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Flame and Fire: The Passion Within Us

For those of us who have given no voice to it, and blench before the scandal of the truth within — take heart — the flame within the sinner is the fire within the Saints:

"Woe is me, to what judgment will I be subject, and of what disgrace I am worthy! My inner self is not like my outward appearance, I talk about how to free oneself from the passions, but day and night I myself think about disgraceful passions ...

Alas ! what trials await me? The truth is that I bear the image of righteousness, but lack its capacity.

What face shall I who am guilty of such indecency wear when I approach the Lord God who knows the secrets of my heart ...

What can I expect, I who am weighed down with such a heavy burden of sins?

My heart is consumed with fire, my mind is clouded, righteous thoughts have failed me ...

I have no boldness before Him who will try my heart and inner workings, I have no clean thoughts, no tears while praying ...

You know, O Lord, my passions hidden in the darkness, the sores of my soul are known to You. Heal me, O Lord and I will be healed. If You will not build the house of my soul, I labor in vain trying to build it myself ...

O, Lord, enlighten the eyes of my heart, that I might rightly recognize the deceit and malice of the passions. May Your grace shield me, that I might be able to stand firm and resist, having girded my loins with courage ...

No one is strong enough to heal the passionate temperament of my soul.

Condescend and save me by Your kindness."

St. Ephrem the Syrian

Saint Ephrem died June, 373 A.D. He was an exegete and prolific writer of commentaries on Sacred Scripture, as well as poems, hymns, and homilies.



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