

So, as often as thy soul on its way perceives varying states which cause difficulty thou must know that thy soul has secretly been advanced to a higher state and that it has acquired a gift of increase in comparison with the degree it occupied before.

The hard temptations into which God brings the soul are in accordance with the greatness of His gifts. If there is a weak soul which is not able to bear a very hard temptation and God deals meakly with it, then know with certainty that, as it is not capable of bearing a hard temptation, so it is not worthy of a large gift. As great temptations have been withdrawn from it, so large gifts are also withdrawn from it. God never gives a large gift and small temptations. So temptations are to be classed in accordance with gifts. Thus from the hardships to which thou hast been subjected thou mayest understand the measure of the greatness which thy soul has reached. In accordance with affection is consolation.

What then? Temptation, then gifts; or gifts and afterwards temptation? Temptation does not come if the soul has not received secretly greatness above its previous rank, as well as the spirit of adoption as sons¹⁾). We have a proof of it in the temptation of our Lord and of the Apostles; for they were not allowed to be tempted before they had received the Comforter. Those who partake of good have also to bear temptations. Along with good are the oppressions [in behalf of it]. So it has pleased God, who is wise in all things.

Thus is the state of things; and accordingly, the apperception of temptations is anterior to the apperception of gifts, in order to test freedom. Grace never reaches a man before he has tasted temptations. In reality it is anterior; to the apperception it is posterior.

It is true therefore, that there are with thee at those times two opposite feelings, not resembling one another. What are they? Joy and fear. Joy, because thou findest thyself as appears from the sign of the temptations going the way that has been trodden by the saints, nay even by the saviour of the world. Fear, lest thou be tempted by these temptations through haughtiness. But the humble are gifted with prudence by grace, so as to be able to recognize the distinctions of these things, namely [to distinguish] between the temptations that arise from

1) Cf. Rom. 8, 15

haughtiness, and cheeks that burn from love. For the temptations that serve to improve behaviour are to be distinguished from those temptations which are permitted [by God] with the purpose of overcoming the presumption of the heart.

The temptations which take place under paternal control and serve to educate the soul, to train and to try it, so that it becomes illustrious, are: dejection, bodily weariness, relaxation
 300 of the limbs, despondency, confusion of mind, bodily pains, temporary despair, darkness of deliberations, deprivation of human help ¹⁾, want of bodily provisions and so on. For by these man acquires a solitary soul and humbleness and a mortified heart; and these things try him by the love of the creator; and the governor administers them to those to whom they are sent, in accordance with the force necessary to bear them. In them are mingled consolations and distress, light and darkness, struggles and help. In short: they make narrow and they enlarge, which is the sign of the increase of help. The temptations which happen by permission unto those who venture to puff themselves up in their mind before the bounty of the author of our boons so as to become injuriously haughty regarding His boons — are the following: the manifest temptations of demons which lie without the domain of the psychic forces, so that [those who are tempted] are destitute of the force which imparts to them prudence; a vivid sensation of the impulses of fornication which are let loose in order to suppress their presumption; a being led easily to anger; the setting up of the will; love of victory in dispute; rashness; a heart inclined towards contempt; complete aberration of the mind; abuse of Him whose honour be blessed; foolish thoughts full of jest, or rather weeping; contempt as to men; [endangering] personal honour by impudence; ridiculousness through many contrivances of the demons, secretly and manifestly; love of mingling and intercourse with the world; frequent evasions
 301 of foolish words; novel individual inventions and false prophecies; frequent promises above one's power; in the bodily sphere a continually hard involved fate most difficult of solution; perpetual meetings with evil and ungodly persons; falling into the hands of evil persons; perpetual emotions of the heart, caused by sudden fear without reason; repeated heavy falls

1) This enumeration has been taken over by Bar Hebraeus, *Book of the Dove*, p. 528

from rocks and high places and the like, such as destroys the body; the inability of the heart to lean on God's care and to confide as is becoming to faith; in short: all unbearable forces which it is above one's power to withstand, such as are let loose against the solitary and his surroundings.

All that I have expounded belongs to the temptations of haughtiness; the beginning of them shows itself in a man as soon as he becomes wise in his own eyes. He gets into all these evils according as he gives way to this deliberation ¹⁾. So by distinguishing between thy temptations thou wilt gain insight into the narrow paths of thy mind. If thou lookest on and observest some [of these temptations] on thy mind's paths, thou must know that the quantity of temptation is in accordance with the defiling working of presumption.

Hear also another consideration. All hardships and troubles which are not borne with patience, cause twofold torture. A man's patience throws off his distress. Want of courage is the source of tortures. Patience is the source of consolations, a certain strength born from courage of the heart. It is difficult ³⁰² for a man to find in his own soul in troubles, if it be not given him by God, that which is found through supplication and the pouring out of tears.

If God decrees that a man shall be troubled in a larger measure, He gives him into the hand of faintheartedness. And this will give birth to great despondency which gives the feeling of psychic suffocation; all these things taste after Hell. Thereupon the spirit of confusion is let loose against [the solitary], and from it rise innumerable temptations: perturbation, anger, abuse, vituperation, oscillating deliberations, moving from place to place, and the like. If thou sayest: Who is the cause of all these? I say: thou; because thou didst not care to find out the means to heal them. There is one remedy for all these and by it a man will at once find consolation within himself. What is this then? Humility of heart. Without it, it is not possible for a man to demolish the fence of these evil things, for he would find them far too strong. Be not angry with me for telling thee the truth: thou never hast sought this within thy soul. If thou wilt, follow it, then thou shalt see how it causes the destruction of thy evils.

1) viz. the deliberation of haughtiness

In accordance with thy humility will be given thee endurance in thy distress; and in accordance with thy endurance its weight will be lightened from thy soul which will be con-
 303 soled in its troubles; and in accordance with the consolation of thy soul, thy love in God will increase; and in accordance with thy love thy spiritual joy will increase. When our compassionate Father is of the will to relieve those who are real sons in their temptations, He does not take them away from them, but He imparts to them endurance under temptations, and all that good which they receive through it, to the perfection of their souls. May Christ in His grace make us worthy of bearing evils for the sake of His love, with thanksgivings of the heart. Amen.

XL

EXPOSITION CONCERNING THE DEGREES OF THE PATH, NAMELY CONCERNING THE POWER OF MINISTRATION OF EACH OF THEM

Bodily discipline in solitude purifies the body from the material elements in it. Mental discipline makes the soul humble and purifies it from the material impulses that tend towards decaying things, by changing their affectible nature into motions of contemplation. And this will bring the soul near to the nakedness of the mind that is called immaterial contemplation; this is spiritual discipline. It elevates the intellect above earthly things and brings it near to primordial spiritual contemplation; it directs the intellect towards God by the sight of unspeakable glory and it delights spiritually in the hope of future things, [thinking of] what and how each of them will be¹).

304 Bodily labours are called bodily discipline unto God. For they serve for the purification of the body through the service of excellence which is manifest personal works, by which man is purified from the pus of the flesh. Mental discipline is labour of the heart. It is the thinking, without cessation, of the great coming judgment, in constant prayer of the heart, and of God's providence and care for this world in its individuals and in its

1) The Greek translation has the right division of the text here

species. This is also the regarding of the domain of the inner affections, lest any of them pass into the hidden and spiritual place. This is the labour of the heart which is called mental discipline.

By this labour of discipline, which is called psychic service, the heart is subtilized and torn away from participation in decay, viz. in the praeternatural affections; from here onwards the heart begins to be often set in emotion by insight into the things of the senses which were created to the purpose of the education of the body and which administer strength to the four elements which are in the body.

Spiritual discipline is service without the senses; this is what has been written by the Fathers, that when the mind of the saints was gifted with personal contemplation, then the heaviness of body was taken away. And further on sight will be spiritual sight.

Personal contemplation he uses in the sense of contemplation concerning the primordial creation of nature. From there one is easily moved onwards toward what is called solitary knowledge which is, according to a clear interpretation, ecstasy in God, this is the order of that high future state which will be given in freedom that lives in immortality, in that way of life
 305 which will be after the resurrection. It will consist therein, that from that point onwards human nature will not be cut off from constant ecstasy in God, to mingle itself with any created being. If there were any other thing equal to Him, nature would sometimes follow Him, sometimes His equals. When, however, the beauty of all which exists in that future order of things, is inferior to His beauties, how should it be possible for the mind not to fix its gaze exclusively on Him? What then? Should mortality trouble it, or the heaviness of the flesh, or the remembrance of kindred, or natural wants, or the adversities which overtake it; or the distraction of ignorance, or the deficiency of nature, or the distraction caused by the elements, or intercourse with one another, or the influence of dejection, or the weariness of the flesh? If now in this world — while all these things are thus — the veil of the affections is sometimes withdrawn from before the eyes of the spirit so that it gazes at the glory, and the mind is drawn away in ecstasy — then, without doubt, if God had not limited the duration of these moments in this life, man would not come back from that

state ¹⁾ his whole life, if he were allowed. Now when all these [earthly] things exist no longer and that endless order [has been established], and when we personally and practically abide in the habitations of the kingdom — if our behaviour be worthy — how then should the spirit find a way to remove itself from the wondrous sight of God and to dwell with any other? Woe ³⁰⁶ to us, who do not know for what state we are destined, reckoning as something this life of sickness and this animal state, and the world with its troubles and evils and pleasures.

O Christ, who art the only strong one, blessed is the man whom thou supportest and in whose heart are the steps towards thee. Turn thou, o Lord, our face away from the world by desire of Thee, so that we see it as it is, without taking shadows for truth. Throw, o Lord, zeal into our heart before death comes, that at the time of our departure we may know for what purpose our entrance in and our departure from this world have served. Then, fulfilling the work to which we were called in accordance with thy aim in placing us in this life first, we shall hope, with a mind full of confidence, to receive the great things which, according to the promises of the scriptures, in the second creation are prepared by Thy love, things the recollection of which we preserve with mystic faith.

Bodily purity is to be clean from filth. Psychic purity is to be free from hidden affections in the spirit. Purity of mind is to be purified by revelations from any emotion unto things which, in view of their material nature, lie in the domain of the senses. Children are pure in body and as to their soul they can be without affections. Yet no one will call them pure in mind. Purity of mind is perfection through training in ³⁰⁷ heavenly contemplation, so that the mind without the senses receives impulses from the spiritual powers of those worlds above, powers which are amazing, surpassing number, distinguished in demeanour, mingled in invisible service, subject to many variations at all times, on account of the motion of the divine revelations.

1) Litt. from there. Cf. Plotinus, *Enneades*, VI, 9 § 9

XLI

A LETTER WHICH HE WROTE TO ONE OF THE BRETHREN WHO LOVED SOLITUDE CONCERNING HOW SATAN CONTRIVES TO DIVERT THE ZEALOUS FROM CONSTANT SOLITUDE UNDER THE PRETEXT OF THE LOVE OF RELATIVES AND HONOURED MEN; AND THAT IT IS BECOMING THAT ALL SHOULD BE DESPISED IN THE EYES [OF THE SOLITARY] COMPARED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD WHICH IS FOUND IN SOLITUDE AS MAY BE SEEN IN THE EXAMPLE OF OUR ANCESTORS

Because I know that thou lovest solitude and that Satan, knowing the intention of thy mind, impedes thee in many respects under the pretext of excellence, in order to divert thee from this comprehensive and manifold excellence, o virtuous brother, I was anxious to help thy good will as one limb helps its partner, with an excellent word, which I have received from prudent men and from the writings of the Fathers and from experience. For if a man does not despise honour and dishonour and bear for the sake of solitude abuse and derision and loss, nay even blows, and become an object of laughter and be reckoned mad and foolish by those who see him, he cannot master the advantages of solitude. For if a man once open the door to [worldly] things, Satan will not cease to bring unto him men under every pretext, a continual, innumerable series of associations. Therefore, my brother, if thou lovest the veracious discipline of solitude without distraction and shocks and sudden pauses, as it has been eminently practised by the ancients, thou wilt be able to carry out this laudable desire by trying to resemble thy Fathers and by retaining in thy mind, as if it were written down, the memory of their histories [ascertaining] that those of them who loved complete solitude, did not care to practise love of their fellows at the cost of distracting themselves, neither were they ashamed of avoiding such persons as were reputed to be in honour.

And though they were thus, devoted to complete solitude, yet they were not deemed by those who know and are wise,

to despise their brethren, nor were they thought of as scorers or destitute of distinctions, as it was pretended by some in the way of apology against those who honour quiet and reclusion more than meeting their fellows. For the man that has experienced the quiet of his cell does not avoid meetings because he despises his fellow, but because of the fruits he gathers from solitude.

How did they practise reclusion? Aba Arsenius would not meet with any one. Aba Theodore, when meeting anyone, was like a sharp sword; he did not greet anyone when he happened
309 to be outside his cell. But the holy Arsenius did not even greet him that came to greet him. Once one of the Fathers went to see Aba Arsenius who opened, thinking that it was his servant. When, however, he saw who it was he prostrated himself. And when the visitor sought to persuade him, saying: Rise, o father, that I may greet thee, were it only in the doorway, then I will go, the saint protested saying: I will not rise until thou goest; and he did not rise until the other had left him and was gone. Thus the blessed one acted, lest they should come again if he once gave way to them.

,One of the Fathers' — pay careful attention to this phrase lest thou think perhaps that Aba Arsenius despised his visitor on account of his mean estate; but it was one of the Fathers who spoke to him.

But we have also a strong proof from another side, lest thou say that he despised one, but received another favourably on account of his high position and conversed with him. No, in his reclusion he avoided alike all kinds of association; and in his eyes to despise the association with high or low for the sake of solitude, and to bear the reproaches of all in view of the honour of solitude and silence, was one and the same thing. We know namely that once the blessed Theophilus, the archbishop of Alexandria, visited him accompanied by the judge of that place, because they longed for the honour of seeing the saints. As he sat with them he did not comfort them even with a single word such as would have been fitting their high position, although they were very eager to hear his speech.
310 And when the archbishop tried to bring him to speech, the solitary was silent for a short time, and answered, saying: If I speak to you, will you remember what I say? They promised to do so. Then the solitary said to them: Wherever you hear that Arsenius is, do not come near to that place.

Doest thou see the wonderful way of the man? Doest thou see how he despised the honour of men? The blessed one knew how to gather the fruits of solitude without a thought to the fact that he was in the presence of the katholikos, the head of the whole church. But he thought thus: I am now dead to the world; what profit will a dead man give the living? He was vituperated for this in a loving way by the blessed Macarius who said to him: Why doest thou flee from us? The holy solitary made a wonderful praiseworthy apology: God knows that I love you; but I cannot be with God and with men.

Another time the archbishop sent him a message concerning this subject. The solitary answered, saying: ,If thou comest I shall open the door to thee. But if I open to thee, I shall open to every one. And if I open to every one, I shall not remain here'. This wonderful doctrine he had heard from none other than from a divine voice, saying: ,Arsenius, flee from men and thou shalt live'. None of the idle men who seek an occupation, will venture to refute this message by his objections or to speak against it, as if to seek peace proceeded 311 from human invention. For this is a doctrine from heaven.

The opinion that this was said to him with a view to reclusion and retreat from the world only, not with the intention that he should also avoid the brethren, is refuted thereby that, when he had retreated from the world and was abiding in the monastery, he again prayed to our Lord in order that he should know to live well. ,O Lord', he said, ,teach me to live', thinking that now he would hear another message. The divine voice proclaimed the same words again, adding as in explanation: ,Flee and be silent and keep in solitude. Though the sight of and intercourse with the brethren be very profitable to thee, still intercourse with them is not as profitable as withdrawal from them'.

When the blessed Arsenius, while he was still in the world, had heard by divine revelation the order to withdraw from it, and when the same had been said to him while he was with the brethren, he knew certainly that in order to acquire a steadfast life, not only withdrawal from lay people was necessary but from every human being. Lest any one should venture to speak against the divine voice, it was also said to Aba Antonius in a revelation: ,If thou desirest to be in solitude,

do not only go to the Thebaïs, but to the heart of the desert. If now God in this way commands us to withdraw from all, and wishes that His friends dwell in solitude, who should then, for other reasons, cling to intercourse and the vicinity of men?

312 If watchfulness was profitable and withdrawal helpful to Antonius and Arsenius, how much more then to the weak? And if the solitude of those whose words and the help that is inspired by the sight of them the whole world needs, is estimated by God higher than their usefulness to mankind in its entirety, how much more will this be the case with him that is not able to guard even his own person properly.

We know another of the saints whose natural brother was ill. He lived as a recluse in a different cell. During the whole period of his brother's sickness he restrained his mercy, so that he did not go out to visit him. When the sick man was on the point of departing from this world, he sent his brother a message to this effect: Come that I may see thee before I depart the world, even if it be in the night. Then I will take leave from thee and go to rest. The blessed one, however, was not to be persuaded even at this time, when natural mercy usually is stirred, to transgress the voluntary borders, saying: ,If I go out, my heart will not be pure before God, for I despise visiting spiritual brethren, should I then honour nature above Christ? So his brother died without his having seen him.

No one, therefore, should consider the weakness of feelings as an insuperable and invincible reason, nor as a providential institution, implying the denial of solitude. If the saints subdue nature which is so strong, and Christ, though despised in His children, loves to be where solitude is honoured, what other necessity should then exist which could not be despised when it presents itself? The commandment: Love the Lord thy God

313 with thy whole soul and with thy whole heart¹⁾ and more than the whole world and nature and what belongs to nature — is accomplished when thou abidest in solitude. And also the commandment ordering the love of our fellow men, is included in it. Wilt thou acquire the love of thy fellow-man, according to the commandment of the Gospel, within thyself, then withdraw from him. Then the flame of his love will burn in thee and

1) Deuteronomy 6, 5

thou wilt run to see him as if thou wouldst see the angel of light. Doest thou further desire that thy beloved ones long after thee? See their faces at fixed days only. Verily, experience is the teacher of all. Be in health.

XLII

THE ANSWER HE SENT HIS NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL BROTHER WHO HAD TRIED TO PERSUADE HIM IN LETTERS THAT HE SHOULD VISIT HIM IN THE INHABITED WORLD BECAUSE HE LONGED TO SEE HIM

We are not strong, as thou supposest, o blessed one. Perhaps thou art acquainted with my weakness, but thou makest not much of my destruction. Constantly thou askest me this, placing nature above the thought which once burned in thee, showing thereby that thou doest not consider it even as a matter to be treated carefully, though to us it seems to be a matter of care. Do not ask from me, o my brother, what gives consolation to body and mind, but let me seek the salvation of my soul. Yet a short time and we shall have passed away from this world. It is not unknown to thee how many persons I should meet, if I went to thy dwelling-place; how many sorts of people and of places, before I should have
 314 returned unto my place; and by meeting them, what cause for thought my soul would receive — my soul, that would be disturbed by the affections which would be awakened in it, after it has been left in peace by them a little. That the sight of lay people injures the solitary, is a fact with which thou art acquainted; not just the sight of women, but also of men.

Behold how many varying states pass through the mind of him that has for a long time been alone with his soul and then suddenly comes in contact with these things, hearing and seeing what he is not wont to see and to hear. If meeting his fellow brethren injures him that is engaged in the struggle and still wrestles with his foe, if the brethren are not in concordance with his aim, into what pit would we fall, that have to be freed from the sting of our foe? Especially those [among

us] that know these things by long experience. Therefore I am not to be persuaded to do this without necessity. Our heart does not err after those who say that hearing and seeing will not harm us and that, in the desert or in the inhabited world, within our cell or without it, we are alike in our deliberations on account of our being at rest against perturbation as long as we do not experience evil varying states and as long as we do not perceive the meeting with persons and things by the shock of affections. Those who say this, do not even know it when they receive a blow. But as to us, we have not yet reached this psychic health. We suffer from rotting abscesses; which, if they be left without bandages but for one day, so that they appeared from under the plasters and the bonds, would abound with worms.

XLIII

315 PROFITABLE WORDS FULL OF SPIRITUAL WISDOM

Faith is the gate of the mysteries. What the bodily eye is for the things of the senses, the same is faith in connection with the treasures hidden to the eyes of the mind.

We possess two psychic eyes, as the Fathers say, just as we possess two bodily eyes. But both have not the same purpose as to sight.

With one we see the hidden glory of God which is concealed in the things of nature, His power and His wisdom, and His eternal care for us which by His peculiar providence is directed unto us. With the same eye we also see the spiritual classes of our fellow-beings.

With the other we see the glory of His holy nature. When our Lord desires to give us initiation to the spiritual mysteries, He opens in our mind the ocean of faith.

As a grace beyond a grace has repentance been given to man. Repentance is being born anew in God. That of which we have received the pledge by baptism, we receive as a gift by repentance. Repentance is the gate of mercy which is opened to all who seek it. Through this gate we go in to divine mercy. Apart from this entrance it is not possible to find

mercy. Because all have sinned, according to the words of scripture, and are justified freely by grace ¹). Repentance is a second grace; it is born in the heart from faith and fear. Fear is the paternal rod which guides us up to the spiritual Eden. ³¹⁶ When we have arrived there, it leaves us and returns. Eden is the divine love wherein is the paradise of all goods, where the blessed Paul was sustained by supernatural food. When he had eaten from the tree of life which is there, he exclaimed: eye has not seen, nor ear heard neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him ²). Adam was bereft of this tree by the promise of the Devil. The tree of life is the divine love which Adam lost by his fall, after which he worked and wearied himself. Those who are bereft of divine love are still eating the bread that is won by the sweat of their labour, even though they work righteousness, as was commanded to the head of our race when he lost it by his fall. Until we find love, we work in the earth with her thorns. Among thorns we sow and reap, even if we sow the seed of righteousness. Perpetually we are pricked by them, even if we are justified, and live with sweat on our faces.

When, however, we have found love, we eat the heavenly bread and we are sustained without labour and without weariness. Heavenly bread is that which has descended from heaven and which gives the world life; this is the food of angels. He that has found love eats Christ at all times and becomes immortal from thence onwards. For whoever eats of this bread shall not taste death in eternity. Blessed is he that ³¹⁷ has eaten from the bread of love which is Jesus. Whoever is fed with love is fed with Christ, who is the allgoverning God. Witness is John who says: God is Love ³). Thus he smells life from God, that lives with love in this creation. He breathes here of the air of resurrection. In this air the righteous will delight at resurrection. Love is the kingdom of which our Lord spoke when He symbolically promised the disciples that they would eat in His kingdom: 'you shall eat and drink at the table of my kingdom'. What should they eat, if not love? Love is sufficient to feed man in stead of food and drink. This is the wine that gladdens the heart of man. Blessed is he

1) Cf. Rom. 3, 23 sq.

2) 1 Cor. 2, 9

3) 1 John 4, 16

who has drunk from this wine. This is the wine from which the lascivious have drunk and they became chaste, the sinners and they forgot the ways of offence, the drunkards and they became fasters; the rich and they became desirous of poverty, the poor and they became rich in hope; the sick and they became valiant; the fools and they became wise.

As it is not possible to cross the ocean without a boat or a ship, so no one can cross towards love, without fear. This foetid sea, which lies between us and the intelligible paradise, we cross in the boat of repentance, which has fear for a rudder. If the rudder of fear does not govern this ship of repentance, in which we cross the sea of this world towards God, we shall be drowned in the foetid sea. Repentance is the ship, fear is her governor, love is the divine port.

318 Fear places us in the ship of repentance and makes us cross the foetid sea of the world and brings us in the divine port which is love, towards which look all those who are weary and crushed by repentance.

When we have reached love, we have reached God and our way is ended and we have passed unto the island which lieth beyond the world, where is the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost; to whom be glory and dominion. That He make us worthy to fear Him and to love Him. Amen.

XLIV

CONCERNING HOW MANY DEGREES KNOWLEDGE HAS AND CONCERNING THE DEGREES OF FAITH

There is a knowledge which is anterior to faith and there is a knowledge which is born from faith. The knowledge anterior to faith, is natural knowledge; that which is born from faith, is spiritual knowledge.

What is natural knowledge? Knowledge which distinguisheth good from evil and which is also called natural distinction. God has implanted in rational nature to know good from evil, naturally, without instruction, yet this knowledge increases through instruction. There is no one in whom this [knowledge] is not active; and this is the force of the knowledge of the rational

soul by nature, namely the distinction between good and evil is stirring in it naturally, without ceasing. Those who are defective in this respect are beneath the rank of reason. Those in whom this is found, stand upright in psychic nature, and
 319 there has not been destroyed in them that which was given by God unto psychic nature, to the honour of His reason.

Those who have destroyed this knowledge which distinguishes between good and evil, are scorned by the prophet: man has no insight in his own honour¹⁾. The honour of rational nature is the faculty to distinguish between good and evil. Rightly the prophet compares those who have destroyed this faculty with the brutes who possess no distinguishing and rational soul. On account of this faculty we are naturally able to find the way of God, and this is the natural knowledge which is anterior to faith and this is the way unto God. On account of the fact that a man knows how to distinguish between good and evil, he receives faith. Witness is the force of nature to the fact that it is beautiful for a man to believe in Him that has created all these things and that he acknowledge the words of His commandments and performs them.

From the fact that he believes this, is born the fear of God. When man clings to the service of the fear of God, and by service proceeds to some extent in it, the spiritual knowledge is born of which we have said that it is born from faith. Not that it is simply born from faith. From simple faith only spiritual knowledge is not born, but from faith fear of God is born. And when we begin with the service of the fear of God, from the service of the fear of God spiritual knowledge is born, according to the word of the blessed commentator²⁾: When
 320 a man possesses the will to cling to the fear of God and an upright mind he will easily receive the revelation of hidden things. The revelation of hidden things he calls spiritual knowledge. Not that the fear of God brings this forth, it is not possible to bring forth that which is not implied in nature. But knowledge is to given gratuitously for the service of the fear of God.

When³⁾ thou inquirest well thou wilt find that the service of the fear of God is repentance. And spiritual knowledge is, as we have said, that of which we have received the pledge

1) Cf. Psalms 49, 12, 20

2) Theodore of Mopsuestia

3) Cf. Introduction

in baptism and which we receive really by repentance. The gift of which we have said¹⁾ that we receive it by repentance, is spiritual knowledge, which is given gratuitously for the service of the fear of God. Spiritual knowledge is apperception of the things which are hidden. When a man perceives the things which are unseen but most profitable, after which spiritual knowledge is called, by this apperception is born a different faith. Not that it is contrary to the old faith, nay it even corroborates it. It is called the faith of sight. Hitherto there was hearing; now there is sight. Sight is more true than hearing.

All these things are born from that knowledge which distinguishes between good and evil and which is stirring in nature. And this is the seed of excellence, as it has been called. But when we conceal this by our will which loves desire, we lose all this good.

With this knowledge are connected a perpetual stabbing of the heart; distress and grief; fear of God; shame before nature; grief at the transitory things which [occupied the mind] before; ³²¹ zeal for that which is becoming; perpetual remembrance of death, torturing thoughts of that transition and care for its provisions; passionate beseeching of God that we enter well that gate through which all nature has to pass; contempt of the world and noble strife for the sake of excellence. All these things are found in this natural knowledge. Man has to examine his discipline in view of these and when he is in accord with them, he goes in the way of nature. When he climbs higher and reaches love, he leaves the domain of nature and strife, fear and fatigue leave him alone.

In accordance with what has been said man has to measure his things [in order to know] in which way he is walking; in that which is beneath nature, in nature, or above nature. Through these distinctions which have been clearly expounded, a man may easily understand what the discipline of his whole life has to be. When thou art not in the things of nature which have been described here, nor in the things above nature it is clear that thou dwellest beneath nature.

1) p. 315

XLV

PROFITABLE ADVICE

There is no good impulse which does not fall in the heart as a gift from on high. There is no evil deliberation which does not approach the heart in the way of a temptation. A man that has attained the knowledge of his weakness has attained the summit of humility.

The conductor of the signs of God's goodness unto man is ³²² a heart which is moved by perpetual gratefulness. The conductor of temptations unto the soul is the impulse of rebellion which is constantly stirring in the heart. God suffers every weakness of man; but He does not suffer a man who is constantly murmuring, without chastising him. The soul which is far from any splendour of knowledge, finds itself in these impulses.

The mouth which constantly praises, receives a blessing from God; the heart which is constantly grateful, is inhabited by grace.

Grace is preceded by humility; chastisement is preceded by presumption.

He that is uplifted in his heart on account of knowledge, is tempted by abuse; he that is uplifted on account of his excellent service, is surrounded by fornication. And he that extols himself on account of wisdom becomes entangled in dark traps.

The man that is far from any remembrance of God, yet bears in his heart care for his fellow, will be of evil remembrance. He that honours all men by his remembrance of God will find all men his helpers by the hidden decree of God.

He that gives an apology in behalf of the oppressed will find an advocate in his creator. He that gives his arm to the help of his fellow, will receive God's arm in stead of it. He that accuses his brother on account of his evil deeds will find God as his accuser. He that directs his brother in his inner apartment, cures his evil; he that accuses him before an assembly makes worse his wounds. He that cures his brother privately gives a proof of the strength of his love, but he who

exposes him in the presence of his comrades betrays the force of his envy.

A friend that vituperates in secret is a wise physician; but ³²³ he that cures in the presence of the public, is really a derider.

The token of compassion is forgiveness regarding all sins. The token of an evil mind are varying utterances unto the sinner.

He that combines with healing chastisement, chastises with love. He whose demand bears the character of revenge, is destitute of love. God chastises with love, not for the sake of revenge, this is far from Him. He demands that His image ¹⁾ be healed; His anger does not endure until guidance is no longer possible; for He does not seek personal revenge. This is the intention of love; the chastisement of love aims at guidance; it does not aim at retribution.

The righteous who is wise resembles God. He never chastises man in retaliation for his sin, but either in order that he may be guided aright, or that others may be deterred. Other than this is no chastisement. But this ²⁾ is regarded as its image by the Spirit, the thought that was with God from eternity.

He that is pleased to think of God as the revenger, thinking that he acknowledges His justice, denounces Him as destitute of bounty. It is far from the fountain of love, the ocean full of bounty, that the idea of retribution should be found with Him. His aim is the guidance of men; and if it were not that we would be bereft of the honour of freedom, perhaps He would even not heal us by vituperation ³⁾. The domain of freedom regarding our deeds is the power with which frankness supplies reason. And also the latter adores the greatness of His bounty, because it is not His will that we rejoice at what is His, but as it were at the merits of our own deeds. And ³²⁴ though all is His, it is not His pleasure that we should think that we delight in what is His, but rather in what is ours.

In accordance with a man's goodness is he illuminated concerning God. According as he stretches himself towards the knowledge of God, does he approach unto freedom of soul.

He that tries to excel in beautiful things with a view to future reward, will be easily led to deviation. He that admires

1) man

2) chastisement on account of love

3) but by stronger methods

the power of his knowledge, when looking at the love which is in God will not be puffed up in mind even if his flesh should be cut off, nor will he deviate from excellence. He whose mind is illuminated concerning the rents for which we are indebted to God, descends unto the depth of humility, body and soul.

Before a man approaches unto knowledge, he will go up and down in his discipline. When, however, he has come near to knowledge he will wholly be raised up. Yet, however he be raised up, his advance in knowledge will not be complete, until the world of glory has come and he has received the whole of his treasure.

According as a man becomes perfect in his relation to God, will he follow Him closely. In the world of truth, He will show him His face, not however the face of His essence. The more the righteous advance to the vision of Him, the more they see an enigmatic sight, as an image shown in a mirror. There, however, they will see the revelation of truth.

Fire feeding upon dead wood is not easily extinguished. If the divine blaze falls in a heart cut off from the world, its flame is not to be extinguished and it will be even quicker than fire. When the power of the wine penetrates into the veins, the mind forgets the particulars of all things; when the
 325 remembrance of God has taken hold of the soul, the recollection of visible things vanishes from the heart.

The mind that has found spiritual wisdom is like a man that has found on the ocean an equipped ship which, when he has got aboard, brings him from the ocean of this world to the island of the world to be. Just so the apperception of the future things in this world, is like a small island in the ocean. And he that has approached unto it, he will no more be vexed by the storms of temporal phantasies.

When the merchant has accomplished his business, he hastens to reach his home. As long as the monk still lives in the period of his service, he has anguish [by the thought] that he shall have to depart the body. As soon however as he is aware that he has redeemed his time ¹⁾ and that he has taken his pledge, he longs for the world to be. As long as the merchant is on the sea, motion dominates his limbs; a storm may rise and the hope of his labour may sink. As long as the

1) Cf. Eph. 5, 16; Col. 4, 5

monk is in this world, fear dominates his service, lest a hurricane be stirred against him destroying the labour which he has wrought from his youth till his old age. The merchant looks towards land, the monk towards the time of his death. The sailor gazes at the stars as long as he is sailing on the ocean, and he directs his ship by them, that they may show him the harbour. The monk gazes at prayer, which directs his way [showing him] towards which harbour he has to direct his course. At prayer the monk gazes at all times, that it may show him the island where he may anchor his ship free from fear and where he may take on board provisions in order to
 326 direct himself towards another island. Such is the course of the solitary as long as he is in this life. He departs from island to island, and from knowledge to knowledge. And as various islands he meets the various [kinds of] knowledge, till he goes ashore and directs his course towards the city of truth the inhabitants of which do no longer traffic, but every one is content with his goods. Blessed he whose course is not disturbed, on this wide ocean. Blessed is whose ship is not wrecked and who reaches that harbour with joy.

Naked the swimmer dives into the sea in order to find a pearl. Naked the wise monk will go through the creation in order to find the pearl Jesus Christ Himself. When he has found it, he will not seek to acquire any other thing. A pearl is preserved in a treasury; the solitary's delight is in solitude. A virgin is robbed in a crowd; the mind of a monk in intercourse. The bird flies to her nest from any place in order to produce young ones, and the discerning monk hastens to his cell in order to produce in it the fruits of life.

When the body of the serpent is crushed, it guards its head cautiously; the wise solitary guards his faith amidst all evils, cautiously, because it is the head of his life.

A cloud covers the sun: so much talk covers the soul which has begun to be illuminated by contemplative prayer.

The bird which is called *ḥurba*¹⁾ is glad and delights — so
 327 the sages say — when she leaves the inhabited places and takes up her abode in the desert. And the soul of the solitary receives heavenly joy when it removes itself from men and takes up its abode in quiet places where it awaits the time

1) In Syriac *ḥureba* means at the same time desert and stoic

of departure. It is told concerning the bird which is called the siren that whosoever hears her singing is allured by her in his course in the desert, and that by the sweetness of her melodies he forgets his life and falls down dead. This resembles what happens with the soul; when that heavenly sweetness falls into it which comes from the melodies of the words of God [and which is transmitted] by mental apperception, it follows [these sounds] so that it forgets its bodily life and leaves the body on account of its delight and is lifted up from this life unto God.

The life of this world is sweet to him that lives in a material way; not, however, so sweet as is departure from life unto him that departs from it by perception in God. A tree will not produce new buds until it has put off the old leaves; and the solitary will not produce new buds, through Jesus Christ, until he has shaken from his heart the memory of his past.

The wind makes the fruits ripe; and the spirit ¹⁾ of God makes ripe the fruits in the soul. The shell in which the pearl is formed receives its full form from the air, as then saying has it still then, it is only mere flesh. And until the heart of the monk receives its heavenly fullness by understanding, its ³²⁸ service is still simple and it has no consolation within its shell.

The fruits of the trees are sour and disagreeable to the taste and are not apt to be eaten till they have become sweet by the sun; and the first labours of repentance are bitter and very unpleasant and without consolation to the solitary, until they are made sweet by the contemplation which withdraws the heart from earthly things so that it forgets itself.

The dog which licks the file drinks from his own blood; he does not recognize his hurt on account of the sweet taste; and the solitary who condescends to drink vain glory, sucks from his own life without being aware of his hurt, because of the momentary sweetness.

Glory on the part of worldly folk is like a rock hidden in the sea; it is not known to the sailor before his ship is split on it so that its bottom is pierced and it is filled with water. It is said therefore by the Fathers, that by glory all the affections return unto the soul, that once had been vanquished and had departed from it.

A small cloud covers the sphere; but the sun which is

1) wind and spirit are expressed by the same word in Syriac

behind it, is nevertheless real; and a little dejection covers the soul; yet the gladness which follows it is the more exhilarating.

The musician who plays the flute is not fed by the sound of its melodies. And when he ceases his music his stomach is the more hungry. And the sweetness of words without ritual performances does not satisfy; when a man no longer hears them he is the more confused.

As it is not possible for a man to drink wine without breathing forth its odour from his mouth, so it is not possible
 329 that a man becomes worthy of spiritual rest in his discipline without the sage's perceiving a change in his state. The heart that has received the heavenly seed is changed in its speech, changed in its mind, changed in its discipline, changed in its senses; and in all that belongs to it, it is different from the other simple men, as a man that was asleep and has awakened from his sleep.

Do not approach the mysterious words in the scriptures without prayer and without asking help from God, saying: Lord, grant me to perceive the power that is in them. Deem prayer as the key to the insight of truth in scripture.

When thou desirest to approach unto God in thy heart, first show Him love in bodily things. Here is the beginning of discipline. For the heart greatly draws near to God by renouncing some special necessary thing and by application to labours. Even our Lord has laid here the foundation of perfection.

Account idleness the beginning of psychic darkness; oral intercourse as darkness beyond darkness; and the latter as the cause of the former. Even profitable words without measure cause darkness. The soul is shaken by frequent intercourse even if it is inclined and in a way near to the fear of God. Deem darkness of the soul as being an agent unto confusion. Darkness in the soul comes from disordered behaviour.

330 Measure and time in discipline illuminate the mind and keep confusion afar. When the mind is upset by disorder, it becomes dark. And when it has become dark, the soul is troubled. Peace comes from order; light is born from peace in the soul; from peace, joyous air in the mind. According as the heart approaches to wisdom, it receives the gladness which is in God. The difference between spiritual wisdom and worldly

wisdom thou perceivest in thy soul. In the former, silence reigns over thy soul; in the latter, it will be a fountain of distraction. When the former is present, thou wilt be greatly filled with humility, and quiet and peace will reign over all thy deliberations, thy limbs being quiet and at peace from turbulence and trouble. When the latter is present, thou wilt possess presumption in thy mind and varying unspeakable thoughts and mental bluntness and thy senses will be turbulent and impudent.

XLVI

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Do not think that a man who is tied to bodily things will approach to freedom of speech in prayer before God.

An avaricious soul is destitute of wisdom; and the one which is compassionate, is made wise by the spirit.

As oil feeds the flame of the torch, so compassion feeds knowledge in the soul.

The key of divine gifts unto the heart is given through love of the neighbour.

331 According as the heart is freed from the bonds of the body, to the same extent is opened before it the gate unto knowledge.

Deem the transition of the soul from world to world to happen by the reception of insight.

Laudable and excellent is the love of the neighbour, but only if the thought of it does not turn us from the love of God.

Delightful is intercourse with our spiritual brethren, but only if it be possible that we preserve along with it intercourse with our Lord. Beautiful, therefore, it is to trouble one self with these, in so far as it is ordered by duty, namely in so far as through it we do not fall short of the hidden service and constant intercourse with God. To disturb divine intercourse, means to erect human intercourse. The mind is not capacious enough for both kinds of intercourse.

The sight of worldly people troubles the soul that once has renunciated what is theirs, for the sake of the service of God. To these belongs constant intercourse, to this even the avoidance of sight.

Bodily labours are not impeded by impressions of the senses. He that on the ground of mental peace wishes to embrace gladness in hidden service will be disturbed in the quiet of his heart, even by voices without sight.

Inner deadness cannot exist except by the annihilation of the senses. Bodily discipline requires keenness of the senses; psychic discipline keenness of the heart. As the soul is more excellent in its nature than the body, so the service of the soul is more excellent than the discipline of the body. And as the body is anterior in existence to the soul, so are bodily duties anterior to the service of the soul.

332 Great is the power of a little discipline, if it is combined with constancy. The soft drop on account of its constancy makes a hole even in hard rocks. When the spiritual man is near to being quickened in thee, death to all things will come to thee, and thy soul will become hot with gladness which has no equal amongst created beings, and thy deliberations will be concentrated within thee, on account of the sweetness in thy heart. But when the world is quickened in thee, distraction of mind will increase in thee, and lack of courage without constancy.

World I call the affections conceived by distraction. When they are born and have become fullgrown they become sin and kill man. As men are not born without a mother, so affections are not born without distraction of mind, nor does sin become fullgrown without intercourse with the affections. When patience increases in our soul, this is a sign thereof that it has secretly received the gift of consolation. Stronger is the power of patience than the emotions of gladness which stir in the heart.

Life in God is the fall of the senses. When the heart lives, the senses fall. The resurrection of the senses is the death of the heart. When the senses are quickened this is a sign thereof that the heart is dead regarding God.

The heart does not derive guidance from the virtues which are performed among men. Virtues which a man shows unto others, cannot purify the soul. Still they are taken into account with God, in view of wages and reward. But that excellence which a man performs unto himself, accomplishes the two: it is taken into account for reward, and it causes purification. Therefore desist from the former and cling to the latter. Without

application to the latter, to desist from the former means to
 333 forsake God openly. The latter, however, fills also the place
 of the former without its being performed.

Be dead in life in order that thou mayest be free through
 thy being dead. Be dead to the world in order that thou
 mayest be free from laws. For none of those who walk in
 them can perfectly fulfill them in this life. Who is dead in his
 life, is free while alive, and alive while dead.

Painstaking regarding graceful words is understood by sim-
 plicity of heart coming from God.

The soul that perceives a life above bodily life, does not
 adorn itself for the world. If man has not found the former,
 he is scarcely able to despise the latter; to despise it utterly
 is absolutely impossible to him. And he that would try to do
 so compulsorily, would stir up in himself a great struggle. But
 if he has found the former kind of life, he can renunciate the
 latter without a struggle.

Comfort and laziness are the destruction of souls. They are
 able to harm even more than the demons. Where the soul
 dwelling in light resides, in laudable labours of virtue, there
 the demons are not able to work. But the soul which is dark
 becomes thereby a guide even for the demons, so that they
 can accomplish all kinds of evil things.

When a weak body is forced to accomplish too many labours,
 it will accumulate darkness upon darkness in the soul and
 conduct it more and more unto perturbation and obscurity. If
 the dense body, namely that of sound constitution, comes to
 laziness and takes its place in comfort, it accomplishes all kinds
 of evil in the soul which dwells in it. Even if the soul greatly
 rejoices in good, still, after a short time the body will bereave
 it of thoughts that rejoice in the good.

334 When, however, the soul is drunk with gladness because of
 its hope, and with the joy in God, the body will be without
 apperception of troubles, even if it be brought low. For it will
 bear a double load without becoming weary as is the case with
 the body that has become heavy; and the body will share in
 the delight of the soul, even though it be brought low, when
 the soul enters into spiritual gladness.

If thou guardest thy tongue, my brother, a gift will be given
 to thee from God, affectibility of the heart so as to see thy-
 self in it; and thereby thou wilt enter into spiritual gladness.

If, however, thy tongue vanquish thee, believe what I say: thou wilt never save thyself from darkness.

If thou possessest not a pure heart, have at least a pure mouth. As the blessed John says: When thou wilt admonish a man unto beautiful things, first draw him near to bodily rest and honour him by a word full of love. There is nothing which makes a man so modest and persuades him to interchange evil things with good ones, as bodily comfort and honour which is shown to him by some one. The second means of persuasion is a man's effort to be a laudable example. He that has gained possession of his self by prayer and watchfulness will easily draw his neighbour unto life, even without wearying words and apperceptible admonition. Baseness, on the contrary, and relaxation do not only harm those who possess them, but also those who see them. As to the fact that a man by bestowing care upon himself can spur his fellows on to beautiful things and by the mere sight of him make those who are relaxed ashamed, no words are sufficient to tell
 335 how blessed such a man is. The silent deed has a greater power to direct others than careful words which are contradicted by laxity of behaviour. When however thou directest thyself, thy neighbour will gain no small help.

The more a man enters into the struggle for the sake of God, the more he will approach unto the heart's freedom of speech in its prayer. And according as he is distracted by many people is he bereaved of help.

The soul that has rest from the stings of the body, will have peace in its emotions.

Be a free man as to the body, in order that thou mayest be deemed worthy of spiritual freedom. Walk in the yoke of thy freedom, lest thou be tied to the yoke of bondage to thy enemies.

If once thou hast shown in thy person an example of dissolution from temporal life, then through abandonment of the affairs of life thou wilt become wholly dead, as an example of the future dissolution, as the care of all things will be taken from thee by death. Be not angry at the blows of the body, which death will wholly take from thee. Be not afraid of death, for God will elevate thee above it.

XLVII

ON THE ANGELIC EMOTIONS STIRRING IN US BY
DIVINE PROVIDENCE FOR THE EDUCATION OF THE
SOUL IN SPIRITUAL THINGS

The first emotion that befalls a man by divine grace and draws the soul towards life, strikes the heart [with thought] ³³⁶ concerning the transitory character of this¹⁾ nature. This thought is naturally connected with contempt of the world. And then begin all the beautiful emotions which educate unto life. That divine power which accompanies man makes as it were a foundation in him, which desires to reveal life in him. As to this emotion which I mentioned, if a man does not extinguish it by clinging to the things of this world and to idle intercourse, and if he makes this emotion increase in his soul by perpetual concentration and by gazing at himself, he will bring himself near to that which no tongue is able to tell.

This thought is greatly hated by Satan and he strives with all his power to eradicate it from man. And if he were able to give him the kingdom of the whole earth in order to efface by thought of it from his mind this deliberation, he would not do otherwise. For Satan knows that if this recollection remains with him, his mind will no longer stay in this world of error, and his means will not reach man.

This sight is clad with fiery emotions and he that has caught it will no longer contemplate the world nor remain with the body.

Verily, my beloved, if God should grant this veracious sight unto the children of man for a short time, the course of the world would stand still. It is a bond before which nature cannot stand upright. And he unto whom this intercourse with his soul is given — verily, it is a gift from God, stronger than all ³⁷ partial workings, which in this middle state are presented unto those who with an upright heart desire repentance. It is especially given to him of whom God knows that he is worthy of the real transition from this world unto profitable life, because He finds good will in him. It will increase and remain

1) earthly

with a man through his dwelling alone by himself. Let us ask this gift in prayer; and for the sake of this gift let us make long vigils. And as it is a gift without equal, let us keep watch with tears at the gate of our Lord, that He may give it us. Further we need not weary ourselves with the trouble of this world. This is the beginning of the impulse of life, which will fully bring about in a man the perfection of righteousness.

On the second working upon man. When a man follows his discipline perfectly and when he has succeeded in rising above the degree of repentance, and when he is near to taste the contemplation of his service, when it is given him from above to taste the delight of spiritual knowledge, a second working, after the first, will take its origin here.

In the first place man is assured concerning God's care for him and illuminated concerning His love of the creatures — rational creatures — and His manifold care for the things which regard them. Then there arises in him that sweetness of God and the flame of His love which burns in the heart and kindles all the affections of body and of soul. And this power he will perceive in all the species¹⁾ of the creation and all things which he meets. From time to time he will become
 338 drunk by it as by wine; his limbs will relax, his mind will stand still and his heart will follow God as a captive. And so he will be, as I have said, like a man drunk by wine. And according as his inner senses are strengthened, so this sight will be strengthened and according as he is careful about discipline and watchfulness and applies himself to recitation and prayer, so the power of sight will be founded and bound in him.

In truth, my brethren, he that reaches this from time to time, will not remember that he is clad with a body, nor will he know that he is in the world. This is the beginning of spiritual sight in a man, and this is the principle of all intellectual revelations. By this the intellect will be educated unto hidden things and become mature, and by this he will be gradually elevated unto other things which are higher than human nature. In short, by this will be conducted unto man all divine visions and spiritual revelations which the saints

1) litt.: natures

receive in this world. Thus nature can become acquainted with the gift of revelations that happen in this life.

This is the root of our apperception in our Creator. Blessed is he that has preserved this good seed when it fell in his soul, and has made it to increase, without destroying it by idle things and by the distraction of that which is transitory.

XLVIII

339 ON THE VARYING STATES OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS TO WHICH THE SOUL IS SUBJECT AT ALL TIMES AND ON THE TRAINING IT ACQUIRES IN THINGS OF THE RIGHT HAND AND OF THE LEFT

Let us look at ourselves at the time of service and prayer. If we possess contemplation regarding the words of the Psalms and of prayer, this has its origin in real solitude.

Let us not be perturbed when we are in darkness; especially if we are not the cause of it ourselves. For it is brought about by divine care, for causes which are known only to it. Our soul is then suffocated and, as it were, in the midst of storms. Whether a man approach unto a book of service — to whatever he approaches, it is darkness upon darkness which he finds in it, so that he desists from all effort. How many a time is he not even allowed to approach. He is wholly unable to believe that a different state will come upon him so that he will be in peace again. This hour is full of despair and fear; and the hope in God and the consolation of faith are wholly effaced from the soul, which is totally filled with doubt and fear.

Those who are tempted by the storm of this time, know by experience the varying state which will follow after it. Never will God leave the soul a whole day in this state; otherwise it would lose life and all Christian hope. But gradually — however strong this darkness may be — a turn unto life will appear from it. Unto thee, o man, I give the advice: if thou possessest no power to dominate thy soul and to fall upon
 340 thy face in prayer, envelop thy head in thy mantle and lie down till the hour of darkness has passed away from thee.

Leave not, however, thy cell. By this temptation are tried especially those who are willing to walk in mental discipline and who in their course are running toward the consolation which comes from faith.

This dark hour, therefore, tortures them, more than by any thing else, by spiritual doubt. It is also accompanied by strong abuse; sometimes even by doubt of the resurrection and other points which it is not necessary to mention.

All these things we have experienced many times and recorded for the consolation of many. Those who are occupied by bodily labours only are wholly removed from this struggle. They are attacked by dejection with which every man is acquainted and which differs from the state mentioned and similar ones. The healing of the latter — viz. its consolation — has its origin in solitude. By intercourse a man will never obtain the light of consolation, but in the course of time he will find alleviation. Afterwards, however, it will attack him vehemently. He needs an enlightened man, experienced in these things, by whom he may be illuminated and encouraged from time to time, though not constantly. Blessed is he that endures under these circumstances the abiding indoors, he that after these things reaches the large and strong apartment, as the Fathers say. Not at once, however, will this struggle cease; neither will grace come and dwell in the soul completely at once, but ³⁴¹ gradually. One, and the other: sometimes temptation, sometimes consolation. Some of it will remain, even till departure. Complete deliverance from it we do not expect here, nor complete consolation.

Thus has it pleased God that our temporal life should be provided. And these things are for those that walk in the way.

XLIX

ON THE GLOOMY DARKNESS WHICH DURING SOLITUDE BEFALLS THOSE WHO WALK IN THE DISCIPLINE OF KNOWLEDGE

At the time of obscurity, more than any thing kneeling is helpful. And even the fact that thou art not able to offer this [unto God] and to cling to it, is [an act of war] on the part

of Satan. It is thy duty to fight against this. For Satan knows the help [provided] by kneeling; therefore he strives with his whole power to withhold thee from offering it. And when thou art near to falling on thy face, he will trouble thee. And even if thou vanquishest him and bendest thy knees he will force thee not to abide by it.

Even if our emotions are cold and dark, we should persevere in kneeling. Even if our heart be dead at these times; even if we are destitute of prayer, so that we know not what to say in that even words of beseeching will not come to us, nor supplication — even then we should be found prostrated constantly, even if in silence.

If we need any help from God, yet remain destitute of help, ³⁴² we rightly do not obtain it, because we do not approach unto God in prayer with zeal and fervour, night and day, crying to Him in pain, because we expect that He will give it us spontaneously. But He contrives an intermediate cause that we should approach unto Him, by leaving us in trouble. And by His refraining from delivering us, He produces our help in that we prolong [our standing] at His door in prayer.

But we, when helpful things come to us, are stupefied and hesitating and we deliver ourselves to despondency and aversion and dejection, and we are colder than water. Under all evils and temptations which befall thee, from without and from within, the way of prayer lies before thee. Fall on thy face, even if for a day and night only and beseech God with a passionate heart. And God, who is merciful and good, will not hesitate to give consolation and relief when He sees that thou beseechest Him in the pain of thy heart, except thou shouldst not ask in the [right] way.

During thy whole life thou hast to act thus. Thou wilt gain and lose. And then thou shalt beseech in pain and He will give thee. And again He will go away from thee; and now thou wilt meet with such a thing that thou wilt think that the end of all has come. And when thou askest Him, in the next hour it will have disappeared. Thus this course has been ordained; be not dejected.

During that time of deep darkness that lies upon the soul, we have to be watchful against dejection. Listen to me, o my brother, fight against [the inclination] to leave thy cell, as a ³⁴³ woman in travail against her pains, and as a man who bears

tortures. For the foe greatly purposes, more than anything, to make thee leave thy cell, under the pretext of being unable to endure, at the time of struggle. And with all his power he will compel thee to go outdoors, lest, staying, thou shouldst seek refuge with kneeling. Greatly, more than anything, is he afraid of this act.

L

SHORT SECTIONS CONTAINING VARIOUS CONSIDERATIONS IN WHICH IS SHOWN THE INJURY CAUSED BY FOOLISH ZEAL UNDER THE PRETEXT OF FEAR OF GOD AND THE PROFIT ORIGINATING IN QUIETNESS; TOGETHER WITH OTHER SUBJECTS

A zealous man will never reach peace of mind. And he that is destitute of peace is also destitute of gladness. Peace of mind is called complete health, zeal is the contrary of peace. He, therefore, that is moved by zeal suffers from a severe illness. Before thou art deemed, o man, to move thy zeal against the illness of others, thou has driven away health from thyself. Thou hast rather to bestow care upon the healing of thyself. If thou desirest however to heal the sick, know that those who are sick, are in want of nursing more than in want of vituperation. So, whilst thou doest not help others, thou vexest thyself by a severe illness. Zeal is not counted
 344 among man as a form of wisdom, but as one of the illnesses of the soul, namely a narrowmindedness and a great ignorance. The principle of divine wisdom is quietness acquired by magnanimity, and the endurance of human weaknesses. Ye, therefore, that are strong, bear the loads of the sick, and direct the transgressor in a meek spirit. The Apostle counts among the fruits of the Holy Spirit peace and patience¹⁾.

A heart full of suffering on account of its insufficiency regarding manifest bodily labours, is the acme of all bodily labours.

Bodily labours, without mental suffering, are as a body without a soul.

He that suffers in his heart and is lax regarding his senses,

1) Gal. 5, 22

is as a sick man whose body is aching and whose mouth indulges in all obnoxious kinds of food. He that suffers in his heart and is lax regarding his senses, is as a man who has an only son and slays him with his own hands limb by limb.

Suffering of the mind is an honourable gift from God; and he that bears it together with the duties it imposes, is as a man who bears holiness in his limbs. A man who is dominated by his tongue in all things, good and evil, is not deemed worthy of this gift.

Repentance along with intercourse is as a pierced jar.

Blame along with a gift is a knife concealed in honey.

Chastity and intercourse with women are as a lioness and a lamb in one house.

Labours and depravity before God are as a man who slaughters a son before his father. He that is sick in his soul
345 and directs his comrades, is as a blind man that shows the way.

Compassion and justice in one soul are as a man adoring God and idols in one house. Everywhere compassion is the enemy of justice.

Justice is the equality of the even scale which gives to every man as he deserves without deviation to any side and without any consideration of a reward for it ¹).

Compassion is an affection which is stirred by bounty and which goes out to every one for their support. It does not repay him that has deserved evil. To him that has deserved good, it gives a double portion. If the former stands on the side of righteousness, then the latter is on the side of evil. As stubbles and fire cannot remain together in one room, so justice and compassion cannot in one soul.

As a grain of sand does not balance a load of gold, so the effect of God's justice does not counterbalance His compassion.

As a handful of sand thrown into the ocean, so are the sins of all flesh as compared with God's mind.

As a fountain that flows abundantly is not dammed by a handful of earth so the mercy of the Creator is not vanquished by the wickedness of the creatures.

As one that sows in the sea and expects that he shall reap, so is he that prays while preserving rancour.

As the flames of the fire cannot be checked from going

¹) itself

upwards, so the prayers of the merciful cannot be checked from ascending towards heaven.

346 As the violence of water in a narrow place, so is the force of anger when it has found a place in our mind.

He that has humility in his heart, has become dead to the world. He that is dead to the world, is dead to affections. To him that is dead in his heart regarding his relatives, Satan is dead. He that has found envy has also found him that found it for the first time¹⁾.

There is a humility that has its origin in the fear of God and there is a humility that arises through the love of God. Some people are made humble by their fear, others by their joy in Him. The former live with limbs subdued and ordered senses and in perpetual contrition of heart; the latter in full exuberance and with an exulting heart which is never checked. Love does not know bashfulness; these, therefore, do not know how to regulate or to order their limbs. Love naturally possesses frankness and oblivion of measure.

Blessed is he that has found Thee, thou harbour of all joys.

Beloved of God is the congregation of the humble, as the congregation of the scraphs.

A chaste body is dearer to God than a pure offering. Both, however, prepare a dwelling-place for the Trinity in the soul. Walk with thy friends in a reserved attitude; in doing so thou wilt be of profit unto thyself and unto them. For usually under the pretext of friendship the soul casts off the reins of watchfulness.

Be cautious regarding intercourse; it is not always profitable. In the congregation honour silence; for it prevents many wrongs.

347 Be not so cautious regarding the belly, as regarding sight. Inner war is in any respect easier.

Do not believe, o brother, that inner deliberations can be regulated without the regulation of the body.

Fear customs rather than enemies. He that fosters a custom is as one fostering fire. Both display their vigour when they have acquired free play. When custom, however, has been repelled the first time it demands access, thou wilt find it weaker, a second time. But if thou fulfillest its desire the first time, thou wilt find it stronger when it demands access unto

1) I am not certain of the sense of these words

thee the second time. Under all circumstances this recollection will strengthen thee.

Help proceeding from watchfulness is better than help proceeding from labours.

Be not friends with one that loves laughter and derision; for he will drag thee towards lax customs. Be not joyous with him whose behaviour is lax; but be cautious against hating him. If he desires to remain standing, try to help him; and care for his existence, until death. If thou art yet ill, thou hast not to play the physician; stretch the end of thy staff toward him, and so on.

Speak with watchfulness before a boaster and one who is sick with envy. For while thou speakest he gives in his heart thy words the explanation he desires. He seizes the opportunity to make others stumble, even through beautiful things in thee.

And thy words will be changed in his mind into opportunities of illnesses.

348 Frown upon him that begins to speak to thee concerning his brothers. Doing so thou wilt be found cautious by God and by him.

If thou givest something to one who is poor, let gladness of face and kind words and encouragement for his suffering precede thy gift. When thou doest this, by thy gift the delight of his mind will be greater than the want of his body.

On the day that thou openest thy mouth to speak against a man, deem thy soul as dead to God and void of all thy labours, even if it is thought that thou art moved to speak by [the desire to] direct and to build. Wherefore should a man demolish his own building and order that of his neighbour?

On the day that thou sufferest on behalf of a man in any way, be it on behalf of the good or on behalf of the wicked, in body or in mind, deem thyself on that day to be a martyr and as one that has been deemed worthy of confessorship for the sake of Christ. Remember that Christ died for the wicked, according to the words of the scripture, not for the good. Behold how great a thing it is to suffer for the evil and to do good to the sinners, even greater than to do this for the righteous. The Apostle reminds thee of this as of an amazing thing.

If thou art able to acquire righteousness within thyself, be not anxious to seek other righteousness.

Anterior to all thy deeds are chasteness of body and purity of heart. Without them every deed is vain before God.

Any work which thou performest without deliberation and examination — know that thy labour upon it is vain even
349 though it be beautiful. God counts as righteousness every matter of discrimination, not fortuitous performances.

A lamp in the sun — the righteous who is not wise.

Seed on a rock — prayer of one harbouring rancour.

A tree without fruits — an ascetic without compassion.

A venomous arrow — vituperation that has its origin in envy.

A hidden snare — the praise of the cunning.

A foolish counsellor — a blind watchman.

Sorrow of heart — sitting with sinners.

A sweet fountain — intercourse with the wise.

A wise counsellor — a wall to rely upon.

A foolish friend — a treasure of deficiency.

Better it is to see a mourning assembly than to see a wise man clinging to a fool.

Better it is to dwell with the beasts than to dwell with people affected by envy.

Better it is to dwell in a grave than to dwell with people who behave in a depraved way.

Sit with vultures but not with those who are covetous.

Associate with the murderer, but not with the quarrelsome.

Have intercourse with the swine, but not with the loquacious.

Better is the young of the swine than the mouth of the loquacious.

Sit amidst lions, but not amidst the haughty.

Be the persecuted, not the persecutor.

Be the crucified, not the crucifyer.

Be treated unjustly rather than treat unjustly.

Be the oppressed, not the oppressor.

Be peaceful, not a zealot.

Deal beneficently, not justly. Justice does not belong to the behaviour of Christianity and no mention is made of it in the doctrine of Christ.

Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep;
350 this is a sign of serenity. With the sick, be as if sick; with the sinners practise mourning and with the converted rejoice.

Be a friend of all men, but a solitary in thy mind.

Join in the suffering of all men, but hold thy body far from all men.

Do not vituperate any one and do not direct any one, not even those who are very evil in their behaviour.

Spread thy mantle over the sinner and cover him.

If thou art not able to take upon thee his transgressions and to receive chastisement in his stead, at least suffer exposure, in order not to expose him.

Do not quarrel for the sake of the belly.

Do not hate for the sake of honour.

Do not love to be a judge.

Thou must know, o my brother, that we stay indoors in order not to know the evil deeds of men. For when we consider all men as good, we shall reach purity in our mind. But if we also become vituperators and chastisers and judges and vindicators, persecutators and critics, in what respect then is dwelling in the towns inferior to abiding in the desert?

If thou art not quiet in thy heart, be quiet with thy tongue.

If thou art not able to be a ruler of thy deliberations, be a ruler of thy senses.

If thou art not a solitary in mind, be a solitary in body.

If thou art not able to labour with thy body, suffer in thy mind.

If thou art not able to watch on thy feet, watch on thy bed.

If thou hast no sufficient power to fast during the night, fast at least in the evening. And if thou hast no force for fasting
35^t in the evening, be on thy guard at least against satiety.

If thou art no saint in thy heart, be a saint in thy body.

If thou art no mourner¹⁾ in thy heart, let at least thy face be clad with mourning.

If thou art not able to justify thyself, then speak as a sinner.

If thou art not a peacemaker, be at least not a disturber.

If thou art not able to be valiant, be a humble man in thy mind.

If thou art not a victor, be not wrath with the vanquished.

If thou hast no sufficient power to shut the mouth of him that speaks against his neighbour, guard at least thyself, lest thou become his partner.

Know that if fire goes out from thee and kindles others, the souls of all those to whom some of this fire has been im-

1) abila, also a monk

parted, will be demanded at thy hands. And if thou doest not throw out fire, but doest agree with him that does, and compliest with his deed, thou wilt be his partner in judgment.

If thou lovest peace, be peaceful. And if thou hast been deemed worthy of peace, rejoice at all times. Pray for insight, not for gold.

Be clad with humility, not with byssus. Acquire peace, not a kingdom.

No one has insight without being humble. He that is not humble, has no insight. No one is humble without having peace; he that has no peace is not humble either. No one has peace without rejoicing. While men walk in all the ways which there are in this world, they do not find peace, until they approach unto hope in God. The heart does not acquire peace from vexations and offences, until it approaches unto this place. But hope will give them peace and pour gladness ³⁵² into their heart. This is what that adorable mouth, full of holiness, has said: come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest¹⁾. Draw near to the hope which is in me, and desist from the many ways, and ye will have rest from labours and from fear. Hope in God elevates the heart. Fear of Hell breaks it.

The light of the mind gives birth to faith. Faith gives birth to the consolation of hope. Hope makes the heart strong. Faith is the revelation of insight. When the mind is dark, faith is hidden, and fear reigns in us and cuts off our hope. Faith through instruction does not free a man from presumption and doubts; only that faith which dawns by insight. It is called the revelation of truth.

As long as faith understands God as God, through the revelation of insight, fear will not approach unto the heart. When we are left in darkness and we lose this insight that we may become humble, fear assails us which brings us near to humility and repentance.

The son of God has borne the cross and sinners have acquired courage in repentance.

If the habit of repentance has driven away the anger of the King, he will not now reject your sincere mind. If the habit of humility can drive away God's anger from him who knows

1) Matthew 11, 28

himself not to be true, how much more will this be the case with you who are suffering in truth for your trespasses. Sufficient is the suffering of the mind in place of all bodily labours, according to the word of the commentator ¹⁾.

353 A temple of grace is he that is mingled with God by constantly thinking of that which belongs to him. What is thinking of that which belongs to him? It is the constant hunting after his rest; suffering at all times; the toil of constant care concerning those things which always remain imperfect on account of the wretchedness of nature; the constant sorrow at these things which the mind bears under strong emotions and which it places before itself with humble contrition as an offering during prayer. As much as possible it despises the care of the body, according to its power. Such is he that bears in his soul the constant recollection of God, as the blessed Basil, the bishop, says.

Prayer without distraction is that prayer which produces in the soul the constant thought of God. For also this is God's incarnation, that He dwells in us by our constant recollection of Him with painstaking care of the heart, seeking His pleasure. Involuntary evil deliberations have their origin in previous laxity.

O men and brothers, ye that desire to give some rest to the body in the way of recreation, for the sake of the service of God, in order to acquire force and to return to your service — let us not weaken our perfect watchfulness during the few days of rest, giving our whole self to relaxation as if we were men who have not the intention to return unto their service.

Those who in the time of peace are wounded by arrows, are the people who bear the cause of this in themselves, namely wilful freedom of speech. And the dirty clothes with which they see themselves clad in a holy place (namely at the
354 time when God is astir in their soul) are those which they have woven in the time of relaxation. The things which put us to shame when, at the time of pure prayer, we wish to offer them, are those with which we have accustomed ourselves at the time when we esteemed our senses too low.

Watchfulness helps a man more than labours; and relaxation injures him more than rest. In rest there arise internal wars

1) Theodore

which a man is able to overcome vexing though they may be to him. For as soon as he gives up rest and returns to the place of labour, they are put to silence and flee from him. Not so it is with that which is born from relaxation, though relaxation is born from rest. For as long as man is in the place of his freedom, he is able to lay hand on himself and place himself under the order of his laws; he is still in the place of his freedom. But when he is relaxed, he has left the place of freedom. If a man does not throw away completely all his watchfulness, he is not compelled against his will to comply with those things which he does not like. And if he does not completely give up the domain of his freedom, he will not be assailed by accidents, which bind him so that he is not able to withstand necessity. Do not give up the place of freedom on account of any of thy senses, o man; else thou wilt not be able to return thereto. Rest injures the novices only; relaxation also the perfect and the aged. Those who let themselves be directed to the comfort of bad deliberations, may find the way back by watchfulness and gain the height of good behaviour. But as for those who, confiding in their labours, have neglected cautiousness, and have been captivated by the relaxations of life, after [they had walked on] the height of behaviour, some have been wounded in the country of the enemies and have died during the time of peace, others have set out for the sake of the merchandise of life, and have exposed their soul to offence.

We have no difficulties when we trespass in a thing, but only when we persevere in it. Trespasses will sometimes happen even to the cautious.

But clinging to them is utter death. Suffering which we endure for the sake of things in which we transgress fortuitously, are counted as pure service on our part, by the grace that sustains our life.

He that sins a second time expecting [forgiveness] walks with God cunningly. Unexpectedly the rope of punishment will be thrown upon him and he will not reach the time for which he had hoped.

If a man's senses are lax, his heart is also lax. The service of the heart is a bond of the outward members, if a man performs it with discrimination as the Fathers who were before us. This is known from other tokens which are seen in him:

namely that he is not entangled in bodily profits, that he does
 356 not love money, and that he is wholly void of anger. Where
 on the contrary these three are found: the love of bodily
 profits to a small or to a large extent, and quick anger, and
 giving way to the belly (even in the case of the former saints),
 know that the relaxation in outward things originates in inward
 lack of patience, not in the baseness of the discriminating soul.
 How else could it be possible that such a one did not possess
 disregard of bodily things, and quietness?

To expose oneself to disdain ¹⁾ discriminately is to be freed
 from all things, to disregard life and to love men.

If thou endurest willingly injuries for the sake of God, thou
 art pure within.

If thou doest not despise any one on account of his stains,
 thou art surely a free man.

If thou doest not run to encounter those who honour thee,
 and if thou art not moved by meeting those who do not con-
 cord with thee, thou art really dead to this life.

Watchfulness with discrimination is better than all kinds of
 behaviour to all kinds of men.

Do not hate the sinner ²⁾; we are all worthy of condemnation.
 If thou art moved for the sake of God, weep over him. Why
 shouldst thou hate him? Thou meanst to hate his sins? Pray
 on his behalf, that thou mayest resemble Christ, who was not
 angry with sinners but prayed on their behalf. Hast thou not
 seen how He wept for Jerusalem? In many things we are made
 mock of by Satan. Why should we hate them that are made
 mock of like ourselves by the same one that makes mock of
 357 us? Why hatest thou the sinner, o man? Perhaps because he
 is not righteous as thou art? And how art thou righteous, that
 hast no love? And if thou hast love, why doest thou not weep
 for him, instead of persecuting him? It is through ignorance
 that some people, reputed to be discriminating, are moved by
 the deeds of sinners.

Be a herald of God's goodness, because He provides for
 thee who art not worthy of it. And though thou art guilty of
 many things, it is not known that he is desirous of revenge.
 And for the few things in which thou showest [good] will, he
 remunerates thee with many. Do not call God just anymore,

1) *καταλαβειν*. Cf. Introduction

2) With this passage cf. p. 14, 79, 348, 350

for His justice is not known in His dealings with thee. Though David called Him just and righteous, still His son has made it clear to us that He is good and kind. For He is kind towards the evil and the miscreant. How callest thou God just when thou comest across the section on the hire of the workmen? Friend, I do thee no wrong. I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Or is thy eye evil because I am good ¹⁾? How can any one call God just if he come across the story of the prodigal son? When he had spent all in fornication, it was only on account of the contrition he showed that [the father] ran to throw himself at his neck and made him lord of all his possessions. No one else can say concerning Him that he doubts His goodness. His son testifies this concerning Him. How could there be justice in God, when Christ died ³⁵⁸ for us who were sinners? If He is compassionate here, we believe that there will be no change in Him. Far be it from us that we should wickedly think that God could not possibly be *compassionate*. *God's properties are not liable to variations as those of mortals. It is not possible that He sometimes should not possess a thing, and afterwards should possess it, or that what He possesses should diminish or increase as that which creatures possess. But that which God possesses is with Him from eternity, and it is with Him for ever, as also the blessed commentator ²⁾ says in his exposition on the creation.*

Fear before His love, not before the reputation of harshness with which He has been charged. Love Him because it is our duty to love Him; not for those things which He will give, but also because of those which we have received. Even if He had made this world only for our sake, who could sufficiently tell His bounty? Where is the remuneration for Him in our deeds? Who has persuaded Him beforehand to bring us into existence? And who will intercede with Him for our sake when we shall be in a state of oblivion as if we were not? Who will stir our destruction into life? And from where will the impulse of knowledge be cast into [what is] dust? O the wonder of God's compassion. O the amazement of the bounty of our Creator. O the power of His almightiness. O His immeasurable kindness regarding our nature, that He also brings sinners into

1) Matt. 20, 13—15

2) Theodore

existence! Who can sufficiently tell His praise, who quickens the sinner and abuser who had become dust without motion [so as to participate of] a laudable, recognizing and rational mode of existence; that changes scattered dust into a being exalted above perception; that makes scattered senses a rational nature with quick motion? If the sinner is not able to [understand] His quickening power, he can be content with His grace.

359 Where is Hell which can make us suffer? And what is the torment which can overcome in us His fear, vanquish the joy at His love? And what is Hell as compared with the grace of resurrection, which will restore us to life after Sheol and make this corruptible to be clad with incorruptibility, and make rise in glory what was lying in the contempt of Sheol? Ye understanding, come and wonder. Who has an intellect wise enough to wonder? Come and let us wonder at the grace of our Creator. The retribution of the sinners is this, that He repays them with resurrection instead of with justice. And those that have trampled upon His laws are clad by Him with the glory of perfection instead of with the body. This grace after we had sinned is greater than that which brought our being ¹⁾ into existence when we were not yet.

Glory to Thy immeasurable grace. Now the floods of Thy grace make mē silent without any emotion remaining, not even thankfulness. With what mouth shall we thank Thee, good king who lovest our life? Glory to Thee in both the worlds which Thou hast created for our education and for our delight, from all those that Thou hast brought into existence to know Thy glory, now and at all times, world without end, Amen.

1) **موجود**

LI

360 ON THE THREE DEGREES OF KNOWLEDGE AND
 THE DISCRIMINATION BETWEEN THEIR SERVICE
 AND IMPULSES AND ON THE FAITH OF THE SOUL
 AND THE TREASURES OF MYSTERIES HIDDEN IN
 IT AND TO WHAT EXTENT WORLDLY KNOWLEDGE
 IN ITS MEANS¹⁾ IS OPPOSED TO THE SIMPLICITY
 OF FAITH

When the soul in the course of its behaviour walks in the way of faith, this improves it much. When it then turns towards the means of knowledge, it becomes alienated to faith at once. And it is removed from that intelligible force of faith which reveals itself by different acts of help in the serene soul that simply, without inquiry, uses all that belongs to it.

The soul that has once, in faith, entrusted itself unto God and, under many temptations, has received the taste of faith's help, no longer thinks of itself, but is made speechless by ecstasy and silence, nor is it allowed to return unto the means of its knowledge or to make use of them, lest it also be bereft, on the contrary, of the divine care which visits it incessantly and provides for it and clings to it everywhere. For the soul would consider it as a despicable thought to deem itself sufficient to guide itself by the power of its knowledge. For those in whose hearts the light of faith has dawned, do not venture to pray in their own behalf, they do not even venture to ask
 361 God: Give us this, or: Take from us that, nor dare they think of themselves in any way. For by the initiated eyes of their faith they always see the paternal care which protects them on the part of that Father whose strong and immeasurable love surpasses the love of all fleshly fathers and who has power to supply us with all things above what we ask and think.

For knowledge is opposed to faith and faith with all its means destroys the laws of knowledge. I do not mean spiritual laws. For the circumscription of the domain of knowledge is

1) *עבודת*

this, that a man is not allowed to do anything without inquiry or examination; but he must investigate, so as to comply, if possible, with what befalls him.

But as to faith, what is it? If yes and no approach unto it equally, faith does not consent to remain in that position. That knowledge cannot be used without methods and means, that it even does not exist without them, is known. And this is the token of its sceptical attitude regarding truth. Faith on the other hand requires a serene and simple mind, far from any cunning or need of means. Behold, how knowledge and faith are each other's opposites.

The mansion of faith is a childlike mind and a pure heart. For in the purity of their heart people have praised God. For 'except ye be converted and become as little children' ¹⁾ and so on. Knowledge, however is the persecutor and opposite of ³⁶² these two. Knowledge adheres to the domain of nature, in all its ways. Faith makes its course above nature. Knowledge does not admit unto itself anything which is in disharmony with nature, not even for the sake of trial; but it lets these things dwell at a distance. Faith on the other hand orders with authority and says: 'Thou shalt tread upon the serpent and the lion: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet ²⁾).

Knowledge is accompanied by fear; faith by trust. As long as a man uses the means of knowledge, he is not free from fear, it is not even possible that he be deemed worthy of freedom. But as soon as he clings to faith, at once a free man and the king of his soul and a son of God, he will use freedom in all things, with authority. A man that has found the keys of faith will use all the species in nature, as God. For faith is allowed even to create a new creation, just as God did. If thou wilt, anything will stand before thee. And many times it is possible to make every thing out of nothing

Knowledge is not able to make anything without materials. Knowledge does not venture to step over unto the domain which lies outside nature. How then? That the dissolved nature of water does not suffer the footsteps of flesh on its back, that he who excites fire is burnt by it, and that it is dangerous ³⁶³ to act contrary to these [rules]. Such lore is cautiously guarded

1) Matth. 18, 3

2) Ps. 91, 13

by knowledge. And it is absolutely impossible to persuade it to order an advance into this domain.

Faith on the other hand commands this with authority, saying: If thou tread on fire it will not burn thee; and floods will not drag thee along. And faith has done these things many times before the eyes of all creatures. If knowledge had been given an opportunity in this domain, it would not have given the permission to try such things at all. Through faith many have entered the mouth of the flames, and have checked the power of the burning fire, and have persevered in it without injury, and have walked on the back of the sea as if it were dry land. Verily, all these things are above nature and contrary to the methods of knowledge.

Seest thou how faith shakes the foundations of knowledge and shows that all its means and laws are vain? Seest thou how knowledge guards the domain of nature? Seest thou also how faith walks above nature and makes there the paths for its course? For nearly five thousand years the means of knowledge have been governing the world and the world has not been able to lift its head from the earth at all nor to perceive the power of its creator, until faith dawned to us and freed us from the trouble of labouring upon earthly things and from the vain slavery of fruitless distraction. And now that we have
364 found an unexplored ocean and an unlimited treasure, should we desire to stay at a poor fountain? There is no knowledge which is not lacking, rich though it may be. As to faith, heaven and earth cannot contain its treasures.

He whose heart is supported by the trust of faith, will never experience want of anything. And though he does not possess anything, he dominates all things through faith. As it is written: All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive¹⁾.

And again: Our Lord is at hand; be careful for nothing²⁾. Knowledge perpetually seeks means to preserve those who possess it. What does faith do? 'Except the Lord build the house and keep the city, they labour in vain that build it and wake to watch'³⁾. Never will he that seeks refuge with faith use means.

Knowledge everywhere praises fear. As also the sage says: Blessed is he whose heart fears. What does faith do? 'He was

1) Matth. 21, 22

2) Phil. 4, 4 sq.

3) cf. Ps. 127, 1

afraid and began to sink' ¹⁾). And again: For ye have not received the spirit of fear to bondage, but the spirit of adoption ²⁾ to freedom in faith and trust in God. 'Fear them not therefore' ³⁾), lest I crush thee before them. Fear always accompanies doubt, and doubt examination, and investigation means, and means knowledge. And that which always examines and investigates, shows doubt and fear; for knowledge does not always and in every thing profit, as has been shown above.

365 Often hard circumstances and multifarious affairs oppose themselves, full of danger and of such a nature that knowledge and the means of wisdom are absolutely unable to give any profit; things which are so hard that they withstand the whole power of the domain of human knowledge.

But faith is never vanquished by anything. What help can human knowledge afford in manifest struggles against invisible natures and incorporeal powers and many things of that kind?

Thou seest how weak the power of knowledge and how strong the power of faith is. Knowledge restrains its pupils from approaching unto anything which can do harm to nature. But look at the power of faith; what does it command its sons? In my name shall they cast out devils and shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them ⁴⁾).

Knowledge according to its laws orders all those who walk in its way, to investigate all things from their beginning till their end and then to begin; lest the end of the thing be contrary to the limits of human power, and people might undertake fruitless labour when their work would prove to be impossible and difficult to be realized. But what says faith? All things are possible to him that believeth ⁵⁾).

O unspeakable richness, o ocean rich in its billows and in
 366 its amazing treasures, o effusions of the power of faith! How full of encouragement, how delightful and full of trust is its path! And how easy are its loads; how delightful is its service. He ⁶⁾ that has been deemed worthy of the taste of faith and then turns towards psychic knowledge is equal to him that has found a pearl of great price and changed it for a copper coin for he has left authoritative freedom and has

1) Matth. 14, 30

3) Matth. 10, 26

5) Mark 9, 23

2) cf. Rom. 8, 15

4) Mark 16, 17

6) Introduction

turned towards the means of poverty which are full of the fear of bondship.

Knowledge is not to be rejected, but faith is superior to it. And if we reject, we do not reject knowledge, far be that from us, but the distinctions in a variety of classes in which it moves itself in opposition to the glory of nature, so that it becomes cognate with the class of the demons. This we shall discern distinctly, seeing in how many degrees knowledge moves, and how many distinctions there are in every one of them, and in which emotions it rises within every one of the classes when it remains in them, and in which of these classes it comes into opposition to faith when it is moved in them, and leaves the domain of nature; and which are the distinctions of the service in them; and in which class it comes to its natural state, having changed its pristine direction preparing the degrees for faith by its beautiful behaviour; and to which point the distinctions of this class conduct it; and how it
 367 proceeds from this class to a higher one; and what are the kinds of service in that latter class, which is the first in honour; and the point where knowledge is united to faith and becomes one with it and is clad by its influence with fiery impulses so that it blazes spiritually and acquires the wings of apathy and is lifted up from the service of earthly things towards the place of its creation, acquiring also other things.

So it is meet for us to know that the degree of the service of faith is superior to that of knowledge. And knowledge is made perfect by faith, so that it acquires the power to ascend and to perceive that which is above all perceptibility and to behold the splendour of Him that is not attained by the mind or the knowledge of the creatures.

Thus knowledge is the ladder on which a man ascends the height of faith, but which he does not use any more when he has reached faith. For now we know little out of much and we understand little out of much. But when perfection has come this little becomes useless.

So faith shows us as it were before our eyes the reality of that future perfection. By faith we are instructed about those unattainable things, not by investigation and the power of knowledge. All works of righteousness: fasting, alms, vigils, holiness and the others which are performed with the body; and neighbourly love, humility of heart, forgiveness of sins, medi-

tation upon beautiful things, investigation of the mysteries
 368 hidden in the holy scriptures, the occupation of the mind with
 the practice of good works, the keeping of the affections of
 the soul within the borders, and the other virtues which are
 accomplished with the soul: all these need knowledge as their
 regulating power. But all these are still degrees along which
 the soul ascends unto the elevated height of faith, and they
 are called virtues.

As to the discipline of faith, its service is above excellence; it is not a service of labour but one of perfect rest; it is consolation and comfort and it is accomplished by the impulses of the soul. All the amazing distinctions of spiritual discipline, the service of which is apperception of spiritual forces and delight and exultation of the soul, and love and joy in God and all the other things which are granted through this discipline — all these are forthwith given by faith in fullness unto the soul which by grace is made worthy of this blessedness, by God who is rich in gifts, as they are mysteriously denoted in the holy scriptures.

But perhaps some one reasons thus: If all these good things and the works of excellence which are mentioned above, and also the refraining from evil and the discrimination of subtle emotions arising in the soul, and the struggle with deliberation and the strife against alluring affections, and the other qualities without which faith cannot even show its power in its working upon the soul — if all these are made perfect by knowledge, how then can it be argued that knowledge is in opposition to faith?

369 The solution of this doubt: There are three stages in which knowledge ascends and descends in an intelligible way, and where it receives its variations according to variations of the places in which it moves, and where it also injures or helps. The three stages which I mean are: body, soul, spirit. And though knowledge is one in its nature, it becomes condensed or subtilized in accordance with its abiding in these intelligible places. And so also its stores are changed and also the working of its impulses.

Hear now the [enumeration of] the stages of its service and the causes by which it injures or helps. Knowledge is a gift which was presented by God unto the species of rational beings from the beginning of their existence. It is simple in

nature, not divided, as sunlight is, but has variations and divisions in connection with its service.

The first stage of knowledge. When knowledge accompanies the love of the body, it gathers provisions as: riches, vain glory, honour, elegant things, bodily comfort, means to guard the body against those things which are in opposition to nature, zeal for rational wisdom that serves to govern this world, and to be the originator of inventions in crafts and learning, and the other things which crown the body in this visible world.

To the properties of this knowledge belong those which have been enumerated above in opposition to faith. This knowledge is what is called simple knowledge, because it is bare
 370 of every godly thought. It imparts to the mind an unspeakable weakness because it dominates it with a bridle and because its whole thought is directed upon this world. Thus this degree of knowledge never imagines that there is at all an intelligible force and a hidden governor regarding man, or a divine care which provides for him. But it thinks that all good which happens to a man, and his being saved from injury and guarded against severe difficult accidents and against the numerous adversities which inhere to our nature openly or in secret, all happen by its own zeal and means.

This is the degree of knowledge which thinks in the way mentioned and its adherents say that there is no providential government in visible things. Consequently it is not able to desist from constant anxiety and fear regarding bodily things. Therefore [it is accompanied by] pusillanimity, grief, despondency, fear of demons, fear of men, rumours of robbers, tales about epidemics anxiety before sicknesses, fear of scarcity of food, fear of death, reptiles and beasts and other things of this kind. And at all times of the day and night knowledge is tossed about as the sea is by its billows, because it does not know to commit its care unto God with the trust of faith in Him.

So knowledge in all its circumstances uses means and artifices. And when by any cause its means are exhausted, because it does not see hidden providence, it scolds men as its
 371 hindrances and haters.

By this knowledge was planted the tree of good and evil, which is the eradicator of love. Knowledge examines the small

stains in others and the shortcomings and weak points of men; and in it are the disputations of learning, and dialectics, and cunning artifices, and all the other means which dishonour man. In it are also presumption and haughtiness, because it reckons to its own credit and not to God's credit all things which happen, if they are wholesome.

Faith on the other hand attributes its deeds to grace. Therefore it cannot be haughty. As it is written: I can do all things through grace which strengtheneth me ¹⁾; and again: Not I, but grace which was with me ²⁾; and what the blessed Apostle says: Knowledge puffeth up ³⁾.

This he says concerning that knowledge which is not mingled with faith and trust in God, but not concerning true knowledge. Far be it! For true knowledge makes perfect by humility the souls of those who possess it, as Moses and David and Isaiah and Peter and Paul and the other saints who were deemed worthy of perfect knowledge, in accordance with the domain of nature. And because their knowledge is constantly enveloped by various visions and divine revelations and the supreme sight of spiritual things and unspeakable mysteries, their own person is in their eyes, as compared with these, dust and ashes.

That other knowledge must needs be puffed up, because it walks in darkness and it examines its subjects in analogy with earthly things without knowing that there is something more valuable.

³⁷² But [even] those who are dominated by haughtiness because their behaviour is [in their own eyes] of greater importance than earthly and bodily things, and because they rely upon service without penetrating with their mind in unattainable things — when they come to meditate upon those waves of the glorious splendour of the godhead, and their service is on high, their mind then cannot deviate to think of impure things and idle deliberations. For those who walk in light cannot go astray. All those, therefore, who err from the light of the knowledge of God's son, and deviate from truth, walk in these ways.

This is the first stage of knowledge accompanying the bodily love. This we reject, calling it oppositional not only to faith, but to all works of excellence.

1) Cf. Philippians 4. 13

2) Cf. I Cor. 15, 10

3) I Cor. 8, 1

The second degree of knowledge. When knowledge leaves this first state and turns towards meditation and psychic love, it performs those beautiful things which have been described above, through the cooperation of the psychic impulses with the bodily senses, by its natural light; namely: fasting, prayer, compassion, recitation of the holy scriptures with a view to excellence, strife against the affections, and so on. All beautiful deeds and excellent distinctions which are seen in the soul, and the amazing stages which are administered in the church of Christ, are accomplished by the influence of the
 373 power of the Holy Ghost, in this middle stage of knowledge. The Ghost will level ways in our heart leading to faith. And by faith we shall gather provisions for this our true world.

And till this point knowledge is still of a bodily nature and composite, though it occupies itself with excellence and though it is the way conducting us to faith. For the latter is a degree higher than knowledge; and if knowledge is as it ought to be, it will be able by the help of Christ, to ascend [this higher way], when it bases its service upon seclusion from men and recitation of the holy scriptures and prayer. And the other good works will be made complete by these.

This is the second degree of knowledge, by which all beautiful works are performed. It is called knowledge of practice, because, as to its outward stage, it accomplishes its activity by deeds perceptible by the senses of the body.

The third degree of knowledge, which is the degree of perfection. How knowledge is subtilized and acquires spirituality so that it resembles the discipline of those invisible forces the service of which is not performed by the apperceptible practice of works but by the thoughts of the intellect — hear this now. When knowledge elevates itself above earthly things and above the thought of service and begins to try its impulses in things hidden from eyesight, and when it partly despises the recollection of [worldly] things from which proceeds the perversion of the affections, and when it stretches itself upwards and clings to faith by thinking of the world to be and love of the promises and investigation concerning the hidden things — then faith swallows knowledge,
 374 gives anew birth to it, wholly spiritual. Then it is able to direct its flight towards non-bodily places and to the depths of the unscrutable ocean of wonderful and divine government

which directs intelligible and apperceptible beings, and to examine spiritual mysteries which are attained by the simple and by the subtle intellect. Then the inner senses awake to spiritual service, as the order of things which will be in the state of immortality and incorruptibility. For from here onwards they have received intelligible resurrection, symbolically, as a true sign of that universal renewal.

These are the three degrees of knowledge, in which the whole course of man is contained, that of body, soul and spirit. From the time that a man begins to distinguish between good and evil, till he leaves the world, in these three degrees is contained the knowledge of himself and the accomplishment of all iniquity and wickedness and the summit of all righteousness; and the scrutiny of the depths of all spiritual mysteries is worked by one knowledge in these three degrees. Within these is the whole emotion of the mind that ascends or descends moving in good things or in evil things or between these. These three degrees are called by the Fathers the natural, the praeternatural and the supernatural. And these are the three directions in which the thoughts of the rational soul ascend and descend, as it has been said. Either it works righteousness in nature, or in the domain above nature, its thoughts wrapped
 375 up in contemplation towards God; or it will go out to feed the swine in the praeternatural domain, as one that has lost the riches of his intellect while serving with the herd of demons.

The first degree of knowledge makes the soul cold to works in the course of the good. The middle one excites in the soul fervour in its course in the degrees of faith. The third stage is the soul's desisting from service; and this is a symbol of the future, that the soul only finds delight in intellectual occupations, in the symbols of future goods. But as nature is not yet elevated above the stage of mortality and above the load of the flesh so as to abide totally in that spiritual state which is exempt from deviation, and because it is not able to administer complete perfection in the world of mortality and to abandon the nature of the flesh completely while it abides in it as yet, therefore it is in the former and in the latter stage alternately. Sometimes the soul in the middle degree of knowledge as a poor being is occupied with performing with all its power the virtues proper to nature, because of the nature of the body. And sometimes, as those who have received the

spirit of adoption¹⁾, it delights in the mysteries of freedom through the gift of the spirit, even as it pleases its giver. Then it turns again towards the poverty of its world, namely of the body, being on its guard against it, lest the latter should captivate it by the allurements which are found in its world through its troubled and easily deviating impulses. For as long as the soul is covered by the curtain of the flesh, it³⁷⁶ has no trust. For there is no perfect liberation in a non-perfect world.

The whole service of knowledge is a service of work and of exercise. The deeds of faith however, are not performed by labours; for they are accomplished by the spiritual impulses through the sole and pure efficacy of the soul [and they are elevated] above the senses. Faith is more subtle than knowledge, just as knowledge is more subtle than apperceptible deeds. For all the saints which have been deemed worthy of spiritual discipline which is ecstasy in God, walk through the power of faith, in the delight of that discipline which is above nature.

I do not call this faith, that a man believes in the discrimination of the adorable hypostases of the Essence, or in the properties of His nature, or in the amazing government regarding humanity consisting in His accepting our nature. But I call this faith: the intelligible light which by grace dawns in the soul and, without leaving room for doubt, supports the heart by the testimony of the mind, namely by the persuasion of hope which is far from all presumptions and not by tradition from hearsay. This light will show the spiritual eyes of the soul the hidden mysteries which are in the soul, and the secret riches of divinity which are concealed from the eyes of fleshly men and are revealed spiritually to those who at the table of Christ are brought up in meditation upon His laws; as He says: If ye keep my commandments, I shall send you the Spirit, the Comforter, whom the world cannot receive, and He will guide you into all truth²⁾. Thus He will also³⁷⁷ show man the holy power, which surrounds him at all times. That power is the Comforter. By the power of this faith all the parts of the soul are kindled as it were by fire so that it despises all danger on account of its trust in God.

1) Romans 8, 15

2) John 16, 13

And upon the wings of faith it is lifted up above the circle of the visible world and, as drunk, it is constantly in ecstatic thought of God. And by simple sight, and by insight without sight of the divine nature, it accustoms the intellect to looking at its secret being in meditation. For until the coming of that which is the perfection of the mysteries, and until we shall have been made worthy of its revelation eye to eye, faith administers unspeakable mysteries between God and the saints. May we be deemed worthy of them by the grace of Christ, here by pledge, there in reality in the kingdom of heaven, with all those who love Him. Amen.

LII

SHORT SECTIONS ON A DIFFERENT SUBJECT
ON THE DISTINCTION OF THE IMPULSES OF
KNOWLEDGE

When knowledge pursues visible things, concerning which instruction is acquired through the senses, it is called natural. When it pursues the intelligible forces behind the visible things in non-bodily species, it is called spiritual. For perception is ³⁷⁸ received by the spirit, not by the senses. And regarding both of these kinds the soul receives the recognizable materials from without. When however knowledge pursues the Essence it is called supernatural, or rather agnostic, because it is elevated above knowledge. As to this [latter kind], the soul does not acquire contemplation concerning it in materials lying without it, as is the case with the former kinds. But without materials, by a sudden working of grace within, unexpectedly, it is revealed in the soul. For the kingdom of God is within us ¹⁾. And it will not come from the place from where it is expected, nor through observation ²⁾, according to the word of our Lord. But within the hidden form of the intellect it is revealed without cause and without meditation upon it. For the intellect has no materials to meditate upon it.

The first [kind of knowledge] is born from constant recitation and from zeal for teachings. The second kind from a steady

1) cf. Luke 17, 21

2) Luke 17, 20

behaviour and faith of the intellect. The third kind is due to faith alone. For there knowledge ceases and works reach their end and senses will be superfluous.

As long as knowledge is beneath this line, it is called knowledge. And the lower it is, the more honoured it becomes, so that when it reaches the earth and earthly things, knowledge is master of all, and without it all is cripple and idle. But when the soul elevates its gaze and directs the space and the
379 time of its impulses towards heavenly things and becomes desirous after the things which are not to be seen with the bodily eye and over which the flesh has no power, then all things fall under the category of faith.

LIII

ON PRAYER AND THE OTHER THINGS WHICH ARE NECESSARILY TO BE SOUGHT ¹⁾ IN CONSTANT RECOLLECTION AND WHICH IT IS VERY PROFITABLE FOR A MAN TO RECITE WITH DISCRIMINATION AND TO RETAIN

That a man have trust in the petition of his prayer through trust in God, is the chief part of the gift of faith. The assurance of faith in God is not a correct confession, though this is the mother of faith, but a soul that looks on the truth of God by the power of behaviour. When thou findest faith and what is related to it, in the holy scriptures mingled with behaviour, do not consider it in the sense of true confession. Faith which gives the conviction of trust is never demanded by the imperfect, or by those whose mind is perverted so that it cannot attain truth. The assurance of truth reveals itself in the soul — in accordance with the elevation that is the result of behaviour — in an attitude which tends toward the legislation of our Lord.

The light of the soul consists in constant meditation upon the scriptures. For they trace in the intellect profitable recollections with regard to watchfulness against the affections and for perpetual abiding with God, in love and in purity of prayer.

1) Bedjan's **ⲁⲓⲁⲃⲁⲓ** is a misprint for **ⲁⲓⲁⲃⲁⲓ**

They trace before us the way which is made peaceful by
380 the steps of the saints. Yet do not confide in the signs of the words when they are not accompanied by great alertness and perpetual affectability through constant prayers. Accept without doubt words that are spoken from experience, even if they are uttered by a simple man. Even the great treasury of earthly kings does not abhor to take increase from the money of the mendicant. And from small sources the large streams of the rivers increase.

If the recollection of the excellent renews in us the desire of excellence when we commune with them mentally, the recollection of the impudent also renews in our mind impure desire when we are reminded of them. This is because the recollection of all these develops in our mind the distinct lines of their deeds. And with their finger as it were they show us their evil deeds or the elevation of their behaviour, in accord with their belonging to one or to the other kind. And the recollection with its stings — be they right or left ones — spurs us to meditate upon the baseness of our mind (while the images of their noble behaviour are depicted in our imaginations) and to look upon them zealously.

So not only the meditation upon evil injures those who are captured by it, but also the sight and the recollection of those who perform evil. And not only is the performing of excellent things greatly profitable to those who accomplish them, but also the imaginative representation formed by the recollection of the persons who perform those things. And on account of
381 this it can be understood that those who are near to reaching the stage of purity, are deemed worthy of seeing perpetually holy men in nightly visions. And during the whole day the images of the saints which are printed in their soul are to them a source of joy by their intellectual intercourse with them. And on account of this they turn with renewed fervour towards the performance of good works and an intense fire of love unto excellence is kindled in them.

It is said that the holy angels assume the appearance of honoured and excellent men and show themselves to the soul in visions during sleep when the emotions are distracted, for the sake of joy and higher incitement. And during the day they set [the solitary] astir by the recollection of the visions, and so they are fired anew to their labour by their joy at

those holy men. And so the latter are promoters of the former's course. In the same way, at the time of the heat of battle, those who are accustomed to evil intercourse, are visited by the demons in this likeness. They assume a likeness in which they show themselves to the soul, namely visions highly exciting amidst the recollections of the day to those who converse with these. Sometimes also they do this by frightful visions which terrify the soul and weaken it, and which accentuate the difficulty of behaviour in solitude and reclusion, and the like.

We ought therefore, o my brethren, to use discrimination regarding recollections, in our meditation, [choosing] which of them we should cherish and which we should dispel hastily as soon as they approach our mind, according to whether they ³⁸² proceed from the activity of the demons who provide the affections with matter, or from desire or anger, or from the holy angels such as give indications that cause joy and knowledge and profit by the deliberations which they excite through their offerings to us, or by the recollection and perception of former deeds some of which stir in the soul deliberations that are useful in any direction.

Experience concerning the two we must acquire by discriminating knowledge, as also experience concerning their aspect, their intercourse, even concerning their way of working. Each of the two has at once to be met with a distinct prayer.

Love which is maintained by [outward] things is to be compared with a small flame whose light subsists by the sustenance of oil; and with a stream subsisting through rain, and whose flow ceases as soon as the supply which maintains it becomes deficient. Love of which God is the cause, is as a source welling from the depth, whose current will never cease. For He alone is the source of love whose supply does not fail.

Thou desirest to perform the recitation of Psalms during thy service with delight, and thou wishest to perceive the spiritual words which thou recitest? Abandon the performance of a certain quantity and ignore the measures of service; and say the words in the way of prayer, and leave the usual iteration. Understand what I say. As to those sections which bear the character of a history, let thy spirit consider their repetition as the recitation of some providential act of God, in order that by the deep significance which is in them the soul be ³⁸³ awakened unto amazement at Providence; and from here it

may be stirred to praises or to profitable affection. The passages which are prayers, take them unto thyself. When thy mind has become established in them, confusion has given way and disappeared. For in the service of bondage there is no peace of mind, nor is there trouble of confusion in the liberty of the children. For confusion is wont to suck away the taste of insights and to rob them of their intellect, as the leech which with the blood of the limbs sucks the vitality of the body. For it is possible, to say of confusion that it is the mount of Satan even. Satan, as a chariot-driver, is wont to ride on it constantly, taking with him a multitude of affections. Thus he invades the poor soul making use of the darkness of its confusion.

And this thou hast to understand clearly, lest in the sentences of thy recited Psalms and of thy prayer thou becomest a conductor of words as if they came from a strange person. For thou shouldst not think that thou art sedulously promoting the work of the apostles if thou art wholly devoid of the passion and the joy which is in it. But thou shouldst say the words beseechingly, as originating in thyself, with intelligence and with passionate discrimination, as one who is aware of his being occupied with ritual of his own. Dejection is caused by distraction of mind; distraction by neglect of labours and recitation and by intercourse left to chance.

Not to use conversation with those who speak to us, but ³⁸⁴ to cut off their speech entreatingly, is a sign of a mind that has found wisdom and power by grace. For its true knowledge frees it from much labour; and by its treading short ways it cuts off the many windings of a long way. For we have not at all times the power to reduce to silence all contrary deliberations by arguments, and it may happen, when we receive a blow, that for a long time we shall not be healed.

Against those who are six thousand years old thou wilt stand thy trial. But they also are provided with means which may destroy thee, being mightier than thy wisdom and thy learning. But even if thou vanquishest, the dirt of their deliberations will defile thy mind and their stinking odour will linger in thy smell. But by the former method ¹⁾ thou wilt be free from all these and from fear, because there is no helper like God.

1) viz. by cutting off discussions
Verh. Afd. Letterk. 1922 (Wensinck).

Perpetual tears during prayer are a sign of divine mercy of which the soul is worthy because of its repentance which has been accepted; and with tears it begins to enter the plain of serenity. Unless the deliberations have been freed from the care of transitory things and have cast away the hope of the world and contempt for it has been established in them and they have begun to prepare provisions for the day of a man's departure, because the thought of things beyond earthly ones has been established¹⁾ in the soul — it is not possible that the eyes shed
 385 tears. Tears originate from pure meditation without distraction and from perpetual meditations without deviation, and by some subtle recollection which falls into the mind and affects the heart by the anxiety it causes. Then tears become frequent.

When thou turnest towards perpetual handiwork in thy solitude, do not make the commandment of the fathers a pretext for love of money. In order to avoid despondency thou must have some trifling occupation which does not trouble the mind. If however thou desirest to bestow more care upon it, for the sake of alms, know then that the order of prayer is more excellent than alms; if thou desirest to do so because of thy need, without being covetous, that which is sufficient to fulfill thy want is what our Lord provides thee with. He never has left His servants in want of transitory things. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you, before ye ask, says our Lord²⁾.

One of the saints³⁾ has said: it is not the aim of thy discipline that thou shouldst appease the hungry and that thy cell should become a place of congregation for strangers. For this behaviour is rather meet for those who are in the world, but nor for solitaries who are free from thoughts of visible things and who preserve their mind by prayer. If ever thou wilt be deemed worthy of the solitary state and avoid heavy
 386 loads in the kingdom of its freedom, let not the customary thought of fear terrify thee with its many and varying deliberations. But as a man who believes that there is a guardian with him and who knows accurately through his wisdom that he and all creatures are under one Lord, and that one will move them all and stops and governs them, and that no fellow is able to injure his comrade without the commandment

1) Reading כוונת

2) Matthew 6, 33

3) Perhaps Euagrius; cf. *Book of the Dove*, p. 30

of the Governor, and that all is under His care — make up thy mind to be courageous. For though some of them have been given freedom, yet they have no freedom in all things, and neither the demons nor the beasts of prey, nor malicious men are able to injure any man according to their good pleasure, until the divine will has given the command and until material opportunity has been given. It is not granted by the divine will that all freedom should realize itself, otherwise no flesh could live. For the Lord does not allow the freedom of demons or man to approach his creatures that they use it according to their good pleasure.

So thou hast to say to thyself: there is a guardian with me and there is no possibility for any of the creatures even to show themselves to me, if no permission from on high has been given. So if thou seest with thy eyes and hearest with thy ears their threatenings, even then thou must not believe that they will venture to act. If they had received an order
387 from the heavenly will, no speech and even not a word even would be necessary, but action would immediately follow will. And if this be the will of my Lord (so say to thyself), that the evil ones have power in his creation, then I must not resist this fact as if I were one taking pleasure in contradicting the will of his Lord. Thus, even in thy temptations, thou shalt be full of gladness, as one who knows and feels that his Lord is governor. Support therefore thy heart by confidence in the faith in the Lord without being afraid for the terror by night nor for the arrow that flies by day¹⁾. For the faith of the righteous in God makes the beasts of the field as lambs and goats²⁾. It is namely impossible to be a righteous man confiding in God unless this be true of thee, that for the sake of the service of righteousness thou art gone into the desert with its many troubles and that for it thou art administering the will of God. So thou labourest in vain when thou takest upon thee these pains. For God does not wish the pains of mankind, but that thou offer to Him as a sacrifice of love thy personal affections. All those who love God show Him this distinctive [sign of love] that they are willing to bear troubles for the sake of His love. For all those who desire to live in the fear of God through Jesus Christ, bear troubles. And then He makes them rule over his hidden treasures.

1) Psalm 91, 5

2) Cf. *Book of the Dove*, p. 80

One of the saints has said: There was an old, honoured solitary to whom I once went when I was shaken by temptations. He was ill and had to lie down. When I had greeted him I sat down near him and said: Pray for me, Father, for I am very much shaken by the temptations of the demons. He opened his eyes and looked at me benignantly, saying. My son, thou art a boy; God will not admit the demons unto thee. I answered: If I am a boy I have to bear the temptations of strong men. Then he said to me: So God is trying to make thee wise. I said to him: How can I become wise, if I taste death every day? He said to me: God loves thee; be silent, God shall give thee His gift. Then he said to me: Thou must know, my son, that I have been making war upon the demons during thirty years, of which I have passed twenty without enjoying any help whatever. When twenty five years had elapsed, rest began to show itself. As it approached, it increased and when twenty eight years had passed it had grown considerably. And now that thirty years have been accomplished rest has increased to such a degree, that I know not how this can happen. — Further he said: When I desire to stand performing service, I am allowed to accomplish one *marmita*¹⁾. Further, even if I remain standing during three days, I am in ecstasy with God, without perceiving fatigue. — Behold how prolonged labours produce illimitable rest.

One of the Fathers used to eat two times every week. He said to us: 'The day on which I speak with someone, I am not able to keep the usual rule of fasting, but I am compelled to break it'. So we understand that the keeping of the tongue not only does excite the mind unto God but that it also in secret grants considerable force for the accomplishment of the visible labours which are performed through the body. And on account of a hidden service the intellect will constantly be illuminated, as our Fathers say. For keeping the tongue excites the heart unto God, if we be silent with knowledge.

This saint was much given to vigils saying: When of a night I stand till dawn and take rest after the recitation of Psalms, and then wake up from sleep, on that day I am as a man who is not in this world. No single earthly thought

1) a fifteenth part of the psalter.

rises in my heart, nor do I want definite regulations, but all day I am in ecstasy.

On one day such as this in which I was wont to take food (and since four days I had not eaten), when I rose in order to perform the evening service and to eat afterwards, I stood in the room of my cell in full sunlight. I perceived only that I began with the *marmita* which is the beginning of the service; but till the next day when the sun rose before me and the clothes on my body became warm, I did not perceive where I was. As the sun troubled me by burning my face my mind came back to me and behold, I saw that it was a
390 new day. And I thanked God because of His pouring out His grace upon mankind and because of His deeming worthy of such a greatness those who seek Him.

Here end the tales of holy men.

LIV

OTHER EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING MAGGENANUTHA ¹⁾

Although we have already spoken on this subject in an other context in the foregoing disquisitions ²⁾, when an opportunity offered itself, yet we do not object to elucidating the subject further here.

Maggenanutha denotes help and guardianship and also the receiving of the heavenly gift. As for instance: The Holy Ghost shall come and the Power of the Highest shall overshadow thee ³⁾. And: Thy right hand shall save me ⁴⁾, which is a prayer for help. And: I will defend this city to save it ⁵⁾.

So we understand two kinds of action in the maggenanutha granted by God unto mankind one is symbolical and intelligible; the other practical. The former is connected with the holiness which is received through divine grace; this means: by the influence of the Holy Ghost a man is made holy in body and soul, as is the case of Elisha and John and Mary the blessed among women. But because this is incomparable

1) Inspiration, revelation, incarnation a. s. o. 2) Syriac text, pp. 107, 160

3) Luke 1, 35 *naggen*; to overshadow is only a faint rendering. The original means rather to envelop and to overpower.

4) Ps. 138, 7 5) Ps. 37, 35

and above that which happens to the rank-and-file of creatures we have to come to that partial [holiness] which is granted unto the other saints, in the relation between the limbs and the body.

The mysterious kind of maggenanutha — as the [gifts] 391 imparted unto each of the saints — is a kind of influence which possesses the mind. And when man is deemed worthy of this maggenanutha, the mind is snatched away in ecstasy and expanded by some divine revelation. And as long as the influence possesses the mind, man is exalted above the emotions of psychic deliberations, on account of his communion with the Holy Ghost.

And this is what was said by the Apostle in the form of a prayer unto the Ephesians, when he desired to explain to them this mystery: May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your hearts being enlightened ¹). What is the result of this? That ye may know what is the hope of His calling and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe ²).

This is one symbolical kind of maggenanutha, that when this power overshadows a man, he is deemed worthy of the glory of the new world, by revelation. And this is the part that has fallen to the lot of the saints by light; concerning which the blessed Paul says, that those are deemed worthy of it who have received sanctification of the mind from the Spirit, on account of their holy and excellent behaviour ³).

Another kind of maggenanutha is that whose action manifests itself practically. It is the intelligible power which constantly covers a man and broods over him, removing from him any injury or accident that threatens to approach his body or soul, something not to be perceived visibly by the mind, but 392 clear and evident to the eye of faith, such as was frequently experienced by the saints; as is written: The angels of the Lord encamp round about them that fear Him and deliver them ⁴). And: Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivers them out of them all ⁵).

1) Ephesians 1, 17 sq.

2) ib. 10, 18 sq.

3) cf. 2 Thess. 2, 13

4) Ps. 34, 7

5) Ps. 34, 19

LV

HOW THE HIDDEN ALERTNESS WITHIN THE SOUL
IS TO BE PRESERVED HOW SLEEPINESS AND COLD-
NESS ENTER THE MIND BANISHING THE HOLY
FERVOUR FROM THE SOUL KILLING THE DESIRE
OF GOD THAT TENDS TOWARDS SPIRITUAL AND
HEAVENLY DESIRABLE THINGS

Opposition would have no chance to cause confusion to those who desire beautiful things, if an occasion were not offered to these evil machinations by the lovers of beautiful things themselves. The matter is nearly thus.

Every impulse of love unto what is beautiful is from the beginning of its motion accompanied by some zeal which in its fervour resembles that of fiery coals. This zeal usually surrounds the impulse of love as a wall, chasing from its neighbourhood all opposition and trouble. It possesses such vigour and unspeakable force that it can stiffen the whole soul against relaxation or against being shaken by the attack of all troublous things. It is in the first place the force of the holy desire implanted in the nature of the soul, namely an emotion set astir by the force of the soul's natural anger, which is implanted in it by God in order to guard the boundaries of nature, so that it may use its vigour for fulfilling the natural desire of the soul, which is excellence. It is impossible to perform excellence without this impulse.

It is called zeal because it makes zealous and it sets astir and kindles and makes man heroic from time to time so that he despises the body in the troubles and terrible temptations which occur, and delivers his soul to death full of confidence and encounters the powers of the rebellion, giving up especially the fulfilling of what the soul loves.

A certain man, clad with Christ, somewhere in his book calls this zeal a dog and a guardian of the law of God, which is excellence.

Excellence is the fulfilling of the laws of God. This force of zeal becomes mighty and alert and fervent for the sake of guarding the house, an account of two reasons; and it becomes

weak and sleepy and despicable on account of other two reasons.

The first reason of fervour and alertness consists in anxiety for the virtues which a man possesses or is going to possess, when some fear arises, lest these virtues should be stolen or seized by some approaching event. This fear is set astir by divine care, in all worshipers of excellence, lest the alertness and the constant zeal of the soul should get asleep.

When this fear is set astir in nature, the dog of which we ³⁹⁴ have spoken will be fervent, night and day, as a blazing furnace, spurring nature which like a Cherub is watching and threatening all the surroundings at all times. If, so to speak, a bird should pass by, it would be astir and bark with a vigour unspeakably sharp.

When this fear is anxious on behalf of the body, it is satanic; because faith in God's care is shaken and man forgets how God thinks of those who care for excellence by caring for them at all times. As the Holy Ghost has said through the mouth of the prophet: The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous and His ears are [inclined] to hear them ¹). For the thoughts of the Lord are unto those who fear Him. And in another place [the prophet] says, as it were speaking in the name of God, unto those who perform righteousness: There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For He shall give His angels charge over thee to keep thee; they shall bear thee up in their hands ²), and compare the other words of Scripture.

But when this fear is on behalf of the soul, for the accidents threatening excellence, namely fear lest the soul be robbed or injured by any cause, this is a divine impulse and an excellent thought. And it is in God's care that this distress and fear originate, and this terror which torments the mind by its oppression.

The second cause of the vigour and the fervour of the dog is brought about by the increase of love of excellence in the soul. According to the measure of the love of the soul for ³⁹⁵ that which it possesses by this love, — which is a divine deliberation — this natural zeal glows for it.

As to the causes of its abating and sleepiness, one of them is brought about by love being quenched and reduced in the

1) Psalms 34, 16

2) Psalms 91, 11 sq.

soul. The second rises when some deliberation of trust takes its seat in the soul and man confides and thinks many times that there is no danger of anything that could injure him. Then he casts away the weapon of zeal and becomes as a house without a guardian. And the dog goes asleep, leaving his watch. Usually this deliberation is the source of most of the intelligible houses being robbed. This happens when the serene flame of holy knowledge in the soul becomes dark.

Whereby does it become dark, if not by some subtle deliberation of presumption penetrating into the soul, or because man is given to too much care of bodily things, or because he is frequently in contact with worldly things. Every time that strugglers come into contact with lay people, especially women, the soul descends. This also happens through contact with the multitude on account of whose gaze the soul necessarily is assailed by vain glory.

In short: the ruling mind as often as it comes into contact with the world resembles the skipper who calmly was sailing on the sea while a soft wind from behind drove him towards the harbour, when he suddenly got among the cliffs.

LVI

396 BEAUTIFUL CONSIDERATIONS¹⁾ CONCERNING THE LIFE OF MAN

As often as man in his course approaches this world, the love of worldly things takes root in him, and he is constantly troubled by the thought of them, and he fights with man for them; and becomes bound in love to some person or other, without discrimination.

When on the other hand the mind profits by the subtle meditation upon the world to be, constantly thoughts unrivalled will move in it; and expecting the things which he does not see, he goes to meet them, forgetting the things of this world, sometimes forgetting himself, because of his utter absorption in ideas, neglecting visible things on account of these deliberations. So deliberations as well as practice are despised by

1) literally: distinctions

him as long as he cares for these ideas. He is devoid of enslaving love related to single persons, but universal love which does not need sight is fixed in his soul. The apperception of recollection concerning human things gradually disappears from his mind, while the thought of hidden things increases in it, gains force and vanquishes bodily deliberations, till it is free from corruptible things, as far as nature allows this. And if it were not that the common [human] recollection was aroused in him, when the need of something which cannot absolutely be dispensed with presents itself, his mind would be directed towards future things the most of the time, by such thoughts as would give him profit of these things. And because of these he becomes a stranger¹⁾ to all the wisdom of this world. So he becomes void of recollection and a fool as it were on account of his having examined human wisdom.

397 Blessed is the man who has been deemed worthy of these things. Tears will not cease to drop from his eyes when he turns unto himself with the recollection of those things by which men are led into error, and why forgiveness is granted them, and whereby the universal end is brought about, and what labour and error is caused by these. It is said concerning Paul that on account of these emotions which prevailed over his soul, for three years he was not quit of tears, unable to subdue them.

Such a deliberation accompanied with the emotion of tears rules man when he perceives the future hope and then turns his mind towards the things of this world, [thinking] how small psychic life is in comparison with the hope preserved for eternities, in the new life. By such affectability man grows dead unto all transitory things and thought of them; and all affections of body and soul die in him.

Let us remember this, my beloved, and despise the things of this world, as much as it is possible for us; and let us gradually, to the same extent, approach with our emotions towards future things. For if a man does not compel himself, from time to time utterly neglecting the things which are before the eyes in order to abandon them gradually and to proceed onwards in this way, so that the thought and the contemplation of these things increase in him — he will remain

1) literally: a fool

in this body with his behaviour. Also those who walk in the way, if they do not go forwards in their daily march and so diminish the distance but remain on one spot, the way before
 398 them will never end and they will never arrive there where they hope to come.

Our case resembles theirs. If we do not compel ourselves gradually, we never shall have the power to abandon the bodily things in order to look towards God.

Because it is so difficult to free oneself from them when one has once become entangled in any of them, it is a matter of wisdom to struggle in order not to come near to them, so that one may be free even of the thought of them, and thus the mind be able to look towards something different. I do not mean that we should not provide for our wants; for these are a necessity and may bereave nature of life. But we should not put them in the position of the principal service by giving them the preference over the service of God. But attending to these needs in part, we must leave the care of them to God. We should confide in Him rather than in ourselves.

And when a man ventures to despise these [earthly] things wholly for the sake of spiritual things, I do not esteem this improper, because we have all the encouragements of scripture that teaches us to be strong in hope; as is written: The Lord is at hand; be careful for nothing¹⁾. And David says: Cast thy care upon the Lord and He shall sustain thee²⁾. The rich do lack and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing³⁾. And our Lord has commanded us, saying: Be careful for nothing, but frequently think of the future things. And these earthly things which are necessary because of the needs of nature, will not fail thee.

399 May God in His grace grant us that His love be abundant in us, in order that by constant meditation on Him we may forget the world and what belongs to it by becoming free from its bonds; and that instead of many bonds we may be bound with that one bond which is not loosened from those who love Him, namely the bond of the kingdom of the worlds above; that we also may be bound with it, and be deemed worthy of the prefiguration of good the fulness of which is preserved in the future world for those who have possessed

1) Philippians 4, 5

2) Psalms 55, 22

3) Ps. 34, 10 according to the Peshito

it here already. That we also may possess it and be possessed by it through the power that comes from it, for ever and ever, Amen.

LVII

HOW PATIENCE FOR THE SAKE OF THE LOVE OF GOD ACQUIRES HELP FROM GOD

In accordance with a man's despising this world and his being occupied by the fear of God, divine care will approach him and he will perceive its help in secret and there will be given to him clear emotions so as to understand it. Even though a man be not destitute of the goods of this world by his own will, still even as he is devoid of them, so mercy will follow him and divine compassion will support him. Glory to Him who shows us His grace in things of the right and of the left hand¹⁾ and who in all of them lays a cause for the renewal of our life; and who makes the souls of those who, wilfully, are too weak to acquire life, ascend towards excellence, by involuntary distress.

400 The poor Lazarus was not destitute of the goods of this world by his own will, even his body was stricken by ulcers; bitter plagues he had to endure, one still harder than the other: illness and poverty. Yet in the end he received honour in the bosom of the patriarch.

God is near to the suffering heart which out of trouble cries to Him. And though the body sometimes refuses to bear these pains for the sake of the help, yet, as a physician who causes healing by the acute pains of his operations, the Lord greatly favours his soul in accordance with the heavy pains of his distress. Now when the love of Christ is not so prevalent in thee that thou art without affection in all troubles through thy gladness in Him, know then that the world lives in thee more than Christ does. When illnesses and want, or injury of the body, or fear of its afflictions trouble thy mind in the joy of thy hope and thy clear thought in our Lord, know then that the body lives in thee, not Christ. He whose

1) happy and unhappy

love is prevalent over thee, he lives in thee. If thou art able to walk in serenity on thy way unto Christ, fulfilling all things required without lack, without bodily torments, without fear of adversaries, know then that thou art sick in thy mind and devoid of the taste of God's glory.

I do not judge why thou art so, but [I say this] in order that thou mayest know at least how far thou art from the
 401 accomplishment, even partially, of the discipline of the saints which lived before us. Do not say: There is not a man to be found whose mind, shipwrecked though the body may be by every sorrow of temptation, is so wholly exalted above sickness that the love of Christ vanquished the affectability of the mind. I refrain from reminding thee of the deeds of the martyrs; perhaps we would be unable to remain standing firm before the deluge of their sufferings, in which patience through the power of love has vanquished the trouble and the love of the body. But because even the recollection of these things is difficult to human nature, in that we are troubled by the greatness of the thing and by its amazing aspect, we will turn towards the ungodly philosophers, and from them, by a comparison with their patience, we shall find instruction concerning the weakness of our will. But this has also to be preserved till its time when we shall explain it in its place¹), knowing that also this is a sign of illness. Thus we shall not judge this matter from ourselves, but so that we may believe how very low we have been cast down and how that, despite this, it is possible that the Highest should become wholly man. The drunkard will never believe that there are many men who do not even drink wine. Neither will the lascivious believe, that there are men who wholly abstain from sexual union. Neither will he that is troubled by a certain desire believe that there are men who are not troubled at all by this desire, even though they be incited by other things. Neither will he that is constantly ill, believe that there exists
 402 a body which is not ruined by illnesses. So the consolation of those who are not able to vanquish absolutely [the weakness of] the mind, may be in the consideration that there is no man who is completely elevated above this weakness. That there are people in whom the love of Christ has vanquished

1) p. 403 (Syriac text)

the weakness of nature so that they wholly despise the body and its love, whose mind is not troubled by the gladness in Christ so that this should bring about the possibility of being vanquished by the power of oppositional forces on the part of the body, and in whom the [divine] gifts have overcome the incompetence of nature — this they do not believe at all.

I do not say that difficulties wholly fail in the way of God, or that there is anyone who lives in this way without temptations. On the contrary, I say that he that lives in excellence, day by day will find more troubles, and the farther he proceeds onwards, the more he is oppressed by distresses. This is a sign of the veraciousness of his course, that he lives a bitter life in this world and that he departs this body with torments. For this world is not the world of the righteous, and they cannot abide in it without distresses. But the will can be strengthened by grace to despise all these things and keep the mind without confusion, by the gladness of the love of Christ.

That there have been men who reached this, and that it is possible that they become thus even now, is due to the great help of the gift of Christ. Do not judge, o man, the
 403 deeds of all men, from thy own case, and do not weigh their behaviour against the weight of thy own weakness. If thou seekest, begin with hope, then thou wilt be helped. And be not incredulous lest thou be left by Him that sows these things in thee, so that thou reach the measure of thine own smallness, whatever it be, in contrast to those who have vanquished the world and its confusion absolutely.

If thou doest not believe the church, approach unto the philosophers. Then thou wilt see, how much power the will possesses to be uplifted above the body and to remain without confusion according to the choice of him that chooses. When thou seest how these, who did not know God, have displayed in the face of the world the endurance and vigour of a heroic will, and how they have shown how much force inner nature possesses to vanquish everything if it like — a man will be struck with amazement in reading their histories at the power which God has assembled in this nature, that, if we like, we can vanquish everything. But because we do not will, we preach the weakness of nature. And while we hide the vigour of nature by the weakness of our will, we say: Who should ever be able to vanquish these things?

One of them had mastered the will of the body to such a degree, that, in order not to give up and to deviate from the choice he had made, he did not even allow his mind to be disturbed when the sword was drawn; so fear of death could not break through the barrier he had made for himself. When ⁴⁰⁴ for many years he had kept silence, the king of the Greeks, wondering at his fame and desiring to put him to the test, ordered him to appear before him. As the philosopher remained silent whenever the king spoke and questioned him, giving no answer, the king grew angry and ordered him to be put to death, because he was not even impressed by the glory of his throne and crown. The philosopher was not moved by this [order], but kept his rule quietly. Then the king ordered the executioners to slay him if he should break his rule out of fear of the sword; but to bring him back living if he should be firm of will. When the moment had come and the executioners commanded him to bend his will or die, he deliberated thus: it is better once to suffer death, while keeping the rule of my will which I have borne all this time, than to give way out of fear of death, putting to shame my wisdom, and be found a coward because of that which I shall have to meet at any rate, whenever it be. — By this firmness of will and this heroic mind he was delivered even from death, being found just and true to his rule. Doest thou see what power will possesses? This sage stretched his neck before the sword without breaking his own rule.

Others have trampled upon the desire of nature and have tamed it by the bridle which they have put into its mouth. Others have remained unmoved before disdain. Others have ⁴⁰⁵ been found consistent and without wrath, before blows. Some have suffered from their equals what could hardly be borne; others from people who were by far their inferiors. Others have remained without feelings of enmity or anger while their possessions were robbed. Others have shown endurance under horrible and severe illnesses, without being troubled, and have added even other ascetic practices. Some have performed voluntary labours, others have practised total nakedness, apart from the covering demanded by chastity, or a solitary life, and support of life by raw food. Thus king Alexander, when once he went to see one of them, did not hear anything from him except on contempt of the world.

All this [they practised] lest they should be withheld from meditation and the occupying themselves with their wisdom.

If the labour of instruction and the discipline of wisdom, apart from the fear of God and the light of faith and the hope of a world to be, are able to perform such heroic deeds, who then should not be despised by his own conscience, that notwithstanding all the light of Christ which is poured out on the world, and the great gifts which are lavished abundantly in secret, and the hope on God which day by day is confirmed by events — still the difficulties and the pleasure of this body are master of him, so that he does not remain as a diamond for the sake of the love of God, despising everything joyfully?

If it is possible to be in doubt as to how men vanquish all ⁴⁰⁶ these things — every wise man knows that no one can do anything by his own power. But it is possible, because by God's help and a firm will he finds all things weaker than himself.

By these the zeal of the solitaries has been kindled, so that they have abandoned and suddenly given up the world and what belongs to it, and have become strong, withstanding all contrary things and, by endurance of will and by the help of their Lord, have vanquished all difficulties whatsoever. For they dwelt in the midst of them. Many of them were adherents of the doctrine of the philosophers, saying: If external sages, in spite of the fact that they were not on the way of God, have taken upon themselves, in return for transitory wisdom and training in the instruction of this temporary world, to bear these things, and have become alienated to the world and apart from it in their dealings, so as to reach the desire of their will, though there was no just basis in their thoughts nor hope of immortality in their labours, performing these things to this high degree with a view to a vain expectation — how much more are we bound to endure for the sake of the love of God and to despise all difficulties for the sake of the sublime future which has been promised us.

So they have been confirmed by this thought and have mastered the laxity of their deliberations and have entered the arena and turned not their backs until they have gained the crown. They were an example even for later generations, and have shown the world how those who walk this way have to enter the arena.

LVIII

407 ON THOSE WHO LIVE IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD
OF GOD AND PASS ALL THEIR DAYS IN A LIFE
OF KNOWLEDGE

Blessed is he that leads a watchful life in this world. A certain Father had written on all the walls of his cell various things, and all kinds of thoughts, and admirable words on every context. He was asked: What are these, o Father? He answered: These are deliberations of justice that occur to me through the angel that is with me and through the right impulses of nature. I write them down when I am in these apartments, in order that I may be occupied with them in the time of darkness, and that they may save me from error.

So a man ought to do all his days.

A certain Father was called happy by his own thoughts which praised him thus: In stead of the world that passes, thou hast been deemed worthy of the indestructible hope. The Father said to them: Why do ye call me happy, while I am still alive? I do not know what will happen to me till my death. I am still on the way; happiness is not certain before I have reached my home.

Indeed, this is a just deliberation. It is becoming that we should appoint our day of death as the term of victory. Before death, he that triumphs is no real victor. For his enemies are living and the way is before him, and he does not know
408 where he may be entangled; for his way is not safe, and he has not yet reached the time of trust. Thus he that is entangled in evil things has not to be dejected; for it is possible for him to gain life, as he is still alive. There is hope for him as well as for the one that behaves well. Why doest thou rebuke the sinner, o man? The labours of thine own merchandise have not yet entered the harbour; the hope of him over whom thou art extolling thyself, has not been cut off by God. It is possible that within a short time he will surpass thee in excellence and come nearer to God than thou art. For death has not yet come and concluded his affair, nor thine. Many vicissitudes happen to a man during

his life. But it is God who looks to the end and not to the things in the middle. There have been many righteous who fell from their righteousness, and sinners have come up and taken their place. Therefore the righteous should not extol himself, he is still alive; nor shall the sinner be dejected, for God is near to him if he seeks Him, and prepared to receive him when he changes his behaviour and turns towards Him. If thou hast wrought righteousness without perceiving the taste of its profit, then be not amazed.

Until a man becomes humble, he does not receive the wages of his service. Remuneration is not given for service, but for humbleness. He that wrongs the latter, looses the former.

He who has taken upon him the service of excellence is inferior to him that has first taken upon him the excellence of service. Excellence is the mother of afflictions; from afflictions humbleness is born. The gift is given for humbleness. Consequently remuneration does not belong to excellence, nor to pains for its sake, but to humbleness which is born from it. Now if humbleness fails, the other ones are vain. The service of excellence is the observance of the commandments of our Lord. The excellence of service is steadiness of mind, which is established by humbleness and watchfulness. Where the power [necessary] for the performance of the former ones fails, the latter is received instead of them. So Christ does not seek the service of the commandments, but the steadiness of the soul, for the sake of which He also has laid commandments upon rational beings. The body works with the right and with the left part, equally. But the mind, as is becoming, is either justified or condemned.

Some serve life by left-hand things, through wisdom from God; and some acquire sin under the appearance of acquiring divine things. Shortcomings in sundry things in which those who are watchful are entangled, are permitted by God in order to guard their righteousness, that their trespasses and failures may become to them a cause of humbleness.

Humbleness protects many men for their service, not only withholding them from haughtiness, but by the recollection their [trespasses] they become humble and receive higher wages.

Without blows a gift cannot be kept. A gift without temptations is found to cause the destruction of those who have received it.

If thou hast served well before God, and He has given thee a gift for thy steadfastness regarding Him, in order to spur thee on the more and to give thee joy in thy service, then let Him give thee knowledge so as to know how it is necessary to humble thyself; otherwise he would appoint a prosecutor or take it again from thee, lest there should be a chance for its being lost. It is not given to every one to guard riches without damage.

The soul that takes upon itself the trouble of excellence and lives in the veracious fear of God cannot be without daily afflictions. Virtues and afflictions are interwoven.

He who abandons troubles also abandons excellence entirely. Who clings to excellency, clings to afflictions. If thou desirest excellence, thou givest thyself over to all afflictions. Excellence is the mother of afflictions; afflictions are the mother of humbleness. For God does not desire that the soul should be without care. And he that desires this, his mind is found to be without God's will. By care I do not mean care concerning bodily things, but concerning the oppression that persecutes virtues. For before we reach true knowledge, which is the revelation of hidden things, we have to come near to humbleness through temptations. He that is found to be without afflictions in his excellence, for him a door unto haughtiness is opened. How can he who desires this [excellence] be without affliction in his mind? It is not possible that the mind remain
411 in humbleness if there is no reason for blows. And it is not possible that without humbleness it should remain in perpetual supplication unto God, in serenity.

First man is removed from the thought of his duty in his mind, then the spirit of haughtiness approaches him. At first the angel of care suffers this, but afterwards it withdraws itself from him. As long as the angel is near him, he provides him solely with thoughts of righteousness. But when he has wronged the angel and it has withdrawn itself from him, then a foreign power approaches him, and no single just thought will furthermore be in him. Haughtiness comes before ruin, says the sage ¹⁾; so humbleness before a gift. By the quantity of haughtiness which is found in the soul, is judged the scale of ruin which is on the point of being sent to it by God.

1) Proverbs 16, 19

For none of the sins does God withdraw from man, leaving him wholly because He dislikes him, until He finds the mind seized with haughtiness or blasphemy. And the former [of these two] becomes the cause of the latter.

Those who in their mind leave the way of humbleness and so become devoid of divine help, either fall into the impurity of lasciviousness, or into blasphemy, or into mental ruin.

Those who extol themselves on account of excellent behaviour, usually fall into evil lasciviousness; those who extol themselves on account of knowledge and mental discipline, into blasphemy or trouble of mind.

Haughtiness is not the state in which such deliberations⁴¹² pass through the mind, nor when the mind is sometimes overpowered by them, but when the mind clings to them. It is manifest that even for such a one there is repentance. But when he loves haughtiness, he does not know how to repent. If he does repent, he does not cling to haughtiness. Not that the evil man sins or commits a fault against God, but that he clings to his evil [is the great thing]. For the former denotes the weakness of nature, the latter audaciousness of the will.

Also by praises on the part of his fellowmen is a man's mind struck with madness, when he desires to perform among them deeds which are above his measure, in order that the glory of his greatness may increase, and men may perceive that he is very near to God. Many have excelled in behaviour and were rich in gifts from God and have been honoured with the gift of [performing] signs. But afterwards they became changed and received a blow from God, the same men that were so honoured before. The cause of this was that they were not able to bear the many gifts which they had received and were drawn towards haughtiness and were rejected by God as dross and became foreign to the high rank in which they were. And many who were quiet and firm in mind, whose words were weighed, whose behaviour was chaste, whose knowledge was envied, have become an object of fear for those who know them and a lamentable aspect for those who see them.

With loud weeping raise thy voice unto God and beg for⁴¹³ humbleness. Fill thy mouth with thy tears and stray ashes on thy head. Do not rise from the earth nor lift up thy head

from the ground, before God has shown thee mercy and has made thee to pass away from this life, saved; or till He has compassion upon thee and gives thee humbleness. And do not desist from mourning before perceiving that thou hast received it, lest thou shouldst be found suddenly as one of these ¹⁾.

And even when thou hast received [humbleness], do not lift up thy eyes, nor look towards the sky, nor satisfy thy eyes with the aspect of men nor let thy heart have rest from fear and prayer. Perhaps thou wilt be saved from the evils which are prepared by the demons, in this discipline full of darkness, narrow, with many stumbling-blocks, incomprehensible to human nature.

Believe me, my brother and consider my words as true: thou art not able to understand all the power of the demons, and thy knowledge is not sufficient to remain standing before their artifices. Let now therefore be poured out within thee a stream of light, in which the love of Christ is found and by which thou art conducted within the wall of divine mercy, to the honour of the humbleness which thou hast found.

When thou enterest into the darkness of temptations where the light withdraws itself and thou art given over to be tempted in that thick darkness of the soul into which those enter who are abandoned by God and given over to the demons, then thou wilt know that thou findest thyself face-
 414 to-face with them as a child that does not know where to go. All thy knowledge will be confuse as a little child. Thy mind which was firm in God, thy veracious knowledge, and thy sound spirit will be in the midst of the ocean of doubts.

By one thing canst thou vanquish them: by humbleness alone. As soon as thou takest hold of this, their whole power vanishes. Do not take it for [a sign] of the health of thy soul when thou goest thy course in serenity through thy joy in God, but when thy being bound up with [earthly] things does not turn thy mind away from the love of God or thy neighbour, nor thy connection with several persons from thinking of our Lord, to whom be the glory. May He keep us near to Him and in intercourse with Him. Amen.

1) who have been described in the above passage

LIX

A PROFITABLE DISCOURSE

True is the word of our Lord who has said that no one can possess love of God side by side with love of the world; nor mingle with the world and with God, nor care for the world and care for God. Apart from all that is connected with vain glory, many of us generally deviate because of bodily want, we who have promised to serve the kingdom of heaven but who do not remember the promise of our Lord who has said: If ye bestow all your care upon the
 415 kingdom of heaven, I shall not leave you in want of the needs of sensible nature; but these things will come to you spontaneously before ye think of their use at the time of want, although I do not even let you want because of care for them.

Upon the soulless fowls which have been created in your behalf, God bestows care; and should He neglect you that care for righteousness? To him that cares for spiritual things, even partially, bodily things are prepared even when he does not provide for them, in accordance with their necessity and in their time.

He that shows care for the last named things more than is becoming, will fall from God, even involuntarily. While we bestow care upon things connected with the name of our Lord, He will provide us with both kinds, in accordance with the measure of our care and the importance of the want of each of them. We should however not ask God's care in these bodily things for ourselves as a remuneration for our labours, but we should direct our whole service towards the future hope. For he that once has given himself to excellence with the love of his soul and longs after its service with his whole being, does not think of looking after bodily things, whether they are or are not. How many times does God allow the friends of excellence to be tempted by such things! And not only this; but He even allows many evil things to assail them from all sides; and He smites their body, as in the case of
 416 Job, and gives poverty entrance to them and lets them be deprived of their human state, and smites them in all that

they possess, with this restriction only, that the plague should not attain to their life.

It is not possible that we should walk in the way of righteousness and that no troubles should hurt us, nor that the body should not suffer illness and pains, nor that we should remain without varying states, if we really desire to live in excellence. That however a man should wilfully kill or injure himself or harm himself in any way, is a cause of damnation. If he walks in the way of righteousness and follows his course towards God, together with many of his fellows, and one of these things should hurt him on his way, it is not becoming for him to deviate; but he shall accept them joyfully without scrutiny, thanking God because He has given him His gift, God for whose sake he has been deemed worthy to be entangled in temptations so as to become associated with the sufferings of prophets and apostles and the other saints who have endured troubles on behalf of the way of God; [thanking God] because He has deemed him worthy to bear afflictions for the way of excellence, even though they should happen through men, or through the demons or through the body.

These things are not permitted without the divine will, but they happen in order that thou mayest have a cause of righteousness. For it is not possible that God should give the opportunity of becoming excellent to him that desires to be with Him, otherwise than by bringing him into contact with temptations for the sake of truth.

That a man himself is not able to become worthy of such
 417 a greatness that he should be led into temptations in behalf of these divine things with joy, but only by a gift from Christ, is witnessed by the blessed apostle. For so great is this thing, that he openly calls it a gift that a man for the sake of the hope in God should be prepared to suffer by faith, saying: For unto you it is given from God, not only to believe in Christ, but also to suffer for his sake¹⁾.

Then thank without a break Him that has delivered you from the dominion of the darkness of the world and has brought you near the kingdom of His son, and has made you fellows of all the children of light who have suffered for the sake of God, in order that you may gain the part that has fallen to

1) Philippians 1, 29

the lot of the saints in the light. And this is what Peter writes in his epistle: But if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye¹⁾. For you will have a share in Christ's suffering. Therefore, when thou art free from affliction, do not leap up with joy, nor when circumstances assail thee cover thy face with sadness, reckoning this as something foreign to the way of God.

Behold, for years and generations, the way of God has been leveled by the cross and by death. How is this with thee, that thou seest the afflictions of the way as if they were out of the way? Doest not thou wish to follow the steps of the saints? Or doest thou wish to go a way which is especially⁴¹⁸ for thee, without suffering? The way unto God is a daily cross. No one can ascend unto heaven with comfort, we know where the way of comfort leads.

If any one trusts himself with his whole heart to God, God never wishes to take care away from him, namely care for the sake of truth. But thereby he knows that he is guided by God, when He continually sends him afflictions. But those who are guided under afflictions, are never allowed by divine care to fall into the hands of the demons, especially when they kiss the feet of the brethren and hide and cover their shortcomings as if they were their own.

He that wishes to be without care in the world yet guided by excellence, loathes this way. As the blessed commentator says in his interpretation of Matthew: For those who long after excellence, it is not possible to flee from afflictions. For afflictions will necessarily increase to the same measure as the soul fights against contrary powers. But when afflictions leave it, the soul in the first place leaves what belongs to it.

He that says that he is without care, yet is guided by excellence, does not even know whence excellence is born in the soul. For we know what are the governors of excellence. By temptations the gate of heaven is opened before the soul. Our Fathers have guided us in this way. God who gives unto His saints victory in strife so that their deliberations are not turned away from the future hope, will guard and help us by their prayers. Amen.

⁴¹⁹ The righteous not only excel in beautiful works by their will but even in involuntary temptations they excel greatly by

1) 1 Peter 3, 14

their tried patience, because they valiantly endure all earthly troubles, expecting the amazing wages of the world to be. The soul which clings to the fear of God does not fear before anything which harms the body.

LX

THAT WITHOUT NECESSITY WE SHOULD NOT
DESIRE NOR ASK THAT ANY SIGN SHOULD MA-
NIFESTLY HAPPEN THROUGH US OR UNTO US

The Lord who is always near the saints through the signs of help He sends to them, does not show, without necessity, His power manifestly by performing any perceptible sign, lest the things which are meant to help us, should become impotent or a means to bring us harm. Such is His way, though He care for them to such an extent; that His secret providence does not abandon them one moment. But in all things He allows them to show care according to their power and to fatigue themselves by prayer.

If however the matter is so difficult, that the scale of their knowledge should become too light, after they have spent their force and resigned because nature is not sufficient [for such a task], He will give His supply according to the greatness of His power, as is becoming and profitable to them in
420 His' mind. As long as possible He strengthens them secretly in order that they may remain standing before that difficulty. By the knowledge which He grants them He causes its bond to be loosened, and by contemplation He excites them unto glorification, in order that the matter may be of profit to both parties.

If however the case wants manifest action, He will proceed to give this, for necessity's sake. His acts of providence are wise, serving necessity, not chance.

He that without necessity ventures upon this, begging from God and desiring that wonders and powers should happen through himself, is found to be tempted¹⁾ of the scornful demon in his heart, and even a boaster and one sick in heart.

For to ask God's help in trouble, is becoming. But to tempt

1) Reading **ⲉⲙⲓⲛⲁ** with Bedjan and the Greek translation (*πειρασζόμενος*)

without necessity, is a dangerous thing. He is not even truly a righteous one, who desires this. But that which the Lord does without any man's will, is found by most of the saints. That a man should desire this wilfully, without necessity, is apostasy from watchfulness and aberration from true knowledge. And if he that asks is heard on this point, because of his daring and his persuading our Lord, he is led unto a thing which is still more serious. But those who are truly righteous, do not desire this; and they not only do not count upon this
 421 but they do not even ask for it, if it is given them; neither before the eyes of men, nor even privately.

Unto one of the saints, because of his serenity, the gift was granted that he knew beforehand if any one should visit him; but he asked God, and he persuaded others to pray for this, that the gift might be taken away from him.

The Fathers did not use this freedom of speech not even in times of necessity. When the blessed Ammon, a holy man in truth, one of the admirable Fathers, went to the great Mar Antonius and wandered in the desert he did not say: O God take me up and set me down there where Antonius is — though he would have been able to do something like this, because of his being near to God, and because this was a case of necessity; for it is said that those who are wandering in this desert incur danger. Notwithstanding all these things, he did not say this to God, but said only this word: O Lord, let not Thy creature perish. — Doest thou perceive the humbleness, doest thou understand the true wisdom of the Fathers? And
 422 God, because He knew that the man was true and not led in his deliberations by haughtiness, showed unto him His care for the saints, and did to the man as his greatness deserved. And so, though Ammon did not beseech, God did what was becoming. For Ammon lay down to sleep; and rising he saw as it were the hand of a man hanging above his head in the sky and showing him the way, till it went and stood still above the cave of the blessed Antonius. — Doest thou perceive God's care for His housemates? It would have been possible even not to let him err. But God desired that Ammon should know how much He cared for him. So He let Him err and showed him afterwards manifestly the way, not through a man, but through an angel and in the air. Blessed be God's care for the saints.

Recollect also what happened to Aba Macarius. When he went to Skete, bearing baskets, and grew fatigued and weary, he sat down because he could not walk any longer. But he did not ask from God that He should do unto him anything, by His influence, to give him comfort. But he trusted himself unto God saying: O God, thou knowest that I have no more strength. Then at once, in a moment, by divine influence, he was taken up and placed there whether he wished to go, he and his baskets.

Those who are righteous in truth, constantly think in their heart that they are not worthy of God. And they consider themselves as true in so far as they deem themselves to be wretches. And they sincerely confess, secretly and openly that they are not worthy of His care. And as sinners and wretches
423 they bestow care and painstaking upon everything and trust themselves unto God, in faith, though, as far as their strength goes they do not desist from what they ought to do, being instructed by the Spirit that they should not neglect to care for their duty but to labour as long as they live.

The time of rest He has preserved for the world to be. And those in whom God dwells do not desire that they may have rest here and be liberated from torments, although consolation in spiritual things is given unto them from time to time in secret.

Excellence is not that a man, on reaching it, should give up care and painstaking. But this is [the sign of] the immanence of the Spirit, that a man constantly subdues and compels himself, even if it should be possible to perform the thing in comfort. For the will of the Spirit is not to accustom those in whom it dwells to laziness and to invite them to comfort, but to labours and greater trouble. And it will teach them alertness and confirm them by temptations and lead them towards wisdom.

It is the will of the Spirit that those who love it, be in vexations. In those who pass their life in comfort, not the Spirit of God but the Spirit of Satan dwells. The Spirit of God is not pleased with bodily comfort, nor does it find pleasure in a life of comfort, but in a life of vexations. Satan on the other hand finds pleasure in a life full of comfort, according to Our Lord's witness. The Holy Spirit flees from comfort;
424 as it is said by the holy Fathers: The Spirit of God does not

dwell in a body softened ¹⁾ by comfort. But it looks after a place where people strain themselves, with an emaciated body, and a prepared soul; and with them it takes habitation, teaching them how to live during this small space of time.

Those who love God complete their life under all kinds of trouble. For all the righteous have driven out this world by means of vexations. According as they came nearer to God, their vexations increased. For one of them said with oaths: I die every day. I conjure you by your honour, o my brethren, that it has been given me in our Lord Jesus Christ to die every day. Therein they differ from other men; and that God lives in them [appears from the fact] that they live in troubles whereas the world delights in comfort. God has not chosen that those who love Him should enjoy bodily comfort, but it is His will that as long as they live they should be in trouble in the world, afflicted, vexed, needy and lonely; naked and poor; sick, scorned and beaten. A standing place they have not; their heart is broken; their body is humbled; their acquaintances disavow them; their mind is full of distress; their aspect is strange to all creatures; their dwelling place is strange to all mankind; their habitation is solitary and lonely, bereft of the sight of the world, void of every sign of the things which cause joy in this world; destitute of any comfort. Mourning,
 425 is found in it; joy, is far from it; afflictions, are frequent in it. They do not even possess plenty of that which the body needs as all men do. Their bed is the ground; their faces are parched by fasting; their knees tremble from weakness. Their internal organs are unfitted for their customary purpose through service alien to human habit. They weep, and the world laughs. They are sorry, and the world is joyful. They fast, and the world takes comfort. All creatures enjoy a sweet sleep, and they wake in prayer. During the day they are wearying themselves and during the night they prepare themselves for struggle. The saints live a bitter life in the world, with a humbled body, an afflicted soul and in distress on all sides.

Thus it is the will of God that all those who are near to Him should live in miserable circumstances, being humbled and wretched in their whole soul and body; some through

1) Dwell and softened are expressed by the same root in Syriac

voluntary troubles; some through the vexations caused by their sufferings; some through the bitter pains which they bear in their bodies; some through the misery and the persecutions of men; danger of sufferings, danger of the demons, danger of illnesses, danger of poverty. Others have been persecuted; others have been put to death; others have been sawn asunder; others have been stoned; others have been drowned in the sea; others have had their limbs cut off alive; others have been delivered to scorn and contempt; others have been ⁴²⁶ punished by the flames, others by prison, others by terrible flogging; others have been delivered to the sword; others have gone round, clad in hides of lambs and goats, and have become as lost in the desert. Troubles the saints have undergone on mountains and in caverns and in the holes of the earth. Of such people according to the witness of the apostle, the world was not worthy. But what is more marvellous than all these things, they did not expect to be saved or to find rest on account of all these according to the word of the blessed apostle. Glory to Him that crowned them, He that by the suffering of the cross has also completed this path with all its previous sufferings, that also His saints may follow His steps.

Fulfilled has been the word of our Lord: In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in me ye shall have good cheer ¹⁾. By the force of this good cheer, these saints acquire the power to be patient. May God, by whose power the saints have been patient in these struggles without becoming weak in their hope, strengthen His hope in us all. Amen.

Without troubles, no life. God did know that two kinds of gladness cannot be in one man. And because it is impossible to cling to His love when the body is in comfort, He has withheld men from this, and has strengthened His love in their soul by bereaving them from all worldly pleasure. May Christ, whose love is stronger than death and fire and sword ⁴²⁷ and exile and alienation from family and loss of life — and no difficulties can remain standing before His love of His friends — reveal in us the power of His love. Amen.

1) John 16, 33

LXI

FOR WHICH CAUSES GOD ADMITS TEMPTATIONS
TO HIS FRIENDS

By the love which the saints show unto God in return for what they bear for the sake of His name in that they undergo trials without leaving the excellency which God loves, their heart acquires freedom to look towards Him without a veil and to ask from Him with confidence.

Great is the power of prayer in freedom of speech. Therefore He allows that His saints are tried by all afflictions, on the way towards Him, in order that they may acquire freedom of speech and may experience His help and His care for them in that He is found to be their saviour in danger; and in order that His friends may acquire wisdom through temptations so that they are not dull and destitute of training. So through temptation they acquire knowledge concerning everything, and are not laughed at lightly by the demons.

For if He would train them by good things only they would lack training in other things and they would be as blind men in trials. And if someone should say: He guides them without training and without selfknowledge [the conclusion would be] that He wished them to be like oxen and asses who possess
428 no freedom whatever. There is even no taste in the good, when a man has not first been tried by temptations of evil and afterwards finds it and when he does not use it as his own, in knowledge and freedom. How sweet that knowledge is which has been acquired through training and the experience of labours, and how much strength it imparts to him that has found it after many personal experiences, is known to those who are acquainted with the help afforded by it.

They learn the weakness of nature and the help afforded by divine power when He first withdraws power from them while they are in temptations. Then they perceive the weakness of nature and the strength of temptations and the wickedness of the Fiend, [perceiving] of which nature their Fiend is, with which nature they are clad, and how they are guarded by divine power; and how, though they run and are uplifted,

when the divine power withdraws itself from them, they become weak before all passions.

Through all this they acquire humbleness, and press close to God, expecting His help and persevering in prayer. How could they have acquired all this, if they had not experienced myriads of evils, without God's caring for their being surrounded by them? 'And lest I should be exalted through the abundance of revelations, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan' ¹⁾).

Man acquires also a confirmed faith by temptations, through experiencing divine help, when it is granted several times. And furthermore he is without fear and acquires courage by temptation, on account of the training he acquires.

429 Temptation is useful to every man. The virtuous are tempted in order that their riches may increase; the lax, in order that they may be preserved from injuries; the sleepy, in order that they may be armed with alertness; those that are afar off that they may come nearer to God; the housemates, that they may approach with freedom of speech.

A son that is not trained, cannot profit by the riches that are given to him from his father's house. Therefore God tempts and vexes first, then He shows His gift. Glory to that Lord who by strong drugs brings us the delight of health. There is no one, to whom the time of exercise is not hard; and there is no one, to whom the time during which he is obliged to drink the potion of temptations, is not bitter. But without this, a sound constitution cannot be obtained. Even to endure is not of our own. How should a clay vessel endure the vehemence of the waters, if the divine fire had not hardened it? If we daign to ask in humbleness fervently and perseveringly, we shall receive everything.

1) 2 Cor. 12, 7

LXII

THAT BY THE THOUGHTS WHICH STIR IN A MAN
HE KNOWS TO WHICH DEGREE HE BELONGS AND
WHICH THOUGHTS FOLLOW

As long as a man is negligent, he fears the hour of death; when, however, he comes near to God, the coming of Judgment. But when he proceeds firmly, both kinds of fear are taken away. How does this happen? While ¹⁾ his knowledge and his behaviour are of a bodily nature, he is frightened by death. But when his knowledge is of a psychic nature, and his behaviour is steadfast, his mind is moved by the thought of Judgment every moment. In the first state he belongs wholly to nature; in the psychic state he is moved and guided by his knowledge and by his discipline. And he is happy in the neighbourhood of God. But when he reaches true knowledge by the motion of the apprehension of God's mysteries and becomes confirmed in future hope, he is consumed by love.

He that is bodily, fears as an animal fears being slaughtered; he who is rational fears the Judgment of God. He that has become a son, is pleasing to love, not to the staff of him who terrifies. 'I and my house, we will serve the Lord' ²⁾). For love annihilates fear. It not only fears not but it even longs after departure. Love is the dissolver of temporary life. He that has reached the love of God, does not desire to stay here any more.

My beloved ones, because I was foolish, I could not bear to guard the secret in silence, but am become mad, for the sake of my brethren's profit. For true love is not able to cling to the cause of love apart from friends.

Oft when I was writing these things, my fingers paused on the paper. They could not bear the delight which had fallen into the heart and which made the senses silent. Blessed is he that is in constant intercourse with God and has withdrawn himself from worldly things, being with Him only, in intercourse founded upon his knowledge. And if he has to be patient, it will not be long before he sees fruits.

1) Introduction

2) Joshua 24, 15

431 Gladness in God is stronger than earthly life. He that has found it, is not only free from the trial of the affections, but he does not even turn towards his life any longer. Furthermore he has no other apperception, if he really has been deemed worthy of this.

Love is sweeter than life. And understanding concerning God, from which love is born, is sweeter than honey and honeycomb. What is the sweetness of love which excels life? Love is not spiteful if it has to undergo a myriad of deaths for the sake of its friends.

Love is the child of knowledge, knowledge the child of health of soul. Health of soul is a power born from patient endurance. And what is knowledge? The apperception of immortal life. What is immortal life? Apperception in God. Knowledge concerning God is the highest of all desirable things. And the heart that has received it, does not want the sweetness of anything on the earth. Because to the sweetness of the knowledge concerning God nothing is to be compared.

O Lord, fill my heart with life everlasting. Life everlasting is consolation in God. He that has found consolation in God, to him the consolation of the world is superfluous. How is it perceived in a man that he has received wisdom from the Spirit? Thereby, that wisdom teaches him kinds of humbleness, internally and by his senses; then it is revealed to him in his intellect, how humbleness is acquired.

432 How is it to be perceived that he has reached humbleness? Thereby that it is a vile thing to him to please this world by act or word, and thereby that the glory of this world is ugly in his eyes.

What are the affections? The allurements that lie in the things and the stories of this world, evoking a bodily want, which never cease as long as the world exists. If a man however has been deemed worthy [to know] the divine intellect and to taste and perceive what is more profitable than those things, their allurements will not enter his heart, because their place has been taken by a desire which is better than those. Then the allurements of [worldly] things and those which are born from them, will no longer approach his heart. But they will stand outside idle. Not that the allurements of the affections do not exist any longer, but the heart which could

receive them is dead to them and living to some other thing. Not that it desists from watchfulness and the labour of discrimination; but there is no longer any struggle in the mind, in as much as the inner being is satisfied by the delight of some other thing. So, when a man is satisfied with delicious and fat food, and his inner being with abundance and delight, and then he sees food which is unclean and steeped in its own filth, his inner being does not need care to check it from desire or to withhold it from gazing at it with lust; nay, the whole inner being is even shaken and troubled by the sight
 433 of it. This does not happen on account of the uncleanness of the food, for possibly he had been accustomed to it before; but on account of the comparison with the excellence of that other food which had filled his inner being with every delight. So it is with the health of the soul. If the heart has really received the apperception of spiritual things and the contemplation of the world to be, its inner being will regard the affections in the way mentioned.

And just as a man when he loses his riches and becomes poor and destitute of the glorious and excellent food in which he delighted in the royal palace, forgets its delicious taste, and those glorious dishes are no longer with him and his stomach is deprived of the delight of their abundance, and he has necessarily to turn towards food which is by far inferior — so it is with him that was deemed worthy of health of soul. If he is deprived of that divine delight because he neglects his duty and falls asleep and becomes neglectful he again turns towards that sordid food, that has been steeped in all filth and which is unclean; and his inner being does not examine, because the stomach of his soul is empty. For to the hungry soul even bitter things are sweet.

And farther: no one to whom a treasure is entrusted will indulge in sleep. If he keeps the law of watchfulness and
 434 clings to the labour of discernment, and through knowledge derived from these drinks in life, the struggle of the allurements of the affections will not approach his mind at all. And these allurements will not be held back with effort from entering the heart, but the satiety of the inner soul which is full of knowledge, and the desire of amazing visions which is found in it, restrain them from approaching to man with their intercourse. This does not happen, as I have said, while man

desists from watchfulness and from the labour of discrimination which are the guardians of true knowledge and of psychic light ; but it happens without the mind being involved in struggle, for the reasons which have been expounded.

The food of the poor is despicable to the rich and the nutriment of the sick to the healthy. But riches and health are established through watchfulness and diligence. This is witnessed to by nature. As long as a man lives he needs watchfulness and diligence and alertness in order to guard his treasure. But if he leaves his territory, he becomes ill and is robbed [of his possessions]. For a long time even he will possess strength through his previous health, but when this does not increase, he will become a prey to weakness and indigence. Does not even nature instruct us concerning these things? And is there any heavenly thing which cannot be discussed in a comparison which we find in our nature? Even our Lord used to confirm all spiritual things by examples from nature and in this way He used to establish their power in our souls ; not only things relating to the shortliving earthly pawn, but also those belonging to the true body, and the
435 completion and the truth of our future. Do not wonder at what I have said. There is not only work to be done till the fruit shows itself, but even till the time of gathering the fruit there is still work to be done. By the time of gathering the fruit I mean the grave. It may occur that, when the fruit has become ripe, hail of a sudden will strike it.

He that mingles with things and proceeds to have intercourse, cannot be certain that his health will stay with him. I say : using and seeing [are the same]. O Jesus Christ, king of the worlds, make me worthy of desire in Thee. The man who adheres to intercourse with God, and who has mingled his life with it, is greater than any other man on the earth and [greater] than any service performed by rational creatures. When thou prayest unto God, say to Him only this : O Lord make me worthy of becoming dead to the intercourse with this world, in truth. — So thou canst comprehend the whole prayer. And try diligently to accomplish this in thyself in reality. If prayer is followed by practice, thou surely art standing in the freedom of Christ.

Being dead to the world is not only this that a man keeps himself far from mingling with [worldly] things. But this is

being dead to the world in truth: that a man in ¹⁾ his mind does not long after the goods of the world.

If we are accustomed to beautiful meditation, we are eshamed of the affections when we come in contact with them (this is known by those who have experienced it in their soul), and so we shall be ashamed to approach unto their causes.

⁴³⁶ If thou desirest to cling to some work for the sake of the love of God, then set death as the limit of thy desire for it. So by practising it, thou wilt be elevated unto the degree of martyrdom through every suffering and injury which smites thee within the domain of death, if thou perseverest till the end without giving way. Meditating upon a feeble deliberation weakens the power of patience. But the confirmed mind imparts a strength which does not belong to nature, to him that adheres to its contemplation. O Lord, make me worthy of hating my life, for the sake of life in Thee.

Dealings in this world resemble a copy of a book which is still in rough draft. What a man desires or whenever he wishes, something can be added to or taken from it, and so he may alter his writing. Future dealings resemble documents drawn up as bonds, provided with the seal of the king, to or from which it is not allowed to add or subtract anything. As long as we are in the place where altering is possible, let us observe ourselves; and while we have authority over our lifebook and our book is still between our hands, let us zealously add [acts of] beautiful behaviour, and let us scratch from it the loss of the old behaviour without freedom. We are allowed to scratch out faults, as long as we are here. And God will take into account every alteration we make in it. May we be deemed worthy of life everlasting before we appear before the king, and He puts His seal on the book ²⁾). As long as we are in this world, God will not put His seal ⁴³⁷ neither on our good works nor on our bad ones, before the hour of departure, when we have completed the service of our country and we prepare to strike camp.

So it is becoming for us, as the blessed Mar Ephraim says, that we make our soul resemble at all times a ship that is prepared [for sea]. When the wind [required] for her will blow,

1) The text has: in the intercourse or occupation of his mind

2) Cf. the Muslim doctrine of the *خواتيم*

she does not know. And the army does not know when the trumpet will give the sign to start; and to the tenant it is not known when the landlord will give the command to depart. Now if these are thus prepared for the sake of a short absence, as they will soon turn perhaps and come back, how much more is it becoming for us to be prepared and ready before the long absence of the day of death. May Christ, the mediator of our life, grant us to reach that long bridge and the gate of the new world, in a state of preparation. To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

LXIII

WHY IT IS THAT PEOPLE WHO ARE IN THE PSYCHIC STATE OF KNOWLEDGE CONSIDER SPIRITUAL THINGS IN ACCORDANCE WITH [THEIR] BODILY GROSSNESS AND HOW IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE MIND BE ELEVATED ABOVE THIS AND WHAT IS THE CAUSE WHY WE ARE NOT FREED FROM IT AND WHEN AND HOW IT IS POSSIBLE FOR THE MIND TO REMAIN WITHOUT IMAGES AT THE TIME OF PRAYER

He whose majesty is blessed, will open the gate before us, so that we have no single wish than desire of Him. When
 438 we so abandon everything, and our mind goes out to seek Him alone, there will be no thought in it of anything which screens its face from the aspect of the Lord of the Universe. The more the mind abandons the thought of visible things, o my beloved, and the more it thinks of the future hope, in accordance with the degree of elevation above bodily thoughts and intercourse with them, to the same extent it will be subtilized and become clear during prayer.

To the same extent as the body, the mind is made free from the bonds of [worldly] things; and to the same extent as it is made free from the ties of thoughts, does it become serene; and to the same extent as it becomes serene, is it also subtilized; and to the same extent as it is subtilized, is it lifted up above the emotions of this world which bears the stamp of grossness. And it knows that it shall look on God as He is, not as we are.

If a man has not been deemed worthy of revelation before, it is not possible that he should know this. And if he does not attain purity, his emotions are not made clear so as to look at the hidden things. And until through his [spiritual] riches he be freed from all that is seen, he is not freed from emotions for those things, and he does not become devoid of deliberations that cause darkness. And even as darkness and enchaining thoughts, so the affections are there.

If a man is not made free from all those things which I have mentioned and from their causes, he cannot consider the hidden things of the mind. Therefore our Lord has ordered us to practise renunciation before any other thing, and flight from the troubles of the world, and freedom from common human thought. Who does not forsake his whole human state and all that he possesses, and deny even himself, he cannot be a disciple to Me ¹⁾; lest the mind be injured by anything: 439 by sight, by hearing, by care of [worldly] things, their loss or their increase, or by man. And thereby that He has bound our mind by hope of Himself alone, He has caused the whole care of our deliberations to look towards Himself. And in Himself He has bound the whole care of our mind, after having freed it from all other things, that thence we may long after intercourse with Himself, because of our care being continually directed towards Himself.

Prayer further requires also training, that through long practice the mind may become wise. For after renunciation which frees our impulses from bonds, prayer requires constancy that through constancy and time the mind may acquire training so as to know how to restrain its deliberations and to learn through experience many things which it cannot receive from others. Any [state of] discipline is prepared ²⁾ by the preceding one; and the preceding one is necessary for the existence of the following.

Prayer is preceded by reclusion; reclusion [is practised] with a view to prayer; prayer in order to acquire love of God; for in prayer are found causes for loving God.

Also this we must know, my beloved ones, that any hidden intercourse, or any meditation upon spiritual things, is to be denoted by prayer or comprehended under the name of prayer

1) Cf. Luke 14, 33

2) literally: educated

or included within this denomination: be it recitation with discrimination, or songs in praise of God, or painstaking thought of our Lord, or prostration of the body, or psalms of glorification, and so on. For from them is received instruction concerning veracious prayer; and from the latter love of God is born. And love is through prayer; and prayer through dwelling alone. And loneliness serves the purpose, that we should have a place where we can converse with God in solitude. Loneliness is preceded by abandonment of the world.

If a man forsake not the world first and renunciate all that he possesses, he cannot attain to loneliness. So abandonment of the world in its turn is preceded by patience, and patience by hatred of the world; hatred of the world by fear and love. For if the mind is not terrified by the fear of Hell and incited by the love of [future] good, the hatred of this world will not arise in him. And if the mind does not hate the world, it cannot forego its intercourse and comfort. And if the mind has not acquired patience before, it cannot choose dwelling in solitude without companions. And if it does not choose a lonely life, it cannot abide in prayer. And if it is not constantly in intercourse with God and cling to those impulses which are interwoven with prayer and to those kinds of instruction which are in prayer, as we have said, it cannot perceive love.

So the love of God proceeds from intercourse with Him; the intercourse of prayer from solitude; solitude from renunciation; renunciation in its turn from patience; patience from hatred of desires; hatred of desires from fear of Hell and the expectation of the [future] good. Desires are hated by him that knows the fruits thereof, namely what they prepare for him and from what good he is deprived for their sake.

So every discipline is connected with that which precedes it, takes increase from it and proceeds unto others which are higher. And if one of the middle links should fail, the following could not maintain itself and it would appear that all were loosened and lost.

LXIV

ON THE MANY VARYING STATES WHICH CLING TO
THE MIND AND ARE PURIFIED BY PRAYER

To choose what is good, is the part of the good will of him that desires this. To accomplish the choice of the excellent will, this belongs to God and it requires much help on His part. Therefore we have to combine the good desire which is awakened in us, with continual prayer. Not only in order to ask from Him help, but also to discriminate whether it concords with His will or not. Not every beautiful desire falls into the heart by divine action, but [only] that which is profitable. There are beautiful things which man may desire though they do not help him. Such desires may even be sent by Satan, even though they be esteemed to be helpful. How many times does the thing desired not fit his measure; and
 442 Satan has contrived it to his detriment, compelling him to ask it, though he has not yet reached this [stage of] discipline or though he is a stranger to the rank of its scheme; or the time is not fit in which Satan incites him to accomplish these things; or he is not able to perform them, either through [lack of] knowledge, or through bodily weakness, or through the time not being favorable. At any rate, though it does seem beautiful, it either troubles him, or it causes him bodily harm, or it places a hidden snare in his mind.

So, as I have said, we have to combine continual and diligent prayer with theseemingly good desire which is awakened in us, saying, every one of us: May it be Thy will regarding me, to accomplish in fact this good which I have chosen and which I desire to practise, if it concords with Thy will. To fix my will on it, is easy to me; to practise it, is however not possible for me without a gift on Thy part. Though in truth both are thine, to will and to do ¹⁾. For it is not without Thy grace that I have surrendered to or been shaken before that which stirred in me. It is the custom of him that desires any good thing with discrimination of mind, to work for it in

1) Cf. Philippians 2, 13

prayer continually; and the force [he acquires] thereby, he will use as an aid for his service. And then wisdom which distinguishes truth from falsehood through much prayer and labour and watchfulness and beautiful longing without break, will come to light, in continual tears, humbleness and heavenly help, especially when its opponents are deliberations of haughtiness which remove from us God's help, and which we can annihilate by prayer.

LXV

443 GOOD ADVICE GIVING INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING WATCHFULNESS AND DIRECTIONS CONCERNING THE WAY OF DISCIPLINE BY WHICH A MAN MAY ACQUIRE A HIGH RANK

Repentance¹⁾ is the mother of life. It opens to us its gate when we flee from all things. The grace which we have lost, after baptism, by a lax behaviour, is restored in us by repentance, through discrimination of mind. From water and spirit we have put on Christ, without perceiving His glory. By repentance we enter into His delight through the discriminating love which rises in us.

He who is destitute of repentance, is destitute of future delight. He who is near to all, is far from repentance. He who is far from all, with discrimination, is the true repentant. As soon as a man withdraws from men and concentrates upon himself, impulses of repentance will show themselves in his mind. He receives the seed of life from grace and, as an embryo, the affection of discrimination moves in him, and in his heart is stirred the thought of eternal life in the future and the hope of resurrection and the thought of Judgment.

Do not think that without divine grace suffering falls into the mind, which receives [it] secretly, as a gift through divine mercy, because of a sudden contrition and a longing after life. As also the blessed Euagrius says¹⁾: A purifying drug is the
444 hot contrition of the soul, which is given by the Lord through the angels to those who repent, that through diligence puri-

1) Cf. Introduction

fication from the affections may be granted. Further he says: The fire of a furnace is the hot contrition of the soul, which through the grace of Christ happens to the soul at the time of prayer so that the thoughts attain contemplation. Its lack is cured by living water.

The beginning of repentance is humbleness without artifice. Splendid garments are a confusion of repentance. The way towards wisdom is the regulation of the limbs. Bodily efferences are a confusion of wisdom. True wisdom is looking towards God. Looking towards God is silence of the deliberations. Solitude of the mind is quietness with discrimination. The moisture of the senses is a fountain of deliberations. Apperception in God is the depth of humbleness.

True contemplation is the mortification of the heart. The heart which is really dead to the world, is wholly astir in God. True mortification is the motion of life. It is better to smell life by desisting from all, than to build life by desisting from smelling. Better is he that builds his soul than he that builds the world. It is better to imbibe life than to distribute life. He whose outward limbs are dead, his inner emotions are alive. He whose outward limbs are alive, has killed the limbs of wisdom. Humbleness with discrimination is true knowledge. True knowledge is a fountain of humbleness. He that is humble in his heart, is humble in his body. He who is audacious in his body, is audacious in his heart. He who is
 445 perturbed in his body, is perturbed in his heart. He who is perturbed in his heart, is foolish in his mind. He who is foolish in his mind, his ways are evil. Whose way is evil, he is dead in life.

If thou lovest humbleness, do not love finery. A man who loves finery cannot bear contempt. And to take to lonely works, is difficult to him. And he is ashamed of submitting to him that is inferior to himself.

The servant of God does not adorn his body. Know that every man who loves bodily finery is sick in his inner being, though he performs beautiful [works]. And to every one who loves visible profit, it is impossible to acquire true love of any one. And every one who runs after honour, is a slave of this world. If those who do these things are disliked by thee, then restrain thyself from the same things.

Humbleness and chastity are promoted by the same idea

of contempt. And from him that loves honour and finery thou requirest not the former properties in their truth. If thou lovest chastity, do not love distraction. Things which happen to thee through divagation do not allow thee to cling to chastity with caution. No one who loves distraction, is chaste. And do not believe that any one who converses with lay people, is humble. Every one who loves God loves a solitary life. That a man who is given to distraction should guard truth in his soul without a stain, is impossible.

Many show the appearance of repentance; but only he possesses it in truth, that is grieved in heart. Many run to find the affection of the heart; but only he finds it in truth, that possesses continual silence. Every one who is a servant of God, loves grief.

Every one who possesses profuse speech is certainly empty within, though he tells amazing things.

Inward grief is a bridle of the senses.

If thou lovest truth, thou must love silence. This will make thee illuminated in God like the sun and it will deliver thee from the idle thoughts of ignorance; silence will even unite thee with God.

When thy kneeling gives thee delight, do not hasten to reach its end. Would that it never ended as long as thou art in this life. When thy mind is concentrated, do not cut off thy prayer. Do not count as idleness a long concentrated prayer, as against the long recitation of Psalms. Love kneeling during prayer better than the sound of the sentences. If it profits thee, then accomplish it instead of thy service.

If the gift of tears be given thee during thy service, do not deem the delight which is in it as a pause in thy service. For the gift of tears is the accomplishment of prayer.

Do not wonder if sometimes, while thou art kneeling in prayer, thy mind, being concentrated upon it, desist from praying. This thou wilt find during service as well as during recitation. When thy mind is distracted, it will rather adhere to recitation than to prayer. Thy method of recitation has to be parallel to the scope of thy discipline. Not all books are useful for the concentration of the mind. Most books containing instruction are not useful for purification. Various books cause distraction of mind. Know that not every book containing instruction concerning the fear of God, is also useful

for the purification of the inner being and the concentration of the deliberations. Do not dispute about the exact significance of these things with him that does not know the truth.

Love rest more than labours. Honour recitation, if possible, more than standing ¹⁾; for it is a source of pure prayer. But there is no reason at all to despise standing. Beware of snares.

Recitation of Psalms is the root of discipline. But know this, that the sentences [sung] with a distracted mind suit better bodily labour. Mental grief is better than bodily fatigue. At the time of weariness be accustomed to spur on thy zeal somewhat. For the heart greatly needs to be alert to render fervent the emotions of the soul. As against desire, so natural warmth is also helpful at the time of weariness; for it chases the cold from the soul. Usually weariness befalls us at two occasions: through a heavy stomach and through great weakness caused by labours.

The regulation of service is the light of the mind. There is nothing like knowledge.

Let every prayer which thou offerest during the night, be honoured in thy eyes above all labours of the day. Do not make heavy thy stomach, lest thy mind become confused and ⁴⁴⁸ thyself troubled by distraction while standing during the night; and thy limbs be lax and thyself filled wholly with relaxation; thy soul be dark and thy impulses troubled, and thyself absolutely unable to concentrate them upon the sentences on account of darkness; and the taste of everything become weak to thee; and the sentences of the Psalms sung keep not their sweetness to thee, sentences the discriminations of which the mind used to taste with delight on account of its swiftness and illumination.

When the order of the night-service is troubled, then the mind will also be confused during the service of the day and proceed in darkness, without taking delight in recitation, as usually. For it is as if a cloud lies over the impulses, when they are in emotion in prayer or in meditation. The delight which during the day is lavished upon the ascetic is poured on the watchful mind on account of the light of the nightly service.

From him who has not experienced solitude for a long time thou canst not expect to learn anything additional concerning

1) in prayer or in vigils

the goods of the ascetics even though he may be very wise and instructive and possess a range of habitual virtues.

Be cautious not to weaken thy body too much, lest weariness overpower thee and thou shouldst make thy soul cold against the taste of its service. As in a scale man ought to weigh his discipline. When thou art satisfied, be somewhat cautious against free speech in thyself.

Let thy sitting be in chastity, also at the time of bodily want. Especially chaste and cautious thou hast to be when going to sleep, not only thy deliberations, but also thy members being watchful. Be watchful against presumption when good states ¹⁾ come upon thee. Thy weakness and thy dullness
449 in the face of its subtlety thou must communicate to our Lord in zealous prayer, lest evil things should be allowed to try thee. For fornication follows haughtiness, and aberration presumption.

Use handiwork as far as thou needest it, especially as thou art shut up in solitude. Let not thy hope on Him that provides for thee, indulge in any weakness; God's provisions in behalf of His housemates are amazing; even in the desert without human hands He provides for those who inhabit it and hope on Him. If our Lord supplies thee with that which the body needs, though thou doest not labour but carest for the soul only, then some thought will arise by the trickery of the murderer ²⁾ namely this, that there necessarily must be on thy part some cause for all this care. And with this deliberation, God's care will be withdrawn from thee. And at the same time myriads of temptations will arise and assail thee, having their origin either in the neglect of those who used to care for us, or in the recommencement of pains and illnesses that are caused ³⁾ in our body. God does not give up His care on account of this emotion alone, but when the mind sticks to it. On account of in voluntary emotion God does not chastise and judge a man, not even when we give way to it for a short time; but at once pain pricks us and contrition comes to us. Our Lord will not seek retribution for such a fault; but only for such a one as the mind really clings to, in that we glance at it unconsciously as if there

1) *καλιάρ*

2) Satan

3) lit. stirring

were no harm in it and without thinking of anything wrong Perpetually we have to pray to our Lord in this way: O
 45° Christ, Thou summit of truth, let Thy truth dawn in our hearts, that we know to walk in Thy way according to Thy will.

When for a short time or longer some evil deliberation shows itself often in thee, know then assuredly that Satan wishes to lay a snare for thee. And pay attention to it in due time. If it is however a right-hand and good one, know that the Lord wishes to give thee some share of life and that for this cause this deliberation is astir in thee so unusually often. If it is a dark deliberation and thou art in doubt concerning it because thou canst not make out clearly whether it is helpful or treacherously hidden in a scheme of beauty, then pay attention to it in keen prayer night and day, with long vigils. Do not push it from thee, neither deliver thyself unto it but pray diligently and fervently because of it. Do not cause crying to our Lord, and He will show himself manifestly, [so that thou knowest] whence it is.

Love silence above all things. It brings thee near the fruit which the tongue is too weak to interpret. At first we compel ourselves to be silent. Then from our silence something is born which draws us towards silence. May God grant thee to perceive that which is born from silence. If thou beginnest with this discipline, I do not know how much light will dawn in thee through it. Concerning what is said about the admir-
 45¹ able Arsenius: that Fathers and brethren came to see him, but that he sat with them in silence and dismissed them in silence — do not think, my brother, that this happened by the action of his will alone, though in the beginning he had to compel himself. After some time some delight is born in the heart from the exercise of this service and by force it draws the body towards remaining in silence.

Many tears are born in us by this discipline, by the amazing sight of things which the heart perceives distinctly. Sometimes by suffering, sometimes on account of ecstasy the heart becomes small as a child; and as soon as it insists in prayer, tears will burst forth.

Great is the man who, side by side with bodily endurance, possesses admirable customs in his soul.

If thou placest all labours of this discipline ¹⁾ on one side

1) solitary life

and silence on the other, silence will outweigh them. There are many warnings of the Fathers which need not be kept laboriously when a man approaches unto silence, and the practice of which becomes superfluous, because he is elevated above them, and is near the mark. Silence is also helpful for solitude.

For it is impossible that, living in an inhabited place, we should not meet with any one. Even that angel of God, Arsenius, who loved solitude more than any one, could not wholly avoid meeting others. For in such a place we meet Fathers and brethren and innumerable other persons, and we have to visit the church. When that blessed man saw that it ⁴⁵² was impossible to avoid this, so long as he was in the vicinity of an inhabited place (though his dwelling-place was at a distance of many miles from a human settlement, even from the solitaries who dwelt in those places), he learned from grace this means: continual silence. When sometimes it was necessary for him to open his door to some of them, they enjoyed his aspect only; conversation was superfluous.

Many fathers have been led by this sight, to become careful also as to their own person that, their spiritual riches might increase, through the instruction they received from the aspect of the blessed one. They continually saw him silent, so that many of them put a stone in their mouth¹⁾, others tied a rope to their inner wall for the sake of recollection, others wearied themselves by unusual fasting; when they had to go to meet other people they imposed the trial of hunger upon themselves. For hunger greatly helps those who try to acquire a greater concentration of the senses. And many used to do such things in order to acquire this self-control of beautiful aspect that imparts life.

Many fathers I have found, o my brethren, great and admirable, who cared for the direction of the senses and the bodily attitude more than for other labours, because from them is ⁴⁵³ also born the direction of the deliberations. Many causes, independent of his will, meet a man and make him leave the domain of his freedom. And if he did not guard his senses through the regularity of custom which dominated his soul before, they would for long prevent him from recovering his mind, finding his former quiet.

¹⁾ Ghazālī tells this about Abū Bakr

The education of the heart is, to be occupied with its hope. The education of discipline is to free oneself from every thing. The recollection of death is a wholesome bond of the outward limbs. A hook [drawing] the soul towards life is the joy that rises in the heart on account of hope. A drink of knowledge are the perpetual temptations which the mind every day draws from within, through the two varying states. The budding of the heart is the conviction of the resurrection in faith, which hope receives from within.

Deem me worthy, my Lord, to see in my soul Thy bounty, before I depart this world, that I may perceive in my self in that hour consolation, as have done those who in good hope have left this world. Open my heart, o God, through Thy grace and purify me from the communion with sin; and make level in my heart the way of repentance, my God and my Lord, my hope and my boast, my strong refuge, by whom my eyes receive light, and let me receive understanding by Thy truth.

Deem me worthy, O my Lord, to taste the delightful gift of repentance by which the soul is made free from the bondage of sin and the whole will of flesh and blood.

Deem me worthy, o Lord, to taste this affection in which reposes the gift of pure prayer. My saviour has reached the amazing passage through which the soul leaves the visible
 454 world and in which begin new impulses for entry into the spiritual world, and experiences of new apperceptions.

He that begins and accomplishes well, places his discipline upon this foundation, entreating God unceasingly that He may deem him worthy to perceive this apperception in which is sown the knowledge of the future order of things through imperishable hope, which through divine grace is preserved for man after the completion of this world.

But he that begins pervertedly goes from above downwards: he begins with joy and he ends with weeping; and he becomes devoid of knowledge and hope, as a formless body which not attained to the reception of the soul, because it has not completed the state of preparation in the womb, but has reached the end of the life of form ¹).

Contempt for intercourse with the world is the sign of a

1) *शुद्धात्मनो रूपं*

soul that has perceived its hope. A hidden alertness implies drowsiness regarding visible things.

The weapon of the heart is faith in Christ. Who by the desire of hope has withstood even death, death is esteemed as nothing in his eyes, and so are being exiled from his country, and the strife of the demons and alienation from men, and lack of the consolation of the world. What is the consolation of visible things and the being occupied with them, as compared with the delight of hope that is perceived in the heart? As he that has abandoned the body in the drunkenness of his joy, through the flaming faith which kindles his heart, so that
 455 all visible things are hidden from him and he knows nothing in the creation through the heat of his body and the emotions of his soul, and as he that abides already in the kingdom, does he account [earthly things] because of the faith of his mind.

Though sometimes we are subject to despondency because of loneliness — perhaps this is permitted in us by Providence — yet we also possess through our heart's faith the consolation of hope which is too great for words; and through this hope, troubles are accounted by us as nothing, even death. And well has one of those who are clad with God, said: Sufficient is the love of God, as a consolation for him that believes, even when he loses his self. How should troubles injure him who despises even the delights of comfort for the sake of future good?

Also this I advise thee, o my brother, that in all thy discipline the scale of mercy be preponderant; through this thou wilt perceive God's mercy for the world. Our own state becomes to us a mirror in which we behold the true Prototype, in those things which naturally belong to that Essence.

By these things and the like we become illuminated so as to be in motion unto God, with a clear mind. A heart wicked from of old, cannot become serene.

A merciful man is the physician of his own soul; for he drives away from his inner being the dark mist, as by a strong wind. Mercy is a good investment with God, according
 456 to the Gospel of life: Blessed is the merciful: for he shall obtain mercy¹). Not only in the world to be, symbolically also here. What mercy is greater than this, that when a man is

1) Matthew 5, 7

moved by mercy unto his fellow man and becomes his partner in suffering, our Lord delivers his soul from gloomy darkness which is intelligible Hell, and brings it in contact with the light of life, for its comfort? The blessed Euagrius has well said: A clear way is founded upon mercy.

Therefore, as I have said: Let a merciful heart preside over thy whole behaviour, then thou shalt find peace with God. Be careful, that no evil be ever done to any man through thy hands, not even to the evil one ¹⁾. And when it is possible for thee to deliver the iniquitous from evil, do not omit it. Not that, if the matter be far from thee, thou shouldst go and mix thyself with such things — such a deed does not belong to thy duty — but if the matter is put in thy hands, and thou hast power over it, because it has been placed before thee accidentally as a trial, in that God wished to try thee by His admitting it, then be cautious regarding thyself lest thou become a participant in the blood of the iniquitous, because thou doest not hasten to deliver him. But try with thy whole soul to save him, even if thou shouldst die for his sake. Then thou wilt really be a martyr and as one that has suffered death on the cross for sinners. And pray God, that this ²⁾ may not happen through thee. But even if he be worthy of evil, let him receive the judgment of his deeds by the hands of
 457 others. It does not become thee to regard the worth of his deeds. Let good [alone] happen to him by thy hands.

Think of Him who bears all, the deeds of all men being placed before His eyes, clearer than the sun; and if He liked He could destroy all men by the breath of His mouth. Thou wert not appointed to pronounce [the judgment of] vengeance against deeds and their perpetrators, but it is thy duty to implore mercy on the world, to abide in vigil for the salvation of all, to share in the suffering of every man, righteous and sinners. And thou must know, that if he deserve it, justice will bind him within a short time, by the hands of others who are fit for this deed; and thou wilt save thy soul and become a living martyr. But even this thou hast not to ask or to care for, but to implore God's mercy upon him, that he may change and become as it is the will of God that he should

1) Cf., p. 14, 79 etc.

2) viz. the punishment of the iniquitous

be and may depart life in righteousness and not [awaiting] the retribution of wickedness.

Be instead of an avenger, a deliverer; instead of an accuser, a peace maker; instead of one who delivers, a martyr; instead of a plaintiff, a dependant. Beseech God in behalf of the sinners, that they may obtain grace. And pray for the righteous, that they may be preserved. Vanquish the evil ones by this kindness, and make the zealous wonder at thy bounty. Those who love justice, make them ashamed by thy mercy. With the afflicted be afflicted in thy mind. Love all men. And be far
458 from all men. Recollect death, and prepare thyself for thy entrance into it. Embellish thy course. Remember that the sins of all men go before them to the court of justice.

Be not dejected because of trespasses. I do not say that thou shouldst not suffer; but thou must not account them as being incurable. Better broken than dead. For one who is broken, there is the physician, who on the cross has implored mercy for those who crucified Him, who asked forgiveness for His murderers while He hung on the cross. 'All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men' ¹⁾, namely on account of repentance. When Simon who had denied Him, had wept a short time, He forgave him. And after His resurrection, He appointed him as the head of His flock. Three times He asked him: Lovest thou me? ²⁾, even as three times he had denied Him, in order to confirm His pardon. Christ came on behalf of the sinners, in order to heal the broken in heart, and to bind up their wounds ³⁾. 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; therefore He has anointed me, to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives ⁴⁾, and sight to the blind, and healing to those who are broken, by forgiveness. ⁵⁾ And the Apostle says in his epistle: Jesus Christ came to the world to save sinners ⁶⁾. And his Lord witnesses: For I am not come to call the righteous; for they that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick ⁶⁾. There were two debtors to a certain creditor; and because they had nothing to pay with, he forgave both of them; namely: when they had beseeched him.

1) Matthew 12, 31

2) John 21, 16

3) cf. Psalm 147, 3

4) Isaiah 61, 1

5) 1 Timothy 1, 15

6) Mark 2, 17

↳ 15 15 }

Our frail nature would not be strong enough if God's justice
 459 should proceed to take vengeance. Therefore He uses mercy
 so that we at all times are bound by our debt.

Do not sin, o man, in hope of repentance, and do not indulge
 in weakness, confiding in forgiveness. Remember, that death
 will not be postponed. Do not contrive to approach to the
 delight of sin, with a cunning mind. God is not mocked¹⁾.
 His knowledge precedes thy deliberation: trouble will come
 upon thee suddenly, and thou wilt cry, but He will not
 answer thee.

When thou approachest thy bed, because the time for sleep
 has come, say: O bed, perhaps thou wilt become my grave
 this night and I not know it. Perhaps in stead of temporary
 sleep, eternal sleep will fall on me this night, while I thought
 of preparing for days and months, which I did not see.

As long as thou hast feet, run after the service of righte-
 ousness, before they be caught by a bond which it is impos-
 sible to sever. As long as thou hast hands, stretch them
 towards heaven in prayer, before thy arms fall from their
 joints and thou desire to raise them, and it is impossible for
 thee. As long as thou hast fingers, raise them unto God in
 supplication. For there will come a time when the splendid
 strength of their joints is weakened. As long as thou hast
 eyes, fill them with tears during prayer, weeping for thy sins,
 460 before the moment when sand will cover the black [clothes]
 and the eyes will become feeble, staring senseless in one direc-
 tion, without thy knowing it. As long as the heart, the fountain
 of the deliberations, is ordered by a distinguishing power, be-
 think of those things which are helpful to thy life, before the
 soul be hastened on to departure from it²⁾ and become a
 house devoid of its inhabitants.

O thou who art wise, let no deliberation flatter thee with
 the hope of a long life. As a flower withers by the blowing
 of the sirocco, so against thee will blow one of the elements
 which are within thee and without thy expecting it, suddenly
 thy knees will relax. And while thou thinkest that it is nothing
 and that thou art curing the illness, suddenly the cunning one
 will approach, who laughs at the wise.

1) Galatians 6, 7

2) the heart

O, for the wretchedness of our nature! how are we entangled in its love, though God does not desire to leave us in this state. Set thy heart to prepare for departure, o man. As a sage thou must expect departure every hour, thinking every day: the messenger of him that comes after me, has reached the gate; why should I remain sitting? It is a departure for ever, I cannot return hither. Go asleep with these thoughts every night; and meditate upon this deliberation every day. And when [the time of departure] comes, go joyfully to meet it, saying: Come in peace. I knew that thou wouldst come and I have not neglected anything that could serve me on the way.

461 Take provisions for thy long way, o sage. Drive away the heaviness of sleep from thy heart, o companion. Order thy things for departure, thou who dwellest as a sedentary. Morningtime is near, o traveller, why art thou sleeping? Come, prepare thyself, thou sailor who art about to sail off, prepare the utensils of thy ship; for thou doest not know when the wind will begin to blow.

Be ready and prepared before he comes that will destroy thy forms. For Sheol shall make wither their form¹⁾, and they shall be bereft of the beautiful glory of nature and their bodies will be left in the wilderness. Remember always that destruction of deplorable appearance, that formless scattering of thy senses, that ruin of the building of thy body, that pure mixture that will become mud in Sheol. Blessed is he that with joy meets the recollection of that destruction! Blessed is he that with good hope awaits that event full of mystery, in which the wonder of the Creator's great power is hidden! Spiritual meditation is, to be continually occupied with the hope of [things which will be] after the resurrection.

The beginning of this impulse in the mind lies in the domain of repentance. That which induces the soul to embrace repentance, is the constant thought of future things. Who has been moved by repentance, his hope has turned to the future world. Who has forgotten this, his mind abides in this world.

Who loves intercourse with Christ, loves to be alone. Who loves to remain in the company of many others, he is a friend of this world.

1) Cf. Job 14, 20: Thou changest his countenance and sendest him away.

462 Repentance¹⁾ is the constant sorrow of the heart at the meditation of that inexplicable statute: how shall I reach that unspeakable entrance? If thou lovest repentance, then love also solitude. For without this, repentance cannot be completed. If there is any one who disputes this, do not dispute with him, for he does not know what he says. If he did know what repentance is, he also would know its place, and that it is not to be disturbed by trouble. If thou lovest solitude, the father of repentance, then love also to accept gladly the small deficiencies of the body, and the blame that arises from them. Without this preparation it will be impossible for thee to live in solitude, freely, without trouble. If thou despisest those things, thou wilt acquire solitude, according to God's will. If thou art wronged or robbed or laughed at or the like, thou wilt not be moved, because of thy love of solitude.

Love of solitude is the constant expectation of death. He that without this meditation enters solitude, having other thoughts, cannot bear those things which, for the sake of solitude, he must bear from all sides: to die for the sake of God, and to live in God. The accomplishment of life is meditation upon death for the sake of God. This brings our mind near to union with God, says Euagrius.

Also this thou must know, o discriminating reader, that lonely dwelling and solitude and reclusion are not chosen by us in order to perform an excellent canonical labour. For it
463 is known that communion with many others gives a better opportunity, because the body preserves its strength better. But if reclusion were not necessary, the pious men that were the holy Fathers, would not have abandoned intercourse with many people. Some of them dwelt in graves, others chose reclusion in a lonely cell, which is greatly relaxing to the body and which does not promote the accomplishment of the canonical rules. And all bodily weakness and misery, and severe illnesses which struck them, they bore gladly during their whole life, even when they were not able to stand on their feet or to offer the usual prayer, or to praise God with their mouth, or to recite a psalm, or to perform any of the [works] which are performed through the body. And bodily weakness alone and solitude with them took the place of all canonical rules.

1) Cf. Introduction

And this was their occupation all the days of their life. And during all this so called idleness, none of them longed to leave his cell or to wander abroad ceasing from canonical labours, or to enjoy the sound of the glorifications of others in a congregation.

Better is he that perceives his sins, than he that is profitable to the world by his appearance. Better is he that one time has sighed by himself, than he that quickens the dead by his prayer and dwells among many others. Better is he that has been deemed worthy of seeing himself, than he that has been deemed worthy of seeing the angels. The latter⁴⁶⁴ partakes of the eyes of the body, the former of the eye of the soul. Better is he that clings to Christ mournfully in solitude, than he that praises Him in a congregation. No one should adduce the words of Paul: For I could wish that myself were accursed by Christ for my brethren¹⁾. He that has received the power of Paul, he has also the permission to do so. Paul was behaving as he did because a divine order had been given to him to be profitable to the world. As he witnesses to it, that he did not this by his own will: for necessity is laid upon me, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel²⁾. Moreover, the election of Paul was not because of repentance, but that he should preach to humanity he received even greater power.

So we must love solitude, o my brother, that this world may die from our heart and we may think of death continually. And by this meditation we shall approach unto God in heart; and we shall despise the emptiness of the world; and its desires shall be despicable in our eyes. Let us joyfully bear, with a sorry body, the continual idleness of solitude, my brother, in order that we may be deemed worthy of delight with those that in the caverns and the clefts of the earth are waiting for the glorious revelation of our Lord from heaven. To Him and to His father and to the Holy Ghost be glory and praise for ever and ever.

1) Romans 9, 3

2) Romans 9, 16

LXVI

465 A LETTER WHICH HE SENT TO HIS FRIEND IN WHICH HE EXPOUNDS SOME THINGS CONCERNING THE MYSTERY OF SOLITUDE AND HOW IT IS THAT MANY NEGLECT THIS WONDERFUL SERVICE BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT ACQUAINTED WITH IT WHEREAS THE MAIN PART OF THEM CLING TO SITTING IN THE CELL BECAUSE THIS IS CURRENT MONKISH TRADITION. TOGETHER WITH A COLLECTION OF SHORT SAYINGS USEFUL FOR THOSE WHO PRACTISE SOLITUDE

Now that thou hast inculcated in me the duty to write to thee on those things which are necessary, I inform thy love by this my writing, in accordance with the promise which I gave thee. As I have found that thou art determined to practise sitting in solitude, with painstaking behaviour, so I from my side will describe to thee in simple words, that which I have heard from discriminating men concerning this service, combining the concentrated sense of their words with personal¹⁾ experiences [gathered] by practice. And thou, on thy side, wilt profit by being occupied with this letter in thy usual diligent way, because with the discrimination of wisdom thou approachest the concise terms of the lecture of this letter, and not in the usual groove. And thou shalt take them as some elucidation of the rest of thy lecture, because of the great insight and power hidden in them. For the mind is greatly strengthened by such a lecture and it takes from it a
466 weapon against distraction of the thoughts and against dejection which is wont to rise from the hardship of labours and the prolonged sitting in solitude. And it casts behind it the world with attention to its practices, through the radiancy with which it is clad [by the sight of] those things which it meets; the which is the aim of this letter, [namely to make known] what is dwelling and service in solitude, and what mysteries are hidden in this discipline which are not observed

1) lit.: near

by many, and what events the prudent try to reach by solitude; and wherefore they reject the righteousness which is practised among men, fleeing from the sight of the world and choosing the troubles and struggles which are connected with quiet and lonely dwelling. On account of this insight and on account of those things which are found in this letter [readers] will call these solitaries who pass their life in this world in concentrated sitting by themselves happy. To those who do not perceive these things, admonition and advice concerning the order of solitude are vain. Here however I write to the wise, and I give advice in love.

If thou seekest imperishable life during thy short days, o brother, then let thy entry unto solitude take place with discrimination ¹⁾, that thou mayest find the profit which awaits the wise in the path of solitude. Scrutinize its service and do not run after a name. Enter, be profound and bold, learn and acquire and train thyself in all the amazing and liberating distinctions of the ways of service in solitude. Then thou wilt understand, with all the saints, what is the height and the ⁴⁶⁷depth and the length and the breadth of this illimitable discipline, because of the illimitable riches which its merchants seek to acquire. And thou wilt not rest, until thou art trained in all the ways of its service ²⁾.

From every human practice, at its beginning, some profit is expected when it shall be realised; this it is which moves the intelligent to lay its foundations. And this aim makes the mind heroic, so as to bear the difficulties of the matter. The mind even gathers some consolation from it by looking towards it. And after the fashion of an officer of the law, it apprehends the mind, till the matter is accomplished. So, in the eyes of the discriminate, the aim of the severe service of solitude is the harbour of mysteries towards which the mind looks, from the time when it lays the first foundations till the end of the work of building. And as the eyes of the helmsman look to the stars, so, in all his long and difficult labours, the inner gaze of the solitary, during his whole course, is directed towards the aim which he has fixed in his mind the first day when he gave himself to sailing the rough sea of solitude, till he shall find the pearl for the sake of which he has

1) Cf. *The Book of the Dove*, p. 19

2) Text has plural

entrusted himself to the not-to-be-explored floods of the ocean. And his gaze of hope makes light to him the whole burden of service and the difficulties full of danger which meet him in his course.

But he that, as soon as he enters solitude, does not set this aim to the profit [he wishes to gather] from his service, labouring at random as a man that combates the air, will never during
468 his life escape the spirit of despondency. And one of two things will happen to him: Either, no longer bearing the insupportable burden, he will be vanquished and give up solitude altogether; or, if he adheres to it, his cell becomes a dungeon in which he is tormented. And because he does not know that he may expect the consolation which is born from the service in solitude, he is not able to implore through his heart's pain or to beseech in passionate prayer or to embrace the token which our merciful Fathers, from love of their posterity, have left to us in their writings, whereby we could gain our life.

One of them has said: To me the profit of solitude is this, that where I withdraw from the camp in which my abode is fixed, my mind becomes void of the occupations of war and turns to a service which is more profitable.

Another: Solitude cuts off causes which give a new turn to the deliberations and within its walls there grow old and tasteless the recollections of previous things. And when the old matter has disappeared from the intellect, the mind returns to nature in order to direct it.

Another: I run to meet solitude, with this aim, that in my heart the sentences of recitation and prayer may become sweet. And when my tongue has been made silent by the delight of their understanding, I fall, as it were, asleep, my senses and my emotion being benumbed. And when by prolonged solitude my heart has acquired peace from the trouble of recollections, solitude sends me continually waves of gladness which arise from emotions which burst forth from within unexpectedly and
469 suddenly, to the delight of my heart; the which, running against the ship of my soul, and [withdrawing it] from the sounds of the world and from the life of the flesh, immerse it in the deepest depths of quiet in God.

Another: The degree of thy hidden things thou canst understand by thy different emotions. I mean the perpetual ones, not those which are set astir by accident and are made to

pass by time. There is no one clad with flesh whose house is not visited by some traveller belonging to the two various states of good and of evil. If he is disprudent, by those of deficiency, through nature, the fathers of children. If he is faithful, by those of elevation, through the leaven of grace which He has mixed with our nature, the parents of the kingdom on high.

Another: Choose the delightful service of continual vigils, by which all the Fathers have put off their old man and have become worthy of the renewal of the intellect. At these times the soul perceives that immortal life, by which apperception it throws off the garment of darkness and becomes the recipient of spiritual gifts.

Another: It is not possible that a man, while seeing many faces and hearing various sounds foreign to spiritual meditation, and speaking and having intercourse with the like, should keep his mind free so as to gaze at himself secretly, to remember his sins, to hide his thoughts, and to look at those which come, and to become familiar with hidden prayer.

470 Further it is impossible for a man to subdue the senses by the domination of the soul without solitude and alienation from men because the initiated soul becomes united to them and involved with them as in one person and is dragged along with their impulses, if it does not hold vigil with hidden prayer. And then, how vigils and alertness with prayer and recitation, will delight and gladden and give joy and make pure the soul, is well known to those who have practised these things during their whole life, in veracious asceticism.

And thou, o man who lovest solitude, place before thee, as a mark, these indications based upon the words of the Fathers, and direct the course of thy service towards them, and before all things, judge which are those which suit best the aim of thy service. Without them thou canst not be mature in true knowledge; try to show thy endurance especially in them.

Silence is a symbol of the future world. Speech is an organ of this world. A man who fasts is trying to acquire likeness with the nature of the spiritual beings.

Through his continual silence and fasting a man becomes distinguished that in his hidden state is constantly occupied with the service of God. By these mysteries is accomplished, even through those invisible forces, the holy service of the Essence

which governs the world. Some men who have been marked
 471 off to enter the divine mysteries, have been signed with such
 seals as these; some of them have been entrusted with the
 guidance of a strong people; others have even acquired power
 over the elements and, midst great admiration, the species ¹⁾
 of nature have obeyed their commandments; others have been
 entrusted with the office of examining, for the universal re-
 novation, the secrets that were hidden in the mysterious silence
 of the Lord of the universe. And it would not have been
 beautiful, if with a full belly and a mind distracted by wantonness,
 such mysteries had been administered, or if the saints had
 ventured to elevate themselves to intercourse with God and
 unto His secret mysteries, unless with weak limbs and a colour
 livid by the pain of hunger, and a mind conscious of its reason
 by its having renounced all earthly deliberations.

When, on account of a long abode in thy cell and troublesome
 labours and secret observance and restraint of the senses from
 all contact, the power of solitude gets hold of thee, thou wilt
 find first that joy which from time to time, without a cause,
 dominates thy soul. Then thy eyes are opened to see God's
 creative power and the beauty of the creatures, in accordance
 with the degree of thy purity. And when the mind by this
 sight has been snatched up in ecstasy, night and day become
 one to it in its admiration of the glorious works of God. And
 then the apperception of the affections is taken away from the
 soul by the delight of this sight. And by it the soul enters
 472 the two degrees of intelligible revelations which belong to what
 lies higher than purity.

LXVII

AN ELUCIDATION WITH EXAMPLES CONCERNING
 THE DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN INTELLIGIBLE THINGS
 [SHOWING] WHICH USE THERE IS IN EACH OF THEM

Intellect ²⁾ is a spiritual sense which is made a recipient of
 the visual power, as the pupil of the fleshly eyes into which
 perceptible light is poured.

1) 

2) 

Intelligible sight is natural knowledge which by power has been mixed with the order of nature, and which is called natural light.

A holy power is grace, the sun of distinction for those things, which hold a middle position between light and sight. Species¹⁾ are those things which are intermediary and distinguished by light so as to become sight. The affections are as it were some dense entities, which, placed between light and sight, hinder the distinction of things.

Purity is the clearness of the intelligible air, through the mediation²⁾ of which spiritual nature circulates in us.

The reverse way: If the intellect is not of a sound nature, knowledge does not influence it. If the fleshly sense is harmed by some cause, sight is taken from it. If the intellect is sound, but there is no knowledge, the intellect cannot have any distinct influence upon spiritual things without it; just as an eye which is sound in all those things which are its own, 473 and yet, often its visual power is dull. So, if all these [spiritual] things are preserved in their proper state, but grace is not near, they remain, all of them, destitute of the service of their different functions; as it is also during nighttime, when all these things, because of the absence of the sun, remain without function, though they are true and perfect in themselves. I mean eye, sight and things, not those which are distinguishing or distinguished. This is what has been said: In Thy light we see light³⁾. Now, even when grace, the intelligible sun, is near and inciting and flattering and working and exhortating, but there is no purity through which (as through the air purified from the density of the clouds and from the matter of darkness) the sunrays attain to us easily, so that we enjoy by their light a sight which is wholly spiritual — then sight is impeded in its discriminating power, nature loses its active force, the soul is hindered from perceiving the second sun which dawns over the world, because of the screen of the body in which the rays of truth are hidden so that they cannot reach us.

Therefore, all that has been said is strictly necessary. And because all these things are hardly to be found without defi-

1) حقائق

2) lit. bosom

3) Ps. 36, 9

ciency any one, not many are found who reach a partial completeness in spiritual knowledge. Such a deficiency has its origin in impotence of the intellect, or in neglect of the aim, or in the unpreparedness of the will, or in lack of purity, or in want of guides, or in the impediments of grace (for riches do not suit the fool, nor is a slave entitled to rule over many things) — or in the hindrances of time, place and mode.

LXVIII

SHORT SECTIONS

You must know, my brethren, that the sensual eye through its visual power alone (which is administered unto it from the brains as it were through a channel), without partaking of other light, is not able to receive [the images] of the different things. All natural apperceptions are placed on the same level as the intelligible things as regards spiritual behaviour in this respect; and [as for] the natural force of the intellect, which is also called psychic knowledge — it is impossible for the soul to participate in truth by contemplation, without receiving divine light. This is based upon excellence of behaviour, which is acquired when the affectible part of the soul is built upon natural health. For many have endeavoured [to acquire this] while being entangled in psychic and bodily affections, by philosophical training, being supported by the latter alone; but they have lost even the truth which they possessed and have ruined their usual visual power. And just as eyes which see in the air fantastic images because of their weak sight which cannot reach the humid matter in them, so every one of them considers as truth one image which presents itself to him. And when all the images of all of them are united, then, instead of one truth, there appears a variety of images. And this happens to them because they have not asked for the rays of grace which shines so as to purify the soul. Truth is the apperception concerning God which a man personally tastes by the perceptive power of the spiritual senses of the mind.

The flower of spiritual knowledge is divine love, which has its origin in radiant insights which are found by the spirit during prayer. Love is the fruit of prayer, which, on account

of contemplation originating in it, draws the mind towards a predilection which never becomes satisfied; the mind clings to this predilection for prayer without growing dejected, be it that it prays apperceptibly, with the body, or by the silent motion of the mind, fervently and eagerly. Prayer is: the impulses of the will being dead regarding fleshly life. For it is alike when a man prays veraciously and when he dies from the world; this means that he denies himself, and this means continually being in prayer.

It is known to those who know the scriptures what beseeching in veracious prayer is. And it is known that those who have devoted themselves to this lonely state in order to acquire lonely prayer through their demands, thwarting their desire, do not follow their nature when they arouse trouble against their soul because of the contrary affections which they stir
476 in their soul after prayer.

So the love of God is found in selfdenial. As from the seeds of the sweat of fasting the blade of chastity grows up, so does lasciviousness grow up from satiety and impudence from repletion. Against a hungry stomach wanton deliberations never direct themselves. Every food which we receive within us is added to the humours of the natural seed which is collected in our body. And when the organic limbs are filled with the influx which is gathered there from the whole body, and when it happens that the bodily [eye] sees [something], or when some involuntary recollection is awakened in the heart, then at once, together with the thought a sensation of delight is astir and spreads through the whole body, so that, even if the mind is very strong and chaste and cautious in its emotions, still, by this apperception of the limbs, the discriminating power of the mind is troubled at once, and is, as it were, cast down from the height where it stood, and the holiness of its deliberations is perverted.

And its pure chastity is defiled by the confusion which is caused by the affection that is astir in the heart on account of the burning of the limbs; and at once half of its force is lost, so to say, and the former scope of its hope is forgotten; and though it has not entered into the struggle, it is defeated without strife or labour on the part of its fiend, and vanquished by the subduing will of the body.

477 To such an extent does copious food and constant satiety

compel a man's good will that, although he is moving steadily in the harbour of chastity, he stoops to comply with that which he never would have stooped to think of. And when he lies down to sleep, alone, a host of thoughts clad in impudent images surrounds him. And his chaste bed is made by them a theatre and a brothel, where he deals and speaks with his thoughts in drunkenness and defiles his holy limbs, though no woman is near to him.

What sea is so disturbed by storms as the steady mind is stirred by the vehemence of the waves assailing it in the sea of the body, through a full stomach? O chastity, how is thy beauty made splendid by sleeping on the ground, by the suffering of hunger, when sleep flies from thee on account of the leanness of the body and the emptiness of the stomach, which is made a deep pit for the intestines between the ribs by abstinence from food. But by indulgence in food and comfort, evil representations and impure images are formed and come into existence. Then they proceed and show themselves to us in the hidden place of our mind, inciting us to mingle with them secretly by impudent actions.

Emptiness of the stomach makes free room for the mind which is devoid of deliberations and all tumult of thoughts. But when the stomach is replenished and satisfied it is made thereby a place of sights and a theatre, even if we are in
478 the wilderness and alone. For he that is satisfied desires many things.

Thou understandest that thou hast been deemed worthy of psychic apathy therein not, that no evil deliberations pass through thee — that is [the absence of] the movement of the impulses which are in the body, the which is impossible — nor that thou vanquishest them easily, the thought not having been defiled or disturbed at all, however exalted this may be; but that, through the intellect being totally occupied, the mind is not even permitted to combat with or to crush them, but that as soon as deliberations elevate their head, it is dragged away from them by some involuntary force, which by custom or grace, begins to ferment in the heart which is the house of the intellect. The struggling mind is different from the rank of priesthood. The mind which, by heavenly mercy, is dead to the world, to it things cause simple deliberations only, without the strife of battle, though from the motion of the

limbs an apperceptive power without equal [is born]. Perfection which is joined with flesh and blood rules over that which originates in flesh and blood, but it does not annihilate the peculiarities of nature while vital impulses still move in elementary life, and the foundation of existence, on account of the four humours, is subject to various emotions.

LXIX

479 HOW THE INTELLIGENT HAVE TO DWELL IN SOLITUDE

Listen, my beloved, to what our love says to thee.

If thou desirest that thy labours shall not be empty and thy days idle and thyself destitute of the profit which the intelligent expect from the discipline of quiet, let then thy entering into solitude take place with discrimination, not in a kind of groove, as it is with many. But let there be an aim towards which thy mind directs the labours of its behaviour¹⁾. And interrogate those who have solid knowledge, through experience, not through reading only. And exercise thyself in all the wonderful and liberal distinctions of solitude, without taking rest before thou art trained in all the ways of its service. And at every step thou takest, examine whether thou art walking in the way, or thou hast erred away from it on one of the ways leading to the desert.

Thou must not believe that the true discipline of solitude is accomplished by visible labours alone. If thou desirest to reach by personal experience that which our Fathers have found, thou must secretly have signs and tokens in thy soul, at every step thou takest, by which thou canst recognise the truth of our Fathers or the error of Satan. A few of them, written in order that thou mayest become wise in thy way are as follows.

480 When thou seest, in solitude, that thy mind is able to use freely its righthand impulses and that there is no compulsion in its rule over any of them, then know that thy solitude is right. And if, while thou art performing thy service with discrimination, without distraction as much as possible, the words are suddenly cut off from thy mouth, and the bonds of com-

1) *Book of the Dove*, p. 19

Verh. Afd. Letterk. 1922 (Wensinck).

pulsory silence are placed on thy soul and this phenomenon is constantly repeated, then know that thou art making progress in thy solitude and that its simple beginnings are taking increase.

For simple solitude is rejected by justice. And every simple [act of] discipline, among discriminate sages is accounted as a lonely, helpless member.

And if thou seest that at every deliberation which stirs in thy soul, at every recollection and vision happening during solitude, the surroundings of thy eyes are filled with tears and thy cheeks are moistened by them, without compulsion, then know that before thee, in the opposing camp, there begins to grow a breach.

And if thou findest that thy spirit, from time to time, descends within them without unusual efforts, and abides there some time, whatever that time be and afterwards thou seest thy members as it were in great weakness, while peace reigns over all thy deliberations, but [the weakness] remains continually the same, then know that the cloud has begun to cover the tabernacle.

If, during thy abiding in solitude, thou findest that harsh delibe-
 481 rations reign over thy soul, and that it is tyrannised by them every moment, and that at all times the mind is attracted by those things which were administered before, namely, when it is desirous of vain investigations — then know that thou art fatiguing thyself with solitude in vain and that thy soul is corrupted by distraction, and that there are outward causes, or inward neglect of duties, especially of vigils and recitation. Then direct and fix thy will. But if thou doest not find peace from the assaults of the affections as soon as these days begin, then be not astonished.

Now ¹⁾, if the bosom of the earth when the sunrays have ceased, preserves their heat for a long time, and if an aromatic smell and the odour of perfumes which spread through the air, remain a long time before they are dissipated and become effaced — how much more certain is it, that the affections, like dogs accustomed to lap up blood at the butcher's, will stand at the door barking, when the usual food is withheld from them, till their old force has abated.

1) Introduction

When neglect begins to penetrate into thy soul secretly and to spread gloom, and the house is near to being filled with darkness, then thou wilt secretly perceive in thyself these signs which will soon appear: Thy faith will be weakened. Visible things will arouse thy covetousness. Thy confidence will diminish. Thy neighbour thou wilt wrong. And thy whole person, thy mouth and thy heart, will be full of vituperation against every ⁴⁸² man and thing and against that which thy deliberations and senses meet, and even against the most High. And thou wilt be terrified by the frailty of the body which has rendered thee pusillanimous at all times. And from time to time thy soul will be shaken by fear, so that thou shalt be frightened and terrorised as it were by thy shadow.

For by faith I do not understand that which is the foundation of the common confession, but the intelligible force that by the light of the mind supports the heart, and by inward testimony stirs in the soul great confidence in God; so that the soul does not provide for itself, but casts all its cares on the Lord without thinking of any of them.

Then, when thou art making intelligible progress, thou wilt soon perceive in thy soul these dim signs. By hope thou shalt become strong, and by prayer rich. And continually abundant profit will be the part of thy mind in all that thou meetest, and thou wilt perceive the weakness of human nature. On the one hand thou must beware of haughtiness; on the other hand let injury against thy neighbour be despicable in thy eyes. Departing the body has become desirable to thee because of the desire to be near those things in which we are going to live. And as for all the afflicting accidents which happen to thee manifestly and secretly thou wilt soon find that all of them happen to thee justly, in all sincerity which is far from ⁴⁸³ presumption. And concerning all these thou shalt make confession.

These are signs for the watchful and for those who constantly dwell in solitude and wish to reach veraciousness of behaviour. Those who are relaxed, do not want subtle signs indicating hidden traps. For they are also far from hidden virtues.

As soon as one of these begins to show itself in thy soul, then at once try to understand towards which side it begins to incline; then thou shalt know at the same time to which category it belongs.

LXX

THAT WE CAN UNDERSTAND THE DEGREE OF OUR BEHAVIOUR BY THE VARYING STATES OF OUR MIND WITHOUT CHILDISHLY JUDGING BY THE MANY DISTINCTIONS OF OUR LABOURS ONLY THAT WE SHOULD RECOGNISE THE DEGREE OF OUR SOUL AS SAGES BY THE JOY WHICH DAY BY DAY IS SECRETLY PERCEIVED IN IT. THE SUBTLE ORDER OF INITIATED KNOWLEDGE

Examine thyself constantly, my beloved, and pay attention to the steadiness of thy labours, and the troubles assailing thee, thy lonely dwellingplace, the subtlety of thy mind and the keenness of thy knowledge, the long period of thy solitude, and the frequent drogues of temptations that are continually administered by the true physician in order to heal the inner man; sometimes however by the demons. Sometimes they come through illnesses and bodily sufferings, sometimes through the terrors of the emotions of thy soul when it thinks of the woes which will come in the end. Sometimes through
 484 the tenderness and fostering of grace there will arise warmth and sweet tears and spiritual joy and all the other things, to be short.

Doest thou see with certainty through all these that thy wounds are going to be healed, that is — that the affections begin to grow weak? Put up a mark and enter into thyself continually and see which of the affections have become weak before thee; which of them have reached their end and are altogether finished; which of them are beginning to become silent in the health of thy soul, and not by the departure of emotional influences; through the maturity of the mind and not for lack of causes.

Doest thou now see perfectly — as thou observest that living flesh, which is peace of the soul, is going to cover thy open wound — which of the affections continually trouble thee, and which from time to time; and which are bodily, which are psychic, and which of a mixed nature; and whether they stir darkly, as being ill by recollections, or they assail the

soul vehemently; whether they consequently behave stealthily or imperiously; and how king mind, the governor of the senses, looks at them when they knock at the door; whether it combates and vanquishes them by its force, or even does not look at them or think of them; and which of them are the remnants of old ones, and which have been newly formed; and whether the affections stir through representations, or by apperception without any representation; whether there is recollection without affections, and emotion without allurements.

By these [symptoms] it is possible to recognize the degree which the soul occupies. If the first mentioned alternative is to be affirmed (though it does not prevail), this shows that 485 there is still strife in the soul though it is strong against [the contrary powers]. If the second mentioned alternative is to be affirmed, it almost proves that, as scripture says, David sat in his house and the Lord had given him rest round about from all his [enemies] ¹⁾.

These things are not to be connected with one affection, but with the natural affections of desire and love also, as also with the affection of love of glory, which forms images and phantasies and allurements. And the affection of the love of money — when the soul participates of it secretly, though it is not persuaded to commit any action thereby — forms in the mind images of things connected with the love of money in the examples of wealth-gathering, and it induces the soul to think of them and it excites the desire of possessing them, and so on.

Not all affections combat man by allurements. For some of them burden the soul with troubles only. Dejection and despondency and distress do not bring allurements nor comfort, but only burden the soul with heaviness. The readiness of the soul is demonstrated by a victory fought against those forces which make use of allurements in the struggle.

For a man ought to possess all these, namely subtle knowledge and signs, in order that he may perceive, at every step he takes, how far he is gone and in which country his soul has begun to walk, in the land of Kanaan or beyond the Jordan.

Consider also this: whether the soul, through its illumination, possesses sufficient knowledge for these distinctions; or distinguishes them dimly, or is wholly destitute of such distinctive

1) 2 Sam. 7, 1

486 faculties. Doest thou find with absolute certainty, that the deliberations have begun to become clear? Does distraction desist from the intellect at the time of prayer? Which affection troubles thee when the mind approaches unto prayer? Doest thou perceive that the power of solitude envelops the soul with the quiet and the unusual peace which it engenders in the mind? Is the mind continually snatched away spontaneously, by immaterial emotions, towards those things which it is not allowed to interpret to the senses? Does there suddenly blaze in them joy which makes the tongue silent by its incomparable delight? Does there constantly flow from the heart some enjoyment which envelops the whole being in rapture, without thy perceiving it? Is sometimes thy whole body possessed by some delight and joy, which no fleshly tongue can express, so that thou esteemest all earthly things as ashes and dung, even when thou recollectest them?

The first happens sometimes at the time of prayer, sometimes during the recitation; sometimes when through constant and prolonged meditation the spirit has become meditative and the mind fervent.

The second usually happens without these. Often during fortuitous works, usually however during the night and on purpose, between sleeping and waking, sleeping though not sleeping and waking though not waking. And the delight which flows through the whole body is esteemed so high at that time, that it seems as if the kingdom of heaven were nothing else but this.

487 And further consider this: if the soul possesses the strength to reject recollections of apperceptible things by the strength of the hope which reigns over the heart and makes strong the inner senses by an unfathomable conviction; and if the heart has acquired, without forethought, the habit of being captured so that it does no longer [perceive] earthly things, through continual intercourse with our Saviour, and thou possessest knowledge so as to distinguish the different designations of this intercourse, when thou hearest them — solitude cultivated without interruption will make it easy to the soul to acquire the taste of these.

They disappear however, after having been present, through the neglect of those who have received them, and for a long time they do not reappear.

On account of these, man ventures to adduce with confidence the testimony of his own mind; so the blessed Paul says: For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, nor any other thing shall be able to separate me from the love of Christ ¹⁾. Then should bodily and psychic trouble, or persecution or hunger, or nakedness or loneliness, or captivity or danger or the sword? No, not even the angels of Satan, nor his powers with their evil cunning; nor glory which makes efforts by its alluring flatteries; nor oppressions and scorn by their vain blows.

If these things, my brother, to a larger or lesser extent have not begun to show themselves in thy soul, thy labours and troubles and all thy solitude are vain efforts. And even ⁴⁸⁸ if miracles were wrought by thy hands and thou shouldst quicken the dead, this would be, nothing in comparison with the absence of these. And it is becoming that thou arousest thy self and with tears beseechest the Saviour of the world that He may take away the veil from the heart, and disperse from the inner firmament the darkness of the clouds of the affections; and that thou mayest be deemed worthy of seeing the rays of daylight.

Then thou wilt not dwell in darkness as one who is dead for ever. Continual vigils with recitation and frequent kneelings performed between, will not fail one day to give this good to him that is diligent. For those that have found them, have found them through these works. And those who will find them, will be able to do so through these works.

And while we are constantly abiding in solitude, performing these works, and the mind is not bound by any thing or any man without the soul, then by the works of inward excellence we shall soon find in ourselves a partial, but veracious apprehension of them and we shall acquire certainty also concerning the rest. Those who, while abiding in solitude, have experienced God's lovingkindness, do not need much persuasion. Nor is their soul sick by the affection of unbelief as those who doubt the truth. The witness of their mind is for them sufficient persuasion, more than myriads of words not founded on experience.

1) Cf. Rom. 8, 38

LXXI

489 ON THE INFLUENCES PROCEEDING FROM GRACE

Thou must perpetually place a token in thy soul, and pay attention to it. And when thou perceivest that divine care begins to reveal itself to the soul, then understand that thou art near the harbour of purity. As soon as man begins to be lifted up above the affections, this holy force will cling to the soul, without leaving it, day or night, showing it God's providence. And even the particulars of what is and comes to pass, of yes and no, what happens to a man secretly and manifestly and the facts relating to the creation of this world, are revealed to the soul by that force which clings to it and which reveals to it the creative power of God and shows it divine providence which, without a break, follows and visits this whole creation. And it shows the soul how this providence follows man at all times, and, though he does not perceive it and does not know it, preserves him against adversities at all times and directs him towards what serves for the salvation and the rest of his soul and body and to gain life.

Now this divine force, which works all these, shows itself secretly to man, by intelligible revelation to his spiritual nature, which is intellect. When man has been deemed worthy to receive this power within his soul, he abides only in ecstasy and silence and tears which always flow as water, so that he desists from
490 all work.

And thou must gaze at all times at this sight of God's continual care for the work of His hands: the mind absorbed in ecstasy, the senses at rest, weak man prostrated on his face in prayer, [in a state] in which no tongue can speak and in which no heart can pray, but by astonishment at these things even prayer is cut off.

This is the idleness which is more profitable than work, when a man is purely at rest, with his senses and his impulses, being continually prostrated before his Lord. And even his bones in silence send up a glorification to God, in this so-called idleness; as the prophet says: All my bones shall say:

Lord, who is like unto Thee?¹⁾ At this time, above all affections, thou findest the demon of haughtiness bound and thrown at the feet of the soul. By this gift, as it is said, man becomes worthy of the love of God and of complete humility.

This first gift is tasted through solitude. And those who, in service and observance, have abided within absolute solitude, must necessarily know it. But when a man leaves solitude and begins to be lax, it is withdrawn from him. And when he enters again and cares for himself and clings diligently to the usual service, he is again supplied with it, and it shows its force to the soul. Then, when man has become wholly perfect, this force will cling to him inwardly and outwardly and
491 not one hour will he be without sighs and tears and the rest, if he does not neglect²⁾ the pure order of his service. Even now there are men who have been deemed worthy of this partly. And the peculiarities of the degree of perfection they recognize from that which they possess partially. For, when a man has tasted a small quantity³⁾ of wine from a large skin, he knows how all the rest is, even when others drink a part or all the remainder.

A man who possesses [this gift] in perfection, will not soon be found, nay hardly at all. For this power is a gift of the observance of solitude; and because in this our enervated generation there is none who keeps perfect solitude and complete observance, we are also destitute of its gifts⁴⁾. He who possesses these signs in writing of ink, but their practice is not found in him by experience, resembles a man who bears in his arms a cither adorned and provided with strong strings, but his fingers do not know, because they are not trained, to play thereon and to bring forth different melodies for his own delight. For he only possesses the cither, but not the required art. And he needs others to play on it before him and give him enjoyment.

Do not rejoice when thou art rich in the knowledge of many things; but rejoice when that which thou knowest is found with thee practically. The former without the latter will retire gradually and even end in haughtiness, through idleness. When thou art zealous in the latter, thou wilt necessarily be illuminated

1) Ps. 35, 10

3) *ῥῆμα*

2) *ἴσως*, meaning uncertain

4) cf. *Book of the Dove*, Introduction, p. XVI



by it without instruction. The eye of knowledge is experience; its growth is brought about by continual service.

492 This will be to thee a luminous token of the serenity of thy soul: when thou, examining thyself, findest thyself full of mercy for all mankind, and when thy heart is afflicted by pity for them and burns as with fire without personal discrimination. While by these things the image of the Father in heaven is continually seen in thee, thou canst recognize the degree of thy behaviour, not by the discrimination of the labours, but by the varying states to which thy intellect is subject. The body is then wont to swim in tears, as the mind gazes at spiritual things, while it is as if from the eyes there flowed brooks which moisten the cheeks, without compulsion, spontaneously.

Now, ¹⁾ I know one who even during his sleep was overwhelmed by ecstasy in God through the contemplation of something which he had read in the evening. And while his soul was amazed at this contemplative meditation, he perceived, as it were, that he had meditated for long in the motion of sleep and examined the ecstatic vision. It was in the depth of the night, and suddenly he awoke from his sleep while his tears dropped as water and fell upon his breast; and his mouth was full of glorification and his heart meditated in contemplation for a long time, with a delight which did not come to an end. And through the many tears that, without measure, were shed by his eyes, and through the stupefaction of his soul by which all the members of his body were relaxed, and of his heart in which some delight
493 was astir, he was not even able to accomplish his usual night-service, except some psalm at break of dawn, so overwhelmed was he by the many tears which as a fountain broke forth from his eyes spontaneously, and by the other spiritual things.

Let us also be zealous, my brethren. And before we go to sleep, let us many times meditate upon glorifications and recited psalm and passages of the holy scriptures, guarding ourselves against evil recollections and from bad thought. And let us provide ²⁾ our treasury with every beautiful thing. Then sleep will overtake us while we are full of the recollection of God, while our soul is glowing with great desire for the things that

1) Cf. Introduction

2) Reading  instead of 

are good, through the grace of God which surrounds us in our sleep and spends upon us its gifts while we are sleeping, examining us, whether our body is free from any kind of impurity, and the impulses of our heart pure from evil. And through grace it will be impossible for the sons of the prince of darkness to approach us because the sword and lance of grace surround us. But when they find us as they like to find us, when grace has withdrawn from us because it disliked us and has removed us from itself as corpses void of life, then they approach us, with all their evil, and try us by all sordid and fearful impulses, according to the desire of their evil will.

And when such a thing happens to us in our sleep, let us understand at once and recollect and perceive, that in that night God's inspiration ¹⁾ was far from us. And how is it that the ⁴⁹⁴ demons have not devoured us? Because the divine will in whose hand the soul of all flesh is placed, only allows [them] to approach us, that we should arouse and look at ourselves. It is not possible for them to approach us when [inspiration] is near.

1) *rehauly*

LXXII

ON TRUE KNOWLEDGE AND ON TEMPTATIONS AND THAT IT IS BECOMING TO KNOW EXACTLY THAT NOT ONLY WEAK AND INSIGNIFICANT AND UNEDUCATED PEOPLE BUT ALSO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN DEEMED WORTHY OF TEMPORARY APATHY AND HAVE REACHED PERFECTION OF MIND AND HAVE APPROACHED PARTIAL PURITY AS FAR AS THIS IS COMPATIBLE WITH MORTALITY AND HAVE GAINED EXALTATION ABOVE AFFECTIONS — IN SO FAR AS IN THIS WORLD IT IS ALLOWED BY GOD IN COMBINATION WITH LIFE IN AFFECTIBLE FLESH — HAVE TO STRUGGLE AND ARE INJURED BY THE AFFECTIONS BECAUSE OF THE BODY AND THAT TO THEM ALSO ARE CONTINUALLY PERMITTED [TEMPTATIONS] IN MERCY BECAUSE OF THE DANGER OF HAUGHTINESS IN SOME DEGREE AND THAT MANY TIMES THEY TRANSGRESS AND HEAL THEMSELVES BY REPENTANCE GRACE ACCEPTING THEM AGAIN

That every rational nature is liable to deviation without distinction and that varying states pass through all men at all times, the discriminate is able to understand from many [symptoms]; moreover the experiences of each day are wholly sufficient to make him prudent if he is cautious and keeps to what is his domain. [They also show him] how many varying
 495 states of rest and unrest work upon the mind every day, so that it suddenly passes from peace to perturbation without any reason from anywhere and falls into unspeakable danger. Even this is clearly described by the blessed Macarius, with great care and devotion, in order to remind and instict the brethren, lest those who stand in the degree of purity give way to despair at the time of contrary states, when there happens to them an accidental [state] like [a change in] air, provided that this is not due to neglect and relaxation, but that these circumstances contrary to the scope of their mind, happen to them while they are walking in their path.

And also the blessed Euagrius witnessing to this through real experience, has committed it to writing, for the sake of ampler confirmation, as it were lest any one should think that the blessed Macarius wrote this in his letter fortuitously without having examined his words carefully. Thus then by reason of two veracious witnesses like these, the mind may accept, without doubt, its consolation at the time of need.

What then? Varying states happen to every man, like [changes of] the air. Understand it: to every man; for nature is one. Do not think that he is speaking to insignificant men only and that the perfect should be exempt from varying states and that they stay in one class, without liability of deviation and without the impulse of the affections, as the Meşalleyānē say. Therefore he says: unto every man.

How is this, o blessed man? He says: there are states of ⁴⁹⁶ cold, and soon after states of heat; and perhaps of hail, and soon there-after of serenity. It is thus for our instruction: strife, then the help of grace. And sometimes the soul runs into a storm and heavy billows assail it; then there comes a different state and it is visited by grace; then joy fills the heart and peace from God and chaste, peaceful deliberations. Grace makes dawn here chaste deliberations on the bestiality and impurity of those whom it had ordered away.

Therefore he warns, saying that after these chaste and peaceful deliberations, accidents will befall the mind, that we should not be sorry or despair; or at the time of rest caused by grace, be puffed up, but that, at the time of joy, we should look at trouble. He says that we should not be sorry when accidents happen; not that we should not resist them, nor that the mind should accept them joyfully as something natural belonging to us, but that thou shouldst not despair even as the man who expected what is exalted above strife, and perfect rest without varying states and without struggles and blows, and freedom from the impulse of any adversity — the which it has not pleased our Lord God to give to our nature in this world so that we should entirely desist from labours and in consequence of this thought thou shouldst be relaxed by despondency and desist from thy course.

But know that all the saints have to face this labour as long as we are in this world, though we have ample ⁴⁹⁷ consolation for it in secret. For every day and at all times it is

demanded of us that we give proof of our love unto God by the struggle against temptations. And therefore we should not be sorry; namely, we should not be dejected in our struggle but thus is our way prepared. 'For he that deviates from this method, becomes a prey of the wolves'. Admirable is that saint, who with a small word confirmed this section that is loaded with significance and absolutely took doubt away from the mind of the reader. 'For he that deviates from this method, becomes a prey of the wolves'. This means that he, that possesses this intention and is minded to walk out of the way, wishing to go in loneliness a way that has not been trodden by the Fathers, is through this in danger of becoming the prey of old wolves who are clad in lambs' clothes in order stealthily to turn back foolish souls to their evil under the pretence of truth. That at the time of joy we should look at trouble, means: when by the influence of grace, suddenly mighty emotions and amazement of the intellectual vision of what is above nature, fall on the soul; as the holy Euagrius says: when the holy angels approach us filling us with spiritual sight, and all those who were in opposition to us vanish, and there comes peace and unspeakable stupefaction; when thou art in this state; when grace envelops thee, and the holy angels are near and around thee and, therefore, all those who tried thee, have withdrawn from thee, then do not
 498 extol thyself and do not think that thou hast reached now the undisturbable harbour and the unchangeable air and that thou art altogether exalted above this bay and the contrary storms and that there is no fiend and no evil accidents. For there were many who have thought thus and have fallen into danger, as Euagrius says, namely: the danger of thinking that thou art greater than many others, and that thou deserveest these [spiritual distinctions] and that others, on account of their insufficient knowledge, are destitute of the like; but I possess [those distinctions] duly, and therefore I have reached perfect chastity and the degree of spirituality, and definite renovation.

On the other hand recollect the impure deliberations and the unclear images which printed themselves in thy mind in the winterperiod, and the disturbancies and the disordered deliberations which assailed thee shortly before, during that gloomy darkness; and how easily thou deviatedst towards the

affections and hadst intercourse with them, when thy mind was troubled, without being ashamed before the divine sight and on account of the gifts and presents thou hadst received.

And know that all this was brought upon thee, in order to humble thee, by the care of God, which provides for every one of us as is profitable to him. But when thou exaltest thyself on account of its gifts, it leaves thee, and thou wilt wholly relapse into the practice of those things by which thou wert tried in thy thoughts.

Know, therefore, that the fact that thou art standing, is not due to thee nor to thy excellence; but that it is grace which
499 bears thee on its handpalms so that thou art not moved.

These things thou hast to recollect at the time of joy, when thy deliberation exalts itself, says our holy Father, and then thou hast to weep and shed tears. And humble thyself at the recollection of thy transgressions committed when [temptations were] admitted to thee; perhaps thou wilt be saved by acquiring humility through them. Be not, however, dejected, but expiate thy sins by deliberations of humility. Humility, even without labours, expiates many sins. Labours without humility on the contrary, are not only destitute of profit, but cause us many evils. Therefore, expiate thy sins, by humility, as I have said. As salt is to all kinds of meat, so is humility to all virtues. The force of many sins is able to break this. Therefore it is necessary for the mind to suffer continually by humiliation and by pain borne with discernment. If we possess this, it makes us a son of God; even without service, it allows us to stand before God rich in virtues. Without it, every service and every virtue and all labours are vain.

Therefore God demands the alteration of the mind. By the mind we acquire improvement and by the mind we become despicable. So this alone is sufficient, without [any further] help, to stand before God and to speak in our behalf.

Thank God without break on account of the fact that, notwithstanding thy so weak and easily deviating nature, from time to time thou art lifted up by the aid of grace to such a height and to such gifts and remember in which sphere
500 thou then art — above thy nature, and how when [temptations] are admitted to thee, thou art brought low and possess a brutish mind. And recollect the wretchedness of thy

nature and how easily thou becomest subject to varying states, as also one of the saintly Fathers has said: When thou art assailed by the deliberation of haughtiness which desires to enumerate thy virtues, then say: Father, look at thy fornication. He means the fornication by which the deliberations are tried at the time of the admittance [of temptations] and with which man is provided by grace, be it as a means of strife or as a means of help, according to the degree in which grace helps us. Seest thou how clearly this admirable Father explains the matter? ,When thou art approached by the deliberation of haughtiness, because of the elevation of thy behaviour, then say: Father, look at thy fornication!' It is manifest that this Father was speaking to a great one, because it is impossible that deliberations of haughtiness should assail other people than those who occupy a high degree and are behaving in a praiseworthy way. For this affection attacks the soul when virtue has been exercised, in order to bereave it of its performance.

Also from one of the letters of Macarius thou canst learn, if thou desirest, which degrees those saints occupy unto whom temptations are admitted. That letter was written by Macarius to all his beloved sons, showing clearly how struggles and the help of grace are provided by God, through which it has pleased His wisdom to train them as long as they abide in this life, struggling against sin, in behalf of excellence. This
 501 He does in order that at all times their looks may be fixed upon Him and that, by continually looking at Him, His holy love may be augmented in them. So that, when they seek continually refuge with Him against the ardour of the affections and the fear of deviations, they are confirmed in faith, hope and love.

So these things are not said to those who continually are in contact with men and wander about everywhere, participating in impure actions and passions [and living] in a state of relaxation. Nor are they said to those who perform righteousness in works which have nothing to do with solitude and who at every moment are captured by the senses, and who at all times are in danger of falling on account of the compulsion exercised on them by the things which happen to them involuntarily, through circumstances which they have not foreseen, so that they are unable to guard completely not

only their deliberation but even their senses. But they are destined for those who by the great watchfulness with which they guard their bodies and their deliberations, keep altogether aloof from the perturbations and conversations of men, and who by having given up all, even their soul, are able to guard their mind in prayer and to receive various provisions from grace, in perfect solitude. And under the arm of the knowledge of the Lord they are brought up and secretly made wise by the spirit, while they have rest from works and the sight of things and possess a mind dead to the world. The affections do not die; but intercourse [with them] dies, because they keep aloof from things and because they are helped by grace.

LXXIII

502 THE CONCISE SENSE OF THE [FOREGOING] SECTION
TOGETHER WITH EXPLANATIONS OF WHAT
HAS BEEN SAID

The concise sense of the foregoing section is to communicate to us that at every moment¹⁾ of the four and twenty hours of the day, we are in want of repentance. The explanation of the denotation of repentance, in its real practical sense, is continual mournful supplication in contrite prayer, offered to God for the forgiveness of previous sins; and petition to be guarded against future ones²⁾. Therefore our Lord also has sustained our weakness by prayer: Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation³⁾. And: Pray, and do not faint⁴⁾. And: Watch ye therefore, and pray always⁵⁾.

Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened⁶⁾. And he corroborates His word strongly and exhortates us strongly by the parable of the friend who went to his friend in the middle of the night and asked him for bread. Verily, I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him, because he is friend, yet be-

1) Introduction

3) Matthew 26, 41

5) Luke 21, 36

2) Cf. *Book of the Dove*, p. 6 and note 3

4) Cf. Luke 18, 1

6) Matthew 7, 7 sq.

cause of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth¹⁾. And ye also: Pray and do not faint²⁾. Blessed is the unspeakable encouragement of the Giver, who exhorts us saying: Ask from me and I will give you gifts.
 503 And He will also provide you with all that is profitable, according to His knowledge. These words are full of encouragement and great confidence.

And as our Lord knows that He does not take away liability of deviation before the cup of death [is drunk], and, this being so, that man is near to a change from excellency to deterioration, and nature susceptible of accidents — therefore He urges us to continual beseechings. For if there were in this world a place of security whereto a man could go and thenceforth his nature would be exempt from need and his service from fear — then He would not have exhorted us towards prayer nor would He have urged us diligently. In the world to be men will not offer prayers unto God, with beseechings concerning various things. For in that place of freedom our nature will no longer be susceptible of variation, nor bound by the fear of opposition, but perfect in every way. Therefore His care not only drives us unto prayer and watchfulness, but even scourges us with the whip of temptations, in view of the subtlety and incomprehensibility of those things which continually happen to us and superate the power of our knowledge, things among which we are found continually and involuntarily. And even although our mind be firm and willed to the good, yet often His care scourges us with temptations, as the blessed Paul says: Lest I should be exalted through the abundance of the revelations, there was given me a thorn
 504 in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice that He might take from me temptation (namely that I might in freedom perform the work which He had ordered me). And He said unto me: My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness³⁾.

Therefore⁴⁾, my Lord, if this is thy will, and our childish nature so much needs a master who rules and exhorts that even a man who is so fond of thy love as I am and so zealous

1) Luke 11, 8

2) Luke 18, 1

3) 2 Corinthians 12, 7 sqq.

4) The following passage is put into the mouth of Paul.

lous a follower of good that he does not see the world at all because of his drunkenness in thee, so that thou hast brought me so far as to see revelations and visions which a fleshly tongue is not allowed to interpret, and to hear the sound of the service of the spiritual orders, so that I am deemed worthy of sight full of spiritual sanctities, that such a man as I with all this is not able to guard his own person, I who am a man perfect in Christ, — because there is still something which because of its subtleness resists the power of my knowledge — I that possess the mind of Christ — [if all this be so] then, my Lord, I rejoice at my illnesses, at troubles, reclusions, bonds, compulsions, on the part of nature or on the part of natural beings, or on the part of the fiend of nature.

Joyfully, therefore, I will bear my illnesses, namely my temptations, which the power of Christ brings upon me. If, with all these, I still require the rod of temptations in order
505 to augment thy influence upon me and that I may be guarded by thy presence, I know that there is none whom thou lovest better than me.

And because thou hast made me greater than many others and hast not given to any of my fellow Apostles what thou hast given to me — namely to know the glorifications of thy powers; and because thou hast called me an elect vessel and hast entrusted me with the guardianship of thy love; because of all these and that I know that the preaching of thy gospel has made excellent progress, while I am free from the bonds of temptations on account of all these things I know that thou wouldst have given men freedom, if this were profitable to me. But thou hast not wished that I should be without trouble and without care in this world; and thou werst not anxious to promote the preaching of thy gospel to the same degree as thou werst anxious that I should profit by my temptations, and my soul be kept healthy with thee.

Therefore, o thou who art discriminating, if the gift of the temptations be so great that a man, even if he be as exalted and advanced in spiritual state as Paul's degree was, still requires fear and watchfulness and gathers profit by meeting temptations, who then can reach a place of security in the world of mortality full of robbers, and receive stability¹⁾ (which

1) *schaulig* → *st*

was not given to the holy angels, lest they should become perfect before us), thus receiving before all people, — spiritual and bodily ones — such a gift that, according to his wish, he should be without varying states at all, without a temptation even approaching to his deliberations?

The order of this world, according to the conception of all ⁵⁰⁶ holy writings, is this, that even if we received a thousand blows every day, our mind would not become humble and we would desist from the course in the arena; but that on account of one small cause, we gain the victory possibly and win our crown. This world is an arena and a running place. And this time is a time of struggle. And the time and the place of the struggle are not subject to a law. This means: the King does not set a terminus to his warriors, till the struggle is ended and all the world is gathered within the gate of the king of kings and it is examined there who has been constant in the war and has not been defeated, and who has taken to flight. How often will it happen that a man who was good for nothing and constantly beaten and thrown down because of his want of training, and who was always in a state of weakness, will snatch the banner from the hand of the valiant warriors and make his name famous above that of the doughty ones, the able and knowing battle-troops, and receive the crown and gifts which are honoured by all his fellows.

Nobody, therefore, should give way to despondency. Only: he should not despise prayer, nor neglect to ask help from our Lord. And let us take this to heart, that, as long as we are in this world and dwelling in this body, even if we are lifted up unto the vault of heaven, it is not possible to be free from toil and injury and care. This is the sum of it all. Pardon me. What exceeds this is superfluous.

LXXIV

507 ON THE DISCRIMINATION OF VIRTUES AND THE SCOPE OF THE WHOLE COURSE AND THE GREATNESS OF THE LOVE UNTO MANKIND AND THE SPIRITUAL AIM WHICH IT REACHES IN ALL THE SAINTS CREATING WITHIN THEM A DIVINE LIKENESS BY THE RICH LOVE WHICH HE POURS OUT UPON MANKIND

The scope of the whole course consists in these three: Repentance, purity and perfection. What is repentance? To desist from former [sins] and to suffer on account of them. And what is the sum of purity? A heart full of mercy unto the whole created nature. And what is perfection? Depth of humility, namely giving up all visible and invisible things. Visible things: all that which is sensible. In visible things: all thinking about them. Another time the same Father was asked: What is repentance? He answered: A broken heart. And what is humility? He replied: Embracing a voluntary mortification regarding all things. And what is a merciful heart? He replied: The burning of the heart unto the whole creation, man, fowls and beasts, demons and whatever exists; so that by the recollection and the sight of them the eyes shed tears on account of the force of mercy which moves the heart by great compassion. Then the heart becomes weak ¹⁾ and it is not able to bear hearing or examining injury or any insignificant suffering of anything in the creation. And therefore even in behalf of the irrational beings and the enemies of truth and even in behalf of those who do harm to it, at all times he 508 offers prayers with tears that they may be guarded and strengthened; even in behalf of the kinds of reptiles, on account of his great compassion which is poured out in his heart without measure, after the example of God.

And what is prayer? He replied: The mind's being free from all that is earthly and the heart's turning its gaze completely towards the desire of future hope. Who deviates from this, is as one who sows in his furrow mixed seed and as one who ploughs with ox and ass together.

1) litt.: small

How is humility acquired? He replied: By constant recollection of trespasses, by expectation of near death, by dressing meanly, by always choosing the lowest place and by always undertaking low and humble work, without compulsion, by constant silence, by disliking crowded meetings, by being unknown and disregarded, by choosing distinctly one occupation, by hating intercourse with other persons, by disliking profits. All his qualities are based upon these.

And his mind must be exalted above vituperating and reproaching anyone and above zealotism. And his hand shall not be against all. Nor the hand of all with him. But he shall be a solitary, only occupying himself with his own things, and lonely. And he shall not take upon himself the care of any one in the world except himself. In short: abiding abroad and poverty and lonely dwelling give birth to humility and purify the heart. As to those who have reached perfection, their token is, that if ten times every day they are delivered to burning for the sake of the love of mankind, they are not
509 saturated with it. As also Moses said to God: If thou wilt not pardon the children of Israel, blot me out of thy book which thou hast written ¹⁾. And as also the blessed Paul said ²⁾: I could desire to be removed afar from Christ ³⁾, if thereby the children of Israel would come near to the faith of life. And if it be thus that it is possible that they, for this reason, will believe in Christ and will come to life everlasting and will not be alienated from the living God. Then, as is written: I rejoice in my sufferings for you, o peoples ⁴⁾. Even so the other Apostles have undergone all kinds of death, for the sake of the love of the life of mankind. The sum of all is God, the Lord of all, who from love of His creatures, has delivered His son to death on the cross. For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten son for it ⁴⁾. Not that He was not able to save us in another way, but in this way it was possible to show us His abundant love abundantly, namely by bringing us near to Him by the death of His son. If He had anything more dear to Him, He would have given it us, in order that by it our race might be His. And out of His great love He did not even choose to urge our freedom by compulsion, though He was able to do so. But His aim was, that

1) Cf. Exodus 32, 32

2) The text has some words which give no sense here and are wanting in the Greek translation.

3) Cf. Col. 1, 24

4) Cf. John 3, 16.

we should come near to Him by the love of our mind.

And our Lord obeyed His father out of love unto us, taking upon Him scorn and suffering joyfully, as Scripture says: 510 Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame¹⁾. Therefore our Lord said in the night in which He was betrayed: This is my body which is given for the salvation of the world unto life. And this is my blood which is shed for all for the remission of sins²⁾. In behalf of them I offer myself.

And so all the saints have reached this accomplishment when they became perfect, so that they resembled God in effusion of love and compassion for mankind. And they asked for themselves as a token of their resembling God, that they should be perfect in the love of their fellows. So did also the solitary Fathers, that they might bear in themselves constantly this likeness full of the life of Christ, the Lord of the Universe.

The blessed Antonius thought that he never could do anything so useful to himself as that which was profitable to his neighbour, in the opinion that the profit of his neighbour was his excellent service. Analogous is a saying concerning the blessed Agathon: 'I wished that I could find a leper, and give him my body and take his'. Doest thou see the perfect love? Even in outward things he could not bear to displease his neighbour rather than himself. He possessed namely a knife, which a brother saw and liked it. And he did not allow him 511 to leave his cell till he had taken it. And when he possessed a thing and saw some one who wanted it, he did not lay any further claim to it.

What do I mean by these things [which include] that many of them have given their bodies even to the beasts and the sword and the fire on behalf of their neighbours? It is not possible that a man should reach this degree of love, with the exception of that one who secretly perceives his faith. And it is not possible that those who love this world, should acquire the love of mankind. When a man has acquired love, he is clad with God at the same time. He that has put on God, never can be persuaded to acquire any other thing except Him, but he puts off his body even. And if he is clad with the world or with love of his life, these will not allow

1) Hebr. 12, 2

2) Cf. Matth. 26, 26, 28

him to put on God. For he is witness: he that does not forsake and hate all, even himself, cannot be my disciple¹⁾. Not only that he should leave them, but that he should ever hate them. And if he cannot be a disciple, how can He dwell in him?

The interrogator. How is it that the service of hope is so delightful, and its labours so few and its work so easy to the soul?

The Father. This is because it excites the natural longing in the soul and gives them this cup to drink and makes them drunk. And from this moment they nevermore perceive fatigue but become apathetic against troubles. And during the whole of their course it is to them as if they were moving in the
 512 air without bodily motion, without seeing anything of the difficulty of the road or the streams and hills that are before them; but the crooked becomes to them straight and rough places plain²⁾, because they always see the bosom of their Father; and all those things which are far and invisible it makes to them clear in themselves, so that they gaze at them mysteriously with the hidden eye of faith. For all the parts of the soul become hot as by fire, on account of the expectation of those things which, though far, become as near; for towards them is tended the whole direction of their deliberations; and they hasten to know when they will reach [their aim] and when they will approach unto every single virtue by practice. They do not practice them partly, but all of them together, at the same time. For they do not take their course along the king's way, as the generality of men, but choose short paths along which a few heroes move, who easily reach the Apartment. For hope warms them as with fire, and they cannot pause in their incessant course, on account of their joy. And to them happens as in the word of Jeremia: I said: I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones³⁾. Such is the recollection of God in the heart of those who move in the expectation of the promise. Short
 513 paths I call the concise virtues, because in them there is no winding nor the long space of many ways of discipline leading from here to there, nor place nor time nor distraction. But they stand on the way and accomplish it at once.

1) Cf. Luke 14, 33

2) Isaia 40, 4

3) Jeremia 20, 9

The interrogator. What is apathy?

The Father answers. Apathy is not [the state] that does not perceive the affections, but that which does not accept them, so that on account of the many virtues possessed, manifest and hidden ones, the affections have become weak and cannot easily assail the soul. Neither does the spirit want to look at them every time, because at all times its emotion is filled with meditation and intercourse with excellent thoughts, which move with insight in the mind. And when an affection is beginning to move, the spirit at once hastens away from it through some insight which it perceives in the mind, and the affection remains idle. As also the blessed Euagrius says: the mind which by the grace of God performs works of excellence and approaches unto knowledge, perceives little of the foolish part of the soul. For its knowledge drags it on high and alienates it to all things in the world; this happens also because, on account of their purity, their mind has become subtle and light and swift. Forther the mind is purified by asceticism, because the body is desiccated, and also in consequence of the fulness of solitude and the long space of time passed in it. Therefore it swiftly alights on several things towards which
 514 their contemplation draws them in ecstasy. Therefore they are rich in contemplation, and are never in want of abundant insight in their spirit, apart from the fact, that the Spirit ripens its fruits in them. And in the course of time also the eye loses sight of the recollections that come from the heart and which stir the affections in the soul and are a principal power of Satan. But when the soul does not associate with the affections by meditating upon them — because it is continually occupied by other care — the power of their nails cannot take hold of the soul's spiritual senses.

The interrogator: What are the characteristics of humility?

The Father answers: As presumption dissipates the soul by phantastic distraction on account of the power inciting it to fly round the whole creation in the cloud of its deliberations, so humility is the power which concentrates the soul's being by the peace of its deliberations and the reclusion of the soul within its self. And as the soul is unknown and invisible to the fleshly eye, so the humble is unknown amongst mankind. And as the soul in the body is hidden from sight and from mingling with every man, so the truly humble not

only does not desire to be seen and known among mankind, because of his being hidden and recluded from all, but it is even his desire — if possible — to be shut off from his soul and to be within himself in total quiet and rest of his emotions and senses, as something that does not exist in the
 515 creation and has not come into existence and is not at all, so that he does not even wish for himself to be known and perceived. And as long as he is hidden and shut off from the world, he is wholly with his Lord.

The humble is never pleased to see crowds and gatherings of people, noise and rumour, nor riches and finery, nor the luxury which is a consequence of them, nor speech and intercourse, rumour and distraction of the senses. But above all he chooses concentration and reclusion with himself alone, to be quiet and shut off and lonely and left to himself in a solitary place void of all beings and separated from the whole creation. And in every respect smallness and limitation and want and poverty is beloved by him. And he is not occupied with many things and labours, but at all times he is satisfied and without care, without troublesome mingling with worldly things, so that his deliberations do not wander from his self, because he knows that if he alights upon many things it is not possible for him to remain without confused emotions. For many practices cause many cares. And many cares are a gathering-point of varied thoughts and deliberations. Then he would have to give up his being exalted above the care of earthly things, in peace of deliberations — except for the small necessary things which are inevitable — with a spirit occupied with a single care, the emotions being in a state of peace. And then necessary things would not allow him to keep silent
 516 and so he would be injured and would cause injury. Thus there would be opened a gate for the affections and discriminating quiet would disappear, humility would flee, the gate of salvation would be shut. And because of all this, he continually keeps his soul away from the many things, and at all times thou findest him quiet and at rest and humble and peaceful.

In the humble there is never violence nor terror nor confusion, nor hot nor quick emotions. But at all times he abides in rest. If heaven should fall on the earth, the humble would not be moved.

Not every one who is quiet, is humble. But every one who

is humble is also quiet. There does not exist one who is humble without being submissive. Those who are submissive without being humble are found in large numbers. This is the meek and humble concerning whom our Lord has said: Learn of me, that I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls¹⁾. The humble is content at all times, because there is nothing which moves his spirit. As it is not possible for a man to move a mountain, so the spirit of the humble is unmoved, if it is possible to say so. And perhaps it is not even foolish to say that even the humble does not belong to this world, because he is not destroyed nor moved by distresses: even [emotions] of joy cause ecstasy and effusion to him. But all his joy and true exultation is in the things of his Lord.

517 — Connected with humility are patience, a concentrated self — which is [real] humility — a low voice, little speech, self-contempt, mean clothes, a modest gait, bashful looks, effusion of mercy, easily flowing tears, a lonely soul, a broken heart, the not being moved by anger, absence of distraction of the senses, moderate wishes, moderate wants in every respect, willingness to bear, patience, intrepidity, manliness of heart born from hatred of temporal life, endurance of temptations, few emotions which are not swift, extinguished deliberations, keeping of secrets, chastity, bashfulness, modesty, and above all: continual silence, continual having recourse to ignorance. The humble is never approached by necessity which makes him confused. The humble, even when he is alone, is shameful for his soul.

I wonder whether there exists a truly humble man, who ventures to pray to God when he approaches unto prayer, or who is worthy of this, or of asking Him anything, or who knows what he shall pray. But when all his emotions are quiet and he only hopes for mercy, [being uncertain] which order will be given concerning himself by the adorable Majesty; when his face is bent towards the earth and the inner gaze of the heart lifted up towards the door of the holy of holies of the Highest, the cloud of whose dwelling-place blinds the eyes of the Seraphs, and whose splendour terrifies the legions of their orders, when silence lies upon all their classes and

1) Matthew 11, 29

518 they expect the rising of mysteries from the domain of invisible things, in an airless womb, with emotions without voice, with unbodily senses, with apperception without resemblance¹⁾, without seeing the revelations which reach them, the vehemence of their emotions being too weak to endure the waves of His mysteries; then he does not venture to say anything, but: According to thy will, my Lord.

These things so far I have endeavoured to write to thee in plain words, which the spirit could attain without scrutiny on account of their manifest sense; things by the reading of which alone the mind forgets the ways and the dealings of this world and its fleshly life, migrating then with the spirit unto its true and profitable world. [I have written this], asking thy love that, when thou comest in contact with these mysteries, thou shalt not leave them without profit, so that they should be found with thee to be dead sentences; lest it should happen to thee as it happened to those who were invited to the spiritual meal but excused themselves. Behold, the table is prepared, spiritual ideas are ranged upon it, and all delightful things are ready; and the bridegroom expects that we shall enter and rejoice with him. Let us, therefore, not excuse ourselves, lest there be said to us also the word that was said concerning them. What then? Verily, I say unto you, that none of those invited, shall eat from my meal.

LXXV

519 ON HIDDEN STATES AND THE POWERS AND INFLUENCES WHICH ARE IN THEM

This may be taken for true by thee, that the practice of marvellous things, and the foreseeing of future things, and temptations, and rest from strife, and victory over every one of the affections, and the presence of every one of the virtues, and consolation, for a certain time, from grace, and purity of prayer, and warmth of spirit, and spiritual joy, and all the other things with which a man fatigues himself for a certain time, with a good intention and a mournful heart — that in

1) The: in the text to be placed after **कर्म**

all these God will condescend to accomplish man's will at any time. And when He sees his intention and longing He grants him his wish and satisfies him.

As to the mysteries which belong to the spirit, namely the emotions during spiritual prayer, and the entering of the mind behind the curtain of the holy of holies, and the apperception of the indestructible inheritance — if a man does not pay their duty, God is not willing to grant them, even if the whole creation should beseech in behalf of him. Their duty is purity of the soul. When a man has reached purity from the affections, what no eye has seen and no ear has heard and what has not entered into the heart of man to ask in prayer, is revealed to him by purity, which during no moment ceases from mysteries and spiritual visions. And what the force of
520 spring is wont to work unto the nature of the earth, this grace works unto the soul by purity. The power of spring makes even the smallest roots in the valleys bud, warming the earth as fire does the cauldron, so that it sends forth the treasures of the plants which God has laid in the earth's nature, to the gladness of the creation and to His glory.

So grace makes manifest all the glory which God has hidden in the nature of the soul showing the soul this glory and making it glad because of its own beauty. So that when it sees the great and unspeakable treasures which God has laid in it and which were hidden from it by the defiled mantle of affections and ignorance, but which now that it has torn asunder the garment of the affections, He has shown to it — it is captured on account of its gladness by His love and turns its back on earthly things.

Moreover it does not remember the body which hid its own beauties from its sight. Then it sees heavenly beauties in itself as the exact mirror which by its great purity shows the beauty of faces. Holiness suits those who are holy. All excellence whatever and all service by which righteousness is accomplished, may be performed and acquired and accomplished without solitude; but apathy and purity cannot be acquired without solitude.

LXXVI

SHORT SAYINGS

The blessed Paul teaches us saying: Put off the old man and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and holiness ¹).

He does not say: Put on the new man over the old man. For he knows that this is not possible. Look, how wisely he gives his order. He does not say: Put on the new man who is renewed by the knowledge of God, but he says, first put off this, and then put on the new. Also he says definitely in another place: Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither does corruption inherit incorruption ²). By incorruption he means the knowledge of the other world. By corruption and flesh and blood he designates the corruptible affections of soul and body, which have the place of their motion in the fleshly mind. Purity he calls the new man, and by the kingdom of God he means the exalted and intelligible contemplation of the blessed motions of the essential rays into which the saintly soul only is allowed to enter when its incorruptible emotions are lifted up above corruption and flesh and blood.

If ³) the apple of thy soul's eye has not been purified, do not venture to look at the sun, lest thou be bereaved of thy usual visual power and thou be thrown into one of those intel-
 522 ligible places which are Tartarus and a type of Hell, namely darkness without God, whither those who with the impulses of their mind leave nature, wander by the cognitive nature which they possess. Therefore he that ventured to go to the banquet in sordid garments, was ordered to be thrown out into that outer darkness. By the banquet is designated the sight of spiritual knowledge. The institutions in it are the manifold divine mysteries, full of joy and exultation and delight of the soul. The garment of the banquet he calls the mantle of purity; the sordid garments the emotions of the affections in the soul which are defiled, the outer darkness, the state with-

1) Cf. Ephes. 4, 22, 24

2) 1 Cor. 15, 50

3) The following passage occurs also p. 16 sq. Cf. the Introduction.

out any delight of true knowledge and communion with God. He that is clad with such garments and ventures to think phantastically with his intellect on the heights of God and to introduce and to settle his soul within the spiritual contemplations of that holy banquet which is made to dawn in the pure only, and who, partaking only of the delight of the affections, wishes to mingle in the delight of that banquet — is suddenly overwhelmed, as it were by some hallucination, and expelled thence unto the place without rays, which is called Hell and destruction, which is ignorance and oblivion of God.

For it has been said that the things of God come of their own, if there is a pure and undefiled place. That they come of their own, means that it naturally belongs to purity that heavenly light shines in it, without investigation and labour ⁵²³ on our part. For in the pure heart, the new heaven is stamped; of which the sight is light and the room is spiritual. As also in another place it is said: As the magnet-stone has the natural faculty to attract atoms of iron, so has spiritual knowledge [the faculty to attract] the pure heart.

Though it has been handed down rightly by the true ones that no mind is absolutely steadfast against the allurements of the affections in this life, yet I say with confidence without being afraid of the truth of experience, that he who is clad with the garment of mourning in his mind, is not only invincible against the allurements of the affections, but a hero in the war against them and a victor, because they absolutely do not venture to show themselves with the intention of strife, nor do they even venture to appear from afar where there is a mourning soul which has made itself a wailing-place with various lamentations on account of its sins. As it has been said by the blessed Jacob: It makes its abode in the grave, till it meets the beloved Joseph. Where there is the bitterness of mourning, I do not believe that the above-mentioned pleasure of the affections is admitted.

But I say that in watchfulness lies this service and confidence, exalted above fear. He that is constantly in a state of mourning because of his fear — as he does not know what the end of his course will be — is more excellent than he that is constantly in the way of gladness, because he perceives the hope ⁵²⁴ of his service.

O thou whose town is vanquished by inward affections, put

on the armour of mourning and persecute them and save thy soul from their hands. For always invincible is this weapon and that of confidence, and tried by the true ones.

LXXVII

THIS CHAPTER IS FULL OF LIFE

O thou wretched man, wishest thou to find life? Take faith and humility in order to find by them mercy and help and consolation from God, and protection secretly and openly. Desirest thou to acquire these, which are the fountain of life? Put on sincerity, from the beginning. In sincerity walk before God, and not in knowledge. Sincerity is combined with faith; subtlety and the reflections of knowledge, with presumptuous thoughts; presumptuous thoughts, with being removed from God.

When thou liest before God in prayer, then be in thy consideration as a an ant and as the reptiles of the earth and as the beetle. And stammer as a villager and speak not before Him with knowledge. With a childlike mind approach unto God and walk before Him, that thou mayest be worthy of the paternal care which fathers entertain in behalf of their young children.

525 It has been said: The Lord guards the children. A child may approach a serpent and take it at its neck; and the animal will not bite. A child may go naked during the whole winter. And while others are clad and covered — yet the cold penetrates all their members — he sits down naked in the day of frost and ice, without suffering, because the body of their childhood is covered by a different, invisible garment, by that hidden care which guards the frail members of childhood, lest injury from any side approach them. Doest thou now believe that there is a secret care in behalf of the tender body which is expecially liable to all kinds of injuries on account of its tenderness and the weakness of its joints, so that it is guarded from obnoxious influences so that they do not cause suffering? For the Lord guards the child. Thou must not only apply this and believe it in the case of children, but also in the case of those who, being wise in the world, leave their knowledge, and relying upon that wisdom which is

all-sufficient become children by their own will. Then they learn wisdom, which is not to be learnt by labours of exercise.

Also the blessed Apostle, who was wise in divine things, has beautifully said in an admonition: If any man seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise ¹⁾. But beseech God, that He may grant thee to reach the degree of faith. If thou perceivest the delight of faith in thy soul, it is not difficult for me to say that there is nothing further which withholds it from Christ. And it is not difficult
 526 for it to be always captivated and not to perceive earthly things but to forget this weak world and the recollection of its things. On behalf of this pray without dejection; and ask it with tears and beseech fervently; and supplicate with great earnestness, till thou hast received it. Further no fatigue will be necessary.

Thou wilt be deemed worthy of this, if beforehand thou compellest thy soul to cast thy care on God, in faith, and so thou wilt change thy care for His care. Then, when He sees that in utter serenity of spirit thou art willed to believe God in things which concern thee and that thou compellest thy soul to confide in God more than in thyself, that power with which thou art not acquainted, will take hold of thee, so that thou wilt be affected in an apperceptible way by the power which works in thee, no room being left for doubt.

By this power which they perceived, many went into the fire without fear, and walked on water without thinking of the possibility that they could be drowned in it, because faith strengthened the senses of their soul so that it felt an inward conviction that resolution could not be weakened nor look on terrible things except with a gaze exalted bove the senses.

Take care not to think at all, that spiritual knowledge can be received by psychic knowledge. It is not only that spiritual knowledge cannot be received by psychic knowledge, but it is even impossible that those who zealously try to acquire training in psychic knowledge should be deemed worthy to
 527 perceive spiritual knowledge. And if any of them should desire to approach unto spiritual knowledge, before having denied psychic knowledge and all its subtle orders and intricacies and before having reached childhood of spirit — it will not be

1) 1 Cor. 3, 18

Verh. Afd. Letterk. 1922 (Wensinck).

possible for him to approach even a little way towards it. But its customs and perverted impulses become to him many hindrances, before he gradually forgets them.

Spiritual knowledge is simple, not illuminated by psychic deliberations. Before the mind has been freed from manifold deliberations and has reached the unified simplicity of purity, it is not able to perceive spiritual things.

This order of knowledge, consisting therein that man here already perceives the delight of the life of the world to be, rejects much deliberation. And psychic knowledge is not able, apart from the gatherings of many deliberations, to know anything which is received by serenity of spirit. And the word of our Lord is not denied: Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven¹⁾. Indeed, many are those who do not reach this innocence; but on account of their beautiful works a portion is kept for them with our Lord in the kingdom of heaven, as can be recognized from the understanding of the blessings which He especially pronounced in His gospel. In these blessings He has touched a variety of ways of behaviour [from which it appears] that for every man who walks to Him, in whatever measure on whatever way, the gate of the kingdom of heaven is open. But the word 'Except ye be converted
528 and become as little children' means that here man perceives the delight of the kingdom. The kingdom of heaven is said to be spiritual contemplation. And this is not found by the labours of the deliberations, but it is tasted by grace. And before a man has become pure, he is not able even to hear. Because it is not acquired by learning. If thou reachest purity, my son, which is acquired through the faith of the heart and by reclusion from men, and thou forgettest the knowledge of this world and doest not perceive it, then [spiritual contemplation] suddenly is found within thee, without inquiring after it. Erect a pillar and pour oil upon it²⁾, and thou wilt find thy treasure within thee.

If, however, thou art entangled in the snares of psychic knowledge, I have no objection to say that it will be easier to thee to escape from iron bonds than from it. And thou wilt never be far from the snares of seduction, and thou wilt

1) Matth. 18, 3

2) Cf. Gen. 28, 18

never be able to find and to have freedom of speech and confidence unto our Lord. And at all times thou wilt walk on the edge of the sword and thou wilt not be able absolutely to be without suffering¹⁾.

Take refuge with weakness and sincereness, that thou mayest live beautifully before God, and that thou mayest be without fear. For as the shadow follows the bodies, so does mercy follow humility. Therefore, if thou wishest to be connected with these,
 529 do not give room any-how to weak deliberations. If all injuries and evils and dangers surround thee and make thee fear, do not care to look at them or to think of them. If once thou believest that God is able to guard and to govern thee, and if thou followest him, then do not further care for anything like these. But say to thyself: All-sufficient is He to whom thou hast once entrusted thyself. I am not near [to anything], but He knows it.

Then thou wilt see indeed the wonders of God, namely how near His salvation always is to those who fear Him; and that His care surrounds them, though it is invisible. And though the guardian which is with thee is invisible to the bodily eyes, yet thou shalt not doubt his existence. Sometimes he reveals himself also to the bodily eyes, for the sake of thy confirmation. But when man has thrown away all visible help and human hope and clings to God in faith and with a clear heart, then at once grace will cling to him and reveal in him its force by various [acts of] help. At first it shows its help in manifest things, also in bodily ones, by its care of him, in order that by these things he may the better be able to perceive the power which is in God's care of him, and that by insight in manifest things he may become confirmed in hidden ones, as is becoming to his childlike mind and his lack of training. How then?

It is to be compared with this, for instance, that a man's want is prepared for him without labour, without his bestowing care on it. So grace causes him to escape many accidents
 530 which often come near him and which are full of danger. And while he has no anxiety before them because he does not perceive them, grace disposes of them in a very wonderful way, as also the other things which suddenly assail him, without his thinking how often injury to the soul and also to the

1) Affection?

body may proceed from them. And it preserves him against them, as a nurse who gives him shade and spreads her wings over her sons, that no harm may approach unto them. And at the same time it causes him to perceive that which happened, showing him what threatened to destroy him, by the yeas of the body, and the actual help of God, in a clear way; and the dissolution of his life which was near and from which God saved him.

So [grace] instructs him, also in hidden things. And it reveals to him the ambushes of thoughts and of deliberations difficult to understand. So he will easily attain to their understanding and their mutual relation and seduction, which is related to which, and how one is born from the other and destroys the soul. And the whole ambush of the demons is laid open before him, and the cover of their deliberations, and what is related to every one of them.

And [grace] provides him with insight, so that he understands what will happen. Then in his sincereness dawns a hidden light so that he perceives everything and the force of the emotions of subtle deliberations. It shows him as it were with its finger — if he did not know this — what is going to happen to him. And then this is born in him, that he asks from his governor, in prayer, all things small and great.

531 And when grace, by all these things, has confirmed his mind in confidence on God, then it begins to introduce him gradually into temptations. And it admits unto him those temptations the difficulty of which his degree is able to bear. And by such a temptation it adduces unto him its help in an apperceptible way, in order to strengthen his courage, till, gradually, he acquires training and wisdom and despises his enemies through confidence in God.

For it is impossible for a man, without these, to become prudent in spiritual struggles and to recognize his governor and to perceive his God, and to become secretly confirmed in his hope, by the force which he has received personally through experience. And as often as [grace] sees that the deliberation of presumption begins to move somewhat in him, and that he begins to think great things of himself, it allows the temptations to become strong and powerful against him, so that he recognizes his weakness and flees and seeks refuge with God in humility.

By these things man reaches the degree of perfect man, through

faith and hope in the son of God to whom he is lifted up in love. For in a wonderful manner God's help unto man is recognized when he is surrounded by circumstances full of despair, and God shows there His power by delivering him from them. Never has man experienced the divine power in rest and comfort, and never has He shown His action in an apperceptible manner except in a lonely place or in the desert or in places not visited by men and free from the disturbance of their habitation.

532 Be not astonished if, when thou beginnest [to practice] excellence, severe troubles rise against these from all sides. For excellence is not to be deemed to involve that its practice is not combined with difficulty and labours. Excellence has received its denomination from this, says the holy Euagrius. Usually difficulties make front against this alertness, and excellence is to be rejected when it is combined with comfort, says the blessed Marcus, the solitary.

All excellence whatever, is called the cross, because it accomplishes the order of the spirit. For all those who desire in the fear of God to live in Jesus Christ, are assailed by troubles. If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. Whoever would save his life in comfort, loses it; and who gives up his life for my sake, finds it¹). Therefore our Lord has placed before thee the cross, that thou mightest pronounce death on thy soul and thereupon cause it to follow Him.

There is nothing so strong as despair. It does not know how it can be defeated by anything belonging to those of the right or to those of the left hand. When a man in his mind has given up his life, none is more courageous than he is, and there is no enemy who is able to meet him, and there is no trouble the fame of which can weaken his mind. For any trouble whatever is inferior to death, and he has resolved to take death upon himself.

533 If in every place and in every work and at all times concerning all things which thou art going to perform thou placest labour and pain as an example for the mind, thou wilt not only be found always courageous and undaunted to thwart all reputed difficulty, and by the vigour of the deliberations to put timidity to flight which usually rises therefrom that deli-

1) Matth. 16, 24

berations look for comfort, but also all hard and difficult things which meet thee will seem to thee easy and light.

How often thy will is thwarted by what thou expectest, though perhaps these things do not reach thee. For thou knowest that the expectation of comfort always withholds men from great profit and from excellent good, so that even those who live in the world with their fleshly dealings cannot accomplish their wish if they do not resolve in their mind to bear difficulties. And because experience is witness to this, persuasion with words is not necessary. And in all preceding generations till now there is nothing which makes men despair of victories and checks them from excellent practice and which makes them — to say it in one word — despise to enter into the kingdom, as the expectation of the small comfort which is near. And not only this, but many times this aspect is the cause of severe accidents and hard temptations to every man whose mind is directed towards it and whose deliberations move unto it; because his governor is the will of desire. Who does not know that also the bird by the aspect of comfort draws near the snare? Perhaps our knowledge, as compared to that of a bird, is much inferior, concerning the hidden things and the accidents which are hidden in things and actions and places and various things. And also Satan, from the beginning, tries to ensnare us by promises and the prospect of comforts.

Now that my mind is occupied with the subject of desire, by the words I have written, I have erred away from the scope which I had indicated above, viz. that at all times we must place the aspect of troubles before our mind, in all that we wish to begin in the path of our Lord, so that it reach its end duly.

How many times, when a man wishes to begin some work for the Lord, he asks whether there is comfort in the thing, or whether it is possible to accomplish it easily, without labour, or whether there is any thing in it to trouble the body. Are not above and beneath names of comfort? What doest thou say, o man? Doest thou wish to ascend unto heaven and to receive the Kingdom which is there and communion with God and spiritual comforts and that blessedness and mingling with the angels, and immortal life? And doest thou ask whether there is trouble in this way? How astonishing are those who desire the things of this world and the riches which are to be destroyed and the dominion which will be dissolved. They

walk on the difficult waves of the sea; and they tread frightful ways; they bear a long course full of labours and troubles, 535 and other mournful things which men are wont to perform for the sake of their desire; and they do not deliberate at all whether there is labour in the matter or vexation in what they wish to do; whereas we always inquire after comforts.

If we always in our mind take upon us the way of crucifixion and always comply with the crucifixion, what difficulty then should not be easier than it? Does there exist any one at all who is not acquainted with this, that no man has ever won a victory in battle and received a perishable crown, or has administered divine actions, or has succeeded in any of the glorious things of excellence, or has got the desire of his will even in things not laudable, without having undertaken first labours and troubles or without having pushed away alluring thoughts of comfort that gave birth to dejection and pusillanimity and caused relaxation in all things? But when the mind is zealous in behalf of excellence, the outward senses — smell, touch, hearing, sight and taste — do not know what it means to be vanquished by the severe shocks caused by foreign influences lying outside the course and dominion of the power of nature.

When anger influences [a man] naturally, then bodily life appears more despicable than dung. When however the heart is spiritually zealous, the body does not suffer by troubles, nor does it shrink from terrible things. But the mind faces all temptations being like diamond in its endurance.

536 Let us also be zealous with a spiritual zeal for the sake of the will of Jesus, then all dejection which causes relaxation in the mind will be driven away from us. For zeal causes courage and firmness of soul and soundness of body. What power is there in the demons when the soul moves its zeal against them with natural vigour?

Resolution too is said to be the offspring of zeal. And all immoveable vigour which is born in the soul when it sets its powers to work, is implanted in it by zeal. Also the crowns of confessorship which the victorious martyrs receive on account of their endurance are born by this twofold influence of zeal and resolution which have their origin in the power of natural anger, [and thus the martyrs] become apathetic against the vehement suffering in vexations.

LXXVIII

ON THE PROFIT [ARISING] FROM THE FLIGHT FROM THE WORLD THE METHOD OF WHICH HAS BEEN THOUGHT OUT BY THE FATHERS THROUGH PRUDENT EXAMINATION

Strong indeed and difficult and very hard is the struggle which arises when things are near. And though a man may be excellent and vigorous, when things causing battles and strife are near, fear clings to him. Then he falls easier than when Satan personally meets him in battle. For when a man
 537 is not far from those things which the heart is afraid of, the fiend has constantly the opportunity [to assail him]. And if it happens that he sleeps a while, the fiend can easily destroy him. For there the body is in danger of being injured, at any rate it has to be kept afar from sin. But here it is the soul that receives an invisible blow and it cannot fatigue the fiend so that he gives up fighting against it. For these things are of themselves able to move against it the disturbance of struggle at any time. And willingly it lets itself be captivated by them, without any one arousing strife against it from without. But the soul is in strife with itself through the allurements of those things which are arranged before the senses of the body, as has been said somewhere; for as soon as the soul is captivated by the injurious meetings with the world, these meetings become stumbling-blocks to it; or, as has also been said: The soul is naturally vanquished, when it meets those things.

Therefore, because the ancient saints who have walked in these ways knew that the mind is not always healthy so as to be able to remain in one attitude, without deviation, and vigilant, because there is a time that the soul becomes enveloped in darkness without being able to look at those things which cause injury — they have examined prudently and [resolved to] put on renunciation, as a weapon. For it frees from many struggles, as has been written. For some have escaped from sins, through their poverty and have migrated towards the desert where there is nothing to cause affections,

so that, when a time comes when they are weak, nothing is found to give occasion to fall.

538 I say: anger and desire and rancour and glory and the like are slight, because of the desert, and by it [those solitaries] were protected as by an invincible tower. Then every one of them was able to accomplish his strife in solitude, there where the senses found no support so as to become fiends by injurious meetings. Better for us is death in our struggle, than life with falling.

LXXIX

HOW THE HIDDEN IMPULSES VARY ALONG WITH THE VARIATION OF OUTWARD BEHAVIOUR

As long as a man clings to renunciation [the thought of] departure from this life is continually alive in his mind. And every hour he meditates on the life after resurrection, contriving to prepare what is necessary for that state. And a contempt for all honour and comfort of the body is sown in his mind, and the thought of the baseness of the world moves in him at all times. And he is courageous and always possesses the heart of a hero in all fear and danger threatening death. For he is not afraid even of death, because he perpetually looks at it very near from a short distance and expects it. And his care is cast on God, with full, undoubting confidence. And when troubles oppose him, he, as a man that knows assuredly that they will prepare crowns for him, bears them with perfect joy, while his soul rejoices and exults when receiving
539 them. For he knows that it is God who sends them, because of the profits of things which remain unknown, in the hidden acts of providence. But when it happens that on account of some cause some transitory thing falls to his lot by the action of him that cunningly devises all evils, at once love of the body begins to stir in his soul and he thinks of a long life and deliberations connected with bodily comfort germinate in him every moment. But, if possible, he withholds his body from being hurt by anything. And he contrives all things which can be utilized for the comfort of the body, and becomes wanting in that freedom which is not subject to any deliberation of fear, and consequently bestows his care and deliberation on

all these things, namely the emotions that cause fear and the things that produce terror. For the courage of the heart has been taken away from him, which he possessed in his soul while he was exalted above the world by his renunciation. And now that he has become an inheritor of the world, in accordance with the quantity of his possession he also has received fear for the law and the provision allotted to him by God.

For the side to the service of which we prepare our members, is that to which we become servants with a submission involving total fear, according to the word of the Apostle ¹⁾).

Anterior to all afflictions is self-love. Anterior to all virtues is that a man despise comforts. He that feeds his body with comforts, is troubled in the place of peace. He that indulges in luxury in his youth, will become a slave and sigh at the end.

⁵⁴⁰ As it is impossible that he, whose head is bound within the dark ²⁾ bosom of the water, should smell the subtle air which is poured out into this empty bosom, so it is not possible that he whose mind is immersed in earthly care, should perceive with the smell of his soul the clear air of the new world. As the smell of a deadly poison disturbs the constitution of the body, so does pernicious sight disturb the peace of the mind.

As it is not possible that health and illness should be in one body without one being destroyed by the other, so it is not possible that money and love be in one house without one destroying the other. As it is not possible that glass remains whole in the neighbourhood of stone, so it is not possible that a saint should continually seek the sight of or discourse with a woman and that his purity should remain immaculate. As trees are eradicated by the perpetual blows ³⁾ of violent waters, so is the love of the world [eradicated] from the heart by the violence of temptations assailing the body. As ⁴⁾ solvent drugs purify the body from bad humours, so does the force of troubles purify the heart from affections. As it is not possible that a dead man should perceive the things of life, so the soul of a solitary, who is buried in solitude as in a grave, is exempt from the storm which usually blows on account of the apperception of things which pass among men. As it is not possible for him that spares his adversary in the field of ⁵⁴¹ battle to avoid blows, so it is not possible that a champion

1) Cf. Rom. 8, 15

2) litt.: thick

3) *κλίμα*

4) Introduction

should spare his body and that his soul should be saved from destruction. As childhood, when terrified by frightful sights runs to seek refuge at the skirts of its parents, so the soul, when troubled by the terror of temptations, hastens towards God to seek shelter in perpetual beseechings. And as temptations assail, to the same extent it multiplies its beseechings. But when it has free-space, it expands itself in distraction.

As those who are handed over to the judges in order to be scourged on account of their evils, become humble and immediately confess their faults, when they come suddenly before the scourges, so that their punishment is lessened and they are soon delivered through the agency of small troubles, but others of them are foolish and obstinate and their scourging is augmented and at last, after much scourging, with lacerated backs, they confess against their will, without gaining any profit; so when we are handed over from divine mercy unto justice, for the faults to which we have become accustomed without returning to the [good] direction, and the Judge of the world orders us to stretch ourselves before the rod of temptations, lest our scourging in the world to be, become heavy; if, as soon as the rod of the Judge approaches us, we humble ourselves and recollect our forfeits and confess before the avenger, we shall soon be saved by small temptations; but if we become obstinate in troubles, and confess not that we were the cause of them ourselves and that we have deserved even more than these, and if we vituperate men and sometimes demons and sometimes even God's justice and assume the attitude of victors though we do not think and say that our works are like theirs, and if we do not think of the fact that God knows and recognizes us better than we do ourselves, and that the judgment of the Lord is over the whole earth and that no man is chastised without His orders, then our distresses assail us as they come, and our trouble becomes violent, and they hand us over the one to its fellow as in a chain, till we know ourselves and become humble and perceive our sins; for without apperception it is not possible for us even to come to [good] direction; then at last when we have suffered many troubles, we confess our sins in a confession without profit and without gathering from it any consolation. And also this that a man perceives his sins, is a gift which is allotted by God to the mind, when He sees that one

has been fatigued by various temptations, lest he depart this world under all these distresses and troubles, without profit; and [also this is a gift: to perceive] that we have not lacked insight on account of obstinacy, but on account of ignorance.

Some depart this world under these circumstances, without confessing that they are guilty, but litigating and vituperating. God, however, who is compassionate, looks to whether they humble themselves, that He may forgive them and give them expansion. Not only that He will put an end to their temptation, but He will even forgive their sins at a faint confession of their heart.

As a man who offers a large offering to the king and tries
543 to make his face benignant, so he that sheds tears in prayer before God, the king of all the worlds, makes to pass away all the degrees of his sins, and is even granted to see His face benignant. As the lamb that leaves the pen, and in its error comes before the den of the wolves, so is the solitary who separates himself from the communion of his fellows under the pretext of lonely dwelling, and constantly visits spectacles and the distraction of the town.

As a man who bears on his shoulder a pearl of great price and goes on an ill-famed way so that he is in perpetual fear of being robbed, so is he that bears the pearl of chastity and walks in the world the way of the enemies. Before he enters the chamber of the grave, which is the place of confidence, it is not to be expected that it will escape robbers and plunderers. Perhaps he that is not afraid, is able [to go that way]; even this man does not know either, on which spot or from where or at which moment he will suddenly be assailed and robbed of his hope. Some are robbed at the gate of their house, namely in old age.

As a man who drinks wine at the time of mourning and gets drunk and forgets all the suffering of his sorrow, so is he that, having got drunk by the love of God in this world which is a place of wailing, forgets his sorrow and all his distress and, through his drunkenness, becomes apathetic against all the affections of sin.

Whose heart is supported by hope in God, his soul is a swift beast of wings. He whose spirit is at all times exalted above the earth and who flies above the sky with the thoughts
544 of his deliberations, and is in continual prayer, is as a man

who has the wind as his driving animal, so that his enemy cannot reach him. Every time the latter seeks to join him, he flies away from him.

As a man who has an advocate in the court of justice, so is he that is compassionate to the troubled ones.

As a man who is amidst dangerous storms on the ocean and casts his utensils from the ship, so is he that despises the hindrances on his godly way in this world which is an ocean ready to suffocate him.

Hindrances will not fail. What doest thou in a house which is not thine? The sight of a corpse ought to be for thee an instruction concerning thy departure from here. Why doest thou multiply bonds to thyself? Gain thy life before thy light grow dim and thou seek help without finding it. This life has been given thee for repentance; do not spend it with various things.

The cross is the gate of mysteries; here takes place the entrance of the mind unto the knowledge of the heavenly mysteries. The knowledge of the cross is hidden within the sufferings of the cross. And in accordance with communion with them is the apperception of the cross, according to the word of the Apostle¹⁾. The greater place the suffering of Christ takes in us, the greater becomes our consolation in Christ. Consolation means contemplation, which is psychic sight. Sight gives birth to consolation. It is not possible that our soul produce spiritual fruits, except when our heart is dead to the world. For the Father quickens the soul that has died the death of Christ, in contemplation of all the worlds.

Another observation. If thou diest not to the world, the
 545 spiritual Adam will not be quickened in thee. When a man, by being offered spiritually, dies to all dealings of this dwelling-place, and trusts his life to the life after the resurrection, Grace will dwell with him. And his behaviour is spiritually strengthened. And when he hates the world, he perceives the behaviour of the new man who is exalted above the filth of human habitation and is deemed worthy of divine revelations.

It is not possible for us to be dead to the world in the world, as long as our mind desires comforts, and the world, by its affairs, is placed before our senses and by apperception

1) Cf. Philipp. 4, 10

renews recollection and incites the body unto seeking what it wishes, by close contact with [worldly] things, by sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste.

The soul's being dead to the world is the heart's being free from the thought of its recollections and the soul's being void of the deliberations concerning [worldly] things and the will being cut off from the love of thinking upon them.

For it is not possible that our heart be in peace exalted above disturbance and in serenity of love lifted up above the world, when there are poured out into it recollections that renew through meetings with things by the senses, their receptacles. The mortification of the soul to the world cannot be acquired, if not the body be also beyond apperception and sight of things.

LXXX

546 ON VIGILS AND ON THE MANY DIFFERENT KINDS OF LABOURS DURING THEM AND THAT IT IS NOT BECOMING THAT THE AIM OF OUR LABOURS SHOULD BE THE FULFILLING OF A QUANTITY BUT [TO WORK] IN FREEDOM AND WITH DISCRIMINATION AS CHILDREN OF GOD WHO WORK WITH THEIR FATHER IN THE ALERTNESS OF LOVE AND HOW PRECIOUS THE LABOUR OF VIGILS IS MORE THAN THAT OF ALL OTHER DUTIES AND WHAT THIS LABOUR IMPOSES ON THOSE WHO CHOOSE IT AND HOW THEY HAVE TO WALK IN IT AND ON THE GIFTS OF WHICH THEY ARE DEEMED WORTHY BY GOD AND ON THE BATTLES AGAINST THEM ON THE PART OF THE PRINCIPAL OF THIS WORLD

When thou desirest to rise for the service of thy vigils, then, with the help of our Lord, do as I say to thee. Bend thy knees as usually, and rise. Then do not begin with thy service at once. But when thou hast prayed and concluded and signed thy heart and thy limbs with the living sign, rise for a short time, in silence, till thy senses are at rest and thy emotions in peace. Then lift up thy inward gaze towards our Lord and beseech Him passionately that He may support thy

weakness. And let the words of thy tongue and the emotions of thy heart be to the pleasure of His will. And say thus, quietly in the prayer of thy heart: My Lord and my God, maker of thy creation, to whom our affections are revealed as well as the weakness of our nature and the strength of our fiend, do Thou guard me against his wickedness, for his power is strong and our nature is wretched and our strength is weak. Thou art benignant who art acquainted with our
 547 weakness and bearest the difficulties of our illness; guard me from the disturbance of deliberations and the vehemence of affections and make me worthy of this holy service. Lest I spoil its taste by my affections and be found audacious before Thee. But with pure deliberations and in clearness of thought let me stand before Thee, as is beautiful to Thy holiness, for the splendour of which the chariot with the Seraphs, who sanctify and praise the holiness of Thy being with vibrating hot emotions to their delight, are not sufficient.

And with these deliberations thy heart will suddenly be opened by grace and thou wilt shed tears at the beginning of thy prayer. And thy deliberations will be purified by the recollection of the Lord. And thy soul will receive quiet and pure chastity. And while thy spirit is concentrated and pure, thou wilt begin thy service, without disturbance, and thou wilt continue it till the end, with delight.

It is becoming for us to continue our service, with complete freedom, apart from all disturbing thoughts of youth. If we see however that there is not much time and light dawns before we have finished, we should leave out on purpose and consciously one or two of the usual eulogies rather than to let perturbancy spoil the taste of our service and disturb also the Psalms of the morning.

If during thy service, a deliberation says to thee whisperingly: Hasten somewhat, let us do much work, then thou wilt soon be ready — do not look at it. If, however, it urges thee, recite in inverse order some marmita's¹⁾ of the Psalter; and every sentence, the sense of which involves the sign of the
 548 cross, repeat it many times; and if it disturbs or troubles thee again: then cease reciting Psalms, and kneel in prayer, and say: I do not wish to count milestones, but I seek to enter

1) tenth part

the Apartment. Every way which leads me quickly to the aim, I will go. The people who fashioned the calf in the desert, walked forty years erring in the desert, went up and down mountains and hills, but the promised land they did not even see from afar.

And if, during thy vigils, long standing overcome thee by its duration, and thou become weak by fatigue, and deliberation say to thee, or rather that cunning one who speaks through it as through the serpent: Finish now, because thou hast no strength to stand — then answer: Not so, but let us sit down, this is much better than to sleep. For even though I do not recite a Psalm, let my tongue be silent, while my mind is occupied with prayer and intercourse with God. To be awake is at any rate better than sleep.

Vigils do not wholly demand standing nor solely the reciting of Psalms. But some spend the whole night with the recitation of Psalms; some with kneelings and passionate prayers and humble prostrations on the earth; some with weeping and tears and bewailing of their sins.

It is said concerning one of our Fathers, that for forty years his prayer consisted in one sentence: I have sinned, as man; do Thou as God forgive me. And the Fathers and brethren
549 heard him repeating this sentence, weeping passionately, without ceasing. And this prayer alone, during night and day, took for him the place of service.

Some pass a small part of the evening with the recitation of Psalms and the rest of the night with songs and glorifications and hymns and other mournful melodies. Others assign the hours of the night to liturgical recitations; and between every two parts they enliven and enjoy themselves by reading the Scripture. Others impose upon themselves the rule, that they never shall bend their knees, not even in the prayer forming the conclusion to a *marmita*¹⁾, though this is the custom of those who practice vigils. But they pass the whole night in one attitude.

Concerning one of the saints, therefore, it is said that because the demon of fornication made war against him and did not neglect to use against him any means, he gave himself to the labour of vigils and imposed upon himself the rule,

1) See above, p. 357, note

that he would never bend his knees, but stood the whole night, his eyes open, without bending his knees, till morning.

All these distinctions are in the labour of vigils, and by them the virtuous put off the old man who is depraved by the desires of seduction and put on Christ and are saved. On account of these kinds of labour performed in wisdom, the saints are deemed worthy of ecstasy caused by divine revelation, which is exalted above fleshly thought.

While the virtuous in their vigils enjoy such various kinds
550 of things, they pass, without dejection the whole space of the long hours of night, while their soul exults and rejoices and forgets the coat of flesh, woven from affections, with which it was clad. And on account of the delight and the joy of their heart, they do not remember sleep. For they imagine themselves to have put off the body and to be already in the state which comes after the resurrection. And in consequence of their great joy, they leave their Psalms from time to time, and they fall on their faces on account of the power of the gladness which moves in their soul. And the whole long night is to them as the day, and darkness as sunrise, on account of the hope which elevates their heart and makes them drunk with its thought and by the blazing of their mind which burns by the recollection of future good. And while the tongue continually plays on the spiritual harp, mind is occupied with its own things; sometimes it turns towards the understanding of the sentences, sometimes it pushes away the foreign¹⁾ deliberation which tries to enter in. Sometimes, when it becomes weary, it turns towards the contents of the daily recitation. And the recollection which it has gathered from it and collected in its treasury, causes at these times emotions at which the mind delights, so that there is no room at all for foreign deliberations.

And then quickly the mind is drawn towards the understanding of prayer and Psalms, lest, by abiding too long in this state — profitable though meditation upon them may be — it should be bereaved of discourse with God and the light of contemplation which the mind is wonted to receive from prayer without distraction in which it speaks in loneliness with its Lord
551 through the secrecy of the heart, in humility of deliberations.

1) *קיא* = proselyte

In these and similar things they pass their whole lifetime, every one of them pleasing his Lord by his labours in accordance with his degree and his power, in total application of will.

If anyone, however, desire to give his body some rest, he may finish and sit down [turned] towards the East. As long however as he is sitting, he shall not allow his mind to be idle; but he shall meditate and think and deliberate on the greatness of this duty; and on what his performance is; and how it is done, and how great his crown, and how glorious the fruit of his labour is; and what watchfulness it demands; and how the ancients have dealt with it, and of what things they have been deemed worthy through the fulfilment of their struggles; and how by the mercy of Jesus he was turned from the world, he that was occupied with vain labours the end of which is destruction from God and reprehension through sins; and how this mercy brought him to this performance of the angels, the hope of which is a veracious hope, and its joy is a joy which is beyond the power of distress and its confidence a confidence which cannot be fallacious. For a man may work ever so much, his labours are small compared with that which he will receive at his end in the pledge of good things, to the delight of his soul.

While these and similar deliberations are in his heart and he is astonished at them he places his mind in the spiritual chariot and lets it fly and be occupied with all the holy Fathers of all generations, the inheritance of whose behaviour he possesses, [thinking of] how every one of them has accomplished, with various distinctions, this spiritual service; and of how they have abandoned the inhabited world and mankind and have withdrawn themselves from the allurements of the world and from the disturbances of life and have gone and hidden themselves in mountains and caverns and removed and lonely places, because they saw that this course of life cannot be accomplished among men, on account of the many hindrances; and have become dead in their lifetime for the sake of life in God, erring through desert places and between rocks as those who have lost their way; people [of such worth] that every single one's glory is not equalled by the whole world. Some of them lived on rough and steep rocks, some at the foot of mountains, or in deep valleys; some in the

caves of the ground and in caverns, as those who dig after foxes in order to surprise them; some in graves and on mountain cliffs. Some have constructed a small hovel in the desert and passed there the rest of their life; some have built a small pen on the top of a mountain, viz. a small cell, and have dwelt therein with pleasure as if in a royal palace. And because they did not care for their livelihood, they only thought of how each of them should please God and accomplish his struggle beautifully.

And what kind of a life did these saints lead in these places?
 553 Did they live with the body, or a life above flesh and blood? Did they not become pusillanimous in that total desert? Did the power of endurance not abate during that long time, did the body not become weak during that prolonged period, through their being deprived of the use of natural needs? How was human life preserved in them? And in all this, what struggles have they endured and what troubles! How strenuously and without perturbation did they endure various difficult wars in which the evil spirits assailed them! How did they not in their life time — even till the end — become relaxed so as to neglect their difficult and wearying labours? How did their spirit not become sorry through this utter loneliness, cut off from all visible consolations? Is there really all this strength in human nature; and how did divine power preserve them without injury, under all those various temptations; and how did it prepare for every one of them by various provisions, in accordance with one's dwelling place, the fulfilling of the need which was necessary for him? Some of them were sustained by a bird. Behold, these last sixty years I have the half of my bread from such a bird. Others are sustained by some tree or palm in a supernatural way, as one of them has said, viz. the bishop who repented in the desert. I am now in this desert nine and forty years. God has granted me life
 554 through this palm. And so it was with the saint who was in his monastery, in a fallen state, for six months; and who fled and went unto the interior of the desert in order to repent his sin. When his stomach ached through and through, the angel came and cured him. Some are sustained by the beasts; as that blessed one who dwelt in a cavern in the desert of Sodom. Some, who are dwelling in the desert near the inhabited world, are furnished by men, as that strenuous man whom

Serapion visited; and as the blessed Martinianus who dwelt in a lonely island and was visited by a merchant two times a year.

Where no habitation was near and there were no ways whatever, [divine power] visited them through an angel, as is said concerning the blessed Apelles who dwelt in the declivity of a mountain in a small grotto. His work consisted therein that he offered prayer to God during the whole day and a hundred times during the night. His food, without care on his part, came in the desert through an angel. He was clad in a shirt, and on his head he wore a small cowl; and these remained on him in the desert, without becoming worn out. Doest thou see, how God cares for his soldiers in every respect?

Others fed upon roots; others upon eatable greens, which grow of themselves; others upon crops which had to be watered and upon dried vegetables, which are sown on purpose; others upon the fruits of trees. To others a bed of parsley and a streaming well were sufficient for the wants of this ephemeral life, in so far as the body is maintained by them, apart from profitable recollections, which at these times are stirred by grace, to the consolation of man.

When a man is occupied in his mind with these and similar things, he becomes drunk as it were with living wine, and forgets himself. Then he sees himself again and wonders that during the whole of this travel through the desert and during the meeting with saints, no injury at all has met the mind. And now it seems to him as if he were with those saints and saw them manifestly. And on account of this recollection of the behaviour of the saints which the mind imagines to itself through the remembrance of their tales, and through meditation upon them, dejection vanishes; and languor is driven forth; the limbs are strengthened; sleep is driven away from the eyelids; the spirit is strengthened and throws fear away; distraction is crushed heroically; the mind is concentrated; a fervent heat burns in the heart and unspeakable joy arises in the soul. Further sweet tears moisten the cheeks; spiritual exultation makes the mind drunk; inexplainable consolations are received by the soul; hope supports the heart and strengthens it. Then it is to him as if he dwelled in heaven, during his vigils that are so full of good things.

By these and similar ways those proceed who perform vigils with discrimination. For there is nothing which makes the mind

556 pure and glad and enlightens it and expels evil deliberations so that the soul exults, to such an extent as continual vigils do.

For this reason all the Fathers were persevering in this labour of vigils, and clung to the rule of abiding awake in the nights, during the whole course of their behaviour; especially because they heard our Saviour in several places warning us earnestly, by His living word: Watch ye therefore and pray always ¹⁾. And: Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation ²⁾. And again: Pray and do not faint ³⁾ and so on. And it was not sufficient to warn us by words only, but He gave us even an example in His person thereby that He always honoured the practice of prayer above all other things. And therefore He perpetually separated Himself, also for prayer, not arbitrarily, but chose for time, night, and for place, the desert; that we, avoiding all crowds and tumult, might be able to pray in solitude, as is becoming.

Also all the revelations which happened to the saints, on various subjects, — whether they served to make them prudent or to common instruction — usually happened to them during the night and at the time of prayer. Therefore our Fathers have received this elevated instruction concerning prayer as it were from Christ; and the state of waking during prayer they chose in the first place, according to the order of the Apostle, 557 for solitude and reclusion from the whole world, in order that they might be, without a break, in the vicinity of God, through continual prayer. They fled into solitude not only lest anything should prevent them from constant prayer, but lest any foreign thing from without should hurt them and disturb their pure mind, and their gladdening vigils should be troubled, which are the light of the soul. They also fed themselves moderately lest the vapour which rises from a full stomach should obscure the mind so as to deprive it of its discriminating quiet and take away the spiritual delight which is granted through prayer. In short: they were zealous in every respect that they might be able to speak with God without a screen, as much as possible, the mind not being hindered by anything at all.

Therefore, because Satan knows, that all these good things are collected in this wonderful performance which occupies the place of the soul with regard to all the sundry members of

1) Luke 21, 36

2) Matth. 26, 41

3) 1 Thess. 5, 17

the body of excellence, he envies it more than all other duties the which all men know by experience and there is nothing in man at which he aims and against which he directs his zeal, and which he prepares himself to combate more than vigils — whether those of a solitary, or of a coenobite, or a layman. Here he cannot but show himself openly, in manifest war against man, without an intermediary, without perceiving
 558 at all the gifts which those receive who perform vigils; but he envies them on account of their chaste habit of standing, and through their perseverance, against sleep, in waking, and glorifications, and singing of Psalms, and prayers and inclinations, and stretching [of the hands], and prostrations, and lying down on the earth, and beseechings of the heart during the whole night. He is especially envious because others lie on their beds as dead at whom he makes mock, according to his pleasure, by sordid visions and impure phantasies, and immerses them during the whole night as it were in mire by various phantasies during the heavy sleep that has its origin in a full stomach — whereas these depart hence with their soul unto the waking state of resurrection. And he sees them, though still bound under the curtain of the body, while perpetually waves of mortality assail them and they are confined by a life limited under the government of the air of this world — still showing in their mortal nature a type of future behaviour.

A great power possesses prayer which is offered at night-time, more than that offered in the day. Therefore all the saints used to pray during the night, while they were combating against the heaviness of the body and the sweetness of sleep, and expelling bodily nature. As also the Prophet says: I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim ¹⁾, while he was sighing in passionate prayer, from the depth of his heart. And further: I rose in the midst of night to praise Thee because of Thy judgments, Thou righteous one ²⁾. For every request which they demanded from
 559 God with power, they armed themselves with prayer in vigils, and at once they received what they had asked.

There is nothing so feared, even by Satan, as prayer which is offered during vigils. And even if it takes place with distraction, it does not return fruitless, unless that which is asked,

1) Ps. 6, 6

2) ?

should be what is not becoming. Therefore he engages himself in severe battle with them, in order to turn them away from this performance, if possible, namely those who are constantly at it. Those who are somewhat strengthened against his evil stratagems, and have tasted the gifts of God which are granted during vigils, and experienced personally the greatness of God's help which has presented itself to them, despise him utterly, him and all his devices.

Therefore, more than the whole community of the church, the order of the solitaries wages war with them, in the struggle of prayer and vigils, in the first place, because they are free from visible things; in the second place, because of their continual solitude. For, because they are free from incitements, he is not able to turn away their deliberations from the thought of God and to detain them from continual beseechings, in their war against him, so that from the beginning of their apprenticeship till their old age they do not neglect the labour of vigils in any way, but it is a performance well known to them, to stand during the whole night; even as we learn from the written stories of every one of them.

560 For Mar Athanasius, says in his story on the mirror of the solitaries¹⁾, that he kept vigils plentifully, so that he passed the main part of the nights without sleep. And it was in this point that Satan found an occasion to wage his first battle against the victorious one; and this happened while he was still a boy. We often read in many stories, that he did not neglect vigils during his whole lifetime, as he did not even when he visited others; as for instance, when he went to see the blessed Father Paul, when they ate their meal [furnished to them] through a bird, and stood in prayer during the whole night. Which of the saints, though possessing all the virtues together, could neglect this duty, and not be rockened to be idle without it? For this is the light of the mind. By it the intellect is elevated and the spirit concentrated, the mind flies [on high] and gazes at spiritual things and becomes young and illuminated in prayer. By it the goods of future life, and the presents the mysteries of which are indicated in the holy scriptures are given as a pledge. Therefore our Fathers did not

1) Athanasius in his *Epistola ad Monachos* does not speak of vigils. Or is Euagrius' work meant here?

neglect this labour from the beginning of their apprenticeship till [they reached] the measure of perfection, so that, even at the time of old age which when a man can hardly stand on his feet, they did not let languor gain power over themselves so as to detain them from continual vigils by giving their
 561 bodies rest in a short sleep; as we also learn from the stories which are told concerning that perfect image of excellence and of all spiritual beauties, I mean the blessed Arsenius. When that famous man of Skete had withdrawn himself from all intercourse with men and removed his dwelling-place to a long distance even from the brethren, he gave himself wholly to the wonderful performance of vigils. His standing during vigils differed also from that of all the Fathers of his time. To which also his story is witness. On the evening before Sunday he set his back to the sun and stretched his hands unto heaven, till the sun rose before him. Again in another place: he passed the whole night in vigils; and when, towards morning he wished to take rest, because nature demanded it, while he struggled with sleep, he said: Go and leave me, evil maid. And so he expelled sleep quickly and remained awake. And this happened at that high age, concerning which it is said that it had bent him.

And in order that his assiduity in vigils may better be known, let us hear another story concerning him; how he persevered during all his old age and weakness, a man ninety
 562 years old. Once he called two of his disciples, who were highly esteemed Fathers, and said to them: Because the demons struggle with me and I am not sure that they will not betray me during sleep, [come and] labour with me this night in vigils, and guard me and look whether I fall asleep during vigils. So one sat down at his right hand and one at his left, from the evening till the morning. [Afterwards] they said: We have slept and waked, but we have not seen him sleeping at all. And when dawn began, whether he assumed such an attitude as to make us believe that he slept, or whether sleep really overwhelmed him, we do not know. Three times [we heard] his breath leave his nostrils, then he rose and said to us: I have slept, did I not? We answered and said to him: We do not know it, for we have slept.

In these delightful labours of vigils those rejoiced who were the leaders of our course. What then was the delight which

the glorious Arsenius gathered from this vexation with which he tortured his body to such an extent? It is clear that he did not vainly persevere in all these things. For we see that not only his inner man became enlightened on account of his delight, by the exalted ray, but also his outward man, which is material and corruptible nature, was clad with the glory with which all the saints will be clad in the end, on account of the variation which the whole inner nature of men undergoes.

563 Wherefrom do we learn this? Once one of the brethren went to the cell of Aba Arsenius and looked through the window and saw the Father standing who was wholly as burning fire. For this brother who had gone to see the Father, was worthy of this sight: he did not belong to the small but to the great ones. The blessed one was famous on account of his exalted behaviour and all Fathers desired to see him. And because they especially desired to see him, [it was] as Aba Macarius said to him: Why doest thou flee from us! Therefore the strangers who came to Skete desired chiefly to see him and to receive his blessing. — When that brother knocked at his door, the Father came outdoors. And when he saw that his visitor was astonished at what he saw, he said to him: Was it time for thee to knock? Hast thou seen anything? The other answered: No. So he dismissed him.

And what shall I say concerning the blessed Pacomius? The counterpart of the former, and among others the chief, the valiant in strife, the fervent and heroic in his vigils, the man who passed a long time fighting against the demons as a glorious champion, in the way of the holy Antonius, who, because many demons used to come to him during the nights, asked God during his vigils that He might free him from sleep, so that night and day he should be without sleep, so as to be able to subdue the power of the Fiend. As it has
564 been said: Let me not turn my back before having crushed them, for they are powerless against the faith of the Lord. — Then this gift was granted him, as he had asked, for a long time. And because his heart was pure — the sight of his soul having been purified through vigils and solitude and prayer — he saw God, who is invisible, as it were in a mirror.

These are the fruits of vigils, and these are the boons of those who perform them, and these are the crowns [granted on account of persevering in] this struggle.

Thou also, o brother, if thou desirest to be the fellow of these saints and an heir of their behaviour, cling to solitude, without dejection, that thou also mayest persevere in the work of prayer without a break. Bear its troubles, in order to acquire its good. And if thy body should be bent down by different reasons and desist from labour, and thou shouldst not be able to accomplish the works of solitude as usual, and thou shouldst begin to be despised by thy heart and to become dejected and worried — because this is the work of the heart, especially for those who have the right intention: not to desist from reprehending and reproving — do not say: Woe to me, that I am idle, and it would be better for me to be in the world and to perform any work whatever, and not possess an idle reputation of solitude and reclusion, and yet to cease from performance, being a solitary and lonely, yet afar from duties.

⁵⁶⁵ Do not say this. For God's lovingkindness bears the load of our weakness; He asks man from what he has, and He knows us better than we do ourselves what our strength is.

When thy strength is sufficient, work. And even if thou art not able to perform but little, thou must bear with joy the laziness of thy solitude and be patient. And thou must know that, if thou leavest solitude, even the thought will not stay with thee which causes thee to be chastised by thy conscience on account of laziness. On the contrary: many circumstances will injure thee on account of distraction and laxity of the senses, which destroy even that which has been performed by thee before, because the grace of solitude has been taken from thee. And thou wilt fall into temptations and many circumstances will befall thee, of which thou didst not think.

If thou doest fall into temptations, do not despair. For there is no merchant who travels on seas and roads without suffering losses; and there is no husbandman who simply reaps the whole; and there is no champion who suffers not blows and strokes even if he gains victory in the end. So in the things of God, in the things of the merchants who go this invisible road, there are profits and losses, blows and victory. When thou art hit, do not turn thy back. Pardon me.

LXXXI

566 AN ANSWER TO A BROTHER WHO HAD ASKED HIM WHY WHEN OUR LORD HAS DEFINED MERCY AS SIMILITUDE TO THE GREATNESS OF THE FATHER IN HEAVEN THE SOLITARIES HONOUR SOLITUDE MORE THAN IT? AND AN APOLOGY OF THIS POINT AND THAT IT IS NOT BECOMING TO NEGLECT THE DISTRESSED AND SICK WHEN THEY ARE NEAR

It is well that thou hast brought forward from the Gospel a comparison and a tested example for the great duty of solitude, as if we were opponents to it or tried to reject it as something superfluous. For our Lord has defined mercy as the similitude to the Father by which those who perform it, can approach Him. This is true. And we, the solitaries, do not honour solitude without mercy, though we try to remain far from care and trouble, as much as possible. Not that we deny necessary things, when they present themselves, but we care for solitude, because in it we are constantly with God in lonely intercourse, by which it is more possible to be purified from perturbation and to approach unto quiet of mind, though such cases are rare. But when it is necessary, we will not neglect mercifulness, compelling ourselves perpetually to be inwardly full of mercy toward all kinds of rational beings, at all times.

For so the doctrine of our Lord orders, and this is the distinction of our solitude, and it is not due to fortune. So 567 none of us neglects to show this inward virtue, — when the time corresponds with the work and the necessity — making known his love openly, by deeds; especially those who have not laid themselves wholly under the rule of solitude do so. But solitude to such ones means that they never meet anyone, except once a week. They have not cut themselves off, by the definition of their rule, from showing their fellow man deeds of mercy; only that one does so who is very devoted and solitary so that he avoids the sight of men. For we know, that without love of the fellow-man, the mind is not able to become illuminated by intercourse with and love unto God. Therefore, which of the says solitaries, who possessed food and

clothing, could see his neighbour hungry and naked and persevere in withholding his hand?

Or which of them, when his brother according to the flesh was sick and tormented and destitute of visitors, has honoured the rule of his reclusion more than the life of his fellow, on account of love of solitude?

Where, however, such circumstances, are not at hand, we keep in mind love and mercy unto the fellow man. Where practice is near, God demands from us plainly that we perform it actually.

568 This is well known, that if we have acquired nothing, we are not allowed to expose ourselves to care and disturbance for the sake of the poor. But it is demanded of us [to give] from what we have.

And when our dwelling place is far from the habitation of men and from intercourse with and sight of them, it is not necessary for us to leave our cell and our solitary and lonely dwelling-place and proceed erring through the world in order to visit the sick and to be occupied with similar practice. For it is known that he that does so descends from greatness to smallness.

If however the recluse live in the dwelling place of many and is near to men through his constant dwelling with them, and he can take rest when others are fatigued — be he healthy or ill — it is incumbent upon him to occupy himself with practice, without asking largely from others. But if he see the brother according to the flesh and to profession, in trouble, or rather: Christ rejected and vexed, and he flee and hide himself, pretending a sham solitude — he that acts thus, is without mercy.

Do not remind me of John of Thebais and Arsenius and the like. For who has given himself to such deeds and cared for the sick or the poor, and has despised solitude? Do not approach unto their stories. For if thou art far from all comfort and all meeting with men as they were, thou art allowed to despise such works of [practice]. If however thou art far
569 from the state of the perfect and continually occupied with bodily labours and occupations, why then doest thou despise a commandment which suits thy measure, taking refuge with the grand behaviour of the saints, a behaviour to which thou art not near?

As to me, I will not neglect to cite the example of Macarius the Great, which was written, as it were, to rebuke those who despise their brethren. One day he went to visit some one who was sick. When he asked him whether he desired anything, he answered: I want some fresh bread. Those solitaries, namely, usually baked bread for a year; so was the custom of those places. Then that blessed man, who was ninety years old, went from Skete the town of Alexandria, forty miles and more, carrying with him dry bread in his cowl. There he changed it and brought the sick what he desired.

And an other, who was his equal, did what is still greater, a certain Agathon, exquisite above all the solitaries of his time, a man who loved silence and solitude better than all others. Once he went to a festival, in order to sell what he had made with his hands. There he found a stranger, lying in the street, sick. He hired a house and stayed with him, working with his hands and making expenses on his behalf and paying the hire of the house. So he served him for six months, till the sick had recovered. Then he said, as the story runs, I 570 wished that I could find a leper and give him my body and take his. — This is perfect love; let us resemble our Fathers, that we may be thought worthy of grace, as they were.

Those who fear God, my beloved, are provided for so that they keep the commandments of our Lord without difficulty, even although that seems possible to them only through labours, and danger is thought to be incurred for its sake. Christ has defined and limited their totality to two commandments, which make up the sum of them all. I mean the love of God, and what He taught to be the like of this: love unto His image. The possession of the former is the aim of spiritual contemplation; that of the second, of contemplation and practice. Now, because God's nature is simple and not composite and invisible and not subject to want, the heart in its occupation equally does not require practice, nor bodily performance, nor material motion. Its performance is simple, and, on account of partial union in the [human] intellect, is in accordance with the simple nature of its adorable cause, which is exalted above the apperception of the senses and the flesh.

The second commandment, love of mankind, is to be accomplished in a double way, in accordance with its double nature. I mean, that we accomplish it with the heart, invisibly, and

at the same time with the body, manifestly; but those things which are accomplished by practice, happen also in secret and in cooperation with the heart.

For, as man's nature is composed of two parts, — namely body and soul — so all things regarding him are provided
571 in a double way, in accordance with the double character of his constitution. As everywhere practice is anterior to contemplation, so it is impossible for man to elevate himself unto that elevated part, unless he has accomplished before, by practice, that which is lower.

Therefore, let no one venture to speak concerning the acquisition of love of his fellowmen, as if he possessed it already in his soul, if the part is still wanting which has to be accomplished by the body, according to the opportunity for practice granted by strength, time and place. Then by faith has to be acquired that part of love which is received and recognized by the heart. When, on account of these things, we have been made ourselves known as faithful and true, as far as possible, then power is given to the soul to stretch itself towards the grand part of exalted and divine contemplation, by means of simple emotions and without comparison.

Where man has no opportunity to fulfill love of his fellow man practically by visible and by bodily things, it is sufficient in the eyes of God, that we keep love of our fellowman with our mind only, especially if we are able constantly to administer the service of that universal part, that is more excellent. If however we are destitute of the totality of that universal part, we should fill up this gap by the lower commandment, namely by apperceptible practice, consisting therein that, according to the time happening, we should provide for the comfort of our brethren, by wearying our body; lest our liberty
572 become an opportunity for the flesh, in that we should occupy ourselves with idle things under the pretext of lonely intercourse. For it is known, that it is not allowed to demand from him who is wholly deprived of human intercourse and who is wholly occupied with God, being dead to all beings because of his being deprived of them — that he should serve men.

He, however, whose rule of solitude forbids intercourse except on one day every week, and who, after the completion of his rule, meeting and mingling and consoling himself with

man, neglects the trouble of his brethren and pretends to keep the rule of his week of prohibition, is anathema. For it is manifest that it is through a lack of mercy and on account of presumption and fallacious deliberations that such a one does not condescend to occupy himself with such things.

He that neglects the sick, shall not see light. And who turns away his face from one in distress, may his day be dark. And who despises the cry of the vexed, may the sons of his house grope in darkness.

Let us not dishonour the great name of solitude by our ignorance. Every duty has its time and place and distinction. And then its service is accepted by God who knows all. The service that deviates from this, is idle; for all measures have to be brought to completion.

He that hopes that he will be consoled and visited in his misery by others, has to humble himself, so that he may be of use to his fellow man when the latter is tempted. Then during his service in solitude he may be joyful and free from presumption and the seduction of the demons.

573 It has been said by one of the holy Fathers, Euagrius, one of the initiated, that there is nothing which frees the solitary from the demon of haughtiness and aids to the attainment of the domain of chastity when the passion of fornication is burning, as to visit those who are thrown on their bed and vexed by bodily troubles. Great is the angelic service of solitude, when it is mingled with such a discrimination, for humbleness is needed. For we are plundered without our knowing it.

We have not said these things, my brethren, that we should despise the duty of solitude; for we have everywhere insisted upon it. We are not now found to contradict our own words, and no one should pick out a single word from our argumentation and take this in his hand without discrimination, neglecting the rest. For I remember that in several places I have said with emphasis, that if a man should happen to be in his cell in total idleness, on account of the necessity of weakness, even then he should not choose to leave it completely and to perform his service outside it rather than to be idle, within. I have spoken of leaving the cell completely; but if a necessary practice presents itself, which demands some weeks, during which he may gain relief or the life of a fellow-man, he should not deem this idleness. If there is anyone who thinks

himself to be one of the perfect and exalted above all that is here, on account of his continually being with God, and his
 574 being far from all visible practice, he rightly withdraws himself even from these things. Great is the labour of discrimination, to him that is spoken to by God. May He in His mercy, give us to accomplish the work of Him that has said: Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them¹). To whom be glory and honour from the whole creation for ever and ever. Amen.

LXXXII

HOW MUCH HONOUR HUMILITY POSSESSES
AND HOW HIGH ITS RANK IS

I desire to open my month, my brethren, to speak on the elevated place of humility; but I am filled with fear, as a man who is conscious of the fact, that he will speak concerning God in a tale of his own speech. For humility is the garment of divinity; for the word which became man, put it on and spoke in it with us, through our body. And every one who puts it on in truth, by humility takes the likeness of Him that has descended from His height and concealed the splendour of His majesty and hidden His glory, lest the creation should perish by the sight of Him. For the creation was not able to see Him without His being united to a part of it which He should assume and speak with them through it; then the creation was able to hear the word of His mouth, face to face.

The children of Israel were not able to listen to His voice, while He spoke with them from within the cloud; then should the creation be able to bear the sight of Him openly? For the children of Israel were so troubled that they said to Moses: Let us speak with thee, and listen thou to His words for us;
 575 but let Him not speak with us, lest we die²). And so terrible was the sight, that even the intermediary said: I fear and tremble. For on mount Sinai the splendour of His glory revealed itself, and the whole mountain smoked and was shaken from

1) Matthew 7, 12

2) Exodus 20, 29

fear of His revelation that took place on it, so that even the beasts which approached the foot of the mountain, died. And all the children of Israel, on the order of Moses, prepared themselves, every one purifying himself for three days in order to be worthy of listening to the sound of God's speech and of seeing His revelation. And when the moment came, they were not able to bear the sight of His light, and the vehemence of the sound of His thunder.

But now that He has poured out His grace on the world by His coming, not in earthquake nor in fire, nor with a terrible and vehement sound — but descending as the rain upon the lamb's fleece, and as the soft dew drops which softly descend upon the earth — it has pleased Him to speak with us in a different way, concealing His majesty in the cover of flesh, speaking to us while being in us, in the garment which Providence had woven from the womb of the virgin, so that we, seeing Him speak with us as one of our race, should not be terrified by the sight of Him. Therefore, every one who puts on the garment in which our Creator appeared, by means of a body full of holiness, puts on Christ. For with the likeness in which He appeared to His creation and in which He dealt
576 with us, He desired to clad His inner man and in it He desired to appear to His fellow men, and with it [He desired] to be adorned in stead of with the garment of honour and outward glory. And therefore the creatures prostrate themselves as to a lord before every one whom they see being clad with this likeness, silent or speaking, on account of the honour of their Lord with which they saw Him clad and in which He wandered about.

Which of the creatures should not be intimidated by the sight of the humble? Yet before the glory of humility revealed itself to all, this sight full of holiness was despised by them. But now that He has caused its majesty to dawn before the eye of the worlds, every man honours this likeness, where-soever it shows itself. For through the mediation of it, the creation became worthy of receiving the sight of its Creator. And therefore [humility] is not despised even by the enemies of truth. And though he that has acquired it, should be a beggar in comparison with all creatures, yet he that has learned it, is honoured on account of it as if he were clad with crown and purple. No one will ever hate the humble nor assail him

with a word, nor despise him. And because his Lord loves him, he is beloved by every one. Every one loves him, every one cherishes him. And wherever he comes, he is looked upon as an angel of light and distinguished by [signs of] honour. When the sage and the learned speak, they are ordered to be silent in order to give the humble an opportunity to speak. The eyes of everyone look on his mouth [in order to know] which word will come forth from it. Every one awaits his
 577 words, as words from God. The sense of his few words is investigated as the words of a philosopher. Sweet are his words to the ear of the sages, more than honeycomb is to the palate of those who taste it. And by everyone he is reckoned as a God, though he be simple in his words and of mean aspect. He that speaks of the humble in a despising way, is not reckoned as one living, but as one who opens his mouth against God. And the more despicable he is in his own eyes, the more honour is shown to him on the part of the creatures.

The humble approaches the beasts of prey and as soon as their eye rests on him, their wildness is tamed and they come to him and accompany him as their master, wagging their tails and licking his hands and his feet. For they smell from him the smell which spread from Adam before his transgression, when the beasts gathered near him and he gave them names, in Paradise — the smell which was taken from us and given back to us anew by Christ through His advent, which made the smell of the human race sweet.

And when the humble approaches the deadly reptiles, as soon as the touch of his hands attains to their bodies, the virulence of their deadly poison is cooled and with his hands he crushes them as if they were locusts¹).

And when he approaches the children of man they look upon him as upon their lord. Why do I mention the children
 578 of man? Because, notwithstanding all the evil and stubbornness of the demons and all the pride of their own mind, as soon as they meet the humble, they become as dust: all their hardness becomes weak, their tricks become craftless, their cunning idle.

Now that we have shown in how great honour humility

1) With this passage is to be compared the *Book of the Dove*, p. 80

stands with God and how great a power is hidden in it, we will clearly show what humility is, and when a man will be deemed worthy of receiving it in its fulness, as it is. And we shall make a distinction between him who is humble in some respects and him that has been deemed worthy of veracious humility.

Humility is a mysterious power, which the perfect saints receive when they have reached accomplishment of behaviour. And this power is not granted except to those who, by the power of Grace, have personally accomplished the whole of excellence, in so far as nature in its domain is able to do this. For humility is all-comprehending excellence. And therefore we cannot deem every man humble, without discrimination, but only those who have been deemed worthy of the rank mentioned. Not every one who in his nature is peaceful or quiet or discrete or without blame, has reached the rank of humility.

But a humble one in truth is he that, possessing inwardly something worthy of being proud of, does not extol himself, but is as dust in his own thoughts. Nor do we call humble him that humbles himself on account of the recollection of his low characteristics or trespasses, which he remembers in order that his heart may become contrite and his mind with-
 579 drawn from impulses of haughtiness, however praiseworthy this may be. For he still possesses deliberations of haughtiness. Humility however he does not possess, but, by various means, he seeks to draw it towards himself. And however praiseworthy this may be, as I have said, he does not yet possess humility; he asks for it, but it is not his.

A perfectly humble one is he that does not need to find out a cause which should make his mind humble. But he has fulfilled all these, and possesses humility as something natural, without bestowing any labour upon it; so that, even though he has received within him the great gift of which all creatures are not worthy — namely his [humble] nature — yet he is deemed a sinner and a simple man in his own eyes. And though he has penetrated into the mysteries of all spiritual kinds [of beings], and possesses great wisdom concerning all the creatures, he knows with perfect certainty that he knows nothing. And this he is not by any intermediary; but without compulsion he is so in his heart.

Can it be possible that man should be so, that nature can thus change him? No. But do not doubt for this reason. For this mysterious strength which he has received, which makes him perfect in all excellence, without labour, is the strength which the blessed Apostles received under the aspect of fire. And on account of it our Saviour ordered them that they should not leave Jerusalem before having received the strength from on high, namely the Comforter which is the Spirit.

And this is the spirit of visions. And this is what is said concerning them in the Scripture: To the humble the mysteries are revealed¹⁾. This means that the humble are deemed worthy
 580 of receiving within them this spirit of revelations which explains the mysteries. And therefore it has been said by holy men, that humbleness makes the soul perfect by divine revelations. Therefore, no one should venture to think concerning himself that he has personally reached the rank of humility, on account of a single thought of contrition which has once risen [in his heart], or on account of a few tears which he has shed, or on account of one beautiful attribute which he possesses by nature or which he has acquired by compulsion; for he would in that case have acquired that which is the summit of all mysteries and the sum of all excellence in the domain of small labours and reckon these as the whole gift. But if a man has vanquished all contrary spirits, and if none of all the works of excellence fails him, for which he has not laboured in order to possess them, and if he has vanquished and subdued all fortresses of resistance, and if he then perceives with his spirit that his soul has received the gift, while the Spirit witnesses to his spirit according to the word of the Apostle, then this is the summit of humility. Blessed is he that has acquired it, for he at all times embraces Jesus' bosom.

But if a man asks: What shall I do? How can I acquire it? By what means shall I become worthy of receiving it? For, if I compel myself and think that I have acquired it, I see that unperceived contrary impulses err through my mind, and, consequently, I fall into despair.

581 He that asks this, is to be answered thus: It is expedient for the disciple to be as his master, and for the slave as his lord. Look at Him who has commanded this and who grants

1) Cf. Ps. 25, 9

the gift, how He acquired it; and strive thou to become like Him; then thou canst do it. For He has said: The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me¹). Doest thou see how humility is to be acquired by the accomplishment of all excellence? So that we have to imitate Him that has commanded it. 'The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the son of man hath not where to lay his head'²). To whom be glory from all those who have become perfect and have been sanctified and become accomplished, in all generations, with the Father who sent Him and the Holy Ghost, now and always and for ever and ever. Amen.

1) John 14, 30

2) Matt. 8, 20

GENERAL REGISTER

[The Roman figures refer to the pages of the Introduction, the Arabic ones to those of Bedjan's text as printed on the margin of the translation].

- Aberration XXXII, 3, 5, 6, 71, 192, 193, 307, 375; 494, 495, 503, 505.
- Accidents (𐤀𐤃𐤁𐤀) XXXIII, 175 sqq., 496, 503; no fortuitous — 176.
- Accomplished (The), 219. See Perfect.
- Affectable state; — as opposed to the spiritual one 122; — of the mind (heart) 401, 446; affectable part of the soul 474.
- Affections XXIX sqq., XLIX, cease only in the desert 1; — and world 18; what they are 18 sq., 432, 472; their relation to the soul 21, 25 sq.; — of the body 25; — of body and soul 25, 397, 484, 521; bodily; psychic and mixed — 484; cannot wholly be vanquished 28; their four roots 28; mental — 42; easier to be avoided than to be vanquished 90; their dangerous power 122; — bereave the solitary of consolation 124; torments of the — 203; — a fence against virtues 217; martyrs and apostles exempt from — 220, 432; — expelled by solitude 244, 254, by weeping 253; — corroborated by luxury 285; the veil of the — sometimes withdrawn 305; — born from distraction 332; provided by the demons 382 sq.; — to be purified away 444; the assaults of the — 481; — compared with dogs 214, 481; the dying — 484; — of love of glory and money 485; the clouds of the — 488; the — of unbelief 488; the garment of the — 520; — caused by selflove 539; — purified away by troubles 540; coat of flesh woven from the — 550.
- Afrem (Mar) 63, 437.
- Agathon 510, 569.
- Alexander the Great 405.
- Allegorical interpretation XXIV sqq.
- Allurements (spiritual) 216, 218 bis.
- Ammon 185, 421 sq.
- Angels helping martyrs and solitaries 66—68; their nature 182 sqq.; do not reach God's wisdom 186, 196; — cannot teach us true contemplation 197; their influence on us 197; classes of angels 199 sq.; — do not reach perfection 225; — liable to aberration 505.
- Angelic service 152 sq.
- Antonius 185, 260, 311 sq., 421 sq., 510, 563.
- Apartment 216, 340, 512, 548.
- Apathy XLVIII, 243; the wings of — 367; psychic — 478; temporary — 494, 511; definition of — 513; — only to be reached by solitude 520; — of the martyrs 536; — regarding the affections 543.
- Apelles (Apollon?) 554.
- Apperception. Second — of the senses 4; — in three ways 195.
- Approach unto God 104, 107, 329, 464, 566.
- Arsenius 154, 308—312, 451 bis, 561—563, 568.
- Asceticism I.
- Asking great things from the king 32 sqq.
- Athanasius 185. His „Mirror of solitaries" 560.
- Basilius 23, 243, 290, 353.
- Beasts of the field are submissive to the righteous, 387.
- Beauty. Inward — and mercy 8; mental — 82; — of the solitary 119; the — that creates all beauties 187.
- Body. To leave the — behind 5; its evil deliberations 5; its longing after visible things 8; — a comrade of sin 267; has to die if it shall vanquish sin 267; when the body is weak, the soul is strong 268; should be opposed, else it will become a seductor 260; — abandoned in the drunkenness of joy 454; curtain of the — 558.
- Bonds in God 7, 40.
- Bread. The heavenly — 316.
- Care (divine) surrounds men always 64.
- Cell. Staying in the — under all circumstances 130, 177, 340, 342; — is the cavern of Moses' revelation 178; treasures of the — 216.

Children guarded by God 525.
 Cloud 193, 217; — which covers the tabernacle 480.
 Commandments. Spiritual — take the place of written law 91.
 Commentator (Theodore of Mopsuestia) XVII, 113 sq.; 135 sq.; 160, 168, 319, 352, 358, 418.
 Commerce. The time of — 177.
 Communion with God 8, 534.
 Compassion to be pushed back by the solitary 153. See s. v. Mercy.
 Concentration XXXVI sq.; — and excellence I sq., 19, 44; — and contemplation 45; — and recitation 92; — and prayer 129, 171 sq., 446; — of the senses 131; — 136, 142, 146, 219, 243, 332, 336, 447; — promoted by fasting 452; — 466; — the desire of the solitary 515; — 516, 547, 555, 560.
 Consolation 181.
 Confidence (trust) 99 sq.; 192 sq., 241, 291, 366, 377, 379, 395, 408, 529 sq.; — and fear 362.
 Contemplation XXXIX, compared with excellence 17; definition of — 17; first and second natural — 31; angelic — 31; also called the naked mind 31; divine — 31, 198; — and concentration 45; — 53, 126; — is psychic sight 128, 162; heavenly contemplations 134; — during prayer 135, 164; prayer different from — 166; — and spiritual — 168; profound — 182; essential — 187, 198; veracious — 194; true — is essential sight 195; light of — 200; spiritual — 217, 303, 570; true — 222; — 223; — which is interpreted spiritual sight 260, 544; immaterial — 303; personal — 304; heavenly — 307; — and solitude 339; — 444; true — the mortification of the heart 444; — and prayer 475; — 492; — in ecstasy 513; intelligible — 521; the kingdom of heaven is spiritual — 528; — of all the worlds 544; practice anterior to — 571; divine — 571.
 Creation. The second — 81.
 Cross. Its double nature 15 sq.; — 223, 232; excellence is called the — 532; — is the gate of mysteries 544.
 Crucifixion of the mind 223, 232, 233; — of the body 238; we have always to take upon us — 535.
 Customs. Lascivious — 4; cutting off — 234; recollection of — 297; — to be feared — 527.
 Darkness of mind 14, 124, 144, 284, 329,

333 sq., 339, 341 sq.; the — of temptations 413; — 438, 448, 456, 481, 498, 537.
 Dead to the world 19, 31, 51, 59, 75, 76, 97, 121, 147, 148, 251, 310, 332, 346, 435, 444, 501, 544; to be dead in life 31, 333, 335; to die in integrity 31, 97, 268/9, 290; the soul — by affections 46; when the soul is — 210; — in sins 252; — to the world by veracious prayer 475; mortification regarding all things 112, 507; to become — in life for the sake of God 552; — to all things 397, 572.
 Death of the body is strength of the soul 268; — 271; inner deadness 331; — 332, 333, 235; — of the outward limbs 444; fear of — 10; — desired as life 10; recollection of — 44, 453, 458, 460, 462, 464; — does not exist with God 189; intelligible — 209; — agreeable to the lover 219; voluntary — of the senses 270; — cognate to sleepiness of mind 289; no one to be called a victor before — 407; risking — for the sake of the love of God 436; — the seal on our book 436; — desirable 482; better is death in struggle than life with falling 215, 538.
 Degrees. The way consists in three — 122, the degrees of the path 303.
 Dejectedness 113, 180, 181, 213, 258, 259, 277, 284, 291, 299, 302, 340, 385, 455, 466, 468, 485, 506, 535 sq., 580; — the beginning of darkness 14 sq.; effectuated by distraction 217, 383; by loneliness 455, 466; nothing is so strong as despair 532; how — vanishes 555.
 Delight may rise suddenly during prayer 58; does not appear at will 163; — preceded by the pains of the cross 216.
 Demons. Their nature 182 sq., 196.
 Desert 1.
 Despair see Dejectedness.
 Despondency see Dejectedness.
 Deviation see Aberration.
 Diodorus Rhetor XVII, 186, 242; — of Tarsus 285.
 Dionysius the Areopagite LIII, 169.
 Discernment (distinction) 41 sq., 89, 134 — 136, 146, 189, 217, 238 sq., 281, 379, 432 sq., 442 sq., 465 sq., 479, 546, 555, 566, 573.
 Disdain has to be sought LIV sq., 76, 85 sq., 356. On the question whether — may be sought by assuming a sinful appearance 142 sq.
 Disparity 192 sq., 207. See Equality.
 Distraction XXXVI 1, 3, 53, 60, 72, 82, 122, 131, 135, 172, 213, 216, 271 sq.,

- 282, 332, 466, 481, 485, 514, 517, 541; — and intercourse 52; — an opportunity for Satan 130; — effectuates dejectedness 217, 383; — and good works 308; — damages chastity 445; how it vanishes 555.
- Dogmatics. Isaac's aversion to — XXVI.
- Drunkenness XLIII, LI, 2, 59, 174, 202, 220, 254, 334, 358, 377, 454, 504, 511, 543, 555; never ceasing — 77; drunk with living wine 555.
- Dunghill. Man's — 32.
- Ecstasy 5 bis, 20, 43, 73, 106, 125, 139, 155, 175, 259, 305, 360, 391, 451, 471, 489, 513, 516, 549; — when the twofold senses are closed 9; ecstatic understanding when the heart is free from recollections 52; man becomes as a corpse without a soul through — 164; — and prayer 166, 174, 261; — in the world to come 170; — during four days 261; — in God 304, 376; — and silence 360; ecstatic thought of God 377; — during three days 388; — during one day 189; — during sleep 492; contemplation in — 513.
- Emotions. See Impulses.
- Enlightened men 6; — intellect 8.
- Ephraim Syrus 437.
- Equality and non-equality 192, 207, 213.
- Error see Aberration.
- Essence (= God) 187, 194, 198, 199, 200, 376, 378, 455, 470.
- Euagrius 4, 106, 174, 175, 385, 443, 456, 462, 495, 497 sq., 513, 573.
- Excellence and concentration 1 sq.; — and the world 2; — and contemplation 17; — the natural health of the soul 24; prior to spiritual knowledge 30; what — is 423; — is called the cross 532.
- Face of God can be seen but not essentially 324.
- Faith has to be combined with works 102; the value of — 315; the degrees of — 318 sq.; — and knowledge 318, 360 sq., 379; the gate of the mysteries 315; — of sight 320; taste of — 366; — makes man like God 362; when — swallows knowledge 374; definitions of — 376, 482.
- Familiarity with God 265.
- Familiarity of speech 36, 41, 73, 75, 114, 330, 335, 353, 421, 427, 528. See Freedom.
- Fasting 238 sq. Without — no knowledge of God's mysteries 48; — the sign of beginning strife 238; — of the ascetics and martyrs 241 sq.; effectuates strength in the soul 268; — on the way to light 281; solitude and — 282; — helpful for concentration 452.
- Fate (~~REINA~~) 175; see Accidents.
- Fear of God 1 sq., 315 sq.; — and doubt 4; bodily and psychic — 20; — prior to love 30; brings the soul near to God 81, cf. 315; hope and fear 91; — and trust 194, 362; when fear is expelled 194; — and love 317, 430; no fear of outward things in the true solitary 539.
- Fervour 19, 94, 95, 122, 127 sq., 129, 131, 136, 172, 241, 282, 332, 375, 392, 484, 486, 512, 519, 550, 555; — causes a brother to beat the earth with his head a hundred times 140; — caused by thinking of God 261.
- File 190, 328.
- Forget (to) the world 5, 399, 526; — all that is here 170; — all worldly things 251, cf. 174; 179, 255, 325, 369; — one's own nature 254; — bodily life 327; — the body and the world 327, 338; — one self 395; — the world and life of the flesh 518; — the body 520.
- Freedom XXXII; XLIX; 3, 5, 6, 13, 170, 175, 191, 195, 207, 323.
- Freedom of speech (frankness) 73, 75, 114, 151, 291, 330, 335, 427, 429, 528. See Familiarity.
- Friend (God, the) 219.
- Garment. Last — of the mind 31.
- Gladness. Exulting joy 58; — without cause 177, 471; — in God takes away all other sensations 431; — as a means to recognize the degree of one's own soul 483; spiritual — 484; — which no tongue can express 486; — sometimes causes the solitary to give up recitation of Psalms 550; unspeakable — 555.
- Glory. Vain — and fornication 45; the harm of — 328.
- Gold. Images of — and precious things 278.
- Grace. Its sudden workings 177; what — imparts to us 198.
- Grave, the time of gathering fruits 435.
- Guardian. Man's — 175 sq.
- Handiwork. See Work.
- Healing of the soul 16; — of the inner man 483.
- Health of the soul 24, 89, 433, 484; — effectuated by sickness of the body 69; — gives birth to knowledge 431; — injured by intercourse 435.
- Hearing and sight 54, 320.

- Heart the central organ of the inward senses 29.
- Hell. Definition of — 88; — does not exist with God 189; intelligible — 456, 521; — is ignorance and oblivion of God 523.
- Hidden things 51, 127 sq., 149, 181, 282, 319, 338, 373, 396, 410, 438, 529, 530; hidden states 519.
- Honour to be rejected 76, 120.
- Hope and fear 91; — 96; all — has to be given up by him that begins with the works of God 97.
- Housemates. God's — 33, 36. God as a — 62.
- Humble 76, 85 sq., 93, 105, 279, 351. Mysteries revealed to the — 122; characteristics of the 515 sq.; — is bashful before his own soul 517; the prayer of the humble 517 sq.; the creatures timid before the — 576; esteemed as a God by everyone 527; the perfect — 579.
- Humility XXXVIII, 34, 76, 93, 105, 108 sq., 139, 220 sq., 224, 302, 321, 414, 421, 432, 507, 524. Works and — make man a God 95; — a cause of grace 322; two kinds of — 346; — remunerated, not service 408 sq.; — to be asked from God with tears 412 sq.; — the beginning of repentance 444; — expiates many sins 499; — compared to salt 499; how — is acquired 508; the characteristics of — 514; — and mercy 528; high rank of — 574 sq.; — the garment of divinity 574; — makes a man Christlike 574; true — 578; the summit of — 580.
- Humours. The four — 580.
- Ignorance. Whether — will be annihilated 87; — during prayer 175; — and oblivion of God 522.
- Illness 347; — of thoughts 16; — of the soul 24, 46, 344, 401; sick in mind 400.
- Illuminated (the) 158, 162, 226, 278, 324, 340.
- Illumination XXXVIII, 6, 125, 164, 196, 326, 330, 337, 389, 446, 448, 455, 485, 491, 555, 562, 567.
- Image of God is the soul XLVIII, 21, 126, 169.
- Impulses XXXI. Inward — 4; intellectual — 31; — in God 46; divine — 59, 259; illuminated — 48, 226, 281; spiritual — 87, 166, 376; — of the soul 166, 260; distinctive — 230; ecstatic — 254; hot — of the body 285; dark and cold — 293, 341; contemplative 303; — of knowledge 377; — of love and beautiful things 392; clear — 399, 438; — interwoven with prayer 440; fervent — of the soul 447; troubled — 448; — unto the entrance in the spiritual world 454; — of the will 475; right hand — 480; incorporeal 486; hot and quick — 516; scarce — which are not swift 517; perverted — 527; hidden emotions 538; vibrating, hot — of the Seraphs; simple — 571.
- Initiated (the) 162, 187, 250; — eyes of faith 361; — soul 470; — knowledge 483; Euagrius is called one of the — 573.
- Inspiration 160, 390 sq.
- Intelligent. The — 479.
- Intelligible rays between the words of the scriptures 6; — forces of the soul 91, of the mind 161; — apperceptions 174; — death 209; — force 370; — resurrection 374; — light 376; — hell 456; distinction between — things 472, 494; — sight 472; — air 472; — sun 473; — contemplation 521; — places 522.
- Intention. The heart's — 292.
- Intercourse (or Association) XXXIV sq., 52, 130, 131 bis, 133, 247; — injures the soul 89, 314; — compared to a blist of cold 132; — the cause of darkness 329; — with God and men 333; — injures health 435; lonely 566, 572.
- Intoxication. See Drunkenness.
- John of Thebaïs 152; the blessed John 334.
- Joy. See Gladness.
- Justice as compared with compassion 344, 348.
- Kingdom. The pure — 221.
- Kneelings 57 sq., 98, 162, 341, 488.
- Knowing oneself is knowing all things 224.
- Knowledge XII sq. Spiritual — posterior to excellence 30; second natural — 31; — without excellence impossible 42; — of life 42; first summit of — is that of the mysteries of created things 48; essential 60, 187; on the speech of true — 175 sq.; the way of true — 180; love the child of true — 201; Sunday a symbol of true — 202; spiritual — 217, 221, 318 sq.; 337, 522, 526; —, love and sight 222; — and humility 224; — with discernment 281; — of God 307; degrees of — 318 sq.; 360 sq.; — anterior to faith and — posterior to it 318; psychic — 366, 430, 437, 474, 528; simple — 369; when — is swallowed by faith 374; impulses of — 377 sq.; natural, spiritual and supernatural — 377 sq.; clear flame of holy — 395; true — 430, 470, 494; — gives birth to love 431; — born from

- health of the soul 431; a definition of — 431; spiritual — and love 475; — incomparable 447; partial accomplishment in spiritual — reached by a few only 473; initiated — 283; spiritual — not reached by psychic — 526; snares of psychic — 528.
- Light.** Inward — springs from purity of thoughts 17; essential — 49; mind clad with — 52; the flower of the — of truth 52; — of knowledge 187; — of contemplation 200, 550; — of faith 360; intelligible — 376; — of the soul 379, 434, 557; — of the mind 447, 482, 560; — of life 456; — and sight 472; divine — 474; hidden — 530.
- Likeness.** Divine — 169, 507, 510.
- Love** XLII sq., more intimate than service 55 sq.; — even in Hell 201; — a child of true knowledge 201, 431; drunk with — 202; the ways of — 205 sq.; spiritual — 217; divine — 218; — is hot by nature 219; — and madness 219; —, knowledge and sight 222; — of God and tears 245; — of God the accomplishment of all spiritual fruits 261; the bread of — 316 sq.; meaning of — 317; — and fear 317; the flame of the love of God 337; — caused by God is a fountain from the depth 382; to be consumed by — 430; divine — the flower of spiritual knowledge 475; — the fruit of prayer 475; — of God is selfdenial 476; — of mankind 507, 508, 510; — of God and of mankind 570.
- Lucidity** 131, 134.
- Macarius** 495, 500.
- Madness** 131, 219 sq., 254.
- Maggenanutha** 390 sqq.
- Man's nature** 197.
- Marcus** the solitary 532.
- Martyrs** 220; spiritual — 31; unseen martyrdom 209, 242; fasting of the — 241 sq.; — are those who suffer for their neighbour 348; — and renunciation 436; who the real — is 456; the living — 457.
- Matter** XXVIII, a screen 2; solution from — 7, 40.
- Means** LV; belong to knowledge, not to faith 360 sqq.
- Meditation** 72, 77, 98, 376, 486, 493; its value and effect 73; — and ecstasy 73; nocturnal — 138; — and the second stage of knowledge 372; constant — and the light of the soul 379; — and the origin of tears 385; spiritual — 461; contemplative — 492.
- Mercy** 8 sq., 42 sq., 54, 455 sq., 492, 506, 507. See also s. v. Compassion.
- Meşalleyânê** 495.
- Mind** (רוח, נפש). Its relation to heart 29; naked — 31 bis, 303; — naturally tends towards good 197.
- Mirror** XXXVII. Our own state a — of godly things 455; the pure soul a — 520; to see God in a — 564.
- Mortification** see s. v. Dead.
- Motions.** See s. v. Impulses.
- Mountains** beyond the Ocean 188.
- Mourning.** Its value 523.
- Mysteries** of visible things 48; hidden — 68; — of God's greatness 72; God's — 83.
- Naked.** The monk goes — through the world 326; — mind 31, 303.
- Nature** is the first book given to man 61.
- Natural,** praeternatural and supernatural 375.
- Negligence** in small things 289.
- Nitria** 185.
- Ocean** surrounds the borders of heaven and earth 188.
- Path.** The mystic — has three degrees XXIV, 121.
- Perfect** (the), 250, 271, 495, 569, 578; perfect man 531; the — need not mingle with works of mercy 573.
- Perfection** XXXVIII, 108, 122, 251, 280, 478, 491, 507 sq., 560.
- Philo** XLVI sqq.
- Philosophers** 21, 401, 403 sqq.
- Plotinus** XLIX sqq.
- Practice.** Practical things of a composite nature 7; — and theory 15; practical things confuse the soul 81; — anterior to contemplation 571.
- Praise** is to be avoided 78.
- Prayer** XXXIX sq.; — which it is not allowed to describe 129. Purifying — 52; — act off by delight 53; the significance of — 105 sq.; — that gives place to thanksgivings 106; — drives away the cloud of the affections 124; mysteries of — 151; what happens during — unto those who live in solitude 162 sq.; distinctions in — 163 sq.; the limit which — is not allowed to surpass 163 sq.; delight during — different from sight during — 164; contemplation during — 164; — vanishes by contemplation 164; pure — the limit of — 175; — and ecstasy 166, 174, 261; — different from contemplation 166; a few are deemed

- worthy of pure — 167; pure — XL, 167, 168, 175, 379, 453, 519; spiritual — XLI; cannot be prayed 168, 170; contemplation and spiritual prayer 168; — a mediator between the psychic and the spiritual state 169; when — ceases 170, 175; — is the time for receiving gifts 173; spiritual — 175, 260, 519; no — without tears 253; constant — 259, 304, 544, 557; — the starting point for inner Sight 260; contemplative — 326; — the key to insight 329; — open under all circumstances 342; — more excellent than alms 385; — requires training 439; — with a view to the love of God 439; true — 440; recitation a source of pure — 447; — during the night is higher than any work on the day 447; hidden — 469, 470; love the fruit of — 475; a definition of — 475, 508; true — is dying to the world 475; lonely — 475; when — is cut off 490; no — in the world to come 503; revelations during — 556; night — higher than — on the day 558; — during vigils feared by Satan above all things 559.
- Prostrations 129.
- Prototype 455.
- Pure. The — 8, 522; the — in heart 50, 564; — mind 92, 259; — heart 118; the new heaven stamped in the — heart 522; — spirit 547.
- Purify (to) — the mind (heart) 16, 75, 555; — oneself from sin 64; — the soul 475; — the sight of the soul 564.
- Purification XXVIII; — on account of works 95; threefold — 161; second — of the mind 162; — of the soul 184, 243; — of the body by service 304; — of the inner being 447.
- Purity XXXVII sq.; — of deliberations the source of inward light 17; natural — of the soul 25; — of the mind 27, 306, 513, 527; — of the heart 29, 165, 250, 348; — preserved by works and recitation 91; how it is effectuated 53, 128; rank of — 162; — during prayer 169; — of emotion 209; the limits of — 250; — of the soul 253, 306, 519; true — 260; bodily and psychic — 306; stage of — 381; — and hidden things 438; what — is 472; the harbour of — 489; partial — 494; repentance, — and perfection 507; — can only be reached by solitude 520; definition of — 520.
- Rapture 50, 156; cf. 171.
- Recitation 98, 218, 488; — in solitude prepares ecstasy 43; — has to take place in complete rest 48; effectuates the illumination of the mind 53; effectuates subtlety of mind 68; — is a fortification of the mind 135; — used by Grace 163; how to gain delight from — 382; — when the mind is distracted 446; — a source of pure prayer 446; — of Psalms the root of discipline 447.
- Recollection 8 bis, 20 sq., 52 sq., 78, 92, 182; — of the body 27; cannot be shaken off 28; — of the other world 53, 306; — of evil things 59; profitable — 91; — of the affections 122; — of the dealings of non-freedom 244; — of this world in the world to come 257; external — 258; — of God 258, 260 sq., 493, 512, 547; — of things of this world 260; — of transitory things 282; obliterated — 283; — of customs 297; — of visible things vanishes by the — of God 375; — of worldly things effaced in the third degree of knowledge 373; — to be admitted with discernment 381, 396; getting void of the trouble of — 468; affections which are ill by — 484; — without affections 484; — of sensible things 487; the recollections which are lost sight of 514; — of the world 545.
- Relaxation of the limbs 58.
- Remuneration in accordance with the fundamental direction of man 92.
- Renunciation higher than giving alms 56.
- Repentance XXVII sq., 11, 115, 118, 132, 139, 179, 315, 317, 320, 337, 443 sq., 453, 448, 461 sq., 494, 502, 507.
- Resurrection of the soul 246, cf. 282; the wonder of — 358 sq.; intelligible — 374.
- Revelation XXXIX, 154 sq., 161 sq., 247, 338, 545; — is silence of intellect 155; six kinds of — 156; — and truth 160; — to the angels 199 sq.; — and vision 249; intelligible — higher than purity 472; revelations usually take place in the night and in prayer 556.
- Rufinus (ecclesiastical writer) 264.
- Sabbath and Sunday 202 sq.; — and grave 203 sq.
- Satan. What — means 189; the different ways in which — combats the solitary 269.
- Scriptures. Intelligible ray between the words of the — 6.
- Scrutinizing blamed 47.
- Senses XXIX; — of the flesh and of the soul 9; — have to be silent 16, 67; — of the soul 29; inward — 29; — the last garment of

- the mind 31; — must he subdued 281; inner — 338, 374; silent — 430; spiritual — of the mind 472, 475; spiritual — of the soul 514.
- Serenity of soul 167, 251, 350, 360, 384, 414, 492; — of spirit 526 sq.; of mind 113, 438; serene heart 67, 455; the serene 259.
- Service. Psychic — 304; invisible — 307.
- Sickness. See Illness.
- Sight XXXIX sq., LI, 128, 338; essential — 49, 184, 195; caused by works and watchfulness 128; spiritual — 9, 187, 304; divine — 161; psychic — 128, 162, 195, 544; — during prayer 164; — makes one motionless 166; kinds of — 182 sqq.; love, knowledge and — 222; inner — 260; contemplation is interpreted spiritual 260; — of God 306, 324; — and hearing 54, 320; true — would make the world stand still 336; simple — 377; intelligible — 472; — of what is above nature 497.
- Signs. That we should not desire — 281 sqq.
- Silence and solitude 154, 451; guarding — rises from three causes 292; ecstasy and — 360; — and an affected heart 446; — and truth 446; — causes union with God 446; — is to be loved above all things 450, 451; — a symbol of the future world 470; mysterious silence of God 471.
- Sin. Intentional and unintentional — 110; — does not exist with God 189; — will not always be and has not always been 189; power and evil influence of — 208 sqq.
- Sinners are to be loved 14, 79, 348, 350, 408, 456 sq.
- Sleeping and waking 454; — which is not — 486; the mystic speaks with God in his sleep 262; prayer during — 259.
- Small things. The tremendous influence of — 287 sq.
- Socrates, the historian 263.
- Solitary has a higher rank than he that gives alms 56; his behaviour the pride of the church 119; his work 150.
- Solitary life 117 sqq.; its beauty 119; compared to an unfathomable sea 125; on the solitary career 127 sqq.
- Solitude XXXIV sq., a fence to the senses 21; — is more than all signs and powers 45; — is higher than missionary work 45; — and ecstasy 139; the right — 149; definition of — 154; — and purity 162; mysteries of — 163; works have to be combined with — 243; — is the beginning of the purification of the soul 243; — expels the affections 244; the effects of — 246 sq.; — and fasting 282; preferred to works 308 sqq., 464; practised by the Fathers of Scete 309; to dwell in — is fulfilling the two chief commandments 313; — and contemplation 339; — and repentance 462; praise of — 463 sq.; the mystery of — 465; the aim of — the harbour of mysteries 467; the profits of — 468; how the intelligent have to dwell in. — 479; simple — rejected 480; — and the first gift of the mystic 490; no one who keeps perfect — in our generation 491; apathy and purity only to be reached by — 520; — compared to the grave 540; — recommended 564; — and mercy 566 sqq.
- Siren's song 327.
- Songs. Spiritual — 216.
- Soul XXX. Ladder from the — to the kingdom 12; pupil of the — 17; its natural inclinations unto God 20; its nature 21; its treasures 21; naturally not affectable 21, 25 sq.; God's image 21, 126, 169; what is natural and not natural to it 23; its natural health 24; nature of souls 182 sqq.; souls see one another when they are purified 185; resurrection of the — 246; serene — 360; — becomes strong by mortification 268; hidden mysteries of the — 376.
- Splendour of the divine glory 8.
- Stork. Monk compared with the — 327.
- Sun 17, 50, 54, 521; intelligible — 86; goes its nocturnal way behind the mountains 188; grace, the intelligible — 473; the second — 473.
- Sunday and Sabbath 202 sqq.; — symbol of true knowledge 202.
- Tears. See also s.v. Weeping; 98, 131, 139, 221, 490, 492 sq., 499; — attract grace 48; — and fasting 48; — when grace opens a man's eyes 49; perpetual — 58; when the fountain of — is given 73; what comes after — 94; — as a criterium of the solitary's state 125 sq.; perpetual — 126, 128, 397, 443, 489; when perpetual — stop 127; when — begin 128; — quicken the cold emotions 131; sweet — 165, 229, 484, 555; — a sign of grace — 177; — a sign of beginning fruits 244; — a sign of the transition from the bodily to the spiritual state 245; — and the love of God 245; effects of — 245; delight of — 252; — caused by love 261; immeasurable — 181; perpetual — during prayer a charisma 384; — originate in pure meditation 385; — did

- not leave Paul for three years 397; gift of — during service 446; — the accomplishment of prayer 446; — born from sight 451; — during prayer 460, 547; spontaneous — a sign of approaching victory 480; — when the mind gazes at spiritual things 492; — during sleep 492; — during prayer cause forgiveness of sins 543; — during vigils 548.
- Temptations 34 sqq.; — of the soul and — of the body 35 sq.; are necessary 36, 104, 109; we should not seek them 37; are not to be shunned in critical cases 37; divine help in — 65; — in accordance with gifts 298; kinds of — 299; — and divine help 303; by — the gate of heaven is opened 418; for which causes — are admitted 427; — heal the inner man 483; — also admitted to those who have reached partial purity 494; — admitted by grace 53; — should not cause despair 365.
- Theodore, one of the confessors 264.
- Theodicy 189 sqq.
- Theodore of Mopsuestia. See Commentator.
- Theory. Practice and — 15.
- Things (outward, worldly) 2, 3, 8, 10, 14, 21, 48, 54, 61, 89, 93, 135, 251, 276, 438, 486, 536.
- Trance 208, 220.
- Transition 141, 158, 171.
- Treasury 165; — within man 12, 528; — of the soul 520.
- Tree of life is the divine love 316.
- Tree of good and evil the radiator of love 371.
- Trust. See Confidence.
- Truth has to be sought 122; divine — cannot be acquired by nature 192.
- Unconsciousness 221.
- Unification XXVI, XLIV, 8, 169, 194, 462.
- Varying states XLV, 112, 124, 129, 139, 179 sq., 192, 206, 213 sq., 216, 219, 246, 298, 314, 416, 453, 492, 500, 505; — serve to make a man humble 109; — of cold and heat 137; — of light and darkness 339; — purified by prayer 441; good — 448; — as a means to recognize one's own degree of discipline 483; — happen to every man 494; — compared to changes of the weather 495.
- Vigils 52, 134 sqq., 450, 469, 488, 546 sqq., 563 sq.
- Vision. See Sight.
- Weakness. Man has to be conscious of his own — 104, 107 sq.; sins arising from — 110.
- Weeping. See also s. v. Tears; psychic — 88; — is the meditation of the solitary 251 sq.; — and purity 252; — expels the affections 253; — and consolation 253; praying for humility with — 412 sq.
- Wine. Spiritual — 317.
- Women. The representation of beautiful — 277, 284; refraining from the sight of — is a mighty weapon 293.
- Work (manual) 449; — called an impediment 57; it is profitable to give up — 130; — unfit for the solitary 152 sq.; precepts for — 385.
- Works and humility make man a God 95; — and trust 102; — and faith 102; — have to be combined with solitude 243; — without humility cause many evils 499; solitude preferable to — 385.
- World. How to be far from the — 18; — and affections 18; man has to be weaned from the — 40; to withdraw from the sight of the — 52; to renunciate the whole body of the — 78; how the — may become the solitary's servant 100; — compared to a whore 227; — compared to a prison 229; how to give up the — 130; what — means 332.
- World to be perceived here already 12; remuneration in the — not to be expected 55; two states only in the — 87 sq. spiritual degrees of those in — 86 sq.; the things of the — 169; in the — no recollection of this world 257.
- Written documents and laws necessary or him that has not received the Comforter 91.
- Zeal condemned 343 sq.; laudable — 395 sq.

QUOTATIONS FROM THE BIBLE

	page			page
Genesis 3, 19	203	Psalms 84, 11	97,	231
" 48, 22	9	" 90, 10		231
Exodus 20, 19	574 sq.	" 91, 5		387
" 24, 9—11	175	" 91, 11 sq.		394
" 32, 32	509	" 91, 13		362
Lev. 26, 36	280	" 91, 15		103
Numb. 13, 33	96	" 119, 123		104
Deut. 6, 5	312	" 126, 6		41
Judges 3, 1 sq.	107	" 127, 1		364
2 Sam. 7, 1	485	" 138, 7		390
" 12, 13	117	" 145, 19		270
1 Kings 8, 11	222	" 147, 3		458
Jes. 6, 1	157	Job 1, 9		278
" 37, 35	390	" 14, 20		461
" 40, 4	512	Proverbs 6, 27		14
" 52, 15	40	" 10, 4		173
" 53, 6	40	" 16, 19		411
" 53, 10	40	" 22, 13		96
" 55, 2 sq.	74	" 25, 28		51
" 55, 6—8	74	" 28, 1		103
" 58, 2 sq.	82, 101	" 28, 13		74
" 61, 1	458	Ecclesiastes 10, 16		223
" 65, 2	73	" 11, 1		55
Jer. 20, 9	512	Ecclesiasticus 1, 1		205
" 36, 2 sq.	74	Matthew 5, 4		253
Ezekiel 9, 6	117	" 5, 7		456
" 33, 11	73	" 6, 7		33
" 33, 18 sq.	74	" 6, 10		13
" 36, 26	246	" 6, 25		100
Micah 7, 8	112	" 6, 31 sq.		33
Psalms 1, 5	114	" 6, 33	100,	385
" 6, 6	558	" 7, 7 sq.		502
" 25, 9	579	" 7, 12		574
" 34, 7	392	" 8, 11		88
" 34, 10	398	" 8, 20		581
" 34, 15	93	" 10, 26		364
" 34, 16	394	" 10, 28		35
" 34, 19	392	" 10, 38, 39	35,	233
" 35, 10	490	" 11, 28		352
" 36, 9	473	" 11, 29		516
" 37, 35	390	" 12, 31		458
" 42, 2	131	" 13, 43		88
" 49, 12, 20	319	" 14, 13		364
" 51, 17	105	" 15, 14		90
" 55, 22	398	" 16, 16		159
" 55, 23	67	" 16, 24		232, 532

	page		page
Matthew 18, 3	361, 527	1 Cor. 3, 18	525
" 19, 27	148	" 8, 1.	371
" 20, 22	36	" 12, 2—4.	50
" 21, 22	364	" 13, 12.	13, 159
" 22, 21	152	" 15, 10.	371
" 25, 32	88	2 Cor. 4, 6.	246
" 25, 41	88	" 5, 21	40
" 26, 26, 28	510	" 12, 2—4.	50
" 26, 41	35, 502, 556	" 12, 7	428
Mark 2, 17	458	" 12, 7 sq.	428, 504
" 9, 23	365	Galatians 5, 17	26
" 16, 17	365	" 5, 22	344
Luke 1, 35	390	" 6, 7	459
" 11, 8	502	Ephesians 1, 11	159
" 13, 24	35	" 1, 17—19	158, 391
" 14, 33	439, 511	" 4, 22, 24	521
" 17, 20 sq.	378	" 5, 16	325
" 17, 21	13, 378	" 10, 18 sq.	392
" 18, 1	502	Colossians 1, 9	158
" 21, 36	502, 556	" 1, 24	509
John 1, 1	159	" 3, 1	246
" 3, 16	509	" 3, 5	16, 148
" 14, 30	581	" 4, 5	325
" 16, 13	377	Philippians 1, 29	417
" 16, 33	426	" 2, 3	250
" 21, 16	458	" 2, 13	442
Acts 10, 10	155	" 4, 4 sq.	364
Romans 3, 23 sq.	315	" 4, 5	398
" 8, 15	299, 364, 375, 539	" 4, 13	371
" 8, 21	256	1 Thess. 5, 17	556
" 8, 38	487	2 Thess. 2, 13	391
" 9, 3	464, 509	1 Tim. 1, 15	258
" 9, 16	464	Hebrews 5, 14	89
" 11, 32 sq.	159	" 12, 2	510
" 11, 33	193, 255	1 Peter 3, 14	417
1 Cor. 2, 9	12, 316	1 John 4, 16	316