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I have not kept my truth within myself. I have duties to perform, and to serve my lord as a humble servant. I have told you of the worship of my lord and the mercy of the Lord. I have prayed for you, Lord, and I pray that you may show mercy. Praise be to you, O Lord, who has forgiven us. None of us is perfect, but we are all workers of the cross.
THE MIDDLE ENGLISH

ST. BRENDAN'S CONFESSION AND PRAYER

Edited from Lambeth Palace Library MS. 541,

By

FUMIO KURIYAGAWA

Six manuscripts of the Middle English St. Brendan's Confession and Prayer have been found:


2. Cambridge University Library: MS. Hh. I. 12, fol. 52a–59b (XVth century). (C) cf. A Catalogue of the Manuscripts preserved in the Library of the University of Cambridge, edited for the Syndics of the University Press, Vol. III (Cambridge, 1858), pp. 264–265. This MS. is used by R. H. BOWERS, loc. cit., as the basis of his text, with corrections and additions from the Queen's (Q) and Harleian (H) copies.


4. British Museum: MS. Harl. 1706, fol. 84a–87b (XVth century). (H)


The manuscripts attribute the *Confession and Prayer* to St. Brendan (484-577 or 583), Abbot of Clonfert. Now St. Brendan is best known as the hero of the fascinating story of the miraculous voyage in quest of the Island of the Blessed. The Latin *Navigatio S. Brendani* was composed, according to its latest editor, probably in Lotharingia in the first half of the tenth century.1 It soon acquired great popularity all over Western Europe. There are no less than 47 MSS. of the Latin *Navigatio* extant. As early as the twelfth century, the Latin *Navigatio* was translated into the vernaculars of various countries: Anglo-Norman, Old French, Old Provençal, Italian, Catalan, Old Dutch, Middle Low German, Middle High German, Norwegian and Middle English.

It was doubtless due to the popularity of *St. Brendan’s Voyage* that a Latin prayer was attributed to him. In a preface to the Latin

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prayer, *Oratio S. Brendani*, preserved in British Museum MS. Addit. 33.773, fol. 2r-fol. 2b, I find the following account:

Beatus brandanus monacus fecit istam orationem. Et revelata est ei a sancto michaele archangelo. quando tranferauit septem maria. et data est illi ista oratio post septem annos pasce querens insulam repromissionis. et celebravit pascha septem annis continuis supra mare....../(fol. 2b, lines 7ff.)......Auctoritas divina revelauit istam orationem beato brandano.

(Blessed Brendan the monk composed this prayer. It was revealed to him by the holy Archangel Michael, when he [i.e. St. Brendan] had crossed the seven seas, and this prayer was given him on Easter day after his seven years' search for the Isle of Promise, having celebrated Easter day for seven successive years upon the seas....../......Divine authority revealed this prayer to St. Brendan...)

*Oratio S. Brendani* is preserved in a number of MSS., but the only edition of it, published many years ago by Patrick F. Moran in his *Acta Sancti Brendani: Original Latin Documents connected with the Life of Saint Brendan, Patron of Kerry and Clonfert* (Dublin, 1872), pp. 27-44, is based upon a single MS., Bibliotheca Sessoriana, Rome, B. CXXVII.

Whether this Latin *Oratio S. Brendani* is the original of the Middle

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2 British Museum MS. Royal 7D. XXVI, fol. 9r-16r; Brit. Mus. MS. Addit. 4785, fol. 2r-9r; Brit. Mus. MS. Addit. 33.773, fol. 2r-23r; Brit. Mus. MS. Addit. 37.787 fol. 165 (abridged); Brit. Mus. MS. Harl. 1260, fol. 214r-229r; Oxford Bodleian MS. 1851 [II], fol. 103-124; Cambridge Corpus Christi College MS. 275, fol. 59-69; St. Gallen MS. No. 321; The Library and Museums of the University of Urbana, Illinois, MS. No. 66, fol. 1r-4r, 5r-10r—Confession of sins, in Latin (fol. 4r-4r); Bibliotheca Sessoriana, Rome, MS. B. CXXVII.—SEYMOUR DE RICCI and W. J. WILSON, *Census of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the United States and Canada*, II (New York, 1937), p. 2118, give *Orazione di San Brendano* (XVth century) in the possession of the Carnegie Library. Is this an Italian version of *Oratio S. Brendani*?
English *St. Brendan's Confession and Prayer*, has not been investigated. But so far as I have compared the ME text with the Latin *Oratio S. Brendani* of British Museum MS. Addit. 33. 773, it seems very unlikely that the Latin *Oratio* was the original of the ME prose *Confession and Prayer*, though it is possible that the author of the ME work derived the idea of attributing his own work to the popular Irish saint from the Latin *Oratio S. Brendani*.

An analysis of the contents of the ME prose *St. Brendan's Confession and Prayer* will make it clear that it is a work of religious instruction rather than a record of any individual's actual confession of any specific offence. The work may be divided into seven parts:—I. Preface (5-39); II. The Seven Deadly Sins (40-126); III. The Ten Commandments (127-291); IV. The Five Bodily Senses (292-344); V. The Seven Deeds of Bodily Mercy (345-405); VI. The Seven Deeds of Spiritual Mercy (406-429); VII. Conclusion (429-443).

Detailed discussion of the language, relationship of the MSS., date of composition, authorship, etc., must be postponed till another opportunity. Here I must content myself with printing the hitherto unpublished text of Lambeth Palace MS. 541, together with variant readings from Cambridge University Library MS. Hh. I. 12 (C), which R. H. Bowers used as the basis of his text. The text of the Lambeth MS. (*La*) is faithfully followed, except in the following points:— (1) abbreviations have been expanded and such expansions indicated by italic type; (2) the punctuations and capitalization are editorial; (3) word-division is regularized; (4) the paragraphing is done according to the paragraph-marks in the MS.

* * * *

— 11 —
Here bigynne a confessyoun which is also a preier pat Seynt Brandoun made, and it is riȝt needful to a Cristen man to seye and worche per-after in his lyuyng.

I knowleche to þee, þou hiȝ increate and euerlastynge Trynyte: þat is to seie, almiȝty God þe Fadir, almiȝti God þe Sone, almiȝti God þe Holy Goost, and naȝeleses not þre almyȝti Goddis: but oon almyȝti God þat madist al þing of nouȝt, as it likede to þin hiȝ magiste, my Lord God and my Saueour.

I knowleche also to þee, þou moost blessid womman oure Lady Seynt Marye, mayde and modir of my Lord God and Saueour.

I knowleche also to þee, þou hiȝ and holy cumpany of heuene.

I knowleche also to þee, þou Chirche sleping in purgatorye.

I knowleche also to þee, þou Chirche fiȝtynge in þis world, þat I haue synned first to þee, my Lord God and my Saueour; for I haue not worschipid þee wiþ alle
my boustis, wordis and werkis, as I my3te, ouʒte, coude, or myʒte haue coud, if I hadde do my bisynes.

[fol. 151r]

That I haue trespassid al|so æzens þee,oure Lady Seynt Marye, þat art my Lord Ihesu Cristis derworþe modir wiþ al þe blessid cumpany of heuene, in lettyngæ of ʒoure ful ioie bi my wickid lyuyngæ, þat schulde haue be moorid; if I hadde wel lyued. Wherfore, þou my Lord God and Sauœou, I crie þee mercy; and þou blessid modir of him wiþ al þe cumpany blessid and holy in heuæ, I crie þee mercy.

Also þou Chirche in purgatorye slepingæ, I haue greuæusly trespassid to þee, þat myʒtist han be releeued and holpen bi my good lyuyngæ, good þinkyngæ and almes-deede doynge. Wherfore, and to þee I crie mercy.

Also þou þiȝtyngæ Chirche in erþe, I haue lettid þee of grace þoru myn euel lyuyngæ: in wiþdrawyngæ opere men fro vertuæs to vicis, by euel occasioun þeuyngæ. Wherfore, I crie þee mercy.

[fol. 152v]

Also I haue trespassid to þee my God, my Lord, my Fadir and myn Aʒeynbier, in þe vii deedli synnes, þe whiche þou forbeeð me to do on peyne of euerlastynge dampnacioun, whiche ben pryde, wrapþe and envie, goltenye, sloþe, leccherie and couetise.

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26 ful ] fulle C. 28 my lord god ] lorde my god C. (fol. 52v, lines 7-8).
yuel ] euel C. 3euyngæ ] 3euyngæs C. 43 wrapþe ] wrape C. 44 goltenye]
glotony C. sloþe ] sleþe C. 46 be ] bene C. 50 blessid ] blissid C.
ffirst I haue trespassid a3eins þee, my Lord, my God,  
my Fadir and myn A3einebier: in pryde, þat I haue be  
vnbuxum to þe in alle my þouȝtis: for to þinke on þi  
goodnes; ne in alle my wordis: forto speke of þi  
vertues, ne I haue not kept þe rule of spekynge to þi  
worship aftir þi blessid techyng, as fro ydil speche, fro  
foul speche, and wickid speche.  
I haue trespassid a3eins þee, my God, in my werkis:  
þat I haue not fulfillid þi biddyngis, and do þe gode  
þwerkis þat I myȝte haue do, and ouȝte to haue do to  
þi worship.  
I haue be prud of herte in my þouȝtis, of my kunnyng,  
of my spekynge, of myn aberynge, of strenkþe, of aray,  
of schap, of kynrede, of riches, and of alle þe goodis  
and ȝiftis þat þou God hast do to me; for þe whiche  
I ouȝte þe moore to haue be meke and buxum to þee  
my God, and to alle þyne.  
Also I haue be proud inward in þinkynge, and outward  
in schewynge and doinge; wherfore I crie þee, my Lord  
Ihesu Crist, mercy.  
I haue synned in wrapþe aȝens þee my good God:  
takynge on me þi doom, willynge wrecche and desirynge  
veniaunce, aȝens þe wille and þe biddyng of þe God.  
I haue synned in wrapþe, in dissesyng of my silf.  
I haue synnyd in wrapþe aȝeins manye of þee, þou
fiȝtynge Chirche: in yuele willinge, in yuel spekynge, and in yuel doynge; Ȝberwise doon to hem þan I wolde þei dyden to me, and Ȝberwise spoke by hem or to hem, þan I wolde þei hadden by me or to me; wherfore I crie to þee, my Lord Ihesu Crist, mercy.

I haue synnyd in enuye grucchynge aȝens þee, God, for þi goodnes þat þou hast do to myn euencristen. I haue be glad of Ȝbere mennys harm, of her losse and her disesse, whanne I haue not loued hem. I haue be sory of her encrees in goodnes, in strenkþe, in wisdom, in welfare and in welþe, whanne I haue hatid hem.

Wherfore I crie þee, my Lord God, mercy.

I haue synnyd in glotenye aȝens þee my God, in ouermyche dispens-Ȝynge of þi goodis, Lord, needlees; for þe which I haue serued þee, my God, þe wors whanne I ouȝte haue serued þee myche þe betere. I haue ete and drunke oftir and moore þan me nedide to þe sustenaunce of my bodi and soule. I haue deuourid and wastid needlees þat nedy men myȝte haue be holpen and cumfortid with to her sustenaunce:

wherfore I crie þee mercy.

I haue synnyd in slouþe, my Lord God, of þi seruise: þat I haue left þat I schulde do, and þat I schulde
I haue be slou3 to heere good and lerne goodnes and to do |bhere-aftir; and slou3 to leue heerynge of wickidnes and of harm. I haue be slou3 in my seyng to se |bhe si3tis of |bhee goodnes of |bhee God, and slou3 to leue |bhee si3tis of vanyte and of yuel; and haue be slou3 to speke goodness to |bhee worship of |bhee God and to myn euencristen; and slou3 to leue yuel speche, wickid speche, and harmful speche. I haue be slou3 to do gode deedis to |bhee worship of |bhee my God, and profi3t to myn euencristen.

I haue be slou3 to go gode weyes to |bhee worship of |bhee God, and profi3t of myn euencristen. I haue be slou3 to |binke gode |bo3tis, and to leue wickide |bo3tis and ydil. I haue be slou3 to leue synne and fle it; and slou3 forto lere vertues and vsen hem. I haue be slou3 to wilne good, speke good, and do good, to |bhee worship of |bhee God and profi3t of myn euencristen; wherfore I crie |bhee mercy.

I haue synnyd in leccherie and in foule |bo3tis, in foule and wickide desiris, in leccherous spekyng, in lusti leccherous heeringe, in leccherous seynge and lokinenge, in leccherous kissynge, in leccherous araiynge and atirynge.

In goostly leccherie I haue also synned, |pat I haue not synned in leccherie and in foule |bo3tis, in foule and wickide desiris, in leccherous spekyng, in lusti leccherous heeringe, in leccherous seynge and lokinenge, in leccherous kissynge, in leccherous araiynge and atirynge.

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loued þee, my spouse Crist, as I schulde do, to whom I was weddid at my Cristendom. Wherfore I crie þee mercy.

I haue synnyd in couetyse, þat I haue not holde me apaied in alle tymes wiþ þe pore astaat þat þou hast sett me yyne; but oþerwyse haue wilnyd and desirid moore heelpþe, moore welþe, moore strenkþe moore kunnyng, moore riches, moore fairnes, and excludynge of alle aduersitees: wherfore I crie þee, my Lord Ihesu Crist, mercy.

Here bigynnen þe ten heestis.

O þou hiþ incomprehensible increate and euerylastynge Trynyte: þee aloone I schulde haue worschipid, wiþ al my myȝt, with al my mynde, wiþ al my witt, wiþ al my wille, wiþ al my resoun, and wiþ alle þe myȝtis of soule and body: in þouȝt, word and deede.

Also I schulde not haue take þin name in ydilnes, ne in falsheed, neþer bi word ne in maner of lyuynge.

Also I schulde haue kept þin holiday, in deuoute preier, in fastinge fro synne, and in discreet almes-deede-doynge bodili or goostli.

Also my fadir and modir I schulde haue worschipid, wiþ worschip aproprid vnto hem.
Also I schulde sle no man, ne\textit{per} bodili ne goostli:  
\textit{bat} is, not bi strook, ne bi wille ne word.

Also I schulde do no leccherie, ne\textit{per} bodily ne goostly.

Also I schulde not stele, ne\textit{per} in wille ne in deede.

Also I schulde lye no lesyng, ne\textit{per} in priue ne in open.

Also I schulde not coueyte ony manny\textit{s} seruaunt, ne his wiif, ne his beest, ne his hous, ne his lond, ne noon \textit{op}er good \textit{bat} is his.

In \textit{these} ten heestis I haue synnyd to \textit{hee}, my Lord, my God, my Maker \textit{and} myn A\textit{ein}bier; whiche heestis I my\textit{3}te han kept, as I ou\textit{3}te, coude, or my\textit{3}te han coud, if I hadde do my bisynes; for haue not worschipid \textit{hee} God in alle tymes, \textit{and in} al place: \textit{in} \textit{hou3t}, \textit{in} word, \textit{and in} deede.

I haue not loued \textit{hee} God in alle tymes, aboue alle \textit{pingis}, wi\textit{b} al myn herte, wi\textit{b} al my mynde, \textit{with} al my soule, \textit{and wi}\textit{b} alle my streng\textit{pis} \textit{and} my3tis, as I schulde; but ofte tymes haue louyd o\textit{per}wise \textit{bat} I schulde, \textit{and} not loued \textit{bat} I schulde haue loued. I haue lo-\textit{ued} also lesse \textit{bat} I schulde haue loued moore.

I haue not dred \textit{hee} God aboue alle \textit{pingis}, ne I haue
not serued þee God for alle þi ȝiftis, as I myȝte, schulde, and coude.

I haue not tristid and leeued in þee God alwey: þat þou art almyȝti and maist help and no þing but þou or bi þee, and þou art almyȝti and canst help al good, and wint helpe; helpist and cumfortist, as Fadir and Lord Maker and Aȝeinbier, alle þi children and seruauntis, and al mankynde þat wolen serue þee. Wherfore I crie þee mercy.

I haue mys-take þe name of þee my God, þat I haue not, in al tyme and in alle places, worschipid þee as I schulde; for I haue mys-take þi name in my synful lyuinge, þat I haue not lyued aftir þi lore: and so I bere þe name of þe seruaunt of þee Lord, but I do not þi werkis. | Also in spekynge I haue mys-take þi name God, as in praiynge vndeuoutly, vnworschipfulli and vnreuerentli.

Also I haue swore bi þi name, ydily, dilauily and vnauysily: and sumtyme truly but I drede moore falsly.

I haue not kepte myn holiday aftir þi teching, Lord, and haue not kepte me out of synne, ne fled synne on þe holiday, as I myȝte and schulde. I haue not lerned ne vsid uertues in holy tyme and in al tyme, as I myȝte and schulde.

I haue not had mynde on þe holiday on þe goodnes

of þee God þat þou hast do to me and al mankynde:
how þou madist us and alle þingis for us; how þou kepist and gouernest us; how greet a peyne and hidous þou suffridist for us, to bye us and bringe us fro þat euerlastynge deel, þat we disserueden worþi to han.

Also | I haue noþing þouȝt on þe holi day, how wel I myȝte haue serued þee, my good God, in word, þouȝt and deede, and haue left vndo; and haue þouȝt, spoke and doon, þat I schulde not haue þouȝt, spoke ne do. 195

Wherfore, my Lord God, I crie þee mercy.
Also I haue noþing þouȝt on þe holi day, how wel I myȝte haue serued þee, my good God, in word, þouȝt and deede, and haue left vndo; and haue þouȝt, spoke and doon, þat I schulde not haue þouȝt, spoke ne do. 195

Wherfore, my Lord God, I crie þee mercy.

Also I haue not worschipid my fadir and modir, boþe bodili and goostli, in wille, word or deede, as I ouȝte, coude or myȝte. I haue mys-spoke to hem. I haue not buxumly and plesyngly herd hem, and doon aftir her biddynge and aftir her teching. I haue not, goodli lowli and mekely, holpen hem wiþ my seruise, and with my good and catel in al tyme, as I schulde and myȝte.

Wherfore I crie þee, my Lord Ihesu Crist, mercy.

I haue also trespassid in mansleynge bodily or goostly: in yuel willynge and yuel spekynge, and þat haþ ben hyndrynge and harmynge to myn euencristen in name or in fame; and so I haue mys-do to oþere men, oþerwise þan I wolde þei hadd do to me.

Also I haue be cause of greet synnynge to oþere men and womme: bi my foly spekynge, bi myn vngodly and

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mys-ara'Iynge, bi myn nyce cuntenaunce and yuel ensaumple 3euynge, bo.pe in word and deede. Wherfore I crie pee, my Lord Ihese Crist, mercy.

Also I haue broke bi vi heest, bi pe syynne of leccherie bodily and goostli: in wickide desiris of leccherie, and in ful lust of leccherous doynge. Wherfore I crie pee, my Lord Ihese Crist, mercy.

Also I haue broke bi vii heest: doinge pe deede of pefte bo.pe bodili and goostli, for I haue resseyued goodis of pee, my Lord, and wickidli spendid hem, as goodis of kynde and goodis of fortune and goodis of gra-|ce, and not serued pee with hem, whanne it bihofte me to haue vsid hem, to bi worship and glorie and to my profite.

Also I haue resseyued goodis of myn euencristen, by mo slei|tes |an I can telle, and 3it in to bis hour I haue not ne can not 3elden it iustli a|ein: ne|ber in wil, word ne deede, as I schulde do.

Also, good Lord, I haue broke pin viii heest: greuousli offendinge pee in lesyngis, for I haue be fals to pee God, and to man also: to pee my Lord God, in false biheestis and couenautis |at I ofte haue maad to pee and b|ine: and not fulfild hem whanne I was cristnyd and bihi3te to pee, my good Lord Ihese Crist, and foond
borowis to be preest: to be bi perpetuel serveraunt, and to forsake be deuel, and alle hise falsnessis, and I bihi3te to kepe bin hi3e, iust and perfi3te heestis: and bus haue I not doon.

I haue also, my good Lord God, bihi3te to pee and to be prest: to leue and forsake synne, and algatis 3it I dwelle and waltre þere, as a fatte sowe in hoot somer turneþ and weendþ hir in þe foule stynkinge slou3.

I haue be fals also to myn euencristen: boþe in word and deede, for þat þat I haue seid I wolde doon not, ful ofte I haue doon it.

Also ful ofte tymes I haue bacbitid myn euencristen, and spoken of hem oþer þing þan I schulde: for I hadde nôtt hem bi loue in herte, aftir þi lawe, Lord of mercy and of charite.

And ful ofte tymes I haue praisid boþe men and wommen oþere þingis of þis world moore þan þei weren worþi; and lackide men and wommen oþere þingis of þis world, seiynge hem to be yuele, whanne þei weren gode; or ellis weren not so yuel as I deemede þem to be. Wherfore, my good Lord Ihesu Crist, me lakide a Trynyte of þi lawe: discrcioun, pite and charite.

Also good Lord, ofte tymes haue I schewid me wilfully
\(\text{operwise and betir outward, }\) but I have been inward, both in cuntenaunce, in word and werk: to make men deeme and lye on me, but I was betir, holier and trewer than I was: as a fals ypocryt disseyuynge manye and my self moost.

A, my good Ihesu, what schal I do? Truly, Lord, what schal I do I woot not, but if I bi greet grace, but is bi messanger, pрайe pyte bi porter, but he wolde opene be ȝate charyte: but I myȝte entre in to be brood bosome of bi mercy; for I, as a fals truaunt fleynge be profitable teching of his maister, haue fled awey fro bin hoolum, ne-Ûdeful, leeful and profitable doctryn of bi blessid lawe; for I, as a rebel and vnkynde child, brekynge he biddyng of his bodili fadir, haue broke bin nyne heest, but art my cheef goostli fadir. For in bis heest pou forbeed me to coueyte my neiȝboris spouse: and but haue I broke in o degre or ofer.

Wherfore I crie be, my Lord Ihesu Crist, mercy.

A, Lord God, mercy: for I haue broke also bi tenbe heest. For I haue coueitide my neiȝboris goodis wrongfully, as gold, siluer, good, catel, beestis, seruauntis, hous, lond, and ofer maner of catel, ful ofte. How ofte, how manye tymes, how greeuousli and how greetly, in alle bin heestis and aȝein alle bin heestis, God, and so greeuousli, so often willyngli and wityngely: but I

\[\text{260 inward }] \text{ inwart C. 264 silf }] \text{ self C. 267 wolde }] \text{ wolle C. 270 haue }] \text{ han C. 271 hoolsom }] \text{ holsom C. leeful }] \text{ om. C. (fol. 56b, line 24). 272 of bi }] \text{ and pat C. 273 biddyng }] \text{ biddyngis C. 276 in o }] \text{ eieber in oo C. 278 bi }] \text{ be C. 284 so often }] \text{ and so ofte C. 285 it }] \text{ om. C. 287}\]
Can it not telle ne þinke. [Wherfore þu, hiþ Kyng of blis, piteuous gracious and merciful Lord: haue pyte and mercy upon me þi pore exilid creature, and graunte me a chartir of pardoun: to come to my kynde heritage þat is þe lond of liþ, þat I am flamyd out of, þoru myn abhomynable lyuyng, þou þat lyuest and regnest Lord Kyng, God and Man in to worldis of worldis, amen.

Here bigynnen fyue bodily wittis.

O þou hiþ excellent Lord God: lowly to þee I knowleche, þat my fyue wittis I haue myspendid: whiche ben þese: heerynge, seynge, smellynge, tastynge and handlynge.

Wip myn eeris I haue mys-herd þo þingis þat displesen þee: þat harmelþ and hyndriþ myn euencristen with ioie and not wip sorowe.

Wip myn iþen I haue mys-seen ofte manye vanytees: þat þou hast forfendid me in manye a place of þi lawe, whiche veyn siþtis han drawe me fro þee vnto myn aduersarie þe deuel, as bi leccherie, bi pride, bi mys-coueitynge, and manye opere synnes þat I haue fallen yu ne for myn abidynge siþt; also I drede me, Lord, leste I haue be cause of manye oon fallynge fro vertues
to vicis; for, gracious God, I schulde haue lokid in to pe goodnes of pee and of þi werkis, þat þou hast ordeyned for mankynde, with worship and reverence, but I dide it not. Wherfore I crie þee mercie, my Lord Ihesu Crist.

With my nose haue I mys-smellid þingis lusty to þe flesch, þat han drawe me to synne moore þan to swetnes of vertues.

With my tunge I haue mys-tastid and mys-spoke in ful manye a tyme; often tymes haue I mys-tastid and mys-spoke in ful manye a tyme: manye tymes haue I mys-tastid ouer-lusty mete and drinke, and moore take it for lust þan for nede of bodily sustenaunce; and wip my tunge I haue spoke ydili, wickidli and falsli. Wherfore I crie þee, my Lord Ihesu Crist, mercy.

Wip myn hondis I haue mys-handlid, and manye a tyme ful myche mys-doon, for I haue handlid and touchid, þat I schulde not touche ne handle. I haue not do þe gode deedis þat I myȝte haue do wip hondis, to þe worschip of þee God and profiȝt of myn euencristen. Wherfore I crie þee, my Lord Ihesu Crist, mercy.

With my feet I haue mys-goon in to placis manye goon þat I schulde not haue go, and slouȝ to go in to gode placis as it perteyneþ to me: as to chirche and to
ōbere placis þat ben solitarie, forto praie to þee, God, praisen and þanken; also I haue be slouȝ to go to myn euencrisṭen to cumforte hem in her nedë of siiknessis and ōbere dissesis. Wherfore I crie þee, my Lord Ihesu Crist, mercy.

Wiþ myn herte I haue mysþouȝt ofte: ydiþ þouȝtis, wickide þouȝtis, harmyngþ þouȝtis, proude þouȝtis, wraþful þouȝtis, enuyouse þouȝtis, and lecherouse þouȝtis; and I haue nott þouȝt on vertues forto lerne hem, to kepe hem and to vse hem: as of mekenes, pacience, charite, stidefast bileueue, and alle ōber vertues, aftir þe teching and þe blessid ensaumple þeuynge of þee, my Lord Ihesu Crist.

Here bigynnen þe seuen werkis of bodily mercy. 345

| Fede þe hungry; þeue drinke to þe þirsti; cloþe þe nakid and nedy; herborowe þe pore houlesse and nedy; cumforte þe siike; visyte prisoners. O, þou hiȝ Kyng of blis, benygne, piteuous, gracious and merciful Lord God and Maker of mankynde, mercy, mercy! I crie to þee, Lord God and Man. I crie mercy for my self; mercy I crie for alle my frendis; and mercy for alle men qwike and dede; for truly Lord I trowe, þere was ne is ne neuere schal be but fewe, þat þei ne han

i̇hesu crist ] god C. 342 stidefast ] stedfast C. 346 Here bigynnen 347
mercy ] Septem opera misericordie corporalia C. 346 þirsti ] þristi C. 348

— 26 —
errid, erren and schulen erre, in doynge þese deedis of mercy. O, Lord! and þou wolte axe a-countis of hem at þe dreadful day of doom, of ech man; and þo þat han doon hem as is declarit aftir, schulen resseyue þi mercy, and regne wiþ þee |in þi kynghod, and þei þat han not doon it in þe foorme þat sueþ aftir, or ellis doon it not, schulen resseyue þi strait riȝtwisnes medlid sumwhat wiþ mercy in þi prisoun helle, where deuelis schulen regne wiþ hem in to worldis of worldis, amen. O, Lord! In what foorme owiþ it to be doon? Truli, Lord, I trowe aftir þin owne teching, for, Lord, þou seist in þi lawe: be þe merciful as ȝoure Fadir of heuene is merciful. A, Lord! and in anoþer place þou seist: þou moste forʒeue of al þin herte. O, Lord! it is hard to an erþeli man, but not to an heuenli man, to do þe deedis of mercy. O, Lord! Bihouþ þis be þe bigynnynyg of oure almes-deede doynge? þe truly, Lord, I trowe; and as þou art ful of myȝt and power, to |do it myȝtily, mawgrey þe wille of þe flesch, and alle goostli enemyes; and as þou art large in alle þi þiftis, þou wilt it be do largely, aftir mennys hauynge, and aftir þat nede is; and as þou art ful of prudence or warnes, þou wilt it be do warly; and as þou art ful of

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discrecioun, þou wilt it be do discreetli; and as þou art ful of mekenes, þou wilt it be do mekely; and as þou art ful of pacience, þou wilt it be do paciently; and as þou art ful of riȝtwisnes, þou wilt it be do riȝtwisly; and as þou art ful of trulþe, þou wilt it be do truly; and as þou art ful of witt, þou wilt it be do wityngli; and as þou art ful of wisdom, þou wilt it be do wisely; and as þou art ful of good wille, þou wilt it be do willyngly; and as þou art ful of goodnes, þou wilt it be do goodli; and as þou art ful of pyte, þou wilt it be do piteuousli; and as þou art ful of mercy, þou wilt it be do mercifuly; and as þou art ful of charite, þou wilt it be do charitefully; and as þou art ful of resoun, þou wilt þese deedis be doon in resoun, bi resoun and with resoun. O, Lord, þese deedis of mercy ben but vii in noumbre, and esy in spekyng, but truly, Lord, þei ben wel hard in doynge to an erþeli man, but not to an heuenli man. A, Lord! Wher þese þingis suffisen not to þee, to do hem þus as it is before seid? No truli, Lord, I trowe. It perteyneþ me moore to do, for it bihoueþ me by pite and charite, to styre opere men to do þe same: as I wolde opere men stiriden opere in refreischynge of me if I were in þe same caas of nede, bi þi lawe, Lord ful of pyte, mercy and charite. O, Lord Ihesu Crist, to þee fully I knowleche, þat I
follischly, recheleesly and vnkyndeli han doon þese deedis of mercy. Wherfore, my Lord God, my Maker and myn Aþeinbier, lowli wþþ herte and mouþ, I crye þee mercy.

Here bigynnen þe vii deedis of goostli mercy.

Teche, counceile, chastise or repreue, cumfort, for þeue, suffre and preie.

O Lord, I haue not tauȝt vnkuȝnyng þi blessid lawe aftir þe witt þat þou hast lent me to vse to þi worship, and þroȝt to me and to alle ofere.

O Lord, I haue not counceilid to fle vicis and use vertues, for dreede or for necligence eiþer |for wantynge of charite.

O Lord, I haue not do my bisynes to chastise þo, þat ben vndir my power and breken þin lawe: neiþer to lette ofere by al her myȝt.

O Lord, I haue not cumfortid hem þat were in goostly myscheef, as I schulde haue do, boþe by word and deede.

O Lord, I haue not forþeue wrongis, repreues and lesyngis, þat men han doon to me.

O Lord, I haue not suffrid mekeli, pacientli and charitably after þe ensaumple and teching of þee, my Lord Ihesu Crist.

O Lord, I haue not alle tymes preied for myn enemes and for alle trespassouris aȝens me, as þou me techist
in þi lawe; wherfore I crie þee, my Lord Ihesu Crist, mercy. For alle þingis þat I haue trespassid ynne aþens þee, my Lord God, my Saueour and myn Aþeynbier, in þe vii deedli synnes: or ony of her spicis; in þi ten co-þmaundementis þat I haue not kepe my fyue wittis yuel spendid, seuene deedis of merci bodili and goostli not fulfild, but ofte moore and worse þan I can telle: þe cause of my negligence I am aknowe þat I haue synned; wherfore I crie þee, my Lord Ihesu Crist, mercy, þat I principally haue trespassid to; and to þee, þou blessid Modir of my Lord Ihesu Crist wiþ al þe cumpany of heuene, mercy; and þou Chirche slepynge in purgatorye, and þou fȝtynge Chirche in þis world, to which I haue trespassid in þouȝt, word and deede, mercy; and þou Lord to whom strecchip al þe trespass: mercy, Lord God, mercy. ～A～M～E～N.

Here eendǐþ a Cristen mannys confessyoun; þe which is also a deuoute Orisoun ～ ～ ～