

PRAYERS FROM THE TREATISE ON THE PASSION

THE FALL OF THE ANGELS

O GLORIOUS blessed Trinity, whose justice hath damned unto perpetual pain many proud rebellious angels, whom thy goodness had created to be partners of thine eternal glory, for thy tender mercy plant in mine heart such meekness that I so may by thy grace follow the motion of my good angel, and so resist the proud suggestions of those spiteful spirits that fell, as I may, through the merits of thy bitter passion, be partner of thy bliss with those holy spirits that stood and now, confirmed by thy grace, in glory shall stand for ever.

THE FALL OF MAN

ALMIGHTY GOD, that of thine infinite goodness didst create our first parents in the state of innocence, with present wealth and hope of heaven to come, till through the devil's train [i.e., deceit] their folly fell by sin to wretchedness, for thy tender pity of that passion that was paid for their and our redemption, assist me so with thy gracious help, that unto the subtle suggestions of the serpent I never so incline the ears of mine heart but that my reason may resist them and master my sensuality and refrain me from them.

THE DECREE OF MAN'S REDEMPTION

O HOLY BLESSED Saviour Jesus Christ, which willingly didst determine to die for man's sake, mollify mine hard heart and supple it so by grace, that through tender compassion of thy bitter passion I may be partner of thine holy redemption.

INTRODUCTION TO THE NARRATIVE OF THE PASSION

GOOD LORD, give us thy grace not to read or hear this gospel of thy bitter passion with our eyes and our ears in manner of a pastime, but that it may with compassion so sink into our hearts that it may stretch to the everlasting profit of our souls.

THE PASCHAL SUPPER

GOOD LORD, which upon the sacrifice of the paschal lamb didst so clearly destroy the first-begotten children of the Egyptians, that Pharaoh was thereby forced to let the children of Israel depart out of his bondage, I beseech thee give me the grace in such faithful wise to receive the very sweet paschal lamb, the very blessed body of our sweet Saviour thy son, that, the first suggestions of sin by thy power killed in my heart, I may safe depart out of the danger of the most cruel Pharaoh the devil.

CHRIST FORETELLS HIS PASSION

GOOD LORD, give me the grace so to spend my life, that when the day of my death shall come, though I feel pain in my body, I may feel comfort in soul; and with faithful hope of thy mercy, in due love towards thee and charity towards the world, I may, through thy grace, part hence into thy glory.

THE PRIESTS AND ANCIENTS CONSPIRE AGAINST CHRIST

GRACIOUS GOD, give me thy grace so to consider the punishment of that false great council

that gathered together against thee, that I be never, to thy displeasure, partner nor give mine assent to follow the sinful device of any wicked counsel.

THE TREASON OF JUDAS

O MY SWEET Saviour Christ, whom thine own wicked disciple, entangled with the devil through vile wretched covetise betrayed, inspire, I beseech thee, the marvel of thy majesty with the love of thy goodness, so deep into mine heart, that in respect of the least point of thy pleasure, my mind may set always this whole wretched world at nought.

‘HE LOVED THEM UNTO THE END’

O MY SWEET Saviour Christ, which (in) thine undeserved love towards mankind, so kindly wouldst suffer the painful death of the cross, suffer not me to be cold nor lukewarm in love again towards thee.

THE DISCIPLES FIND A ROOM FOR THE LAST SUPPER

ALMIGHTY JESUS CHRIST, which wouldst for our example observe the law that thou camest to change, and being maker of the whole earth wouldst have yet no dwelling-house therein, give us thy grace so to keep thine holy law, and so to reckon ourselves for no dwellers but for pilgrims upon earth, that we may long and make haste, walking with faith in the way of virtuous works, to come to the glorious country wherein thou hast bought us inheritance for ever with thine own precious blood.

THE WASHING OF THE FEET

ALMIGHTY JESUS, my sweet Saviour Christ, which wouldst vouchsafe thine own almighty hands to wash the feet of thy twelve apostles, not only of the good but of the very traitor too, vouchsafe, good Lord, of thine excellent goodness, in such wise to wash the foul feet of mine affections, that I never have such pride enter into mine heart as to disdain either in friend or foe, with meekness and charity for the love of thee, to [de]file mine hands with washing of their feet.

INSTITUTION OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

OUR MOST dear Saviour Christ, which after the finishing of the old paschal sacrifice hast instituted the new sacrament of thine own blessed body and blood for a memorial of thy bitter passion, give us such true faith therein, and such fervent devotion thereto, that our souls may take fruitful ghostly food thereby.

From *English Prayers and Treatise on the Holy Eucharist*, by Thomas More, edited by Philip E. Hallett (London: Oates and Washbourne, 1938).