

ASCETICALLY SPEAKING, pp. 7-8

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PATIENCE AND HUMILITY

St. Seraphim of Sarov

Bear it in silence when an enemy offends you, and open your heart to the Lord...What is not in the light is all dark; likewise without humility there is nothing in a man but darkness alone.

WE NEED NEW HEARTS!

Dr. Alexandre Kalomiros

A whole new world must be born in a Westerner's heart in order for him to understand something of Orthodoxy. How can someone who has breathed the dry air of *rationalism* from the cradle and learned to *worship* human cleverness as an idol be humbled and become as simple as a child? (emphases supplied)

THE CHURCH IS UNITED!

Dr. Alexandre Kalomiros

In reality, there is no question of union of the Christians. *True* (emphasis supplied) Christians were, are, and always will be united.

LOVE FOR OUR NEIGHBOUR

St. Ignatius (Brianchaninov)

Love for our neighbour is preceded and accompanied by humility in our human relationships. Hatred towards our neighbour is preceded by condemnation and criticism of him, detraction and disparagement, slander and backbiting, scorn for him, otherwise *pride* (emphasis supplied).

LOVING CHRIST IN OUR NEIGHBOUR

St. Ignatius (Brianchaninov)

By loving our neighbour - by loving him in the Lord, that is, as the Lord commands us -we acquire love for Christ, and love for Christ is love for God.

UNSEEN WARFARE

St. Nicodemus(ed.)

If you want to gain a speedy and easy victory over your enemies, brother, you must wage ceaseless and courageous war against all passions, especially and pre-eminently against self-love, or a foolish attachment to yourself, manifested in self-indulgence and self-pity.

For it is the basis and source of all passions and cannot be tamed except by constant voluntary self-inflicted sufferings and by welcoming afflictions, privations, calumnies, persecutions by the world and by the men of the world.

GOD'S TREATMENT OF OUR SOULS

St. Maximos the Confessor

20. When Physicians are treating the body they do not administer the same remedy in all cases. Neither does God, when treating the illnesses of the soul, regard a single kind of therapy as suitable for all conditions; but He allots to each soul what is suitable for it and effects its cure. So let us give thanks while we are being treated, however great our suffering, for the result is blessed.

ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS!

St. Maximos the Confessor

86. God may be called and actually is the Father by grace only of those whose will and disposition have been *reborn in the Spirit through the practice of the virtues*. By means of this birth they bear in their soul and manifest in the virtues the imprint of God their Father. Through their way of life they they make those who see them glorify God by reforming themselves, and so they provide an excellent pattern of virtue for others to imitate. For God is glorified *not by mere words but by works of righteousness, which proclaim the majesty of God far more effectively than words* (emphases supplied).

PROTECT THE SOUL!

St. Makarios of Egypt

46. The soul must watch and anticipate carefully so that it is not even for the twinkling of an eye taken captive by the devil's power. Even if only one part of an animal is caught in a trap, the whole animal is held fast and falls into the hands of the hunters; and the same thing is liable to happen to the soul at the hands of its

enemies. The psalmist makes this quite clear when he says: 'They prepared a trap for my feet and bowed down my soul' (Ps. 57: 6. LXX).

NO CONTRADICTIONS IN HOLY SCRIPTURE

St. Peter of Damaskos

Whenever a person even slightly illumined reads the Scriptures or sings psalms he finds in them matter for contemplation and theology, one text supporting another. But he whose intellect is still unenlightened thinks that the Holy Scriptures are contradictory.

Yet there is *no* (emphasis supplied) contradiction in the Holy Scriptures: God forbid that there should be. For some texts are confirmed by others, while some were written with reference to a particular time or a particular person. Thus every word of Scripture is beyond reproach. The appearance of contradiction is due to our ignorance.... The person who searches for the meaning of the Scriptures will not put forward his own opinion, bad or good; but as St. Basil the Great and St. John Chrysostom have said, he will take as his teacher, not the learning of *this* (emphasis supplied) world, but Holy Scripture itself....

For no one is more foolish than he who forces the meaning of the Scriptures or finds fault with them so as to demonstrate his own knowledge - or, rather, his own ignorance. What kind of knowledge can result from adapting the meaning of the Scriptures to suit one's own likes and from daring to alter their words? The true sage is he who regards the text as authoritative and discovers, through the wisdom of the Spirit, the hidden mysteries to which the divine Scriptures bear witness.