

BALAAM'S ASS
Or
A Sinner's Thoughts (Part Two)
by
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“And God opened the mouth of the ass,
and it spake to Baalam.”

(cf. Numbers 22:28)

- Lazy, indolent, and lackadaisical — this is what men call whoever has not been healed of the mania to seize and destroy things and cheat his neighbor. Yet this actually represents virtually all of mankind's activity.
- Mankind has no need of Christ, since it considers its own darkness to be light.
- What place is worthy of being a resting place for the Gospel, the Book of Life? Yet God has counted us worthy to have it near us, in our homes, in our icon corner and at our bedside. How can we thank Thee, O compassionate Father?
- Poverty is such a sweet thing when it is endured for Christ.
- There is a great gulf between Christians and other people, even those who are the most excellent and philanthropic of them. It is another world. It is an altogether different creation, “a new creation.”
- The life of a true Christian is the only truly heroic life. In this [spiritual] war, to be courageous is to be humble; the prizes and rewards of this warfare are called disdain, poverty, and contrition. Those who are considered courageous according to the standards of the world are not able to endure this kind of warfare. “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12).
- Whosoever's heart has not suffered misfortune or pain, or has not been grievously afflicted, has not truly experienced hope in God.

¹Selections translated by Metropolitan Ephraim of Boston from the periodical *Kivotós* (in Greek), Athens, June, 1952, p. 237.

- Whosoever has not despaired of all [human] aid is not yet on God's path, because he thinks that there are other benefactors on whom he can rely.
- Whosoever has been greatly embittered and grieved by the world will be comforted and will experience God's sweetness. Nothing else can please him save only Christ, the saints, and humble Christians.
- Once we become Christians, the praises of men leave a certain bitterness in us. Conversely, the condemnations of men leave us with a certain bittersweetness, causing us to become introspective and warming our hearts.
- As much as the heart is introspective, by so much does it ascend.
- I don't believe in art. I believe in the life that is true. Art, so-called, is a false idol of this life. It is a fabrication.
- For a Christian, righteous joy does not harbor within itself revengeful wrath.

