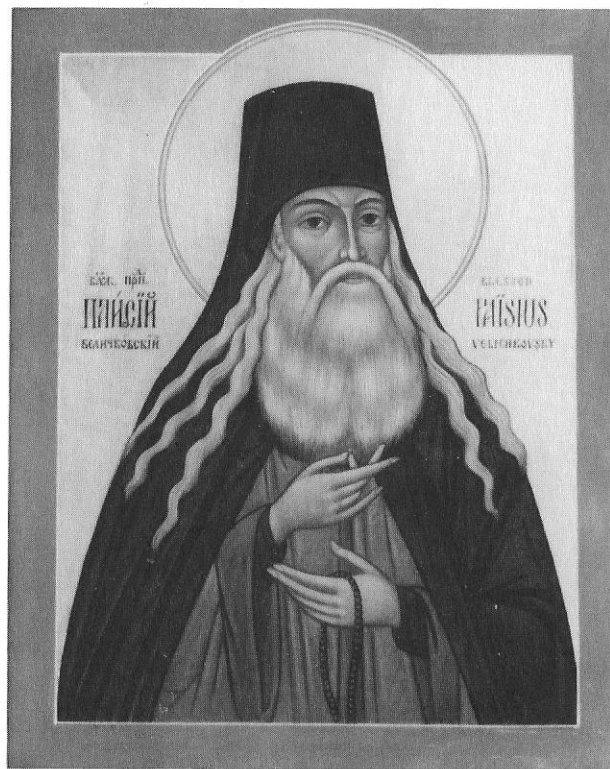


LITTLE RUSSIAN
PHILOKALIA



Vol. IV: St. Paisius Velichkovsky



ST. PAISIUS VELICHKOVSKY

Icon of the St. Herman Monastery, Platina, California,
prepared for the glorification of St. Paisius, painted by
Fr. Theodore Jurewicz for the 250th anniversary of
the Saint's death, 1722-1972.

Stichera Tone Four
to the special melody "As Valiant as the Martyrs"

Weep not, O brethren, but turn your sorrow into joy.*
With the spiritual trumpet* arouse the new army*
to battle with the enemy.* Call on our God-bearing
Father Paisius,* strengthen your hearts with his
instruction,* hymn and keep the righteousness of God,*
glorifying the Lord in His saints.*

LITTLE RUSSIAN PHILOKALIA

VOLUME IV

Saint Paisius Velichkovsky



NEW VALAAM MONASTERY • ALASKA

St. Herman Press * St. Paisius Abbey Press

1994

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*Dedicated to Elizabeth and John of St. Paisius Press in
Boulder City, Colorado, for their untiring labors in helping
to make available Patristic teachings in the spirit of
St. Paisius Velichkovsky.*



ST. PAISIUS PORTRAIT OF MT. ATHOS
A large portrait hanging in the guest quarters
in the archandarc of St. Elias Skete near Karyes
on the Holy Mountain.

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ST. PAISIUS VELICHKOVSKY

Icon prepared by Moscow iconographers for the glorification in 1988, the jubilee year of the Baptism of Russia.

INTRODUCTION

The Mind of the Fathers

THE SIGNIFICANCE of St. Paisius Velichkovsky, historically as well as for us today, lies in his powerful quest to *return to the Fathers*. The Church Fathers, the Eastern Orthodox patristic authorities, are the shapers of a world-view that places Jesus Christ at the head of the *hierarchy of values*, a balanced apprehension of reality without which the whole world returns to chaos.

We see clearly that the modern world is falling apart in its departure from the living Christ who came to save the world. Our society, born and formulated according to Christian principles, needs to *return to the Fathers* in order to make life bearable on this earth, where man was placed temporarily until the end of time. To prepare for that awesome *end of time* one must develop the *mind of the Fathers*, and there is no other better authority than St. Paisius Velichkovsky, whose biography has just been released again after years of waiting.*

Introducing this biography of St. Paisius, Fr. Seraphim Rose stated: "It is the Life of a Holy Father of modern times, one who lived like the ancients almost in our own day."** In other words, St. Paisius was a man like us, living in difficult times, in whom the power and grace of God abided visibly. And this grace-filled power was love. Love such that "he loved the Lord with his whole soul ... [This love] became more and more inflamed and was poured out equally on all those near him. Warming everyone with his love and zeal, and being painfully concerned for each, compassionate toward all ... he did

* Now in a new printing: *Blessed Paisius Velichkovsky: The Man Behind the Philokalia* by Schemamonk Metrophanes, St. Paisius Abbey, St. Herman of Alaska Press, 1994.

** Ibid, p. 17.

not turn away any man who came to him and entreated mercy, whether of soul or body, and he sent no one away empty-handed.”*

St. Paisius was born in 1722, and baptized with the name Peter. He was the youngest son of the Archpriest of Poltava in the Ukraine. At 13 years of age he was sent by his mother to theological school in Kiev in the hope that he would take the place of his father who had reposed, and support and console his mother in her old age.

But Peter’s soul and heart had tasted the Truth through the Church services, the writings of the Holy Fathers, and above all the Holy Scriptures — and he wanted the *fullness* of Christ’s revelation. It was precisely through the written word that he discovered and pursued that singular way of life, the angelic way, the monastic calling. His soul, having found Christ, wanted to be totally with, in, and for Him, the Source of love, and Love Itself.

This distinguished St. Paisius from a 17-year-old of today. Having a foretaste of the life to come, he clearly knew what it was he sought — union with the Truth. He could see that this was not being given in school or in the society around him. Even the monastic life he witnessed in Kiev could not provide that which he longed for; therefore he fled the world, trusting in God to provide that which his heart desired, believing the word of God in the Psalms: *Delight thyself also in the Lord: and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass* (Psalm 37:4-5).

The fourth volume of our *Little Russian Philokalia* contains the only two independent writings which come down to us from St. Paisius (with the exception of his letters). These two works were the result of his thirst for the Fathers, the mystical teachers of how to attain union with God, our Creator and the Sustainer of life.

The Scroll was written in response to an attack on the main work of true monastic life — the cleansing of heart and mind through the mental activity of the Jesus Prayer. St. Paisius’ severe censure of the monk who started this attack, and of those who followed him, is not personal. St. Paisius was fully aware that the war was not against flesh and blood but *against powers*,

* Ibid. p. 218.

against the rulers of the darkness of this world (Eph. 6:12). His main concern, like that of a loving parent, is to protect his spiritual children. He would have been the most joyful, after the angels in heaven, to see the monk turn from his error and come to his senses. Like a good pastor he takes the opportunity to reveal the work of mental prayer as it was given to man by God, its purpose, and the beginning and end of it. The chapters end abruptly, and we do not know how many more St. Paisius may have written or planned to write.

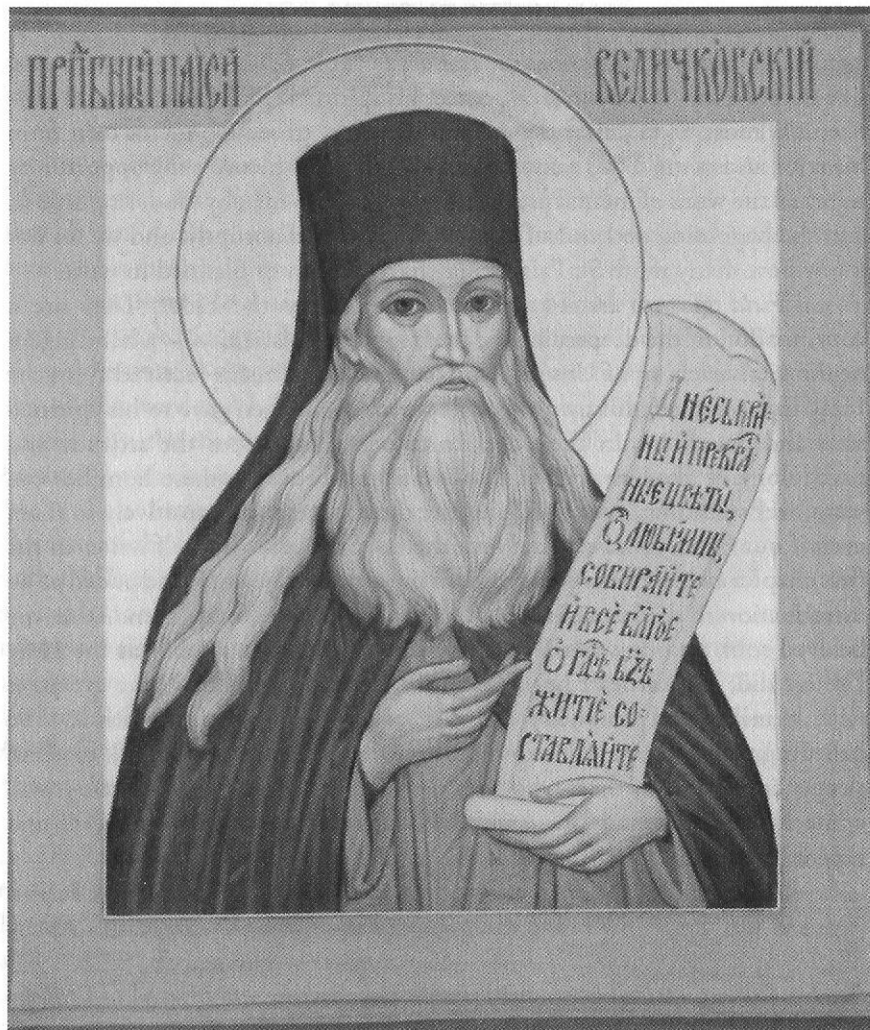
Field Flowers are 44 ascetical homilies by the Elder. They are a continuation of the deepest ascetic tradition of Christianity — a handing on of the vital teaching of Unseen Warfare which St. Paisius received from the Holy Fathers, made his own through *practice*, and then gave to his spiritual sons and daughters. In their detail and penetration into the attitude and psychology of “Lovers of Truth” — warrior-ascetics — these homilies can seem overwhelming, even shocking, yet the soul responds positively to them even if our fallen mind rebels. Nevertheless, St. Paisius himself writes in the first chapter (which was taken from his own spiritual journal and added as an introduction to the homilies): “At least from this time forth, then: Arise, my beloved soul, and do what I shall tell you. If you cannot labor as the Holy Fathers did, then at least begin according to your strength. Serve everyone with humility and simplicity of heart; acknowledging your infirmity and belittling yourself, say: ‘Woe to thee, my wretched soul ... slothful, careless, sleepy, cruel; woe to thee, who hast perished!’ And so, little by little it will come to tender-feeling [*umilenie*], will shed tears, will come to itself and repent.”

Monk Paisius

St. Paisius Abbey

November 15/28, 1993

Repose of Sts. Paisius and Herman of Alaska



ST. PAISIUS VELICHKOVSKY

Icon by Fr. Andrew Erastov of Jordanville.

The inscription on the scroll reads: "O beloved, gather ye now field flowers and blooms of beauty and compose an all-good Life in the Lord God."

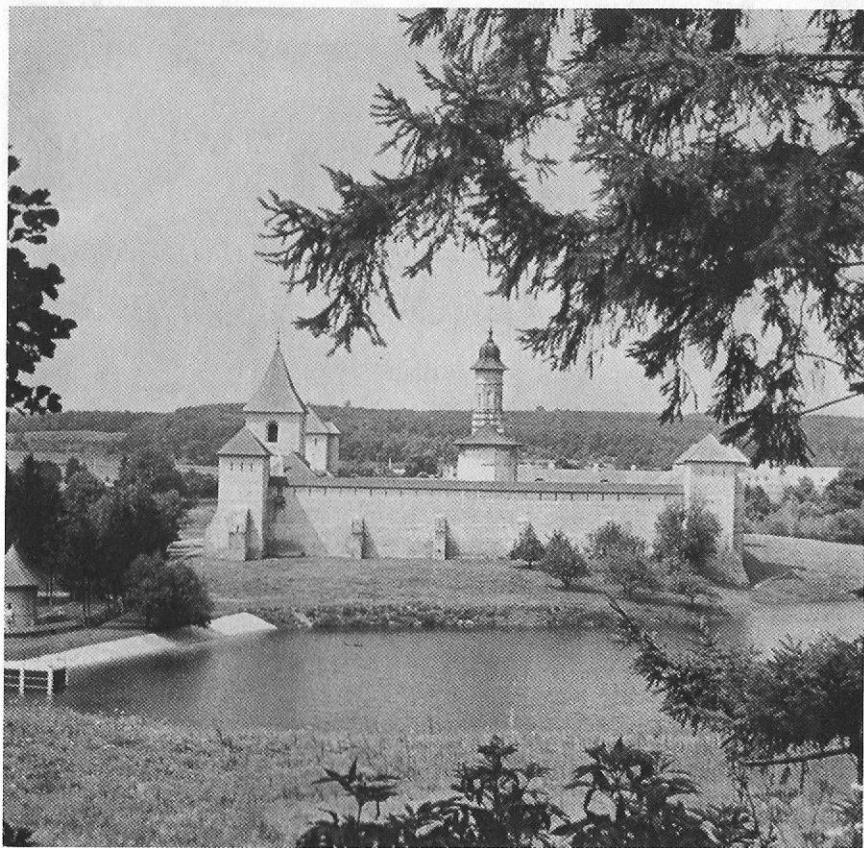
I

❧ The Scroll ❧

CONTAINING
SIX CHAPTERS ON MENTAL PRAYER

By Our Father of Blessed Memory,
ELDER PAISIUS VELICHKOVSKY

Translated by Fr. Seraphim Rose



View of Dragomirna Monastery from the east. On the left is the original little church where the hesychasts used to gather. (Dragomirna is now a women's monastery with about sixty nuns.)

❧ The Scroll ❧

CONTAINING
SIX CHAPTERS ON MENTAL PRAYER
By Our Father of Blessed Memory,
ELDER PAISIUS VELICHKOVSKY

*Against the blasphemer, a certain vain-minded
monk-philosopher of the Moshensk mountains;
written in the Moldavian monastery of Dragomirna.*

THE FORWARD OF ELDER PAISIUS

REPORT HAS COME to me, the least of all, that certain ones among the monastic calling are daring to blaspheme the Divine, ever-memorable and God-created Prayer of Jesus, sacredly performed by the mind in the heart, founding this their babbling on the sand of vain-wisdom without anything to support it. They are armed for this, I dare to say, by the enemy, so that by their tongues as by a weapon he might find fault with this most faultless and Divine work, and that by the blindness of their understanding he might darken this mental sun. Therefore, lamenting such evil-wisdom of these who have *gone astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies* (Ps. 57:4), and fearing lest any of those not yet firm in understanding, hearing such fables, might fall like them into the pit of blasphemy and mortally sin before God, blaspheming the teaching of very many of our God-bearing Fathers who have testified and taught of this Divine Prayer, being enlightened by Divine grace; and further, not enduring any more to hear the blaspheming words against



Main catholicon in Dragomirna.

this faultless work, and in addition being persuaded by the entreaty of the zealots of this soul-saving work — I have resolved, even though this be beyond my infirm mind and weak powers, calling on the help of my most sweet Jesus, without Whom no one can do anything, in order to refute the false reason of the vain-minded and to fortify the God-chosen flock of brethren in our monastery in the name of Christ: to write down a little on Divine mental prayer in the form of extracts from the teaching of the Holy Fathers, so as to give a secure, unwavering, and undoubted testimony of it.

Being dust and ashes, I bend the mental knees of my heart before the unapproachable greatness of Thy Divine glory, and I entreat Thee, O my all-sweet Jesus, Only-begotten Son and Word of God, radiance of the glory and image of the Hypostasis of the Father! Enlighten my darkened mind and thought and grant Thy grace to my miserable soul, so that this work of mine may serve for the glory of Thy most holy name and for the benefit of those who wish, through the mental and sacred work of prayer, mentally to cling to Thee our God, and to carry Thee, the priceless pearl, ceaselessly in their souls and hearts, and for the correction of those who in their extreme ignorance have dared to blaspheme this Divine work!

I.

THAT MENTAL PRAYER WAS A WORK OF THE HOLY FATHERS OF ANTIQUITY; AND AGAINST THE BLASPHEMERS OF THIS SACRED AND MOST FAULTLESS PRAYER

LET IT BE KNOWN that this Divine work of sacred mental prayer was the unceasing occupation of our God-bearing Fathers of antiquity, and in many desert places as well as in coenobitic monasteries it shone forth like the sun among monks: on Mount Sinai, in Scetis of Egypt, on the Mount of Nitria, in Jerusalem and in the monasteries which are about Jerusalem, and in a word — in the entire East, in Constantinople, on Mount Athos and in the islands of the sea; and in the latest times, by the grace of Christ, in Great Russia also. By this mental heedfulness of sacred prayer, many of our God-bearing Fathers, being kindled by a seraphimic flame of love for God, and after God for their neighbor, became the strictest keepers of God's commandments, and having purified their souls and hearts of all the faults of the old man, they were enabled to be chosen vessels of the Holy Spirit. Being filled with His various Divine gifts, they were manifested by their lives as lamps and fiery pillars in the world, and having performed numberless miracles, by deed and word they brought an incalculable multitude of human souls to salvation. Many of them, being moved by a secret Divine inspiration, wrote books of their teachings concerning this Divine mental Prayer, in accordance with the Divine Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, which books are filled with the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. And this was by the special Providence of God, so that in the last times this Divine work would not fall into oblivion. Many of these books, by God's allowance because of our sins, were destroyed by the Saracens who subjugated the Greek kingdom; but some of them by God's Providence have been preserved to our times.

Against the above-mentioned Divine mental work and the preservation of the paradise of the heart, none among those of right belief has ever dared to pronounce blasphemy, but they have shown great honor and extreme reverence for it as for something full of every spiritual benefit. But the source of malice and opponent of every good work, the devil, seeing that above all those in the monastic state through this work of mental prayer were choosing the good part and sitting with undistracted love at the feet of Jesus, prospering in the perfection of His Divine commandments, and through this were becoming a light and illumination for the world — began to melt from envy and use all his snares in order to criticize and blaspheme this soul-saving work and, if possible, to uproot it entirely from the face of the earth. And so he both destroyed books, as was said above, through the Saracens who are in all ways like him, and likewise sowed his soul-corrupting tares in the midst of the pure and heavenly wheat of this work, in order to make a blasphemy against this saving work through senseless men so that the self-willed who come in contact with this work for the sake of their own self-exaltation, would reap tares in place of wheat and find perdition in place of salvation. And even with this the devil was not satisfied, but found in the lands of Italy the Calabrian serpent, forerunner of Antichrist, in his pride in every way like the devil, the heretic Barlaam; and settling in him with all his power, he moved him to blaspheme our Orthodox Faith, as is written in detail in the Lenten Triodion, in the Synaxarion of the Second Sunday of the holy Great Lent. Among other things, he dared in various ways, both by tongue and by pen, to blaspheme and denounce also the sacred mental prayer, as is written in his sacred book, in the 31st chapter, by our Father among the Saints Simeon, Archbishop of Thessalonica, whose very words I here set forth:

"This impious Barlaam blasphemed and wrote much both against the sacred Prayer and against the Divine grace and light which were on Mount Tabor (Matt. 17:5). Not understanding and not even capable of understanding (for how could one attain to this who had become vain in mind and proud in the conceit of his thoughts?) the meaning of the words *Pray without ceasing* (I Thess. 5:18), or of the words *I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the mind also* (I Cor. 14:15); or of *hymning and singing in your hearts to the Lord* (Col. 3:16); or of *God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son*, that is, grace,

into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father (Gal. 4:6); or of *I had rather speak five words with my mind than ten thousand words in a tongue* (I Cor. 14:19) — he renounced mental prayer itself, or rather, the invocation of the Lord, which is also the confession of Peter when he confessed: *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God* (Matt. 16:16), and the tradition of the Lord Himself when He said in the Gospel: *Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He shall give it to you* (John 15:16), and likewise: *In My name shall they cast out devils* (Mark 16:17), and the like. For His name is eternal life (John 17:3): *But these*, it is said, *are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His name* (John 20:31); and the Holy Spirit is given through the invocation of Christ: *No man can say the Lord Jesus, except by the Holy Spirit* (I Cor. 12:3). Concerning this it is written in a myriad places.

And what did the serpent, fount of malice, succeed in doing by his undertaking with the son of perdition, the thrice-cursed heretic Barlaam, whom he taught, as I have said, to blaspheme against sacred mental prayer? By his blasphemy could he darken the light of this mental work, and, as he had hoped, uproot it entirely? By no means; but his malady was turned upon his own head. For at that time the great champion and advocate of piety, most radiant among the Saints, our Father Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonica who in complete obedience and in the unceasing sacred exercise of mental prayer shone forth like the sun on the Holy Mountain of Athos with gifts of the Holy Spirit, before his elevation to the Hierarchal Throne of that Church, in the reign of the most Divine emperor Andronicus Paleologus, in the most illustrious great church of the Wisdom of God in the reigning city, at the great Council which was assembled against the above-mentioned heretic Barlaam, being filled with the Spirit of God and clothed in invisible power from above — he closed that mouth which was opened against God and shamed him utterly, and by his words and writings inspired with fire he burned his heresies, suitable only for kindling, and all his blasphemies and turned them into ashes. And this heretic Barlaam with Acindynus and all who thought as they were thrice given over to anathema by the whole Catholic Church of God. And even up to now, yearly on the Sunday of Orthodoxy, he

together with other heretics is cursed by the same Church in this way: *To Barlaam and Acindynus and their followers and successors — anathema thrice.*

Behold, O friends who dare to blaspheme mental prayer, and see who was its first blasphemer: was it not the heretic Barlaam, who was thrice given over by the Church to anathema and is to be cursed forever? Do you not also, with your blasphemy, enter into communion with this heretic and those who think as he? Do you not tremble in your souls lest you similarly fall under the Church's curse and become estranged from God? In rising against a most sacred work and scandalizing by your blasphemy the souls of your near ones who are unsteady in understanding, do you not fear the terrible threat of God for this in the Gospel? Are you not afraid, in the words of the Apostle, that *it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God* (Heb. 10:31), that for this you will fall, if you do not repent, into both temporal and eternal punishment? What plausible reason have you found for blaspheming this most faultless and most blessed thing? I am in total perplexity.

Do you fancy that the invocation of the name of Jesus is of no benefit? But it is not possible to be saved in any other than in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Is the human mind, through which the Prayer acts, defective? But this is impossible. For God created man in His image and likeness; and the image and likeness of God is the soul of man, which according to God's creation is pure and faultless: therefore the mind, being the chief of the senses of the soul, as sight is in the body, is likewise faultless.

Is then the heart, upon which as upon an altar the mind sacredly offers to God the mystical sacrifice of prayer, deserving of blasphemy? In no way. Being the creation of God, as is the whole human body, it is most good. And if the invocation of Jesus is soul-saving, and the mind and heart of man are the work of God's hands — then how is man at fault if he sends up with his mind from the depths of his heart prayer to the most sweet Jesus and begs of Him mercy?

Or is the reason why you blaspheme and deny mental prayer because it seems to you that God does not hear mystical prayer performed in the heart, but hears only that which is pronounced by the lips? But this is a blasphemy against God: for God is knower of hearts and knows exactly all the most

refined thoughts of the heart, even future thoughts, and knows them all as God and Omniscient. And He Himself seeks, as a pure and faultless sacrifice, just such mystical prayer sent up from the depths of the heart, having commanded: *But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly* (Matt. 6:6). These words the lips of Christ, the lamp of the world and universal teacher, St. John Chrysostom, in his 19th Homily on the Gospel of Matthew, with the God-given wisdom of the Holy Spirit, ascribes not to prayer pronounced only by the lips and tongue, but to the most secret, unvocal prayer sent up from the depths of the heart, which he teaches to perform not with actions of the body and not with the sound of the voice, but with the most fervent will, in all quietness, with contrition of thoughts and inward tears, with pain of soul and the closing of the doors of the mind. And he brings forth from Holy Scripture, as a testimony of this prayer, the God-seer Moses, and St. Anna, and the Righteous Abel, speaking thus:

"But are you pained in soul? You cannot but cry out, because to pray and entreat in the way I have mentioned is characteristic of one who is very pained. Moses also, being pained, prayed in this way, and his pain was heard; wherefore also God spoke to him: *Why dost thou cry out to Me?* (Ex. 14:15). And Anna, again, fulfilled all that she wished without her voice being heard, because her heart cried out. And did not Abel pray in silence, and even having died? — and his blood gave forth a voice surpassing that of the trumpet. Do thou groan also, then, just as holy Moses; I do not forbid. Rend your heart, as the Prophet commanded, and not your garments. Call upon God out of the depths: *Out of the depths*, he says, *have I cried unto Thee, O Lord* (Ps. 129:1); from below, from the heart draw voice; make your prayer a sacrament." And later: "For you do not pray to a man, but to God Who is everywhere, Who hears before you speak and knows unuttered thoughts; if you pray in this way, you shall receive a great reward: *Thy Father*, He says, *which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.*" And later: "Inasmuch as He is invisible, He desires that your prayer should be the same."

Do you see, O friends, how by the testimony of this invincible pillar of Orthodoxy there is another prayer than that pronounced by the lips: a

secret, invisible, voiceless prayer offered from the depths of the heart to God, which, as a pure sacrifice, the Lord accepts as an odor of spiritual fragrance, rejoices in it and is glad, seeing that the mind, which above all should be consecrated to God, is united with Him in prayer. Wherefore, why do you arm your tongue with blasphemy against this Prayer which is witnessed by the lips of Christ, and St. John Chrysostom, slandering, hating, mocking, denying and shunning it as some foul thing, and in a word, not enduring even to hear of it? Fear and trembling overcome me by reason of your irrational undertaking.

Yet again, seeking the cause of your blasphemy, I ask you: Is not the reason why you blaspheme this most soul-saving Prayer because, it may be, you have happened to see or hear that some one of the practicers of this Prayer has gone out of his mind, or taken some deception in place of truth, or suffered some harm to his soul, and therefore you have fancied that mental prayer was the cause of such harm? But it is not so, no; that is not the case at all. Sacred mental prayer, according to the writings of the God-bearing Fathers, working by God's grace, purifies a man of all passions, rouses him to most fervent keeping of God's commandments, and preserves him unharmed from all the arrows and deceptions of the enemy. If, however, anyone dare to undertake this Prayer with self-will, not in accordance with the teaching of the Holy Fathers, without questioning and taking counsel of those experienced in it, and being haughty, passionate, and infirm, he lives without obedience and submission, and in addition seeks only the life of a hermit without being worthy of seeing even a trace of such a thing because of his self-will: such a one, in truth, I also affirm, will easily fall into all the snares and deceptions of the devil. But is prayer the cause of such deception (*prelest*)? May it not be. And if for this you find fault with mental prayer, then you should also consider the knife to be at fault if a small child, because of his senselessness at play, should happen to stab himself with it. Likewise, in your view, one should also forbid soldiers to use the military sword which they receive to fight the enemy, if some senseless soldier should happen to stab himself with his own sword. But just as the knife and the sword are not guilty of any fault but only accuse the senselessness of those who stab themselves with them, so likewise the spiritual sword, sacred mental prayer, is innocent of any fault, but rather the

self-will and pride of the self-willed are the cause of demonic deceptions and every spiritual harm.

But why, as if I had been uncertain up to now, do I ask of you the cause of your blasphemy against this sacred Prayer? I know it for a certainty, O friends! I know the very cause of your babbling: First, your reading of the Holy Scriptures is not according to the commandment of Christ, that is, not with testing; second, mistrust of the teaching of our Holy Fathers who taught of this Divine mental prayer by the wisdom of the Spirit given them by God, in accordance with the Holy Scriptures; third, in addition, your extreme coarseness: it may be, you have never seen or heard of the writings of our God-bearing Fathers concerning this; or, if you have, then you do not in the least understand the power of their Divinely-wise words — behold the essential cause of your evil-wisdom.

If only you would read, with fear of God and strict attention and undoubting faith, with a labor-loving testing of them and with the humility of wisdom, the patristic books which are above all fitting to be read by monastics and which contain in themselves the whole meaning of life according to the Gospel — the patristic books, I say, which are just as necessary to monks for the benefit and correction of the soul and for the acquiring of a true, undeceived and humble understanding as breath is necessary for physical life: if you would read these books in this way, God would never allow you to fall into such a pit of blasphemy. Rather, through this work He would kindle you by His Divine grace with His unutterable love, so that you would cry out with the Apostle: *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ* (Rom. 8:35) which we have been enabled to attain by the mental work of this Prayer? And not only would you not blaspheme it, but you would even be zealous to lay down your life for it, perceiving in very deed and experience benefit for your soul beyond words from this mental heedfulness. But since you do not read the books of the Holy Fathers with undoubting faith, or in reading them you do not trust them, as the fruits of your blasphemy indicate, or else you entirely disdain to read them: therefore you have fallen into such ungodly sophistry that, as if you had never heard of the Christian writings, you blaspheme and deny this sacred Prayer of which the entire Holy



Tismana Monastery in the southwestern region of Romania,
where many of St. Paisius' disciples lived.

It is now a women's convent.

Scripture, in the Divinely-wise interpretation of the Holy Fathers, gives testimony.

But in order that you and all who doubt concerning this may be delivered from such harm to the soul, I find no more fitting treatment than this: that I shall strive, as much as the Lord by His grace favors and helps me, to show that our God-bearing Fathers, enlightened by God's grace, have established the building of their soul-profitting teaching concerning this all-sacred Prayer performed secretly by the mind in the heart, on the unmov- ing rock of Holy Scripture. And do you, having yourselves come to see evidently and clearly the truth of the teaching of the Holy Fathers, with the cooperation of the grace of God secretly touching your souls, and having been healed of your infirmity of soul, offer to God most sincere repentance over your inclination — and you shall become worthy of His Divine mercy and complete forgiveness of your sin.

2.

THE BEGINNING OF THIS DIVINE MENTAL PRAYER, AND WHAT TESTIMONIES THE GOD-BEARING FATHERS BRING FORTH CONCERNING IT FROM HOLY SCRIPTURE

BEFORE INDICATING from whence this Divine Prayer has its very beginning, I must present something by way of general information. Let it be known that, according to the writings of our Holy and God-bearing Fathers, there are two mental prayers: one for beginners, belonging to activity; and another for the advanced, belonging to vision. The one is the beginning, and the other the end; for activity is the ascent to vision. And one should know that, according to St. Gregory the Sinaite, there are eight primary visions, which he enumerates as follows: "We say that the eight primary visions are: first, the vision of God, the invisible and unoriginate and uncreated Divinity, cause of all, One in Trinity and above all being; second, that of the rank and order of the mental powers; third, that of the composition of [visible] beings; fourth, that of the overseeing condescension of the Word; fifth, that of the universal resurrection; sixth, that of the terrible Second Coming of Christ; seventh, that of eternal torment; eighth, that of the Kingdom of God which has no end." Having presented this, I shall relate, according to the poverty of my infirm reason, in what manner activity and vision must be understood.

Let it be known, then (I speak to those who are simple like myself), that the whole labor of monasticism by which anyone may have labored, with God's help, in love for his neighbor and for God, in meekness, humility, and patience, and in all the other commandments of God and the Holy Fathers, in perfect submission of soul and body according to God, in fasting, vigil, tears, and prostrations and other ways of exhausting the body, in all-fervent performance of the church and cell rule, in the secret mental exercise of prayer,

in lamentation, and in reflection on death — all such labor, as long as the mind is still guided by its own human authority and will, may accurately be called activity; but in no way may it be called vision. And if such mental labor of prayer somewhere in the writings of the Holy Fathers might be called sight, this is only in a simple way of speaking, inasmuch as the mind, as the eye of the soul, is called sight.

But when, by God's help and the above-mentioned labor, and above all by profound humility, a man purifies his soul and heart from every defilement of the passions of soul and body — then the grace of God, the common mother of everyone, taking the mind which has been cleansed by it as a child by the hand, leads it up as by steps to the above-mentioned spiritual visions, revealing to it according to the degree of its purification the unutterable Divine mysteries to which the mind cannot attain. And it is this that in truth is called true spiritual vision, which is the prayer of sight, or, according to St. Isaac, pure prayer, from which come awe and vision. But into this it is not possible for anyone to enter by his own self-willed labor, unless God visit him and lead him up to it by His grace. And if anyone dare to ascend into such visions without the light of God's grace, as St. Gregory the Sinaite says (Homily 130), let him know that he forms imaginations and not visions, imagining them and imaginations being presented to him by a spirit of imagination. And now, such an understanding of active and contemplative prayer being presented, the time has already come to indicate from whence Divine mental prayer has its beginning.

Let it be known that, according to the testimony of our Divinely-wise, Holy and God-bearing Father Nilus the Faster of Sinai, mental Divine prayer such as is suitable for the perfect was given by God Himself already in Paradise to the first-created man. For St. Nilus says this (Homily 49) to those who pray fervently, so that they might manfully preserve the fruit of prayer and that their labor might not be in vain: "Having prayed according to rule, await those things which are not according to rule, and stand manfully, preserving your fruit. For it is to this that you were assigned from the beginning: to do and preserve, lest having done it, what is done be left unpreserved; otherwise there is no benefit to you at all from your praying."

Interpreting these words, the Russian luminary St. Nilus, the desert-dweller of Sora, who shone forth like the sun in Great Russia by the mental work of prayer, as is clear in his Divinely-wise book, says the following: "Now this Saint brings forth from antiquity that one should do and preserve; for the Scripture says that God created Adam and placed him in Paradise to do (to work) and preserve Paradise. For here this St. Nilus of Sinai calls prayer doing (work) of Paradise, and the guarding against evil thoughts after prayer he calls preserving." Likewise St. Dorotheus also says that the first-created man, being placed by God in Paradise, remained in prayer, as he writes in his first Instruction. From these testimonies it is clear that God, having created man according to His image and likeness, conducted him into a Paradise of sweetness to work the immortal gardens, that is, the most pure, exalted, and perfect Divine thoughts, according to St. Gregory the Theologian. And this means nothing else than that he remained, as being pure in soul and heart, in contemplative, grace-filled prayer, sacredly working in the mind alone, that is, in the sweetest vision of God, and that he manfully preserved this, it being the work of Paradise, as the apple of his eye, lest it ever decrease in his soul and heart. Wherefore, great is the glory of sacred and Divine mental prayer, whose verge and summit, that is, beginning and perfection, were given to man by God in Paradise; and so it is from there that it has its beginning.

But incomparably greater glory did it acquire when the One Holier than all the Saints, more honorable than the Cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim, the Most Holy Virgin Mother of God, remaining in the Holy of Holies, ascended to the very height of Divine vision by means of mental prayer and was enabled to be the spacious dwelling of God the Word, Whom the whole creation cannot contain, Who was contained in Her Hypostatically and was born of Her without seed for the sake of men's salvation. Of this witness is borne by the invincible pillar of Orthodoxy, our Father among the Saints Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonica, in his Homily on the Entrance into the Temple of our Most Holy Lady the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary; for he says that the Most Holy Virgin Mother of God, dwelling in the Holy of Holies and coming to understand perfectly, from the Holy Scripture which was read every Sabbath, concerning the human race which was perishing from disobedience,

took extreme pity on it and accepted mental prayer to God, that He might soon have mercy on and save the human race. Here I shall present the very words of St. Gregory, a few out of many, which are worthy of an angelic mind: "For this Divine Maiden, the Virgin, hearing and seeing this, took pity on the common race, and looked how one might obtain a healing and treatment equal to such suffering. She found that She should turn immediately with Her whole mind to God, and She took upon Herself this Prayer for us, in order to compel the Uncompellable and attract Him to us the sooner, so that He Himself might uproot the curse from the midst, stop the fire which was devouring the field of the soul, and bind to Himself the creature, having healed his infirmity. Wherefore, the Virgin Full of Grace, having thus examined for Herself what was most fitting and characteristic in every nature, placed mental prayer as wondrous and most glorious and better than any word. And seeking how She might the more skillfully and appropriately converse with God, She came to Him as a self-placed, or rather God-chosen intercessor."

And later he says: "Wherefore, when She saw nothing among existing things better than this for man, She firmly directed Herself, with awe, toward entreaty, renewed the greater and more perfect, and discovered, and acted, and for those things which are after these She gave activity as the supreme ascent to vision; but vision is as much greater than those things that have been mentioned as truth is greater than imagination. But concentrating everyone within himself, and having purified your minds, hear now the greatness of the mystery; for, taking the opportunity afforded by this whole assembly gathered in the name of Christ, I wish to speak a word above all to those who have renounced the world. One who, for the sake of renunciation, has already tasted of those future good things, who is placed with the angels and is acquiring a dwelling in the heavens: let him desire to emulate, according to his strength, the first and only one to renounce the world from childhood for the sake of peace, the Ever-Virgin Bride."

And later St. Gregory says: "Wherefore, seeking what is most necessary to an intercessor for converse, which is what prayer is, the Virgin acquired sacred silence: silence of mind, and separation from the world, forgetfulness of things below and of the exalted knowledge of a hearer of secret things, unto

a better transformation. This activity, as in truth an ascent to the One Who truly Is, or, to speak more truly, to Divine vision, is as it were a brief indication for a soul that has acquired this activity in truth. Every other virtue is like a medical treatment which is applicable to infirmities of soul and to evil passions which have become rooted in because of despondency; but Divine vision is the fruit of a healthy soul, as being some kind of ultimate perfection and an image of Divine activity. Wherefore, a man becomes a partaker of God not by words or by judicious moderation in visible things, for this is earthly, and lowly, and human; but rather by dwelling in silence, for it is by this that we become separated from and are released from things below and ascend toward God. And thus, enduring day and night in prayers and entreaties in the upper chamber of the life of silence, we draw near in some measure and approach to that Inaccessible and Blessed Nature. And those who endure thus, and are dissolved in this way in the Light Which Exists unutterably beyond feeling and thought, see God in themselves as in a mirror, having already purified the heart by sacred silence. And thus, silence is a swift and short guide, as being most successful and uniting one with God, especially for those who keep to it entirely. And the Virgin Who remained in it even from infancy — what is She? She lived in silence in supernatural manner from Her very childhood, and because of this She alone among all women gave birth without a man to the God-man, the Word."

And later he says: "Wherefore also the Most Pure One, renouncing, as it were, the world's very dwelling and talk, moved away from people and, having fled from reproachable life, She chose a life unseen by anyone and uncommunicative, dwelling in the place where no one was allowed to enter. There, being freed of every material tie, and renouncing all contact with and love for anyone, and going beyond showing any mercy for the body, She concentrated the mind in a single turning toward Him and in dwelling with and heedfulness toward Him and in unceasing Divine prayer. And by means of it, dwelling within Herself and placing Herself above multiform disturbance and thoughts and simply above every appearance and thing, She accomplished a new and unutterable path to Heaven, which is, I shall say, the silence of thoughts. And applying Herself industriously to this and heeding it with Her mind, She soared beyond all creatures and saw much better than

Moses the glory of God and saw Divine grace belonging in no way to the power of the senses — a sacred and all-joyful vision of undefiled souls and minds, having partaken of which She is, according to the Divine singers, a bright cloud of truly living water, and the Dawn of the mental day, and the fiery Chariot of the Word.”

From these words of the Divine Gregory Palamas, he who has a mind can understand clearer than the sun that the Most Pure Virgin Mother of God, dwelling in the Holy of Holies, by means of mental prayer ascended to the supreme height of Divine vision; and by renouncing the world for the sake of peace, by sacred silence of the mind, by silence of thoughts, by concentrating the mind toward unceasing Divine prayer and heedfulness, and by ascending through activity to Divine vision — She gave in Herself to the Divine and angelic monastic order an example of heedful life according to the inner man, so that monks, having renounced the world, looking upon Her might fervently strive, according to their strength and by Her prayers, to be Her emulators in the above-mentioned monastic labors and sweatings. And who can worthily praise Divine mental prayer, a doer of which was the Mother of God Herself, being instructed by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, for the benefit and advancement of monks!

But for the confirmation and undoubted assurance of those who doubt regarding this, as if it were a thing unwitnessed and unknown, it is now time to show what testimonies are brought forth regarding it from Holy Scripture by the Holy Fathers who wrote from the enlightenment of Divine grace.

Divine mental prayer has its unshakable foundation in the words of our Lord Jesus Christ: *But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly* (Matt. 6:6). These words, as has already been said in the first chapter, are interpreted by the lamp of the world, St. John Chrysostom, by means of God-given wisdom, as referring to unvocal, secret prayer which is sent up from the depths of the heart, bringing forth as testimony from the Sacred Scripture the God-seer Moses and St. Anna, mother of Samuel the Prophet, and Righteous Abel and his blood which cried out from the earth — saying that in their prayer, without uttering a single word, they were heard by God. This great teacher of the universe, the lips of

Christ, St. John Chrysostom, has also set forth separately, in three homilies, the teaching concerning this Divine Prayer, as is written by the unlying witness, Blessed Simeon the Archbishop of Thessalonica, in chapter 294 of his book, which the whole Catholic Eastern Church holds in great veneration as a pillar and confirmation of the truth.

The fiery pillar and fiery lips of the Holy Spirit, the eye of the Church, Basil, I say, the Great, in explaining the passage of the Divine Scripture: *I will bless the Lord at all times, His praise shall be always on my lips* (Ps. 33:1), excellently teaches concerning the mental lips and mental activities, that is, concerning mental prayer, bringing forth testimony from the Sacred Scripture; and his very words, filled with Divine wisdom, I here present:

“His praise shall be always on my lips. Its appears that the Prophet says the impossible: how can the praise of God be on human lips always? When a man speaks in ordinary worldly conversations, he does not have on his lips the praise of God; when he sleeps, he is entirely silent; and also when he eats and drinks, how can his lips pronounce praise? To this we reply that there are certain mental lips of the inner man by which he is nourished, partaking of the Word of life, which is *the bread which cometh down from heaven* (John 6:33). It is precisely these lips of which the Prophet spoke: *I opened my lips and summoned the Spirit* (Ps. 118:131). It is to this that the Lord arouses us, that we should have these lips opened wide so as sufficiently to receive true food, when He says: *Open wide thy lips and I will fill them* (Ps. 80:11). Wherefore, the thought of God, once engraved on and confirmed in the understanding of the soul, can be called the praise of God which is always in the soul. And according to the word of the Apostle, one who is heedful can do everything to the glory of God, so that every deed, and every word, and every mental activity has the significance of praise. *Whether the righteous man eat, or drink, or whatsoever he doth, he doth all to the glory of God* (I Cor. 10:31). In such a one, even when he is asleep, his heart keeps vigil.” Thus does St. Basil speak. And from his words it is clear that besides the lips of the body there are also the lips of the mind, and there is a mental work and praise which are ever mentally within the inner man.

The name of blessedness, the Egyptian — or rather, universal — sun, who has shone forth with unutterable gifts of the Holy Spirit, the heavenly

man, the Great, I say, Macarius, in his heavenly words concerning this holy Prayer speaks thus: "A Christian must always have the remembrance of God, because it is written: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart* (Matt. 22:37). He must love the Lord not only when he enters the temple of prayer, but also when walking, and conversing, and eating, and drinking, let him have the remembrance of God, and love, and desire; for He says: *Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also* (Matt. 6:21), and the rest.

The holy and God-bearing Father of old, Isaiah the Hermit [solitary], concerning the hidden teaching, that is, the Prayer of Jesus, which is performed by the thought in the heart, brings forth as testimony the words of the Divine Scripture: *My heart grew hot within me, and in my meditation a fire shall flame out* (Ps. 38:4).

St. Simeon, who is testified of in the above-mentioned book of the most blessed Simeon of Thessalonica, who in the midst of the reigning city [Constantinople] shone forth like the sun by mental prayer in unutterable gifts of the Most Holy Spirit, and consequently is called by the entire Church the New Theologian — in his homily on the three forms of prayer writes thus concerning mental prayer and heedfulness: "Our Holy Fathers, hearing the Lord Who said that *Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies, and these are the things which defile a man* (Matt. 15:19-20); and again hearing that He teaches to *cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also* (Matt. 23:26), abandoned every other work and labored only in this guarding of the heart, knowing for certain that together with this doing they would keep without difficulty every other virtue as well. And without this doing it is impossible for there to be a single virtue." These words of the Saint clearly indicate that the Divine Fathers placed the above-mentioned words of the Lord as a testimony and foundation for themselves of the guarding of the heart, that is, of the mental invocation of Jesus. This Saint brings forth also, as a testimony of Divine mental prayer, other passages of Sacred Scripture, saying: "Ecclesiastes speaks of this: *Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and go undefiled in the ways of thy heart, and remove anger from thy heart* (Eccl. 11:9-10), and: *If the Spirit of the Lord shall come upon thee, leave not thy place* (Eccl. 10:4). By "place" he means the heart, as also the Lord has said: *Out of*

the heart proceed evil thoughts (Matt. 15:19). And again: *Be ye not haughty* (Luke 12:29), [that is, do not dissipate your mind hither and thither]. And again: *Narrow is the gate, and sorrowful is the way, which leadeth unto life* (Matt. 7:14); likewise: *Blessed are the pure in heart* (Matt. 5:8), that is, those who do not have in themselves a single thought of this world." And the Apostle Peter says: *Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour* (I Pet. 5:8). And the Apostle Paul clearly writes to the Ephesians concerning the guarding of the heart, saying: *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* (Eph. 6:12).

St. Hesychius the Presbyter, theologian and teacher of the Church of Jerusalem, friend and intimate of our holy and God-bearing Father Euthemius the Great, who wrote in Divinely-wise fashion, from the enlightenment of Divine grace, a book in 200 chapters concerning this sacred mental invocation of Jesus in the heart, that is, concerning mental prayer, brings forth concerning this the following testimonies from Sacred Scripture: *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God* (Matt. 5:8); likewise: *Beware, lest there be a hidden word of iniquity in thy heart* (Deut. 15:9); likewise: *In the morning will I stand before Thee, and Thou shalt see me* (Ps. 5:4); likewise: *Blessed is he that shall take and dash thy little ones against the rock* (Ps. 136:9); likewise: *In the morning I put to death all the wicked of the land, that I might cut off all the doers of iniquity from the city of the Lord* (Ps. 100:8); likewise: *Be prepared, O Israel, to call upon the name of the Lord thy God* (Amos 4:12); and the Apostle: *Pray without ceasing* (I Thess. 5:17); and the Lord Himself says: *Without Me ye can do nothing. He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch* (John 15:5-6); likewise: *Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts: murders, adulteries... These are the things which defile a man* (Matt. 15:19); likewise: *I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within my heart* (Ps. 39:9); and others, which because of their multitude I omit.

Our Divine and God-bearing Father John of the Ladder brings forth the testimony of Divine Scripture concerning this sacred Prayer and true silence of the mind, saying: "The great doer of great and perfect prayer has

said: *I had rather speak five words with my understanding* (I Cor. 14:19), and the rest; and again: *My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready* (Ps. 56:8); likewise: *I sleep, but my heart keepeth vigil* (Song of Songs 5:2); likewise: *I cried with my whole heart* (Ps. 118:145), that is, with body and soul; and the rest.”

Our Divine Father Philotheus, Abbot of the Monastery of the Bush of the Most Holy Mother of God which is on Sinai, who compiled a small book of chapters on the mental guarding of the heart — priceless pearls of Divine wisdom, filled with unutterable heavenly sweetness of the Holy Spirit — places as the unshakable foundation of his words the words of the Sacred Scripture: *In the morning I put to death all the wicked of the land* (Ps. 100:8), and the rest; likewise: *The Kingdom of God is within you* (Luke 17:21); and: “He likened the Kingdom of Heaven to a mustard seed, and a pearl, and leaven”; and again: *Without Me ye can do nothing* (John 15:5); likewise: *With all watchfulness keep thy heart* (Prov. 4:23); and: *Cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also* (Matt. 23:26); and: *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* (Eph. 6:12); likewise: *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith* (I Pet. 5:8-9); likewise: *I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity* (Rom. 7:22-23); and others.

Our Divine Father Diadoch, Bishop of Photicus, of whom testimony is given in the book of the above-mentioned Hierarch of Christ, Simeon of Thessalonica, places the following foundation from the Divine Scripture in his homily (one out of 100 chapters in his Divine book) on the mental Jesus Prayer sacredly performed in the heart: *No man can say the Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Spirit* (I Cor. 12:3); and from the Gospel parable of the merchant who was seeking good pearls he brings forth the following words: This is the pearl of great price which can be obtained by him who will sell his property and will have unutterable joy over obtaining it, and the rest.

Our holy Father Nicephorus the Faster, of whom testimony is given in the same book of the above-mentioned Hierarch Simeon, in his homily on

the guarding of the heart, which is filled with spiritual profit likens this Divine mental doing of prayer in the heart to the treasure hid in the field, and calls it a burning lamp, bringing forth passages of Sacred Scripture: *The Kingdom of God is within you* (Luke 17:21), and: *We wrestle not against flesh and blood* (Eph. 6:12); likewise: *to dress it and keep it* (Gen. 2:15), and the rest.

Our blessed and God-bearing Father Gregory the Sinaite, who by the doing of the Divine Prayer ascended to the height of Divine vision and shone forth like the sun with gifts of the Holy spirit on the Holy Mountain of Athos and in other places, who composed the Hymns to the Holy Trinity which are sung every Sunday after the Canon to the Holy Trinity [at Nocturns] in the Holy Catholic Eastern Church throughout the world, and likewise the Canon to the Life-giving Cross, having embraced the writings of all the God-bearing Fathers, composed a book, filled with every spiritual profit, in which he teaches in refined detail, more than all the other Saints, concerning this Divine Prayer sacredly performed by the mind in the heart, and brings forth in confirmation of his words the following passages from the Sacred Scriptures: *Remember the Lord thy God always* (Deut. 8:18); likewise: *In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening let not thy hand cease* (Eccl. 11:6), and the rest; likewise: *If I pray with the tongue*, that is, with the lips, *my spirit prayeth*, that is, my voice (know, that lips and tongue, and spirit, and voice — are one and the same thing), *but my understanding is unfruitful. I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also; and: I had rather speak five words with my understanding* (I Cor. 14:14, 15, 19), and the rest, bringing forth as a witness also St. John of the Ladder, who refers these words to prayer. Likewise: *The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force* (Matt. 11:12); likewise: *No man can say the Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Spirit* (I Cor. 12:3), and the rest.

The follower of the steps of the Apostles, the invincible pillar of the Orthodox Faith, he who by the fiery sword of the Spirit and the truth of Orthodox dogmas annihilated the Spirit-fighting heresies of the Latins, as if they had been the webs of spiders, at the Council of Florence — Mark, I say, the all-sacred, most wise and most eloquent Metropolitan of Ephesus, in the beginning of his commentary on the Church's services, writes concerning the Divine Prayer of Jesus performed secretly by the mind in the heart, making

use of the testimony of the Divine Scripture; his very words, Divinely-wise, I present here: "We should, according to the commandment which has been commanded, *pray without ceasing*, and offer worship to God *in spirit and in truth*; but care for worldly thoughts and the fetters of concern for the body lead may away and turn many away from the *Kingdom of God* which is *within us*, as the word of God proclaims, and hinder us from remaining at the mental altar-table and offering of ourselves spiritual and rational sacrifices to God, according to the Divine Apostle who says that we are the temple of God Who dwells in us, and His Divine Spirit dwells in us. And it is not astonishing if such a thing usually occurs with many who live according to the flesh, when we see that certain of the monks, who have renounced earthly things, by reason of the mental warfare at the undertaking of the passions and the great disturbance which arises therefrom and darkens the rational part of the soul, cannot yet attain to pure prayer, even though they strongly desire this. Sweet is the pure and unceasing remembrance of Jesus in the heart and the unutterable enlightenment which comes from it."

Our holy Russian Father, St. Nilus of Sora, who composed his book concerning the mental guarding of the heart from the teaching of the God-bearing Fathers, and in particular from Gregory the Sinaite, makes use of such testimonies as these from Sacred Scripture: *Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, and these are the things which defile a man* (Matt. 15:19-20); and: *Cleanse that which is within the cup and platter* (Matt. 23:26); likewise: It is fitting to *worship the Father in spirit and in truth* (John 4:23); likewise: *If I pray with the tongue, and the rest*; and: *I had rather speak five words with my understanding, than ten thousand words with the tongue* (I Cor. 14:14, 19), and the rest.

Again, the Russian luminary, the Hierarch of Christ Demetrius, Metropolitan of Rostov, who with the spiritual sword of the word annihilated, as if they had been the webs of spiders, the errors of the sectarians and their God-resisting, corrupt understanding, which is contrary to the Sacred Scripture, who wrote for the benefit of the Holy Church many teachings which are filled with the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, and composed a homily on the inner mental doing of prayer which is overflowing with spiritual profit, makes use of the following testimonies from Sacred Scripture: *Thou, when thou*

prayest, enter into thy closet, and the rest; likewise: *My heart said unto Thee: I will seek the Lord; My face hath sought Thee; Thy face, O Lord, will I seek; in the same way as the deer thirsteth for springs of water, so doth my soul thirst for Thee, O God*; likewise: *The Kingdom of God is within you*; likewise: *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit* (Eph. 6:18); and: *If I pray with the tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful*; and again: *I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also*, and the rest. These words, agreeing with Sts. John of the Ladder, and Gregory the Sinaite, and Nilus of Sora, he understands as referring to mental prayer.

Indeed the Church's Typicon itself, which was printed in the great reigning city of Moscow, presenting the Church's law concerning prostrations and prayer, brings forth as testimony of the Divine prayer these passages from Divine Scripture: *God is Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth* (John 4:24). Likewise: *If I pray with the tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also* (I Cor. 14:14-15). And again: *In the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, than ten thousand words with the tongue* (I Cor. 14:19). And it brings forth as testimony from the Holy Fathers: St John of the Ladder, and the Divine Gregory the Sinaite, and St. Antioch, and in part their Divine teaching on this mental prayer, and in the end it says: "And with this, here we end the discussion of the sacred and ever-memorable mental prayer." And then it speaks also of the holy prayer common to everyone, performed in the Church's services.

And so by God's grace it has been shown that the God-bearing Fathers made wise by the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, place the foundation of their teaching concerning the mental sacred activity of prayer, secretly performed within the inner man, on the unshakable rock of the Divine Scripture of the New and Old Testaments, taking from there, as from an inexhaustible source, such a multitude of testimonies.

And who among right-believing Christians, seeing this, could have the least doubt concerning this Divine matter? Only one who submits to the spirit of insensibility, who hears and sees but does not wish to understand and know, could do this. But those who fear God and have sound reason, seeing such testimonies of so many witnesses, will unanimously confess this to be a Divine



Petru Voda Monastery, close to Durau Monastery. Many of St. Paisius' disciples labored in this region of the Carpathian Mountains in Romania.

matter, more natural to and befitting the angelic monastic order than all other monastic labors. Concerning this work the above-mentioned and very many other of our Divine Fathers offer in their writings many worthy words, which are sweeter than honey and the honeycomb and filled with spiritual wisdom, giving instruction concerning the inner, mental labor against the mental and invisible enemies: concerning how one should turn against them this spiritual sword and this flaming invincible weapon of the Name of Jesus which guards the doors of the heart; that is, concerning how this Divine Prayer of Jesus should be sacredly performed with the mind in the heart.

Concerning the sacred doing of this sacred Prayer, especially concerning its very beginnings and concerning how beginners should learn it in practice, I, the least one, as far as the power of my infirm mind allows, must write at least a little, God strengthening me, from the teaching of the Holy Fathers. And first of all it must be explained that this Divine Prayer is a spiritual art, and then what preparation there must be for practicing it, according to the teaching of the Holy Fathers.

3.

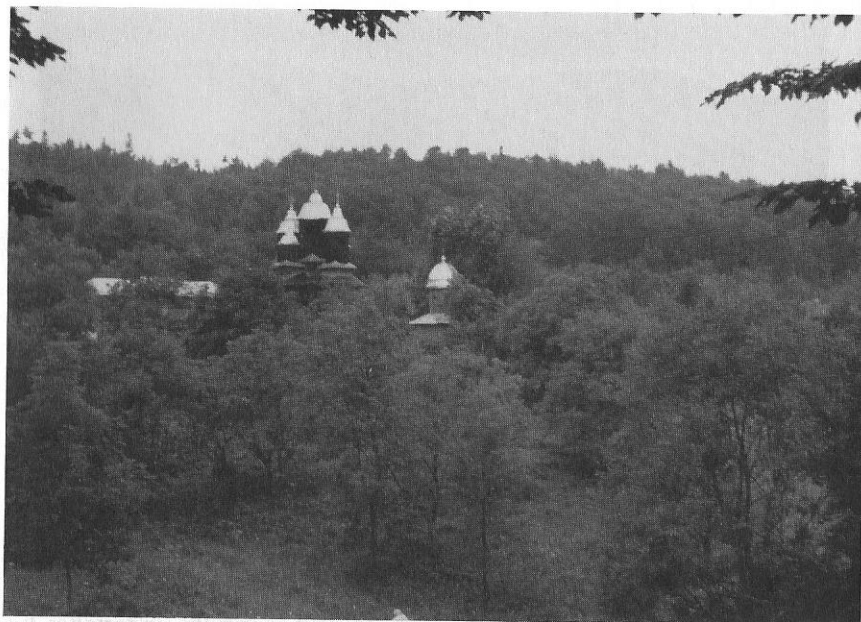
THAT THIS SACRED MENTAL PRAYER IS A SPIRITUAL ART

LET IT BE KNOWN that our Divine Fathers call this sacred mental doing of prayer an art. St. John of the Ladder in the 27th step, on Silence (27:21-23), teaching of the mystery of this mental prayer, says: "If you have studied well this art, you cannot but know of what I speak. Sitting on a high place, observe, if only you are able, and then you will see how, when, and from whence, and how many and what kind of thieves come in order to enter in and steal your clusters of grapes. This watchman, when he becomes tired, rises up and prays; then again he sits down and manfully undertakes his previous doing."

St. Hesychius, the Presbyter of Jerusalem, says concerning this sacred Prayer: "Sobriety is a spiritual art which, with God's help, completely delivers a man from passionate thoughts and words and evil deeds" (Century 1, Ch. 1).

St. Nicephorus the Faster, teaching concerning the same thing, says: "Come and I shall declare to you an art, or rather a science, of eternal, or rather heavenly dwelling, which leads its doer without labor and without danger into the harbor of dispassion."

The aforementioned Holy Fathers, as has been indicated, call this holy Prayer an art, I think, for the following reason: just as a man cannot learn an art by himself, not having a skilled artist [to show him], so also it is impossible to learn this mental doing of prayer without a skilled instructor. But this matter, according to St. Nicephorus, comes to most or even to everyone, from instruction; and they are rare who have received it from God without instruction, by painful forcing of themselves and warmth of faith.



The monastery of Poiana Marului (Apple Orchard) in the beautiful wilderness regions of Wallachia, Romania, the place of Paisius' elder, Basil.

The rule of church prayer according to the Typicon and the holy church books, which Orthodox Christians, both laymen and monks must offer daily as tribute to the Heavenly King, may be performed and read orally by anyone who can read and write, without instruction. But to offer to God the mystical sacrifice of prayer with the mind in the heart, since this is a spiritual art, is impossible without instruction, as has been indicated above.

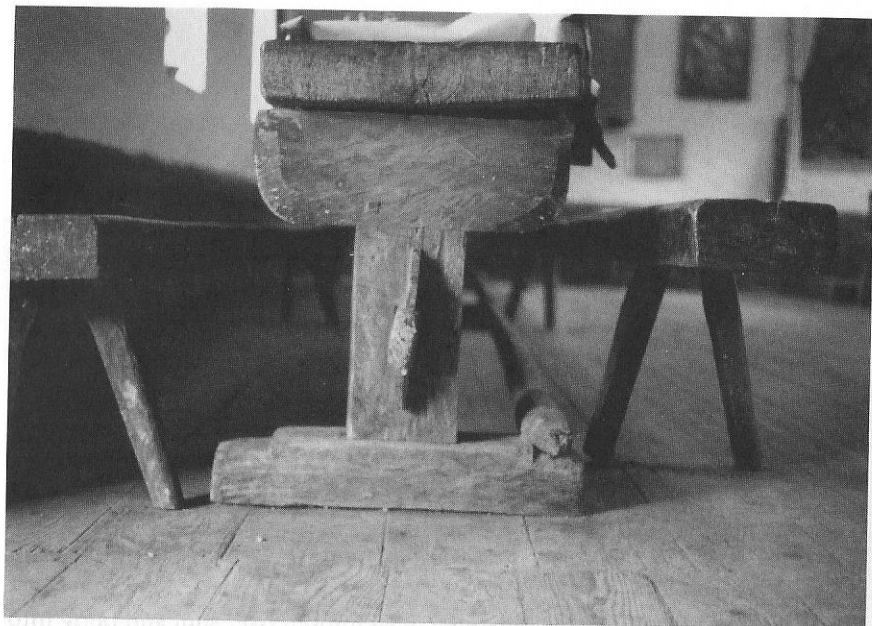
Being a spiritual art, it comprises also the unceasing work of monks, so that not only by renunciation of the world and what is in the world, by a change of name at their tonsure and distinctive garments, by an unmarried, virginal, pure life of voluntary poverty, by distinctive food and place of dwelling — but also by their very mental and spiritual heedfulness according to the inner man, and by prayer, monks might have a work which is distinct from and surpasses that of people in the world.

4.

WHAT PREPARATION IS NEEDFUL FOR THOSE WHO DESIRE TO UNDERTAKE THIS DIVINE WORK

INASMUCH AS this Divine prayer is greater than any other monastic labor and is, according to the Holy Fathers, the pinnacle of all corrective labors, the source of virtues, the most refined and invisible work of the mind invisible in the depths of the heart — so does the invisible enemy of our salvation extend against it the most refined, invisible nets of his various deceptions and fantasies, which are scarcely understandable to the human mind. Therefore, one who is zealous to learn this Divine work must, according to St. Simeon the New Theologian, give himself over soul and body into obedience, in accordance with the Divine Scripture: that is, give himself in complete cutting off of his own will and his own understanding to a man who fears God, a fervent keeper of His Divine commandments, and not inexperienced in this mental labor, one who can, according to the writings of the Holy Fathers, show the one who submits himself to him an unerring path to salvation, the path of the mental activity of prayer secretly performed by the mind in the heart. This is essential in order that, by means of true obedience according to reason, he might become free from all noises and cares and attachments of this world and the body. And how can one not be free if he has placed all concern for his soul and body upon God and, after God, upon his father? And by the humility which is born of obedience, according to the testimony of St. John of the Ladder and many other Holy Fathers, he can escape all the deceptions and nets of the devil peacefully, calmly, without any harm, and may constantly exercise himself in this mental work, with great prospering of soul.

And if someone has given himself over into obedience, but has not found in his father a very profound and experienced and skilled instructor of



The table in the refectory (trapeza) at Secu Monastery, Romania, dating from about the time that St. Paisius was abbot there and ate at this very spot.

this Divine mental Prayer (at the present time, alas, which is worthy of many tears and much lamentation, skilled instructors of this work are completely disappearing) — then he should not fall into despondency because of this; but remaining in true obedience according to God's commandments (and not self-willed and apart from others, without obedience — for deception ordinarily follows upon this), and having placed all his hope upon God, let him submit himself, in addition to his father and in place of a true instructor, in faith and love, to the instruction of our Holy Fathers, who have set forth in detail the teaching of this Divine activity from the enlightenment of Divine grace, and from this source let him take instruction concerning this Prayer. And in any case, the grace of God, by the prayers of the Holy Fathers, will aid and enlighten him as to how, without any doubt, to learn this Divine work.

5.

THE CHARACTER AND EFFECT OF THIS SACRED PRAYER OF JESUS

HAVING PLACED as a firm and unwavering foundation of this Divine Prayer such a preparation, that is, Divine obedience, it is now time to show from the teaching of the Holy Fathers what this sacred Prayer is, and its character and effect. And this is in order that he who desires to be instructed in this spiritual work might see what a great and unutterable advancement in all virtues it leads the ascetic, and that therefore he must desire with great fervor and Divine zeal to cling to the all-holy doing of this mental Prayer.

St. John of the Ladder, in his 28th Step, on Prayer, says in the beginning: "Prayer, in its character, is the communion and union of man with God; and in its effect it is the confirmation of peace, reconciliation with God, the mother and again the daughter of tears, the cleansing of sins, a bridge which leads through temptations, a wall against afflictions, the annihilation of battles, an angelic doing, the food of all the fleshless ones, future joy, limitless doing, the source of virtues, the cause of gifts, invisible advancement, food of the soul, enlightenment of the mind, an axe against despair, the proof of hope, the ceasing of sorrow, wealth of monks, the treasury of those who keep silence, the lessening of anger, the mirror of advancement, the manifestation of peace, the uncovering of one's condition, the herald of future things, the sign of glory. Prayer, for one who truly prays, is a judgment seat, and judgment, and the throne of the Lord's judgment, before the future Judgment."

St. Gregory the Sinaite, in his 113th Chapter, says: "Prayer in beginners is like a fire of joy which comes forth from the heart; while in the perfect, it is like an active light giving forth fragrance. Or again: prayer is the preaching of the Apostles, the action of faith, or rather, unmediated faith, the confirma-

tion of things hoped for, active love, angelic movement, the strength of the fleshless one, their work and joy, the good tidings of God, the confirmation of the heart, the hope of salvation, the sign of sanctification, the formation of sanctity, the knowledge of God, the manifestation of baptism, the purification of the font, the betrothal of the Holy Spirit, the rejoicing of Jesus, the joy of the soul, the mercy of God, the sign of reconciliation, the seal of Christ, the ray of the mental sun, the morning star of the heart, the confirmation of Christianity, the manifestation of Divine reconciliation, the grace of God, the wisdom of God, or rather, the beginning of self-knowledge, a Divine manifestation, the work of monks, the dwelling of those who keep silence, or rather the cause of silence, a sign of angelic dwelling."

And the blessed Macarius the Great says: "The head of every good striving and the pinnacle of all corrections is to persevere in prayer, by which we may ever obtain, through entreaty of God, all the other virtues as well. By prayer those who are worthy partake of the sanctity of God and spiritual activity and the union of the mind with the Lord in unutterable love. He who constantly forces himself to endure in prayer is roused by spiritual love to Divine fervor and flaming desire towards God, and he receives, according to his measure, the grace of spiritual, sanctifying perfection" (Homily 40, Ch. 2).

St. Hesychius the Presbyter of Jerusalem says: "Let the guarding of the mind be fittingly and properly called light-bearing and lightning-bearing and light-flashing and fire-bearing. For it surpasses, to speak the truth, all the numberless multitude of bodily virtues. Wherefore this virtue should be called by the most honorable names by reason of the brilliant light which is born of it. By coming to love it sinners, worthless ones, vile and irrational ones, senseless ones and unrighteous ones can become righteous, useful, pure, holy and wise through Christ Jesus. And not only this, but they may also behold Divine mysteries and theologize. And having become beholders, they cross over to this most pure and endless light and they touch it with unutterable contacts, and they live and abide with Him. Since they have tasted *that the Lord is good* (Ps. 33:8), so there is manifestly fulfilled in such chief angels the word of David: *Surely the righteous shall confess Thy Name and the upright shall dwell before Thy Face* (Ps. 139:14). In truth, these alone truly call upon and

confess God, with Whom they ever love to converse, loving Him" (Second Century, Chapter 71).

And St. Simeon, Archbishop of Thessalonica, says of this sacred Prayer: "This Divine Prayer, this invocation of our Saviour: 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me,' is at the same time a prayer, and an entreaty, and a confession of faith, and a giver of the Holy Spirit, and a bestower of Divine gifts, and a purification of the heart, and the banishment of demons, and the dwelling of Jesus Christ, and a source of spiritual thoughts and Divine reflections, and deliverance from sins, and healing of souls and bodies, and a giver of Divine enlightenment, and a source of Divine mercy, and a granter of Divine revelations and mysteries to the humble, and salvation itself; because it is the bearing of the saving Name of our God. It is the calling upon us of the very Name of Jesus Christ the Son of God" (Chapter 296).

So also do other Divine Fathers, writing about this sacred Prayer, by their teaching filled with Divine wisdom, declare concerning its action, concerning the unutterable benefit which comes from it, and concerning the advancement through it in the Divine gifts of the Holy Spirit.

And who, seeing that this sacred Prayer leads the ascetic to such a heavenly treasury of various virtues, will not be enkindled with Divine zeal for the constant doing of the Prayer, so as to keep always in the soul and heart the All-sweet Jesus, remembering in oneself constantly His most dear Name, and thus to be filled with fire for His unutterable love? Only he will not do this who, applying himself to worldly thoughts, has bound himself by the fetters of bodily cares, which lead many astray and take them away from the Kingdom of God which is within us. He only will not be fervent to touch on the mental doing of mental prayer who in very deed and practice has not tasted in the throat of his soul the unutterable Divine sweetness of this most profitable doing, and does not know what hidden spiritual profit it has within itself. But those who desire to be joined in love with the Most Sweet Jesus, having spit upon all the beauties of this world, all enjoyments and bodily repose itself, will desire to have nothing else in this life but only to exercise themselves constantly in the paradisiacal doing of this Prayer.

6.

CONCERNING THE BEGINNING OF HOW ONE SHOULD LEARN TO PERFORM THIS DIVINE PRAYER WITH THE MIND IN THE HEART

IN ANCIENT TIMES, this all-holy activity of mental prayer shone forth in many places where the Holy Fathers had their dwelling. Therefore, at that time there were also many teachers of this spiritual activity. For this reason also, our Holy Fathers, when writing about it, set forth only concerning the unutterable spiritual benefit which proceeded from it, having no need, as I think, to write about the very experience of this activity which is fitting for beginners. And even if certain ones did write concerning this in some places this was very comprehensible only for those who knew the experience of this activity, while for those who did not know this it was quite incomprehensible. But certain of the Holy Fathers, when they saw that true and undeceived instructors of this activity had begun to be quite few in number, and fearing lest the true teaching concerning the beginning of this mental prayer might be lost, wrote also concerning the very beginning and the experience of it, concerning how a beginner should learn and how he should enter with his mind into the land of the heart, and there form the Prayer with the mind truly and without deception. The Divine teaching itself of these Fathers concerning this subject should be set forth here.

Saint Simeon the New Theologian speaks thus concerning the beginning of this activity: "True and undeceived attention and prayer consists in this, that during the time of prayer the mind preserve the heart and remain constantly within it, and from there, that is, from the depths of the heart, it should send up prayer to the Lord. And when it tastes with the heart *that the Lord is good* (Ps. 33:8) and takes sweet enjoyment, it will no longer depart from the place of the heart. And together with the Apostle it will say: *It is good*

for us to be here (Matt. 17:4). And ceaselessly examining the places of the heart, it acquires a certain means of chasing away all the thoughts of the enemy which have been sown there." And further he speaks even more clearly about this: "Having sat down in a silent cell in some special corner, pay heed to do as I tell you: Close the door and raise your mind away from all cares, and press your chin to your chest, moving the sensuous eye in harmony with the mind. Subdue the inhaling of the nostrils so as not to exhale strongly, and strive mentally to find within yourself the place where the heart is, wherein it is natural for all the powers of the soul to be located. At first you will find there darkness and dense coarseness. But if you continue doing this night and day, you will acquire — O wonder! — ceaseless rejoicing."*

And later he speaks yet more clearly about this as follows: "As soon as the mind has found the place of the heart, immediately it sees what it has never seen before: it sees air in the midst of the heart, and itself entirely bright and filled with discernment. And from that time on, no matter from where a thought might appear, before it enters and takes form it is immediately banished and destroyed by the invocation of Jesus Christ. Henceforth the mind, remembering the evil done by demons, raises against them a natural anger, pursues them and throws down the mental adversaries. And you will learn other things also with the help of God by means of preserving the mind, keeping Jesus in the heart" (Homily 68, "On the Three Forms of Heedfulness and Prayer").

St. Nicephorus the Faster, teaching yet more clearly concerning the entrance of the mind into the heart, says: "First of all, let your life be one of silence, without cares, and at peace with everyone. Then, entering into your closet, close yourself in, and sitting in some corner, do as I shall tell you: You

* In his Russian translation of the Homilies of St. Simeon the New Theologian, Bishop Theophanes the Recluse has a footnote at this part of the text warning that these techniques, "owing to the insufficiency of guides, can be accompanied by bad consequences." It must therefore be emphasized that the practice of the techniques set forth in this Sixth Chapter should not be undertaken without the indispensable condition set forth in Chapter Four: being in at least outward obedience to a spiritual father in a monastery. For lay people these techniques may be reduced to a very simple direction, which Bishop Theophanes expresses thus: "The essence of the matter is to acquire the habit of standing with the mind in the heart. One must lead the mind from the head down to the heart and plant it there," i.e., acquire the habit of concentrated prayer, which "may most conveniently be attained by (in general) walking before God and the labor of prayer, and especially by going to church."

know that the breath which we breathe is this air; we exhale it by no other way than by the heart. And it is the cause of the life and warmth of the body. The heart draws in air in order by means of breathing to let out its warmth and acquire for itself coolness. The cause of this activity, or rather its servant, is something light, which being created by the Creator very fine, like some kind of bellows, easily breathes in and out what surrounds it, that is, the air. In this way the heart, drawing in coolness by means of the air and letting out warmth, performs ceaselessly the function for the sake of which it was established in the composition of life. Now, having sat down and concentrated your mind, force it to enter the heart together with the breath. And when it enters there, what follows after this will be not unjoyful and not unhappy." And later: "Therefore, O brother, train the mind not quickly to come out of there; because at first it will find it to be very tedious because of the inward enclosure and confinement. But when it will become accustomed to it, it will no longer bear to wander without, because *the Kingdom of Heaven* is to be found *within us*, and when we examine it there and seek it with pure prayer, then everything outward will become vile and hateful. If immediately, as has been said, you enter with the mind into the place of the heart which I have indicated to you: then give thanksgiving to God and glorify Him, and rejoice, and hold ceaselessly to this activity, and it will teach you what you do not know. And you should also know that the mind, remaining there, should not stand silent and idle, but should have as its ceaseless work and instruction these words: *Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me*; and it should never cease from this. This keeps the mind from being puffed up and preserves it beyond the reach and access of thoughts from the enemy, and raises it daily into love and Divine desire. But if, O brother, after having labored much you cannot enter into the land of the heart as we have commanded you, then, do what I shall tell you, and with God's help you will find what you seek.

"Do you know that the rational part of a man is in his breast? For it is within the breast, even when the lips are silent, that we speak and take counsel, and utter prayers and psalms, and so forth. To this rational part, having taken away from it every thought (for you can if you wish), let it say: *Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me*; and compel it, in place of every other thought, ceaselessly to cry this out within. And when you will keep to this for

some time, by this the entrance to the heart will be opened to you also, as we have written for you without any doubt, for we ourselves have discovered this through experience. And there will come to you, together with the much-desired and sweet heedfulness, the whole choir of the virtues as well: love, joy, peace, and the others."

The Divine Gregory the Sinaite, also teaching how one should perform, with the mind in the heart, the most saving invocation of the Lord, says: "Sitting from morning in a low chair, lower the mind from the ruling place into the heart, and keep it there. And bending down with difficulty, and feeling a strong pain in the chest and shoulders and neck, ceaselessly call with the mind or soul: Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me. Then, if it happens that, because of the confinement or pain and from the frequent invocation, it becomes unpleasant for you (which occurs not because of the uniformity of the Three-Named Food frequently eaten, for it is said, they who eat Me will yet hunger (Sirach 24:23) — then transfer your mind to the other half; say Son of God, have mercy on me. And pronouncing this half many times, you should not often exchange the halves out of sloth and boredom; because fruit trees which are often transplanted do not take root. Keep your breathing also light, so that you will not breathe strongly. For the movement of air, which proceeds from the heart, disperses thought and darkens the mind; and returning from there, it either gives the captive over to forgetfulness, or forces it to be in one place instead of another. And thus it becomes insensible to that toward which it should not be insensible. If you see the uncleanness of evil spirits, that is, thoughts which arise or form images in your mind, then do not be afraid and do not be surprised; but likewise, if good thoughts concerning certain things should appear to you, do not heed them: but restraining the breath as much as possible, and enclosing the mind within the heart and constantly and frequently performing the invocation of the Lord Jesus, you will soon crush and uproot them, wounding them invisibly with the Divine Name, as St. John of the Ladder also says (Step 21): 'Beat the foes with the Name of Jesus, because there is no weapon stronger, either in heaven or on earth' ("On Silence," II, 15).

And again the same Saint, teaching how one should sit in silence and prayer, says: "Sometimes one should sit on a stool for the sake of the labor, and sometimes on a bed for a little while for the sake of repose. And your sitting should be in patience, for the sake of Him Who said that we must be

patient in prayer (Luke 18:1), and one should not stand up quickly, becoming faint-hearted by reason of the difficulty of the pain of the affliction and the mental invocation and the frequent tension of the mind. Thus also the Prophet declares: Afflictions have taken possession of me as of one giving birth (Jer. 8:21). And so, penetrating downward and concentrating the mind in the heart, if your heart should be opened to you, call to your aid the Lord Jesus. If the shoulders should hurt and the head be frequently pained, endure this all the more firmly and zealously, seeking out the Lord in the heart: for to those who force themselves belongs the Kingdom of Heaven, and the violent take it by force (Matt. 11:12), and the rest." And again he says, concerning how one should utter the Prayer: "The Fathers spoke thus: one says the whole Prayer, Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me; another says half, Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me —and this is more convenient by reason of the infirmity and childishness of the mind. And no one himself, without the Spirit, can secretly name the Lord Jesus purely and perfectly, except by the Holy Spirit (II Cor. 12:3); but, like a dumb child, he cannot utter it with his tongue. And he should not, out of slothfulness, frequently change the invocation of the Name, but only rarely, for the sake of restraint." Again: "Some teach that it should be pronounced with the lips, and others with the mind; but I allow both the one and the other. Sometimes the mind becomes tired, becoming wearied with speaking; and sometimes the lips do. Therefore, one should pray with both — both with the lips and with the mind; however one should call out silently and without disturbance, lest the voice, disturbing the feeling and attention of the mind, should hinder it, until the mind, having become accustomed to this, should advance and receive power from the Spirit to pray strongly and entirely. Then one will no longer need to speak with the lips, and one will not even be able to, being in a condition to perform the activity with the mind alone" (First and Second of the last Seven Chapters).

And so, behold how the above-mentioned Holy Fathers, as has been indicated, present the very clear teaching and practice of the learning of the mental activity for beginners. And from this teaching one may understand also the teaching of other Saints concerning this activity, which is set forth in a most direct manner.

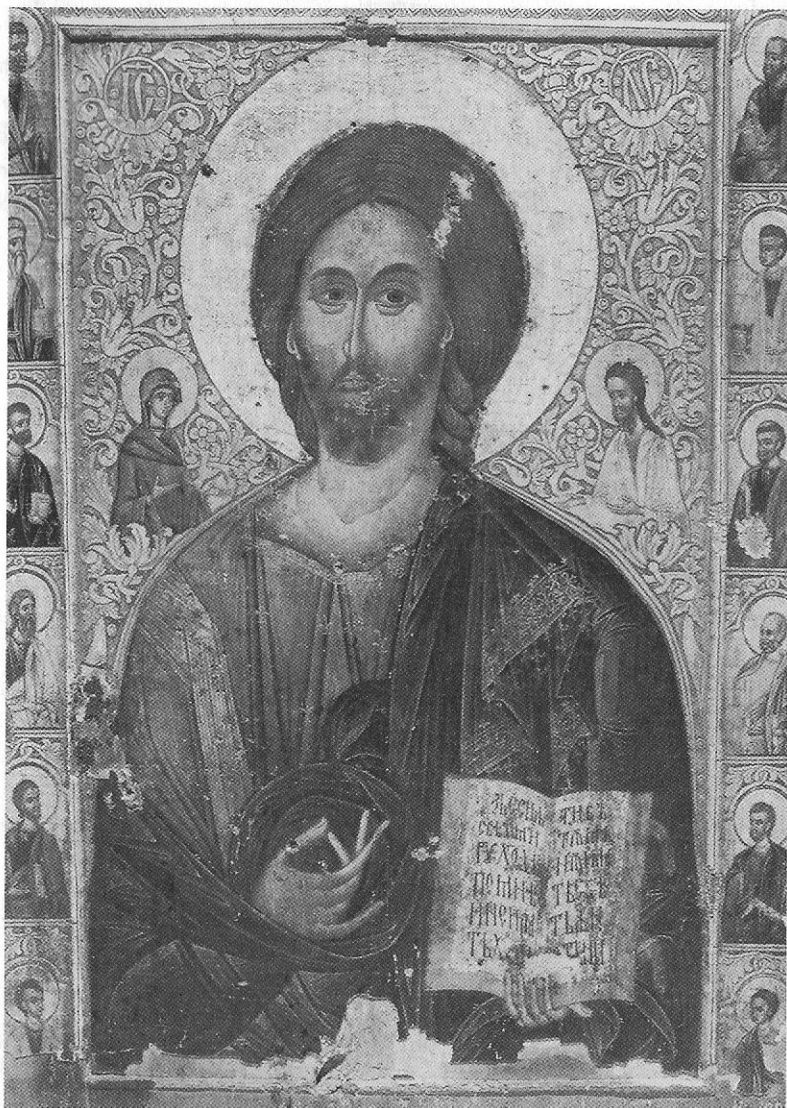
The end of the Six Chapters. To the Most Merciful God may there be glory, honor, worship and thanksgiving unto the endless ages. Amen.

(In the original there is not a complete ending to these chapters.)



ST. PAISIUS VELICHKOVSKY

Color cover of the Greek edition of Schemamonk Metrophanes' biography,
translated by Peter Batsos, Athens, 1990.



CHRIST PANTOCRATOR

16th-century icon from the painted monasteries of Bucovina,
Romania, in the territory of Dragomirna.

II

❖ *Field Flowers* ❖

or Lilies of the Field

*Gathered from the Divine Scripture,
Concerning God's Commandments
and the Holy Virtues*

BY ST. PAISIUS VELICHKOVSKY

*Translated by Fr. Seraphim Rose
and Olga Oleinikov*



Icon of the Mother of God in the main church of Secu Monastery,
dedicated to the Beheading of St. John the Baptist.

INTRODUCTION

BY ELDER THEodosius OF KARoulIA, MOUNT ATHOS, 1905

IN THE LIBRARY of the Russian Skete of the Prophet Elias on Mount Athos there is a manuscript written in semi-Slavonic speech similar to the Lives of Saints by St. Demetrius of Rostov. Concerning this manuscript there has been preserved the following oral tradition. In the 20's of the nineteenth century a young novice of one of the Russian monasteries who was a peasant of Orel province, went to the Niamets (Neamts) monastery in Moldavia, which was at that time renowned for the high spiritual life of the monks and for the ascetic works of the earlier abbot, the famous Elder Paisius Velichkovsky, from Little Russia, who died in 1794. Receiving the monastic tonsure in this new place of dwelling with the name of Sophronius, this monk for a long time remained in this monastery, in which he found many disciples of the great Elder Paisius, among them the calligrapher Platon who had written down the works of the Elder Paisius during his own lifetime. The calligrapher Platon, being well disposed towards the monk Sophronius for his skilled singing on the cliros, gave him the above-mentioned manuscript which he had written out with his own hand, remarking that the forty-four ascetic homilies in the first half of this manuscript were composed by their renowned Elder Paisius himself.

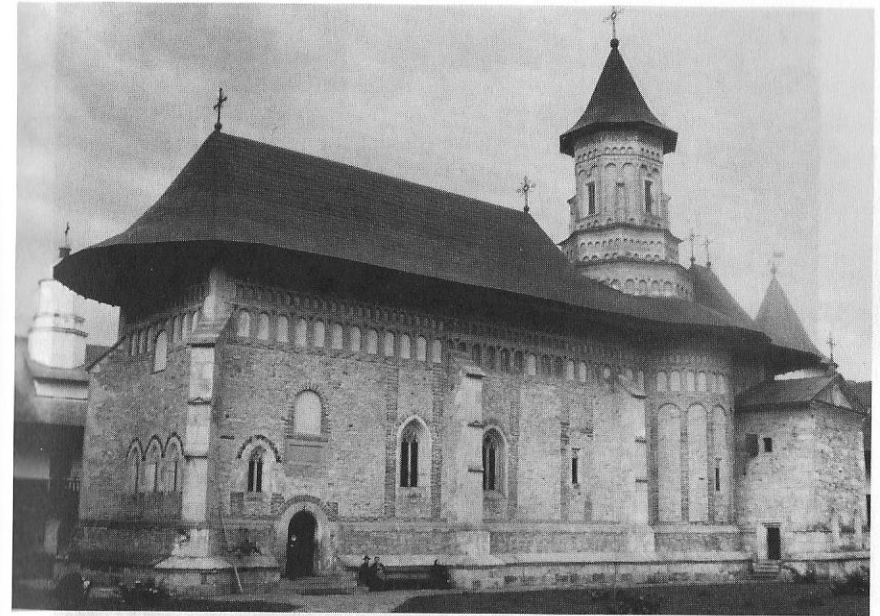
In 1836, having left the Niamets Monastery in Moldavia, Monk Sophronius came to live in the Skete of the Prophet Elias on Mount Athos, which had been founded by Elder Paisius Velichkovsky while he was living on the Holy Mountain. In this skete the monk Sophronius died in 1867, in the 72nd year of his life, leaving in this monastery the manuscript he had brought, concerning which he related the above account to many of the brethren of the Skete, including a certain educated monk who had come to the monastery in his youth in 1864, and until now remains among the living, being respected for his years. From his words this information is taken concerning the manuscript now being published. In the content of its ideas, which are penetrated with a strict patristic ascetic spirit, and by the character

Hiero-Schemamonk
Theodosius of Karoulia



of the composition, which is distinguished by simplicity and the highest degree of persuasiveness, the manuscript very much reminds us of the works of the Elder Paisius which have already been printed. He was a zealot in word and deed of the inward spiritual monastic life. And this similarity serves as a confirmation of the authenticity of the oral communications regarding the authorship of this work which have been set forth above.

At first we supposed about this manuscript that it, in particular the first half of it, was not an independent work of the great Elder but a translation of some Greek printed or manuscript book. But after an investigation in the libraries of the famous Athonite monasteries by men who are highly educated and deserving of faith, no such printed book or manuscript was to be found; nor was it in the catalogues of printed books in the Greek language. Therefore the first half of this manuscript, comprising forty-four homilies, must be acknowledged as an independent work of the Elder Paisius, which is now being published in Russian translation by the Skete of the Prophet Elias for the benefit of all monastics, especially those who are zealous for the solitary contemplative life; while certain homilies in it are most useful for lay people also.



The main church of Neamt Monastery, Romania, where St. Paisius is buried.
The church is dedicated to the Feast of the glorious Ascension of Christ.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

The second half of the manuscript referred to here, which was not translated into Russian (nor will be translated here into English), is a compilation of citations from the Holy Fathers, undoubtedly made by Elder Paisius himself. The first chapter of this compilation is placed in the Russian and in this English translation as Chapter One of the *Field Flowers*, replacing the first Chapter of Elder Paisius, which for some reason was missing from the manuscript. Thus there are 45 chapters in the whole work.

The printed edition of this work (Odessa, 1905) does not indicate the author of the above Introduction. However, from the disciples of Elder Theodosius, who reposed in 1937, it has been learned that it was he who, at the request of the Fathers of the Skete of St. Elias, verified the evidence which indicates the authorship of Blessed Paisius and wrote this Introduction. The work is printed here for the first time as a part of the collected works of Elder Paisius.

— Fr. Seraphim Rose



This is the altar icon of the Neamts Monastery church. It is considered to be the oldest in Romania and dates from the time of the first Christian emperors. It was brought to Romania in the 15th century.

❖ *Field Flowers* ❖

or Lilies of the Field

*Gathered from the Divine Scripture, Concerning
God's Commandments and the Holy Virtues*

I.

A BRIEF EXPOSITION OF THOUGHTS WHICH DISPOSE TO REPENTANCE

REMEMBER, O MY SOUL, the terrible and frightful wonder: that your Creator for your sake became Man, and deigned to suffer for the sake of your salvation. His angels tremble, the Cherubim are terrified, the Seraphim are in fear, and all the heavenly powers ceaselessly give praise; and you, unfortunate soul, remain in laziness. At least from this time forth arise and do not put off, my beloved soul, holy repentance, contrition of heart and penance for your sins. Putting them off year after year, month after month, day after day, you will not at all desire with your whole heart to repent, and you will not find one to have compassion on you. O! with what torture you will then begin to repent, but without success. Having the opportunity today to do some good deed, do not put off until tomorrow, my beloved soul, holy repentance, because you do not know what today will bring forth or what misfortune might happen to you this night. For you do not know what the day or night will bring, whether a long life stands before you or not, or if you will suddenly and unexpectedly receive a miserable and speedy death. Now, my beloved soul, is the time of patience; now is the time to endure sorrow; now is the time to keep the commandments and fulfill the virtues; now is the time of sweet lamentation and tearful mourning. If you truly wish to be saved, my soul, be in love with sorrow and groaning, as previously you loved repose.

Live as if you were daily dying; soon your life will pass by like the shadow of clouds before the sun, and you will be forgotten. The days of our life, as it were, are shed forth into the air; and so, do not hesitate even before the most difficult sorrow.

With regard to men: let us not speak of senseless sorrow, but even in reasonable sorrow, do not give yourself over to grief, do not be disturbed, do not run away; but consider yourself as dust before the feet of others. Without this you cannot be saved or escape eternal torment; for our life ends soon, and passes away as a single day. If a man will not crush himself piously through virtues, or will not sacrifice his own life for the fulfilling of God's commandments and the traditions of the Fathers, he cannot be saved.

And thus, my beloved soul, remember all the Saints: the Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Hierarchs, Holy Monks and Righteous ones, Fools-for-Christ and all who from the ages have pleased God. Where have you found Saints who did not subdue the flesh to the spirit or who did not suffer in difficult misfortunes and cruel sorrows? But daily they received a multitude of misfortunes, likewise suffered hunger and thirst, kept vigil and prayed day and night, had humility and contrition of heart, a childlike lack of malice, every mercy, an aid in every sorrow and need, various gifts and alms-giving, as much as possible. In a word, they had all the virtues, together with an unhypocritical love. What they themselves did not wish and hated they did not do to others. And they did it with obedience, like bought slaves, working not as for a man, but as for God, with wise simplicity, but not appearing wise, as being insignificant, but only paying heed to their own salvation.

O man! death stands before you. If you will labor, you will be revered with eternal life in the future age. Virtue is acquired by every kind of forcing oneself. Therefore, if you wish to conquer the passions, cut off the love of pleasure; but if you are pursuing food, you will spend a life in passions; the soul will not be humbled if the flesh is not deprived of bread. It is not possible to deliver the soul from perdition while protecting the body from unpleasantness. Therefore let us return to what is primary. If you wish to be saved, O my soul, to go first on the most sorrowful path which has been indicated here, to enter into the Heavenly Kingdom and receive eternal life—then refine your flesh, taste voluntary bitterness, and endure difficult sorrows, as all the

Saints tasted and endured. And when a man is preparing himself and gives himself the command to endure for the sake of God all sorrows which come upon him, then light and painless seem for him all sorrows, unpleasantnesses and attacks of devils and men. He does not fear death, and nothing can separate such a one from the love of Christ.

Have you heard, my beloved soul, how the Holy Fathers spent their lives? O my soul! Imitate them at least a little. Did they not have tears? O woe, my soul. Were they not sorrowful, thin and worn out in body? O woe, my soul. Did they not have bodily illnesses, great wounds and lamentation of soul with tears? O woe, my soul. Were they not clothed in the same infirm body that we have? O woe, my soul! Did they not have the desire for splendid, sweet and light repose in this world and every bodily repose? Yes, they desired these things, and their bodies in truth were afflicted, but they exchanged their desires for patience and their grief for future joy. They cut off everything once and for all. They considered themselves as dead men, and tormented themselves mercilessly in spiritual labors. Do you see, my soul, how the Holy Fathers labored, having no repose and suffering every kind of evil? They subjected the flesh to the spirit and fulfilled all the other commandments of God, and were saved.

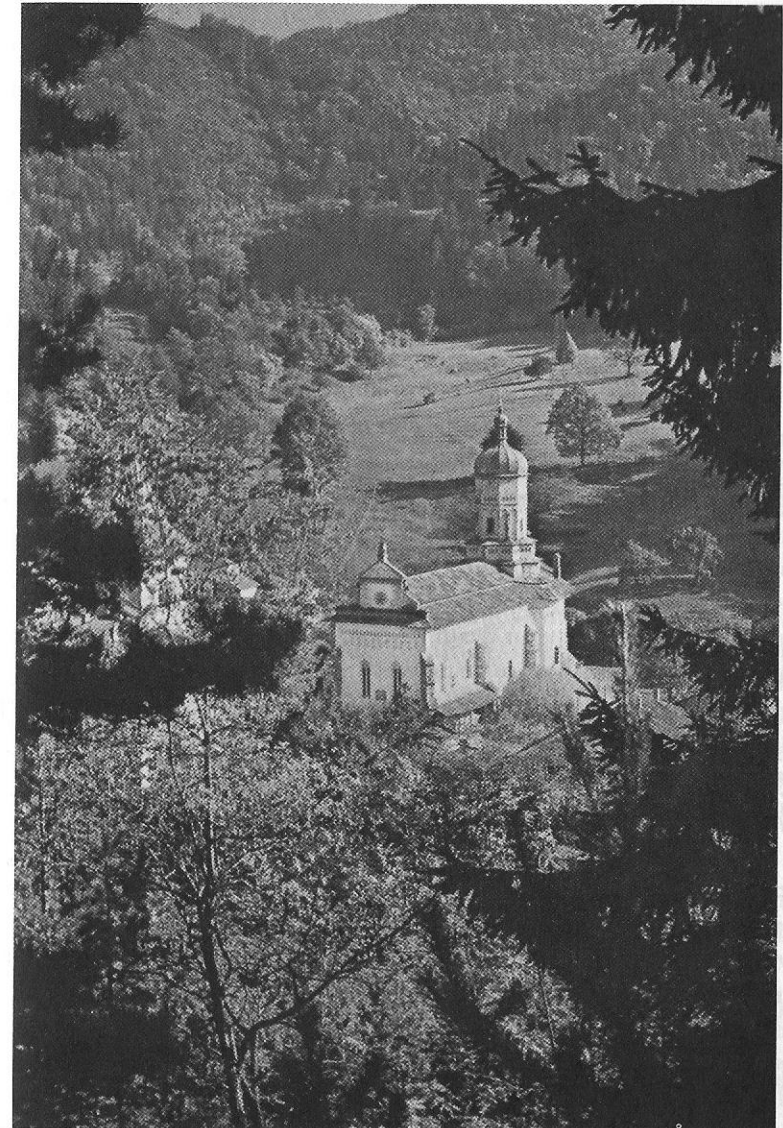
But you, O pitiful soul, do not at all wish to force yourself, and you grow faint from small labors, grow despondent and do not at all remember the hour of death and weep over your sins; but you have become accustomed, my wretched soul, to eat to the fill, to drink to the fill and to be slothful. Do you not know that you are called voluntarily to torment? And yet you endure nothing. How then do you wish to be saved?

At least from this time forth, then: Arise, my beloved soul, and do what I shall tell you. If you cannot labor as the Holy Fathers did, then at least begin according to your strength. Serve everyone with humility and simplicity of heart; acknowledging your infirmity and belittling yourself, say: "Woe to thee, my wretched soul; woe to thee, vile one; woe to thee, O all-defiled one, slothful, careless, sleepy, cruel; woe to thee, who hast perished!" And so, little by little it will come to tender-feeling, will shed tears, will come to itself and repent.

2.

THE BATTLE AGAINST DESPONDENCY,
SLOTHFULNESS AND WEAKNESS

WHEN THIS HAPPENS, occupy mind with the thought of death. Come mentally to the grave; behold there one who has been dead four days: how he grows dark, bloated, and gives off an intolerable foul odor, is eaten by worms, having lost his fair appearance and beauty. Then look in another place: here there lie in the grave the bones of young and old, the beautiful and the ugly; and consider: who was fair, or ugly? Who was a faster, a continent man, an ascetic, or a careless man? And did it bring benefit to rich men that they had repose and enjoyment in this world? Remember then the endless torments of which the holy books speak: the fire of gehenna, the outer darkness, the gnashing of teeth, the infernal tartarus, the unsleeping worm. And depict to yourself how sinners cry out there with bitter tears, and no one delivers them. They lament and weep over themselves, and no one has pity on them. They sigh from the depths of the heart, and no one has compassion on them. They implore for help, complain about their grief, and no one heeds them. Think how creatures, each in its own time, unfailingly serve the Lord their Creator. Reflect concerning the most glorious miracles of God which have been performed upon His slaves from the beginning of the world, and especially of how the Lord, having humbled Himself and suffered for the sake of our salvation, has benefacted and sanctified the human race; and for all this give thanksgiving to God, the Lover of mankind. Remember the future endless life and the Kingdom of Heaven, the repose and unutterable joy. Stand firm, do not leave off the Prayer of Jesus. If you will recall and reflect on all this, then despondency, slothfulness and weakness will disappear, and your soul will come to life as from the dead, by the grace of Christ.



Bistritsa Monastery near the city of Piatra Neamt in Moldavia, Romania.

3.

AN INSTRUCTION MOVING TO CONTRITION WHICH CUTS OFF ALL SELF-EXALTATION AND HUMAN PRIDE AND CONVERTS THE SOUL TO FOUNTAINS OF TEARS

IF YOU SEEK such contrition, it is most sweet and soul-profitting to pay heed to the following instruction concerning the departure of your soul. Now, O man, you are taking enjoyment of beauty, attractiveness, and glory, and spend your life in vain adornment, hoping thus to spend hour after hour, day after day, month after month, year after year. O man! Your life is all the time coming to an end. Life passes by; time little by little goes past; the frightful Throne of the Lord is being prepared; the Righteous Judge is drawing near. O man! The judgment is at the doors; expect a frightful answer. The fiery river, boiling, is resounding with a crackling and with powerful sparks. Frightful torments are raging, awaiting the torture of sinners. O man! Labor, strive, struggle. Before your death a herald will not come! The reward of the Saints is at hand; crowns are being prepared for the righteous; for those who labor and endure sorrows, the Kingdom of Heaven is opened; endless repose is at hand, and unutterable joy is being prepared. *Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered the heart of man, that which God has prepared for those who love Him.*

O man! Have you heard of torments? Why do you not tremble and become frightened? O man! Have you heard of unending joy? Why do you not struggle? Why do you waste the time of your life in tumult and vanity? Later you will not find another time, even though you might search with tears. O man! Even if you live for a hundred, for a thousand years in this world with every food and enjoyment, fattening yourself like a calf, and making yourself look good, like a fox—when the frightful end, death, will come, then our life will seem as a single day, and all satiety and adornment will disappear without a trace, like the flower of the grass, which quickly falls away. O man! Your life from birth to maturity and old age is like a single day, and after this is the speedy, unexpected end of your life. O man! Bring to mind: where are your

grandfathers and great-grandfathers, where are your father, and mother, and brothers, where are your relatives and close friends? Did they not all depart this life? Did they not also wish to live a little longer in this world, to enjoy themselves, adorn themselves, and make merry in their prosperity? But behold—against their own desire they were taken away. Remember that you are earth, you are nourished by the earth, and you will go again into the earth: the flesh will disintegrate and rot, will be eaten by worms, and the bones will crumble like dust. Bring to mind the days of eternity and the years of past generations. How many kings and princes there were who lived in enjoyment and adornment! And what did this help them in their departure from this temporal life; where then were their enjoyment and adornment? For now they are earth and ashes!

How many strong, rich, valiant young men, blossoming with youth and beauty, there have been in this world; and how did their mighty strength, their pleasant youth blossoming with beauty, help them? It is as if all this had never been. Thousands of thousands and ten thousands of ten thousands, or as the sand of the sea, have been the men of every kind; and all of them departed this life. Some of them could not give any kind of answer at the hour of death, but unexpectedly, standing or sitting, were taken away by death. Some gave up the ghost while eating and drinking; others died suddenly while travelling; some, while lying in bed and thinking to refresh their body by a small, brief sleep, in such a condition have fallen asleep in an eternal sleep; some miserably endured agonies at their last hour, beholding fearful, threatening spectacles, the mere depiction of which can terrify us not a little. And there have been other various and sudden deaths!

Oh, oh! Woe, woe! How the soul weeps before death, raises its eyes to the angels, stretches out its arms to men, pitifully implores, — but receives no help. In truth, the vanity of man!

Oh, oh! Woe, woe! Frightful and terrible is it to all when the soul is forcibly separated from the body. The soul departs with weeping, and the body is given over to the earth. Then all hope in the vanity, charm, glory and enjoyment of earthly things is converted to nothing.

Oh, oh! Woe, woe! A great weeping and lamentation, a great sighing and affliction is the separation of the soul. Oh, woe! Woe! Short is this path

on which we go with the body. This life is smoke, steam, dirt, ashes, dust, stench. As smoke disperses in the air, as the flower of the grass quickly falls away and fades, as a horse quickly runs away, as water flows quickly by, and as the fog ascends from the surface of the earth, and as the dew of the morning vanishes, or as a bird flies by: thus does the life of this age pass away. As the wind passes by, so does time go and pass by, and the days of our life come to an end. It is better to endure more and to love fierce and cruel sorrows in this world, than to have a thousand years of joy and repose in this age as against a single day of the age to come. For the path of earthly life is not long; it appears for a short time and soon passes by. In truth, vanity and corruption is everything sweet, beautiful and glorious in this world. For these things, just like a shadow, being altered, pass everything by, and they are in this world like a dream. Now someone is, and a little later he departs; today he is with us, and in the morning is given over to the tomb.

Oh, oh! Woe, woe! Truly, in vain does everyone born of earth trouble himself! We all change, we all will die: kings and princes, judges and powerful ones, rich and poor, and every human being. Today he rejoices with us, takes enjoyment and adorns himself, and in the morning we weep over him and lament and mourn. Oh, man! Come to the tomb. Behold there a dead man lying. He is not glorious, not good of appearance, not beautiful. How he is swollen up and gives off a foul odor! The flesh rots and is corrupted and is devoured by worms: the bones are laid bare and the whole body crumbles to dust.

Oh, oh! Woe, woe! O sinful soul, what a frightful vision! Woe, woe! Made rich with the senses of soul and body, created most wisely, there is in you now neither splendor, nor good appearance, nor beauty. Whither has your bodily beauty and splendid youth disappeared? Where is the smiling face, where the splendid and bright eyes? Where is the eloquent tongue of Aristotle? Where is the breath, where the sweet, soft and gentle voice? Where is the eloquence of wisdom, the dignified walk, the dreams and desires and the vain cares? All this has fallen away and is eaten by worms. Behold how some of them come out of the mouth and nostrils, others from the eyes and ears, others from the posterior opening, and how the whole is filled with ugliness and foulness.

Oh, oh! Woe, woe! Beholding the dust lying in the tomb, let us say to ourselves: "Who is the king and the noble, who the poor man? Who is the master, and who the slave? Who is the glorious, who the inglorious? Who is the wise, who the fool? Where are the beauty and enjoyment of this world? Where are the power and wisdom of this age? Where are the dreams and the short-lived charms? Where is the corruptible and vain wealth? Where are the silver and gold ornaments? Where is the multitude of slaves standing by? Where are all the cares of this vain age? There is nothing left of all this; the man is deprived of all this."

Oh, oh! Woe, woe! Truly, in vain does everyone born of earth trouble himself. I behold you in the tomb and am terrified at your appearance. I behold you and tremble and shed tears with my whole heart. Oh, oh! Cruel and merciless death, who can flee you? You devour the human race like unripe wheat.

And thus, brethren, having come to see the shortness of our life and the vanity of this age, let us take care for the hour of death, leaving off the tumult of this world and the useless worldly cares; for neither wealth nor glory nor enjoyment will remain with us after death; and nothing of this will descend with us into the tomb. Only good deeds will go there and defend us and remain with us. We were born naked, and naked we depart again. And so, hearing this, we should not only sit in silence in our cells, restrain our tongue, take care for our souls, and weep in prayer over our sins, but we should even hide ourselves under the earth, mourn there over our sins while we are still alive, and live while dying for the sake of God in struggle. Knowing our speedy departure, let us before death wear out our corruptible body, because after death also it must remain corruptible until the Lord God resurrects us from the dead on the Last Day and grants to us immortal life and the endless Kingdom forever. Amen.

4.

THE GRACE OF GOD:
HOW CAN ONE KNOW WHETHER HE
HAS ACQUIRED PERFECT GRACE

WHERE THERE IS GRACE, the fount of life, there good works come from the heart. When the Holy Spirit visits, any labour becomes easy, unceasing prayer flows from the heart, and the eyes continuously shed tears. This may be accompanied by spiritual enlightenment and pure, sober reasoning for it is then that the Holy Spirit acts within a man. Anyone given to passions, however, generates more passions within himself, thus allowing the evil spirit to take hold of his soul, rendering it dark and heavy.

The question as to who is holy, i.e. experiences the above manifestations of grace, may be answered as follows: the one who in all immaculacy has preserved and fulfilled the commandments, conquered the passions and renounced all pleasure. Who has renounced pleasures? He who has totally renounced self-love in all aspects of his free will; who has begun to hate himself in this short life for the sake of the Heavenly Kingdom and eternal life; who has acquired unwavering faith; who firmly and undoubtingly relies on God in all his sorrows and needs. Such a man is truly holy and passionless.

5.

CONCERNING THE FEELING OF SOUL AND BODY, OF THE
VIRTUES, AND OF WHICH VIRTUE IS BORN OF WHICH

AT THE CREATION of man the love of God towards the human race was manifested, unutterably and incalculably, for God gave to man feelings of soul and body. The feelings of soul are: mind, thought or understanding, word, imagination, feeling of the heart. The feelings of the body are the following: sight, smell, hearing, taste, touch. By means of the one and the other, we perform virtues of the soul and body. It was pleasing to Christ our God that books should be written so that a man might, by their means, judge properly and be instructed in the fear of God, the beginning of spiritual

wisdom. The fear of God gives birth to faith; faith to hope; hope to love towards God and men; love to patience and many other virtues; patience to obedience and every virtue; obedience to trust; trust to fasting, fasting to purity and silence; silence gives birth to continence, prayer, tears, vigil, lamentation, vigilance, sobriety and much else, and cuts off evil speaking. Lamentation gives birth to unacquisitiveness; unacquisitiveness gives birth to righteousness and cuts off every dispute. Prayer gives birth to understanding, sobriety of mind, tears, joy, humility of heart, meekness. Humility gives birth to humility of wisdom, solitude; humility of wisdom cuts off pride, vainglory, and sprouts forth spiritual fruit. From these virtues are annihilated all passions of soul and body and, little by little, grace increases. These virtues are indispensable for those who are healthy of body and for those who are possessed by fleshly passions.

6.

CONCERNING THE GREATER AND PRIMARY VIRTUES.
IF ONE FULFILLS THESE VIRTUES, ALL OTHER VIRTUES
WILL BE SUBMITTED TO HIM ON FAITH

CONCERNING FAITH: The first virtue is faith, for by faith even mountains are moved and men receive everything they wish, as the Lord said. Each one, in all glorious and wondrous deeds, is confirmed by his faith. By our own free will faith either decreases or increases.

7.

ON LOVE

THE SECOND VIRTUE is unhypocritical love towards God and men. Love embraces and binds in one all virtues. By love alone the entire law is fulfilled and God-pleasing life takes place. Love consists in laying down one's life for one's friend and not doing to others what you yourself would not want done to yourself. For the sake of love the Son of God became a man. He who remains in love remains in God: where love is, there is God also.

ON FASTING

THE THIRD VIRTUE is fasting. Fasting I call the eating of a little bit once a day. Getting up from the table when still hungry, having his food, bread, and salt, and his drink-water, which the springs themselves bring forth. Behold the royal way of receiving food, that is, many have been saved by this path, so the Holy Fathers have said. To refrain from food for a day, or two days, three, four, five, or a week, a man can not do always. But, so as every day to eat bread and drink, one can always do this; only, having eaten, one should be a little hungry so that the body will be submissive to the spirit and capable of labours and sensitive to mental movements, and so the bodily passions will be conquered. Complete fasting cannot mortify the bodily passions as well as poor food mortifies them. Some fast for a time and then give themselves over to delicious foods, for many begin fasting beyond their strength and also other severe labours, and then they grow weak from the lack of measure and unevenness of this labour, and they seek tasty foods and repose for the strengthening of the body. To act in this way means to build and then again to destroy, since the body through thinness from fasting is yearning for sweet things and seeks consolation, and the sweet foods ignite the passions. But if someone establishes for himself a definite measure as to how much poor food to eat in a day, he will receive great profit. However, concerning the quantity of food, one must establish a rule that it be as much as is necessary for the strengthening of oneself. Such a one can perform every kind of spiritual work. But if someone fasts beyond this, at another time he will give himself up to repose. Ascetic labor according to measure is priceless. For certain of the great Fathers also took food in measure, and everything they used in its right time, and everything had measure—ascetic labours, bodily needs, cell possessions: everything according to a definite, moderate rule. Therefore, the Holy Fathers do not command one to begin to fast above one's power and to make oneself weak. Take as your rule to eat every day; thus one may refrain in a more firm way, but if one fasts more than this, how will he refrain later from eating to the full and over-eating? In no way will he be able to. Such an

immoderate beginning comes either from vainglory or lack of understanding, while continence is one of the virtues which aids in the subjugating of the flesh. Hunger and thirst are given to man for the purification of the body, from preservation from unclean thoughts and lustful passions. Everyday to eat poorly is a means to perfection, as certain ones have said, and one who eats every day at a definite hour in no way is lowered morally nor undergoes any harm of soul. St. Theodore the Studite praises such ones in his instruction on the Friday of the first week of the Great Fast where he cites in confirmation of his words the Holy God-bearing Fathers and the Lord Himself. Thus we also should act.

The Lord endured a lengthy fast, as did Moses and Elijah, but only once. And certain other ones sometimes when entreating something from the Creator, laid upon themselves a certain time of fasting, but in accordance with natural laws and the teaching of the Divine Scripture. From the activity of the Saints, from the life of our Saviour, and from the rules of those who have lived in good order, it is evident that it is splendid and profitable always to be ready and to be found in ascetic labour, in work and in endurance; however, not to weaken oneself by immoderate fasting and not to bring the body into a state of inactivity. If the flesh is inflamed because of youth, one must refrain a great deal; but if it is infirm, one must take much or little. Look and judge according to your own infirmity as to how much you can do. To each one there is a measure and the inward teacher is one's conscience; not everyone can have the same rule and same ascetic labour, because some are strong and others are weak. Some are like iron, others are like copper, while others are like wax. And thus correctly discovering one's own measure, take food once each day, apart from Saturdays, Sundays, and great feasts of the Lord. A moderate and sensible fast is the foundation and chief of all virtues. One should fight evil as one fights a lion and a fierce serpent—in the infirmity of the body and spiritual poverty. He who wishes his mind to be firm against defiled thoughts should make his body refined through fasting.

It is not possible, without fasting, to serve as a priest. As it is indispensable to breathe, so also is it to fast. Fasting once having entered into the soul, kills to the depths the sin which lies therein.

9.

ON CONTINENCE

THE FOURTH VIRTUE is continence, the mother and bond of all the virtues. If you contain your stomach, you will enter into Paradise. For continence is the killing of sin, the going away from passions, the beginning of spiritual life, and the intercessor of eternal good things. On the contrary, eating to the full deprives a man of spiritual gifts, because fullness of the belly inclines one to sleep and arouses in one filthy thoughts, and this person cannot accomplish vigil, nor reading, nor occupy himself with handicraft, nor fulfill any other good deed. Bread and warm water are light, splendid, sobering and thirst-quenching for nourishment. Without warm water a faster's stomach becomes dry, and digestion becomes more difficult, and bread or dried crusts soaked in warm water or pudding is quickly digested, and are especially suitable food for the time of a feast or in the evening. There are four kinds of partaking of food: fasting, continence, sufficiency, and satiety. If one contains his stomach, he will not be deprived of dwelling in Paradise, but he who does not contain his stomach will be the prey of death, deprived of all virtues, and mocked.

10.

CONCERNING VIGIL

THE FIFTH VIRTUE is vigil. With understanding, and in measure, beginning monks should keep vigil for half the night and half the night sleep until morning; that is, keep vigil six hours and sleep six or five hours. The measure of the middle ones is to sleep four or three hours and keep vigil for eight hours, and for the perfect ones to sleep one hour and the rest of the time to stand up all night and keep attentive vigil. During the day everyone should sleep one hour. Vigil with discernment cleanses the mind from the dispersal of thoughts, makes it light, and leads it into prayer. Just as the sensible eyes enlighten the body and illuminate all its members, so also unsleeping attentiveness and vigil enlighten the soul with spiritual sight, or remind a man of

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the unutterable good things which the Lord has prepared for those who love Him, shows eternal torments prepared for sinners, and a man keeping vigil is astonished at the Creator of all, as to how the day and night succeed one another, how the sun shines, and the moon and stars, how there follow in succession the frost, snow, heat, thunder, rain, which remind a man of the passing life of this age, of the end of death, and draw out of him abundant tears, and, like a guardsman on a high place, illuminate clearly to the spiritual eye the condition of a man as to how he is living, whether on a right or a wrong path. A moderate vigil gives joy to the heart.

II.

ON THE PRAYER OF JESUS

THE SIXTH VIRTUE is the Prayer of Jesus. This is a work which is common between angels and men. By this Prayer men quickly draw near to the life of angels. Prayer is the source of every good deed and the virtues, and banish from a man the darkness of passions. Acquire it and your soul, before death, will be like an angel's. Prayer is a Divine rejoicing. This is the only precious sword. There is no other such implement which, more than it, can cut off the demons. It scorches them as fire scorches thorns. This Prayer, like fire, ignites the whole man and brings him unutterable joy and rejoicing, so that from joy and sweetness he forgets about this life and considers everything in this age as dust and ashes.

12.

ON HUMILITY AND THE HUMILITY OF WISDOM

THE SEVENTH VIRTUE is humility and the humility of wisdom. Humility of heart without labor saves the old, sick, humble, poor, uneducated man. For its sake all sins are forgiven. It leads up a man from the very pit of sin. Through humility of wisdom all the nets of the enemy and his plans are destroyed, and it enroots the spiritual life and preserves it from fall.

13.

ON SILENCE AND NOT SPEAKING

THE EIGHTH VIRTUE is silence, that is, the going away from every worldly care and disturbance, or unanswering silence in the midst of many people. He who has reined and controlled his tongue will hold in check his whole body. He who is continent in his tongue will flee every evil also which comes from it. The tongue is an uncontrollable evil. Many have perished from the sharp sword, but not as many as from their own tongue. For the tongue is a double-edged sword which invisibly slaughters the soul and the body, which utters empty words constantly in idle spectacles. O tongue, the enemy of my righteousness! O tongue, my destroyer and the spirit of satan! For, by much labor a man builds his spiritual building—salvation; but you, O tongue, by one word, in a single hour, destroy and annihilate it. A wise man attaches himself to silence.

14.

ON NON-ACQUISITIVENESS

THE NINTH VIRTUE is non-acquisitiveness of things and extreme poverty. A non-acquisitive monk, like a high-soaring eagle, remains uncaught by any vainglorious net of this age and unwounded. Let us flee, let us flee from love of silver and other things as from a roaring lion, for it converts meekness and humility in a man into unmerciful anger and remembrance of evil, and makes him a fierce beast.

15.

ON DISCERNMENT

THE TENTH VIRTUE is sensible and good discernment in every work, because, without discernment, good may be brought into evil, and therefore not remain good.

Without the above-indicated ten virtues it is impossible to be saved. The Holy Fathers have explained about them in various lengthy homilies. Here we have spoken about them briefly. Three of these virtues, firstly, fasting, that is, moderate and constant continence; secondly, ceaseless occupation in the instruction from the Divine Scriptures with a moderate vigil, that is, according to conscience, strength, and wakefulness of each; and thirdly, the Prayer of Jesus done sensibly, that is, with heedfulness of the mind to the words of the Prayer and inward keeping of the heart, these virtues are the most fundamental ones and should be fulfilled sensibly before the face of God and for His sake, without any hypocrisy, pleasing of men, or vainglory. Otherwise, he who fulfills them is not at all to be distinguished from one who does not fulfill them. It is better to leave off that virtue through which we voluntarily become highminded. The reward is given not so much for labors as for the sake of humility. It is better to be sinning and repenting than to have corrected oneself and be highminded. May the Lord God enlighten and confirm us to perform His Will and His sacred commandments and virtues. May there be glory to Him now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

16.

ON THE PASSIONS AND RUINOUS VICIES, AND
CONCERNING WHICH IS BORN OF WHICH

BEFORE any fall into sin the demons bring upon a man the following passions: dark forgetfulness; fierce anger, that is, inhuman and beastlike malice; and ignorance, like darkness which has no trace of light. These three passions precede every sin. For a man does not perform a single sin before he has become disposed towards every sin, towards every evil, either by forgetfulness or by anger or by ignorance. From these proceed insensitivity of soul, that is, the mind, which is the eye of the soul, remains dark and is then captivated by all the passions. The first of all to be born is a weakness of faith; weakness of faith gives birth to self-love, the beginning and end, the root and origin of every evil. It is senseless love towards one's own body when everywhere and in all things one chooses what is useful for one's self alone. This evil root of the passions is uprooted by means of love and mercifulness, and

renunciation of one's own will. Self-love gives birth to mercilessness and love of silver, which is an unsatiated belly, which is likewise the root and cause of every evil. From these two, self-love and love of silver, there proceed in every place, all misfortunes and cruel evil deeds. As in laymen, so also in monks, love of silver gives birth to pride through which the demons fell away from holy glory and were thrown down from heaven. Pride gives birth to love of glory, by which Adam was deceived, desiring to be God when he was not, and by this he brought on suffering and the curse upon the whole race of man. Love of glory gives birth to love of sensual pleasure, through which Adam fell and was banished from Paradise.

Sensual pleasure gives birth to filling the belly and various works of fornication. Fornication gives birth to anger which extinguishes warmth of heart and is ruinous for every virtue. Anger gives birth to remembrance of evil, the cooling of spiritual warmth. Remembrance of evil gives birth to dark and malicious blasphemy against one's brother. Blasphemy gives birth to sorrow not at the proper time which, like rust, devours a man. Sorrow gives birth to senseless brazenness. Brazenness gives birth to vainglory which puts one's virtues on display, and through this leaves one's labors without reward. Vainglory gives birth to incontinent loquacity. Loquacity gives birth to idle speaking, lying, slander, judging, dispersion of thoughts, despondency, captivity. Despondency gives birth to dark dreams. If one conquers these passions, the others will submit to him, which are: horror, terror, envy, hatred, hypocrisy, deceiving, murmuring, unbelief, stealing, passionate attachment, love of things, faintheartedness, spite, self-esteem, love of being in high places, pleasing of men, brazenness, laughter, complete falling, the unutterable abyss of perdition through despair, in which condition a man slaughters himself without knowing God's love of mankind and mercy, and that He came to save sinners, and that there is no sin on earth which cannot be forgiven. Of the seven following passions: self-love, love of silver, pride with vainglory, remembrance of evil, judging, self-esteem, despair—this is the end of all passions. If one does not guard himself from these passions, if he does not renounce them, he will destroy the ten virtues discussed above, namely: faith, love, fasting, abstinence, vigil, prayer, humility with the wisdom of humility, silence through not talking, non-acquisitiveness and discernment, and he will do

harm also to all the remaining virtues. If one has even one of the main passions, he will not succeed in his struggle against the other passions, even if he should practice some virtue, or shed his blood for Christ; even a prayer of such a man does not please God. May the grace of the Lord God deliver us from all troubles and passions forever. Amen.

17.

ON THE PASSIONS OF THE BODY:
WHAT CAUSES THEM AND HOW
THEY CAN BE QUENCHED

BODILY DESIRE in a man comes either from warmth and comfort, or from much eating and immoderate sleep, or from the action of Satan, or from judgment of others and from one's own vainglory, from bodily beauty, or from idle conversations, showing off and not guarding the eyes. If there should come some unclean thoughts and night fantasies during sleep or during the daytime, or fleshly excitation, one may be delivered from these in no other way than by fasting, continence and prayer with tears in all-night vigil. When one recognizes the power for soul and body of being worn out, soon one receives repose from the passions.

18.

ON WALKING WITH HEEDFULNESS

EVERY EVENING we must test ourselves as to how the day passed with us, and every morning we again should test ourselves as to how the night passed. And not only at some definite time but at every time and in every place and concerning everything we must give account to ourselves, and reflect concerning the virtues and the passions, in what condition of life we are: in the beginning, at the middle, or at the end; whether we are laboring worthy of the rewards and performing virtues, or only laboring without receiving rewards. When we sin in anything, let us make up for our lack of virtue by tears and let us weep. We do not come to perfection and are poor

in grace, because we do not know in what is the beginning, the middle, and the perfection of virtues, and what causes the lessening of virtue, so that with every virtue the vice of vainglory is mixed, which acts against it. Without knowing this, we labor in vain. Although the virtues are called property of the soul, the body also suffers and is strengthened. The passions are called that of the soul because some souls love them and take delight in them separately from the body. Others are called bodily passions because the body takes delight in them and is weighed down by them. In one case and the other, the soul and the body do not agree with each other.

19.

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF ALL THE PASSIONS
OF SOUL AND BODY

FIRST, one must clean the royal house from every impurity and adorn it with every beauty, then the king may enter into it. In a similar way one must first cleanse the earth of the heart and uproot the weeds of sin and the passionate deeds and soften it with sorrows and the narrow way of life, sow in it the seed of virtue, water it with lamentation and tears, and only then does the fruit of dispassion and eternal life grow. For the Holy Spirit does not dwell in a man until he has been cleansed from passions of the soul and body. Only one thing may remain within a man, either the Holy Spirit or the passions. Where the Holy Spirit is, there the passions do not come near, and where the passions are, there the Holy Spirit does not dwell, but rather the evil one. First of all, one must banish within oneself self-love in all forms of desiring objects of this world, and one must belittle oneself in all forms of repentance: in thoughts, in deeds, in words, in food, in clothing, in condition of the house, in inward things, and in all one must humble oneself and condemn oneself. In everything one must choose the worst thing for oneself, and in this way quiet the passions of the soul. Humility never falls, for it lies beneath everything. Likewise it is essential to humble one's flesh, wearing it out with labors and sorrows without repose, and thus the passions of the body will grow faint. One must also bridle one's tongue as the source of every evil and the destroyer of good. In this way all the passions of soul and body will

cease to act and will be humbled. A man will be dispassionate and begin to acquire eternal life. The enemy will be conquered, for he will turn out to be powerless, and all his weapons and net will be of no avail.

20.

ON DISPASSION

DISPASSION consists not only of fleeing sinful passionate deeds, but also in not even having the desire for them. Dispassionate is he who has conquered attachment to all thoughts which compel or deceive, and having stood above all the passions, is not disturbed by anything of this world, does not fear sorrows, misfortunes, and dangers, is not terrified even by death itself, considering this the covenant of eternal life. Dispassionate is he who, while suffering from the devils and from evil men, pays no attention to them and does not consider this to be evil. It is as though someone else is suffering. And when he is glorified, he is not puffed up, and when he is offended, he does not become angry, but like a child, when chastised he weeps, and when comforted he rejoices. Dispassion is not some special virtue but a collective name for all of them. Then a man is brought to life by the Holy Spirit. For without Him the whole spiritual body is not strong, which is a summation of virtues. Before the Holy Spirit has come to dwell in a man, after the cleansing of passions, he cannot be called dispassionate, for until that time he suffers in every place. But when the Holy Spirit descends upon a man, then He lightens for him all heaviness and sorrow, and He comes easily and abides in all. Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

21.

ON PURITY OF THE HEART AND SOUL

AFTER a life of much labor, through our spiritual exploits we enter into purity of heart, mind, soul; for from sorrows, from most difficult virtues of spirit and body—hunger, thirst, vigil, and others—the heart is cleansed.... From the foul passionate desires are born the bodily passions, that is, fornication. But from purity of heart and fasting with prayer the mind is cleansed

from foul thoughts and fantasies. Through purity of mind the soul is liberated from its passions and enters into the process of perpetual, ceaseless enlightenment. And from purity of soul proceeds a mental vision. Without purity of heart, mind, and soul, that is, dispassion, the demons dare to enter into us to disturb us and show us deception in place of truth. For only by a pure heart, soul, and mind is the Mental Sun beheld. One must especially be diligent in fasting and ceaseless prayer so that this Prayer might enter into the depths of the heart and purify it from passions of soul and body, and delighting us, softening, rejoicing, and banishing foul thoughts and fantasies of the mind it might enlighten the soul. When in this way a man's heart, mind, soul, and body have been cleansed, grace comes to dwell in him, and the entrance becomes closed to devils and passions, and a man begins to sense spiritual sweetness. Until the natural movements in a man's body grow weak, and cease to arouse sinful sweetness in his heart, and until all the bodily senses are purified during one's lifetime, and until the mind is delivered from dark, foul fantasies and the soul is liberated from attachments—until this time, the sweetness of grace will not be aroused in that man, and he will not see the Divine in his soul. The beginning of purity is the mind's refusal to sin. The end of purity is mortification of oneself, dead coldness of the body toward sin. Impurity of heart is the sweetness of fornication and the sinful heating of the heart, while impurity of the body is active falling into sin. Impurity of the mind is foul thoughts, while impurity of the soul is various passions of the soul when the soul loves anything excessively and takes delight in it. If one labors in body and performs certain virtues but is careless about the attitude of the heart and does not occupy himself fervently with the mental work with heedfulness and is not concerned about sobriety of soul, he is like one who gathers with one hand and scatters with the other. For bodily labors are only the beginning of the spiritual path, while inward sobriety of the heart, the mental activity, and the attitude of the soul are its end. Bodily labors without the inward outlook and heedfulness are like a dry leaf. Therefore, we do not come to perfection and do not receive grace because we do not know where to place the beginning of spiritual life, what comprises its middle and its end, and in what consists its essence and the foundation of the virtues. Until we find this out, we will at one and the same time be laboring and scattering.

O man! Understand where it is that the spiritual, ascetic life begins, from whence the virtues are born, how the passions easily enter into us, and then you will soon receive the enlightenment of your soul. But without this beginning, you will, as it were, be sowing the seeds into the sea and they will be swallowed up.

22.

ON THE DARKENING OF THE MIND,
THAT IS, LACK OF DISCERNMENT

THE DARKENING of the mind comes from various passions, from much speaking, from vain concerns, from excess cares, from sorrow, from fantasy, from overeating, from much sleeping. It occurs often from devils, that is, from their disturbances when they come near to us. From the entrance into us of these passions, the eye of our soul becomes closed, that is, the vision of the mind becomes dull, and it no longer sees anything spiritual and does not have understanding like unto one who, even with the healthy eye of his body, does not see in the darkness of night and sometimes stumbles and sometimes falls into the pit. So also a man who has a darkened mind falls into the pit of various passions. He grows despondent, has fantasies, gives himself over to much sleep, and completely forgets himself and that he is going on the path of eternal perdition.

23.

ON SOBRIETY OF MIND, THAT IS, HEEDFULNESS

SOBRIETY OF MIND and brightness of thought come from dispassion, that is from purity, fasting, continence, undistracted silence, remaining without departing from one's cell, the Prayer of Jesus, want of cares, and from the activity of the Holy Spirit when grace is given to us from the Benefactor. By these virtues the mind is cleansed from darkness, crudeness, and fantasies, and is enlightened. And then a man becomes capable of understanding, of judgment, and joyful. No one can stop the swirling of thoughts by anything except the constant Prayer of Jesus, by the memory of death and future

torment, by the memory and desire for future good things, by heedful singing or reading when in solitude.

But more than anything else the mind is cleansed from darkness, crudeness, and fantasies by prayer, fasting, and remaining silent in one's cell without leaving it. Prayer and fasting banish all sinful thoughts, stop the fever of the brain, preserve the mind from disturbance, gather it away from dispersion, and enlighten it. Prayer and fasting banish from a man unclean spirits and heal those who are tormented by demons, as the Lord said: *This kind (that is, the devils) goeth not out save by prayer and fasting* (Matt. 17:21). Prayer and fasting also cleanse the mind, in which the devils often cause darkness. Prayer and fasting are weapons which protect every access of the devils to us. Prayer, like a grace-given spirit, enlightens the mind, and gives fervor. Prayer with sobriety of heart is the guardian of the mind, extinguishes its forgetfulness as water does fire. Therefore, one should call by an honorable name this virtue which gives birth to bright visions.

Having come to love this virtue, you useless and vile sinners will be holy and worthy, and you who are lacking understanding and judgment will have understanding and judgment. The unrighteous will become righteous, and besides this will be beholders, theologians, and witnesses of the Divine Mysteries through the invocation of the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Many Holy Fathers have said that the Prayer of Jesus is the source of every good thing, a treasury of virtues. It speedily enables one to have the grace of the Holy Spirit. It saves, explains, and instructs in what is unknown to us. Just as a man sees his own face in a mirror, so also in sober and good prayer he sees with his mind his whole life, whether he is living well or evilly. This Prayer of sobriety banishes from a man a multitude of passions, delivers him from all the nets of the devils in thoughts, words, and deeds, conquers every natural desire, feeling, and sorrow, helps in every temptation, gives purification and as a fiery sword cuts them off, for God is invoked by this Name before Whom everything submits. Nothing can so conquer the malicious, cunning tricks of the devils as the sober Prayer of Jesus, pure and attentive, performed with a pure mind and in humility of wisdom. It is impossible for a man moved by spiritual endeavor to rise up against the devils and oppose them, apart from this Prayer. However, without an instructor in

this Prayer, he will perish after having suffered. Hearing or having learned from the words of the Holy Fathers that it is great, and not understanding its essence, he performs it and thinks senselessly about it, that he has attained perfection, and he begins to have fantasies in his mind, having enemies within himself, without having cleansed himself beforehand by sobriety, attentiveness, vigil, and in this way he is overthrown by the devils. The beginning of this good and splendid activity consists in the following: first, one should weaken the passions; not do what is not pleasing to God; and not do to one's brother what one oneself hates. Then, one should keep one's heart from lustful sweetness and foul heating of the flesh; one should firmly preserve the mind from thoughts so that the heart might always be kept in humility of wisdom. From this already is born prayer, which conquers and annihilates a multitude of passions and evil spirits, and grace thus is increased. As fasting and the Prayer of Jesus serve for the cleansing and strengthening of sobriety and attentiveness, so also sobriety comprises a worthiness, holiness, and support of prayer. Sobriety, in other words, is called purity of mind, while impurity of mind, dirty thoughts, and impurity of heart are called the fever and lustful sweetness. The heart cannot remain firm in purity, so as not to be defiled, if it will not be crushed by fasting. It is impossible also to preserve holiness without fasting, and the flesh will not submit to the spirit for spiritual activity, and prayer itself will not rise up and act because natural needs predominate. And the flesh will be compelled to become feverish. From the fever of the flesh arise thoughts, and the mind is defiled. And from thoughts the heart is aroused and is defiled, and through this, grace departs, and the unclean spirits have boldness to rule over us as much as they wish. They force the flesh to passion, and they direct the mind where they wish, or, having tied it as if by ropes, they hold it and keep it incapable of spiritual desire and activities. Without this, the demons cannot conquer us. For the evil ones, first of all, attempt somehow to bring our mind into darkness and forgetfulness and then to throw us into the sinful abyss. But we shall always keep to fasting as to a quiet harbor from the mental nets of the enemy, for fasting purifies the body and nourishes and strengthens prayer, making it ascend like a flame of fire from our lips. Being joined to fasting, sober prayer scorches the demons, since they cannot come near the chaste soul which is like a hot furnace to them, and they can do it no harm.

24.

CONCERNING THE PRAYER OF JESUS, WHICH
SOON BRINGS TO THE SOUL GRACE
AND EASILY SAVES THE SOUL

“LORD JESUS CHRIST, SON OF GOD, HAVE MERCY ON ME!” If one with desire and ceaselessly as the breath from his nostrils forms this Prayer, soon there will dwell in him the Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and make a dwelling in him, and prayer will devour the heart and the heart prayer, and a man will begin day and night to perform this Prayer and will be delivered from all the nets of the enemy. One should say the Prayer of Jesus in this way: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me!” Whether you are standing, whether you are sitting, whether you are eating, whether you are travelling, whether you are doing anything else, constantly say this Prayer, fervently compelling yourself, for it strikes the invisible enemies as a soldier with a strong spear. Imprint it on your thoughts, and do not be disturbed or hesitate to perform it secretly even in the places of natural need. And when the tongue and lips grow faint, then pray with the mind alone. From prayer which is performed for a long time by the tongue there proceeds prayer of the mind, and from that of the mind, that of the heart. When the mind grows faint from constant concentration and the heart grows pained, then one may relax and sing a little.

One should perform the Prayer of Jesus aloud but not loudly, sufficient so that one can hear it. One should not at the time of prayer incline one's thought here and there to worldly, corruptible things, but should remain without laziness in the memory of this Prayer alone. The Prayer is nothing else than a division between the visible and invisible worlds. Wherefore, one must enclose one's mind in the Prayer. Where the body stands, there also the mind should be with it, without having any thought at the time of prayer. The Holy Fathers say, “If anyone prays with his lips but is careless about his mind, he is laboring in vain, for God heeds the mind and not much speaking. Mental prayer does not allow that there be in the mind any fantasy or unclean thought.” If one does not become accustomed to the mental Jesus Prayer, he

cannot have ceaseless prayer. If the Jesus Prayer becomes one's habit and enters his heart, it will then flow as water flows from a spring. At all times, everywhere and no matter what one does, it will always urge him on, be he awake or asleep. When his body begins to sleep or drowse, even then it will awaken him, gushing out of his heart and never ceasing. Therefore this Prayer is great, never left off, so that when it is being said, although the lips may grow faint, and the body may drowse, the spirit never sleeps. When some essential work is performed diligently or thoughts powerfully attack the mind or sleep overcomes one, then one must fervently pray with the lips and tongue, that the mind might heed the voice. And when the mind is in peace and calm from thoughts, one may pray with it alone. This path of prayer is the swifter one to salvation than by means of psalms, canons, and the usual prayers for those who can read and write. What a grown man is before a child, this Prayer is before a learned grammarian, that is, a prayer which is written down with art. The Prayer of the heart and mind is for the advanced ones. For the middle ones, it is singing, that is, the usual Church chanting; and for beginners, it is obedience and labor. This prayer demands sobriety, continence, removal from men, every kind of want of care and freedom from disturbance from which true prayer grows and matures. If one does not overthrow these obstacles he cannot have unceasing prayer, either.

25.

THAT ONE SHOULD NEVER BE WEIGHED DOWN
WITH CARE FOR ANYTHING

ALL vexations and sorrows are caused to us by the devils. They cleverly bring various cares and traps at the wrong time so as to distract our mind from prayerful contemplation, that is, they strive to make our mind idle, not occupied with the work of salvation, to take it away from the high prayerful love of God. And if it were possible to them, they would give the kingdom and wealth of the whole world, so as, by being burdened with cares, to draw away our mind from the memory of love towards God, that is, from ceaseless prayerful memory, ceaseless prayer, which is love for God. But above everything else we should have care for this and not leave the sweetness of prayer.

All our care we should place upon God, He Who will fulfill all our needs. Let us give over to forgetfulness all the deeds of this world, and let us not have care for anything in this world, for care binds a monk's hands and feet and draws him against his will into the love of this world. Just as water extinguishes fire, so also cares of this world extinguish love for God. Wherefore let us be heedful and constantly fervent in love towards God, and the Lord will take care for our needs, and then there will also appear a fount of tears from this Prayer. If we remove ourselves from the disturbance and agitation of the world, then through heedfulness and guarding of the heart prayer becomes a sweetness, and tears flow forth by themselves, and a man no longer forces them out of himself by compunction but with joy. And if someone desires during this Prayer to be filled with warm love for God, even before the departure of his soul, and to live as an ascetic and in want and bear on his body the death of Jesus, to be constantly dead to the flesh, and all the days of his life to work without disturbance for God alone, then the beginning and end for all this is to cut off all attachments and desires and every care and vanity of this world.

Depart from every man, from tumult and disturbance, leading the life of a bird and being not at all concerned over vain things. Everything will remain on the earth, for we live here as guests, as the Apostle said, Our citizenship is in heaven. (Phil. 3:20).

Let us be concerned only about the soul, and in every need have, as the one who takes care of you, God. Nowhere, never, and in no need does God leave those who hope without doubt in Him entirely and who serve Him with all their hearts in love towards Him. If we shall live in hope upon God, even if only for one day and thus we die, this is better than many years spent in doubleness of soul. Nowhere is it written that those who hoped in God were abandoned, for it is impossible to be saved without tearing away one's mind from vanity and every care and without gathering it in a single place. The mind is single: either it is given over entirely to Christ or to vain cares. Every thought and care which are premature and distract our mind from prayer proceed from the devils. He who desires to be saved and to please God must turn away from everything earthly and live like one of the birds. Let him choose a suitable place apart and remain alone or with his spiritual child. Let

him endure want in bodily needs, in food, clothing, and things. In want the soul is humbled and becomes contrite, while the mind is exalted. When a man sees nothing about himself, it is easier to endure in body, rejoicing in soul over the future rewards. Where there is an abundance of all things needful in the midst of many brethren, there it is impossible to preserve the mind undisturbed, because this demands obedience and the leaving off of one's own will in the fulfillment of everything commanded.

26.

ON UNCEASING PRAYER

WHAT should one do so that the mind might be constantly occupied with God? If we do not acquire the three following virtues: love for God and men, continence, and the Prayer of Jesus, then our mind cannot be completely occupied with God. For love makes anger meek, continence weakens fleshly desire, and prayer draws the mind away from thoughts and banishes every hatred and high-mindedness. Be then constantly occupied with God, for God will instruct you in everything and will reveal by the Holy Spirit what is above in heaven and what is below on earth. Amen.

Prayer to the Life-giving Trinity

O good Father and the Most Holy Son and the Holy Spirit:

O Holy Trinity, O undivided God, save me, a sinner.

27.

FOUR VIRTUES WHICH BIND TOGETHER

THE FOUNDATION of all good things is in the following: to sit in one's cell, to acquire unceasing prayer, to restrain the stomach and the tongue. He who is careless about these four virtues, let him know that not only does he destroy these, but he destroys the foundation of all the virtues and opens the fount of passions and the abyss of disturbance. The cell is for a monk what the grave is for a dead man. The dead man never moves in the grave, and the monk sitting in his cell never sins, being free from the three occasions of sin

— sight, hearing, and conversation. Only God remains in him and good deeds. And prayer draws away from all thoughts so that everything in this world is considered as dust and ashes. When the soul feels the sweetness of prayer, it considers life to be nothing. It does not desire beautiful things and sweet things. It forgets about itself and everyone living on the earth. Therefore one must fulfill the rule of prayer and firmly compel oneself to prayer. And when we grow faint, then we must take up handiwork so that sleep might not overcome us. If at night during the time of prayer sleep attacks us and the heaviness of the eyes also, then one should keep vigil with a light and not bend over but should look straight at the ikon. The restraining of the stomach from food, that is, fasting and continence, gives vigilance, lightness of the body for the performing of virtues. He who is continent like an eagle flies without feeling the flesh. Restraint of the tongue delivers from the following vices: slander, disturbance, idle words, lying, stony insensibility of the heart without contrition, despondency, vainglory, the showing off of one's ascetic labor. From much speaking proceeds the destruction of the virtues, the laying waste of silence, and other dishonorable passions. He who is silent is fearful to demons, because they do not see the secrets of the heart among those who are perfect when they do not speak with the lips. But he who loves much talking will not escape sin. If one were to place on one side of the scale all the works of sinful life and on the other side silence, we will find that silence outweighs them. Do you see how much help there is for a desert hermit-dweller for the acquirement of so many virtues in the restraint of the tongue and how much that is evil they destroy? The beginning, the duration, and the end, the root and foundation of the silent desert life is much prayer. But sobriety, lack of fantasy in the mind, and hunger are its helpers. Without this, a man will be inclined to be drawn away by thoughts, to sleep, slothfulness, and distraction, despondency, weakness, and he will waste his time in vain. Apart from this, there is demanded of him a warm, unwavering faith and hope in God, patience, constancy confirmed by courage, lack of concern for all objects whether good or bad, because the mind, being occupied with objects, is concerned, has fantasies, is distracted, clings to them, and from this the warmth of the heart is extinguished and sweetness of prayer, spiritual warmth, and zeal. The mind, being careless, drowns and forgets itself, and one wastes

his time, forgets about death, torment, and the heavenly kingdom, dozes in body, and sleeps a dark sleep. But the soul alone cannot fight with sleep, awaken and raise from sleep the flesh, without the arousing and cooperation of the mind, that is, sobriety and prayer of the heart. A man either is strengthened and comes to perfection from mental arousal and activity of the heart or he becomes weak and is conquered by the passions and often suffers from the devils, for he who remains on the right hand, that is, activity of the heart, preserves his mind from foul thoughts, and the heart keeps vigil, and in such a one the Holy Powers remain and help him, but if one remains on the left side, he is overcome by the opposing powers. Many Holy Fathers have spoken thus about this: "If one remains calmly in one's cell (and the cell will teach one everything), with the arousing and the warming of oneself soberly and fervently with one's whole soul, mind, and heart, being occupied with God alone, being removed from everything, and preserving one's mind sober without fantasy in thoughts, being continent in food, and being ceaselessly and diligently occupied with the Prayer of Jesus, if one thus remains in one's cell, one will, as it were, be wounded in soul and heart by a sharp blade, and the mind will be illumined by zeal." Silence is an undistractable service and standing before God. If a man, when he has fulfilled all this, will experience what he has never before experienced, the sweetness of love towards God, precisely from the Prayer of Jesus, then he will flee men like a wild donkey and then he will come to know the desert silence and will receive benefit from anchoritism.

28.

THAT WE SHOULD BE CONCERNED ABOUT INWARD THINGS
AND NOT GIVE OURSELVES OVER TO EXCESSIVE CARES
BUT CEASELESSLY PRAY TO GOD

SEE, O MONK, that you be heedful to the cunning tricks of the evil demons and that you be sober of mind! The cunning demons, when they see a man in a good mood, who with tears performs his prayer and acts of virtue, then they remind him of certain things he has to do in his cell, and they say to him: "This work is indispensable. See that you do it." Today it is this,

tomorrow that or something else, or some tenth thing, or go and visit a brother, or go here or there, or they compel him to store up excess food and offer every other kind of pretext, and so they disturb and cause him anxiety. They do this so that he might not be free for God and might not be sated with the tearful contrition of weeping.

But you, O ascetic and warrior of Christ, recognize the deceptions of the evil demons and behold what they do, lest in some way they deceive you. For just as it is impossible to look at the sky with one eye and with the other at the earth, so also a man cannot be concerned both about the soul and about the body. As a fount cannot in one current gush forth sweet and bitter water, so it is impossible both to serve man and God and to be concerned over the body. It is impossible to serve mammon and please God. It is impossible because one hates the one and loves the other like a slave serving two masters cannot love both of them. In this way we should consider eternal for ourselves no other object apart from our immortal Creator alone, to serve Him, to use this little time we have for Him, to have hope in eternity. Therefore the Holy Fathers themselves were concerned only about the present day. Concerning tomorrow, concerning every thing and need, they laid their care on God, giving over to the hands of the Lord their soul and body, that He Himself might care for their life and be concerned for every need of theirs. *Cast your burden on the Lord, and He will sustain you.* (Ps. 55:22). Be ceaselessly occupied only with Him, for He always hears day and night those who cry out to Him, and especially does He look upon their unceasing prayer. But if we will take care for ourselves, then God will not take care of us. If we gain revenge by ourselves, then God will not take revenge for us. If we deliver ourselves from illnesses, God will not heal us. But when we have hope, we dissolve ourselves for the sake of prayer, we throw off our care, and then there come to our mind the memory of death and the coming of Christ, and the warmth of the heart is enflamed, the mind is cleansed and enlightened, and our soul takes sweet enjoyment in contrition and remains in the fear of God. But when we tie ourselves to excess handiwork and care, then we forget everything, both the memory of death and the coming of Christ, and the warmth of the heart is extinguished, and the light of the mind is darkened, and contrition and the fear of God depart from the soul, and it departs from God through excess

handiwork and care. Therefore we must place our hope upon God, so that He might take thought for our life, and our life then will be in accordance with the word of the Apostle, as it is said, *If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.* (Rom. 14:8). That is, if we live on hope in God, as the Lord also has said, *He who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.* (John 11:25, 26). But if we take care for tomorrow, and are concerned about enjoyments, and in this lose this small time we have, then how shall we be free for the Lord? It is clear that we will leave Him and fall away from His Divine Love and be deprived of all virtues, and we will be abandoned by Him Himself. We will be deprived of His Glory, and our life will be in hope on ourselves. Either we live or we die; nevertheless we live unto sin and die for torment.

Let us not be tied down to anything bit by bit with care, otherwise we will both be deprived of earthly good things and will not receive future good things. Once and for all, we have renounced earthly things and worldly wisdom. Let us give over to forgetfulness every worldly deception. Let us despise everything deceptive, and let us disdain everything temporal of this age. And thus let us enter alone on the path to the Lord. Day and night let us serve Him in fear. Let us be naked of everything in this world and have the life of a bird.

O monk! Do you not consider everything which is in the world as nothing, and yet are still concerned about necessities of the body? Everything is corruptible and has an end. In the prosperity of this world or bodily comfort—vanity of vanities! O monk! I will speak to you a profitable word, that there is nothing more needful to each one than his soul, and we shall have our body itself as something foreign, for it is mortal and corruptible. Apart from God, our soul alone is immortal and incorruptible. He who has placed his hope on God in truth will not be concerned over the flesh, with what to feed it, how to clothe it, he will not gather possessions in case of hunger, and will not be afraid of anything, neither being eaten by wild beasts nor killed, but all of this, according to the commandment, he will leave, for he has in everything God as the one who cares for him and helps him. And if someone does not place his hope for all of himself on God and in all essential

needs of the body and in every sorrow, and he shall not say, "as is pleasing to God," he cannot be saved. But he who endures sorrow little by little is exalted at the departure of his soul, and after the departure rejoices with unutterable joy. When we become sick, receive wounds, or draw near to death and die, or endure insufficiency in essential needs, and have no one at all who might have mercy on us, and if in all this we say, "As God wishes, may He do with us," then by this alone the devil our enemy will be put to shame and conquered.

Every hour expect your death and the coming of Christ, and say: "Now I will strive to work over my soul; in the evening I can die." When the evening comes, think, "Will I not die in this very night? Or death will suddenly come, or a tree will fall upon me, or my dwelling will fall to pieces and kill me, or my breath will suddenly stop, and as a flower falls I will fade. As the grass dries up, I shall die and then will be without a trace. God alone knows where I will then be, for He will judge each according to his deeds, saying 'I assign him to go there.'" Think thus every day, and do not be concerned about anything, only about your own sins, and in this way your soul will enter into humility and lamentation and you will consider yourself as a frightful sinner and will ceaselessly gush forth founts of tears. But in necessities, in clothing, vessels, and things, observe simplicity, poverty, modesty, not because there is nothing to buy these things with, but because by this the soul is humbled and is not removed from God, and then everywhere it will be easy to find them. And to speak simply, in this act in such a way that your conscience does not accuse you of anything. He who does not despise everything and glory and bodily repose and even justifies himself in anything cannot be saved.

O man! Be heedful to your soul, because there is only one in you, and there is only one time for your life, and the end is unknown, which is death, and the spaces of the air are impenetrable and filled with your enemies. There will not be then another helper but good deeds. Pay heed to yourself so you will not be repenting for endless ages. Pray ceaselessly, and spend day after day in heedfulness unto the salvation of your soul. And concerning bodily needs, think about those which are most essential. You have forgotten, O unfortunate one, your promise and your first zeal, that you would constantly and only pray and place all concern upon God, when you were valiant as a

fleshless one, so that He might take care of everything, of food and clothing and sorrows. Do you not know, O miserable one, that to the extent that the Saints abandoned every vanity and care of this world, God fulfilled their needs and shortcomings. As an inexhaustible treasure they had Divine help. But to the extent that a man becomes vain, to this extent is he abandoned by God.

O man! Remember the hour of death and eternal torment. Remember the life eternal, unutterable beauty and glory which God has prepared from the ages for those who love Him as His elect. Remember the time which is past and the years of your life which were lost in the vanity of this world. Can you return of them even a single day or night? And likewise, if the end of your life comes, can you add or beg back a day for repentance, or even a single hour? We shall wish to seek out the time we have poorly spent of our life, and we shall not find it. And thus know the deception of the cunning devils. Let us be sober of mind, and let us be disdainful of what is vain. When the body hungers, it will find food, and similarly with other needs, for as a bubble on the water is lost, thus everything of this world is corrupted. It is not possible to work for God and mammon. But the evil demons attentively and unfailingly watch over us, see to what we are inclined, and arouse us to do this. Noticing our sinful desire, they darken our mind, and day after day steal our time. Like thieves they secretly penetrate into our thoughts and compel us to be concerned for corruptible things and to leave off God and one's own soul. And they place in us the thought, "This or that matter is very needful. Do it today or tomorrow." Whereas in very fact it is not needful at all.

O man! Be attentive to this! And thou shall be blessed! Listen to the Apostle Paul, who says, Pray constantly, (I Thess. 5:17) — at all times, everywhere. Should you say: "It is impossible to pray without ceasing, for the body grows weary from a long service," know that he does not mean praying only when standing at the service, but praying always: at night, during the day, in the evening, in the morning, at noon, and at every hour. Whether you are working, eating, drinking, lying down, rising up, always pray, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me!" And do not wait for a definite time to pray — whether a year, a month, a week, and do not think of a particular place for it, for it is not at a certain time or place that you are confronted with God, but within your own mind, and in all places of His dominion.

29.

BY WHAT IS SOBRIETY OF MIND PRESERVED?
FROM WHENCE DOES SLEEPINESS AND THE COLDNESS OF
OURTHOUGHT COME WHICH EXTINGUISH THE HOLY WARMTH
INTHE SOUL AND FERVOR TOWARDS GOD?

THIS HOLY WARMTH is preserved by sober thought, warm zeal, so as manfully and patiently at every hour, with all one's power, to guard one's soul from weakness. This zeal removes every opposition, drowsiness, laziness, weight, weakness, and despondency. This zeal is strengthened, is aroused, is enkindled, and is the defender of the house of virtues. At the same time, one must fulfill the usual bows or prostrations, handiwork, and be refreshed in the air, for from this there is great help and power against sleep, laziness, weight, and weakness. And in prayer one must stand in a fresh place that is cool, because then the blood does not circulate through the legs. This is not only for the infirm and those sickly of body, but for those who are healthy. In a warm room, on the other hand, one is attacked by drowsiness, sleep, weight, heaviness, weakness, and this hinders and overcomes the ascetic. Nothing so weighs upon solitary desert dwellers than these infirmities. Besides, be heedful to yourself. From tumult is born much speaking, idle talking. From idle talking, idleness. From idleness, laziness. From laziness, despondency. From despondency, sleep. And from sleep, the deprivation of good deeds. And then a man falls into every evil.

30.

ON SLEEP. HOW ONE SHOULD FIGHT WITH SLEEP
IF ONE DESIRES TO LABOR WELL FOR THE SAKE
OF GOD IN THE SOLITARY LIFE

IN THE DESERT, in solitary life, there are six powerful battles: laziness, despondency, sleep, despair, heaviness, and fear. For the sake of these six passions, the Holy Fathers forbid one to live by himself. Truly, sleep is more ruinous than either laziness or despondency or despair because they originate from sleep, and many other passions stem from sleep. Heaviness and

fear attack a man sometimes. Is it not by slothfulness that anyone sleeps with an insatiable sleep? When dark sleep conquers, then the ascetic grows despondent and sorrows about the loss of time. Then despair comes over the loss of the salvation of one's soul. There appears a thought which wounds the conscience, saying, in vain is your labor, since sleep has overcome you. A great misfortune, O brethren, is sleep. As fog hides the sun, so also excessive sleep clouds the contemplative power of the mind, and as a curtain places forgetfulness upon the mind, it becomes insensitive to every spiritual good and becomes forgetful. When the guard dozes off, the thieves attack; when the mind becomes insensitive, it darkens and allows passions to intrude. The demons darken the mind with darkness and quench the fire with water. So also, by drowsiness and sleep they conquer, so as to have the opportunity to deprive the soul of all good deeds and attack it with passions. All the effort and striving of the devils against us consists in drawing our mind away from God and ceaseless labor. For this they strengthen themselves by every means, by every pretext they keep us in the vanity of this age, or they wish to immerse us in sleep so as to steal time through being in idleness.

Sleep is single, but there are many causes for it. It comes from requirement of nature, from overeating, from daydreaming of the mind, from tumult and disturbance, from sorrow, from the envy of the demons, from despondency, or from an excessively prolonged fast, and from the fact that while exhausting the flesh one wishes to give repose to oneself by means of sleep. Excessive eating and drinking become habit because anyone who is used to eating and particularly to drinking a lot conditions his body to require more. Likewise, the one who becomes accustomed to eat little conditions himself to require little. It is the same with sleep: if one grows weak and does not battle against sleep, but wishes to sleep until he is completely satisfied, then nature will demand much sleep of one, and such a one will always spend his life as in darkness, constantly having his mind darkened and not occupied with the doing of virtues. But if anyone becomes accustomed to sleep little, then nature will demand little of him. The habit for immoderate sleep is very ruinous. He who has acquired this from his youth, let him labor and force himself against it at the beginning of his renunciation of the world. If one wishes to conquer sleep during the time of standing, sitting, and lying down

and to train oneself in vigilance, then much is required of him of continence, of sobriety of mind, ceaseless Prayer of Jesus, undisturbable silence, warm zeal, so as at every hour to fence off one's soul against weakening by means of patience. Let also the memory of death go to sleep and rise with you, and then the body even against its desire will follow after the soul.

Nothing so helps against sleep as the following four virtues—continence, sobriety, the Prayer of Jesus, and the memory of death. These virtues are called a vigilant and sober watchman. Without these four virtues, the house of the soul remains asleep and daydreaming. The hungry stomach does not endure to lie on its bed the whole night, and he who has a sober mind is not darkened by deep sleep, and he who feels the sweetness of prayer does not tarry on his bed, and he who remembers about his being placed in the grave does not grow lazy. The four above-mentioned virtues always agitate the spirit. Let us then keep vigil, let us be continent, be sober, perform the Prayer of Jesus, and have the memory of death. And by this means let us arm ourselves against sleep, for if one might keep vigil during the day but does not have the above-mentioned virtues, he will fall into various evils. Therefore, there is required a prolonged vigil, continence, sobriety, a firm standing at prayer, and the memory of death, so as little by little to annihilate sleep.

When standing at prayer you grow faint, then sit on the little stool in your cell but do not lean against the wall, because when you begin to drowse you will begin to waver and will be awakened. If you drowse at prayer, then take a book and battle. If sleep does not allow to read even books, then take up handiwork and guard yourself with prayer. I know that by prayer alone without handiwork you will not conquer sleep, but you will be conquered by it. The demons compel you to sit down even without need under the pretext of exhaustion, and they forbid us to take up handiwork, and immediately after a certain small effort at vigilance they suddenly bring, like darkness, deep sleep upon us and thus darken and plunge us into forgetfulness. Therefore, beloved struggler, do not listen to them. Do not sit down ever without a book and handiwork, not because handiwork is necessary, but so as to establish something counter to sleep. The whole night one should stand at crucifixion against the sweetness of sleep. Oppose it by all means and do not remain in slothfulness. First of all, fulfill the usual rule of prayer, forcing yourself to pray

firmly; then rest a little at handiwork so as not to give yourself over to sleep. For the sake of infirmity, handiwork is considered essential. Sleep very much roots itself in and grows, because, when first awakened, a man, going back again, drowns like a lazy calf or like a pig who desires always to wallow in the mire. Then from such a one the angel of God steps away, and he falls into the hands of the opposing enemies, and they keep him in sleep as much as they wish, showing him all kinds of dreams and visions.

If you arise from your bed and again sleep begins to weigh you down from the attack of the devils, then jump up manfully as from fire or as from a poisonous snake or as from a roaring lion who wishes to devour you. Stand against sleep, O struggler, and having arisen, refresh yourself in the fresh air, keeping at the same time prayer. One who lives alone does not need to sleep at the end of the day or night, for from this there comes to him a great weight, and also because at the end of the day the holy angel, our guardian, comes to worship God, giving a reply for our deeds, as is written by certain of the Fathers. One should not rest either before or after the dawn. Like a bird, if he oversleeps the dawn, he cannot fly, as some say. The enemies often try to force us to sleep not at the proper time, saying in the mind, lie down just a little, and again you will get up, so that through this there will be no time to read books or to take up handiwork. If you will listen to them and lie down, you will lose much time.

Such is the habit for sleep. When anyone becomes accustomed to sleep ahead of time, then sleep increases, but when anyone misses the time of sleep, while he himself grows weak, sleep diminishes and there remains time for handiwork. From much sleep and overeating, the body becomes weak, more heavy and unhealthy. If you are very much conquered by sleep, then sleep at one definite time, either in the evening or at night, in a warm or in a cold place where it is easier to sleep less, but in a warm place beware lest you be suffocated. At other times, do not lie down to sleep but keep vigil.

The measure of sleep at the night time, the amount in one period of twenty-four hours: for a beginner, seven hours; for the intermediate, four; for the perfect, two hours and all-night standing. And always, day and night, it is befitting, as much as possible, to keep vigil and to make oneself vigorous. Behold the angelic vigil. Having slept the first sleep, arise. To arise at this time

seems both difficult and painful, as if all our members are afflicted and paralyzed, but when a man becomes strengthened, he arises and spends a little time in the fresh air; then all the pain and heaviness vanish, and the whole day he remains happy and joyful that he did not become slothful. Act in this way and you will conquer sleep.

When you cannot act according to what has been said above, then take for yourself a friend, for no one can conquer sleep remaining alone, if he does not oppose it with all his strength, because such a one does not have a fellow-struggler and instructor from among men. It is therefore indispensable for such a one himself to have manfulness and the fear of God. Therefore, many Saints took a little sleep sitting down. Certain ones, standing at prayer, blinking their eyes, looked at or served the Saints. But you, who love to sleep, wish to conquer sleep. No, it is not so easy. If we do not conquer sleep, our labor shall be in vain. Why is it that when we are together with the brethren we keep vigil and strengthen ourselves out of shame, but when we are alone, then we are conquered by sleep and do not become strong? Evidently, this is because we are empty and do not have good deeds and the fear of God. The Holy Fathers strengthened themselves against sleep to such an extent that they almost fell on the earth. One of the Fathers placed a candle and attached near it a little rope with a weight. When the candle burned down, it burned the little rope, and the weight fell into a metal-sounding thing and woke him up. Another one had a very narrow bed, and when he wished to turn during sleep he would fall down off the bed. Another one put a rock in his hand, and when the rock fell, it woke him up.

Manfulness and courage are the mother of every good deed. Therefore, brethren, we should be manful and endure, and may the Lord God strengthen us unto the ages. Amen.

31.

THAT WE SHOULD PRAY WITH GREAT HEEDFULNESS IN PSALMS AND PRAYERS

DOING, keep, O man. That is, when praying heedfully, guard yourself with great caution, so as to pray in Psalms and to chant prayers with fear, joy, firm zeal, and a low bow to the Divine icon. For you will find in the Psalms both instruction and prayer. Let us not pronounce the words only with the tip of the tongue, but pray with our whole heart. Join into one the body, the soul, and the mind. If anyone labors irrationally, that is, not paying heed to himself, such a one does not have a reward from God, but even angers Him. Just as one who fills a bad vessel with water can never fill it, so also one who prays without heedfulness does not receive rewards. There is required not simply to pronounce a Psalm or perform a prayer, as if performing one's usual lesson, but with the Psalm and prayer one must pray to God from one's whole heart and to be in constant contrition of soul with the purity of prayer. God does not require a quantity of established Psalms and prayers, but heeds our undisturbed and firm mind. For many thousands of prayers are performed with the tongue, while the mind is thinking of vain things, vile things and unclean things. And how does God hear and obey such ones? You yourself do not know what you do, O man. It is not a multitude of prayers God wishes from us, but so that with fear of God and contrition we might stand at prayer, as the angel of the Lord also commanded the great Pachomius. Your striving should be not for quantity but for a profound understanding and heedfulness, so that all that you do might be accepted by God. Not everything that is small is small, and not everything that is great is great and perfect. But acquire fasting and the fear of God. Take on a sorrowful and grievous appearance, that is, stand at prayer in contrition, modestly. And presenting yourself, be before the throne of God, considering yourself to be earth and ashes, a spider and an ant, and your work to be a spiderweb. Feel yourself as one condemned by God, as having transgressed His commandments and become entirely evil. Your legs should be kept straight, the heels together, and one should not go from place to place, the hands placed decently on the breast. Just as one

condemned to death stands before the Judge, not daring to look here and there, thus you should stand before God, before whom the angels stand with fear, and glorify Him in unceasing hymns for the unsleeping eye day and night beholds what we do, what we think, or how we live, upon whom we place our hope in every grief and need, upon man or upon God's bounties. And our King and our righteous Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the True God, is always willing and able to deliver us from every misfortune and trouble. But consider yourself worse than every other man and every other creature, and your work consider displeasing to God. Without this, secret lack of fear will arouse blasphemous high-mindedness. According to our faith, God also helps us in our every need. If we have a more powerful hope and trust, God the more powerfully will help us.

32.

ON CONFUSION AND DEMONIC FEARS

DURING the mental storm and darkness when an especially difficult time occurs for those who live alone, then unceasing prayer is profitable; handiwork with prayer also serves as a great help or simply to sleep through that difficult time, not to think and not to lament, and thereby to avoid harm. During a time of intense distress from the enemy, when the soul is in fear, one must pronounce aloud Psalms and prayers, or combine with prayer handiwork so that the mind will pay attention to what it is performing and pay no attention to the confusion and not be afraid, for with him is the Lord, and the angel of the Lord never departs from us. Sometimes one can take a walk in the fresh air and breeze and the demons will at once depart. The demons especially oppose the Jesus Prayer because nothing harms and inflicts upon them despondency as does this Prayer. Very fearful indeed is the Jesus Prayer, because like a fire scorches grass, so does this Prayer scorch and burn the demons and chase them away when combined with fasting. That is why they strive to take it away from us, but they put an effort for awhile as they vanish like smoke and become invisible. If you prepare yourself to pray, prepare yourself also to do battle with demons, and firmly arm yourself so that manfully you will understand the onslaughts coming from them. As wild

beasts they will come out against you, and to all your body they will cause suffering. They make a great disturbance against one who is vigilant and is occupying himself with prayer since they see the weapon which annihilates their power, and not enduring it, with pain and trembling they vanish. May the Lord God help us and preserve us by His grace unto the ages. Amen.

33.

THAT ONE SHOULD ENDURE INNOCENTLY
EVEN EVERY REPROACH AND INSULT

GUARD YOURSELF strictly and be attentive, O my soul, because the last times are already at hand, and special struggle is required for you and endurance against demons and men. Guard yourself against visible enemies when among people and from invisible ones when in the wilderness. No one ever receives the crown of life without suffering, without having conquered the enemy. If one goes out against the opponent and conquers him by his bravery and manfulness, then he receives honor and glory and a bright crown. Thus you also, my soul, should strengthen yourself, endure every insult and dishonor, and every reproach you should receive with joy, and not only without exalting yourself in self-justification, but you should even ask forgiveness, since every offense, insult, reproach, evil speaking, and every kind of wrong accusation directed against you gives you humility and grace. If you do not endure all of this but become embittered, exalted, and angry against the offenders, you cannot attain perfection and be saved. Such behavior is characteristic of beginners, of passionate men, of the faint-hearted and those feeble of mind. It is characteristic of the perfect, however, to receive all this with joy and to endure with thanksgiving. When the enemy himself cannot somehow hinder and offend any of us in the good life, then he inflicts upon us unbearable sorrows which are beyond our strength. He sends against us certain people, obedient to his biddings, so that through them as his own weapons he might conquer us. But then against our very enemy there will be our praiseworthy victory, to endure for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven the sorrows caused by him through the offenses, insults, and belittlement of men. Remember the Saints from the ages of whom the whole world is not

worthy, who were in deprivations, sorrows, persecutions, and difficult circumstances. And what kind of new path do you wish to establish by which you think to be saved? If you cannot labor, according to the Fathers, then at least, according to the Fathers, endure sensibly. This is not a little thing. Rather, it is greater than all virtues. If one can endure insult or offense for the sake of God with thanksgiving, he does not a little deed. In this is humility and love so as to endure sorrows from one's brother. By this alone many have been saved. Especially this path belongs to the Fools-for-Christ, for they suffer much from insults. A great work is foolishness for the sake of God, for it embraces all the virtues. Of everything of this life they have nothing, and patience alone do they acquire with all zeal, and by this they conquer all sorrows.

Thus, O my soul, at the present time there is no better path than this to salvation. Be deaf, dumb, blind, and as if insensible to everything of this life, and go away into solitude, away from all people, like a senseless one. Consider yourself incapable of anything, as it were, a fool for the sake of God. He who wishes to be first among you, let him be the servant of all. Solomon, reproaching himself for his excess reasoning, said that it was vain and that blessed is the man who has acquired the fear of God, humility and love, that is, unceasing prayer. Such a one has acquired the true wisdom of the world and wealth. Faith saves us without any sinful defect. Just as faith without deeds is dead, so also deeds without faith are dead. Where the right faith and good deeds are, there is complete righteousness. At the present time it is required that a man pay heed to himself in every virtue. He who sighs for one hour over his soul is better than one who enjoys the whole world. If we save ourselves, this is sufficient for us. Everyone doing any of the virtues saves himself alone, and if one should save the whole world but destroy himself, what benefit would there be to him from this? We all know how to be saved, but in our laziness we do not wish it. Save then yourself. Not everyone will give an answer to the fact that he did not instruct others, but only those to whom this is given. They must suffer to death and lay down their lives for their flock. But for himself everyone will give an answer. If even great monks out of humility fled being placed in a position of authority and glory and the teaching of others and bearing another's weight, as is related about them in

the sacred accounts, but they rather took care only for themselves, then how much more should we sinners and infirm ones leave such a matter, for by this we harm ourselves and others. Instead of many, let us take care for ourselves.

Now certain men do not accept good teaching and the life according to the Fathers, but more than this, they laugh upon those who struggle well. They live according to their own will and choose teachers like themselves. Therefore, certain ones instructing others have harmed themselves by this. From such a directing of others we undermine our own foundation and make the warmth of the soul grow cold. It is enough for us to take care for ourselves alone, for our own salvation. Concerning the fault of our brother, seeing and hearing of it, be toward it as a blind man, deaf man, and dumb one, not seeing, not hearing, and not speaking, as one crude of mind, not understanding, not showing oneself to be wise. But to oneself be attentive, discerning, and clear-sighted. If anyone desiring to be saved, seeing and hearing any offensive word, does not make his eye blind, his ear deaf, and his tongue dumb, he cannot be without disturbance, even in quietness of soul. And when you will be asked by anyone, do not allow yourself to justify yourself or to contradict, but say with humility, "Forgive me, for the sake of God." And over the rest be silent. For our Lord Jesus Christ has shown us an example of humility, as it is written, *He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation?* (Is. 53:7-8). Thus, you also, O man, should imitate your Creator. Thus, you should be without answer before those who offend you, as if having water in your mouth or not having a tongue. Only say, "Forgive," considering yourself worthy of every torture, reflecting within yourself, if the whole world should rise up against you for a whole year, making reproaches and offenses against you, what is that to you, O vile one. Do not think that from your brother you will be harmed in any way. Evil rises up against us by itself without him. And if you do endure some kind of sorrow for the sake of future reward, in everything reproach yourself and not your brother. In every deed, strive to reproach yourself, showing and considering that you are earth and to earth you will return. Acquire forever three words: "Forgive, bless, and pray for me, a sinner." Ask of no one about anything which is not necessary for you. Become accustomed to speak about

every man well and belittle yourself. In this is great humility which raises the soul from hell, cuts off the passions, and is a great victory and weapon against the devil. May the Lord God strengthen us to endure offenses.

34.

THAT ONE SHOULD ENDURE SORROWS

HE WHO DESIRES TO BE SAVED should not fear to look upon the fierce sorrows which come from demons or men, because in human life there are many changes. Men change from evil to good and loving. One who fears sorrows usually falls into weakness and faint-heartedness. If one becomes used to fleeing or escaping sorrows or goes from place to place, or chooses only a particular time to begin to labor and to struggle, such a one all the days of his life will not find a place and a time for receiving benefit. One should, on the contrary, look upon and have hope in the mercy of God and remember His glorious miracles from the ages and His help to those who have pleased Him, and that God will not abandon one in any need or sorrow. And never does He allow a temptation which is above our strength. Therefore, we should manfully bear our cross with thanksgiving for the sake of God and future eternal good things. We should endure everything sorrowful in the present time and place. According to the word of the Apostle, *We must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God* (Acts 14:22). By this narrow, sorrowful path we come to the highest perfection of patience, and no matter in what place we are, we are not deprived of benefit, but we shall receive it by God's mercy. Let us forget everything sorrowful which comes from demons and men, and let us not take care for any sorrow, nor for food. Let our care be only for this, that the present time should not pass vainly, that is, without spiritual struggle and prayer. And when any kind of sorrow from demons and men comes upon us, or an affliction or disease or misfortune, then especially let us diligently pray to God. Let us cry out with tears without anxiety and concern over how we should be delivered from this need, for there is no sorrow that comes to us without God's Providence. Wherefore let us love the narrow and difficult path of sorrowful life, for this narrow and sorrowful path leads to the Kingdom of Heaven. Therefore let us not flee dangers, misfortunes,

needs, and sorrows, but let us manfully endure everything sorrowful, difficult, and unpleasant until we receive Divine help. It befits an ascetic, a Saint of God, to be strong in every sorrow, to place his heart, as it were, on a firm ground, and not to be weak like water. This life which turns like a wheel is inconstant and without order. Sometimes there is prosperity for a man, some kind of honor—but do not place your heart on this. Sometimes there is persecution from men—and then do not be sorrowful. Sometimes sorrows and passions attack from demons—do not be sad then. All of this comes to us and is allowed by God for our salvation. And again it departs as His grace ordains, so as to chastise and have mercy upon us. Unto Him may there be glory, both now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

If you wish not to grow angry against one who offends, you should diligently, from your whole heart, pray for him to God and give him some kind of gift or a small consolation. Go to him yourself when you see that he has come to himself from the anger, and speak about being forgiven your sin, find out the reason for his anger, and show him yet greater love. On meeting him, precede him with a low bow, and to everyone speak of him as one who is good. Nothing so brings one to contrition and humility as this. And nothing will so arouse anger in him than the reproach of him as an offender and a repulsion of him, and speaking evil of him, because he who hears this can tell him about it. A great evil is this, and spiritual people also are affected by this passion. But such a one who is saving himself and his friend is in truth a wise and perfect struggler, and better than many who labor.

If anyone thinks that he has love but does not have the same love for all, but distinguishes between persons, separating the lowly from the rich, the infirm from the healthy, a sinner from a righteous man, one far off from one near, one who is an enemy from one who loves you, such love is not perfect, but partial. Actual and perfect love consists in considering everyone and loving them equally, both those who love you and those who hate you. Such love, with which mercy is inseparable, is, in brief, a net for all the virtues. It embraces and contains all the commandments of God within itself. And if one can keep all the commandments, it is only he who can keep this. Therefore, we do not come to perfection and do not receive grace because we do not fulfill in perfection the commandments. To him who laid on the most

pure breast of the Lord it is said in the Apocalypse, *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life* (Apoc. 2: 10). To conquer the world means to conquer with patience its wisdom and passions and every evil. That is, to suffer, to leave off one's own habits and will which come from worldly wisdom, from world-loving life, and to be converted to spiritual life, not to do any evil at all, and to keep the commandments of God. For good deeds are a sacrifice to God. *A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise* (Ps. 51:17). Human passions, on the other hand, are sacrifices to demons. Man was created dispassionate; the passions in him occur from free will, by doing or not doing them. May the Lord preserve us from the passions.

35.

THE VARIETY OF DEMONIC BATTLES, AND HOW TO CUT OFF THE ENTRANCE OF EVERY THOUGHT AND DESIRE

PAY HEED TO YOURSELF, O monk, sensibly and diligently, with a vigilant mind, as to when the demons come, by what means they catch one, and by what means they themselves are vanquished. Guard yourself with great caution, because every hour you walk in the midst of passions and nets. Everywhere the passions surround one. Everywhere are set out their traps. Pay heed lest you be attracted by the enemy into his will through passions and traps. There is a great need for us, even essential for us men of flesh, to fight with the fleshless ones — one man with ten thousand enemies. Many tears, much patience, much suffering and caution, and a thousand eyes everywhere are required, for the evil spirits rise up maliciously against us like a lion. They would destroy us if we did not have the Lord with us. They have been very skilled in the art of catching men for more than seven thousand years. Without sleep, food, and rest, constantly, every hour, and by all means, they seek our perdition with every trick and with great effort. Having turned out to be powerless in one way, they think up something else. They start one thing, and contemplate yet another. And they roar about everywhere looking where they might find doors to enter and from where they might begin the battle, and, as it were, trick us into doing evil. Do you not know with whom you do battle? How legions of invisible enemies surround you, and every one of them wages

his own battle? They sound numberless voices, and desire to swallow up your soul. Should you not be cautious? Is it possible that having drunk your fill and given yourself over to sleep, lying down and constantly consoling yourself, that you can with all this receive salvation? If you will not be attentive to this, you will not escape their traps. We have come to struggle, as it were stepping into the fire. If we desire to be true warriors of the King of Heaven and not false participants, then let us put far away from us every passion or other. And according to our desire and fervor they tighten their traps, for the occasion to sin belongs to us ourselves, our attachment, weakness, and away from ourselves every negligence and faint-heartedness and effeminate weakness, and thus we shall stand against the cunningness of the demons. Let us labor in prayers and other virtues with all fervor and power, with soul, heart, and mind, just as someone might run swiftly on a road without looking around, or as a stingy man might fast, for such is the cunningness of the evil demons. They are constantly occupied with us. Like watchmen they notice our inclinations and our desires, what we are thinking about and what we love, what we are occupied with beside these. Whatever passion they notice in us, they arouse this in us, and thus they place their nets for us. In this way, we ourselves, first of all, arouse against ourselves every passion, being ourselves the cause of it. Therefore the demons seek in us occasion that through our own inclination and desire we might the sooner be caught. They do not compel us to do what we do not desire, to do that from which our mind inclines away and our will does not agree, knowing that we will not obey them. Rather, they test us some, whether we will accept some passion or other. And according to our desire and fervor they tighten their traps, for the occasion to sin belongs to us ourselves, our attachment, weakness, and negligence. We do not cut off the beginning of every passion, but the final cause of every evil is the demons. Through the demons we fall into every sin, and no kind of evil comes to us apart from them.

Thus the demons cast us into every passion. They compel us to fall into every sin, and we are tangled in every net. By nets I mean the first thought of desires and various foul thoughts through which we bind ourselves with every passion, and fall into every sin. This is the door of demons and passions, by which they enter into us and rob our spiritual treasury. Immoderate sleep,

laziness, eating not at the proper time are a cause of the entrance of demons. And having come, they first of all knock on the doors of the heart secretly, like thieves. They introduce a thought, and they notice whether there is a watchman or not, that is, they see if the thought will be received or not. If it will be received, then they begin to cause passion and arouse us to it, and they steal our spiritual treasure. If they find a watchman at the doors of the heart who is accustomed to belittle and banish their suggestions, if one turns away in mind from the first mental impulse and has one's mind deaf and dumb to their barking and directed towards the depths of the heart and so does not at all agree with them, then to such a one they cannot do any evil, since his mind is sober. Then they begin to scheme and to place various nets to catch us in passion, for example, forgetfulness, anger, foolishness, self-love, pride, love of glory, love of pleasure, overeating, gluttony, fornication, unmercifulness, anger, remembrance of wrongs, blasphemy, sorrow, brazenness, vainglory, much speaking, despondency, fearfulness, sleep, laziness, heaviness, fright, jealousy, envy, hatred, hypocrisy, deception, murmuring, unbelief, disobedience, covetousness, love of things, egotism, faint-heartedness, duplicity, bitterness, ambition, gluttony and laughter. Then they arouse a great storm of thoughts of fornication and blasphemy, so that the ascetic might become frightened and despondent, or so that he might leave off his struggle and prayer. But if the enemies after raising all this cannot hold and take away from his struggle a firm soul and an unwavering soldier of Christ who, like a passion-bearer, has placed his foundation on the rock of faith so that the rivers of sorrows do not cause him to waver, then they try to rob him by some seeming good, considering it more convenient under the appearance of good to introduce something of their own and in this way to deprive one of perfect virtue and struggle. Thus they try to compel us to make spiritual conversations for the sake of love, to teach men, or to sweeten the food a little for the sake of a friend or for the feast, for they know, the deceptive ones, that Adam fell for the love of sweet things. First they begin to darken the purity of the mind and heedfulness to oneself, and by this path they suddenly throw us into the pit of sexual sins or into some other passion. If even by this way they do not cause one to waver who is sober in mind, then they arm themselves with false visions and offend and disturb him by various afflictions. A most skillful

warrior lets all this go by him and regards it as nothing, as if it has no relation to him, for he knows that all this is the device of the devil.

If even thus they do not conquer, then they battle by means of high-mindedness. They introduce the thought that the man is holy, saying to him secretly, "How many afflictions you have endured!" The demons, like a clever hunter, when their first means turns out to be powerless, abandon it, go away, hide themselves, and pretend to be conquered. But beware, O man, pay heed, don't be lax, for they will not depart from you until the grave. But they will prepare a great siege and will look attentively by what means they can again begin to rise up against you, for they do not rest. When the warmth of fervor grows cold in a struggler, they then secretly, having prepared some net, come again and lay them out and try to catch him. In all the paths of virtue, the devils establish their nets and hindrances when we fulfil heedfully every deed for our salvation and not out of pleasing men, or from some other idea. But if in virtue there is hidden some kind of impurity, pride, vainglory, and high-mindedness, then in such a matter the devils do not hinder us, but they even inspire us, so that we might labor without benefit. The demons strive for nothing so much as by every crafty means to steal time and make it idle. In everything that the demons do, they strive to dig three pits for us. First of all, they act against us and hinder us so that there will be no good in all our acts of virtue. In the second place, they strive so that the good will not be for the sake of God. That is, having no opportunity to bring us away from good, they make efforts through vainglory to destroy all our labors. In the third place, they praise us as if we turn out in everything to be God-pleasing. That is, being unable to confuse us by vainglory, they strive by high-mindedness to destroy our labors and deprive us of rewards. Every demonic battle against us is in three forms. First, the devils darken our mind and a man becomes forgetful and dispersed in all his works. Then they introduce an idle thought, so that through it we might lose time. Finally, they bring various temptations and afflictions. Therefore, of us it is demanded that at all times we should be very sober of mind, for the enemies ceaselessly are making tricks and acting against us. If one struggles for many years, the enemy seeks a convenient time so as in a single hour to destroy his labors. Not many men see the numberless traps, devices and tricks of the demons. As a fleshless spirit

the demon does not require rest, and through a long life he has learned to catch men. Therefore, no one can escape the tricks, the ruinous nets, and pitfalls of them, except one who remains in bodily infirmity from constant struggle, and who lives in spiritual poverty, that is, with a contrite heart and in humble thoughts. Such a one will conquer them.

Most of all, the Divine help cooperates with us. However, in us, as we have said previously, is the beginning of all passions, attachment, weakness, and negligence, because we do not renounce in soul and thought and do not cut off the first impulse of every passion that comes. And the demons add yet more. Seek within yourself the reason for every passion, and finding it, arm yourself and dig out its root with the sword of suffering. And if you do not uproot it, again it will push out sprouts and grow. Without this means you cannot conquer passions, come to purity, and be saved. Therefore, if we desire to be saved, we must cut off the first impulse of the thought and desire of every passion. Conquer small things so as not to fall into big ones. It is evident that God allows one to be overthrown in battle by the demons or some stubborn passion because of our pride and high-mindedness, when one considers himself to be holy, or strong, and trusts in himself, and exalts himself above those who are weak. Let such a one acknowledge his own infirmity, acknowledge the help of God, and be enlightened. Let him understand that without God's help he can do nothing, and thus he will humble his thought. Or again, this is allowed as a chastisement for sins, so that we might repent and be more experienced in struggle. Or it is allowed for the sake of crowns of victory. However, in that in which you are conquered and from which you suffer, before all other passions you must arm yourself against it and for this use all your fervor. Every passion and suffering is conquered by undoubting faith, by labor of heart and tears, by warm fervor and quick striving to oppose the present passion. This is a high and praiseworthy struggle, as taught by the Holy Fathers. Every warfare of the demons against us comes from and is reinforced by four causes: from negligence and laziness, from self-love, from love of pleasure, and from the envy of demons. May the Lord preserve us by His grace from all the nets of the enemy and passionate works, unto the ages of ages. Amen.

ON VARIOUS SORROWS AND HEAVINESSES FROM THE DEMONS

IT DOES NOT BEFIT A MONK to begin a life of silence before trial and much learning about the passions. If he himself is not experienced and does not have an instructor and without such help begins a battle against the evil demons, he will soon be destroyed by them. We must acknowledge the various impulses of the demons, the afflictions and heavinesses. The demons, for example, cause headaches, so that the brain feels as if it is rent asunder, at the time one is supposed to do prostrations. The evil one dares to enter through the ear canals and cause temptations. He weighs down the head, arouses the brain, and causes one to refrain from struggle and prostrations as something harmful to oneself. Sometimes headache comes merely from the approach of the demons to us from the great disturbance of soul which is caused by them. But, it also happens that they enter us through the hearing and again go out, and from this the head aches. From their approach, disturbance, and entrance, the head aches and the mind is darkened. The heart groans and one can't cry out with the lips. Then we must refresh ourselves, and immediately they are driven away without a trace by the wind like a heap of mosquitoes. Likewise, the demons cause deafness, fever in the head and ears as if a leech were crawling in the head, or as if someone were tearing the hair, so that one can barely endure it. The head becomes heavy and the mind darkens, one feels that part of one's mind has been taken away and one can no longer understand the written word. By this the demons want to chase us away from desert silence. However, everything will be as previously, just as before. Do not fear, O monk, but hope in God. Likewise, they bring upon us forgetfulness and blindness, as if the eyes wish to pop out. They cause slowness in the words and pain in the tongue and lips as if they were stuck together with glue when we wish to pray. They cause hiccups, not such ones as occur with food we have eaten, but a different kind with air alone, so that the throat hurts. Then they cause pain in the neck as if someone were pressing the neck with pliers. If we shall labor well in these temptations and remain

vigilant in prayer, then the demons fill the air like mice, cry out loudly with various voices, desiring to tear us apart, or at least throw us down on our chair or on the bed, and scarcely do they depart. If we sit down, the demons, standing nearby, play on pipes (which are called "clowns' bags"), and the soul, hearing this, becomes weakened with laziness and, like fire which is put into water, is extinguished and thus he falls asleep. And they hover around us so that we might doze the more in sleep. The foul odor from them is much more repulsive than the foul odor from dogs, so that the mouth is closed. And during the time of vigil they scorch our face as if with fire. Some people suppose that our flesh becomes dried up from vigil, but this is not correct. Rather, it is from the approach of demons at that time. Likewise, from any kind of food which arouses us there is a two-fold and difficult battle. All this is brought about by the demons in the solitary life so as to banish us out of the wilderness. Since many times diseases have occurred to certain Saints, we therefore consider this as a natural infirmity, and as it were out of need and infirmity we lie down on our bed, desiring to receive alleviation, without suspecting a trick of the evil demons. But they, having noticed our negligence, that we do not wish to force ourselves even a little against our infirmities, take even greater possession of us, so that all our members grow weak and ache. And if we can become stronger and stand up and refresh ourselves in the fresh air and fervently pray, then the disease vanishes and remains without a trace.

The demons may also induce a throbbing pain in the arms and legs, as if someone were beating us and gnawing on us, and an aching pain throughout the body. They cause boredom and dissatisfaction. They likewise touch all the members of our body and cause difficulties to passionate people. And all this truly happens. In confirmation of this, St. Macarius the Great, when walking in the desert, saw a demon hung all about with gourds instead of garments, who was involuntarily forced to reveal to the Saint his deeds. "Pay attention to the vessels," he said, "which are hanging on me, and look to see which ones are hanging in what places. Those places I anoint on men out of the corresponding vessels. The men, becoming weighed down, suffer."

No matter what sorrows the devils might cause us, they all strive to hide this, so that we will not find out that they come from them. They watch out for a special time and cause a pain or heaviness, so that they might not

be considered the cause of it, but so that we might grumble about our difficult circumstances, without understanding their cunningness. And so not enduring with thanksgiving, we will be deprived of our reward. So when some kind of disease occurs to us or some heaviness, then from our whole heart we should stand upon the rock of faith as brave soldiers of Christ; and if this is from the devils, it will quickly begin to grow weak and soon disappear. But if this is a natural disease, then it will begin to grow worse. And when we find out that this is from the devils, then let us oppose it unto death. But if it is natural, then there is no need to compel our nature. All the sorrows caused by the demons we can endure and conquer if we force ourselves, because God will not allow temptations to come upon us beyond our strength. But He will ease them if we will only endure and do not depart from our silence, and place our trust in God with one mind and undoubting. And if one opposes the enemies, they will flee from him. But if one does not force himself, he will be conquered by them. *God settles the solitary in a house, and will lead forth those held captive by His strength* (Ps. 67:6). Every day He looks to our patience, and sends to our good free will His help, giving it to all who are in need. The strugglers suffer until grace visits them, for then the thoughts are cleansed and the passions are lessened and annihilated. Then also, suffering from diseases and heaviness is lightened, and we are guarded from the incursions of demons and passions. By prayer and fasting, by tears and prostrations and the grace of God, the devils are banished out of us. Even then, however, until the very departure of our soul, great caution is required, lest out of our negligence we might do something not pleasing to God, or lest the demons should afflict some harm on us, and lest through this the grace of God might depart from us. For frightful is the cunningness and craftiness of the malicious devils, and numberless are their malicious traps and inventions. In all our good intentions they interfere with and oppose us. Not many recognize their nets, but only courageous souls to whom God reveals this. May the Lord our God help us and strengthen us against all sorrows from the demons, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

CONCERNING FRIGHTENING EXPERIENCES

IF ANYONE is fearful by nature, let him not be disturbed at all, but be manful and place his hope in God, and pay no attention at all to disturbances. Do not allow there to be rooted in you this childish attitude — as children are often afraid — but consider this as nothing, as something demonic. The slave of God fears only His Master, who created the body, placed in it a soul, and brought it to life. But the demons, without God's allowance, can do nothing to us, but only frighten and threaten us with fantasies. He who has acquired a manful mind and has placed his hope in God does not fear them, and he has in the Lord a strong helper and hope. For what creature can harm us when it is not pleasing to God to allow this? From one's own thought, a man either is strengthened or weakened, for in it is born every good and evil work. Through custom every good and evil work becomes attached to a man, and to what a man becomes accustomed, that seems to him to be his own. But do you be manful, and may your heart be strengthened, and guard yourself with the sign of the Cross when some frightening experience comes. Guard every place that you enter with the sign of the Cross: entering into any empty room, make the sign of the Cross, and having said the prayer and the "Amen," enter without fear. If the demons find that we are firm in the Lord, immediately they will be put to shame and will not disturb us. Let us keep in mind that we are in the hands of God. The Lord said, Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall in any wise hurt you (Luke 10: 19). Let us keep to the thought that without the commandment of God not a hair of our head will perish (Luke 21:18). We ourselves cause frightening experiences for ourselves by our fearful thoughts when we say, "What if the demon comes and hits me, or jumps up and frightens me?" Let us not think at all about this, as if this will happen to us, and let us not be our own enemy, thinking about something unexpected. Let us reflect that at our right hand is God, and we shall not be moved. The demons follow after us like hunters, and attentively observe our thoughts. And

they offer to us their own fantasies similar to our thoughts. But the fear of God banishes the fear of the devils.

CONCERNING WHAT IT IS THAT THE DEMONS
ESPECIALLY FEAR

THE DEMONS very much fear six virtues: 1) hunger, 2) thirst, 3) the Prayer of Jesus, 4) the sign of the Cross, that is, he who makes the sign of the Cross correctly upon himself, 5) frequent Communion of the Most Pure Mysteries of Christ, if one worthily communes, and 6) undoubting hope in God. There is nothing more frightful than this weapon against the demons.

SOME BRIEF PATRISTIC ADVICE ON
INDISPENSABLE SUBJECTS

WHEN TEMPTATION comes upon you by God's allowance, as, for example, nakedness, illness, hunger, or some other temptation for your body, even to the shedding of your blood for the sake of God, then endure unto the glory of God with hope in His mercy, so as to say with boldness and not shamefully, We have gone through fire and water and were led out into repose. If you wish to know, O man, how to perform the will of God in everything, I will tell you briefly. For the duration of your whole struggle, in every work, join sorrow for the sake of God, according to your strength. Behold the goodwill of God, for even a little sorrow for the sake of God is better than a great deed without sorrow. But to weaken oneself little by little, this is not from God but from the demons. If we are infirm and have no strength to struggle, then we shall acquire humility, thanksgiving, and the Jesus Prayer. And if we are well, we should force ourselves as far as exhaustion. And thus little by little our heart is strengthened and taught patience and the virtues. Otherwise, one cannot be saved.

If one lives not in accordance with the spirit of the community or place where he lives, such a one chases himself out. One who is crude in words

arouses anger. Quarreling, even over a good deed, is a contradiction. If you do not have in your soul contrition, then know that you have pride or anger against someone, or that you eat, drink, or sleep too much, or give yourself over to dispersion and cares, and this does not allow the soul to come to tender-feeling. If overeating is battling with you, then say to yourself, O man, that you will be deprived of heavenly food and enjoyment and the beauty of Paradise, and that this food will be converted to worms. O servant of the Divine service, reflect and be heedful to yourself, because you are performing a great deed! You stand in a holy place with the angels, where everything is filled with fear and trembling. O priest, depart from the place where people hasten to please men, for what kind of contrition will there be when you hurry? And without tears, one should not serve. If your conscience accuses you in anything, with this do not dare to serve. If you desire to learn something, then strive for it, and you will learn. There have been many great theologians and composers of skillful words; however, only through vigilance did they remain in contrition, because vigilance and solitude give understanding to the mind and put disturbance far away. This served for them in place of handiwork. Theology is not fitting for one who is occupied with conversations. Strive, O man, every day to destroy with repentance the sins you have committed, and to wash your face with tears. If your death will occur in a day in which you have shed tears, you will be delivered from eternal torment, because this is true repentance. In like manner were delivered the thief who wetted his kerchief with tears, and that monk who daily fell into sexual sin and daily repented before the image of Christ, and the publican who beat himself on the chest and with tears said, "God, be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13), and the harlot who wetted with tears the most pure feet of Christ, and Manasses who was cleansed with tearful repentance. All of these were saved. In truth, I think that if it would be possible to wash one's whole body with tears, it would become incorruptible. However, a man will not weep if he does not have painful labor, that is: 1) contrition from the impulses of sin, 2) joyful tender-feeling, 3) remembrance of the future fire, and 4) the remembrance of the reward of each one according to his deeds.

For the sake of the above four virtues, the Holy Spirit does not depart from a man, but constantly remains with him. And one who remains in

laziness for a long time, or has fallen into a great sin, or is negligent about the passion from which he suffers, from such a one the Holy Spirit departs. The beginning of obedience is complete renunciation of one's own will and self-justification, and the renunciation of one's body. The labor to subdue one's will and one's manner is not easy. But no one can be saved without the renunciation of his will, even though he might struggle fervently, for our will and our manner are like a bronze wall between us and God. We cannot draw near to God until we abandon our manner and our will. If we shall ask anything according to our desire and our petition shall meet a denial, the next time we will find this desire already weak. But if you fulfill your desire, the next time you will find it more powerful against you. For every good and evil deed grows through custom, through habit, and is strengthened. In every deed, remember this. If you wish to know someone's habits and deeds, then listen to what his lips speak of, for nothing is expressed by the lips that previously was not in the heart.

40.

WHAT IS A MONK?

A MONK is a fulfiller of the commandments of Christ, a perfect Christian, an imitator of and a participant in the passion of Christ, a daily martyr, a voluntary dead man who willingly dies in spiritual struggles. A monk is a pillar of patience, a depth of humility, a fount of tears, a treasury of purity, one who laughs at all that is considered splendid, sweet, glorious and attractive in this world. A monk is a soul that is pained, constantly meditating on the memory of death, both in wakefulness and in sleep. A monk is one who constantly forces nature, and who guards his feelings without weakening. A monk is of the order and condition of the fleshless ones, though preserved in a material body, having in mind at all times, in every place, and in every work, only what is Divine.

It is impossible for one to stand constantly before God if he has not placed his hope upon Him in every need with all his heart and has not abandoned all cares. When you wish to make a beginning of any good work, first of all prepare yourself for the temptations which will come upon you, so as to manfully encounter them and not to waver in your hope in God. When

a man begins with warm faith to live well, the enemy of good usually sends him various frightful temptations, so that he, being frightened by this, might leave off the work of his good desire. But if you will not prepare yourself for meeting such temptations, then beware of undertaking the good labor. A man who doubts in God's help even without temptations will fear his own shadow. May one's own conscience be for every man his teacher and witness. In every work, without thinking ahead of time over every word, do not speak. Every hasty work is not good. Without knowing a friend, do not reveal mysteries. A flattering friend, when he turns away, will become an enemy.

41.

ON THE BENEFIT OF FLEEING THE WORLD

IT IS BETTER to battle alone with the demons, and in hunger, nakedness, and every sorrow to die with a small struggle in the desert, fleeing the world, than to seek great labors for salvation in the midst of the world — for the flame of the passions of this world ignites and scorches the monk who returns to it. If one may be dispassionate, even such a one in the world will suffer harm. And he who is passionate will be tangled up in every sinful net. Like a fish who hastens to grab food on the hook is drawn out of the water and dies, so also a monk who is in the world is attracted in thought to worldly deeds, and against his will, as if drawn up by a hook, falls into the nets of the enemy and perishes, falling away from the angelic life. He kills his own soul and gives it over to torment. Repose and love of pleasure are the hook of the devils by which the devils catch the souls of monks unto their destruction. As long as we love bodily repose, pleasure, and laziness, then we are still fighting with the flesh and not with the demons. It makes warfare against us at all times and helps the devils against us. Especially does laziness battle against us, both at the time of standing and sitting and in bed. We love repose, pleasure, and laziness because they naturally grow with the body, and that is why they battle against us so powerfully.

However, he who desires to live according to God must force himself to be above natural habits. Let us repent and wear ourselves out in this world. Death alone we will not escape, and for him who forces himself, there is a

great reward after death. But for him who loves repose and enjoyment in this brief life, after death there is eternal torment. Which is better, O man, to grieve for a few days and then reign eternally, or to be in repose for a few days and to be tormented eternally? From repose and pleasures come laziness. From laziness comes idleness. From idleness, discouragement. From discouragement, the looseness of the body. From looseness of the body comes the failure to restrain the feelings. And from the failure to restrain the feelings and from the impulse of the devils rise up all the passions. And from agreement with them and our own free will, the passions become strengthened.

It is clear that in the world, where men look freely upon everything they hear and is said, there is no restraining of the feelings, and there is agreement with the impulses of the demons. Therefore let every man depart from unrestrained bodily repose, hearing, seeing, and conversations. When the eye sees something, or the ear hears something, or when we speak about something, the mind heeds it, and the soul strives toward it, and the heart desires it. And when a man becomes used to this and it becomes rooted within him, then the demons ceaselessly place into his mind everything about these things and remind us about them. And when our senses enjoy the passions with satisfaction, then sin is manifest completely. A man cannot be purified from passions until he cuts off the occasion for passions. From the following passions proceed dispersion of thoughts, darkening of the mind, and the entrance of the demons: from laziness, the wandering of unclean thoughts, from sleeping until one is satisfied, from frequent eating not at the right time, from a sudden burst of anger, and from bodily repose. Only inward activity, that is, ceaseless prayer of the mind and of the heart proceeding from the mind, and fasting, banish the demons and do not allow them to enter, preparing within a place for the Holy Spirit. Thus a man becomes a temple of God. Without this, the world-loving, cunning spirit settles in, who takes possession of the body. This kind, said the Lord, goeth not out save by prayer and fasting (Matt. 17:21). The inward activity is inaccessible and fearful to the demons, but attraction by evil thoughts opens up to them an entrance within us. While a man is bound by passions and love of the world, so long do the demons dare to rule over his body, to offend him, to draw him into all the passions, and to force him against his will like a submissive slave who is their pet. The passions are the doors to the demons. By their means they enter as by a

door. They are allowed by God to be armed against us, so that we might acknowledge our infirmity and will not exalt ourselves. However, the demons cannot directly corrupt the qualities of our soul and its powers, for the power of God does not allow them to do this. It happens that sometimes someone struggles well, but through these indicated passions, he allows the demons to enter, and then for him there is a double warfare and heaviness, and for a long time he cannot return to his original fervor.

From distraction of thoughts comes drowsiness and a dark, insatiable sleep. From darkness comes falling into sin. From falling into sin comes despondent torment of the soul. Since the foggiess and darkness of the mind, as was said above, comes from the wandering and distraction of thoughts and the failure to restrain the senses, so also we should in every way flee the temptations of the world, guard our senses, and hold them back as a horse by the reins from harmful incidents without giving them a free hand, that by guarding them we flee from evil deeds. A sober mind should be placed as the good watchman of our soul, so that it might not allow the senses to do what is evil. When your mind leaves off its inward caution and good concern, then the passions arise, and each one of them, seizing your spiritual powers, like a weapon directs them against you. Then the mind also begins to be passionate, distracted in thoughts and dark. The passions become unrestrained, their bonds are let loose, and they become free. Therefore, O monk, be sober with your mind, be sober. Find for yourself a melancholy place which is absolutely useless to men, from where you cannot be banished, a place remote from the world. Lead there your silent life, where, even if you wish to do some kind of worldly activity, there will be no opportunity for this, thanks to the remoteness from the world. In the desert, by the sole fact of having withdrawn from the world, a man is delivered from the passions.

42.

WHAT IS OF GOD, AND WHAT OF THE ENEMY?

HOW IS ONE to judge of a good deed, when one thought inclines us to do it, and another, on the contrary, counsels against it? How can one know in this case whether this is God's will, or a temptation from the enemy?

The enemy likes to hide the truth and to mix good with evil. But how can one find out the truth? God's goodwill and all our intentions are meek, full of good hope, and undoubting. Not only in our good deeds, but also in our lawlessness, God endures long with meekness and awaits our repentance. And how can one distinguish the impulse of the enemy? The enemy usually hinders us and turns us away from good. However, if in anything which apparently is good, the mind is disturbed and causes us disturbance, banishes the fear of God, deprives us of calmness, so that without any reason the heart aches and the mind wavers, then know that this is an impulse from the enemy and cut it off. What is from the enemy is full of disturbance and is disquieting, and it makes our mind doubt all our intentions. We should not believe the disposition of our heart in all things, but we should reason whether this disposition is profitable. But when our mind is confined by thoughts and darkness from the enemy, then one must leave off entirely every thought and reasoning, for we do not know the truth as long as our mind is not purified by prayer. For then, the thoughts like some muddy water rise up in the mind, or like a cloud they wander, and the senses of the soul become insensitive to everything. Therefore, he who desires to know the truth, let him arouse himself for a long time to fervent prayer, and to the work which he desires. During the time of prayer the enemy cannot conceal the truth, since then he has no power. You can experience the truth of such faith in deeds. May there be glory to our God unto the ages. Amen.

43.

ON UNDOUBTING FAITH

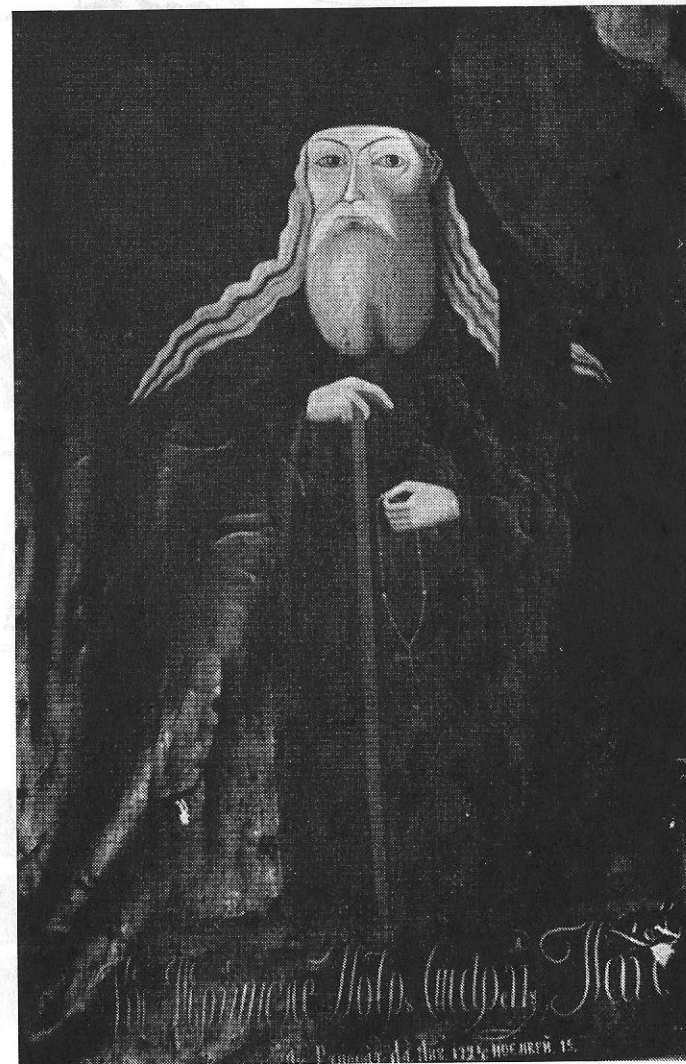
HE WHO BELIEVES in God's Providence undoubtingly does not concern himself with worry over what kind of death he will happen to die, whether from men, or from wild beasts, or from hunger, or from the heaviness of great labors, or from any other occasion. There will not be two deaths, and the one no one can escape. However, one who has once placed himself in God's care for all his needs, for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven, and who has died to the world, will no longer be concerned about how he will die. He who has once placed his hope in God no longer is concerned over himself,

and in whatever he does, in everything, he will find profit for his soul. But let such a one know that he who gives himself over to all sorrows for the sake of God will find salvation in any place. According to our faith, the grace of God also is given to us. If faith is small, little will be given. If we believe more, we shall be vouchsafed more grace for patience. Nothing happens to us apart from God's Providence and His ordering. God expects from us only the goodwill of our mind. But the decrees of God are unattainable, unfathomable, and therefore we must in patience save our own souls. *He who endures to the end will be saved*, through Christ Jesus our Lord. To Him may there be glory now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

44.

EXHORTATION

I IMPLORE AND EXHORT YOU, my beloved fathers, brethren, and children, in the following: Love the Lord with all thy soul and all thy heart. Be righteous and just, submissive, with bowed head and your mind turned towards heaven. Have contrition towards God and men. Be a consoler of the sorrowful, patient in trials, and not given to irritation, bountiful, merciful, a feeder of the poor, receiver of strangers, sorrowful for the sake of sins, joyful in God, hungry and thirsty, meek, patient, not a lover of glory, not a lover of gold, a lover of your neighbor, not hypocritical, not proud, a lover of labor for the sake of God, silent, pleasant in replies, fervent in fasting, in frequent prayers, vigils, and psalm-singing, sensible. Do not judge any man, but condemn yourself. And for this you will be the child of the Gospel, the son of the Resurrection, the inheritor of life in Christ Jesus our Lord. To Him may there be honor and power and worship, with the Father and the Most Holy Spirit, both now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.



Icon portrait of St. Paisius in Neamts Monastery located in a hallway outside the museum.



ST. PAISIUS AS PHILOKALIC FATHER

An iconographic engraving in the Greek edition of the St. Herman Press book *Blessed Paisius Velichkovsky* by Schemamonk Metrophanes, depicting St. Paisius in the tradition of ascetic writers like Sts. Isaac the Syrian and Symeon the New Theologian.

III

The Instruction of Elder Paisius for the Tonsure to the Monastic Order



SYNAXIS OF ST. PAISIUS

Left, St. John Maximovitch of Tobolsk; right, St. Sergius of Radonezh. From a fresco in a Romanian church of 1970.

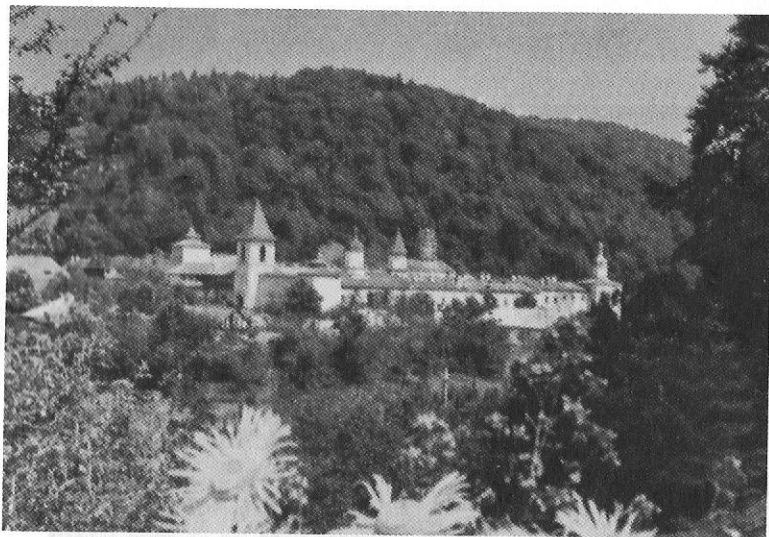


The Instruction of Elder Paisius for the Tonsure to the Monastic Order

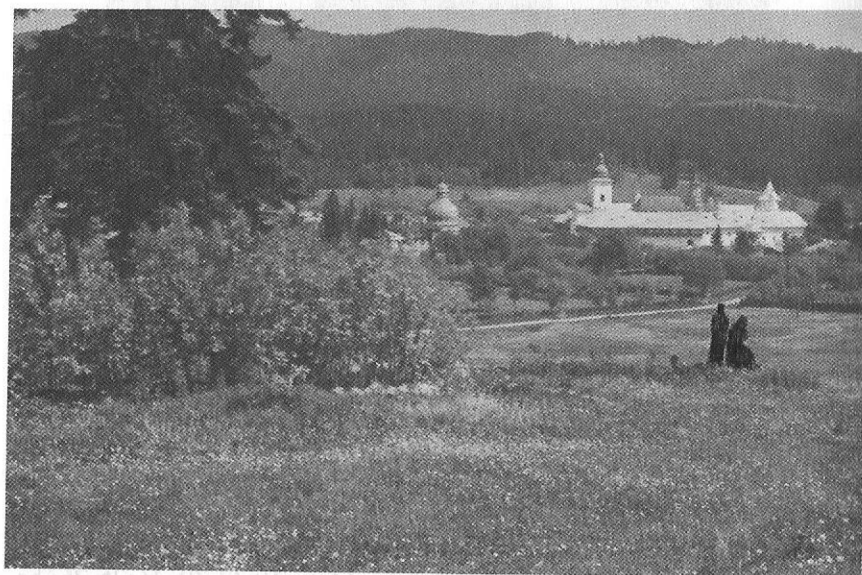
INTRODUCTION

HOW WE MUST ALWAYS WAGE WAR AGAINST THREE ENEMIES

JUST as soldiers of this world, when they assemble for battle, arm themselves with every weapon, so that they are fearful to their enemies and courageously battle against them, so also the warriors of Christ must arm themselves with every spiritual weapon when they wish to go forth to battle against the invisible enemies. It is written: *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world* (Eph. 6:12); against three mighty enemies: against the flesh, the world, and the Devil, as we hear more clearly in the Gospel of St. Matthew, chapters 10 and 16: The Lord said to His disciples, "*He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth (his) son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for My sake and the Gospel's, he will save it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*" (St. Matt. 10:37-39; 16:25-26; St. Mark 8:35-36).



Secu Monastery, where St. Paisius was abbot from 1775 to 1779.



General view of Neamts Monastery as it looks today.

I. *On Daily Warfare*

HOW MONKS MUST BATTLE AGAINST THESE THREE ENEMIES AND GAIN THE VICTORY

IN THE HOLY GOSPEL the Lord clearly pointed out three enemies that wage war against our soul. The first and fiercest enemy is the devil. Against him He commands us to take up the Cross. The second enemy is our body, in part. He commanded us to oppose it by denying father, mother, son and daughter. The third enemy is the world. Of this He said: *If a man gain the whole world, what benefit is it to him?* Against these three enemies we monks must wage war and battle, always striving as a spectacle unto this world (I Cor. 4:9). The spectators of my warfare are God and His angels, likewise the devil and his demons. The arena of warfare is the breach between the Saints and sinners. The body is the steed, the soul — the mounted knight. The army's commander is the mind. The weapons of the warriors of Christ are faith as an invincible shield, patience as a mighty helmet, fervent prayer as a sword, unfeigned humility as bow and arrows (Eph. 6:13-18). The devil trembles greatly before such weaponry. The hosts of satan and the heads of his army are, above all, pride, luxury, impurity, murder, vainglory, fury, anger. By these the devil takes command and smites the soul with sin as with arrows. The second host of satan's might is the wickedness of this world, for thereby he battles by means of delusion and temporal delight and the glitter of what is beautiful. In keeping with these, our body raises up its own warfare against the soul by overeating and drunkenness and the desire for fornication, by slothfulness and the other sinful passions. Truly the warfare against the first enemy is extremely difficult: visible nature against the invisible. We would

be unable to prevail over such an enemy if the Lord were not our helper. But without God's help we shall not overcome the others either.

THE FIRST ENEMY, THE WORLD

THE FIRST DEGREE of warfare and battle against the world is when we separate ourselves from it and leave its sweet pleasures and the delusive mirage of its beauties, of corruptible wealth, of temporary merriment, and take up the example of the voluntary poverty of Christ, that by our poverty we may glorify His richness, *Who being rich, for our sakes became poor, that we, through His poverty, might become rich and draw near to God* (II Cor. 8:9). For *the whole world lieth in evil* (wickedness) (I John 5:19), and *all that is in the world is the lust of the flesh*, which seduces our eyes, and *the pride of life* (I John 2:16). For this reason the Apostle said: *Love not this world, neither the things that are in the world* (I John 2:15); if one wishes to be a friend of the world, he becomes an enemy of God (James 4:4). Therefore flee from this world, like Lot from the burning of Sodom unto Mount Segor [Zoar] (Gen. 19:22 LXX) — to the life of stillness; like Israel from Egypt, hasten from the darkness of sin unto the promised land, to a God-pleasing life, pure and without sin. Flee from Babylonian bondage to the freedom of Sinai. Deny the world with its delusion; estrange yourself from it with an estrangement that never turns back. And thus you will conquer the hosts of the first enemy, and with your victory you will bring joy to heaven and sorrow to the demons. But if he overcomes you and takes your soul into captivity then, even if you acquire the wealth and beauty of the entire world, you will have no profit from it; you will not ransom your soul from captivity with any of these things. And what will you give in exchange for your soul?

THE SECOND ENEMY, THE FLESH

YOU WILL VANQUISH the first fortress of the body if you separate yourself from your relatives, from father and mother and wife and children and brother and sister; for they abide in worldly, earthly bondage like the dead (St. Luke 9:60). But you, hasten to God's work and depart from earthly-mindedness to the heavenly, where Christ reigns forever. You must

separate yourself from your relatives, not simply from all of them but only from those who inhibit your salvation and are earthly minded, saying: Get married, son, and gather wealth in the world, work for possessions, acquire properties, plant vineyards, accumulate a multitude of servants and rejoice in all of these all the days of your life, for you are the heir of our estate. It is from such parents that we must flee and separate ourselves, for they show us darkness instead of light and death instead of life. But if our parents give good counsel and lead us towards God and serving Him, we must love such parents greatly and consider them saintly, fervently submitting to their will and advice.

Again, you vanquish the body and the second fortress of its power if you restrain yourself from much pleasurable food and intemperate drinking. Then by fasting you will slay the desire for sin and mortify the lustful desires of the flesh; likewise other passions also, or sin-arousing provocations: slothfulness you will destroy by wakefulness; the desire for fornication by the self-restraint of purity. It is with these arrows that the body wages war against the soul, *for the flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh* (Gal. 5:17), and thus they oppose one another.

Our very body is partially an enemy for us, because with its desire for sin it battles against the soul. But it is also our friend as it assists the soul in what is good. With my body, with God's help, I can fast, pour out tears, make prostrations, give alms. We can not do these without the body, with the naked soul. And again, the body protects the soul from pride, for the soul, being the image of God, is of a very lofty nature, and on this account it can be exalted with haughtiness. But if it looks to the body, then it humbles its high-mindedness and understands that man is dung and dust. For this reason St. Gregory [Palamas] spoke of "being harnessed together and being estranged, of a merciful enemy and a treacherous friend" (Oration 14). For if we look to this world below, to the body, then man is temporal, mortal, the inheritor of fire and darkness. But again, if we look with the mind's eye to the world above, then he is great, eternal, immortal and the heir of heavenly light. Wherefore I beg you as servants of Christ, that you be not captives of the world below, of the body and death, but that you persevere for the world above and immortality's realm, that you may appear also to be inheritors of its light.



Durau Monastery, where many of St. Paisius' spiritual daughters labored before some moved from here to Varatec to build a new skete.

THE THIRD ENEMY, THE DEVIL

IF YOU OVERCOME the first hosts of your enemies, then you can easily take arms against the devil himself, against the rulers of the world, the prince of darkness, against his dark principalities and opposing powers, and smite their array. Only *take up the full armor of God, that thereby you can repel and extinguish all the fiery darts of the wicked one* (Eph. 6:12-16): with the triple weaponry of faith, patience, and prayer all the warfare of the devil and his opposing powers is readily overcome: pride by humility, vainglory by self denial, fornication by purity, but most of all by the Cross of your patience, whereon you mortify your body, crucifying yourself to the world and dying to sinful life (Gal. 6:14). And like a dead corpse you will not behold sin and will be safeguarded from it; then you will be alive to the Lord. Then your victory will appear like the full moon in the daytime, shining with eternal glory; the angels of God will come forth to meet you rejoicing, and Christ the eternal King of glory will receive His victory-bearer and glorify you before the eyes of His most radiant angels, before the patriarchs and prophets and apostles, and will join you to the choir of the monastic Saints, granting you a place in His heavenly kingdom.

2.

On the Origin of Monasticism and What the Name of Monk Signifies

A MONK is a fulfiller of all the commandments of Christ, an abyss of humility, a pillar of patience, never-forgotten remembrance of death, a never-waning wellspring flowing with tears, a treasury of purity, a mocker of the corruptible, a trampler of all the beauties of this world, voluntary mortification, a martyr every day and a worker of violence (St. Matt. 11:12), a sacrifice pleasing to God (Rom. 12:1), an ever-burning lamp of spiritual wisdom, an enlightened mind, an observer of all things visible and invisible, speedy intercession, Divine meditation, a pure heart, lips never silent of God's praise, an abode of the Holy Trinity, a spectacle for angels and men (I Cor. 4:9), fright for the demons.

A monk is called "inok" (Slavonic) because he has another (inoe) different way of life, not bodily but spiritual, another activity, another age, another food, another garment and labor. He is called "black robed" because of his black and mournful apparel; and he is called "monk" because he is alone (Greek, monakhos), free of cares, and alone must have his communion with the One God alone.

ON THE ORIGIN OF MONASTICISM

THE FOUNDERS and teachers of these things are: first, Melchisedek, the priest of the most High God, who lived without a wife or descent (offspring) in the desert (Gen. 14:18-20; Heb. 7:3); second, the marvelous Elias (Elias the Glorious), who lived without a wife in the desert of Horeb; third, John the Baptist, who lived in the desert of the Jordan without a wife,

without any possessions, neither eating meat nor drinking wine, wearing a mournful garment — a hair shirt (Mark 1:6). Of the lawfulness and antiquity of the monastic order the following clearly give proof, it was legislated and confirmed by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, for the Lord led a pure and unmarried life in virginity, was poor and without possessions. Likewise His Apostles also left everything, father and mother, wife and children, and they themselves followed after Christ, abandoning everything in the world (Matt. 19:27-29). Thus monks follow the teaching and counsel of Christ and are fervent for the life of the Apostles. They abandon all that is beautiful and charming in the world, the pride of life and the desire for all that is beautiful. They abandon marriage, merriment, and bodily repose and temporal wealth, and they themselves follow after Christ, taking up their cross: voluntary patience and poverty and virginity, wandering in the deserts and mountains (Heb. 11:38). Instead of radiant dwellings they live in dark caves, in dens and in the crevices of the earth. In place of wives and children they live with the beasts of the earth and the birds of heaven; instead of bright clothing and pleasant food and drink, a poor garment of hair, hunger and thirst for a little water; and instead of drinking and merriment, weeping and sighing and the shedding of tears. Their bed is the earth and their shelter heaven; this is their hair-woven cross of daily long-suffering. For this reason monks have hated the vanities of life and are not bound with worldly commerce, a wife, children and houses. They are not weighed down with wealth, so as to be able to serve the Lord more readily and to please God (II Tim. 2:4). Thus they choose the better blessedness because everyone who takes a wife takes care how to please her and the wife — the husband, but he who has no wife, takes care how to please His God and serve Him faithfully (I Cor. 7:32-33). Moreover, let it be known that to live with a wife is natural: this is how the beasts and pagans live; but to live in virginity and purity is above nature: this is an angelic work and the way of life of the holy Saints of God, who always labor for the Lord, as the Apostle says: If anyone fast and offer prayer, let him be separated from his wife for a time (I Cor 7:5). Monks, however, always abide in fasting and prayer, even unto death and accordingly, they have no wife. Even the Old Law commanded that those who present themselves before the Lord are to separate themselves from their wives (Ex. 19:14-15,22). Therefore, monks

keep themselves separate from women even unto death and thus labor for Him in purity, as His most intimate servants.

Now heretics may accuse monastics of disparaging marriage and food and use the Apostle's words against them, namely that the Spirit said that in the last time some will fall away from faith, hearkening to the teachings of demons, forbidding marriage and refusing the food which God created (I Tim. 4:1-5). But the Apostle wrote this prophecy about various heretics who will appear after us, and also of the Manicheans,* the Marcionites,** and the Ebionites*** abominable before God. Of these, the Manicheans believed in two different gods: a good god in heaven and another evil one on the earth, the ruler of the world. Misunderstanding the Apostle's words, they thus spread their cursed heresy — they scorned the food created on earth. But as for not eating meat and not drinking wine, this is not abuse but rather a form of abstinence. From the very beginning of the world until the time of the flood, meat was not eaten and wine was not drunk. And in the Law of Moses the Nazarites did not drink wine (Num. 6:2-3). As for vegetables and meat, they did not eat the meat of swine. Likewise Daniel and the three children scorned the meat dishes of Nebuchadnezzar the King (Dan. 1:5-15). Moses and Elias and the Lord Himself fasted, did not eat meat or drink wine for forty days and nights. And John the Baptist did not eat meat or drink wine throughout all the days of his life (St. Matt. 3:4; St. Luke 1:15). So tell me, O heretic, who now rebukes those who fast: do you mean to say that these men held to a demonic teaching? Yea, the whole world knows that they were filled with the Holy Spirit and thus refrained from good meat and wine and a wife. The ancient theologians tell the same of the Evangelist Matthew and James the son of Alphaeus, that they did not eat meat and did not drink wine during all the days of their life. Thereby they did not scorn the creation of God but they

* *Manicheans*: Perhaps the most "famous" of the Gnostic sects, Manicheism sought to combine Zoroastrianism with Christianity. It preached a strict ascetic life based on pagan, dualistic concepts. Its founder, Manes, claimed to be the Comforter promised by Christ.

** *Marcionites*: Founded by Marcion, who taught a slightly "Christian-colored" gnostic, dualistic pagan philosophy, world view and spirituality.

*** *Ebionites*: One of the sects of those holding to the Judiazar heresy, it denied the Divinity of Christ and proscribed a strict fulfillment of the Mosaic Law.

abstained, and by fasting they slew the sinful passions in their body. For fasting is a fearful thing for the demons, but beloved of God and a most venerable gift, as the fifth canon of the Council of Nicea testifies.

The order and law of true worshippers of God and fasters was laid down by the Apostles after the Ascension of the Lord, as Luke the Evangelist records in the Acts (Chapter 4). There was one heart and one soul in the multitude of those that believed in Jerusalem, for they sold all their possessions and held everything in common, except for their wives (Acts 4:32, 34-35). But Ananias and Sapphira agreed on a price and they died for hiding a part of the money and not holding everything in common (Acts 5:1-11). Therefore the Apostles urged and instructed some of the faithful young men of the people, that they live thus without wives in purity and voluntary poverty and obedience, steadfast unto death, being sworn with an oath and bound with a vow. Many then agreed to their counsel and lovingly accepted this sacred labor, and thus the Apostles instituted the monastic order, tonsuring their heads in Cenchrea (Acts 18:18), that is, for the pure unmarried life of elders. And Paul did the same, tonsuring four men (Acts 21:24) plus Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:18). But the tonsured were called not monastics, but servants of God, as the eighth disciple of the Holy Apostle Paul, Dionysius the Areopagite, testifies in writing to a certain monk Demophilos, calling him a servant of God and a slave who had surely cut off his own will and surrendered himself entirely to the will of God. Just as a slave is not free before his master, so a monk is never devoid of the work of God but labors for Him unceasingly day and night with praises, thanksgiving, intercession, chanting, vigil, fasting, and Divine meditation. For the work of a servant of the Lord is truly this: every virtue of Christian perfection, all the commandments and all the fulfillments of God in the monastic life, such as voluntary poverty, purity, obedience.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the reflection, the visible model of every virtue, the Teacher and the Light of perfection, the Source of purity. For He Himself lived in virginity and purity up to His voluntary death, and while hanging on the Cross He entrusted His most pure Virgin Mother to His virgin disciple (St. John 19:26-7). He Himself loved voluntary poverty. The wealthy God was born in a poor manger of a poor virgin; He lived in poverty in the world and did not have a place to lay down His head (St. Matt. 8:20); He

died poor, naked on the Cross, He that is clothed with light as with a garment. He lived in obedience, from His birth (St. Luke 2:51), being *obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross* (Phil. 2:8); and from this point obedience is laid down as law in the glorious Church of Christ by God Himself. And on these three virtues of Christian perfection monks make vows before God and bind themselves with an oath to purity and genuine virginity, to voluntary poverty and unfeigned obedience, and to the other virtues which are born of these primary ones.

The monastic life is divided into three parts or three types: first, the community (coenobitic); second, *the skete*; and third, solitary life in the desert [hermitic]. A fourth has also appeared in their midst; it is called the decadent: the self-willed who live like bandits, each having his own possessions and doing everything according to his own will [idiorythmic]. These live without any order and law, are hypocrites and not monks, as Cassian said. Even the well-ordered monks must adorn themselves with every virtue, with humility, sobriety, patience, love, fasting and prayer.

Wherefore I adjure the monastics: do not become the slaves of sloth and abomination, but labor for the Lord in fear and trembling, working out your salvation. Adorn your mind with Divine meditation, for this is the venerable work of monks, of those who are verily monastics. Do not love repose and sleep, but maintain fervent prayer in your mouths; seek not the perishable things of the temporal age, but the eternal things of the age to come. If you do these things, you will then be a true servant of God. And your Lord will say: *Where I am, there will My servant reign together with Me in the Glory of My Kingdom* (St. John 14:3), the which do Thou vouchsafe us all, O Christ our god, that there we may praise Thee, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Note: Particular gratitude is due to M. J. Featherstone, Holy Cross School of Theology, Brookline, MA., who provided us with his transcription from ff 46-57, MS Slav 485, Academi Romana, Bucharest, Romania, from which this translation was made. An abridged paraphrase of this work was published in: Chetverikov, Fr. Sergii, *Starets Paisii Velichkovskii*, translated by V. Lickwar and A. J. Lisenko, (Nordland, Belmont, MA., 1980), Appendix II, "A Sermon on the Monastic Tonsure," pp. 333-336.

Conclusion

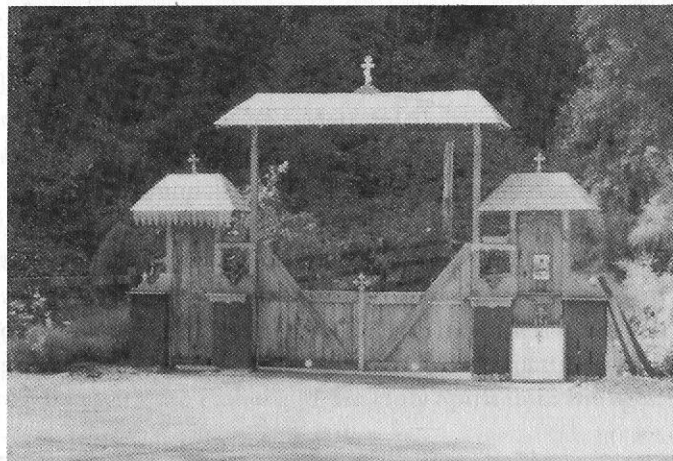
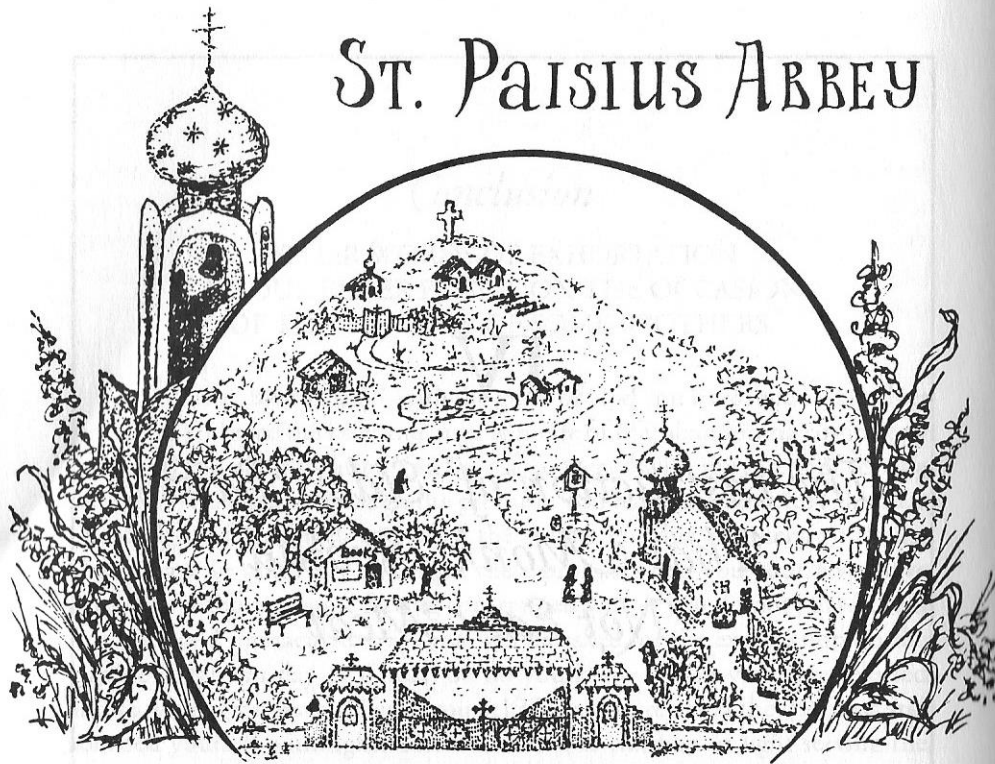
OTHER WORDS OF EXHORTATION OF OUR ELDER PAISIUS ON THE OCCASION OF THE TONSURE OF SOME BROTHERS.

HERE, BROTHERS, with the grace of God you have made yourselves worthy to embrace the holy and angelic mode of life, abandoning completely the world and all of its lusts. You have approached with the intent of serving our Lord Jesus Christ through the promises you have uttered before the altar in the sight of the angels and of all the Saints. For this, brothers, you must always have in mind day and night these promises that you yourselves have agreed to without anyone having constrained you. If you do not guard them in a pure and immaculate way, you will be asked for the explanation on the terrible judgment day of Christ. So do you know whom you have rejected and to whom you have adhered yourself? You have rejected the darkness and adorned yourself with light. Therefore walk as children of light serving the Lord in a manner that is irreproachable in all purity and truth. Serve the fathers as if it were Christ himself, not as men, so that you may be burning lamps for all people according to the word of our Lord which says: "Let your light so shine before men that they see your good works and render glory to your Father which is in heaven" (St. Matt. 5:16). Be imitators, in good works, of our Lord Jesus Christ and of all his Saints living in true obedience and in the most complete renunciation of your will (until death, as you have promised) serving him night and day in all patience, humility and meekness. So that the truthful promise can be fulfilled in you that our Lord Jesus Christ uttered in his Gospel with the words: "Where I am there shall also my servant be" (St. John 12:26). The Lord in his immense mercy has made you worthy of such a promise so that you may follow it in Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom be glory together with the Father and the Holy Spirit unto the ages. Amen.

IV

The Instruction of Elder Paisius That Monks Should Not Eat Meat

ST. PAISIUS ABBEY



Moldavian gates of the St. Paisius Abbey, Forestville, California.

The Instruction of Elder Paisius That Monks Should Not Eat Meat

AS IS KNOWN, Elder Paisius sent his disciples from Secu to Bucharest in order to study the Greek language. To two such disciples, Dorotheos and Gerontius, the elder, sending some money, wrote a letter of warning because they were being persuaded, with the blessing of a bishop, to eat meat. The elder wrote to them thus:

"It seems to me that, in accordance with the correct understanding and ordinance of the Holy Orthodox Church, one should not obey even an Angel in this matter. After the Flood the Lord, because of human weakness, permitted the eating of meat, but the order of monastic life corresponds to the life in Paradise, where there was no eating of meat. And although at the beginning of monastic life there was in places a falling away from this order, especially in large cities, nevertheless St. Sabbas the Sanctified confirmed the non-eating of meat; and such has become the general order in all lands. Therefore, one cannot say that the non-eating of meat is only a local custom; and this cannot be left to the free choice of everyone, and it is not true that abstaining from meat harms the health. One should not be put under constraint by those who eat meat, but one must please God rather than men; and those who tempt you, when they see your firmness, will themselves praise you." The Elder referred his disciples to the work of the Elder Basil of Merlopoliany on the monastic tradition of not eating meat,* and reminded them that the brethren of the monastery and the desert-dwellers would be scandalized and grieved if they knew that these brothers had begun to eat meat.**

* Slavonic text of this work in the Optina Life of Blessed Paisius, pp. 134-157.

** This paragraph is from Chetverikov, vol. II, pp. 45-46.

❧ EPILOGUE ❧

A TEACHING

By the Most Blessed SIMEON,
Archbishop of Thessalonica

*That All Christians, Clergy, Monks, and Laymen,
Are Obligated to Pray with*

THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST

According to Their Ability

LET EVERY PIOUS MAN continually repeat this Name as a Prayer in his mind and with his tongue. Let him always constrain himself to do this while standing, travelling, sitting, resting, speaking, and doing all things. Then he shall find great peace and joy, as those who have occupied themselves with it know from experience. This activity is both for those in worldly life and for those monks who are in the midst of turmoil. Each one must strive to occupy himself with this Prayer, even if to a limited extent only. All, clergy, monks and laymen, must have this Prayer as a guide, practicing it according to their ability.

The monks are dedicated, and have an indispensable obligation to do this even though they are in labors which are in the midst of turmoil. They must constrain themselves to say the Prayer constantly, praying to the Lord unceasingly (I Thess. 5:17), even though they are wandering in thoughts and in the midst of that confusion which is called "captivity of the mind." They must not be neglectful because their thoughts are stolen by the enemy, but must return to the Prayer, rejoicing.

The clergy must be diligent in this Prayer as though it were apostolic work and Divine preaching, as the one activity which brings about Divine effects — one which demonstrates the love of Christ.



The main church of Secu Monastery, dedicated to the Beheading of
St. John the Baptist, celebrated August 29.

Let those who are in the world work at this as a sealing of themselves, a sign of their faith, a protector, sanctification, and expeller of every temptation.

All Christians, clergy, laity, and monks, when rising from sleep must first think of and remember Christ. They must offer this remembrance to Christ as a sacrifice and first-fruits of every thought (Hebrews 13:15). For we must remember, before every thought, Christ Who saved us and has loved us so greatly, for we are, and are called, "*Christians*." We put Him on by Divine Baptism (Gal. 3:27), and we were sealed with His Chrism. We have partaken, and do partake, of His holy Body and Blood. We are His members (I Cor. 12:27) and His temple (II Cor. 6:16). Him do we put on, and He dwells in us. For this reason we are obliged to love Him and remember Him always. Wherefore, let everyone devote time, according to his ability, and have a certain amount of this Prayer as an obligation. And this suffices concerning this matter, for this is a sufficient amount of instruction for those who seek concerning it.

Translated from volume V of the Greek Philokalia

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