as filthy rags; when I think that I am going, I am falling; when I stand, I am down, and that when I am something, I am nothing. Therefore, O Lord, preserve me, for the fear of my heart is very great; yea, greater than I can express it; I often am as a woman in travail, my countenance is changed pale; my hands are upon my loins on account of the trouble of my heart; the dangers of hell surround me, the fatness and marrow of my bones are dried up; for here neither money nor possessions, neither flesh nor blood avail, but my soul is at stake, eternal life or eternal death is the issue; I, therefore, pray, For-sake me not, dear Lord, but open the eyes of thy mercy and behold my great burden, stand by me and deliver me from all my distress.

18. *Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins.* O Lord, thou that bearest rule, if the righteous call upon thee, thou receivest them; thou art nigh to those who are of a broken heart; thou dost comfort those who are of a contrite spirit; the offering that is acceptable to thee is a contrite spirit; a broken heart thou dost not despise. Thou didst send forth thy beloved Son, anointed with thy Holy Spirit, to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, Luke 4: 18; to comfort all that

mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes; the oil of joy for mourning; the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. He preached ransom to all who are heavy laden, and with faithful hearts come to him; he invites all the thirsty to the waters of life; he bore all our sins upon the cross in his own body; and our debt he blotted out by his blood, even as Moses did before, through types and shadows, when he sprinkled unclean Israel with the blood of oxen and rams, and with the ashes of the heifer; under the law nearly all things were purified by the shedding of blood, Num. 19; Heb. 9. If the figurative blood had such virtue, that it could purify the flesh to sanctification, how much more shall the blood of the beloved Son, who offered himself unspotted through the eternal Spirit, purify our consciences from dead works. O ever living God, through the merits of thy Son, and through the riches of thy grace we receive the remission of our sins; yea, through his blood thou didst reconcile all upon earth and in heaven above. I, therefore, dear Lord, confess that I have or know of no remedy for my sins, for neither works nor merits, neither baptism nor the Lord's Supper can avail, although all sincere christians use both as signs of thy word, and hold them in respect; but alone the precious blood of thy beloved Son, which is bestowed upon me, and who has graciously redeemed me, a poor sinner, through mere grace and love, from my former walk; therefore, O God of truth, with whom there is no lie, remember the words of thy prophet, which he spake in thy name, namely, "If the wicked will turn from all his sins, that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die; all his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him," Ezek. 18: 21, 22. O my God, look not upon me, but upon the eternal Melchisedec, Christ Jesus, whom thou hast appointed high priest over thy house, upon the blessed King of thy righteousness, who has no beginning nor end of days, and is a high priest for ever; who did not honor himself, but is ordained of thee, as Aaron, who in the days of his flesh, offered up prayer and supplications, with

strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; for his sake hear me, for his sake accept me, for his sake be merciful to me, console thy afflicted servant. I have no comfort neither in heaven above nor upon earth, but in thee alone, have mercy upon me in my great distress; my unclean, sinful flesh afflicts me; my wicked nature wages war against me, and besides, for thy word's sake, I have become an abomination, an outcast and a fable to all men. All who hear of me shake their heads at me; without and within I have no peace. I say again, my sins combat me, my soul is in tribulation and pain; therefore, dear Lord, I pray thee not for gold and silver, for they can profit me nothing in the day of vengeance, neither for long life, for they are always perverse, but this I desire alone of thee, from my whole heart, that thou wouldst look upon me, a miserable sinner, with the gracious eyes of thy mercy; in my affliction and pain, comfort me with thy Holy Spirit, and forgive all my sins.

19. *Consider mine enemies, for they are many and they hate me WITH CRUEL hatred.* O Lord of hosts, when I was of the world, I spake and did as the world, and the world hated me not; but as soon as I had eaten the book that was shown to me, although it was in my mouth sweet as honey, yet it made my belly bitter, for there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe, Ezek. 2: 10. While I served the world I received my reward; all men spake well of me, even as the fathers did of the false prophets. But now, that I love the world with a godly love, have sought from my heart their welfare and happiness, rebuked, admonished, and instructed them with thy word, pointing out to them Jesus Christ and him crucified, they have become unto me as a grievous cross, and as the gall of bitterness; so fiendlike is their hatred, that not only I myself, but all those who love me, showing me favor and mercy, must, in some places look for imprisonment and death. O blessed Lord! I am more despicable in their eyes than a notorious thief and murderer; I am like a lost sheep in the wilderness of the world, chased, tormented, and pursued unto death by ravenous wolves. Am I not

like a person without hope, forsaken and comfortless like a ship in the depth of the ocean, destitute of mast, sail, and helm, tossed about by every wave and every tempest? My flesh had almost said, I am betrayed because I find the unrighteous, forward nation enjoying riches, honor and prosperity, and reposing in quietude and peace, while the godly must endure so much hunger, thirst, affliction, and violence; their habitation is insecure, they must toil and labor for their bread; they are accursed, defamed, persecuted and hated of all men, as the filth of the world, and as an abomination. O blessed Lord! mine enemies are many and great, their heart roars like the furious lion, their words are as deadly arrows, their tongues are always against me; at one time I am reviled by them as a false seducer, at another reproached as an accursed heretic, although by thy grace I possess nought but unyielding truth. Thus am I their mortal enemy, because I instruct them in the way of righteousness. O Lord! I am not ashamed of my doctrine before thee and thine angels, much less before this rebellious world; for I know assuredly that I teach thy word; I have taught, throughout, a true repentance, a dying unto our sinful flesh, and the new life that cometh from God. I have taught a true, sincere faith in thee, and in thy beloved Son, that it might be made powerful through love. I have taught Jesus Christ and him crucified, very God and very man, who, in an incomprehensible, inexpressible, and indescribable manner, was born of thee from all eternity, thy eternal Word and Wisdom, the brightness of thy glory, and the express image of thy person, and that in fullness of time, through the power of thy Holy Spirit, he became, in the womb of the unspotted virgin, Mary, real flesh and blood, a visible, tangible, and mortal man, like unto Adam and his posterity in all things, yet without sin; born of the seed or lineage of Abraham and David, dead and buried, arose again, ascended into heaven, and thus became before thee our only, and eternal Advocate, Mediator, Intercessor, and Redeemer. If all the prophets, apostles, and evangelists have not taught this with the greatest clearness from the beginning, I will gladly bear my

shame and reproof. I have taught no other baptism, no other supper, no other ordinance than that sanctioned by the unerring word of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the declared example and usages of his holy apostles, to say nothing of the superabundant evidence of the historians and learned of both the primitive and the present church. Since then, I substantiate my doctrine by the evidence of thy plain, ineffable word, and by the ordinance of thy Son, who can reprove me, and show with the argument of truth that I am an imposter? Does not the whole Scripture teach, that Christ is the truth, and shall abide forever? Is not the apostolic church, the true christian church? We know that all human doctrines are chaff and froth, and that anti-christ has spoiled and corrupted the doctrine of Christ; why then do they hate me, because out of pure zeal I teach and propound the doctrine of Christ and his apostles unadulterated? No one however, hates the opposers of anti-christ but such as are his members. Had I not the word of Christ, how cheerfully would I be taught it, for I seek it with fear and trembling; in this I can not be deceived. I have by grace, through the influence of thy Holy Spirit, believed and accepted thy holy truth as the sure word of thy pleasure; it will, also, never deceive me. Let them write and vociferate, threaten, and dispute, boast, extirpate, persecute and destroy, as they please, still thy word will triumph and the Lamb will gain the victory. Yea, I rest assured, that with this my doctrine, which is thy word, I shall, at the coming of Christ, judge and condemn, not only men, but also angels. And though I and my beloved brethren were totally extirpated, and taken from the earth, yet thy word would remain eternal truth. We are no better than our co-workers who preceded us. Yet the time will arrive when they shall exalt thy power, and look, perhaps too late, upon him whom they have pierced. O Lord! with that cruel hatred they hate me! Whom have I slandered in a single expression? Whom have I curtailed a pennies worth? Whose gold, silver, or cattle, have I desired? I have loved them with a pure love, even unto death; thy word and will have I taught them, and with earnest diligence have I shown them, by thy

grace, the way that leadeth to felicity, therefore my enemies are many, and hate me with cruel hatred.

20. *O keep my soul, and deliver me; let me not be ashamed, for I put my trust in thee.* O Lord, Lord! the word of Paul fills me with terror, where he says, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall," "For if a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself," for the flesh, destitute of thy Spirit, is perfectly blind in divine things, ignorant, entirely false and unjust, nay, sin and death, as I have remarked publicly in speaking of David and Peter, for though David was a great prophet, a man after thine own heart, faithful in all thy ways, yet when thy Spirit departed from him, where were his chastity, love, humility, and the fear of his God? did he not become an open adulterer, murderer, and boaster of his own glory, until thy Spirit again enlightened him by the word of the prophet, and he acknowledged the deadly sin he had committed, how foolishly he had acted before thee? In like manner as regards Peter: he acknowledged Christ, thy beloved Son, not by flesh and blood, but by the Spirit of thy grace, was called by Christ a stone and a rock, was ready to go with Christ into prison and to death: the trial came, thy Spirit forsook him for a season: he could not bear the trifling expression of a maid, he denied Christ, and swore that he knew him not: but as soon as Christ looked upon him, and thy Spirit returned, he acknowledged his fall, wept bitterly, and afterwards publicly preached the name of Jesus among all nations, paying no regard to his having been strictly forbidden to do so, by imprisonment, stripes and menacing words. He frankly answered, "We ought to obey God rather than men." I beseech Thee, therefore, blessed Lord, that thou wilt keep my soul, which is bought with so dear a price, lest I turn from thy truth; for though I may now think with Peter, that I could give my life for Thee, and with Paul, that neither tribulation, nor distress, nor persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor sword, nor life, nor death, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate me from thy love, yet I do not sufficiently know myself. All my trust

is in Thee; I have not yet resisted unto blood, although I have drank a little of the cup of thy affliction, yet I have not tasted the dregs; for when prisons and bonds are suffered, when life and death, fire and sword are threatened, then will the gold be separated from the wood, silver from the straw, and pearls from the stubble. Forsake me not, therefore, gracious Lord, for trees of deepest root are torn up from the earth by the violence of the storm, and the lofty, firm mountains are rent asunder by the force of the earthquake. Had not Job and Jeremiah, men of thy love, well nigh lost all patience in temptation, and murmured against thy will? Suffer me not, therefore, gracious Lord, to be tempted above what I am able to bear, for thou art true and faithful, lest my soul be ashamed. I pray not for my flesh, being well aware that I must once suffer and die; but this alone I desire, that thou strengthen me in my warfare; assist and preserve me, make a way for me to escape in temptation: deliver me, and let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in Thee.

21. *Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee.* O Lord of hosts! O God, when the husbandman had sown good seed in his field, his enemy came while he slept and sowed tares among the wheat, so that when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, satan came also among them, Job 1: wherever Jesus is, there will the devil be found near at hand, as alas, I have observed in my short time; thy saving word, thy gracious gospel, which is the proper food of my soul, imparting to it the power of eternal life, which has been trampled upon for so many years by anti-christ as an idle tale, and a useless fabrication, is again received, believed, and acknowledged, in power, by some through the influence of thy compassionate favor; the hellish lion or behemoth roars, now in excessive rage; walks about seeking to devour them, has no rest, nor repose, knowing well that his kingdom and dominion must decline and be destroyed thereby; makes use of all his cunning and subtlety, and transforms himself into an angel of light; those whom he has lost through thy word he has allured again by false doctrine into his snare and net, and has changed the pure, salutary sense of the

Scriptures, by means of false prophets and unskilful teachers, into a meaning entirely carnal, and completely calculated to mislead; has authorized the sword and destructive weapons, and excited a vindictive spirit against the whole world; moreover he has instituted open adultery under cover of the custom of the Jewish fathers; also established a literal king and kingdom, together with many other abuses, at which a sincere christian is astonished and confounded. But all which thou hast not planted shall come to nought. O Lord! preserve me pure and upright in thy truth, that I may neither believe, nor teach anything that is not in conformity with thy holy will and word, with true faith, sincere love, real baptism and supper, a blameless life, a scriptural separation from such as cause offence in doctrine and in life. Preserve me, gracious Lord, from all error and heresy; preserve me as thou hast done heretofore in thy mercy; grant that I and my beloved brethren may seek, love, and fear thee with all our hearts, render obedience to the magistracy in all things not contrary to the word of God; for this, says Paul, is good, and acceptable in thy sight; preserve us from the wiles of the devil who would fain teach us of another king after the spirit, beside the true King of Zion, Jesus Christ, who rules over thy holy mountain with the iron sceptre of thy word, is King of kings and Lord of lords, is set at thy own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; under whose feet all things are put, who hath all power in heaven and on earth, before whom every knee must bow, and every tongue confess that he is Lord, to the glory of thy great name. O gracious Lord, let integrity and uprightness preserve me under thy cross, that I may not deny thee, and thy holy word, in the time of temptation, nor conceal thy divine truth and will under the mask of hypocrisy, lies, and obscure equivocal expressions, so that at the appearance of thy dear Son, my Lord Jesus Christ, I may receive with all saints, the promised kingdom, inheritance, and reward which, with firm assurance and perfect confidence, we daily

hope, and expect, as the consequence of thy gracious promise.

22. *Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.* O LORD of hosts, now, that I have confessed my sins before thee, prayed for my transgressions, praised thy mercy, and desired thy grace, I must, with David, beseech thee, in behalf of my brethren; for I observe Israel scattered abroad and going astray, like sheep without a shepherd, and the pleasant vineyard of the Lord is laid waste, and trodden down of all men; the chosen seed of Abraham, the house of Jacob, has again become a proper slave or bond-servant in the grievous service of Pharaoh in Egypt; the royal line of Judah is carried away into Babylon, together with the holy vessels, which are so lamentably abused by Belshazzar, and his concubines. Jerusalem, the personification of peace, which was likened to a dove, is changed into a barbarous gormandizer of innocent blood, and a rapacious lioness; she that was princess among the nations, the city of the great king is become destitute of kings, citizens and walls, waste and solitary; the temple of the Lord, the house of prayer, in which the true worship ought to be performed, has become a notorious nest of robbers, a den of lions, bears, wolves, basilisks, dragons and serpents, a house of all idolaters; nay, the unchaste bed of the adulteress Jezebel. The bride of Christ, the glorious Church, who was clothed in variegated raiment, and decked with divine ornaments, in honor of the king, is changed completely into a disgraceful harlot. The ark of the Lord, the glory of Israel, is seized by the Philistines, and taken into the temple of Dagon. Why make a long lamentation? Judea is changed to Babylon, Canaan to Egypt, and Palestine to Sodom, and the King of glory, Christ Jesus, blessed forever, is daily esteemed as a simpleton, and despised as a fool; his holy apostles, the beloved witnesses of thy truth, must as liars, give way with their doctrine to all men; his knit or wrought garment, which the Scriptures were unwilling should be rent or divided, is torn into four or five pieces; anti-christ exercises authority and dominion in all countries by the preaching of lies; and with violence, is thy word proscribed and rejected; if I travel east, west,

north or south, I find in all places, nothing but vain obstinacy, perversion, blindness, avarice, pride, wantonness, rioting, drunkenness, pomp and splendor, strife, envying and ungodliness. I find (I repeat), violence, false doctrine and an impure, deceptive employment of thy sacraments, throughout the world; I find the influence of tyrants triumphing in the courts of all princes; that the learned speak like the beast, are ambitious, avaricious, gluttonous, earthly and carnally minded, and teach according to the lusts and desires of men; there are scarcely any who seek for truth, and if there are, they must bear thy cross; therefore are my cheeks wet with tears day and night; my soul findeth no comfort; neither bread nor drink is sweet to my taste. Like the prophet Micah, I may well go naked; make a wailing like the dragons, and mourning as the owls; for the wound of Israel is incurable. In sorrow, I may well lament with Esdras, and say, "Our sanctuary is laid waste, our altar broken down, our temple destroyed; our psaltery is laid on the ground, our song is put to silence, our rejoicing is at an end; the light of our candlestick is put out, the ark of our covenant is spoiled, our holy things are defiled, and the name that is called upon us is almost profaned: our children are put to shame, our priests are burnt, our Levites are gone into captivity, our virgins are defiled, and our wives ravished; our righteous men carried away, our little ones destroyed, our young men are brought in bondage, and our strong men are become weak; and which is the greatest of all, the seal of Sion

hath now lost her honor; for she is delivered into the hands of them that hate us," 2 Esd. 10: 21—23. Redeem Israel, O God, out of his troubles! look with the eye of thy mercy, upon our great misery and distress, release us from the iron furnace of Egypt, bring us out of the land of the Chaldees, let the holy city be builded again upon her own heap, having walls and gates; repair and rebuild thy fallen temple, the stones of which are trampled upon in every street. Gather together thy wandering sheep, receive thy returning bride, who has behaved so perversely with strange lovers. O God of Israel, create in us a pure heart, that longeth for thy blessed word and will. Send forth faithful laborers into thy harvest, who cut and gather the grain in due season; perfect the builders who lay for us a good foundation, that in the last days thy house may be established, and appear above all the hills, that many people may go thither and say, "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths," Isa. 2: 3; that we may walk before Thee, in peace and liberty of conscience, all the days of our lives, under a good government and blameless teachers, with a christian baptism, true Supper, godly life, and a just separation; that thou mayest in power be eternally honored and praised in us, as in thy beloved children, through thy dear Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, to whom with thee, O Father, and thy Holy Spirit, be praise and everlasting dominion, Amen.