

A vintage-style illustration featuring a variety of flowers and a bird. In the top left, there are pink and blue flowers. In the top right, a red flower and a brown flower are visible. In the bottom left, a blue and red bird is perched next to a cluster of orange and yellow flowers. In the bottom right, there are blue flowers. The central text is enclosed in a grey rectangular box.

A BOOK OF PRAYER
FOR THE
Common Student

PENELOPE ALVES

A BOOK OF PRAYER FOR THE COMMON STUDENT

For my beautiful Children

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INTRODUCTION

Dear Friends,

The idea for this booklet of prayers came to me while hearing my own young teens express frustration over certain subjects. Some of their struggles came from the inherent difficulty of the subject. Latin, for example. Math. Other frustrations came from a psychological block towards certain subjects or books which they viewed as seemingly useless to their futures and therefore uninteresting and therefore not understandable. As their mother with other children and duties, it wasn't always possible to be there for them in every moment of need: you know, the hot head, the dancing words, the tight chest, the impulse to defenestrate the horrid book.

So, this Book of Prayer for the Common Student was born. A helper, a companion, an encourager through your studies. The aim of these prayers is to recalibrate your heart and mind, to plumb the deeper why behind everything you are learning. These prayers are crafted to lift you beyond yourself, your desk, your pencils and books and up to the council rooms of God where all that is crooked becomes straight. They can be read when you're feeling down, when you're stuck, or simply when you need a break. They can be read in order, or cherry-picked depending on your need.

There are 40 different prayers covering many aspects of a whole, living education, an education that seeks to train body, soul and mind. Much of what has been written has been influenced by Charlotte Mason and her educational philosophy so you will find her ideas scattered freely amongst the words. There are many

Bible references, poetical license taken with real poems, and Medieval cosmology pattering along the edges.

I pray this little book will not only enrich your educational experience but impulse your spirit to the deepest and best knowledge of all—knowledge of God. If you are already a believer in Jesus Christ, may these help you grow in your Christian walk. And, if you are not yet saved from your sins, may God use these words to turn you to Himself through His Son. A life best lived is a life lived for the glory of God.

A PRAYER DESIRING KNOWLEDGE

Father of Lights and Spirit of Wisdom,

As I view the stack of books before me
My yearning to know grows
Deeply, widely.

This universe is a looking glass
Reflecting the infinite;
It is eternity bursting at the seams,
Overflowing into this finite space.
I, too, am finite.

I sense acutely my insignificance against the landscape
Of your incalculable wisdom and knowledge.

I ask that my search for knowledge would be pure:

Not as an idol worshipped,
Nor for boasting or self-aggrandizing
But rather as a path beside a stream
Leading upwards to the fountainhead:

The Divine Trinity,
The mystery of God;
Of the Father,
Of Jesus Christ,
Of the Holy Spirit—

In whom are hid
All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

May a trickle of this knowledge flow into my soul;
May Your brilliant light illuminate the shadows,
Leading every study of every subject
To an outpouring of worship
To the Only wise
God.

May I never forget that of all knowledge,
Knowledge of God

Is the greatest, highest, and most beautiful
For He is incomparable and ever glorious.
I may have all the knowledge this world could ever offer,
I could be lauded by kings and queens,
Presented with medals and honors;
But if I know not God
It is all for naught.
If I know not God,
I myself am nothing.
So, in this life-long quest for knowledge,
May it be for
Your Glory,
Your Worship,
Your Praise
Alone.

A PRAYER ON I AM

God of my body, soul and spirit,

Because of Your infinite mercy,
I am fearfully and wonderfully made—
Created and stamped with the Divine Seal,
A finite body but an infinite soul.
I am made in the image of God,
With a soul that longs for eternity,
A spirit that desires holy communion,
With a conscience that demands my good,
With a heart that needs, so deeply, its God.
But I am Adam's son, Eve's daughter.
I am a sinner,
A rebel and unrighteous,
A hater of discipline and correction
A transgressor of Your Law.
Without You, I am lost and poor and helpless.
I am in need of Your salvation, Your grace, Your regeneration
Through the blood of your holy Son Jesus.
Wash me! Purge me! Create in me a clean heart!
Through Your divine power and undeserved election,
I am a child of God, a member of Your universal Church.
I am saved and indwelt with the Holy Spirit,
I am a temple of the Triune God,
An image-bearer of Christ crucified.
By Your matchless, inexplicable grace,
I am loved by the God of Heaven,
And of more worth than ten thousand sparrows.
I am the possessor of gifts and talents and abilities,
I am unique and special,
And of intrinsic value.

I am then engaging in a constant battle
Between these two I ams:
This strife found across all Time
Between the spirit and the flesh.
I am a garden enclosed,
I am a fortified citadel.
The enemy is within the gates,
The thief upon the wall.
I am cast upon You in full dependence for every need of every
moment.
I am Your sheep, and You are my Shepherd.
Your rod and your staff comfort me.
I am secure for eternity
In the hand of Jesus
And in the hand of the Father.
Despite my failures,
Despite my faults,
With joy and assurance
My daily hope and daily rest:
I am Yours forevermore.

A PRAYER ON I OUGHT

Giver of my conscience,

Mystery of the unspoken Law,
Inscribed upon my heart and mind,
I wonder at its power and insistence,
I crouch before its reprimands
I humble myself before its demands.
Keep me listening, oh God,
To this internal, moral judge.
How delicate this innate muscle,
How sensitive to use and obedience and training,
How easily seared and dampened,
Relegated to villainy over my weak soul.
Keep fresh before me my duties:
All that I ought to
 be
 think
 do
 speak.

May my conscience guide me rightly:
Be a True North,
A faithful guide.
I confess to neglecting many duties.
I confess to twisting ought to naught.
I confess to ignoring the whispers of that still, small voice.
Keep me tender, oh God!
Help me to listen with sharper ears;
Help to me respond with greater alacrity;
Help me to execute with higher precision.
I ought, before all,
To glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.

I ought, then,
To love my neighbor as myself.
I ought to honor my father and mother.
I ought to flee from
 the lust of the flesh,
 the lust of the eyes,
 the pride of life;
I ought to produce the fruit of the spirit.
May these duties be sweet and never
A burden,
A list impossible,
A load too great to carry.
May they be a relief and a joy,
The most real and the most free manner
In which a man can live:
Guided not by my own vices and enslaved desires
But yoked with the One
Whose yoke is easy
And burden light
And there find rest for my soul.

A PRAYER ON I CAN

Omnipotent One,

I will love You, O Lord,

My strength,

You are my Rock, my Strength, my Fortress, my High Tower.

I call upon You

To save me from all my enemies, within and without;

From fear and anxiety

From weakness and doubt.

I am afraid and distressed;

The wicked one delights in my wavering sorrow and frustration.

I call upon you, Yahweh;

You are worthy of my praise!

You will hear my cry out of Your holy Temple

And in Your power and in Your awesome might

You fly to my aid

Scattering the powers of darkness

With your arrows and lightnings, hailstones and fire.

You deliver me

And set me in a large place.

Through You

I can see light;

I can run through a troop;

I can leap over a wall.

Through You

I can do all things demanded by my conscience,

all that I ought,

all that your Lamp has illuminated,

all that causes suffering

all that brings glory to Your name.

I can be abased and I can abound

I can be full and I can be hungry
I can have abundance and I can have need;
I can be content in all things
Through You, through Christ,
Oh God, my Rock and my Redeemer!
You gird me with strength,
You train my hands for the battle,
Your right hand upholds me and
Your gentleness makes me great.
Your Way is perfect
Your Word is tried.
And so, because of You,
Every day of my life
I can worship and praise You,
And thank You,
And trust You,
And I can live for Your glory.

A PRAYER ON I WILL

God of the Garden,

In that dark night of sorrow like no other sorrow,
Surrounded by the delicate leaves and gnarly bark
And hanging fruit of ancient olives,
Christ was crushed
Like the fruit in the press,
The precious liquid flowing in eternal streams of joy
"Not my will
But Thine be done."

My will,
So often shackled to the desires of the flesh,
So attached to selfish aims—
Thy will,
So perfect in all its ways,
even when it is difficult to understand,
even when it is contrary to my wishes.

Free my will, oh God!
Free it to follow You,
To do and be all that I ought
And all that I can,
Rising to plains so much higher, so much greater
Than myself.

This is true Freedom:
Not in my will, but in Thine,
A holy alignment of my will
With the Divine,
A deliberate choice towards all that is good and right.
Train my will with patience,
Eradicate any willfulness,
Slowly woo me more and more

To think and be and will
Like You.
If I pursue,
If I rebel,
If I stall,
Against your will—
Rebuke me in Your kindness.
May my will become strong in Thine,
Ordering my character, my passions, my desires;
Bringing into subjection my mind, my body, my emotions;
Changing my thoughts when necessary
With a holy rod of iron.
Grant me this power over my own self,
That like a pruned tree,
Like a fruit that is pressed in the Garden of God,
My life might be an outpouring of delight
To those around me
And to the heart of God.

A PRAYER FOR THE HABIT OF ATTENTION

God of Grace,

Our world is filled with Noise;
Some more melodious than others.
Yet in this moment
My duty is to overcome all distraction,
Internal and external;
To focus wholly and carefully,
To train my mind solely on
One book,
One subject,
One point.

How easy it is for my mind to wander.

How easy it is to find delight in distraction.

How easy it is to forget the here and now.

Grant me the grace to chasten and forgive myself
For neglecting the truth
That time is fleeting.

This lost moment, opportunity, window
Will never return.

I must always be redeeming the time.

There is joy in self-denial,

In reigning in my passions and emotions and dreams
And focusing for these few moments

On something perhaps not so
Superficially pleasant.

The dividends received are exponential in value:

A few moments of attention

Will indelibly imprint the wonder gained
For a lifetime.

May I demonstrate Your grace to others

Who are the cause of my distraction,
Who have not yet learned
Full respect and self-control.
Help me to not be distracted by their distraction
And to instead,
In my endeavor to focus and learn,
Be an example to those around me,
Further enriching this day of learning.
Liberate me from mental distractions: a mind that wanders.
Liberate me from emotional distractions: a heart that is
demanding.
Liberate me from physical distractions: a body that rebels.
Keep me from foolish distractions:
 a need for entertainment
 a resistance to learning
 an anxiety for the future.
May Your grace be my anchor
Holding me fast
Moment by every moment
In this day of study.

A PRAYER FOR HUMILITY

O Christ, who is gentle and humble in heart,

In Your kindness and in Your grace
Make me again like a little child
Of whom is the Kingdom of Heaven,
Of whose unassuming thoughts and actions are marked
By simplicity and selflessness.
Divest me of the all-consuming thought of self;
Of that insidious enemy—
The pride of life—
Who loudly demands entrance at the door of my heart,
Who cries for admittance at the gates of my mind.
Set me free, dear Christ of the cross
From self and pride,
From affectation and conscious performance
That this divine grace of humility
May shine forth
In purity,
In innocence,
In Christ-likeness.
For You humbled yourself,
You emptied yourself,
Taking the form of a slave
And became obedient to the death upon the cross.
How, dear Christ, can I raise my head
Against yours
So lowly bent
And crowned with thorns
Against a chest disfigured and bleeding—
I repent of my pride, of my egotry
at the foot of the cross.

May I know myself with truth, not with obsession
May I delight in Your creation,
May my thoughts be drawn to all things beautiful,
May I labor and strive and grow with simplicity of heart
Grateful for guidance and rebuke
Glad of Your every grace upon me
Growing greater
Not in the eyes of the world
But in the Kingdom of Heaven
Where to be the least
is the best.

A PRAYER FOR SELF-KNOWLEDGE

Prince Emmanuel,

In the Holy War
for this country of
Mansoul,
May you ever be victorious.
May the daemons that assault,
The breaches that abound,
The temptations that beset,
The weaknesses that delay
Victory,
All be overcome by Your power.
Grant me the grace and the courage
To look within myself
And be willing to raise the sword against my own darling:
To oppose all that opposes You.
May my Mansoul be for your Pleasure;
Reveal to me when it is not.
May all the Lords of this land:
 My Reason
 My Desires
 My Will
 My Heart
 My Habits
Submit to You as the Prince of this land.
May harbored, pet sins:
 Egoism and self-pity
 Pride and Criticism
Be identified and destroyed
by Your Word
and by the power of Your Holy Spirit.

For I am not my own;
I have been bought by an immense price.
Help me to know myself as You know me,
To know myself without being consumed by myself,
To examine myself honestly,
To kiss the rod that chastens,
To embrace the the trial that purifies.
Help me to use my talents, my intellect,
My abilities and creativity
For the joy and benefit
Of those around me
Whether or not I am aware
Of being a channel of blessing.
Indeed, hide from me, O Prince
All praise and lauding of men
That would cause undue
Pride and self-consciousness.
In this Mansoul,
May You ever reign supreme;
For Your glory and that
of King Shaddai.

A PRAYER FOR THE STUDY OF THE SCIENCES

Lord of Heaven and Earth,

When I consider the Heavens,
The works of Your Fingers;

When I consider the remnants
Of the Garden of God;

When I consider this frame
Fashioned from the dust
In the very image of God;

When I consider the invisible:
Every cell,
Every molecule,
Every atom;

When I consider the height of the mountains;

When I consider the depths
Of the Sparkling Blue
And its monsters, its luminescence, its vibrancy;

When I consider the beasts of the field,
Every creature with wings;

When I consider every law of motion
Under which all of nature is subject,
Whether man or gassy planet;

When I consider the riches,
the raw resources available in abundance below our feet;

When I consider the perfection of obedience
every leaf, every dust mite, every shooting star renders to
You;

When I consider every power and energy, seen and unseen,
thermal, light, mechanical, kinetic;

When I consider every element created to sustain life,
wonderfully organized;

When I consider the incomprehensible:

What is man?

I bow in Worship before the Creator in this Study of any Science:

Chemistry or Physics, Biology or Astronomy, Earth or

Anatomy.

Grant me a ride down the shaft

Into your Inexhaustible Mine;

Give me just one more nugget of unbelievable worth.

May I never tire of the unbounding wonder found in the Sciences.

May I never be led astray by men and women

Who are blind to their Creator.

May I never assume all has been discovered: infinity's fingerprint
is yet upon this universe.

Your Creation astounds me,

Humbles me,

Sustains me,

Fills me.

Surely Science is Knowledge:

The sanctifying knowledge

Of the majestic God

Who created with just the Word of His omnipotent mouth

The Heavens and the Earth.

A PRAYER WHILE JOURNEYING UPWARDS IN THE MOUNTAINOUS COUNTRY OF MATHEMATICS

God of Order,

I must confess that there are times
Numbers dance across the page
And through of my mind
In a choreographed routine
Difficult to grasp.
Help me to breathe
When I get it wrong
And to simply try again.
Grant me patience
When story problems seem irrelevant and superfluous.
I know that each lesson is a necessary stepping stone
Up this difficult
Yet beautiful mountain.
Your order is seen here as in no other place.
From the golden rectangle on a snail's shell,
To the fibonacci sequence on a pine cone,
To the trillions of lightyears between galaxies,
The perfection of Mathematics
Is matchless.

Each sequence and pattern is predicable,
Each law perfectly and always followed,
Each shape, tessellation, and polyhedron
curiously and wonderfully formed,
Each operation right or wrong.

There is comfort in reverse calculation,
A steady bedrock against all doubt.
Help me to love math for its own sake,
For the mental exercise it affords,

And to never proclaim
"I will never use this" or "I can just use a calculator"
For You are the inventor of numbers:
Rational and irrational, whole and fractions,
Of shapes and graphs and parabolas,
Of formulas and negatives and exponents and time and speed.
Admittedly, so much is yet beyond me.
Help me to climb joyfully
Placing one foot in front of the other,
Breathing the pure air of this mountain land
 Free from nebulous doubt,
 Free from factual relativism,
 Free from subjective, personal opinion.
May I see your Perfection
And your order
Each day as
I sharpen my pencil
And open my heart.

A PRAYER FOR THE STUDY OF LATIN

Savior,

Nailed to the cross, naked and bleeding
Pilate hung above You these words:

This is the King of Jews

In Hebrew and Greek

And Latin.

INRI

Iesus Nazarenes, Rex Iudaeorum.

Crucified for the Jews and the Gentiles,

The Greeks and the Romans,

Lifted up to draw all men unto Himself.

Is it farfetched to imagine Paul before Nero

Presenting his defense in Latin?

Is it a coincidence

That the Church Fathers

And the Reformers

And the Puritans

Also preached and studied and wrote

Using Greek and Hebrew and Latin?

That their writings are sprinkled with Latin

Like coarse grain salt across a feast?

From Babel until now,

Language has always been a judgment.

Perhaps, to some small degree,

Latin still represents

Death and a Curse

With its declensions and cases

So foreign to my natural tongue.

Yet every curse and judgment

Is offered redemption.

So Latin
Has been the rallying cry of Christians
For hundreds of years:
Sola Scriptura
Sola Gratia
Sola Fide
Solus Christus;
And in this beauty of truth,
In the beauty of its ancient poetry,
In the beauty of its ancient wisdom,
Latin has been redeemed from its curse.
Grant me patience oh God,
You Creator and Confounder of Tongues
To study and understand,
Word by word,
That I may with conviction before the men of this world
Negate that Latin is dead.
It is alive
and overflowing with the worship of the ages.
Soli Deo Gloria!

A PRAYER WHILE IMMERSED IN THE ART OF MUSIC

O Thou Transcendent,

As these notes roll over my soul,

Now as a mighty ocean,

Now as a twinkling brook,

Now as a rushing river,

As I want to dance

And cry

And sing

And be silent,

Help me to receive this transcendent, tonal language

Overflowing with nuance and delight

As it speaks its own words in its own way.

Give me ears to hear!

Indeed, when I fail to hear,

To understand her words,

Grant me patience and tenacity

To listen again,

To be awed by the majesty

Of this unspoken

Universal tongue.

As my hands touch these keys, these strings, this bow

May a portion of the composer's wisdom

Flow out in tribute, yet

Tinged with its own story.

May each note be set free to declare its

Fathomless message to a waiting world.

Give me grace and patience to practice;

To find delight

in the order and precision

of theory and technical skill,

Of chords and scales
And clefs and dynamics.
From the Day when the angels sang,
To Moses' Song of Deliverance,
To David,
The Sweet Psalmist of Israel,
To the psalms
And hymns
And spiritual songs
Of the Early Church,
How music has ever delighted the heart of God!
So that each sonorous note, even today,
Rises through the galaxies
And into the windows of heaven
And somehow, yet again,
This fallen world brings Him
Joy and glory.
So may I join in the symphony
Of exalting wonder
And worship through music once more.

A PRAYER WHILE STUDYING THE BIBLE

Holy Spirit, Divine Instructor,

How delightful is Your Word!

I stand like a deer

Panting in this wilderness for water brooks,

Longing after the Living God.

Truly Your Word is sweeter than the honeycomb

And precious,

More than the finest gold.

It is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

It is living and active;

Sharper than a sword of double edge.

Your Word is as the rain and snow;

It will ever be the impetus for the springing forth of fruit

From a dry and thirsty land.

Its inspiration is astounding—

That God would use mere mortals

To communicate His very Word:

God-breathed

From His eternal heart onto

Stone

And skins

And papyrus;

Humble, finite instruments

Whose pages burn with Truth eternal.

There is no Book like this Book;

No Story like this Story.

Oh, Divine Instructor!

Unlock the chains of preconception

And comfortable traditions.

Breathe into my soul,
Reveal to my heart,
Teach me
The fathomless depths of the wonders of your Word.
Make me to know God
Like I have never known Him before.
Make me to know myself, my sin and failings.
Make me to love your Truth
And to conform to it fully.
May I never misinterpret Your Holy Word
May all my -ologies
Be informed thoroughly
Through the wisdom of Your Spirit.
May I never study your Word purely for intellectual knowledge,
But rather to hear Your precious voice.
Give me patience to truly study,
Humbly making use of the tools so accessible today
 of hermeneutics and ancient tongues,
 of history and commentaries,
To work through each passage with steadfast care.
Give me a heart to appreciate something fresh
From every familiar verse.
May I be broken each time I open these sacred pages.
May I know Christ—
The scarlet thread
From Genesis to Revelation,
The Seed who was crushed
And has sprung up into life eternal.
May your Word be ever a bubbling spring,
A daily delight of Communion
With the Triune God
through Your Holy Spirit.

A PRAYER WHILE PRACTICING HANDICRAFTS

Maker of Heaven and Earth,

You flung worlds into existence with the word of your mouth,
Yet in the creation of man

Your divine hands molded the ruddy earth
Into the first of your image-bearers.

You opened Adam's side with surgical precision
And with a bone

Fashioned Woman, the crowning beauty amongst the beasts of
the field.

You gave your creative Wisdom to mankind:

Men with Moses

In all manner of workmanship

of metal,

of wood,

of stone,

of fabric,

of embroidery,

of the apothecary,

To establish a House of Beauty and Holiness

For Your Presence to dwell with man.

The perfections of those measurements,

The glory of their designs

Harkening to the God who invented every raw and marvelous
material.

Your Son Jesus was born

Into the home of a carpenter

Where the smell of sawdust

And the grating of a saw,

And the pounding of a hammer

Were the daily rhythm of that humble dwelling in Nazareth.

How familiar every natural substance was
In the fleshly hands
Of the Eternal Christ!
 You are the First Maker
 The Creator of all things.
With our desk littered with tools,
Scraps and mistakes,
We wonder anew at the perfections of your Creation
And at the honor you have bestowed upon man
To work with our hands.
Even in this small act of gluing, trimming, sewing, whittling,
Man again declares his origin:
The fingertips of the God of Creation.
We confess that we desire ease in our handiwork.
Our impatience and failed nature
Are rarely more evident than in this so God-like occupation.
May every wrong knot, mistaken trim,
Each unsuccessful endeavor,
Remind us that we are mere imitators,
That You alone are God;
But through your wisdom,
We too may be sub-creators.

A PRAYER FOR READING LITERATURE

Author of Story Divine,

You have set the precedent

And the high standard

For every story

Of all time.

Literature must be written

Within the Tao,

Within your Story,

Within your Moral Expectations.

Help me to read judiciously,

Ever stepping into deeper waters

Fearlessly.

May I always eschew twaddle,

Hungering only after that which is True and Beautiful and Lovely.

I confess to skimming.

I confess to misunderstanding.

I confess to prejudice

And to pride.

Grant me humility to read again

And again

Until every True story

Works upon me and

Molds me.

May these worlds exist vibrantly,

In parallel,

To this world;

May they be only a leap through the pool.

May characters be my friends and counselors;

May I love these worlds with my spirit:

Finding not only an escape

But a light
In this tangible hero's journey through the dark.
May Redemption be the heartthrob
Of every story.

May I be broken and changed
May I weep and rejoice
May I learn courage and valor
May I be daily more conformed

To the Logos
Through these logos.
We were given Aslan for a reason.
And Sydney Carton.
And the Rat and the Mole and Little Diamond.
And so many others, good and bad.
Thank you for Your gift of human authors
Who will point us on to the Light
By Whom we see light
Generation after generation
Page after page
Until we reach the
Final Chapter.

A PRAYER WHILE ENJOYING POETRY

O Communicator of Beauty,

In this world of chaos,
Of hideous blackness,
We long for beauty
And rhythmic order;
A cadence that assures us all is well.
Yet at times,
Beauty is found through tears;
Comfort through apparent mess.
Oh God of the craggy peaks
And of the slender lily,
Help me to be divested
Of my expectations for what poetry is.
Reveal to me its hidden beauties.
Give me patience
To work through each line, meter, foot and style;
To let unknown words and impossible phrases
Wash over me,
And baptize me
in an overwhelming flood
Of the transcendent,
Of all that is beyond my small self.
May I love the very sound of language.
May I love what I cannot fully understand.
May I love the courage
And the heart
Of men and women whose gift continues to give,
Though often before despised and neglected
By their own generation.
Give me ears to hear,

Lips to recite,
A heart to store.

May the lines of Keats

 "Beauty is truth,

 Truth beauty'

 -that is all ye know on earth,

 and all ye need to know."

Be true of every adventure into this sphere.

Help me to read the poetry of Your Word

And to know with conviction that every ancient Hebraic
parallelism,

Every alliteration,

Every acrostic,

Every abecedarian

Comes from your heart;

For You are even God of Poetry.

How incomprehensible,

How astounding,

How Beautiful,

How Truth

Is our God.

A PRAYER WHEN READING BIOGRAPHIES

Oh God of man,

How ever greater with the passing of Time
Is that cloud of witnesses which surrounds us.
How small I am when I read of
Them!

Men and women who have gone before:
Every life distinct,
Every experience unique,
Yet all for our learning;
For our benefit,
For our saving.

May I be stripped of every thought of accomplishment;
May I be sheared of every ounce of fluffy pride.
May I be naked before
God and man

Confessing freely that I am not as I should be.
I may never be a consul or general in Plutarch's Lives.
I may never be a martyr of Trial and Triumph.
I may never be a Tesla, Nightingale or Raleigh.
But may my life story be one of triumph
And not of shame.

Help me to love more fully the stories of others
So often written after their decease
With little say in their legacy;
May I appreciate their failures as a fellow fallen creature,
May I celebrate their successes as a benefactor of their labor.
Help each author to write fairly and justly.
Give me discernment to neither idolize
Nor despise.

Truly You have especially selected biography

As a primary medium
To display who You are:
 Your attributes,
 Your dealings with mankind.
Abraham and David
Peter and Paul.
Jesus Christ: Son of God and Son of man.
Indeed, all these things were written for our learning.
Oh God,
Use these stories of life found and not found in your Word
To further rebuke me,
And encourage me,
And inspire me on
To a life
Fully lived
For Your Glory
And for the blessing of my fellow man.

A PRAYER WHILE PRACTICING HANDWRITING

Perfect One of the Highest Sphere,

You have communicated with us
Clearly and intelligibly through the
Written Word.

Men, for thousands of years have
Meticulously copied
And translated
letter by letter,
Illuminated pages, sparkling with gold foil
And endless perfect strokes.
Impressive beauty
Inscribed across the centuries.

As I copy each letter of my own with care and precision,
Each stroke, curve and line,
My muscles are prone to cramp,
And my mind to boredom.
May the memory of those faithfuls
In cold abbeys of stone
Renew my strength and patience.
As each letter joins into words
And words into thought
A piece of art ensues:
Both intellectual and physical.
May my handwriting honor the words it expresses.
May a lazy scrawl never bring shame to the lofty thoughts it
presents.

For surely handwriting is a lost art of deep intimacy.
How much easier to type, to jot, to hurry through the task!

Technology has infiltrated my consciousness
Convincing me that
Ink and paper
Have lost their intrinsic value.
How precious are the recipe cards of our grandmothers,
The Bible notes of our grandfathers!
How delightful the decades-old dedications in used books:

To Margaret for Christmas
Love, Auntie Mary
1921

The ink still clear, the love still warm.

So as I tilt this lined sheet
And lift this simple ball-point pen,
Help me to not despise this day
Of small things
But to perpetrate in my corner of the world
Momentum backwards
To the old, nearly forgotten days
Of beautiful Handwriting.

A PRAYER WHILE PLAYING SPORTS

Knitter of my being,

From my mother's womb
You formed each muscle, each bone,
Every tendon and sinew.
You packed into each cell
Potential and momentum
To growth and strength,
Each straining against its walls
For greater connection and movement.
How ungodly it is
To neglect this natural yearning,
To be sedentary and find contentment therein.
How glorifying to our Creator
To strain and train
To discipline and demand
Greater endurance,
Greater submission,
Greater tenacity.
There are times of immense
 exhaustion,
 pain,
 discouragement.
Help me to cheerfully employ correction and criticism
For my improvement.
Help me to be a part of the whole,
to find delight
 in teamwork and
 in celebrating the victories of others.
Help us to share our gifts for the good of all,
Even as You have ordained throughout your Word:

The many being one.

Help me to never idolize any game

Or team or player or financial gain.

Help me to ever keep my priorities aligned with Yours:

That if I have strength to play,

it is because of You;

That if I have the ability to improve,

it is because of You;

That if I enjoy any level of success,

it is because of You.

I return worship to the Creator

For red blood coursing through my veins;

For a strong heart pumping it's rhythm of praise;

For two lungs who dance with joy, in and out;

For arms and legs;

For coordination and concentration.

Surely You have knit our bodies together

In wise perfection.

May my every move

Be for Your praise.

A PRAYER FOR THE READING OF MYTHS AND FAIRY-TALES

Oh God of Wonder,

This world is yet a place
Of dragons and orcs and monsters.
How delightful to know
The True Knight has come
And has vanquished every foe,
Liberating His beautiful Bride
From chains and a fallen past:
From old, weak, king Adam
Who could never prevail
Against the fire-breathing
Winged serpent.
Your Son is the center point
For all the earth;
Pagans looked forward to Him in ignorance,
A god-man of superhuman strength
Who would be their great
Deliverer,
Odysseus and Achilles:
Time would fail to tell of heroic men of mysterious birth
Through whom the ancients longed to find Redemption.
We look back
With wonder
And see His story fully
Told and retold
Across the globe.
The Christ, Son of God and Son of Man.
Stories of wonder filled with
Triune three
And the perfection of seven.

Thorns from a wicked curse,
Hidden treasure,
Pride and pain.
Sacrifice and Death.
Redemption and Restoration.
There is no story like
The story of Salvation!
We wonder, oh God
At your grace and wisdom
In guiding man to place your Son
At the very center of all their thoughts and works
So that very few can say:
We never heard.
How delightful to read these stories:
To feel again our sinful, lost estate,
To worship the One who came,
Who has restored order
And enacted the greatest rescue.
The Gospel is no fairy tale
But every fairy tale is indeed the Gospel.

A PRAYER DURING NATURE STUDY

Creator of All Things,

Here in this cathedral of

Azure and emerald,

Ivory and fuchsia,

All things lift their voices in symphonic praise

To the God of Heaven:

The birds' melodies an unfailing chorus of joy;

Every aroma filling my lungs with Your sweetness;

Every flower telling me of your beauty;

The evergreens: Oh Ancient of Days who never slumbers or
decays!

Who laughs at the Winter

And sings in the Spring.

Your might, Great God,

Is heard in every crashing wave,

In every rushing wind.

The seed that is buried in darkness

And raised with patience

In newness of life;

The lowly caterpillar

Breaking from its cocoon,

Spreading its wrinkly wings;

How dull must be our hearts

To not prostrate in the dirt,

Our filthy hands raised in worship

For the salvation of our fallen nature

Illustrated here in our backyard!

The Big Dipper pours out Your blessings upon this world,

The Galaxies sprinkle the heavens

Like windows into

Home.
If this is a fallen world,
What must Eden have been!
How we groan together here outside,
Looking into the Third Heaven,
Brimming its celestial chalice,
And overflowing onto hills of granite,
Puddles of blue,
Expanses of meadow.
We wonder at its completeness:
Food and medicine
Shade and consolation.
You have surrounded us with Good.
It is good still
As You declared when Time was in her cradle.
And we wonder
And love
And adore
The Creator God whose hands
Have given us so bountifully
This beautiful world.

A PRAYER WHILE WRITING

Father of the Logos,

In the beginning

Was the Word.

The perfect, eternal, infinite

Word.

Wonder of wonders!

The Word dwelt with man

Whose curse-laden eyes

Beheld His matchless glory

Full of Grace and Truth.

He, the fulfillment of every noble word, thought or deed.

The First Mover,

Whose delightful words of communication

First flowed from Himself

And whose rushing river

Has never

nor will ever

Cease as long as eternity's aeons roll.

As I join in this divine movement,

Adding to the sum

Of beautiful words

Illumine my soul,

Guide my pen,

O God.

Not as inspiration

For Your inexhaustible canon is complete

And I confess a sinful ineptitude

To have ever been worthy of such an honor.

But with humility,

I beseech You
To direct my thoughts, fill my heart, permit recollections
That would further my small words
In a way glorifying to
The incredible universe
Of communication.
There are times my sin impedes my writing;
There are times my selfishness is pervasive;
There are times my world is simply too small
To give due respect
To the written word,
To the ancient originators of the
Ideas and thoughts
That inform my imagination;
And to each esteemed reader who generously gives of their
Soul and time.
Truly, we must give an account for all that we say
And therefore write.
May my words be True,
May they draw others to You,
No matter the genre, subject or length.
May I stand before your Judgement Seat
Unashamed
Having carefully and prayerfully
crafted each thought, paragraph, or essay
as worthy of
The Eternal Word.

A PRAYER WHEN READING HISTORY

Author of Providence,

Truly kingdoms rise and fall.

Rulers are crowned and dethroned;

Empires creep across borders—

Unstoppable tsunamis

Until ordered and repelled

By Divine whisper

“Thou shalt not pass”.

They shrink back into obscure oblivion

And dusty history tomes

Ashamed of their audacity.

Ask the Babylonians of Daniel’s age

If the foreknowledge of the Almighty

Has ever failed!

Ask the inhabitants of Jerusalem,

The mummies of Pompeii

If history does not indeed declare the marvelous works of God.

Like an intricate chess game,

A fascinating puppet show

Whose strings are pulled by an invisible hand

To the tune of an over-arching

Story

Unknown, unseen, inexplicable

To human reasoning,

Until in retrospect

Dim patterns emerge in the shadows

Illuminated with the Light by whom we see all light,

Of a Heavenly God

Over all.

Oh God,

Liberate us from the rampant mistakes of old!
Surely all these things were recorded for our learning.
May history free our generation from the cycle of godless,
reckless abandon.
May history never bore us.
May we never be closed and egocentric,
Interested only
In the history of our own nation or people or ethnicity.
May we never become entangled and therefore discouraged
By dates and foreign tongues.
May we never sink contentedly into the couch of familiar narrative
Whose silken curves often deceive
And betray
Your Truth.
May we not become debunkers
But curious
Truth-Seekers,
Not content with the convenient or complacent
But courageous enough to bear the
Uncomfortable and Shameful,
Horrible and Astounding
Reality
Of the slavery of man
Submitting to the degenerate demands of their captive will.
We worship the God of Heaven
Who masterfully orchestrates all things,
Even the failings and power-plays of man,
To His own
Glorious Purposes
That all of History
Point its trembling finger to
Divine Providence
And His unending
Grace.

A PRAYER FOR THE STUDY OF MODERN LANGUAGES

God who so loved the world,

Outside this community, this region, this country

Is a wide world

Full of men and women

Created in Your image.

Around the throne,

In the day of the Lamb

Ten thousand times ten thousand

And thousands of thousands

Of every

Nation and

People and

Tongue

Will join together and

In that day, we will worship the Lamb as one, with one voice and one language.

But until then, in this broken world

Even our communication is fragmented

Into language and dialects.

God, your love extends through all the earth;

In your mercy, may mine as well!

And in a small gesture of this love,

Give me patience to learn this language

Spoken by a society and culture

Removed from my own.

Render me the privilege of saying your Name

And spreading your Word

Past the river, over the mountains, across the sea.

There are genders

And declensions

And conjugations,
Tones and gestures,
Idioms and colloquialisms
Difficult to grasp,
Harder to intone.

Out of respect and love, grant me courage

To make mistakes,

To eschew pride and haughtiness,

To lower myself and become as a little child:

Stuttering and stammering out innocent but painful blunders.

Grant me the patience to bear with godly grace and gratitude

Jeering and malevolent humor

At my expense.

May this effort at language study never be purposed as a feather
in my cap;

If that be my intention, purge me thoroughly!

May my study be consistent, filled with mental vigor and deep
enrichment.

May I know the pleasure of reading the best writings

In their native tongue;

May I know the joy of performing translating service to my fellow
man in distress.

May their words become my words, their people my people

For the furtherance of Your Kingdom.

A PRAYER DURING ART STUDY

Beautiful Savior,

There are things too beautiful for me
Whose eyes are stained with sin.
Open up these secrets slowly,
Lest coming out of the darkness
I am totally blinded by a light so brilliant,
It hurts.
Guide me through the shadows, dear Lord,
Through the penumbral mist
Gradually dissipating with the warmth and the light
Of that long-awaited aurora.
There are layers I can only just distinguish,
Physical and spiritual
Between base and details:
Flowers white
And purple bonnets.
Oh, how I long to see clearly!
What stories stand sentry at the Entrance of the gallery
While I merely peep through a window
Ignorant of my ignorance.
What strokes and lines, points and hatchings;
How they disappear steps away,
How they sweep back with astonishing clarity
In this fresh attitude of inspection.
What genius strokes of light,
Shrewd color play
Of a wheel always spinning,
Dazzling its sprayed sparks of shades and hues.
Give me eyes to see!
May I gaze and perceive their pain,

Feel the heat of the blaze,
Hear the rush of the wind.
May I look and know something of that other
Who reaches through his canvas and through the years
Who takes my hand and invites me in,
Whose sunflowers still bloom on the table,
Whose children are still rosy in the garden,
Whose palette is still splattered with the hectic rush of the surf
crashing into his studio
and across his apron and onto the canvas.
How quiet I feel now,
How in awe
In this other world where the invisible is granted form;
The transcendent a trysting place with the material.
May these pictures form a gallery
In my mind
That as my eyes are opened,
I may see them again and again
In greater fullness and beauty
Fully astounded
At this ladder that reaches up to Heaven.

A PRAYER WHILE STUDYING GRAMMAR AND LANGUAGE ARTS

To the Alpha and Omega: which was and which is and which is to come,

What are tenses to the everlasting God!

To the One who inhabits eternity,

To whom one thousand years is as one day

To whom infinity is an everlasting Now.

What are parts of speech to a God who embodies all things,

To whom thought is speech,

Speech is action,

Who is love, justice and majesty

Incarnate,

Who is so beyond our limited words

There fail adjectives to properly describe Him;

A Spirit, excelling and transcending

all time and space and material?

And yet, this same magnificent, inexplicable God

Is a God of order, a law giver, the perfect organizer.

He may eclipse the feeble efforts of language

But we do not.

How human we are!

How frail, how needfully subject to established patterns and decrees!

How right to subject ourselves fully

To proper speech and grammar

To the specific study of the mechanics of our language

To the analysis and parsing of thoughts and phrases and sentences.

How right to serve faithfully these rules;

How right to master them and use them most advantageously.

How proud to disparage this care,

How arrogant to consider myself above these demands.
Who am I to carelessly fling out sentences,
Bereft of punctuation, of capitalization, of proper spelling,
Lacking coherence and logical progression?
I pray for patience then
 To study the masters of language;
 To diligently learn and apply the rules of grammar;
 To slowly build a repertoire of perfectly spelled words;
 To sweetly replicate studied passages in beautiful
dictation work;
 To gently reread and rework what I have written until it is
fully acceptable.
May I eventually find freedom in this place;
The freedom of that constraint
Which prevents hideous chaos and libertine darkness,
Which allows the architectural plan
The full glory of its potential.
May this submission to the expectations of language
Bring my heart into greater submission to You,
Understanding more deeply
That true freedom is found
Not in my will
But in Thine.

A PRAYER WHILE DISCOVERING GEOGRAPHY

To the One Who holds the seas in the hollow of His hand,

You sit upon the circle of the earth,
You stretch out the heavens as a curtain upon this terrestrial stage.
What must it be to sit at Your side,
While celestial scales
Measure out mountains and heavens
Hills and dust
Nations and seas;
You, the Great Creator
We, little more than sand castles
Crumbling against children's knees at the seashore.
But we are not in Heaven.
We are mankind
Gazing up at the soaring heights of glacier tipped mountains,
Peering below,
Down, down, down
To the murky, bottomless depths of the roaring sea.
And so we marvel
At the physical features that surround us
And at the tenacity of the human plant
Who has through Your grace been able to thrive in all conditions:
Harsh and extreme,
Indifferent to soil and climate.
In this study of Geography,
May we wonder equally at
Strings of islands, those subaquatic mountain peaks;
Buttes and canyons and plateaus;
Shifting plates below, a swirling atmosphere above
And at the wisdom granted to man across the centuries

Who has tamed or submitted to
The Land granted them in Your Providence:
Snowshoes and sleds,
Timber and furs,
Thatched roofs and rice paddies and bamboo cerbatanas.
We bow in worship for cucumbers and melons ripened beneath
The Sun shining in his annual zenith,
For oranges and limes and lemons ready with impeccable timing
To cure winter colds.
It is with gratitude we trace the silver lines of rivers and streams
And brooks: the cradles of so many civilizations.
The mysterious dark circles
Of oases and cenotes and kettles lakes:
Water for thirsty man,
Highways for grain and trade across this globe.
Is there any other subject
In which God's Common Grace is more evident?
How from His lofty heights
He sends His rain
Over the righteous and the wicked!
Truly, as our fingers trace out the lines and borders of physical
and topographical maps,
As we read of courageous explorers:
 Sir Edmund Hilary, Thor Heyerdahl, Admiral Byrd
And so many others,
Their generosity and sacrifice has enriched our lives,
Has led us to worship You more fully
As the greatness of the wonders of this world dawn upon our
Mortal souls.
Yet this world is groaning
And we sigh along with rumbling plates and crashing icebergs
And swirling hurricanes
Longing for the Final Redemption
Of this Dot in the outer swirls of the Milky Way
And of our Heaven-hungry souls.

A PRAYER FOR THE STUDY OF CITIZENSHIP AND GOVERNMENT

To the One Who upholds the Government upon His shoulders,

Heaven is Home

But in this wilderness we pitch our tents,

Sojourners for the course of this sublunary, changeful life.

How tempting to seclude into utopian peace

Ignoring the exhortation

To shine as Lights in the world.

If ever there was an exemplary citizen

May, in your Grace, it be myself.

May I give unto Caesar that which is Caesar's

And live blamelessly and without reproach

Before the world around.

May I never scoffingly question,

"And who is my neighbor"

But ever and always dismount from my beast

To bind up the wounds of the half-dead,

To pour in oil and wine

And carry the wounded soul to the nearest inn.

For my duty is to my fellow man,

To the county in which I live,

To the government who rules over me.

I am not my own.

May the Lives recorded by Plutarch ever inspire

And urge me

To give myself in every possible capacity

In sacrificial service to my land and people.

May my every endeavor be salted by the peaceful recognition

That whatever government rules,

Whatever their system,

Whatever their laws,

Whatever their failures,
They have been placed there by Your appointment.
As I study and understand
Elections and foreign policy,
Congress and departments,
Federalism and Commonwealths,
Communism and Democracy,
Socialism and Parliaments,
Monarchies and Dictatorships
And all that is entailed in the governing of any nation
May my interest be enlivened, my conscience awakened
In pity
To fallen man
And his feeble efforts to mimic the One who reigns in
Righteousness.
Grant me grace to see this world as You see it:
Given over to the tyrannical reign of the prince of the power of
the air by Yourself,
But under the all-knowing, all-powerful, all-merciful Hand
Of the Eternal Father
In Whom is all our Hope, all our Trust, all our Care.

A PRAYER FOR MEMORIZATION

God of my Heart and Soul and Mind,

Fill me

You brimming chalice of beauty and delight,

For I of myself am and have

Nothing.

My natural thoughts are of perversion and sin;

My innate desire is towards all that is contrary.

So, create in me a clean heart

That it might be worthy of

Treasures

Soulfully stored in chests of flesh and under locks of lips.

A man is defiled by what comes out,

So may what exits the gate of my soul

Be influenced fully by the treasures laid up inside.

Grant me patience, oh God

To commit these verses,

These poems,

quotes,

sayings,

psalms,

paragraphs

To memory;

To store them perfectly and precisely

In this bank that promises

One thousand percent interest.

May I never find memorization monotonous

But rather a joyful duty to myself

For my own eternal good,

Finding consecration in the renewing and restoration

Of my mind,

Constantly bathed and purified
By Words of Life
And Wisdom
And Hope.
How delightful in the hour of woe
To reach into this treasure trove
And finger again Things
Old and New
Of Eternal delight;
To murmur quietly against tear-stained hands
Words of light against the blackness.
And how delightful in the hour of joy
To reach into this treasure trove and
Find words for a heart bursting beyond its confines.
So I must memorize. I must!
God have mercy if I don't;
To where shall I turn?
May my life be a mirror of centuries of ancient wisdom
Bottled and aged like the most delicious wine.

A PRAYER WHEN USING TECHNOLOGY

Holy Father,

By your unsearchable Providence
I have been born into this age of
Unprecedented technological advancement.
Computers and chips and the internet
Surround me,
Beckon me,
Woo me.

The construct of our culture and our lives
Demand them.

And I am not exempt.

Truly, the ease of gathering information,
Of expanding my education,
Of sharing
And receiving
Are beautiful, wonderful things.

And yet,

I must confess

How frequently good and holy intentions
Spiral rapidly and darkly
Into laziness and addiction.

Oh Father,

Deliver me from this seemingly innocuous slavery!
Help me to submit to You my heart and soul and mind
That I may have no idols,
That I may master through Your power
The temptation of domination
By dopamine highs and rapid, foolish, even evil entertainment.

Give me wisdom, Father,
To set limits,

To ask for help,
To order and discipline.
Help me to engage with and use technology
Wholesomely.
In my life:
May social media never replace real relationships.
May podcasts never replace in-person conversation.
May blogs and articles never replace books.
May videos never replace physical experiences of food and travel
and music.
May I learn to be grateful but not dependent;
 appreciative but not subjected.
Help me to ever use it for your glory:
 May Your Gospel be spread farther and wider and faster;
 May Your Truth be known more deeply and more fully.
With great humility I thank You for allowing me the privilege
To benefit from and use technology
For the advancement of your kingdom in my own soul
And in that of the
Entire world.

A PRAYER WHILE LEARNING COMPUTER SCIENCE

Father of Lights,

Here in this so very modern space,
This almost fantastic world of science-fiction
Where AI and robots,
Software and coding
Fly like spacecraft from this tangible, created world
Into the technological abyss of universes unknown,
May the Light of your Presence fill my soul
As computer lights flash,
Binary sends her messages,
Currents fly unseen beneath my fingers,
A million unseen stars zooming around their
Mother board galaxy.
How many have found a god in this space!
How many have bowed in worship to this great achievement of
man.
Oh, God, deliver me from such a sin!
May all my light and world be found in You alone.
Grant me patience as I learn and work with these machines
For surely they hold no life
And have no mind
But that which man has given them.
May my mind be clear,
May my eyes be guarded,
May my heart stay pure.
Grant me the joy of using this knowledge
For Your pleasure
And for Your work.
Help me to listen to my body,
To exercise and take breaks,

To purposefully enjoy the outdoors,
To discipline myself against consumption.
I pray for understanding of the invisible,
For patience in the minute,
For perseverance against frustration.
For even in this most human of activities,
Your power is displayed and proved and needed.
You are the creator of mathematics,
The Former of currents and electricity,
The Inventor precious metals and conductors,
the vital components to every machine;
You are the granter of wisdom to the men of old:
Men like Babbage and Turing
Whose curiosity and intelligence have propelled this science
forward.
May I be a small part of that impulse
And may my mark bear the imprint
Of the Light-giver,
My God.

A PRAYER FOR THEATER

Faithful and True,

Before me the stage: expansive, shiny, brilliant.
Within me the treasure chest: delightful, rich, abundant.
Beyond me the faces: eager, joyous, expectant.
Without me the costume: suggestive, significant.
Beside me the cast: nervous, excited camaraderie.

I am merely acting.
Feigning to know.
Assuming a character.
Dramatizing my lines.
Performing a play.

You, before all, know what it is to step into a time, a space, a life
Contrary and separate from your own.
You know what it is to lay aside what is rightfully yours
And willingly clothe yourself in the apparel of other.
There is none like You for true empathy:
The King of worlds upon worlds in the flesh of humble man.
But the incarnation was no act. No play. No assuming of
character.

For the dust of Nazareth has stuck to your sweaty brow,
You breakfasted honey and laban,
You were tempted in the lonely wilderness,
You have sorrowed and You have loved,
You have really passed through the bitter pangs of death.

May we together perform this story as it is worthy
May I never forget these shoes in which I have walked

May our audience be touched and impacted
May the words I have spoken not be lost to the air
Because we are merely players and all the world is a stage.

A PRAYER WHILE READING LAW

Oh Lawgiver from Eternity,

How delightful are the Words of Your Law!

How righteous, how perfect, how concise.

Ceremonially, politically, morally:

There is no law like Your law,

The foundation,

The basis,

The inspiration,

For any lawgiver among men.

Your law has been imprinted on the conscience of man

Since the day You declared,

"Thou shalt not eat."

If Hammurabi's pre-Exodus Code

Demands anything of

Righteousness and Justice

We must confess its genesis to be beyond his pagan intellect

And to be a humbling demonstration to the ancient world

Of God's Grace to mankind.

If man has complicated Law

Or has blurred the lines between right and wrong,

Help me to rest on the Rock beneath the seeming void.

May my reading be ever God-like;

My understanding holy and righteous.

Surely man is man,

Despite his most strenuous efforts

And most eloquent crafting,

Despite a clear and beautiful Constitution

Of Articles and Sections;

A concise Bill of Rights,

Despite subsequent codes and statutes and amendments

And every impulse towards a system of Right,
There are loopholes and confusion,
Strained points and debatable righteousness.
Deliver me from any corruption,
From any temptation to twist or overlook.
May I find delight even in man's law
As it mirrors in foggy, hazy terms
The crystal wonder of Eternity's
Unalterable, unchangeable, unquenchable Law
Whose reaches know no borders
Of either Time or Space;
Whose Judge and Advocate
Has never failed and can never fail
The Words of His own Law.
For with a Scepter of Righteousness
And Diadems of Glory
And a Gavel of Justice
The delightful, peaceable, perfect Law of God
Will ever rule supreme.

A PRAYER FOR PRACTICING RECITATION

Eternal God,

As I prepare to stand before others
To share and perform these words from memory,
I see You standing in the throne-room of eternity
With angels for your listeners.
Your words were spoken with ease and with power
Such that entire worlds sprang into existence.
The angels clapped and shouted with joy
In praise over that holy and unpracticed recitation
But one
Whose envy and pride rose to horrific heights,
Whose sinful heart exploded into thought,
Who deemed himself as worthy
As the God of Heaven
And now also the God of Earth.
How honoring to Yourself,
How much joy it must bring You
As the invisible Witness
That from childhood, we too, endeavor to speak
 Beautiful
 Catalytic
 Empowering words
To those around us.
May this habit not cease with a weekly recitation
Demanded by an educational philosophy,
But may this desire
To memorize and perform the worthy words of others
With poise and dignity,
Fearlessly and shamelessly,
Spill out

Into my being,
My thought-process,
My interactions with others,
That at any time my
 Philosophizing,
 Public speaking,
 Counseling,
 Sharing,

May be sprinkled with confetti and topped with the cherry
Of perfect recitation.

Grant me the humility to comprehend that
The servant is no greater than his Master
And if Your audience was divided,
How much more my own?
Give me courage to speak anyway,
To publicly bring a little more light
Shining and penetrating
Through the darkness.

A PRAYER WHEN STUDYING LOGIC

God whose thoughts are beyond our own,

In this study,

How evident the defects of mind

Created by original sin.

How lacking in clarity,

In sequential thinking,

In the broad understanding of deeper currents

Between parallel and contradictory thought;

How prone to wander!

How prone to careless, self-serving argument!

How prone to vanity!

Divest me, oh God

Of prejudicial preference to my own opinions.

I confess that I have often been guilty

of generalizations

of producing fallacious evidence

of contradictions

of impossible hypotheses

of appealing to the masses.

Help me then in this study

To freely confess my sin,

And to open my heart to truly logical thinking;

Whether in apologetics

Or in any other study,

That I may with clarity and factual argument

Present Truth to any denier.

Give me patience to understand

The different relationships between statements,

The science of a syllogism,

The definitions of difficult terms and concepts.

I owe this duty to You as the perfect God,
To my fellow man who deserves clear and judicious thoughts
From a careful mind,
And to myself, who ought to never settle for mediocrity.
May thinking and speaking and arguing logically
Become a habit
That infuses my every day.
May it influence my every decision,
Whether petty or important.
May it impact the way I read
And the way I write,
That every cell in my body
May beat to the marching drum
Of clarity and logic,
In a small reflection
Of You whose thoughts are so delightfully high
Like the starry Heavens above this passing Earth.

A PRAYER IN THE STUDY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

To the King of kings and the Lord of lords,

In a World whose governing

Is filled with intrigue

And deception

And betrayal

And corruption,

Encourage my heart, oh God.

As I further understand the implications of international dealings

And the inner workings of different governments,

Help me to remember

That every king is placed on his passing throne

By the Eternal God;

And that every policy,

Every economic system,

Each treaty,

And every war

Have been enacted and enabled

By a Sovereign Lord.

Truly the god of this world

Has infected every system,

Every governing body,

Every empire,

From the beginning of time.

And if there has been any good;

And if any promises have been kept;

And if there have been years of prosperity;

And if there is peace;

And if there is stability;

As much as man demands recognition and further power,

We, as your people, bow in humble adoration

That the King of kings
Would deign to present a preview
Of that coming reign
Of perfection and bounty
Like no other kingdom as ever achieved.
How we yearn for that day!
Until that day comes,
I ask for grace and love in this study.
Grace for those who are mistaken in their ideology;
Love for those suffering under poor political theory.
May this study move me
In compassion for my fellow man
And may each aspect of this science
Elicit heartfelt prayer
For your creatures
Around this globe;
That they, too,
May know the joy and the hope
Of the coming Kingdom
That will never makes us ashamed.

A PRAYER WHILE STUDYING PHILOSOPHY

To the One who will keep us from falling,

In this study of ideas,

This quest for wisdom,

This pursuit for truth,

Man has abounded in human logic, in careful observation, in analytical conclusions

That have aided cultures and societies towards better ends.

Man has also abounded in carnal suppositions, even sinful explications

For the inexplicable,

For the sublime.

God of my heart,

Grant me wisdom to sift

Like the threshers of old

The wheat from the chaff.

Truly you have endowed great men with great wisdom,

Good men with good ideas,

Intellectual men with fulfilling answers.

And yet, in this study, perhaps more than any other,

The depravity of man's heart

Has shamelessly displayed itself

Glorying in atheistic carnality.

Guard my heart, O God,

My soul and my mind.

May I see Your wisdom shining through the ideas of the pagans;

May I see your grace displayed in the understanding of human nature,

But may I have the courage

To see your enemies as they are:

Infiltrators to the citadel,

Dressed as angels of light.
May this study never distance me from You,
May the erroneous ideas of man never find fertile soil,
May my curiosity be ever tempered by a greater yearning for You
Than for what man,
In the apex of wisdom,
Could ever offer my hungry heart.
May this study serve me but not dominate me,
May I be greater equipped to share Your Word
With a godless generation.
May this study of philosophy,
This love of wisdom
Find its fulfillment in the One who is of old,
In she who witnessed the genesis of all created things,
In she who is a tree of life and the provider of Consolations.
For she is more precious than rubies,
More precious than all the glittering of this world
That is not really gold.
May I get that Stone of Wisdom
And with all my getting, get understanding
And Eternal Life
Through the only wise God.

A PRAYER FOR WHEN I AM OVERWHELMED

God of Grace,

When my heart is overwhelmed,
Lead me to the Rock
That is higher than I.

Lead me
Because in my weakness,
I cannot go on alone.

Lead me up
Because I am carnal and earthy;
You are high and holy.

Lead me to the Rock
Because I am weak and lowly;
You are strong and mighty.

I am overwhelmed with
 responsibility
 information overload
 intellectual struggle

My head feels hot, my chest feels tight.

I hurt inside and out.

I feel like a failure, like nothing is clear, that I tread in a murky bog.

I cast myself upon Your grace

And thank you for this greatest lesson of all:

You are God and I am not.

I am but dust

But You know and remember this

With great compassion.

I come to You in humility for strength and renewed encouragement

To strive with patience towards the finish line.

Remind me, Holy Spirit,
 To breathe deeply
 To change subjects
 To rest in music
 To inhale the fresh air of the outdoors
 To exercise my body
 To find the balance between mercy and truth:
 recognizing where I am and where I should be
 and having the courage to push myself forward with joy.
I am grateful for every challenge.
I am grateful for every frustration.
I am grateful for every failure.
My need is cleansing, purifying, sanctifying.
There is shelter and rest in the Rock:
Hide me here,
Keep me a well-ordered man—my passions and emotions
conformed and subject
To my Reason
Whose quiet voice whispers in peace:
The Name of the Lord is my Strong Tower.
I run to You
And there
I am safe.

A PRAYER FOR GROWTH

Oh God of Matchless Grace,

My own failings and insufficiencies and immaturities
Are only too obvious to myself and those around me.
I pray for growth, dear Father,
Gracious One,
In Whom my entire being is bound up
In love.

As an earthly father provides
Food and nourishment for our earthly growth,
So You, my Heavenly Father,
Kindly provides for this other
More necessary,
More demanding
Growth
Of character, of spirit, of soul, of heart, of mind, of conscience.
How stunted is the man
Who has never been enlarged
By the God of Heaven!
May the mirror of Your Word
Plainly display where I am dwarfed
And through your grace and power
Help me to mine the necessary truths for my growth.
I am discontent,
Not out of sin
But because of sin.
How I long to leave behind the childish impulses
Of selfishness and pride,
Of megalomaniacal tendencies,
Of stubbornness and foolishness.

May I grow in
Your grace,
Your wisdom,
Your knowledge,
Your love.
May I grow to be more like You.
May this be the primary aim of all my studies,
All my education,
All my gleaning.
I have no higher aim,
No better purpose,
No greater desire,
Than to be subjected to the Smith's anvil;
To the Potter's wheel;
To the Husbandman's shears,
That I might live and grow and learn and work
For the Glory
Of God alone.

A PRAYER FOR THE FUTURE

Creator of Time,

Here in my youth

The Future appears to stretch before me

Long and unknown.

I am filled equally with hope and trepidation,

Fear and excitement.

There are decisions I must make,

Callings I must heed.

Pressures from within and pressures from without.

Yet You are the Creator of Time

And what appears to be a thousand interminable years

To You are as but one fleeting day;

And what appears to be unknown

Has long been seen and known and determined

By a God of Holy Providence.

May my fears keep me dependent upon You;

May my hopes keep me energized for You.

May my life be lived today with care

That my future may be lived with freedom.

Give me wisdom as I look ahead,

Wisdom to say yes

And no.

Give me humility to bow to Your will,

Give me grace to labor diligently, to see Your plans unfold.

I dare not step out in my own strength, wisdom, or knowledge,

I dare not trust my own desires and impulses.

Fill me with Your Spirit

That my future may be victorious,

A life lived to the fullest,

A life devoted to You.

My Future is in Your hands,
Father, I wish them there.
For I am not my own
And the price that You have paid has made me Yours
Forever.
So take me.
My intellect, my soul, my everything.
I lay myself upon the altar of Your will,
A living sacrifice.
May I be found holy! May I be found acceptable!
May sweet incense rise continually
From my life to your Throne
So that my future be fully Yours
A holy staircase
Whose upward communion finds the galaxies but a slight
distance
So close may I live to my God;
My future sure, my life saved
Only because of the One
Whom I love and adore
Jesus, Friend of Sinners, Savior of my soul.

