



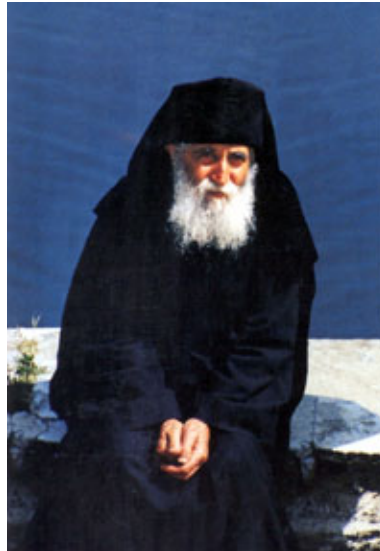
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The humble are like nightingales that hide in ravines and spread joy to the souls of men with their sweet songs.

We mustn't despair when we struggle and continuously see nothing but the slightest progress. We all do nearly nothing, some a little more, some a little less. When Christ sees our little effort He gives us an analogous token and so our nearly nothing becomes valuable and we can see a little progress. For this reason we mustn't despair, but hope in God.

Unfortunately, in our days, there are many people who upset the mother Church. Of these, those that are educated have understood dogma with their minds and not with the spirit of the Holy Fathers. At the same time, those who are unlettered have grabbed hold of dogma with their teeth, which is why they grind their teeth when they speak about ecclesiastical topics. In this way, greater harm is caused by those in the Church than by those who battle it from without.

That which is asked of every Orthodox person is to instill a "good uneasiness" into the heterodox, that they might understand that they are in delusion. This is so they will not falsely calm their conscience and thus be deprived in this life of the rich blessings of Orthodoxy and in the life to come of the even greater and eternal blessings of God.

The person who is possessed by material things is always subjugated to unhappiness and anxiety, for on the one hand he trembles for fear that they take his things away from him, while on the other he trembles for fear that his soul be taken from him. Now, the miser whose hand is sore from his tight hold on things, also squeezed his own heart, and turned it into stone. In order for him to be healed, he must visit unhappy people, to suffer, so he will be forced to open his hand slowly, slowly, and his heart of stone will also start to soften. It will become a human heart and in this way the gates of Paradise will also open.

When a monk doesn't find spiritual work, he cannot be helped even by his elder, and spends his time with external things. He becomes spiritually wild and, even if he was to be tied down in his cell, he could not sit still. He will always enjoy contact with people, to give tours, to speak about the domes and archeology [of the monastery], to show them the pots with various flowers, to treat them to rich, worldly meals, and to give rest only to worldly people.

The monk flees far from the world, not because he detests the world, but because he loves the world and in this

way he is better able to help the world through his prayer, in things that don't happen humanly but only through divine intervention. In this way God saves the world.

The monk is helped greatly when the monastery is far from the world, far from archeological areas and worldly noises. Even monasteries that are great sites of pilgrimage lose sight of their true goal, for many times from being a monastery they end up as a business. For this reason some bishops, very rightly, would like to have these sites, for monastics must love poverty, which they were ordered by God to preserve. Unfortunately, however, they do not limit themselves to the necessary, the simple, as much for themselves as, more generally, for the monastery. Nor do they refuse things from the faithful, or encourage them to help, on their own, our poor, suffering brethren. But what do they do instead? They gather the sweat even of the poor and fill the monastery with a huge amount of oil lamps and bells, thinking that God is glorified in this way. This type of piety, however, is like the piety which many Russian clerics had who became the cause, though they didn't intend it, of the oil lamps, chandeliers and bells being made into cannons so as to hit the very Church of Christ.

When an elder doesn't have much experience, but has a great deal of love and much humility, he is able to help his spiritual children by means of the guidance of more experienced elders, as well as by the grace of God, which he continually receives due to his great humility. However, the young cleric who gathers young people as his disciples reveals his great pride, which he has down to the marrow of his bones. He is like a baby born with a beard-a monster-and those that follow him reveal that they have an ailment of the brain or heart. Also, those clerics who study psychology so as to help souls using human contrivances are not spiritually well. The strange thing is that their teachers of psychology don't believe in God or in the existence of the soul. If they accept the soul's existence, they do so in their own unique way. In this way these clerics show that they are spiritually sick and that they need to be examined by the Holy Fathers. Having been healed, they would be able to discern, on their own, the sick spirit and would experience divine grace at the same time. Thus from that time forth they would use the divine energy for those suffering souls and not human contrivances.

Those who rush to be made spiritual fathers, though they still have many spiritual toxins, are like unripe, sour quince, which, as much sugar as we may pour on, never becomes a nice sweet; but, even if it does, it quickly gets sour.' Sweet words and great truths have value when they come from genuine mouths, and are received only by those souls that are well-disposed and by those great people who have a pure mind.

One word of a humble and [spiritually] experienced man that is painfully born from the depths of his heart has greater worth than a bunch of clever sayings of an external man that come out quickly from his educated mouth. His words don't speak truth to the souls of men, for they are fleshly words and not the flames of the fire of Pentecost.

If a passionate man tries to correct an egotist, steel hits flint and fires are ignited! If he tries to correct a sensitive person, he hurts him greatly. It would be like a wild man taking a thick wire brush to clean out a little mucus from a baby's eye.

What a wonderful thing it will be when we know ourselves! Then humility will be for us a state of being, and God will position us well with His divine gifts. Then the spiritual laws will cease working, and the one who rises the highest will humble himself, for we will all walk low, we won't fall and we will continually receive the grace of God which is given to the humble.

Holy asceticism, together with its great self-denial, which is born from great faith in a burst of love for God, brings man to true joy. He is happy to live, for his heart flutters, glorifying his God of benefactions. He is also happy to die, for he thus goes close to God again, and will continue there his doxology.

Virtue has the habit of betraying man, wherever he may hide. Though he may act as a fool-for-Christ,' still he will be betrayed, though it may be later on, and he will help many souls.

The goal of reading is the application, in our lives, of what we read. Not to learn it by heart, but to take it to heart. Not to practice using our tongues, but to be able to receive the tongues of fire and to live the mysteries of God. If one studies a great deal in order to acquire knowledge and to teach others, without living the things he teaches, he does no more than fill his head with hot air. At most he will manage to ascend to the moon using machines. The goal of the Christian is to rise to God without machines.

Let us not expect the spiritual spring if we don't first pass through the spiritual winter during which the spiritual

vermin die. We mustn't expect the divine to blossom within us if the human hasn't first died.

Costly (fervent) love, which sacrifices itself and does not partake of the world, is itself consumed by the love of God from within. The life of man is then a continuous Lent and all of his days are a continuous joy of light. Costly love for God, with its sacrifices sweetens the heart to boiling, and divine love, which cannot be held in, like steam, soars and so unites to God. This state of spiritual madness not only takes man out of himself, but even the heart is taken from the flesh, that is, from the fleshly desires, and is clothed completely in, and refined in God.

Those who constantly partake of the love of God are often indifferent to material nourishment. Or, if they eat, they don't taste the food, for even then they continue to feel God intensely and to partake of the sweet blessing of His love. When the heart becomes a furnace through the love of God, it is then able to burn up all vanity that approaches, and this brings internal peace when man passes through the fiery trials of his life.

There are no people more blessed than those who have made contact with the "heavenly television station" and who are piously connected to God. In the same way, no people are more wretched than those who have cut contact with God and wander, dizzy, around the world, flipping through the world's many television stations so as to forget, if only for a short time, the anguish of the derailment of their lives.

It is very helpful to read a bit of the Gerontikon before beginning to pray. Then your heart will warm up, the lid will come down on your many worldly cares, and you will be able to pray without distraction.

In the hour of prayer, when our mind wanders to thoughts of bad things, or if these thoughts come without our wanting them, we shouldn't wage an offensive war against the enemy, because, even if all the lawyers in the world joined together, they wouldn't make any headway with a little demon. Only through ignoring them can one chase these thoughts away. The same is true for blasphemous thoughts.

If you want to grab God's attention so He'll hear you during prayer, turn the dial to humility, for God always works in this frequency; then humbly ask for His mercy.

My brother, don't ask for anything in prayer except for repentance. Repentance will bring you humility, humility will bring you the grace of God, and God will uphold you in His grace and will give you whatever you need for your own salvation as well as whatever is needed, should the case arise, for you to help another soul in need.

When man is spiritually healthy and distances himself from other people, so as to better help them through his prayers, then he regards all people as holy and only himself does he regard as a sinner.

If we haven't got control of our mind during the hour of spiritual study we are not benefited at all. We simply yawn and tire ourselves without a goal, for we cannot remember anything. In the same way, when the printer doesn't have his mind on his work and forgets to put ink in, the printing presses work without printing anything.

All evil begins in the mind, when it is interested only in science. Scientists don't find their inner peace and their balance then. However, when their minds are attached to God, scientists use their science to cultivate their inner world and to help the world, for their minds are sanctified.

The mind, when it begins to spend time near God, oftentimes forgets, not only its dwelling, but even this dwelling of the soul, this earthen flesh.

In all things we must put forth good thoughts and refuse to accept evil telegrams" if we want to purify our heart and change the evil machines of the heart into good machines; then gold will be turned into holy chalices and broken bells into chandeliers.' Even discarded paper will be turned into fresh napkins. When, however, the heart is evil and it views good gold as bronze, it will make it into bullets and cannonballs.

Oh, blessed desert by which created man is so greatly helped to be reconciled with his Creator, and is transformed into an earthly Paradise - as you gather once again the wild animals around the person you tamed!

As much as is possible, love the desert and the immaterial life, and fly from your material possessions to the fold of the poor. Simplify your life so as to be freed from worldly anxiety, so that your life might have meaning.

Conscience is the first law of God, which He carved deeply into the hearts of the first-created. In turn we each make a photocopy from our parents when we're born. Those who manage to heighten their sense of conscience

through daily study of themselves feel themselves to be foreigners in this world, and worldly people are baffled by their gracious behavior. Those who haven't studied their conscience benefit neither from their spiritual studies nor from counsels from their elders. They won't even be able to keep God's commandments, for they have lost their senses altogether.

The soft life makes people useless. Without toil and struggle sanctification doesn't come.

When one realizes one's sinfulness and the great mercy of God, the heart cracks, as hard as it may be, and real tears fall of themselves and then man prays and weeps without effort. This is because humility works continuously together with *philotimo* and drills on the heart so that the springs increase, and the hand of God continually strokes the hard-working and *philotimo* child.

Let us struggle with all our powers to gain Paradise. The gate is very narrow, and don't listen to those who say that everyone will be saved. This is a trap of satan so that we won't struggle.

Christ is wholly love, goodness and consolation, and never suffocates. He has an abundance of spiritual oxygen.

[God allows temptations] so as to dust off our soul, for it to be purified through sorrows and weeping, so that we are forced to take refuge in God for our salvation.

Theology is the word of God that is comprehended by pure, humble and spiritually reborn souls. It is not the beautiful words of the mind which are formed with philological artistry and which are expressed with the juridical or worldly spirit. Created words can't speak to man's soul, just as a beautiful statue is not able to speak, unless the audience is very worldly and is satisfied simply by beautiful words. Theology that is taught as a [worldly] science usually examines things historically and consequently understands things externally. Because patristic asceticism and inner experience are absent, this theology is full of doubts and questions. With his mind man is not able to comprehend the divine energies unless he first struggles ascetically to live these energies, so that the grace of God might work within him.

Children contract their first spiritual colds from the open windows of their parents' senses. The mother passes on her cold especially when she is not modestly dressed and scandalizes her children with her behavior.

The holy life of parents instructs the souls of their children and so they naturally obey them and grow up with piety and without psychological problems, and the children are pleased with their parents. The parents are gladdened by their children in this life and in life eternal, where they will once again glory in them.

Whoever is at peace in the material world and is not concerned about the salvation of his soul is like the senseless birds who don't make a noise from within the egg, so as to break the shell and come out to enjoy the sun-the heavenly flight in the life of Paradise-but instead remain unmoving and die inside the egg shell.

The pretense of worldly politeness is very harmful, for it fools one and opens one's heart to the worldly person, and in the final analysis it wastes one's piety, for the worldly person doesn't know what piety is. It's like giving golden pounds to people that only know bronze pennies.

Blows are necessary for the salvation of our souls, for they cleanse the soul. The more one hits and rubs clothing, the better it is cleaned. Similarly, the more one hits octopus and cuttlefish, the more they are softened and washed from ink.

Live in constant glorification of and thanksgiving towards God, for the greatest sin is ingratitude and the worst sinner is the ungrateful person.

At the beginning of the spiritual life, out of love, God doesn't allow anyone to realize either his sinfulness or the many benefactions that He bestows on him, so as to keep him from despair, especially if he is sensitive.

Those who are in the world must not despair when they are overcome by many passions, and when their nature is unruly and races passionately downwards. Rather, they must trust in the almighty power of God and turn the steering wheel of their powerful engine back onto the road toward God, upwards. Soon after they will pass other, slow-moving cars, which for years have been driving the road toward God.

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