

Healing from Lust 2

John of Chrysostom's Instructions to the Catechumens

Here is an excerpt from St. John Chrysostom's instruction to catechumens on how the laver of regeneration, that is baptism helps heal us from lust.

Such is the defilement from which the laver of the Jews cleansed. But the laver of grace, not such, but the real uncleanness which has introduced defilement into the soul as well as into the body. For it does not make those who have touched dead bodies clean, but those who have set their hand to dead works: and if any man be effeminate, or a fornicator, or an idolater, or a doer of whatever ill you please, or if he be full of all the wickedness there is among men: should he fall into this pool of waters, he comes up again from the divine fountain purer than the sun's rays. And in order that thou mayest not think that what is said is mere vain boasting, hear Paul speaking of the power of the laver, "Be not deceived: neither idolaters, nor fornicators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, nor covetous, not drunkards, not revilers, not extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God." And what has this to do with what has been spoken? says one, "for prove the question whether the power of the laver thoroughly cleanses all these things." Hear therefore what follows: "And such were some of you, but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the spirit of our God." We promise to show you that they who approach the laver become clean from all fornication: but the word has shown more, that they have become not only clean, but both holy and just, for it does not say only "ye were washed," but also "ye were sanctified and were justified." What could be more strange than this, when without toil, and exertion, and good works, righteousness is produced? For such is the lovingkindness of the Divine gift that it makes men just without this exertion. For if a letter of the Emperor, a few words being added, sets free those who are liable to countless accusations, and brings others to the highest honors; much rather will the Holy Spirit of God, who is able to do all things, free us from all evil and grant us much righteousness, and fill us with much assurance, and as a spark falling into the wide sea would straightway be quenched, or would become invisible, being overwhelmed by the multitude of the waters, so also all human wickedness, when it falls into the pool of the divine fountain, is more swiftly and easily overwhelmed, and made invisible, than that spark. And for what reason, says one, if the laver take away all our sins, is it called, not a laver of remission of sins, nor a laver of cleansing, but a laver of regeneration? Because it does not simply take away our sins, nor simply cleanse us from our faults, but so as if we were born again. For it creates and fashions us anew not forming us again out of earth, but creating us out of another element, namely, of the nature of water. For it does not simply wipe the vessel clean, but entirely remolds it again. For that which is wiped clean, even if it be cleaned with care, has traces of its former condition, and bears the remains of its defilement, but that which falls into the new mould, and is renewed by means of the flames, laying aside all uncleanness, comes forth from the furnace, and sends forth the same brilliancy with things newly formed. As therefore any one who takes and recasts a golden statue which has been tarnished by time, smoke, dust, rust, restores it to us thoroughly cleansed and glistening: so too this nature of ours, rusted with the rust of sin, and having gathered much smoke from our faults, and having lost its beauty, which He had from the beginning bestowed upon it from himself, God has taken and cast anew, and throwing it into the waters as into a mould, and instead of fire sending forth the grace of the Spirit, then brings us forth with much brightness, renewed, and made afresh, to rival the beams of the sun, having crushed the old man, and having fashioned a new man, more brilliant than the former.

St. John Chrysostom: "Instructions to Catechumens." translated with introduction, and notes by Rev. W. R. W. Stephens, M.A., Prebendary of Chichester, and Rector of Woolbeding, Sussex. assisted by Rev T. P. Brandram, M.A., Rector of Rumboldswyke, Chichester.

St. John Chrysostom on Lewd Songs and Lustful looking from his Second Instruction to Catechumens.

"For is it not monstrous, after this mystic voice is borne from heaven—I mean the voice of the Cherubim—to defile thy hearing with lewd songs, and dissolute melodies? and does it not deserve the utmost punishment if, with the same eyes with which thou lookest upon the unspeakable and dread mysteries, thou lookest upon harlots, and dost commit adultery in thy heart."

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Sts. Barsanuphius and John: Combating the Sexual Passions

The passion of lust is dealt with by two Desert Fathers of sixth century Palestine, Sts. Barsanuphius and John.

The question of Abba Dorotheus to the Great Elder:

-- Q: I am being strongly attacked by sexual passion; I am afraid that I may fall into despondency, and that from the infirmity of my body I will not be able to restrain myself; pray for me, for the Lord's sake, and tell me, my Father, what I should do?

A: Brother! The devil, out of envy, has raised up warfare against you. Guard your eyes and do not eat until you are full. Take a little wine for the sake of the body's infirmity of which you speak. And acquire humility, which rends all the nets of the enemy. And I, who am nothing, will do what I can, entreating God that He might deliver you from every temptation and preserve you from every evil. Do not yield to the enemy, O brother, and do not give yourself over to despondency, for this is a great joy to the enemy. Pray without ceasing, saying: "Lord Jesus Christ, deliver me from shameful passions," and God will have mercy on you, and you will receive strength by the prayers of the Saints. Amen.

-- Q: The same brother, being attacked by the same sexual passion, asked the same Great Elder to pray for him and to tell him how to distinguish whether a man is being tempted by his own lusts or by the enemy.

A: Brother! Without labor and contrition of heart no one can be delivered from passions and please God. When a man is tempted by his own lust, this may be known from the fact that he is careless about himself and allows his heart to reflect about what he has done before; and then a man himself draws passion unto himself through his own lust. His mind, being little by little blinded by passion, begins, unnoticeably for himself, to pay attention to someone for whom he feels attraction, or to speak with him, and he finds occasions on which to converse with him or to sit with him, and by all means he strives to fulfill his desire. If one allows thoughts to pay heed in this, warfare will increase until a fall, albeit not in body but in spirit, in agreement with thoughts; and it turns that such a man lights the fire himself in his own substance. But a sober and prudent man who desires to be saved, when he sees from what it is that he suffers harm, carefully preserves himself from evil remembrances, is not drawn into passionate thoughts, avoids meetings and conversations with those for whom he feels attraction and avoids every occasion for sin, fearing lest he himself ignite a fire within himself. This is the warfare which proceeds from one's own lust, which a man brings on himself . . .

Tame your steed with the bridle of knowledge, lest, looking here and there, he become inflamed with lust towards women and men and throw you, the horseman, to the ground. Pray to God, that He may turn "your eyes, lest they see vanity" (Psalms 118:37). And when you will acquire a manful heart, warfare will depart from you. Cleanse yourself, as wine cleanses wounds, and do not allow stench and filthiness to accumulate in you. Acquire weeping, so that it might remove from you freedom (looseness) in your relations, which destroys the souls that adopt it. Do not throw away the implement without which fertile land cannot be worked. This implement, made by the Great God, is humility: it uproots all the tares from the field of the Master and gives grace to those who dwell in it. Humility does not fall, but raises from a fall those who possess it. Love weeping with all your heart, for it also is a participant in this good work. Labor in everything to cut off your own will, for this is accounted to a man for sacrifice. This is what is meant by: "For Thee we are mortified all the day, we are accounted as sheep for slaughter" (Psalms 43:22). Do not weaken yourselves by conversations, for they will not allow you to prosper in God. Firmly bridle the organs of your senses: sight, hearing, smelling, taste, and feeling, and you will prosper by the grace of Christ. Without tortures no one is a martyr, as the Lord also has said: "In your patience possess ye your souls" (Luke 21:19), and the Apostle says, "in much endurance, in sorrows" (II Corinthians 6:4).

-- Q: Pray for me, my Father, I am very much disturbed by thoughts of sexual sin, despondency, and fear; and a thought says to me that I should converse with a brother to whom I feel attracted when I see him, lest by my silence I give him occasion for suspicion. I feel likewise that the demons are somehow pressing me, and I fall into fear.

A: Brother! You are not yet instructed in warfare with the enemy, which is why there come to you thoughts of fear, despondency, and sexual sin. Stand against them with a firm heart, for combatants, unless they labor, are not crowned, and warriors, unless they show the King their skill in battles, do not become worthy of honors. Remember what David was like. Do you not also sing: "Test me, O Lord, and try me, kindle my inwards parts and my heart" (Psalms 25:2). And again: "If a regiment arm itself against me, I will hope in Him" (Psalms 26:3). Likewise, concerning fear: "For if I should go in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me" (Psalms 22:4). And concerning despondency: "If the spirit of the powerful one should come upon thee, do not leave thy place" (Ecclesiastes 10:4).

Do you not wish to be skilled? But a man who is not tested by temptations is not skilled. It is battles that make a man skilled. The work of a monk consists of enduring battles and opposing them with manfulness of heart. But since you do not know the cunning traps of the enemy, he brings thoughts of fear and weakens your heart. You must know that God will not allow against you battles and temptations above your strength; the Apostle also teaches this, saying: "Faithful is the Lord, Who will not leave you to be tempted more than you can bear" (I Corinthians 10:13).

Brother! I also in my youth was many times and powerfully tempted by the demon of sexual sin, and I labored against such thoughts, contradicting them and not agreeing with them, but presenting before my own eyes eternal tortures. For five years I acted thus every day, and God relieved me of these thoughts. This warfare is abolished by unceasing prayer with weeping.

And the fact that the demons are pressing you proceeds from their envy; if they could, they would chase you out of your cell also; but God does not allow them to take possession of you, for they do not have authority for this. God could swiftly relieve you, but then you would not begin to oppose another passion (when it comes). May the demons not weaken you so as to turn your attention to a brother (to whom you are attracted), or to converse with him; but if you should happen unexpectedly to come together with him, against your desire, restrain your glance with fear and decency and do not listen attentively to his voice. And if this brother, out of ignorance, should himself begin to speak with you or sit next to you, then skillfully avoid him, but not suddenly, rather with decorum. Say to your thought: "Remember the terrible Judgment of God and the shame which will then overtake those who are attracted by these shameful passions." Compel your thought, and you will receive help, by the prayers of the Saints, and God will have mercy on you. Do not be a child in mind, "but a child in malice" (I Corinthians 14:20); in mind, O brother, be perfect. Pay heed to yourself, as to how you will meet God. Amen.

-- If you wish to be delivered from shameful passions, do not behave with anyone familiarly, especially with those toward whom your heart is inclined by a lustful passion; through this you will be delivered also from vainglory. For in vainglory is involved the pleasing of men, in the pleasing of men is involved familiarity of behavior, and familiarity of behavior is the mother of all passions.

-- Q: What should I do, my Father? I suffer from sexual passion.

A: As much as you can, wear yourself out, but according to your strength; and have hope not in this, but in love from God and in His protection, and do not give yourself over to despondency, for despondency serves as the beginning of every evil.

-- Q: What do the words you have spoken mean: "See to it, lest you be drawn away by a thought of sexual sin?"

-- A: This happens not only with regard to sexual passion, but in other cases also. The mind is subjected to this as a consequence of distraction, and when this happens a man should cry out to himself, saying: "O Lord! Forgive me for the sake of Thy holy Name; I have been subjected to this for my negligence. Deliver me from distraction and from every net of the enemy; for Thine is the glory unto the ages. Amen." And let the following be for you the sign by which you may know that you are drawn away: if one is speaking with others and his mind is distracted here and there, it happens that when he speaks of one thing his thought passes over to something else; this is what it is to be drawn away. Likewise, if anyone is doing something and passes over in thought to something else; in his forgetfulness he either ruins what he is doing or does something more than necessary, and this is likewise (a case of) being drawn away. In the same way a sexual thought draws us away. It happens that one is conversing with another, and if the enemy succeeds in drawing his mind away from God-pleasing sobriety, then, as a consequence of distraction, a sexual desire appears in the mind. And this is likewise a drawing away, because it has happened not from reflection or remembrance, but a man is drawn away by it out of forgetfulness. And such a one is like a traveller who, by reason of grief that comes upon him, goes away from the straight road and finds himself on another road. But coming back to himself, a man should call out to himself, according to what has been said above, and hasten to God's mercy. The Lord is merciful and will accept him like the prodigal son; we know with what mercifulness He accepted the latter. But when this warfare arises in the mind even without distraction, one must be sober, not take enjoyment of such thoughts, no tarry in them, but all the sooner hasten to God the Master. END

from "Saints Barsanuphius and John: Guidance Toward Spiritual Life," trans. by Fr. Seraphim Rose, (Platina, California: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1990), pp. 71 - 76, 113, 126-127 (selections).

St. John Climacus on Chastity in his work, The Ladder of Divine Ascent

Offer to the Lord the weakness of your nature, fully acknowledging your own powerlessness, and imperceptibly you will receive the gift of chastity. from St. John Climacus, The Ladder of Divine Ascent, Step 15

Satiety in food is the father of fornication; but affliction of the stomach is an agent of purity. From St. John Climacus, "The Ladder of Divine Ascent," Step 14.

There is a passionate person more passionate than the passionate, and he will even confess his pollutions with pleasure and enjoyment. St. John Climacus, "The Ladder of Divine Ascent," Step 15

St. John Cassian on The Conferences

CHAPTER XIII.

The answer concerning the trampling down of shame, and the danger of one without contrition.

MOSES: Just as all young men are not alike in fervour of spirit nor equally instructed in learning and good morals, so too we cannot find that all old men are equally perfect and excellent. For the true riches of old men are not to be measured by grey hairs but by their diligence in youth and the rewards of their past labours. "For," says one, "the things that thou hast not gathered in thy youth, how shall thou find them in thy old age?" "For venerable old age is not that of long time, nor counted by the number of years: but the understanding of a man is grey hairs, and a spotless life is old age."¹⁰⁴ And therefore we are not to follow in the steps or embrace the traditions and advice of every old man whose head is covered with grey hairs, and whose age is his sole claim to respect, but only of those whom we find to have distinguished themselves in youth in an approved and praiseworthy manner, and to have been trained up not on self-assurance but on the traditions of the

Elders. For there are some, and unhappily they form the majority, who pass their old age in a lukewarmness which they contracted in youth, and in sloth, and so obtain authority not from the ripeness of their character but simply from the number of their years. Against whom that reproof of the Lord is specially aimed by the prophet: "Strangers have devoured his strength and he knew it not: yea, grey hairs also are spread about upon him, and he is ignorant of it." [105](#) These men, I say, are not pointed out as examples to youth from the uprightness of their lives, nor from the strictness of their profession, which would be worthy of praise and imitation, but simply from the number of their years; and so the subtle enemy uses their grey hairs to deceive the younger men, by a wrongful appeal to their authority, and endeavours in his cunning craftiness to upset and deceive by their example those who might have been urged into the way of perfection by their advice or that of others; and drags them down by means of their teaching and practice either into a baneful indifference, or into deadly despair. And as I want to give you an instance of this, I will tell you a fact which may supply us with some wholesome teaching, without giving the name of the actor, lest we might be guilty of something of the same kind as the man who published abroad the sins of the brother which had been disclosed to him. When this one, who was not the laziest of young men, had gone to an old man, whom we know very well, for the sake of the profit and health of his soul, and had candidly confessed that he was troubled by carnal appetites and the spirit of fornication, fancying that he would receive from the old man's words consolation for his efforts, and a cure for the wounds inflicted on him, the old man attacked him with the bitterest reproaches, and called him a miserable and disgraceful creature, and unworthy of the name of monk, while he could be affected by a sin and lust of this character, and instead of helping him so injured him by his reproaches that he dismissed him from his cell in a state of hopeless despair and deadly despondency. And when he, oppressed with such a sorrow, was plunged in deep thought, no longer how to cure his passion, but how to gratify his lust, the Abbot Apollos, [106](#) the most skilful of the Elders, met him, and seeing by his looks and gloominess his trouble and the violence of the assault which he was secretly revolving in his heart, asked him the reason of this upset; and when he could not possibly answer the old man's gentle inquiry, the latter perceived more and more clearly that it was not without reason that he wanted to hide in silence the cause of a gloom so deep that he could not conceal it by his looks, and so began to ask him still more earnestly the reasons for his hidden grief. And by this he was forced to confess that he was on his way to a village to take a wife, and leave the monastery and return to the world, since, as the old man had told him, he could not be a monk, if he was unable to control the desires of the flesh and to cure his passion. And then the old man smoothed him down with kindly consolation, and told him that he himself was daily tried by the same pricks of desire and lust, and that therefore he ought not to give way to despair, nor be surprised at the violence of the attack of which he would get the better not so much by zealous efforts, as by the mercy and grace of the Lord; and he begged him to put off his intention just for one day, and having implored him to return to his cell, went as fast as he could to the monastery of the above mentioned old man-- and when he had drawn near to him he stretched forth his hands and prayed with tears, and said "O Lord, who alone art the righteous judge and unseen Physician of secret strength and human weakness, turn the assault from the young man upon the old one, that he may learn to condescend to the weakness of sufferers, and to sympathize even in old age with the frailties of youth." And when he had ended his prayer with tears, he sees a filthy Ethiopian standing over against his cell and aiming fiery darts at him, with which he was straightway wounded, and came out of his cell and ran about hither and thither like a lunatic or a drunken man, and going in and out could no longer restrain himself in it, but began to hurry off in the same direction in which the young man had gone. And when Abbot Apollos saw him like a madman driven wild by the furies, he knew that the fiery dart of the devil which he had seen, had been fixed in his heart, and had by its intolerable heat wrought in him this mental aberration and confusion of the understanding; and so he came up to him and asked "Whither are you hurrying, or what has made you forget the gravity of years and disturbed you in this childish way, and made you hurry about so rapidly"? And when he owing to his guilty conscience and confused by this disgraceful excitement fancied that the lust of his heart was discovered, and, as the secrets of his heart were known to the old man, did not venture to return

any answer to his inquiries, "Return," said he, "to your cell, and at last recognize the fact that till now you have been ignored or despised by the devil, and not counted in the number of those with whom he is daily roused to fight and struggle against their efforts and earnestness,--you who could not--I will not say ward off, but not even postpone for one day, a single dart of his aimed at you after so many years spent in this profession of yours. And with this the Lord has suffered you to be wounded that you may at least learn in your old age to sympathize with infirmities to which you are a stranger, and may know from your own case and experience how to condescend to the frailties of the young, though when you received a young man troubled by an attack from the devil, you did not encourage him with any consolation, but gave him up in dejection and destructive despair into the hands of the enemy, to be, as far as you were concerned, miserably destroyed by him. But the enemy would certainly never have attacked him with so fierce an onslaught, with which he has up till now scorned to attack you, unless in his jealousy at the progress he was to make, he had endeavoured to get the better of that virtue which he saw lay in his disposition, and to destroy it with his fiery darts, as he knew without the shadow of a doubt that he was the stronger, since he deemed it worth his while to attack him with such vehemence. And so learn from your own experience to sympathize with those in trouble, and never to terrify with destructive despair those who are in danger, nor harden them with severe speeches, but rather restore them with gentle and kindly consolations, and as the wise Solomon says, "Spare not to deliver those who are led forth to death, and to redeem those who are to be slain,"[107](#) and after the example of our Saviour, break not the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax,[108](#) and ask of the Lord that grace, by means of which you yourself may faithfully learn both in deed and power to sing: "the Lord hath given me a learned tongue that I should know how to uphold by word him that is weary:"[109](#) for no one could bear the devices of the enemy, or extinguish or repress those carnal fires which burn with a sort of natural flame, unless God's grace assisted our weakness, or protected and supported it. And therefore, as the reason for this salutary incident is over, by which the Lord meant to set that young man free from dangerous desires and to teach you something of the violence of their attack, and of the feeling of compassion, let us together implore Him in prayer, that He may be pleased to remove that scourge, which the Lord thought good to lay upon you for your good (for "He maketh sorry and cureth: he striketh and his hands heal. He humbleth and exalteth, he killeth and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up")[110](#), and may extinguish with the abundant dew of His Spirit the fiery darts of the devil, which at my desire He allowed to wound you. And although the Lord removed this temptation at a single prayer of the old man with the same speed with which He had suffered it to come upon him, yet He showed by a clear proof that a man's faults when laid bare were not merely not to be scolded, but that the grief of one in trouble ought not to be lightly despised. And therefore never let the clumsiness or shallowness of one old man or of a few deter you and keep you back from that life-giving way, of which we spoke earlier, or from the tradition of the Elders, if our crafty enemy makes a wrongful use of their grey hairs in order to deceive younger men: but without any cloak of shame everything should be disclosed to the Elders, and remedies for wounds be faithfully received from them together with examples of life and conversation: from which we shall find like help and the same sort of result, if we try to do nothing at all on our own responsibility and judgment.

St. John of the Ladder on freedom from impurity

All things are possible for them that believeth,[\[1\]](#) said the Lord. I have seen impure souls raving madly about physical love; but making their experience of such love a reason for repentance, they transferred the same love to the Lord; and, overcoming all fear, they spurred themselves insatiably on to the love of God. That is why the Lord does not say of that chaste harlot; "Because she feared," but: "because she loved much,[\[2\]](#) and could easily expel love by love."

All things are possible for them that believeth. Believing is the condition for all things being possible. When asked what is the work that we should do, Jesus replied that our work is to "believe on Him who sent me." I need to believe that God will set me from these unhealthy feelings, desires and behaviors. That is my work.

“I have seen impure souls raving madly about physical love;”

It is comforting knowing that St. John Climacus actually knew and had seen people who had impure souls and then after repenting loved God much. John is not just saying they had a mild form of sexual addiction, but “impure souls raving madly about physical love.” This is me! There is hope. The compulsion, the madness, or in 12-step talk, “the insanity.” The impurity and unnaturalness of it all.

“but making their experience of such love a reason for repentance,”

In spite of all this madness, they took what satan meant for evil and turned their experience for turning to God. Having their minds renewed and transformed.

they transferred the same love to the Lord”

They transferred their love to the Lord. Can this even be done? Maybe God knows what is behind their raving madly about physical love and truly knows what the heart of these souls need. In Morning prayers there is the phrase, “help me to love you as I once loved sin and help me labor for you as I once labored for satan the deceiver and destroyer.” There appears to be a transferring of affection. Lord help me truly to love even more than this sin.

“overcoming all fear, they spurred themselves insatiably on to the love of God.”

Overcoming all fear is so important. When I am afraid, I am not believing and trusting in Him who is able to keep me from falling. (Jude, Peter?) Not partial fear, but all fear. They spurred themselves insatiable on to the love of God. Just as a sexual addiction is insatiable, never returns on its promises, so we can take the ever-wanting more and more to God our father who gives us great things. We can never want enough of Him, because He love is everlasting-will never run out.

Let those who have been humbled by their passions take courage. For even if they fall into every pit and are trapped in all the snares and suffer all maladies, yet after their restoration to health they become physicians, beacons, lamps, and pilots for all, teaching us the habits of every disease and from their own personal experience able to rescue those who are about to fall. (St. John Climacus, The Ladder of Divine Ascent, 26.13, page 163)

Encouragement for Despair

"There is a sin which is always 'unto death' [1 Jn 5:16]; the sin which we have not repented. Even a saint's prayer's will not be heard for the unrepented sin. The person who repents correctly does not imagine that his sins are cancelled through his own effort; but knows that through this effort he makes peace with God."

St. Mark the Ascetic

When you are praying, watch over yourself so that not only your outward man prays, but your inward one also. Though you be sinful beyond measure, still pray. Do not heed the devil's provocation, craftiness, and despair, but overcome and conquer his wiles. Remember the abyss of the Saviour's mercy and love to mankind. The devil will represent the Lord's fact to you as terrible and unmerciful, rejecting your prayer and repentance; but remember the Saviour's own words, full of every hope and boldness for us: `Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out'; and `Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden' - with sins and iniquities, and wiles and calumnies of the devil - and I will give you rest.'

St. John of Kronstadt, My Life in Christ

Since the Word of God through His descent to us has brought the kingdom of heaven close to us, let

us not distance ourselves from it by leading an unrepentant life. Let us rather flee the wretchedness of those who sit 'in darkness and the shadow of death' (Isa. 9:2). Let us acquire the fruits of repentance: a humble disposition, compunction and spiritual grief, a gentle and merciful heart that loves righteousness and pursues purity, peaceful, peace-making, patient in toil, glad to endure persecution, loss outrage, slander and suffering for the sake of truth and righteousness. For the kingdom of heaven or, rather, the King of heaven - ineffable in His generosity - is within us (cf. Luke 17:21); and to Him we should cleave through acts of repentance and patient endurance, loving as much as we can Him Who so dearly has loved us.

St. Gregory Palamas, Philokalia, Vol. 4.

A young officer, who had recently been led to the way of God but was still struggling with his conscience, asked his confessor if God really accepted man's repentance so readily, as they say he does.

"If your cloak happens to get torn, my son, do you take it off immediately," he asked, " and throw it away because it is useless?"

"Of course not," he said. "I sew it up and mend it, as much as is possible."

"If you pity your clothing and do not throw it away so easily, how can God not feel sorry for His creation?" the good Elder said, "Will he not do all he can to mend him?" The young man was put at ease.

[1] St. Mark ix. 23

[2] St. Luke vii.47

[104](#)

[Ecclus. 25:5; Wisdom 4:8, 9.](#)

[105](#)

[Hos. 7:9.](#)

[106](#)

Apollos or Apollonius was a most celebrated hermit of the fourth century, who finally became the head of a monastery of five hundred brethren in the Thebaid. Some account of him is given by Palladius (*Hist. Laus.* c. lii.) and Rufinus (*Hist. Monach.* c. vii.). Cf. also Sozomen III. xiv.; and VI. xx., whence we learn that his life was written by Timothy, Bishop of Alexandria. Cassian relates another story of him in XXIV. ix.

[107](#)

[Prov. 24:11.](#)

[108](#)

Cf. S. [Matt. 12:20.](#)

[109](#)

[Is. 50:4.](#)

[110](#)

[Job 5:18; 1 Sam. 2:6, 7.](#)

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