Prayer about the Cup

The clear day quietly burns out;
Pure is the blue vault of heaven;
The whole west shines in gold
Over the land of Judea.

Calmly towering over the fields,
Illumined by the sunset,
Stands high Olivet
With fragrant gardens.

And, full of radiance, before it,
Enlivened by the noise of the people,
Lies holy Jerusalem,
Surrounded by a strong wall.

In the distance Ebal and Gerizim,1
To the east the waters of the Jordan
With the lush greenery of the valleys
Are outlined in the waves of mist,
And the beauty of the Dead Sea
Through slumber gazes at the heavens.2

And there, in the west, far off,
The mighty expanse of the azure waves of the Mediterranean
Is bounded far and wide
By the sandy shore...3

It grows dark... everywhere silence...
Lo, the lights of night have flashed forth,
And the bright full moon
Illumined the Garden of Gethsemane.

In the grass, beneath the olive branches,
Sons of the divine Word,
Having forgotten the noise of Jerusalem,
Sleep three apostles of Christ.

Their sleep is calm and deep;
But heavily slept the stern world:

The hereditary vice of ages
Had locked him in its chains,
The curse of the forefather lay upon him
As a stain of disgrace
And with each new age's evil
Struck him like an ulcer...

But the hour of freedom was approaching
And, alien to the common disgrace,
The messenger of God, at this hour,
Was deciding the fate of the world.

For the high word of truth
He foresaw the cross of Golgotha.

And, stirred by a feeling of sorrow,
He prayed alone to the Father:
Thou knowest, Father, my sorrow
And seest how Thy son suffers,
O, strengthen me, I pray,
My soul is failing!

The day of execution is near: it will come,
Given as a sacrifice to the people,
Thy son will die without murmur,
Will die for common freedom...4

Struck by the curse of the rabble,
Tormented and stripped bare,
Before the crowd he will bow
His bloodied head.

And those to whom from the cross
He will send the gift of blessing,
With a smile of proud contempt
Will raise their hands against Christ...

O, may this cup pass,
My Father, from Thy son!
It is bitter for me to see the malice of the world
For his redemption!

But not my will be done,
Let it be as Thou wilt!
The lot appointed by Thee
Is the work of eternal righteousness.

And if to Thy people
My disgrace brings good,
Let for common freedom
The Son of Man die!

Having ended the prayer, full of sorrow,
He came to the disciples
And, seeing their calm sleep,
Said to them: Arise, the hour has come!

Leave your sleep and pray,
That ye enter not into temptation,
Then shall ye be strengthened in faith
And with faith meet adversity.

He spoke and quietly withdrew
To where he had wept before,
And, stirred by the same sorrow,
He fell upon the ground and prayed:

Thou, Father, sentest me into the world,
But Thy son the world receiveth not:
To it I proclaimed love,
It heedeth not my words;
I was a physician to its sick,
I prayed for mine enemies
And over me Jerusalem,
As over a deceiver, mocked!

I bequeathed peace to the people,
The people threateneth me with judgment,
I raised the dead
And the world prepareth a cross for me!..

O, if it be possible, from me
Let this cup pass!
Thou art the God of love, the beginning of light,
And all things are possible to thee!

But if holy blood is needed
To reconcile earth with heaven,
Blessing Thy eternal judgment,
I am ready to go up to the cross!

And his gaze in inexpressible anguish
He cast down from heaven to earth,
And again, tormented by sorrow,
He came to the disciples.

But their closing eyes
Were weighed down by unbidden sleep;
Of the great mystery of this night
Their poor mind did not comprehend.

And he stood silent, full of torment,
Bowed his high brow
And on his breast his holy hands
Folded in exhaustion.

What he thought in these minutes,
As man and Son of God,
Having taken upon himself the sin of millennia,
Only his Father knew.

But no human soul
Has ever experienced
That grievous pain which
Was in his breast at that time,

And people, truly, would not have understood,
Our whole sinful world did not comprehend
Those tears which shone
In the eyes of the Savior at that moment.

And now again he withdrew
Under the shade of fig trees and olives,
And there, bending his knees,
Again he wept and prayed:

O my God! It is hard for me!
My mind, wavering, grows dark;
All human evil
Weighs upon me alone.

The shame of mankind, the shame of ages,
All this I take upon myself,
But myself under the weight of chains,
As a man, I am exhausted...

O, leave me not in the struggle
With my earthly flesh,
And all that is pleasing to thee
Then let it be over me!

I pray: may there descend upon me
The holy power of strengthening!
May I accomplish with love
The great feat of reconciliation!

And he raised his hands to heaven,
And was wholly turned into prayer;
Fire burned his face,
Bloody sweat streamed down him.

And suddenly from the cloudless heavens,
Surrounded by rays of light,
There appeared in the secluded garden
The herald of God's miracles.5

Wonderful was his beautiful gaze,
Both serenely and brightly
The animated brow,
And the face shone like a clear noon;

And near the Savior he stood
And with speech inspired from above
He strengthened the Liberator of the universe
For the glorious feat;

And himself, like a light shadow,
But full of gracious powers,
His airy knees
He bowed with fervent prayer.

Around all was deeply silent;
There was silence in heaven,
Only in the kingdom of darkness alone
Satan suffered in vain.

He knew that in the world was wavering
The idol of his dominion
And that the dishonorably fallen world
Was approaching a new freedom.

The author of evil, he understood
Who was the incarnate Messiah,
For what he had besought the Father,
And, crushed by terrible torment,
The proud spirit silently languished,
Crushed by impotent malice...

Calmly in the blue heights
Myriads of lights shone,
And full of sweet coolness
Was the pure air. Above the earth,
Rising quietly, the heavenly being
Flew to the starry heights,
Meanwhile the world's Redeemer
Again came to the disciples.

And at this wonderful moment
How truly great he was,
With what fire of inspiration
Burned his beautiful face!

How brightly reflected the eyes
All his firm will,
How joyfully the lights of night
From the heights looked down upon him!

The disciples, as before, slept,
And again the Savior said to them:
Arise, the day of sorrow is near
And the hour of betrayal has come...

And the sound of sharp-pointed swords
Awakened the Garden of Gethsemane,
And the reflection of ominous torches
Illuminated the face of Judas.

Ebal (now Emad-ed-din) and Gerizim (now Shah-Gaden) near Shechem, in the tribe of Ephraim, to the north of Jerusalem at 52 versts. Six tribes of Israel on the first

pronounced curses, and the other six on the second blessings, commanded by Moses (Sacred Church Geography by V. P. Polyakov, second edition, 1848).2
The water of the Dead Sea is clear and transparent, but extremely bitter, like in our salt marshes. The largest, its length extends to 91 versts, its width to 25. (Ibid.)3
The Mediterranean Sea is at a distance of 50 versts from Jerusalem. (Ibid.)4
Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Romans, ch. VIII, v. 21; to the Galatians, ch. V, vv. 1 and 13.5
Gospel of Luke, ch. XXII, v. 43.6
Gospel of Matthew, ch. VIII, v. 29; Mark, ch. V, v. 7; Luke, ch. IV, v. 34 Sunday Reading, 1840, No. 45. The Temptation of Jesus Christ by the Devil.