Chaucer's Retractions

Here the maker of this book takes his leave.

Now pray I to them all that listen to this little treatise or read it, that if there be any thing in it that pleases them, that thereof they thank our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom proceeds all wit and all goodness. And if there be any thing that displeases them, I pray them also that they blame it on the fault of my lack of wit and not to my will, that would much prefer to have said better if I had had cunning. For our book says, "All that is written is written for our doctrine," and that is my intent. Wherefore I beseech you meekly, for the mercy of God, that you pray for me that Christ have mercy on me and forgive me my sins; and namely of my translations and compositions of worldly vanities, the as is the book of Troilus; the book also of Fame; the book of the XXV. Ladies; the book of the Duchesse; the book of Saint Valentines day of the Parliament of Birds; the tales of Canterbury, those that tend toward sin; the book of the Lion; and many another book, if they were in my remembrance, and many a song and many a lecherous lyric, that Christ for his great mercy forgive me the sin. But of the translation of Boethius's Consolation of Philosophy, and other books of legends of saints, and homilies, and morality, and devotion, that thank I our Lord Jesus Christ and his blissful Mother, and all the saints of heaven, beseeching them that they from henceforth unto my life's end send me grace to bewail my sins and to study to the salvation of my soul, and grant me grace of true penitence, confession and satisfaction to do in this present life, through the benign grace of him that is king of kings and priest over all priests, that bought us with the precious blood of his heart, so that I may be one of them at the day of doom that shall be saved. *Qui cum Patre et Spiritu Sancto vivit et regnat Deus per omnia secula.* Amen.

Here is ended the book of the tales of Canterbury, compiled by Geffrey Chaucer, of whose soul Jesus Christ have mercy. Amen.