

8th Sunday of Luke

40. You should not doubt that the intellect, when it begins to be strongly energized by the divine light, becomes so completely translucent that it sees its own light vividly. This takes place when the power of the soul gains control over the passions. But when St Paul says that 'Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light' (2 Cor. 11:14), he definitely teaches us that everything which appears to the intellect, whether as light or as fire, if it has a shape, is the product of the evil artifice of the enemy. So we should not embark on the ascetic life in the hope of seeing visions clothed with form or shape; for if we do, Satan will find it easy to lead our soul astray. Our one purpose must be to reach the point when we perceive the love of God fully and consciously in our heart - that is, 'with all your heart, and with all your soul . . . and with all your mind' (Luke **10:27**). For the man who is energized by the grace of God to this point has already left this world, though still present in it.

[v1] 265 *St. Diadochos of Photiki On Spiritual Knowledge and Discrimination*

75. Love of God is opposed to desire, for it persuades the intellect to control itself with regard to sensual pleasures. Love for our neighbor is opposed to anger, for it makes us scorn fame and riches. These are the two pence which our Savior gave to the innkeeper (cf. **Luke 10:31**), so that he should take care of you. But do not be thoughtless and associate with robbers; otherwise you will be beaten again and left not merely unconscious but dead.

[v2] 110 *St. Maximos the Confessor Fourth Century on Love*

155. We who have been commanded to regard our neighbor as ourself (cf. Lev. 19:18; **Luke 10:27**) should do so not for one day only, but for our whole life. Similarly, we who have been told to give to all who ask (cf. Matt. 5:42) are told to do this for our whole life. And if we would like others to do good to us, we should ourselves act in the same way towards them (cf. Matt. 7:12).

[v4] 50 *St. Symeon the New Theologian One Hundred and fifty-three Practical and Theological Texts*

12. God, it is said, is the Sun of righteousness (cf. Mal. 4:2), and the rays of His supernal goodness shine down on all men alike. The soul is wax if it cleaves to God, but clay if it cleaves to matter. Which it does depends upon its own will and purpose. Clay hardens in the sun, while wax grows soft. Similarly, every soul that, despite God's admonitions, deliberately cleaves to the material world, hardens like clay and drives itself to destruction, just as Pharaoh did (cf. Exod. 7:13). But every soul that cleaves to God is softened like wax and, receiving the impress and stamp of divine realities, it becomes 'in spirit the dwelling-place of God' (**Eph. 2:22**).

[v2] 116 *St. Maximos the Confessor Two Hundred Texts on Theology and the Incarnate Dispensation of the Son of God Written for Thalassios First Century*

63. By 'dividing wall' (**Eph. 2:14**) Scripture means the natural law of the body, and by 'barrier' (*ibid.*) that attachment to the passions according to the law of the flesh which constitutes sin. For attachment to shameful passions is a barrier set up by the law of nature - of the passible aspect of nature - walling off soul from body, and preventing a person from practicing the virtues in such a way that by means of the soul their principle passes into the flesh. Once their principle has passed into the flesh and has overthrown the law of nature - of the passible aspect of nature - it destroys the attachment to unnatural passions which that law imposes.

[v2] 251 *St. Maximos the Confessor Various Texts on Theology, the Divine Economy, and Virtue and Vice Fourth Century*

If the purpose of the divine counsel is the deification of our nature, and the aim of divine thoughts is to supply the prerequisites of our life, it follows that we should both know and carry into effect the power of the Lord's Prayer, and write about it in the proper way. And since you, Sir, in writing to me your servant have been inspired by God to mention this prayer in particular, it is necessarily the subject of my own words as well; hence I beseech the Lord, who has taught us this prayer, to open my intellect so that it may grasp the mysteries contained in it, and to give me words equal to the task of elucidating what I have understood. For hidden within a limited compass this prayer contains the whole purpose and aim of which we have just spoken; or, rather, it openly proclaims this purpose and aim to those whose intellects are strong enough to perceive them. The prayer includes petitions for everything that the divine Logos effected through His self-emptying in the incarnation, and it teaches us to strive for those blessings of which the true provider is God the Father alone through the natural mediation of the Son in the Holy Spirit. For the Lord Jesus is mediator between God and men, as the divine apostle says (cf. 1 Tim; 2:5), since He makes the unknown Father manifest to men through the flesh, and gives those who have been reconciled to Him access to the Father through the Holy Spirit (cf. **Eph. 2:18**). It was on their behalf and for their sake that without changing He became man, and is now the author and teacher of so many and such great new mysteries as yet beyond our understanding. Of these mysteries that He has granted to men in His boundless generosity, seven are of more general significance; and it is these whose power, as I have said, lies hidden within the Lord's Prayer/ These seven are theology, adoption as sons by grace, equality with the angels, participation in eternal life, the restoration of human nature when it is reconciled dispassionately with itself, the abolition of the law of sin, and the destruction of the tyranny that holds us in its power through the deceit of the evil one.

[v2] 286 *St. Maximos the Confessor On the Lord's Prayer*

He restores human nature to itself. First, He became man and kept His will dispassionate and free from rebellion against nature, so that it did not waver in the slightest from its own natural movement even with regard to those who crucified Him; on the contrary, it chose death for their sake instead of life, thereby demonstrating the voluntary character of His passion, rooted as it is in His love for humankind. Second, having nailed to the Cross the record of our sins (cf. Col.

2:14), He abolished the enmity which led nature to wage an implacable war against itself; and having summoned those far off and those near at hand - that is, those under the Law and those outside it - and having broken down the obstructive partition-wall - that is, having explained the law of the commandments in His teaching to both these categories of humankind - He formed the two into one new man, making peace and reconciling us through Himself to the Father and to one another (cf. **Eph. 2:14-16**): our will is no longer opposed to the principle of nature, but we adhere to it without deviating in either will or nature.

St. Maximos the Confessor On the Lord's Prayer

95. There is a certain cloud-like power, fine as air, that lightly covers the intellect; and even though the lamp of grace always burns and shines in a man, as we said, yet this power covers its light like a veil in such a way that he is forced to confess that he is not perfect or wholly free from sin, but is, so to speak, both free and not free. This, certainly, does not happen without God's assent but is, on the contrary, in accordance with divine providence. Sometimes the dividing wall (cf. Eph. 2:14) is loosened and shattered, sometimes it is not entirely broken down. Nor is prayer always equally effective: sometimes grace is kindled more brightly, confers greater blessings, and refreshes more fully, and sometimes it is duller and less strong, as grace itself ordains according to what is of most profit to the person concerned. At certain times I have attained the level of perfection and have tasted and experienced the age to be; but never yet have I known any Christian who is perfect or absolutely free.

[v3] 327 *St. Symeon Metaphrastis Paraphrase of the Homilies of St. Makarios of Egypt V Love*

46. He who wholeheartedly hates and renounces the desire of the fallen self, the desire of the eyes, and the false pretensions of this life' (1 John 2:16) - that whole 'world of iniquity' (Jas. 3:6) through the love of which we become the enemies of God (cf. Jas. 4:4) - has crucified the world to himself and himself to the world: he has destroyed in his flesh the enmity between God and his soul, and has made peace between the two (cf. Eph. 2:15). For he who has died to these things through effacing the will of the flesh has reconciled himself to God. He has eradicated the enmity of this world by obliterating sensual pleasure through a life crucified to the world, and has embraced friendship with Jesus. He is no longer God's enemy because of his love for the world, but is a friend of God, crucified to the world and able to say, 'The world is crucified to me, and I to the world' (Gal. 6:14)

[v4] 90 *Nikitas Stithatos On the Practice of the Virtues One Hundred Texts*

79. Since the day of judgement will be one of fire, what each of us has done, as St Paul says, will be tested by fire (cf. 1 Cor. 3:13). Thus, if what we have built up is of an incorruptible nature, it will not be destroyed by fire; and not only will it not be consumed, but it will be made radiant, totally purified of whatever small amount of filth may adhere to it. But if the work with which we have burdened ourselves consists of corruptible matter, it will be consumed and burnt up and we will be left destitute in the midst of the fire (cf. 1 Cor. 3:13-15). Incorruptible and

imperishable actions are the following: tears of repentance, acts of charity, compassion, prayer, humility, faith, hope, love and whatever else is done in a spirit of devotion. Even while we are still alive such actions help to build us up into a holy temple of God (cf. **Eph. 2:21-22**), while when we die they accompany us and remain incorruptibly with us forever. The actions which are consumed by the fire are well known to all: self-indulgence, vainglory, avarice, hatred, envy, theft, drunkenness, abusiveness, censoriousness, and anything else of a base nature to which our appetites or incensive power prompts us to give bodily expression. Such actions pollute us even while we are still living and consumed by the fire of desire; and when we are wrenched away from the body, they accompany us but do not survive. On the contrary, they are destroyed and leave their perpetrator in the midst of the fire, to be punished immortally for all eternity.

[v4] 165 *Nikitas Stithatos On Spiritual Knowledge, Love and the Perfection of Living One Hundred Texts*

83. The principle and source of the virtues is a good disposition of the will, that is to say, an aspiration for goodness and beauty. God is the source and ground of all supernal goodness. Thus the principle of goodness and beauty is faith or, rather, it is Christ, the rock of faith, who is principle and foundation of all the virtues. On this rock we stand and on this foundation we build every good thing (cf. 1 Cor. 3:11). Christ is the capstone (cf. **Eph. 2:20**) uniting us with Himself. He is the pearl of great price (cf. Matt. 13:46): it is this for which the monk seeks when he plunges into the depths of stillness and it is this for which he sells all his own desires through obedience to the commandments, so that he may acquire it even in this life.

[v4] 228 *St. Gregory of Sinai On Commandments and Doctrines, Thoughts, Also on Stillness and Prayer On Hundred and Thirty-seven Texts*

You, too, should do the same. If you are seated and you see that prayer is continuously active in your heart, do not abandon it and get up to psalmodize until in God's good time it leaves you of its own accord. Otherwise, abandoning the interior presence of God, you will address yourself to Him from without, thus passing from a higher to a lower state, provoking unrest and disrupting the intellect's serenity. Stillness, in accordance with its name, is maintained by means of peace and serenity; for God is peace (cf. **Eph. 2:14**) beyond all unrest and clamor. Our psalmody, too, should accord with our mode of life, and be angelic, not unspiritual and secular. For to psalmodize with clamor and a loud voice is a sign of inner turbulence. Psalmody has been given to us because of our grossness and indolence, so that we may be led back to our true state

[v4] 278 *St. Gregory of Sinai On Prayer: Seven Texts - How to Psalmodyze*