

The Book of Mystical Chapters

*The Esoteric Spiritual Doctrine
of the
Early Christian Monks and Ascetical Teachers of the East*

*Translated & Introduced by
John Anthony McGuckin*

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Introduction

The early Christian monks formed an international society that flourished in all the Greek territories of the late Roman empire, as well as in Syria and Persia, in Egypt gathered around the Nile and as far into Africa as Nubia (modern Sudan) and the highlands of Ethiopia. They inhabited the rocky and desert terrain of Sinai, Palestine, Arabia, and Cappadocian Turkey; and in the great capital of the late Roman Empire, Constantinople, they became almost a civil service, so great were their numbers, with many dedicated scholars and aristocrats among them. After the fifth century the monastic phenomenon became descriptive of Western Christianity too, where Gaul (ancient France) and Italy became centres of Latin monasticism. Everywhere in the ancient Christian world that the four major languages, Greek, Latin, Syriac or Coptic, were spoken, Christian monks could be found living in solitary isolation near villages, in small communes of hermits gathered together in remote valleys, or in small houses, usually of a few dozen living the communal life together. These three forms of monastic lifestyle in the Early Church had become standard by the fourth century of the common era, and after Constantine had begun the transformation of the Roman State into the Christian Empire of Byzantium, the monastic movement flourished for more than a thousand years more with the patronage of Christian emperors. In centres such as Athos on the Halkidiki peninsula of Greece, the Caves Lavra (Pechersk) in Kiev, or the wooded mountain monasteries of Transylvania, this is a way of life that has continued with an ancient vigour into the modern era.

Over the course of this long history, a vast body of esoteric doctrine was gathered together by the monks for their own guidance in travelling the paths of the mystical life. The complete dedication of their lives to the search for God, in a radically simplified and poor lifestyle of disciplined work, celibate chastity, and study of the sacred writings of the prophets and saints who had preceded them, made for a radical focus in their lives that is hard to imagine in the random complexities and relativities that

form the context of the self-styled 'advanced' western societies of the present era. The literature, from the early third century, attained considerable sophistication. Teachers such as Origen of Alexandria, one of the most erudite Platonist philosophers of his age, extended his thought into the systematisation of scriptural exegesis, and the concept of the purification and ascent of the soul. His works became constitutive of later efforts to advance a distinctively Christian 'spiritual theology'. Evagrius of Pontus, another major intellectual of the early Christian period, was one of the most successful in combining the high intellectual tradition of Origen, with the day to day needs of communities of ascetics seeking advanced guidance in spiritual psychology.

One very large part of the sharp focus that some of the early monks found by their lifestyle was given over to the surveying of the stages and forms of the inner life of the human spirit. The monks were professionals of the mapping of the movements of the interior soul, and wrote specifically for the instruction of their younger disciples. Younger monks and sometimes nuns (though the latter were usually sedentary in communities lodged in more secure places) would frequently travel the monastic communities of the east Roman world seeking out experienced psychic guides, and soon the finest of these spiritual masters became internationally known, attracting disciples from all over the Christian territories. The sayings of the wise teachers were soon put into writing; sometimes by the sages themselves in their own lifetime, and sometimes gathered together from oral history as a posthumous memorial of their doctrine.

These texts today form a vast body of esoteric literature that remains largely unknown to the western Christian world. As Christianity developed as a state religion, it turned its thoughts more and more to the rationalistic defence of its theology. Such a move was perhaps inevitable as large sections of the international Christian movement entered into disputes over doctrinal issues. The monastic texts, by contrast, were largely uninterested in controversial argument. It was a literature dedicated to the secrets of the inner life, a quest for the paths of peacefulness, mercy, and purity of prayer. Over long centuries the rationalistic spirit of Christian argumentation has barely subsided. Many generations have come and gone, producing the controversial literature of their own ages. In the West a major dispute (known to subsequent historians as the Reformation) led to the collapse of a monastic tradition in large parts of Europe, further contributing to the rationalising of the spirit of Western Christianity, and impoverishing its tradition of mystical teaching. In the Eastern Christian world, no Reformation was ever experienced. The rise of Islam in the ancient oriental heartlands of Christianity curtailed the freedoms of Christians for centuries, but led to

a certain 'blessed obscuring' of the life of monasteries which survived; and survive they did in large numbers. The life of these Eastern Orthodox monasteries follows, often unchanged, the patterns of the primitive communities, and in them the spiritual texts of the esoteric tradition have been carefully preserved, copied, and transmitted as the basic training of new generations of spiritual seekers; a common culture that unites the Christian East from Syria to Romania, and from Ethiopia to Russia.

The earliest writers tended to divide their spiritual teachings into three basic categories, suitable for the stages of first searchers, young monks of several years' standing, and finally the more advanced. The instructions were usually arranged as short paragraphs, meant to be learned by heart and meditated on over and over again for a day or even a week until the paragraph had broken like a fruit on the tongue of the monk and revealed its inner flavour to the searching mind. The same practice was adopted in regard to phrases from the Scripture, especially the Psalms. The biblical texts are frequently referred to in the monastic writings, and here I have given several reference marks (bracketed in the main text). Those who check them up should know that the monks always quoted the Greek Septuagint version of the Bible, which is often different to the current translations of scriptures in common use today, both in text and in numbering system (Psalms are usually one number out of alignment). In addition, the monks often alluded to texts, rather than giving a precise rendering of them, a sign that they were quoting from memory, as copies of the sacred writings in antiquity were not usually found in every private cell, only in the main church building.

The short paragraphs meant for memorisation were called Kephalaia in the Greek. It is a word that means 'text-headings', or 'chapters'. The collections of these monastic manuals of instruction, therefore, were often called Books of 'Chapters'. The first stage of teachings was called 'Praktikos'. This was like a stage of 'exercises', or basic matters of technique and preparation in the life of prayer and mystical searching. It was predominantly concerned with the need for disciplined attention, and the skills required to scrutinise the often complex paths that made up the psyche of the searcher. It was a firm belief of the monks, based upon the Christian idea that the soul was made after the image and likeness of God, that a mastery of the knowledge of the inner self was necessary before one could presume to discern the more mysterious workings of the divine Spirit in a human life. The contemporary word 'psychology', (and perhaps even the focused modern interest in psychology as a quest for the authentic self) derives from the Christian interest in mapping out the inner life of the monk as a first stage in mystical journeying. The word is taken from the Greek and signifies 'the

study of the inner soul'. Today some forms of psychology have often, sometimes with a totalitarian reductionist attitude, tried to replace or commandeer all the various awarenesses of spiritual subjectivity. For the early Christians, however, although 'psychologia' was of fundamental importance, it was only the first stage in a threefold path of increasingly transcendent journeying.

The second stage of advancement, after Praktikos, was designated 'Theoria'. This was a technical term for 'seeing', and referred to the spiritual state when the basics of moral and ascetical discipline could be taken for granted (for the celibate ascetics of the desert this was a considerable physical undertaking involving long vigils, fasts, and the observance of personal chastity and compassion for others). Once the lessons of Praktikos had been absorbed the spiritual quester moved on to seek guidance about the manner in which particular difficulties of the inner life could be resolved. The second stage focuses on what were the recurrent problems that stopped a spiritual person from progressing. The level of Theoria is like that developmental stage in a musician's career when the elementary exercises have been completed, but the player wishes to break through the barrier of the limitation of his or her present technique to reach after a stage of virtuosic ability. What is it that prevents different individuals from advancing beyond their prejudices, and repressions, so as to become increasingly illuminated ? Theoria probes this issue from a variety of angles.

The third stage of the monastic instructions was reserved for more experienced monks, and was often the subject of long discussions where junior monks would be excluded. This stage was called 'Gnostica'. It is a word that means the state of Knowing, or Understanding. It always, in Christian circles, referred to esoteric speculation and reflections on the higher mysteries. Many of the Christian 'gnostic treatises' fell under the disapproval of the bishops and were suppressed, or even destroyed. Some of the 'Gnostic Chapters' survived, however, as the more advanced monks kept the tradition of spiritual wisdom alive, despite all opponents, those outside the church, and even those within it, who have often tried to stifle the inner currents of Christian mysticism by the oppressive weight of bureaucracy or rationalist reductionism. The books of 'Gnostic Chapters' are often enigmatic and difficult to interpret. Unlike the other two books, the Practical and the Theoretical Chapters, they were not meant to be a teaching tool for those who had not yet experienced such things. The Gnostic chapters, by contrast, were meant to be a signal to those who had already experienced some of these things, that others were around them who had also experienced the movings of the divine spirit within, and who were ready to communicate on an equal level, about the higher mysteries.

This present book, a portable collection of Christian monastic wisdom, is only a very small edition of the vast amount of teachings that exist and are still used in the monasteries of the Eastern Christian world. It has been arranged, in the manner of an ancient manual of instruction, in three ascending books: Praktikos, Theoretikos, and Gnostikos. The 'sentences' have been edited, again in the ancient manner, in the form of three 'centuries' or groups of one hundred aphorisms. Each single sentence is meant to be taken as a day's reflection. It was first supposed to be learned by heart, at the beginning of the day, and then repeated as the daily text in every spare moment of quiet (hesychia). Such moments of hesychia were structured by the early monks around the simple repetitive tasks that made up daily life in remote deserts. The regular monotony of basket weaving (a favoured monastic employment) was interspersed with the repetition of prayers and the musing on the 'sentence' of the day. Today life is more busy and demanding, but the moments of hesychia still present themselves with sufficient regularity even for the busiest city-dweller, in those times spent waiting for buses or trains to arrive, or depart, those times when one is walking or simply sitting idly for a moment. Such times are ideally suited for the recitation of the sentence and its dialectic – teasing out the implications of what such an aphorism could mean. How has it already been experienced, how could it illuminate a truth about the individual's own heart, the troubles of their friends' hearts, or the secret ways that God wishes to develop the soul of the seeker ?

The book, in short, is not meant for a rapid half-hour read-through, from cover to cover in one sitting. Such is the temptation for a world gone mad for speed and rationalising. It would be better to employ this book as a Frisbee than to use it in that way. It is offered in the first place as an historical example of the esoteric spiritual teachings of the early Christians, who could once boast many masters of the mystical life, before the experience of going to Church was diluted down to the boredom and intellectual vulgarity that characterises many people's current experience of organised Christian services. So, it is offered to those inside and outside the Christian movement as a scholarly record of no small importance, for these texts chart the extensive psychological investigations which were sponsored by the early Christian scholars. But more than this, it is also offered as a practical 'manual of assistance' for those who wish to climb the higher paths of mystical knowledge in the Christian tradition, and (in an age when living spiritual masters are difficult to come by) need experienced guides to orient them. In the 18th century, monks of Mount Athos (the still surviving Byzantine monastic colony in the Halkidiki peninsula), collated many of the main writings of the vast monastic corpus into a collection which they entitled 'Philokalia'

(The Lover of Beautiful Things). This continues to be one of the chief inspirational collections for all Orthodox monasteries to the present time. Our present book, which takes many of its source texts from that old Greek collection, is itself a *Little Philokalia*. It represents major Christian sages from the Greek Byzantine, Libyan, Egyptian, Palestinian, Syrian, and Persian traditions.

All the writers represented here are the greatest of the East-Christian esoteric teachers, mostly from the first millennium of the Church. In the second millennium of Christianity the voice of women teachers rose with new vigour and insight. In the first millennium, by contrast, women were not generally allowed great access to the expensive literary education that was the fundamental preparation of all the rhetoricians and writers of Antiquity. Accordingly, though their voices were present and vital in the affairs of the Church, and in the currents of mystical life, they are not well represented in the textual monastic tradition. Names of great women monastics have been preserved : Syncletica, Sarah, Proba, Macrina, Melania, Prisca, Perpetua, and many others. But such women who stood at the heart of female ascetic communities, as directing 'Ammas' (that is – Mothers or spiritual elders), did not typically leave behind rhetorical treatises as did the men, who were in many cases also ordained priests and bishops, as well as monks. Perhaps another volume from the second millennium of mystical Christianity would serve better to honour the female teaching tradition. In this present book Ammas Syncletica and Sarah alone represent the ancient female elders.

I hope, by presenting the teachings of all these sages in an accessible form, that they will continue their task of instructing and challenging, in a certain transcendence of time that so many of them aspired to. I hope that they prove to be illuminating, in every sense.

*John A. McGuckin. Priest of the Romanian Orthodox Church.
Professor of Church History. Union Theological Seminary. New York.
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Book One.
Praktikos - The Century of Practical Chapters.

- 1.1 *Snow can never emit flame.
Water can never issue fire.
A thorn bush can never produce a fig.
Just so your heart can never be free
from oppressive thoughts, words, and actions,
until it has purified itself internally.
Be eager to walk this path.
Watch your heart always.
Constantly say the prayer:
'Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me.'
Be humble.
Set your soul in quietness.
Hesychios. On Watchfulness. 122.
Philokalia. 1. pp. 159-160.*
- 1.2. *One of the monks asked the great teacher Abba Nistero :
'What should I do for the best in life ? And the Abba answered:
'All works are not equal.
The scripture says that Abraham was hospitable,
and God was with him;
it says that Elias loved quiet,
and God was with him;
it says that David was humble,
and God was with him.
So, whatever path you find your soul longs after in the quest for God,
do that, and always watch over your heart's integrity..
Sayings of the Elders.
PL. 73. 856.*
- 1.3. *Abba Antony said:
Whoever sits in solitude and is quiet has escaped from three wars:
those of hearing, speaking, and seeing.
And then there is only one war left in which to fight,
and that is the battle for your own heart.
Sayings of the Elders.
PL. 73. 858.*

- 1.4. *Amma Sarra said :*
If I prayed to God that all men should approve of my conduct,
I should find myself endlessly penitent
before each man's door.
I shall not ask this,
I shall pray instead that my heart might be pure towards all.
 Apophthegmata Patrum. Amma Sarra.
PG 65. 420.
- 1.5. *Keep a careful watch on yourself.*
Do not allow yourself to be swept away by external obsessions.
The tumultuous movements of the soul, in particular,
can be rendered quiet by stillness.
But, if you keep encouraging and stimulating them,
they will start to terrorize you and can disorder your whole life.
Once they are in control it is as hard to heal them
as it is to soothe a sore which we can't stop scratching.
 Abba Philemon. The Discourse.
Philokalia. 2. p. 242.
- 1.6. *Set your mind on following the path of saints.*
Prefer a simple style of life.
Wear unremarkable clothes.
Eat simple food.
Behave in an unaffected manner.
Don't strut around as if you were important.
Speak from your heart.
 Abba Philemon. The Discourse.
Philokalia. 2. p. 242.
- 1.7. *After our baptism*
an even greater baptism
(if I may make so bold as to put it that way)
is the baptism provided by our tears.
Our first baptism cleansed all our former sins ..
and the baptism of our tears
cleanses us anew
by the gift of compassion God gives to the human race.
 John Klimakos. The Ladder 7. 64.
PG. 88. 804.

- 1.8. *Our Lord told us to pray in secret,
that means in your heart,
and he instructed us to 'shut the door'.
What is this door he says we must shut, if not the mouth ?
For here is the temple in which Christ dwells,
for as the Apostle said : 'You are the temple of the Lord.' (1 Cor. 3.16).
And the Lord enters into your inner self, into this house,
to cleanse it from everything that is unclean,
but only while the door (that is your mouth) is closed shut.*
Aphrahat the Persian. Demonstration on Prayer. 4. 10.
PS. 1. 1. 157-160.
- 1.9. *From the moment you start praying, raise your heart upwards
and turn your eyes downward.
Come to focus in your innermost self
and there pray in secret to your heavenly Father.*
Aphrahat the Persian. Demonstration on Prayer. 4.13.
PS. 1. 1. 165-166.
- 1.10 *Before you pray
first forgive all those who have offended you,
then pray.
Only then will your prayer rise up into the presence of God.
If you do not forgive,
it will simply remain on the earth.*
Aphrahat the Persian. Demonstration on Prayer. 4.13.
PS. 1. 1. 169-170.
- 1.11. *When you pray be mindful
that you are in the presence of God,
offering a priestly sacrifice.
Would it not be a shameful thing
to offer a sacrifice that was blemished ?
So, as you pray to be forgiven,
first forgive those who have offended you.
Bring them to mind and pardon them,
and then you yourself will also know God's forgiveness.*
Aphrahat the Persian. Demonstration on Prayer. 4.13.
PS. 1. 1. 165-166.

- 1.12. *A young calf starts to wander after fresh grazing
and eventually finds itself stranded among frightful chasms.
So it is with the soul
for thoughts gradually lead it astray.*
Mark the Ascetic. On those who presume they can negotiate their salvation. 74.
Philokalia. 1. p. 114.
- 1.13. *If we purify ourselves of wickedness
then we will come to see invisible realities.
But there is no point, while we are still blind,
in asking why it is we cannot see the light;
no point in stuffing our ears
and then asking why it is we cannot hear anything.*
John of Apamea. 2nd Dialogue with Thomasios.
Lavenant. SC. 311. p. 61.
- 1.14. *A disciple should always carry the memory of God within.
For it is written : You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart. (Dt.6.5).
You should love the Lord, not only when entering into the place of prayer,
but should also remember him with deep desire
when you walk, or speak to others, or take your meals.
For scripture says : Where your heart is, there also is your treasure (Mt. 6.21);
and surely, wherever a person's heart is given,
wherever their deepest desire draws them,
this is indeed their god.
If a disciple's heart always longs for God,
then God will surely be the Lord of the heart.*
Makarios the Great. Homily. 43. 3.
Dorries. p. 286.
- 1.15. *If your mind can pray without distraction
your heart will soon be softened.
And, as it says in Scripture:
'God will never scorn a heart that is humbled and distressed.' (Ps. 51.17).*
Mark the Ascetic. On those who presume they can negotiate their salvation. 34.
Philokalia. 1. p. 110.
- 1.16. *If we want to set our lives right, and find peace,
it is not the tolerant attitude of others that will do it for us.
It will come about rather by our learning
how to show compassion to them.
If we try to avoid this hard struggle of compassion,*

*by preferring a withdrawn and solitary life,
we will simply drag our unhealed obsessions into solitude with us.
We might well have hidden them. We certainly will not have eliminated them.
If we do not seek liberation from our obsessions,
then becoming more withdrawn and less social
may even make us more blind to them, since it can mask them.*
John Cassian. On The Eight Vices.
Philokalia. 1. p. 72.

- 1.17. *If we take St. Paul literally (Eph. 4.26.),
we are not allowed to cling to our anger even for a day.
I would like to make a comment, however,
that many people are so embittered and furious
when they are in a state of anger
that they not only cling to their anger for a day
but drag it out for weeks.
I am at a loss for words to explain those
who do not even vent their anger in speech
but erect a barrier of sullen silence around them.
and distill the bitter poison of their hearts
until it finally destroys them.
They could not have understood how important it is to avoid anger,
not merely externally, but even in our thoughts;
because it darkens our intellect with bitterness,
and cuts it off from the radiance
of spiritual understanding and discernment,
by depriving it of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.*
John Cassian. On The Eight Vices.
Philokalia. 1. pp. 71-72.

- 1.18. *The thief on the cross certainly did not receive
the Kingdom of Heaven as a reward of his virtues,
but as a grace and mercy from God.
He can serve as an authentic witness
that our salvation is given to us
only by God's mercy and grace.
All the holy masters knew this
and unanimously taught that perfection in holiness
can be achieved only through humility.*
John Cassian. On the Eight Vices.
Philokalia. 1. p. 80.

- 1.19. *If you are tired and worn out by your labours for your Lord
place your head upon his knee and rest awhile.
Recline upon his breast (Jn. 13.23),
breathe in the fragrant spirit of Life,
and allow Life to permeate your being.
Rest upon him, for he is a table of refreshment
which will serve you the food of the divine Father.*
John of Dalyutha. Letter. 28. 2.
PO. 39. 3. pp. 388-389.
- 1.20. *A man may want to protect his household valuables
from the predations of thieves,
but he will be frustrated in his efforts if his voice is drowned out
by the noise of the crowds outside.
So it is with the soul in the body, for its powers too
are often drowned out by bad things.
The soul is in the body almost as if it were not there.
It abides there often without manifesting its powers.
God did not ordain that the soul should be in the body
and yet still be able to move without relation to the body's characteristics.
As long as the souls is in the body,
its own senses are inoperative.
As soon as it separates from the body,
it can move in and of itself.
And this separation need not only be understood
as if it were a question of the soul leaving the body,
for it can also be considered as the separation of the
psychic awareness from the body.
Though the soul may still be in the body
it surely finds itself outside the body.
While the body still moves in the world,
the psychic consciousness transcends the world.
This is what the Saviour meant when he said:
'But you are not of this world.' (Jn. 15. 19).
John of Apamea. 1st Dialogue With Thomasios. 8.
Lavenant. SC. 311. pp. 53-54.*
- 1.21. *A monk once said to Abba Philemon:
I am very conscious of how my mind
constantly wanders all over the place,
drifting after things that are no good for it.
What can I do, father, to be delivered ?
And he hesitated for a little while and then replied:*

*This is a remnant of the obsessions your external life inflicts on you.
It still troubles you because you have not yet
reached the heights of perfect longing for God.
The longing for the experience of God
has not yet fallen on you like fire.*
Abba Philemon. The Discourse.
Philokalia. 2. p. 244.

- 1.22. *When the soul has been purified by keeping the commandments,
the spiritual intellect can be ordered and stabilised;
only then can it reach that state it needs to attain for prayer.*
Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 2.
Philokalia. 1. p. 177.
- 1.23. *Try to make your spiritual intellect deaf and dumb
during the time of prayer,
for then you will really be able to pray.*
Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 11.
Philokalia. 1. p. 178.
- 1.24. *If you store up grievances
and nurse old animosities inside yourself,
(and then try to pray)
you will be like someone going to a well for water
with a bucket that is full of holes.*
Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 22.
Philokalia. 1. p. 178.
- 1.25. *Always be on your guard against your anger,
and then you will not be carried away by other violent desires.
Anger gives fuel to all sorts of other passions,
and always clouds the spiritual eye,
disrupting the state of pure prayer.*
Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 27.
Philokalia. 1. p. 179.
- 1.26. *Sometimes it happens that when you start to pray
you find you can pray well.
At other times, even when you have expended great effort,
you may find your efforts frustrated.*

*This experience is to make you learn
that you must exert yourself constantly,
for having once gained the gift of prayer
you must be careful to keep it safe.*

Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 29.

Philokalia. 1. p. 179.

- 1.27. *Do not pray for your heart's desires,
For they may not entirely harmonise with God's purposes.*

Pray instead as you have been taught:

'May your will be done in me.' (Lk. 22.42).

*Pray to God this way about everything,
that his will might be accomplished in you;
for he only desires what is good and useful for your life,
whereas you do not always request this.*

Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 31.

Philokalia. 1. p. 179.

- 1.28. *I have often prayed and asked God
for what seemed good in my own estimation.
Like a fool, I kept on at God to grant me this,
I would not leave it to him to arrange as he knows best for me.
Then, having obtained the thing I had prayed for so stubbornly,
I have often been sorry that I did not leave it to the will of God;
for the reality often turned out very different to the way I had imagined.*

Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 32.

Philokalia. 1. p. 179.

- 1.29. *Whether you pray alone,
or in the company of others,
try never to pray simply as a matter of routine,
but always with conscious awareness of what you are doing.*

Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 42.

Philokalia. 1. p. 180.

- 1.30. *When you pray keep a careful watch on your faculty of memory
so that it does not distract you with images of your past,
but instead reminds you in whose presence you stand;
for it is in the nature of our spiritual intellect
that it can get carried away by memories during the time of prayer.*

Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 45.

Philokalia. 1. p.180.

- 1.31. *The dark powers are sick with envy against us when we pray,
and they will use every conceivable trick to frustrate us spiritually.
They endlessly stir up our inner memories to distract us into thoughts,
and will try to stir our flesh to all kinds of desires,
for in this way they think they can hinder the soul's glorious ascent
and its journey to God.*
Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 47.
Philokalia. 1. p. 180.
- 1.32. *If you want to experience true prayer
then seek to control your anger and your desires.
But more than this, you must also
strive to liberate yourself from every material thought.*
Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 54.
Philokalia. 1. p. 181.
- 1.33. *When your spiritual intellect longs for God so deeply
that little by little it loses interest in material things
and turns away from all thoughts rooted in sensory perception,
or those that rise from our temperament or our memories,
and at the same time becomes more and more
filled with a sense of reverence and joy,
then know that you have drawn near to the threshold of prayer.*
Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 62.
Philokalia. 1. p. 182.
- 1.34. *Someone who is tied up cannot run.
Just so, the spiritual intellect which is still a slave to its obsessive desires
can never see the domain of spiritual prayer,
because it is dragged all over the place
by compulsive ideations,
and cannot achieve the necessary intellectual stillness.*
Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 72.
Philokalia. 1. p. 183.
- 1.35. *Know this:
that the holy angels encourage us to pray,
and when we do pray they stand beside us with great joy,
praying for us.
But, if we grow careless
and admit wicked thoughts,*

*we greatly vex the angels,
for there they are struggling hard on our behalf,
and we cannot even be bothered to pray to God for our own benefit,
but have scorned their assistance,
and dishonoured their Master and their God.*

Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 81.

Philokalia. 1. p. 184.

- 1.36. *Prepare yourself like a professional wrestler.
Even if you see a sudden apparition do not be alarmed
but be careful in case evil spirits
try to deceive you with visions.
If this happens be very attentive;
turn immediately to prayer and ask God
to enlighten you himself whether this vision is from him,
and, if it is not, to drive the illusion away from you at once.
Be of good courage, for if you make your prayer to God with burning zeal
these dogs of wicked spirits will trouble you no longer,
but will immediately be whipped away by the unseen power of the Lord.
But never deliberately try to evoke a form or a phantasm
in the time of your prayer.*

Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 92, 94, 114.

Philokalia. 1. pp. 184-185, 187.

- 1.37. *As bread is food for the body,
and holiness is food for the soul,
so spiritual prayer is food for the interior mind.*

Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 101.

Philokalia. 1. p. 185.

- 1.38. *Do not run away from poverty or sorrows,
such things lift our prayer to heaven.*

Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 131.

Philokalia. 1. p. 187.

1. 39 *It is very dangerous to reach out boldly, without any sense of shame,
for the knowledge of divine things,
or set off on a life dedicated to immaterial prayer,
when we are still caught fast in the nets of sinfulness and anger.
We would deserve the Apostle's rebuke when he tells us that
our soul, when it prays, ought to 'wear a veil over its head
on account of the angels who are present'. (1 Cor. 11.5.)*

That is, we must first clothe our soul in due reverence and humility.
Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 145.
Philokalia. 1. p. 189.

- 1.40. *If your eyes are hurting you,
it will certainly not help to stand gazing
into the glare of the noonday sun.
In the same way, the fearful practice of transcendent prayer
(something that can only be accomplished in spirit and in truth)
will be of no use whatsoever
to a spiritual intellect which is still impassioned and unclean.
What is more: if such a spirit should try to practise this prayer
it may even rouse the anger of God against its presumption.*
Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 146.
Philokalia. 1. p. 189.
- 1.41. *God is in want of nothing, and shows no particular favouritism,
but he certainly did not want to receive that man
who came to him with a sacrificial gift,
until he had first been reconciled with his neighbour
who had a grievance against him(Mt. 5.23).
So think, and discern carefully
how you ought to offer spiritual incense to God
on the altar of your spirit,
so that it will indeed be an acceptable gift.*
Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 147.
Philokalia. 1. p. 189.
- 1.42. *If you seek after prayer with concentration,
then you will surely find prayer.
Nothing is more essential to prayer
than concentration.
Do all that you can to acquire it.*
Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 149.
Philokalia. 1. p. 189.
- 1.43. *If you find your intellect wanders,
then reading, night-time vigils, and prayer will bring it to stillness.
Fasting, hard manual work, and quiet solitude calm the fires of desire.
To calm your restlessness, sit and recite the book of psalms,
and have pity and compassion on all those around you.
If you do excessive and inappropriate exercises*

*it will all come to grief very quickly,
and this will cause you more harm than good.*
Evagrius of Pontus. Texts on Watchfulness. 5. (Praktikos 15).
Philokalia. 1. p. 58.

1.44. *A tree will never blossom without water.
Without mystical knowledge the heart will never rise on high.*
Evagrius of Pontus. Address To The Monks. 117.
Driscoll. (Appendix).

1.45. *How lovely is prayer,
and how radiant are its works.
Prayer is acceptable to God
when it walks with good deeds,
and it is heard when it rises out of a spirit of forgiveness.
Prayer is always answered when it is pure and sincere.
Prayer is powerful when it is suffused with God's vigour.*
Aphrahat the Persian. Demonstration On Prayer. 4.16.
PS. 1. 1. 173-174.

1.46. *It was a saying of Amma Syncletica's
that just as bitter medicine purged poison
so prayer and fasting purged our evil thoughts.*
Aphthegmata Patrum. (Syncletica 3).
PG. 65. 421.

1.47. *Do not be surprised
if you fall back into the old ways every day.
Do not be disheartened,
but resolve to do something positive;
and without question
that angel who stands guard over you
will honour your perseverance.*
John Klimakos. The Ladder. 5. 30.
PG. 88. 777.

1.48 *If we dwell on hurts which others have given us
we will be like those bizarre interpreters of scripture
who read the spiritual text in any way that suits them.
Put this attitude to shame within you
by reciting the Jesus Prayer –*

'Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on us.'
John Klimakos. The Ladder. 9. 10.
PG. 88. 841.

- 1.49. *All people are able to pray in a congregation.
Many others find it much better
to pray with a single like-minded companion.
Solitary prayer is suitable for very few indeed.*
John Klimakos. The Ladder. 19. 5.
PG. 88. 937.
- 1.50. *A furnace puts gold to the test.
The assiduous practice of prayer
tests a disciple's zeal and love for God.*
John Klimakos. The Ladder. 19. 8.
PG. 88. 937.
- 1.51. *The angel Lucifer fell from heaven
solely on account of one passion, his pride.
It makes me wonder whether it is possible to rise up to heaven
solely on the strength of humility ?*
John Klimakos. The Ladder. 23. 12.
PG. 88. 968.
- 1.52. *When a ray of sunlight enters the house through a crack
it lights up everything inside,
and even shows up the finest dust in its beam.
So it is with the fear of the Lord,
when it enters a human heart
it reveals all the fallibility still lurking there.*
John Klimakos. The Ladder. 26. 38.
PG. 88. 1088.
- 1.53. *If you cannot avoid grave lapses,
because of bodily weakness,
you must take the road of humility,
and all its qualities,
for there is no other road that will lead you back to salvation.*
John Klimakos. The Ladder. 26. 54.

PG. 88. 1089.

- 1.54. *Stillness of spirit is an endless worship of God,
and a standing in the very Presence.
Let the memory of the name of Jesus
be present in every breath you take,
and then you will know the value of stillness.*
John Klimakos. The Ladder. 27. 61.
PG. 88. 1112.
- 1.55. *If you keep a vigil,
devote the main part of the night to prayer,
and only a little part to the recitation of the Psalter.*
John Klimakos. The Ladder. 27. 77.
PG. 88. 1116.
- 1.56. *When you go out after prayer
keep your tongue under restraint,
for it is well capable of dissipating,
in a very short time,
what you laboured to gather together.*
John Klimakos. The Ladder. 27. 81.
PG. 88. 1116.
- 1.57. *When you are ready to stand in the presence of the Lord
let your soul wear a garment woven throughout
from the cloth of our forgiveness of others.
Otherwise your prayer will be of no value whatsoever..*
John Klimakos. The Ladder. 28. 4.
PG. 88. 1129.
- 1.58. *Let all your prayer be completely simple.
Both the tax-collector and the prodigal son
were reconciled to God by one simple phrase:
(one saying: God have mercy on me a sinner,
and the other: Father I have sinned against you.)*
John Klimakos. The Ladder. 28. 5.
PG. 88. 1129.

- 1.59. *If, in the course of your prayers,
you feel a special joy,
or are moved in the heart by something,
then stay with it for a while.
It is a sign that your guardian angel has come
and begun to pray with you.*
John Klimakos. The Ladder. 28. 11.
PG. 88. 1132.
- 1.60. *If you are serious about the life of prayer
take care to be very merciful,
for in this way 'you shall receive a hundredfold reward'
and even greater things in the future age.*
John Klimakos. The Ladder. 28. 44.
PG. 88. 1137.
1. 61. *Abba Agathon said:
In my opinion no other labour is as difficult
as prayer to God.
Every time a person wants to pray
our spiritual enemies want to come and disrupt it,
for they know that it is only by deflecting humans from prayer
that they can do them any harm.
Whatever good work a person undertakes
will produce success, if it is done with perseverance,
but the labour of prayer
is a warfare that will endure until our very last breath.*
Apophthegmata Patrum. Abba Agathon.
PG. 65. 112.
- 1.62. *Abba Agatho said:
I have never allowed myself to go to bed
while I still felt resentment against a person,
And, as far as I was able, I never allowed anyone else to go to bed either
as long as they still felt resentment against me.*
Apophthegmata Patrum. Abba Agathon.
PG. 65. 109.
- 1.63. *Abba Poemen often used to say that
malice could never overcome malice.
So if anyone acts maliciously towards you*

*do good to them in return;
for in this way you shall extinguish malice
by kindness.*
Sayings of the Elders.
PL. 73. 1032.

- 1.64. *A monk came to Abba Sisoës and said:
'What should I do Abba, for I have fallen from grace ?'
And he replied, 'Get up again.'
The monk came back shortly after and said:
'What shall I do now, for I have fallen again ?'
And the old man said to him,
'Just get up again.
Never cease getting back up again !'*
Sayings of the Elders.
PL. 73. 1034.
- 1.65. *One of the monks asked an elder for advice on the spiritual life
and he said : 'Do battle vigorously !'
But the monk replied: 'But my thoughts oppress me constantly.'
And the old man said to him:
'Scripture says –
Call on me in the day of your distress, and I will deliver you,
and then you shall bless my name. (Ps. 49 LXX). –
So it is clear :
Call upon God to deliver you from the mind's oppression.*
Sayings of the Egyptian Fathers. 46.
PL. 74. 389.
- 1.66. *Make it your study
to acquire a long perspective
on your many thoughts.*
Sayings of the Egyptian Fathers. 64.
PL. 74. 390.
- 1.67. *You need a spiritual pilgrimage.
Begin it by shutting up.*
Sayings of the Egyptian Fathers. 72.
PL. 74. 391.
- 1.68. *Always to want your own way;
becoming accustomed to having it;*

*always to seek the easy path;
all this leads straight to depression.
But love, quietness, and contemplation of the inner life,
cleanse our hearts.*
Sayings of the Egyptian Fathers. 76-77.
PL. 74. 391.

- 1.69. *Never look down on anyone.
You do not know whether the Spirit of God
prefers to dwell in you or in them.*
Sayings of the Egyptian Fathers. 83.
PL. 74. 391.
- 1.70. *These are the seven rules of a monk :
In the first place, as scripture says,
Love God with all your soul and all your mind.
Then, love your fellow human beings as you love yourself.
Fast from all evil.
Never pass judgement on anyone, for any cause.
Never do evil to anyone.
Discipline yourself and purge yourself from material and spiritual evil.
Cultivate a modest and gentle heart.
If you can do all these things
and see only your own faults, not those of others,
the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ will be with you abundantly.*
Sayings of the Egyptian Fathers. 109.
PL. 74. 394.
- 1.71. *Love is a most holy condition of the soul
in which it values the mystical knowledge of God
above all other existent things.
We cannot enter into such a state of love, however,
if we are still obsessively clinging to material values.*
Maximus The Confessor. Centuries on Charity. 1.1.
Philokalia. 2. p. 4.
- 1.72. *If you believe in the Lord
you will stand in awe of his judgement,
and this fear of judgement can serve
to rein in our reckless obsessions.
Once we have gained control here we should
also learn to accept sufferings patiently.*

*Such acceptance will lead us into a deep hope in God.
This hope in God begins to disconnect our spiritual intellect
from all material obsessions.*

*When our intellect has been liberated,
it will finally possess the Love of God.*

Maximus The Confessor. Centuries on Charity. 1. 3.

Philokalia. 2. p. 4.

- 1.73. *A soul that is yet the victim of its imaginations,
that is driven by obsessive desires,
and brimming with animosities,
still stands in need of much purification.*

Maximus The Confessor. Centuries on Charity. 1. 14.

Philokalia. 2. p.5.

1. 74. *If we look inside our hearts,
and find there even a trace of animosity towards others
for the wrongs they have done to us,
then we should realise that we are still far removed from the love of God.
The love of God absolutely precludes us from hating any human being.*

Maximus The Confessor. Centuries on Charity. 1. 15.

Philokalia. 2. p. 5.

- 1.75. *If you love God you will certainly start to love your neighbours too.
You will find you are unable to hoard your money any longer,
but will want to distribute it in a godly way,
being generous to all who are in need.*

Maximus The Confessor. Centuries on Charity. 1. 23.

Philokalia. 2. p. 5.

- 1.76. *If you imitate God by giving alms
you must not discriminate between
the deserving and the undeserving,
between the wicked and the innocent.
For God gives what is necessary to all
with an open hand, as is appropriate to them,
although he sees the heart's intention
and always honours a good person more than the wicked.*

Maximus The Confessor. Centuries on Charity. 1. 24.

Philokalia. 2. p. 5.

- 1.77. *Discipline your flesh with fasting and vigils
and apply yourself assiduously
to the recitation of the Psalter and to prayer,
then the sanctifying gift of self-control will descend on you,
bringing love with it.*
Maximus The Confessor. Centuries on Charity. 1. 45.
Philokalia. 2. p. 7.
- 1.78. *Do not listen to gossip
at your neighbour's expense,
and do not spend time talking with
those who love to find fault in others;
otherwise you will fall away from the love of God,
and find yourself alienated from the eternal life.*
Maximus The Confessor. Centuries on Charity. 1. 58.
Philokalia. 2. p. 9.
- 1.79. *Tie the leg of a sparrow to the ground
and no matter how hard it tries to fly
it will be fastened to the earth.
In the same way, if your intellect tries to fly up
to the mystical knowledge of heavenly realities,
but has not yet been freed of obsessive passions,
it will remain tied fast to the earth.*
Maximus The Confessor. Centuries on Charity. 1. 85.
Philokalia. 2. p. 12.
1. 80. *Once the soul starts to feel how healthy it has become
it will also notice that even its dreams
have become simplified and calmed.*
Maximus The Confessor. Centuries on Charity. 1. 89.
Philokalia. 2. p. 12.
1. 81 *If you are a theologian you will pray in truth.
If you can pray in truth, then you are a theologian.*
Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 61.
Philokalia. 1. p. 182.

- 1.82. *When you pray, be concentrated, without self-display,
closely withdrawn into your heart.
for the demons fear concentration more than thieves fear dogs.*
John Klimakos. The Ladder. 7. 15.
PG. 88. 805.
- 1.83. *The heart itself is only a small vessel,
yet dragons are there, and there are lions;
there are poisonous beasts there, and all the treasures of evil;
there are rough and uneven roads;
there are precipices;
but there too is God and the angels,
life is there, and the Kingdom;
there too is light and there the apostles,
and heavenly cities, and treasures of grace.
All things lie within that little space.*
Makarios the Great. Homily. 43.7.
Dorries. p. 289.
- 1.84. *If the soul of the disciple is not lit
from the lamp of the Godhead dwelling within,
then what a nothing they will be.
The Lord was such a 'burning lamp' (Jn.5.35)
because the Spirit of the Godhead dwelt substantially in him,
and, in the humanity, set his very heart on fire.*
Makarios the Great. Homily. 43. 2.
Dorries. pp. 283-284.
- 1.85 *A smelly old pouch can be filled with pearls inside.
So too Christians in the exterior person
ought to be humble and of lowly esteem,
but inside, in the secret self,
they possess the 'pearl of great price'. (Mt. 13.46)*
Makarios the Great. Homily. 43. 2.
Dorries. p. 285.
- 1.86 *If you feel oppressed, go into a dimly lit and quiet place.
Lift both your hands up to heaven.
Make the sign of the cross over yourself.
Then lift up the eyes of your soul towards God.
The oppression will leave you.*

the New Theologian. Practical & Gnostic Chapters. 1.71.
Koder. SC. 51.

- 1.87 *The first stage of the spiritual life,
The beginning of it all,
is to gain some control over the passions.
The second stage is to devote oneself
to the vocal recitation of the psalms;
for when the passions have been calmed,
and prayer has brought some order in our quest for pleasure
then the psalms can bring us great delight,
and they are pleasing in God's sight.
The third stage is to pray with our mind.
The fourth is when we ascend to contemplation.*
Symeon the New Theologian. On the Three Methods of Prayer.
Philokalia. 5. pp. 87-88.
- 1.88 *The fathers described prayer as a spiritual weapon
without which we cannot go into battle
for we would surely be carried off into exile in enemy country.
But we cannot acquire pure prayer
unless we cling to God with an open heart.
since it is God alone who gives the gift of prayer to one who prays;
and God who teaches us mystical knowledge.*
Theodoros the Ascetic. Spiritual Chapters. 8.
Philokalia. 1. p. 305 .
- 1.89 *It is beyond our power to prevent obsessive thoughts
from troubling and disturbing the soul.
But it is within our power to forbid such imaginings to linger within,
and forbid such obsessions to control us.*
Theodoros the Ascetic. Spiritual Chapters. 9.
Philokalia. 1. p. 305.
- 1.90 *Withdrawal from the world means two things:
the withering away of our obsessions,
and the revelation of the life that is hidden in Christ. (Col. 3.3-4).*
Theodoros the Ascetic. Spiritual Chapters. 17.
Philokalia. 1. p. 307.
- 1.91 *The Lord makes his abode in the souls of the humble,*

*for the hearts of the proud are full of shameful obsessions.
Nothing strengthens the obsessions so much as arrogant thoughts;
nothing uproots the weeds of the soul so quickly as blessed humility.*
Theodoros the Ascetic. Spiritual Chapters. 27.

Philokalia. 1. p. 308.

- 1.92. *Never let anger or irritability get a grip on you,
for as scripture says: 'The angry man becomes a fool' (Prov.11.25),
whereas wisdom makes its abode in the heart of the gentle.*
Theodoros the Ascetic. Spiritual Chapters. 30.

Philokalia. 1. p. 309.

- 1.93. *If you want a life of discipleship
do not allow the desire for material possessions
to get a grip on you.
A disciple with many possessions
is like a ship that has been too heavily laden.
It is lashed by the storms of cares
and sinks in the deep waters of distress.
The love of money gives birth to many evil obsessions,
and has rightly been called the 'root of all evil.' (1 Tim. 6.10).*
Theodoros the Ascetic. Spiritual Chapters. 38.

Philokalia. 1. p. 310.

- 1.94. *Friend of Christ,
you should seek to have, as your friends,
persons who will be of help to you in the way of life you want.
Let your friends be lovers of peace,
those who are spiritual soul-mates,
and those who are saintly.*
Theodoros the Ascetic. Spiritual Chapters. 54.

Philokalia. 1. p. 312-313.

- 1.95. *Do not develop a taste for rich and exotic foods...
Make your diet a simple one,
and even then be careful to avoid excess.
As scripture says :
'Do not be led astray by gluttonous feasting.' (Proverbs. 24. 15. LXX.)*
Theodoros the Ascetic. Spiritual Chapters. 55.

Philokalia. 1. p. 313.

- 1.96. *Pray night and day.
Pray when you are happy,
and pray when you are sad.
Pray with fear and trembling,
and with a watchful and vigilant mind,
that your prayer might be acceptable to the Lord;
for as scripture says :
'The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,
and his ears are open to their appeal.'* (Ps. 34.15).
Theodoros the Ascetic. Spiritual Chapters. 60.
Philokalia. 1. p. 314.
- 1.97. *Love has rightly been called the capital city of all virtues,
the fulfilment of the Law and Prophets (Mt. 22.40; Rom. 13.10).
So let us make every effort to attain this holy love.
By means of love we shall be liberated from the tyranny of evil obsessions
and be raised up high to heaven on the wings of goodness,
and we shall even see the face of God,
so far as this is possible for human nature.
Theodoros the Ascetic. Spiritual Chapters. 82.
Philokalia. 1. p. 319.*
- 1.98. *The patriarch Abraham undertook the labour of hospitality
and sat by his tent door welcoming passers-by (Gen. 18.1)
and his table was open to all comers
even to the uncouth and the unworthy,
for he set no limitations.
This was why he was counted worthy
to be present at that most wondrous feast
when he entertained angels, and the Master of All.
We too should love practise open hearted hospitality
so as to welcome not only angels, but even the Lord himself, as our guests,
for it was the Lord who told us:
'In so far as you did it to one of the least of these,
you did it to me.'* (Mt. 25. 40).
*How good it is to be kind to all,
especially those who are unable to repay you.
Theodoros the Ascetic. Spiritual Chapters. 85.
Philokalia. 1. p. 320.*

1.99. *If your heart does not accuse you
either for negligence, or for harbouring evil thoughts,
or for having rejected a commandment of God,
then indeed you are pure of heart
and worthy to hear those words:
'Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God.'* (Mt. 5.8).
Theodoros the Ascetic. Spiritual Chapters. 86.
Philokalia. 1. p. 320.

1.100 *With a modest mind and a humble heart
let us repeat over and again
that prayer which the great saint Arsenios
used to offer to the Lord:
'My God do not abandon me,
though I have done nothing good in your sight,
but, because you are compassionate, grant me
the power to make a start.'
And how true it is that all our salvation
lies in the mercy, and in the deep love, that God has for us
To him be glory, dominion, and worship.*
Theodoros the Ascetic. Spiritual Chapters. 100.
Philokalia. 1. pp. 323-324.



Book Two.

Theoretikos – The Century of Theoretical Chapters.

- 2.1. *Note how scripture says
there must always be fire burning on the altar (Lev. 6. 12-13).
Scripture also says you shall be called priests of the Lord,
and that text is also addressed to you :
'You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood,
a people set apart for God.' (1Pet. 2.9).
So, if you are indeed a high priest of God,
and wish to perform the priestly functions of your soul,
make sure that the fire never goes out on your altar.
Origen of Alexandria. Homily on Leviticus. 4.6.
PG. 12. 440.*
- 2.2. *If you really wish to achieve spiritual stillness,
and to guard your heart successfully,
then let the prayer : 'Lord Jesus have mercy on me'
become one with your breathing
and in a few days you will see how it can all be achieved.
Hesychios. On Watchfulness. 182.
Philokalia. 1. p. 170 .*
- 2.3. *The second stage of the spiritual life, is the illuminative.
This belongs to those whose efforts in holiness have achieved
the first stage of liberation from obsessive attachments.
It is characterized by spiritual intuition of existent realities,
by contemplation of the inner constitutions of created things,
and by the communion of the Holy Spirit.
Niketas Stethatos. Gnostic Chapters. 43.
Philokalia. vol. 3. p. 336.*

- 2.4. *In the illuminative stage, the spiritual intellect is purified by divine fire;
a psychic opening of the eyes of the heart occurs,
and the Logos is born in us,
who brings mystical discernments of the highest order....
The one who reaches this state by the intellect's mystical intuition,
rides like Elijah in a chariot of fire. (2 Kings. 2.11f).
Niketas Stethatos. Gnostic Chapters. 43.
Philokalia. vol. 3. p. 336.*
- 2.5. *If anyone truly desires to do the will of God with all their heart,
God will never abandon them,
but will constantly guide them along the paths of his will.
If someone really sets their heart on the will of God,
God will find even a little child to illuminate
so as to communicate his will to that person.
But if a person does not truly desire the will of God,
even if they were to go to a prophet,
God would put it into the heart of that prophet
to give a response comparable to the deceit
that was in the seeker's heart.
Dorotheos of Gaza. Discourse. 5.
PG 88. 1684.*
- 2.6. *Just as someone who has not been illuminated
should not try to speculate on spiritual mysteries,
even so, when the light of the all-holy Spirit
sheds its powerful radiance on someone,
they too should not try to put it into words.
When the soul is drunk with divine love
it wants only to enjoy the glory of the Lord
with a voice that is rendered silent.
Diadochos of Photike. On Spiritual Knowledge. 8.
Philokalia. 1. p. 237.*
- 2.7. *When we have successfully blocked all the gates of the intellect
by means of the remembrance of God,
it is necessary to give the intellect something to do.
We should give it one thing only : the prayer 'Lord Jesus!'
This is more than enough for it;
for it is written that none can say 'Jesus is Lord' except in the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12.3).
Let the spiritual intellect constantly reflect on these words
with great intensity within its inner chambers,*

so that it will not be distracted by any mental images.
Diadochos of Photike. On Spiritual Knowledge. 59.
Philokalia. 1. p. 251.

- 2.8. *Even in this present time the Kingdom of light,
and the heavenly icon, Our Lord Jesus Christ,
mystically illuminates the soul.
Although he reigns in the souls of his saints,
Christ lies hidden from the eyes of the crowd.
Only with the eyes of the soul can he be seen;
and so shall he remain hidden until the day of resurrection,
but on that day we shall be bodily covered with the light of the Lord
and our whole being will be radiant as our souls are even now.*
Makarios the Great. Homily. 2. 5.
Dorries. pp. 19-20.
- 2.9 *All God's gifts to us are beyond all beauty
and the origin of all our goodness,
but there is nothing that can so set our hearts on fire
or move them to the love of goodness itself
as much as the gift of divine understanding.
It is the first-born child of God's grace
and the first of the great gifts he gives to the soul.
It starts by disconnecting us from our current obsessive desires
And gives us instead of our longing for corruptible things,
a deepening love for the ineffable riches of divine comprehensions.
From that point onwards, the mind catches fire in a blaze of transcendence,
So as to become a concelebrant in the liturgy of the angels..*
Diadochos of Photike. On Spiritual Knowledge. 67.
Philokalia. 1. p. 255.
- 2.10. *Beloved one, if you really want to advance your salvation,
you must practise this method of prayer.
Begin with total obedience,
and a conscience that is innocent in the sight of God.
Then your mind must keep watch over your heart
during the time you are at prayer,
as if patrolling it all the time.
From the centre of your heart,
from the heart's very depths,
your mind should send up its prayer.*
Symeon the New Theologian. On the Three Methods of Prayer.
Philokalia. 5. pp. 84-85.

- 2.11. *As soon as your mind has experienced what the Scripture says :
 'How gracious is the Lord' (LXX. Ps. 34.8),
 it will be so touched with that delight
 that it will no longer want to leave the place of the heart.
 It will echo the words of the Apostle Peter:
 'How good it is to be here.' (Mt. 17.4).*
 Symeon the New Theologian. On the Three Methods of Prayer.
Philokalia. 5. pp. 84-85.
- 2.12. *Sometimes people find themselves brightly illuminated
 and refreshed by God's grace for a while,
 but then this grace may be taken away,
 and they can fall into depression and start grumbling,
 and even give up dispiritedly,
 instead of energetically renewing their prayers
 to call down again that assurance of salvation.
 Such behaviour is like an ungrateful beggar
 taking alms at the palace door
 and then walking off indignantly
 because he was not invited in
 to dine with the King himself.*
 John of Karpathos. To the Monks of India. 70.
Philokalia. 1. p. 291.
- 2.13. *Scripture says: 'Blessed are those who have not seen
 and yet have believed' (Jn. 20.29).
 Just so, blessed are those who feel that grace has been withdrawn from them
 and no longer find any consolation in their hearts,
 only constant tribulation and a dark abyss,
 but even so do not give in to despair.
 Instead, they take strength from their faith
 so as to bear up courageously,
 secure in the thought that in this way they are experiencing
 the vision of the Invisible One.*
 John of Karpathos. To the Monks of India. 71.
Philokalia. 1. p. 291.
- 2.14. *It is more important to remember God,
 than it is to remember to breathe.*
 Gregory of Nazianzus. Oration. 27.4.
PG. 36. 16.

- 2.15. *Blessed are you O heart that is lucid, the dwelling place of the deity.
Blessed are you, O heart that is pure, and which beholds the hidden essence.
Blessed are you flesh and blood, the dwelling place of the Consuming Fire.
Blessed are you mortal body made from dust,
home of the Fire that sets the Ages alight.*
Sahdona the Syrian. The Book of Perfection. Part 2. 4. 7.
de Halleux. vol. 2. p. 33.
- 2.16. *It is truly a matter for wonder and astonishment that he,
before whom even the heavens are not pure,
and who fills even his great angels with awe,
should think to take delight and pleasure in a heart of flesh
one that is filled with love for him,
and so has become large enough and pure enough
to be his dwelling place.*
Sahdona the Syrian. The Book of Perfection. Part 2. 4. 9.
de Halleux. vol. 2. p. 34.
- 2.17 *Those who possess love,
that perfection of the commandments,
become the dwelling place of the Trinity,
and can see within their heart
the vision of God.
Blessed is that heart which has deserved to see this sight;
blessed is the heart which has become the home of love,
and in which the Godhead has come to dwell.
Such a person, even in this present age,
is living in the Kingdom of Heaven.*
Sahdona the Syrian. The Book of Perfection. Part 2. 4. 7.
de Halleux. vol. 2. p. 33.
- 2..18. *Let us embrace the burning fire of God's love within our hearts
for the heart's purity is born from our closeness to him.
It is only by unfailing and focused gazing
that the spirit gravitates to God,
but when the luminous ray
of the simple eye of the soul,
is flooded with those intense rays of light
that flash down on us from on high, then it is that the fire of God flares up
in a great blaze within our hearts.*
Sahdona the Syrian. The Book of Perfection. Part 2. 4. 14.
de Halleux. vol. 2. p. 36.

- 2.19. *Blessed are you Lord, who dwell in the heights
and yet have chosen to live within a human heart,
giving it joy and lifting it up to the heights alongside you,
to live with you there,
to praise you in the heights and in the depths.
Glory to you, who have given such wonders to a heart
which your own hands made from the very dust of the earth.*
Sahdona the Syrian. The Book of Perfection. Part 2. 4. 11.
de Halleux. vol. 2. p. 35.
- 2.20. *Blessed is that soul
whose eye has been cleansed of all the sorrows of this present age,
those dark storm clouds,
and which has been rendered simple and lucid
so that it can discern the Lord
wrapped in a cloud of light.*
Sahdona the Syrian. The Book of Perfection. Part 2. 4. 33.
de Halleux. vol. 2. p. 43.
- 2.21. *You cannot achieve pure prayer
while you are still entangled in material affairs
and agitated by incessant worries,
for prayer is the abandonment of thoughts.*
Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 71.
Philokalia. 1. p. 182.
- 2.22. *The breast of the Lord:
such is the mystical knowledge of God.
Whoever reclines there
shall be a theologian.*
Evagrius of Pontus. Address To The Monks. 120.
Driscoll. (Appendix).
- 2.23. *Abba Antony said:
I no longer fear God. I have come to love him,
for perfect love casts out fear. (1 Jn. 4.18)*
Apophthegmata Patrum. Abba Antony.
PG. 65. 85.

- 2.24. *The Kingdom of heaven means dispassion of the soul along with true spiritual insight into existent reality.*
Evagrius of Pontus. Praktikos. 2.
PG. 40. 1221.
- 2.25. *The Kingdom of God is knowledge of the Holy Trinity filling the whole capacity of the spiritual intellect, and carrying it into incorruptibility.*
Evagrius of Pontus. Praktikos. 3.
PG. 40. 1221.
- 2.26. *If you attain mystical knowledge and experience the delight that rises from it no longer will the dark spirit of arrogance be a seduction for you, not even if it should offer you all the kingdoms of the world; for what is there, may I ask, that could possibly surpass the delight of spiritual contemplation ?*
Evagrius of Pontus. Praktikos. 21. (= SC. vols 170-171. Praktikos. 32).
PG. 40. 1228.
- 2.27. *You can tell the state of dispassion has been reached when the spiritual intellect starts to catch glimpses of its own inner radiance, when it can remain in a state of tranquillity even when troubled by dream images, and when it can look on all of life's affairs with equanimity.*
Evagrius of Pontus. Praktikos. 36. (= SC. vols. 170-171. Praktikos. 64).
PG. 40. 1232.
- 2.28. *When the spiritual intellect practises the ascetic life, with God's help, and draws near to mystical knowledge, it ceases to have much, if any, awareness of the sub-rational affairs of the soul; for contemplative knowledge carries it on high and detaches it from the senses.*
Evagrius of Pontus. Praktikos. 38. (= SC vols. 170-171. Praktikos. 66).
PG. 40. 1232.
- 2.29. *Keeping the commandments is not necessarily the full healing of the soul's powers. For this, the spiritual intellect also needs contemplative vision*
Evagrius of Pontus. Praktikos. 51. (= SC vols. 170-171. Praktikos.79).

- PG. 40. 1233.**
- 2.30. *Love is the child of dispassion.
Dispassion is the very flower of ascetical practice.
Ascetical practice consists in keeping the commandments.
The guardian of the commandments is the fear of the Lord.
The fear of the Lord is the child of right faith.
Faith is so innate a good thing.
it can be found even in those who have not yet learned to believe in God.*
Evagrius of Pontus. Praktikos. 53. (= SC. vols. 170-171. Praktikos. 81).
PG. 40. 1233.
- 2.31. *Prayer is the conversation of the spiritual intellect with God.
Imagine what state of spiritual awareness is necessary,
to give us the capacity to stand without faltering
in the presence of the Master,
and to speak with him face to face.*
Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 3.
Philokalia. 1. p. 177.
- 2.32. *Prayer emanates from joy and thanksgiving.*
Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 15.
Philokalia. 1. p. 178.
- 2.33. *Prayer is the remedy for sadness and depression.*
Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 16.
Philokalia. 1. p. 178.
- 2.34. *Once you learn to be patient,
you shall always pray in great joy.*
Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 23.
Philokalia. 1. p. 178.
- 2.35. *Who else is good apart from God ?
So, entrust all your life to him
and all will be well with you.*
Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 33a.
Philokalia. 1. p. 179.
- 2.36. *Our God is good,
and most certainly the giver of good gifts.*

Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 33b.
Philokalia. 1. p. 179.

2.37. *Do not be upset if you do not immediately receive
what you asked God to give you.
The Lord wants to give you greater things
than you have even thought to pray for –
to teach you to persevere in prayer.*
Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 34a.
Philokalia. 1. p. 179.

2.38. *Can you imagine any greater thing
than to have communion with God himself,
and to be wholly absorbed by him ?*
Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 34b.
Philokalia. 1. p. 179.

2.39. *Undistracted prayer
is the highest act of the human intellect.*
Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 35.
Philokalia. 1. p. 180.

2.40. *We try to live honourably,
so that we can discern the inner meaning of existent things,
and we try to discern that in order to make our way
to the divine Logos in the ontological heart of all things;
for the Logos manifests himself to us when we are in this state of prayer.*
Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 52.
Philokalia 1. p. 181.

2.41. *The state of prayer
is a condition transcending material obsessions.
In profound love it carries up the spirit which loves wisdom
to the heights of intelligible reality.*
Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 53.
Philokalia. 1. p. 181.

2.42. *If you pray ‘in spirit and in truth’
you will no longer honour the Creator
because of his works,
but will praise him because of himself.*

Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 60.
Philokalia. 1 p. 181.

- 2.43. *When the mind has divested itself of its fallen state
and has clothed itself with the state of grace
then in the time of prayer
it can even see its own inner condition
which is something like a sapphire,
or the azure blue of the sky.*

*Scripture calls this the dwelling place of God,
which the elders saw on Mount Sinai. (Ex. 24.10).*

Evagrius of Pontus. On Discrimination.

Philokalia. 1. p. 54.

- 2.44. *When you are praying do not try to envisage
the Godhead within you in any imagined form.
Do not let your mind be cast in the mould
of any particular figure.
Instead, draw close to the Immaterial One immaterially,
and then you will understand.*

Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 67.

Philokalia. 1. p. 182.

- 2.45. *There is a text in the Apocalypse
that speaks of an angel who brought incense
and offered it with the prayers of the saints (Rev. 8.3).
In my opinion, this refers to that grace which the Angel makes alive in us,
when he brings the mystical knowledge of true prayer,
so that the spirit can henceforth stand firm,
liberated from all agitation, weariness, and carelessness.*

Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 76.

Philokalia. 1. p. 183.

- 2.46. *The bowls of incense (mentioned in the Apocalypse) (Rev.5.8).
are, we are told, the prayers of the saints,
which are offered up by the twenty four elders.
The bowl symbolizes the love of God,
or, more precisely,
that perfection of spiritual love
in which prayer comes alive 'in spirit and truth'.*

Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 77.

Philokalia. 1. p. 183.

- 2.47. *If you pray truly
you will discover great confidence,
and angels will come to you
as once they came to Daniel (Dan. 2. 19),
and they will enlighten you
about the inner meaning of created existences.*
Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 80.
Philokalia. 1. p. 183.
- 2.48. *Just as sight is the most important of all the senses,
so, is prayer the most divine of all the virtues.*
Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 150.
Philokalia. 1. p. 189.
- 2.49. *When you stand in prayer
and feel that no other joy can be compared to it,
then you have indeed discovered true prayer.*
Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 153.
Philokalia. 1. p. 189.
- 2.50. *How beautiful is a head that is adorned
with a priceless diadem,
set with clusters of Indian gemstones and pearls.
But incomparably more beautiful is a soul
that is rich in the knowledge of God,
and illuminated by the most radiant contemplation
for it has the Holy Spirit dwelling within.
Who could ever properly tell of the beauty of such a blessed soul ?*
Theodoros the Ascetic. Spiritual Chapters. 29.
Philokalia. 1. p. 309.
- 2.51. *The fragrance of an expensive perfume
even when it is kept in its jar,
will permeate every room in a house,
delighting not only the owners, but even the neighbours as well.
So it is with a saintly soul, loved by God,
for its fragrance will emanate through all the senses of its body,
making known to those who can discern
the holiness that lies hidden within.*
Theodoros the Ascetic. Spiritual Chapters. 88.

Philokalia. 1. p. 320.

- 2.52. *When you are in love
surely your constant concern is to be near the beloved
at any and every opportunity,
and you avoid anything that would hinder you
from being in the company and society of your loved one.
So it is when someone loves God.
One constantly desires
to be with him and speak with him.
This can only be achieved through pure prayer,
so let us apply ourselves to prayer with all our strength
for it makes us become like the Lord.
This is the meaning of the scripture which says:
'O God, my God, I cry to you at dawn;
my soul has thirsted after you.' (Ps. 63.1. LXX).
This person who cries to God at dawn
signifies the spiritual intellect
which has withdrawn from every evil
and which has been wounded to the heart by the love of God.
Theodoros the Ascetic. Spiritual Chapters. 94.
Philokalia. 1. p. 322.*

- 2.53. *When love carries off the intellect to ecstasy
in mystical knowledge of the divine
and it stands apart from existent realities
it then becomes aware of the infinity of God.
It is at that moment, as Isaiah tells us,
that it is utterly outside itself
and comes into a profound sense of its own smallness.
In its wonder it repeats the words of the prophet:
'Alas for me, for I am wounded in the heart.
I am a man of unclean lips,
dwelling among a people of unclean lips,
and I have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts,
with my own eyes.' (Is. 6. 5).
Maximus The Confessor. Centuries on Charity. 1.12.
Philokalia. 2. pp. 4-5.*

- 2.54. *Blessed is that spiritual intellect
that travels beyond all existent realities
and comes into the endless delight
of the divine beauty.*
Maximus The Confessor. Centuries on Charity. 1. 19.
Philokalia. 2. p. 5.
- 2.55. *Do not despise Christ's commandment of love,
for it is the means by which you can become the child of God.*
Maximus The Confessor. Centuries on Charity. 4. 20.
Philokalia. 2. p. 43.
- 2.56. *The perfect peace of the holy angels
derives from their two fixed attitudes :
their love of God and their love for each other.
The same applies to the saints of all the ages.
This is why it is most truly said:
'On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets'. (Mt. 22.40).*
Maximus The Confessor. Centuries on Charity. 4. 36.
Philokalia. 2. p. 44.
- 2.57. *A person who has attained such a state of love
that their whole existence is ordered by it,
is the one who can say: 'Jesus is Lord,' in the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor. 12. 3).*
Maximus The Confessor. Centuries on Charity. 4. 39.
Philokalia. 2. p. 45.
- 2.58. *The whole purpose of the Saviour's commandments
is to liberate the intellect from its malice and crudeness,
and to lead it into his love, and into love of one another.
Out of this love shines out the radiance of mystical knowledge
which God's holy power makes possible in us.*
Maximus The Confessor. Centuries on Charity. 4. 56.
Philokalia. 2. p. 46.

- 2.59. *If you assiduously concentrate on the interior life
you will become restrained and patient, kind, and humble.
Then you will also be able to contemplate, theologise, and pray.
This is what the apostle Paul meant when he said:
'Walk in the Spirit.' (Gal. 5.16).*
Maximus The Confessor. Centuries on Charity. 4. 64.
Philokalia. 2. p. 47.
- 2.60. *The Saviour told us: 'Blessed are the pure of heart,
for they shall see God' (Mt. 5.8),
And they shall see him,
and all the treasures he keeps hidden within,
when they have purified themselves by love and self-control.
The greater their purification, the clearer their vision.*
Maximus The Confessor. Centuries on Charity. 4. 72.
Philokalia. 2. 48.
- 2.61. *When you have been found worthy
of the contemplation of divine and transcendent realities
then give your full attention to the refinement of
love and self-control,
for in this way you can guard your unstable
and disturbed soul in all tranquillity
and allow its light to shine out radiantly.*
Maximus The Confessor. Centuries on Charity. 4. 79.
Philokalia. 2. p. 49.
2. 62. *Control the soul's restless fluctuations by love.
Calm its desires by self-control.
Give wings to its powers of understanding by prayer.
Then the light of your spiritual intellect shall never be dimmed.*
Maximus The Confessor. Centuries on Charity. 4. 80.
Philokalia. 2. p. 49.
- 2.63. *Love and self control
liberate the soul from its obsessions.
Reading and reflection deliver the intellect from ignorance.
Regular prayer brings the soul into the very presence of God.*
Maximus The Confessor. Centuries on Charity. 4. 86.
Philokalia. 2. p. 50.

- 2.64. *God alone is good by nature
and only the person who imitates God
can be good in moral terms.
Such a person has only one aim in life ...
never to fall away from that single goal that matters,
which is our God himself.*
Maximus The Confessor. Centuries on Charity. 4. 90.
Philokalia. 2. p. 50.
- 2.65. *The soul is like hardening clay if it clings to materiality.
It is like wax when it clings to God.
It can become like either nature according to its purpose and intent....
Any soul that clings to God is softened like wax
and receives the impression and seal of divine realities within it.
In the Spirit it becomes the very dwelling place of God. (Ephes. 2.22).*
Maximus The Confessor. Centuries on Theology. 1.12.
Philokalia. 2. p. 53.
- 2.66. *Whoever believes, fears.
Whoever fears, is humble.
Whoever is humble becomes gentle.
Whoever is gentle pacifies the unruly forces of desire and aggression
and begins to keep the commandments.
Whoever keeps the commandments is purified.
Whoever is purified is illuminated.
Whoever is illuminated is made a spouse of the divine Logos-Bridegroom
and shares with him the bridal chamber of the mysteries.*
Maximus The Confessor. Centuries on Theology. 1. 16.
Philokalia. 2. p. 54.
- 2.67. *The disciple who seeks after mystical knowledge
should call out ceaselessly to God,
for their deliverance from evil
and in thanksgiving for their communion in his blessings.*
Maximus The Confessor. Centuries on Theology. 1. 30.
Philokalia. 2. p. 56.
- 2.68. *A soul can never attain to the mystical knowledge of God
unless and until God himself stoops down in mercy*

*to grasp it and then lift it up to himself.
The spiritual intellect of a human being
lacks this power of itself
to ascend and participate in divine illumination.
God must first draw the intellect on high
(in so far as this is possible for the humanity)
and then illuminate it with the rays of divine light.*
Maximus The Confessor. Centuries on Theology. 1. 31.
Philokalia. 2. p. 56.

2.69. *As the Gospel tells us
by simple faith a disciple can move
the mountain of their sinfulness
by the practice of virtue. (Mt. 17. 20).
This is how we free ourselves
from the restless whirl of existential sensation.*
Maximus The Confessor. Centuries on Theology. 1. 33.
Philokalia. 2. p. 56.

2.70 *If you are able to be a true disciple,
you shall receive the fragments of mystical loaves
from the hands of the Logos himself
and shall feed thousands of people. (Mt. 14. 19-20).*
Maximus The Confessor. Centuries on Theology. 1. 33.
Philokalia. 2. pp. 56-57.

2.71. *The 'Sabbath of Sabbaths' (Lev. 16.31)
signifies the spiritual calm of the Logos-formed soul,
which has abstracted its intellect even from the contemplation
of all the godlike principles within existent things,
Such a soul is clothed altogether in God
through an ecstasy of love,
for mystical theology has brought it
to perfect stasis in God himself.*
Maximus The Confessor. Centuries on Theology. 1. 39.
Philokalia. 2. p. 58.

2.72. *The Kingdom is the inheritance of those who are saved,
their dwelling place and their home
for such is the tradition the true Logos gave us.
It is the final fulfilment of those who turn towards*

*the ultimate goal of desire.
Once they have reached this state
they will be given rest from all motion
since there shall no longer be any time or age
through which they have to pass.
After passing through all things
they will have come to rest in God
who is before all ages
and whom the nature of ages cannot contain.*
Maximus The Confessor. Centuries on Theology. 2.86.
Philokalia. 2. p. 86.

2. 73. *You may attain to the highest level of interior life
in your asceticism and your contemplation
but as long as you still live this present life
your spiritual knowledge, and prophecy,
and the pledge of the Holy Spirit,
shall all be yours 'only in part'
never completely.
But when you come,
beyond the constricting limit of the ages,
to that perfect condition in which those who are worthy
see the truth face to face, as it truly is (1 Cor. 13. 12),
then you will no longer have only a part of the fullness
but will share in the entire pleroma of grace,
as St. Paul says:
'according to the measure of the stature
of the pleroma of Christ.' (Eph. 4.13)
For in him all the treasures of wisdom
and mystical knowledge lie hidden. (Col. 2.3)
Maximus The Confessor. Centuries on Theology. 2. 87.
Philokalia. 2. pp. 86-87.*

- 2.74. *The body shall be divinised along with the soul
through its own special communion
in the process of deification.
So, the One God will be made manifest
in the soul and in the body too
since he moves them both
beyond their own natural limitations,
through the superabundance of his glory.
Maximus The Confessor. Centuries on Theology. 2. 88.
Philokalia. 2. p. 87.*

- 2.75. *True love of God, and divine knowledge,
when it is joined with the soul's renunciation
of its love affair with material embodiment
is our deliverance from all evil,
and the short road to our salvation.*
Maximus The Confessor. Centuries of Various Texts. 1. 50.
Philokalia. 2. p. 99.
- 2.76. *The spiritual intellect
becomes freed from attachment to bodily forms
and transcends the sensation of delight or sorrow
when it is bonded and made one with God,
who is truly all that we long for, desire, and love.*
Maximus The Confessor. Centuries of Various Texts. 1. 54.
Philokalia. 2. p. 100.
- 2.77. *The fact that God became a human being
is a firm confirmation of our hope
for the divine transformation of human nature.
Humanity shall be made divine
just as God himself became a man.
He who became man without any sin (Heb. 4.15)
will deify human nature,
yet without changing it into divine nature,
and he will personally exalt it as high
as he was once brought low for humanity's sake.
This is the mystical teaching of the great apostle Paul who said:
'In the age to come he shall make manifest
the overflowing riches of his grace.' (Eph. 2. 7).*
Maximus The Confessor. Centuries of Various Texts. 1. 62.
Philokalia. 2. pp. 101- 102.
- 2.78 *Not every person is able to achieve
the highest state of transcendent soul;
but it certainly is possible
for everyone to find reconciliation with God,
and it is this which will save them.*
John Klimakos. The Ladder. 26. 82.
PG. 88. 1029.

- 2.79. *The different forms of virtues
and the inner systems of existent things
are all patterns of divine blessings;
and by means of them God is continually incarnated.
He is embodied in the form of virtues,
and ensouled in the inner systems of mystical knowledge.
By these means he deifies those who are found worthy,
stamping in them the seal of true virtue
and giving them the infallible essence
of the mystic knowledge of the truth.*
Maximus The Confessor. Centuries of Various Texts. 1. 78.
Philokalia. 2. p. 105.
2. 80 *God is revealed to each person
in the way they conceptualise the divine glory.
For those who aspire to transcend
the complex structure of matter,
and whose psychic powers are wholly integrated
so as to dance closely around the deity,
he reveals himself as unity and trinity...
For those whose capacities are limited
to the complex structure of materiality,
and whose psychic powers are not integrated,
he reveals himself as they are, not as he is,
for they are still caught up in physical conceptions
of the duality of matter and form.*
Maximus The Confessor. Centuries of Various Texts. 1. 95.
Philokalia. 2. p. 108.
- 2.81. *The godly apostle Paul describes the various energies
of the Holy Spirit as varied gifts of grace,
telling us that they all come from the single power of the Spirit. (1 Cor. 12. 11).
The revelation of the Spirit, however, is given
in the measure of each disciple's faith,
and in the form of communion in a special gift of grace.
This power of the Spirit is available for each believer
in a way that corresponds to the quality of their psychic state,
and of their faith and receptivity;
and it is this grace of the Spirit's power
which allows them the capacity to fulfil the various commandments.*
Maximus The Confessor. Centuries of Various Texts. 1. 96.

Philokalia. 2. p. 108.

- 2.82. *You need to gain three things before all others:
The first is freedom from the anxieties of life;
the second is a clear conscience;
the third is complete detachment,
such that your thoughts no longer buzz around materialities.
When you have acquired these things,
Then sit down by yourself in a quiet place, out of the way of everyone,
and close the door and withdraw your intellect
from all worthless and transient things.
And pray in this way:
Rest your head down upon your chest
and focus your physical sight
along with the eye of your intellect
upon the centre of your stomach, at your navel.
Restrain a little the rhythm of drawing in breath through your nostrils
so as to allow your intellect to search inside your inner self
for the place where the heart is,
where all the powers of the spiritual intellect have their dwelling.
In the beginning you will find only darkness, dryness and obscurity.
But if you still persist, practising this task attentively night and day,
you will find, and how marvellous it is, the dawning of unceasing joy.*
Symeon the New Theologian. On the Three Methods of Prayer.
Philokalia. 5. pp. 86-87.

- 2.83. *Once the intellect has accomplished its task
of discovering the place where the heart resides
it shall immediately see things of which it was previously ignorant,
and could never have hoped to find.
It will see the open spaces within the heart
and will see itself as entirely radiant with light
and full of discernment and perception.
When this happens, from whatever source thoughts might try to stir up again,
allow none of them to assume imaginative or syllogistic form within the intellect.
Drive every thought away with the invocation of the name of Jesus;
Saying : 'Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me.'
The rest you will learn for yourself, with God's help,
But always be sure to keep strict guard over your intellect
and retain Jesus in your heart by praying those words:
'Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me.'*
Symeon the New Theologian. On the Three Methods of Prayer.
Philokalia. 5. p. 87.

2. 84. *When the love of God is completely overwhelming
it binds the lover not just to God but to everyone else too .*
Thalassios the Libyan. Centuries on Love. 1. 1.
Philokalia. 2. p. 205.
- 2.85. *Love is the only thing that can bind together God and his creation
and bring about societal harmony.*
Thalassios the Libyan. Centuries on Love. 1. 5.
Philokalia. 2. p. 205 .
- 2.86. *How precious in the sight of God, and all people,
is a person who tries to live always from love.*
Thalassios the Libyan. Centuries on Love. 1. 7.
Philokalia. 2. p. 205.
- 2.87. *Love and self-control purify the soul.
Pure prayer makes the spiritual intellect radiant.*
Thalassios the Libyan. Centuries on Love. 1. 11.
Philokalia. 2. p. 206.
- 2.88. *Put a seal on your senses by stillness,
then sit in judgement over the thoughts
making a noisy clamour in your heart.*
Thalassios the Libyan. Centuries on Love. 1. 22.
Philokalia. 2. p. 206.
- 2.89. *Our Lord and God is Jesus the Christ,
The psychic intelligence of anyone who follows him,
will not remain in darkness. (Jn. 12. 46).*
Thalassios the Libyan. Centuries on Love. 1. 44.
Philokalia. 2. p. 207.
- 2.90. *Do not neglect the discipline of Praktikos
and then your spiritual intellect will become luminous.
So it is written:
'I will reveal to you unseen and hidden treasures.' (Is. 45.3).*
Thalassios the Libyan. Centuries on Love. 1. 48.
Philokalia. 2. p. 207.

- 2.91. *The spiritual intellect that has been liberated from its obsessions becomes filled with light, and ever more illuminated by the mystical intuition of existent realities.*
Thalassios the Libyan. Centuries on Love. 1. 50.
Philokalia. 2. p. 208.
- 2.92. *Spiritual knowledge is the radiant light of the soul. Whoever lacks it is the one scripture speaks of : 'the fool that walks in darkness.' (Eccles.2. 14).*
Thalassios the Libyan. Centuries on Love. 1. 51.
Philokalia. 2. p. 208.
- 2.93. *As soon as the spiritual intellect has reached full purification it will start to feel cramped by its existential limits and will long to transcend all transient realities.*
Thalassios the Libyan. Centuries on Love. 1. 55.
Philokalia. 2. p. 208.
- 2.94. *Blessed are they who have attained to infinite infinity, for they have transcended all the limits of limitations.*
Thalassios the Libyan. Centuries on Love. 1. 56.
Philokalia. 2. p. 208.
- 2.95. *To reach the heights of dispassion makes even our spiritual reflections dispassionate. And the heights of mystical knowledge bring us into the presence of the One who is beyond all possibility of knowing.*
Thalassios the Libyan. Centuries on Love. 1. 73.
Philokalia. 2. p. 209.
- 2.96. *The mystical knowledge of the holy and consubstantial trinity is sanctification and deification both for humans and angels.*
Thalassios the Libyan. Centuries on Love. 1. 100.
Philokalia. 2. p. 210.

- 2.97. *Those who are still making progress on the spiritual path
will not yet have achieved stability of attitude.
But those who have reached a perfect stage
can hardly ever be deflected from their path.*
Thalassios the Libyan. Centuries on Love. 3. 84.
Philokalia. 2. p. 221.
- 2.98. *Abstract your soul from the material sensation of sensory things
and your spiritual intellect will find itself in God,
and in the world of intellective things.*
Thalassios the Libyan. Centuries on Love. 4. 4.
Philokalia. 2. p. 223.
- 2.99. *God is Light,
the Most High, the Unapproachable;
God cannot be conceived in the mind
or spoken by the lips.
God is the Life-Giver for every rational creature.
God is to the world of spiritual intellect
what the Sun is to the sensory world,
and will manifest divinity in our minds
to the degree that we are purified.*
Gregory of Nazianzus. Oration 40.
PG. 36. 363.
- 2.100. *Master, as you looked down upon us once before,
look down upon us again.
As you intended your incarnation for our salvation,
for you came to save us who were lost,
so now do not close us out of the company of the saved.
Raise up our souls, and save our bodies.
Cleanse us all from every wickedness.
Liberate us from our obsessive desires Lord,
and let us worship you alone in the eternal light.
Let us rise up from the dead,
and dance in that blessed, eternal,
and unbreakable ring –
our dancing with the angels.*
Thalassios the Libyan. Centuries on Love. 3. 99 -100.



Book Three.

Gnostikos - The Century of Gnostic Chapters.

- 3.1. *We ascend through three stages of development to perfection; the purgative, the illuminative, and finally the mystical, which is perfection itself. The first is for beginners. The second is for the more advanced and the third is for the perfect. If we are serious about it, then we shall progress through these three stages growing in maturity in Christ, and finally attaining the stature of perfect maturity 'which is the measure of the stature of the pleroma of Christ' (Eph. 4.13). Niketas Stethatos. Gnostic Chapters. 41. Philokalia. 3. pp. 335-336.*
- 3.2. *Just as thoughts only enter the heart through the mental images of sensory experiences, so the blessed light of the Godhead will illumine the heart only when it has been completely emptied of all things and stripped of all sensory forms. Indeed, that brightness is manifested to the pure intellect to the same degree it has become void of all ideational forms. Hesychios. On Watchfulness. 89. Philokalia. 1. p. 154.*
- 3.3. *Carbon can engender a burning flame. So it is with God who dwells within our hearts since we have undergone the mystery of holy baptism; for when he sees our minds freed from the winds of evil, and brought to state of calmness, sheltered by the guardianship of the intellect, he is more than ready to kindle our minds to contemplation; like a flame lighting a candle. Hesychios. On Watchfulness. 104.*

Philokalia. 1. p. 157.

- 3.4. *When the heart has acquired stillness,
it will look upon the heights and depths of knowledge;
and the intellect, once quietened,
will be given to hear wonderful things from God.*
Hesychios. On Watchfulness. 132.
Philokalia. 1. p. 161.
- 3.5. *God hides the mysteries he offers us
so that he might teach us to search for them in love.*
Narsai of Edessa. The Parable of Dives and Lazarus. 241.
Siman. p. 58.
- 3.6. *There is no radiance greater than the light
of the Spirit's initiation;
no wisdom on earth possesses comparable power.
It cannot be measured on the scales against pearls or precious gems;
no priceless thing can be compared to it;
nothing approaches its inner beauty;
all other beautiful things fail in comparison.
It is more desirable than anything on earth,
and its beauty can even lead the world captive in desire;
seducing angels and humans alike.*
Narsai of Edessa. The Parable of the Vineyard. 59-63.
Siman. p. 65.
- 3.7. *Cleanse the mirror of your soul
and the single light will merge with you,
manifesting itself to you as trinity.
Then take the light down into your heart,
and there you will see the Living God.*
John of Dalyutha. Letter 28.2.
PO. 39. 3. pp. 388-389.
- 3.8. *The love of God is fiery by nature
and when it descends in an extraordinary degree on to a person
it throws that soul into ecstasy.*
Mar Isaac of Nineveh. The Ascetical Homilies. 35.
Miller p. 158. (adapted)

- 3.9. *A human being cannot possibly see God,
but 'things impossible for humans are possible for God' (Lk. 18.27).
And so, God can be seen by humans when he so allows it;
by those he has chosen to see,
and when and how he wills to be seen,
for God is powerful in all things.
In times past he was seen prophetically, through the Spirit,
and he has also been seen in the manner of 'adoption',
through the Son's revelation..
In time to come he shall be seen as Father in the Kingdom of Heaven.
The Spirit shall prepare human beings in the Son of God,
and the Son shall lead them to the Father,
and the Father shall bestow on them
the gift of incorruption for eternal life,
which comes upon all those who look upon the face of God.
Those who see light are within light
and share the brilliance of the light.
Just so, those who see God are within God
and receive of his splendour,
a radiance of the vision of God which gives us life.
Irenaeus of Lyons. Against the Heresies. 4. 20. 5-6.
PG 7. 1035.*
- 3.10. *The expectation of future blessings
links the spiritual intellect with what it hopes for.
When it dwells continually on these blessings
it becomes forgetful of present realities.
Thalassios the Libyan. Centuries on Love. 4. 66.
Philokalia. 2. p. 226.*
- 3.11. *Jesus is the Christ.
one of the Holy Trinity;
and you will become no less than his heir.
Thalassios the Libyan. Centuries on Love. 4. 73.
Philokalia. 2. p. 227.*
- 3.12. *When the spiritual intellect is stripped of its obsessions,
it discovers the Holy Spirit
and, in the same way, the Spirit initiates it
into the fullness of its hopes.
Thalassios the Libyan. Centuries on Love. 4. 75.
Philokalia. 2. p. 227.*

- 3.13. *When the spiritual intellect begins to practice divine wisdom
it makes its start with faith.
Then it passes through the intermediate stages
until it arrives at faith once again,
though this time it is of the most exalted kind.*
Thalassios the Libyan. Centuries on Love. 4. 78.
Philokalia. 2. p. 227.
- 3.14. *The ways of God which the saints can see in contemplation
reveal not the divine self, but the divine character.*
Thalassios the Libyan. Centuries on Love. 4. 81.
Philokalia. 2. p. 227.
- 3.15. *Why did Christ lead his disciples onto a high mountain
when he was transfigured in light before them ?
It was to show that when disciples arrive at the summit of love
they stand out of themselves and perceive the Invisible One.
Such a person flies over the obscuring clouds
and comes out into the clear sky of the soul,
and so is able to look more acutely into the Sun of righteousness,
although the perfect vision of the Godhead
always transcends our capacities.
On that day pray in solitude.
For stillness is the mother of prayer,
and prayer is the revelation of the glory of God.*
John of Damascus. Discourse on the Transfiguration. 10.
PG 96. 561.
- 3.16. *If you really long for mystical knowledge,
the certain assurance of salvation,
then first make a concentrated effort
to break the soul's obsessive bondage to its body;
strip the soul of the garments of attachment to materiality
and then let it dive down naked into the depths of humility,
for it is there you will find the precious pearl of your salvation,
hidden in the shell of divine knowledge.*
Theognostos the Priest. On the Practice of the Virtues. 10.
Philokalia. 2. p. 257.

3.17. *When you are no longer at the mercy of your obsessions;
and you feel the love of God burning ever more deeply in your heart;
when you come to the stage when the thought of death
no longer fills you with dread,
for you look on it merely as a dream of the night
or, more to the point, as a welcome liberation,
then you have indeed found the pledge of your salvation.
On that day you will be filled with ineffable joy,
for you carry the Kingdom of God within you.*
Theognostos the Priest. On the Practice of the Virtues. 12.
Philokalia. 2. p. 257.

3.18. *I will tell you something strange,
and you must not be alarmed by it.
There is a certain mystery which takes place
between the soul and God
when the soul has reached the highest stages of purity, faith, and love.
When the disciple reaches final reconciliation
a unification with God takes place,
for he inhabits the soul through unceasing prayer and contemplation.
Elijah was in such a union
when he shut the heavens and made the drought (1 Kings 17.1);
and so was Moses who divided the sea (Exod. 14. 21),
or conquered Amalek by simply stretching out his hands (Exod. 17. 1-13);
and so was Jonah when he came out safe
from the depths of the sea and the whale. (Jonah. 2. 1-10).*
Theognostos the Priest. On the Practice of the Virtues (On Priesthood). 69.
Philokalia. 2. p. 269.

3.19. *Our God loves humanity most profoundly,
and the disciple who reaches such a state of union
finds that God will refuse him nothing at all.*
Theognostos the Priest. On the Practice of the Virtues (On Priesthood). 69.
Philokalia. 2. p. 269.

3.20. *Always wait patiently, with your faith made active by love,
until God has given you the illumination to allow you to teach.
There is nothing so sad as an intellect engaged in theology
when it is devoid of God.*
Diadochos of Photike. On Spiritual Knowledge. 7.
Philokalia. 1. p. 237.

- 3.21. *Those who meditate unceasingly
upon the holy and glorious name (of Jesus)
in the depths of their heart,
can sometimes see the radiance of their own spirit-intelligence.
For when the mind is profoundly concentrated on this invocation,
we feel experientially how it starts burning off
all the layer of dirt that normally suffocates the soul.*
Diadochos of Photike. On Spiritual Knowledge. 59.
Philokalia. 1. p. 251.
- 3.22. *If you can feel the love of God in your heart
know that you are indeed known by God.
In as much as we experience the sensation
of the love of God in our hearts
we have truly entered into the love of God.
From that point onwards
we cannot stop longing with all our hearts
for the enlightenment of mystical knowledge,
until such time as we can feel it entering our very bones
to transform us utterly.*
Diadochos of Photike. On Spiritual Knowledge. 14.
Philokalia. 1. 238-239.
- 3.23. *Sometimes the soul is set on fire with the love of God,
with a force that moves unerringly, but invisibly,
so that even the body is, as it were,
swept along into the abyss of that unspeakable love.
We can experience the force of that holy grace
when we are most vigilant,
or even (as I have spoken of on other occasions)
in the way that sleep starts to affect us.
But when you feel this movement,
know for certain, and it is a point of utmost importance,
that it is the motion of the Holy Spirit of God within us.*
Diadochos of Photike. On Spiritual Knowledge. 33.
Philokalia. 1. 243-244.
- 3.24. *In the early stages grace normally enlightens the soul
in such a way that it has a deep sense of its own inner radiance,
but as the soul is advanced along the difficult path of enlightenment*

*it normally communicates its many intimate mysteries
in a manner transcending sensation.*
Diadochos of Photike. On Spiritual Knowledge. 69.
Philokalia. 1. p. 255.

- 3.25. *The king's treasure chamber is full of gold.
The mind of the true disciple is full of spiritual knowledge.*
John of Karpathos. To the Monks of India. 34.
Philokalia. 1. p. 283.
- 3.26. *The fire of your prayer ascends to even greater heights
while you meditate on the holy oracles of the Spirit.
Let that fire burn as an eternal flame on the altar of your soul.*
John of Karpathos. To the Monks of India. 98.
Philokalia. 1. p. 296.
- 3.27. *Sit still in prayer
and keep your attention fixed within,
so that you may make good progress in holiness,
and close yourself off to wickedness.
Because when you are alive to mystical knowledge in this way
you will receive a great abundance of contemplative insights
into so many things.
If you ascend even higher,
the light of Our Saviour will shine on you with even greater radiance.*
Evagrius of Pontus. On Discrimination. 14.
Philokalia. 1. p. 52.
- 3.28. *Our rational nature had become dead through wickedness
but Christ raised it to life again
by means of the contemplation of all the Aeons.
And Christ's Father raises up
the soul that has died in Christ
by means of the spiritual knowledge that he gives of himself.
This is the meaning of that text in Paul :
'It is our belief that if we have died with Christ,
we shall also live with him.' (2 Tim. 2. 11).*
Evagrius of Pontus. On Discrimination. 17.

Philokalia. 1. p. 54.

3.29. *By prayer the disciple can become the equal of angels,
who long to 'see the face of the Father who is in heaven' (Mt. 18. 10).*
Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 113.
Philokalia. 1. p. 187.

3.30. *Do you really long to pray ?
Then leave behind present transitory things
and live your life as if you were in heaven;
not just theoretically,
but truly, by angelic actions
and mystical knowledge even more divine.*
Evagrius of Pontus. Chapters on Prayer. 142.
Philokalia. 1. p. 188.

3.31. *Faith is the beginning of Love.
Mystical knowledge of God
is the perfection of love.*
Evagrius of Pontus. Address To The Monks. 3.
Driscoll. 1991. (Appendix).

3.32. *As it is written: 'God's glory rests on Israel.' (Ps. 68. 34).
This means, rests upon an intellect that
(so far as this is possible)
contemplates the beauty of the glory of God himself.
And the text goes on: ' And his power is in the clouds.'
which refers to how the Father manifests the Beloved,
who sits at his right hand,
to luminous souls who have fixed their eyes on the dawning light,
and how he floods them with light
just as the sunlight suffuses the pure white clouds.*
Hesychios. On Watchfulness. 35.
Philokalia. 1. p. 147.

3.33. *Once the heart has been perfectly emptied of mental images*

*it gives birth to divine and mystical concepts
that play within it just as fish and dolphins play in a calm sea.
As the sea is rippled when a soft breeze moves over it,
so is the heart's abyss moved by the Holy Spirit.*

As it is written:

*'Because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son
into your hearts, crying out: Abba, Father.'* (Gal. 4. 6).

Hesychios. On Watchfulness. 156.

Philokalia. 1. p. 165.

- 3.34. *If the prayer: 'Lord Jesus have mercy on me'
is constantly on your mind and on your lips,
and the name is always in your heart,
in the way that air circulates in our bodies
or wax feeds the candle flame,
how happy it will make you.*

*The sun, as it rises over the earth, brings day,
and the holy and venerable name of the Lord Jesus
when it begins to shine continually in our minds
produces countless mystical understandings
all as bright as sunlight.*

Hesychios. On Watchfulness. 196.

Philokalia. 1. p. 172.

- 3.35. *When the clouds are dispersed, how clear the air becomes;
and when our illusory obsessions are dispersed
by that Sun of righteousness, Jesus the Christ,
then radiant and starbright perceptions
come to birth within our hearts,
for Jesus illuminates our atmosphere.
It is what the Wisdom of Solomon speaks of:
'Those who trust in the Lord shall comprehend the truth.
Those who are faithful in love, shall dwell with him.'* (Wis. 3. 9).
- Hesychios. On Watchfulness. 197.
- Philokalia. 1. p. 172. .**

- 3.36. *The mystical vision (of the Cherubim and Living Beings)
which Ezekiel saw (Ezek. 1.4 – 2.1)
was true, and accurate, and fundamental.
It was the symbolic foretelling of a divine and mystical reality,
that very 'mystery hidden from generations and from aeons' (Col. 1.26)
which 'has been revealed in these last times', (1 Pet. 1.20),
in the appearing of Christ;*

for the prophet was psychically witnessing the mystery of the human soul that receives its Lord within, and becomes his throne of glory.

Makarios the Great. Homily. 1.2.

Dorries. pp. 1-2.

- 3.37. *The soul that is found worthy to participate in the Holy Spirit and be illuminated by his radiance, and the ineffable glory of his beauty becomes his throne, and his dwelling place. Such a soul becomes all light, all face, all eye, (as in Ezekiel's vision). (Ezek. 1.4 – 2.1.) The soul becomes entirely covered with the spiritual eyes of light, nothing in it is left in shadow.*
Makarios the Great. Homily. 1. 2.
Dorries. p. 2.

- 3.38. *When the soul becomes totally radiant, and covered with the ineffable beauty of the glory of the light of Christ, it comes to share in the very life of the divine Spirit to such perfection that it is changed into the very chamber and throne of God.*
Makarios the Great. Homily. 1. 2.
Dorries. p. 2.

- 3.39. *The souls of the righteous become heavenly lights, as the Lord himself told his apostles: 'You are the light of the world.' (Mt. 5. 14) And it was he who first transformed them in light, that through them he might enlighten the cosmos.*
Makarios the Great. Homily. 1. 4.
Dorries. p. 5.

- 3.40. *If you have become the throne of God, if the heavenly charioteer has ascended within you, and your soul has become as a single spiritual eye*

*and has become completely luminous;
and if you have been clothed in light ineffable,
and fed from spiritual delights, and drunk from living water,
and all your inner life has been tested and proven in hope;
then in all truth you have started to live the eternal life,
even in this present age,
and your soul has found its rest in God.*

Makarios the Great. Homily. 1.12.

Dorries. p. 12.

- 3.41. *The Lord clothes his chosen souls in
the garments of the ineffable light of his kingdom;
the garments of faith, hope, love, joy, and peace;
the garments of goodness and kindness and all comparable things.
They are divine garments pulsating with light and life,
and they bring us peace that passes all description;
for God is himself, Love and Joy, and Peace,
and Kindness, and Goodness,
and this is exactly how he renews our very being in his grace.*
Makarios the Great. Homily. 2.5.
Dorries. pp. 18-19.

- 3.42. *When a soul is full of expectant longing ,
and full of faith and love
God considers it worthy to receive
'the power from on high' (Acts. 1.8; 2. 1-3)
which is the heavenly love of the Spirit of God
and the heavenly fire of immortal life;
and when this happens the soul truly enters
into the beauty of all love,
and is liberated from its last bonds of evil.*
Makarios the Great. Homily. 4. 13.
Dorries. p. 37.

- 3.43. *Let us strive to seek after that supreme good
which the Lord spoke to us about,
and let us desire this with great longing
so that we may enter into the ineffable love of the Spirit
which St. Paul advised us to strive after
when he told us to: 'Seek after love.' (1 Cor. 14. 1).*

*In this way we shall be turned from our hardness of heart
by the right hand of the Most High
and be made worthy to come into the day;
our spirits finding their rest, and their deepest delight,
when they are wounded by the love of God.
For the Lord greatly loves humankind,
and is deeply moved whenever a human being
turns in their whole self, wholly to him.*
Makarios the Great. Homily. 4. 16.
Dorries. p. 39.

3.44. *Even worldly persons desire to be associated
with the glory of an earthly king.
How much more true is this of those
whom the finger of the divine Spirit of Life has touched.
Divine Love has wounded their hearts
with the longing for Christ, the true and heavenly king.
His beauty, and ineffable glory,
his unfailing graciousness and his incomprehensible majesty,
have conspired to hold them captive with desire and longing.
Their whole being is fixed upon him.*
Makarios the Great. Homily. 5. 6.
Dorries. p. 50.

3.45. *How should we believe ?
In what way should we struggle and give all our energy to living a good life ?
We should do it with great hope and perseverance
so that we can be found worthy to receive the power given from heaven,
and so receive the glory of the Holy Spirit
in the innermost depths of the soul.*
Makarios the Great. Homily. 5.10.
Dorries. pp. 61-62.

3.46. *When God created Adam
he did not give him physical wings such as the birds had;
for he preferred to give him the wings of the Holy Spirit.
These he will return to him at the Resurrection,
to raise him up and bear him wherever the Spirit desires.
It is these wings which even now the saints possess
so that they can fly up intellectually
to the kingdom of heavenly comprehensions.*
Makarios the Great. Homily. 5. 11
Dorries. p. 62.

- 3.47. *Some times the flame (of a lamp) can leap up and burn furiously.
At other times it burns gently and quietly.
Some times its light leaps up and emits a great radiance.
At other times its small flame gives out only a dim light.
This is how it is with the lamp (of grace in the soul).
It is always lit and giving off illumination,
but when it burns with special radiance
it is as if the soul were drunk with love for God.
At other times, as God himself decides,
the light is still there, but is only a dim glow.*
Makarios the Great. Homily. 8. 2.
Dorries. p. 78.
- 3.48. *The beloved of God
seeks to be consecrated entirely to the Lord,
and to cling to him alone,
so as to walk the way of his commandments,
and reverence the overshadowing presence of the Spirit of Christ,
until he becomes one spirit with the Lord, as the apostle says. (1 Cor. 6. 17).*
Makarios the Great. Homily. 9. 12.
Dorries. p. 90.
- 3.49. *When the face of the soul has been unveiled
it shall gaze upon the Heavenly Bridegroom,
face to face, illuminated by the unspeakable light of the Spirit ...
On that day the soul is worthy of the heavenly life
and becomes the bright dwelling-place of the Spirit of God.*
Makarios the Great. Homily. 10. 4.
Dorries. pp. 95-96.
- 3.50. *When we start off learning to write,
we first master the written signs and soon excel in them.
Then we go to a higher school,
and find ourselves at the bottom of the class again,
but soon we make progress until once more we excel,
and then go on to a higher school,
and find ourselves at the bottom again,
until once more we learn to excel ...
This issue of making progress is just the same, even more so,*

*in the case of the heavenly mysteries:
they allow for great degrees of progress
and many stages of advancement.
Through much application and much practice
the learner can arrive at perfection.
This is the condition of those Christians who have truly tasted of God's grace
and bear the sign of the cross within their minds and hearts
so that they understand the illusion of material reality.*
Makarios the Great. Homily. 15. 42.
Dorries. p. 152.

3.51. *The Lord is the master silversmith
who fashions our hearts like embossed silver,
making them new in secret
and lifting them out in relief from the body.
Then the true beauty of the soul is made manifest*
Makarios the Great. Homily. 16. 7.
Dorries. p. 162.

3.52. *Christians who have come to this perfection,
who have been found worthy to come into full perfection
so as to become the companions of the King,
are those who are unfailingly dedicated to the Cross of Christ.
Just as in time of the prophets,
sacred chrism was regarded as the most precious of things,
since both kings and prophets were anointed with it;
so it is now with spiritual disciples,
for they are anointed with heavenly chrism,
and become Christs by grace;
for in this way they are kings and prophets of heavenly mysteries.
They are the children of God,
and as such they are princes, and gods.*
Makarios the Great. Homily. 17. 1.
Dorries. p. 166.

3.53. *One who has found and taken possession of
the heavenly treasure of the Spirit inside the heart,
is enabled by it to fulfil all the righteousness of the commandments
and to practise all the virtues faultlessly and blamelessly.
After that gift, everything becomes straightforward and easy.*
Makarios the Great. Homily. 18.2.
Dorries. pp. 177-178.

- 3.54. *Those who are worthy to 'become the children of God' (Jn. 1.12)
and to be 'born from on high' (Jn. 3.3)
who have Christ within their hearts, shining in them radiantly
and giving them peace ...
are like guests at a royal banquet,
so excited, and so full of rejoicing, and unspeakable happiness.
At other times they are like the bride
resting in the secret chamber of the Bridegroom,
sharing the divine repose.
At other times they are like the bodiless angels,
for even their bodies seem to be light and transcendent.
And sometimes it is as if they have been made drunk with strong wine.
They are inebriated in the Spirit,
intoxicated by divine and spiritual mysteries.
Makarios the Great. Homily. 18. 7.
Dorries. p. 180.*
- 3.55. *Some times the soul finds rest in the deepest quietness,
and joy, and perfect peace,
in perfectly focused spiritual delight and ineffably deep repose.
At other times the soul is stirred up by grace
and taught lessons in ineffable wisdom, and understanding,
and knowledge of the Spirit,
in ways that pass beyond all our ability to speak about them...
Manifold are the patterns of grace,
and most varied are the ways it leads the soul.
Sometimes, as God decides,
grace gives rest to the soul.
At other times it puts it to work.
Makarios the Great. Homily. 18. 9.
Dorries. p. 181.*
- 3.56. *The disciple who progresses entirely into the ambit of grace
becomes sanctified and thereby advances into complete union with the Spirit.
Then the disciple is truly rendered holy and pure
by that Spirit,
and is made fit for the Kingdom of God.
Makarios the Great. Homily. 24. 6.
Dorries. p. 199.*
- 3.57. *For some, the charisms and gifts of the Holy Spirit*

*are given as an advance.
Some disciples enter into them through faith and prayer,
apparently without any work, or grief, or toil,
and even while they are still engaged in the affairs of ordinary life.
Even so, God does not give his grace carelessly,
or inappropriately, or accidentally,
but always in his ineffable and inscrutable wisdom,
so that he can test the autonomy and free will of the disciples
who have come into such grace so unexpectedly.*
Makarios the Great. Homily. 29. 1.
Dorries. pp. 235-236.

3.58. *Let us make our body an altar of sacrifice.
Let us place all our desires on it and beseech the Lord
that he would send down from heaven that invisible and mighty fire
to consume the altar and everything that is on it.*
Makarios the Great. Homily. 31. 5.
Dorries. pp. 249-250.

3.59. *Let us be like a crafty merchant
who would never dream of investing exclusively
in only one form of enterprise,
but expends his efforts extensively
in the cause of maximising his assets.
This is exactly how we should develop our soul,
to be versatile and speculative,
so that we can gain a true and great profit,
no less than God who will teach us himself
how to pray in truth.
For the Lord finds his repose in the good intent of the soul
and will make it into the throne of the divine glory.*
Makarios the Great. Homily. 33. 2.
Dorries. p. 258.

3.60. *Scrutinise your heart to see if your soul
has taken the Lord as its guiding light, its true food and drink.
If it has not, then strive eagerly night and day in order to achieve this.
When you look to the sun,
make sure it is the true sun that you seek,
for remember you are blind.
So, when you look into your soul*

*see if you can see there a good and true light....
It was Jesus who came to give sight back to the inner self.*
Makarios the Great. Homily. 33. 4.
Dorries. pp. 259-260.

- 3.61. *The eyes of the body can see all things with perfect lucidity.
So it is with the saints,
for to them all the beauties of the godhead are clearly visible.*
Makarios the Great. Homily. 34. 1.
Dorries. p. 260.
- 3.62. *Many lamps can be lit from one fire
and each one will shine out with the same nature of light.
So it is when Christians are enkindled from that one nature
and one divine fire, which is the Son of God.
Then the lamps of their hearts are lit and burn brightly before him on the earth.
This is why it is said:
'And so God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness.' (Ps. 45.7).*
Makarios the Great. Homily. 43. 1.
Dorries. p. 283.
- 3.63. *The soul that truly believes in Christ
must be transformed and changed from this present evil condition
to another state, one that is purely good,
and from the present lowly nature to another, divinised, nature.
The disciple will be made completely new
by the power of the Holy Spirit,
and so will be made ready even here
for the heavenly Kingdom.*
Makarios the Great. Homily. 44. 5.
Dorries. p. 293.
- 3.64. *All things are possible for God.
Such was the case of the thief (on the cross).
In one moment he was converted through his faith
and was restored to Paradise.
It was for this that the Lord came,
so that he might change our souls, recreate them,
and, as scripture says, 'make us sharers in the divine nature.' (2 Pet. 1.4).
He will give to our soul, a heavenly soul,*

*that is the Holy Spirit who will lead us into the fullness of virtue,
so that we shall even start to live the eternal life,
as far as this is now possible.*

Makarios the Great. Homily. 44. 9.

Dorries. p. 295.

- 3.65. *The sun is in the heavens,
though all the power and radiance of its light shines on the earth.
So it is with the Lord, who sits at the right hand of the Father,
'above every Principality and Power,' (Eph. 1. 21)
but whose eye looks down into the hearts of his disciples on earth,
so as to raise up all those who need his help,
to where he himself is.*

This is why he says:

'For where I am, there shall my servant be also.' (Jn. 12. 20).

Makarios the Great. Homily. 45. 6.

Dorries. p. 300.

- 3.66. *The soul that has had the veil of darkness
removed from it by the power of the Holy Spirit,
and whose spiritual eyes have been illuminated
by the heavenly light,
and which has been perfectly liberated from its unworthy obsessions,
and purified by grace,
will at last be able to serve the Lord totally,
in Heaven, and in the Spirit, and even in the body.
Such a soul becomes so extensive in its consciousness
that it finds itself everywhere,
wherever it pleases to be,
and wherever it finds itself
its fundamental desire is to serve the Christ.*

Makarios the Great. Homily. 46. 4.

Dorries. p. 303.

- 3.67. *Even in this life the Lord reveals himself to the soul,
and is discovered by it,
in knowledge, and wisdom, and love and faith...
He placed within the soul understanding, and comprehension,
volition, and the overseeing guidance of the spiritual intellect,
and he established within it a great and different kind of subtlety.
For God made the soul able to move wherever it wills,
made it something that is both volatile and inexhaustible.*

*He gave the soul grace to come and go in an instant,
and to serve him in all the range of its intellectual powers,
in whatever place the Spirit wishes.
He graced the soul to be able to come and go in an instant
with great subtlety, intellect, and free will,
to serve him wherever the Spirit wishes.
In short he made the soul like this
so that it could be his own bride,
and that it might have communion with the divine,
to be merged in union with God,
and so become as one spirit with God.
It is as scripture says :
'Whoever is joined to the Lord is made one spirit with him.' (1 Cor. 6. 17).
Makarios the Great. Homily. 46. 6.
Dorries. p. 304.*

3.68. *The Spirit, taking possession of the soul,
sings a new song to the Lord,
with the timbrel of the body,
and the rational strings of the lyre which is the soul...
and so it sends up praises to the life-giving Christ.
As breath sounds when passed through a flute
so does the Holy Spirit make music
in the holy and God-bearing saints
who sing hymns and psalms to God from a pure heart.
Makarios the Great. Homily. 47. 14.
Dorries. p. 310.*

3.69. *It was God's own desire
to have communion with the human soul;
and this was why he espoused it to himself
as a royal bride,
and why he purified it from all uncleanness.
Makarios the Great. Homily. 47. 17.
Dorries. pp. 311-312.*

3.70. *What did the Lord mean when he said:
'Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God ?' (Mt.5.8).
or again when he said :
'Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect ?' (Mt. 5.48)
Did he not promise to us in these words a state of
final purification from all wickedness ?
And is this not the final setting aside of our ignoble obsessions,*

*and our ascent to the perfections of the highest plane of virtues
which is itself the ultimate purification and sanctification of our heart
by means of its communion with the divine and perfect Spirit of God ?*
Makarios The Great Letter.

Jaeger. p. 239.

- 3.71. *As the Apostle said :*
'A virgin can devote all her attentions to the things of the Lord.' (! Cor. 7.34.)
this is like the soul trying to be holy not merely in body, but even in spirit,
at every level of thinking and acting,
both openly and in secret,
so that it shall be freed of the last vestiges of sin.
For then, with great longing,
it will desire, as the bride of Christ, to be made one,
with its heavenly King;
to be so united with him in all his radiant and immaculate beauty,
that it becomes as one spirit with him.
Makarios the Great. The Great Letter.

Jaeger. p. 241.

- 3.72. *Those who truly believe in the promise of the Spirit*
can see most clearly, from many indications,
that it is absolutely necessary to come to God wholeheartedly
and fully believing in his promises,
and with all our energy trying to fulfil his commandments.
Day by day, as our inner attitudes become progressively renewed,
we shall grow ever more aware,
in our inmost self,
of the active grace of our spiritual advancement.
This is how we shall finally be able to attain
that true repose of perfect sanctification,
which is to say perfect love,
in which we venerate the Spirit as true children of God.
Makarios the Great. The Great Letter.

Jaeger. p. 300.

- 3.73. *Christ called that radiance*
in which he shone before the apostles (Mt. 17.2)
the 'Kingdom of the Father.'
As he himself said, it is that very Kingdom of God
which comes in power to those who have seen him.
On that day the saints will shine with radiance and glory,
they will be made scintillatingly bright by receiving that light
as he gives it to them.
For it is this bread, his body,

*(which in the present life we come to the altar to receive),
which one day will be revealed to the eyes of all
coming upon the clouds (Mt. 24. 30).
In one instant it will display its brilliance to the east and the west
like a lightning flash.*
Nicholas Cabasilas. *The Life in Christ.* 4. 19-20.
PG. 150. 624.

3.74. *The saints of God already live within this radiance
and at death, the light does not depart from them.
The saints possess this light constantly,
and they enter into new life radiant with it.*
Nicholas Cabasilas. *The Life in Christ.* 4. 20.
PG. 150. 624.

3.75. *Through the sacramental mysteries
as through windows,
the Sun of Righteousness enters a darkened world...
He introduces the eternal and immortal life
into this failing and dying cosmos
and he lifts it up to transcendence,
for the Life of the World
has overcome the world.(Jn. 16.33)...
When the rays of the sun stream into a house
one hardly notices the lamp any longer
because the radiance of the sun has drowned it out.
Just so, when the brightness of the future life
enters our soul in this present existence
and dwells within it,
it overwhelms our life in the flesh,
and all the beautiful allurements of the world
with its own encompassing brightness –
which is our life in the Spirit.*
Nicholas Cabasilas. *The Life in Christ.* 1. 6.
PG. 150. 504.

3.76. *What is this awesome mystery that is taking place within me ?
I can find no words to express it,
my poor hand is unable to capture it
in describing the praise and glory that belong
to the One who is above all praise,
and who transcends every word. ...
My intellect sees what has happened*

but it cannot explain it.
It can see, and wishes to explain,
but can find no word that will suffice;
For what it sees is invisible, and entirely formless,
simple, completely uncompounded,
unbounded in its awesome greatness.
What I have seen is the totality recapitulated as one,
received not in essence but by participation.
Just as if you light a flame from a flame,
it is the whole flame you receive.
 Symeon the New Theologian. Hymns of Divine Love. 1.
Koder. SC. 156. pp. 157-158.

3.77. *My Christ,*
you are the Kingdom of Heaven,
you are the land promised to the meek,
you are the meadows of paradise,
the hall of the celestial banquet,
the ineffable bridal chamber,
the table open for all comers.
You are the bread of life,
the strange new drink,
the cool jar of water,
the water of life.
You are the lamp that never goes out for all your saints;
the new garment, the diadem,
the one who distributes diadems.
You are our joy and repose,
our delight and glory.
You are gladness, and laughter, my God.
Your grace, the grace of the all-holy Spirit,
shines in the saints like a blazing sun.
 Symeon the New Theologian. Hymns of Divine Love. 1.
Koder. SC. 156. p. 168.

3.78. *By what boundless mercy my Saviour,*
have you allowed me to become a member of your body ?
me, the unclean, the defiled, the prodigal.
How is it that you have clothed me in the brilliant garment,
radiant with the splendour of immortality
which turns all my members into light ?
Your body, immaculate and divine,
is all radiant with the fire of your divinity,

*with which it is ineffably joined and combined.
 This is the gift you have given me, my God;
 that this mortal and shabby frame
 has become one with your immaculate body;
 and that my blood has been mingled with your blood.
 I know too that I have been made one with your divinity,
 and have become your own most pure body;
 a brilliant member, transparently lucid, luminous, and holy.
 I see the beauty of it all. I can gaze on the radiance.
 I have become a reflection of the light of your grace.*
 Symeon the New Theologian. Hymns of Divine Love. 2.
Koder. SC 156. p. 178.

3.79. *The solitary is innocent of the world
 and continually speaks with God alone;
 He sees him and is seen by him.
 He loves him and is loved by him,
 and so becomes light itself
 since he is enlightened
 in a manner past all speech.*
 Symeon the New Theologian. Hymns of Divine Love. 3.
Koder. SC. 156. p. 188.

3.80. *In the midst of that night, in my darkness,
 I saw the awesome sight of Christ, opening the heavens for me.
 And he bent down to me and showed himself to me
 with the Father and the Holy Spirit in the thrice holy light –
 a single light in three, and a threefold light in one,
 for they are altogether light, and the three are but one light.
 And he illumined my soul more radiantly than the sun,
 and he lit up my mind, which had until then been in darkness.
 Never before had my mind seen such things.
 I was blind, you should know it, and I saw nothing.
 That was why this strange wonder was so astonishing to me,
 when Christ, as it were, opened the eye of my mind;
 when he gave me sight, as it were, and it was him that I saw.
 He is 'Light within Light' who appears
 to those who contemplate him,
 and contemplatives see him in light;
 see him, that is, in the light of the Spirit
 And now, as if from far off, I still see that unseeable beauty,
 that unapproachable light, that unbearable glory.
 My mind is completely astounded. I tremble with fear.*

*Is this a small taste from the abyss
 which like a drop of water serves to make all water known
 in all its qualities and aspects ?*
*I found him, the One whom I had seen from afar,
 the one whom Stephen saw when the heavens opened,
 and later whose vision blinded Paul.*
*Truly, He was as a fire in the centre of my heart.
 I was outside myself, broken down, lost to myself,
 and unable to bear the unendurable brightness of that glory.*
And so, I turned and fled into the night of the senses.
 Symeon the New Theologian. Hymns of Divine Love. 11.
Koder. SC. 156. p. 238.

3.81. *Love came down, as is its way,
 in the appearance of a luminous cloud.
 I saw it fasten on me and settle upon my head.
 and it made me cry out for I was so afraid;
 and so it flew away, and left me alone.
 Then how ardently I searched after it;
 and suddenly, completely,
 I was conscious of it present in my heart,
 like a heavenly body.
 I saw it like the disc of the sun ...
 It closed me off from the visible
 and joined me to invisible things.
 It gave me the grace to see the Uncreated.*
 Symeon the New Theologian. Hymns of Divine Love. 17.
Koder. SC 174. p. 41.

3.82. *Grace me with the vision of your face, O Word,
 with the enjoyment of your ineffable beauty.
 Allow me to contemplate and find my delight in your vision;
 ineffable vision; invisible vision;
 awesome vision*
*the reflection of your divine glory,
 which allows itself to be seen as a simple light,
 a light most sweet..*
 Symeon the New Theologian. Hymns of Divine Love. 24.
Koder. SC. vol. 174. pp. 226-228.

3.83. *Do not say it is impossible to receive the divine Spirit.
 Do not say without him it is possible to be saved.
 Do not say that one can possess the Spirit though unaware of it.*

*Do not say God cannot be seen by human beings.
Do not say that humans can never see the light of God,
or that at least it is not possible for this generation.
My friends, it is never impossible.
It is more than possible for those who desire it.*
Symeon the New Theologian. Hymns of Divine Love. 27.
Koder. SC. 174. p. 288.

- 3.84. *God heard my cries,
and from unimaginable heights stooped down
and looked upon me.
Once more he had pity on me
and allowed me to see
the One who is invisible to all,
so far as this is possible for humankind.
Seeing him I was astounded;
I who was closed up in my tiny house,
confined within such a tiny vessel,
all about surrounded by darkness,
the darkness of the heaven and earth, that is....
I saw him again, but now in the very centre
of my tiny house, my tiny vessel.
So quickly had he come there, all completely,
uniting himself to me inexpressibly,
joining himself to me ineffably,
suffusing himself in me unconfusedly,
in the way that fire permeates iron,
or light shines through crystal.
So he made me become like fire itself,
revealing himself to me as Light.*
Symeon the New Theologian. Hymns of Divine Love. 30.
Koder. SC. 174. pp. 366-370.

- 3.85. *It was God who said: Let there be light.
And all at once there was light.
so, if he shines as light
spiritually within a heart
or appears as a flash of light,
or as the mighty sun,
what do you think he can do
if he illuminates the soul of a disciple ?
Can he not enlighten it
so that it has a clear and perfect understanding of God,*

and how he is present within it ?
Symeon the New Theologian. Hymns of Divine Love. 34.
Koder. SC. 174. pp. 432-434.

3.86. *I was in the world like a blind man,
like an atheist, ignorant of my God,
but you yourself had pity on me,
and looked down on me
and turned me back to yourself.
You caused your light to shine so brightly in my darkness,
and called me back to you, my maker.*
Symeon the New Theologian. Hymns of Divine Love. 37.
Koder. SC. 174. p. 460.

3.87. *You alone are uncreated my Saviour,
you alone are without beginning..
Holy and all-venerable Trinity,
God of all that is;
you have shown to us the light
of your immaculate glory.
Grant it to me even now, and unceasingly, my saviour.
Through the light, let me ever contemplate you, Holy Word,
and begin to see your transcendent beauty.*
Symeon the New Theologian. Hymns of Divine Love. 47.
Koder. SC. 96. p. 124.

3.88. *God is dispassionate spirit-intellect,
transcending every intellect and all dispassion.
God is light, the spring of all blessed light.
God is wisdom, intelligence, and mystical knowledge.
God is the giver of wisdom, intelligence, and mystical knowledge.
Those who receive these gifts on account of their innocence,
those in whom they are abundantly manifested,
are indeed the children of God,
since the icon of God has been preserved in their innermost selves.*
Niketas Stethatos. Gnostic Chapters. 1.
Philokalia. 3. p. 326.

3. 89. *If you seek after God with all your heart and all your strength,
then the virtues of your soul and body
will turn you into a mirror of the image of God within.
You will be so merged in God, and God so merged in you
that each will endlessly repose in the other.
Such are the riches of the gifts of the Spirit
that such a disciple will be, and be manifested as,
the very icon of divine blessedness,
a very god by adoption,
since God is the perfecter of his own perfection..*
Niketas Stethatos. Gnostic Chapters. 3.
Philokalia. 3. p. 326.
3. 90. *Our spiritual intellect is an icon of God.
and it rests in its proper home
when it dwells among its own kind of realities
and when it never deviates from its proper dignity and condition.
This is why it always loves to rest among the things of God,
and ever seeks to unite itself to God,
who is its origin, its energy, and its natural ascentive attraction.*
Niketas Stethatos. Gnostic Chapters. 12.
Philokalia. 3. p. 329.
3. 91. *Souls that are purified and illuminated
by the rays of primordial light,
in a radiance of mystical knowledge,
are not only filled with every goodness and luminosity,
but are carried up to the intellectual heavens
through the contemplation of natural essences.
The action of the divine energy
does not stop here, however, but continues until
it has finally made them one with the One,
through wisdom and mystical knowledge of ineffable things;
making them abandon their former multiplicity
and become one in themselves.*
Niketas Stethatos. Gnostic Chapters. 21.
Philokalia. 3. p.331.
- 3.92. *When you become aware of the increasing fire
of your love for God and inner faith in him
then you should realise
that you are bringing Christ to birth within your soul.
It is he who is lifting your soul high above its earthly and visible limitations*

*and preparing a dwelling place for it in the heavens.
When you experience your heart filled with joy,
and consumed with yearning for God's ineffable blessings,
then know that the divine Spirit is working within you.
When you feel your intellect filled with ineffable light
and spiritual understandings of transcendent wisdom,
then recognise that the Paraclete is actively present in your soul,
uncovering the treasures of the Kingdom of Heaven
that lie hidden within it.*

Niketas Stethatos. Gnostic Chapters. 23.

Philokalia. 3. p. 331.

- 3.93. *In the first ranks of the highest angelic powers
some circle with eternal motion around the divine presence,
burning with fire and gazing clear-sightedly on the godhead;
while others contemplate God in mystical wisdom,
since this is that divine condition
that sets them in endless revolution around the deity.
It is the same with souls who have become like the angels.
They too burn with fire for God and are clairvoyant,
advanced in wisdom, in spiritual knowledge, and mystical perception.
As God affords them, in their limited way,
these souls also wheel endlessly around the divine presence....
Having been firmly established in the enlightenment they have received
and, sharing in the very life of the One Who Is,
they share generously with others,
teaching them by word
about his enlightenment and graces.*

Niketas Stethatos. Gnostic Chapters. 27.

Philokalia. 3. p. 332.

- 3.94. *Once a soul has been consumed in the depths of God's love
and has tasted the sweet delight of God's intellectual graces
it can no longer bear to stay frozen in its own former condition,
but is impelled to rise ever higher to the heavens.
The higher it ascends through the Spirit,
and the deeper it sinks into the abyss of God,
the more it is consumed by the fire of longing,
and searches out the immensity of the even deeper mysteries of God,
strenuously trying to come into that blessed light
where every intellect is caught up into ecstasy,
where the heart knows it can finally rest from all its strivings,
and find its rest in joy.*

Niketas Stethatos. Gnostic Chapters. 37.

Philokalia. 3. p. 334.

- 3.95. *The heart which is constantly guarded,
and not allowed to receive the forms, images, or ideations
of the dark and evil spirits,
will give birth from within itself
to thoughts that are radiant with light.*
Hesychios. On Watchfulness. 104.

Philokalia. 1. p. 157.

- 3.96. *The mystical stage of perfection
belongs to those who have already passed through all the degrees
so as to come to the 'measure of the stature of the pleroma of Christ.'
It is characterised by the spirit's passing through
the sphere of all the lesser aerial spirits,
and entering the ranks of the higher celestials,
drawing near to the original light,
to search out the depths of God in the Spirit.
It engages us in the perfection of our contemplative spiritual vision
of the principles of God's providence, justice, and truth;
and in the unravelling of hidden mysteries, symbols,
and obscure passages in Holy Scripture.
The ultimate goal is to be mystically initiated and perfected
in the secret mysteries of God;
and to be filled with ineffable wisdom
through our communion with the Holy Spirit,
so that we become wise theologians in the great church of God,
enlightening others with theological discourse.
Whoever attains this stage
through profound and penitent humility,
becomes like a second apostle Paul,
for such a one is caught up into the third heaven of theology,
and hears ineffable words which mere mortals
still caught up in sense perception are not permitted to hear. (2 Cor. 12. 1-4).
Such a person experiences ineffable blessings
which no eye can see, no ear can hear (1 Cor. 2.9),
and so becomes a true servant of God, God's very mouth
a companion of those other theologians
who share the company of the highest angelic powers,
the Cherubim and the Seraphim,*

who exemplify the essence of wisdom and spiritual gnosis.
Niketas Stethatos. Gnostic Chapters. 44.
Philokalia. 3. pp. 336-337.

- 3.97. *The Spirit is light, life, and peace.*
If you are illuminated by the divine Spirit
your life will be established in peaceful serenity.
A spring will gush out within you, which is the wisdom of the Logos,
and the mystical knowledge of existent being,
and you will come to have the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2.16).
Then you will know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God (Lk. 8.10)
and will enter the depths of the deity,
day by day speaking words of life for others
from a heart that is calmed and enlightened.
Niketas Stethatos. Gnostic Chapters. 46.
Philokalia. 3. p. 337.
3. 98. *The Logos does not take all his disciples and servants along with him,*
into the revelation of his greater and more secret mysteries,
only those who have been given ears to hear,
whose eyes have been opened to see,
and whose tongues have been refashioned to speak clearly.
He takes these disciples,
separate from all the others (even though these too are his disciples)
and he leads them up the mountain of Thabor,
which is the mountain of contemplation,
and there he is metamorphosised before them. (Mk. 9. 1-8)
Niketas Stethatos. Gnostic Chapters. 83.
Philokalia. 3. p. 350.
- 3.99. *Lift up the eyes of your mind*
to the light of the Gospel of Transfiguration (Mk. 9. 1-8),
so that you yourself might be transfigured
as your spiritual intellect is made new.
If this happens, you will draw down the divine rays from on high
and will be conformed to the image of the glory of the Lord,
whose face shone on the mountain as radiant as the sun.
Gregory Palamas. Homily. 35.
PG. 151. 437.

3.100. *Come true light.*
Come eternal life.
Come hidden mystery.
Come nameless treasure.
Come Ineffable One.
Come Inconceivable One.
Come endless rejoicing.
Come Sun that never sets.
Come true hope of all who wish to be saved.
Come awakening of all who sleep.
Come resurrection of the dead.
Come Powerful One who ever creates and recreates
and transfigures. by your simple will.
Come Invisible One beyond all touch or grasping.
Come eternally Motionless One, ever active
to come to us and save us who lie in Hell.
Come beloved name repeated everywhere
whose existence and nature we cannot express or know.
Come eternal joy.
Come untarnished crown.
Come royal purple of our great King and God.
Come jewelled belt of shining crystal.
Come unapproachable sandal.
Come imperial vestment.
Come sovereign right hand.
Come Lord whom my miserable soul has longed for, and longs for still.
Come Solitary One, to this solitary, for as you see I am all alone..
Come, for you have alienated me from all things,
and made me be alone in this world.
Come, you who have become my desire,
and have made me desire you, the Inaccessible One.
Come, my breath, my life.
Come, consolation of my poor soul.
Come, my joy, my glory, my endless delight.
For I must give you all my thanks
for making yourself one with me in spirit.
 Symeon the New Theologian. The Mystical Prayer.
Koder. SC. 156. pp. 150-152.



Abbreviations : Primary Sources

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Index of Texts and Authors

(Place of their appearance in these three books)

Aphrahat the Persian **1.8. 1.9. 1.10. 1.11. 1. 45.**

Aphrahat lived in the early fourth century of the Christian era, and was the first of the series of ‘Syriac Fathers’. He held some high office in the church (probably an early bishop) and composed a series of Instructions on prayer and other matters called his ‘Demonstrations’. He was one of the early ascetics among the Syrian Christians before monasticism became widely popular and organised.

Apophthegmata Patrum
(Sayings of the Fathers) **1.4. 1.46. 1.61. 1. 62. 2.23.**

The sayings of the Egyptian desert fathers were collected by their disciples and other admirers and publicised from the late fourth century for an international Christian audience. One form was the brief ‘Life and Legend’ of the holy person, but a common genre was a collection of their essential wisdom into short pithy sayings or ‘apophthegms’. Many of them were collected into alphabetical arrangement associated with the various names of the teachers. Often this is the only information that remains about individual historical characters.

Gregory of Nazianzus **2.14. 2. 99**

Gregory, known as ‘The Theologian’ in Byzantine Christianity, was a very wealthy man, son of a bishop, and close associate of the leading theologians of Cappadocia (Turkey) in the fourth century. He was the most educated Christian leader of his generation, and wrote extensive treatises, letters, poems and sermons. He was copied almost as many times after his lifetime as was the bible, and so became the most influential of all the Greek theologians. He was president of the international (Ecumenical) Council which defined the Christian doctrine of the trinity, and was a major architect of that theology. His spiritual teaching lays great stress on the need for the soul’s purification in light.

Diadochos of Photike **2. 6. 2. 7. 2.9. 3.20. 3.21. 3.22. 3. 23. 3.24.**

Diadochos lived in the mid 5th century of the Christian era, and was bishop of Photike in Epirus, Northern Greece. He was very interested in the developing monastic movement, and composed treatises on prayer related to it, especially trying to moderate excessive trends he felt it was prone to. He is one of the first writers to speak about the ‘Jesus Prayer’ as a way of focusing the intellect on short repeated invocations of the divine name. He exercised a great generic influence on his many successors.

Dorotheos of Gaza **2.5.**

Dorotheos was a Syrian by origin, who came to Egypt to study with famous ascetic elders. He was a student of Barsanuphius and John, and founded his own monastery at Gaza circa 540. He had the foresight to see that the glory days of Christian monasticism in Egypt were coming to an end, and tried to describe and collect the old oral tradition of the ancients into prose form. His series of ‘Instructions’ became

standard material for training eastern monks, and in the process he disseminated the Egyptian teachings widely in the Greek world. His system stresses the primacy of love and humility for spiritual advancement.

Evagrius of Pontus

***1.22. 1.23. 1.24. 1.25. 1.26. 1.27. 1.28. 1.29. 1.30.
1.31. 1.32. 1.33. 1.34. 1.35. 1.36. 1.37. 1. 38.
1.39. 1.40. 1.41. 1.42. 1.43. 1.44. 1.81. 2. 21.
2.22. 2. 24. 2.25. 2.26. 2.27. 2.28. 2.29. 2.30.
2.31. 2.32. 2.33. 2.34. 2.35. 2.36. 2.37. 2.38. 2.39.
2.40. 2.41. 2.42. 2.43. 2.44. 2.45. 2.46. 2.47. 2.48.
2.49. 3. 27. 3.28. 3. 30. 3.31.***

Evagrius (circa 346-399) was a native of the Black Sea town of Ichora in Pontus. He was a disciple of the leading Cappadocian theologians of his day, and as a child was taught rhetoric by Gregory of Nazianzus. His scintillating career as a Christian thinker and public speaker in Constantinople was cut short by a scandal and he fled for safety to Palestine. There he was advised by the famous ascetics Melania and Rufinus. Changing his lifestyle to a more ascetic form, he became a monk in Egypt and soon became known as the most famous of all the monastic teachers. His interests ranged across a wide spectrum of metaphysics, psychology and mysticism. His doctrine was later challenged after his lifetime and he was condemned by an imperial synod in the 6th century, but even with this posthumous setback, his works ever afterwards dominated the later Christian mystical tradition.

Gregory Palamas

3.99.

Gregory (circa 1296-1359) was a Greek nobleman who around 1318 became a monk on Mount Athos, the monastic complex near Thessaloniki. He was chosen by the communities of Athos to defend their theology that it was possible to experience the presence of God directly in a dedicated life of prayer and mysticism, against rationalist philosophical opponents heavily influenced by western 13th century empiricism. The resultant theological system he elaborated (known as Hesychasm) became one of the most influential traditions of later eastern Orthodox Christianity. It stresses the approach to God in luminous vision and the deifying transfiguration of material reality by the grace of the incarnate divinity present in Christ.

Hesychios

1.1. 2.2. 3.2. 3. 3. 3. 4. 3. 32. 3.33. 3.34. 3. 35. 3.95.

Little is known of Hesychios apart from the fact that he composed books of 'Centuries' of sayings related to ascetical advice. He was probably an archimandrite (leader of a monastery) in Sinai some time in the 6th or 7th centuries.

Irenaeus of Lyons

3. 9.

Irenaeus (circa 130 – 200) was one of the most important of the early Christian bishops who fought against the Christian gnostic movement, which he felt endangered Christianity by transmuting a historically grounded revelation of God in Christ, to the status of a non-material symbol. He gave to Christianity its strong emphasis on ordered systems of governance and orthodox scriptures. Many of his early theological statements became standards of orthodoxy for later Christian thought. He has a broad cosmic vision of God's redemptive involvement in the world, that comes out in his spiritual remarks.

Isaac of Niniveh**3.8.**

Isaac was a monk in Kurdistan some time around 676. He eventually became bishop of Niniveh, but preferred a more secluded life. He lived in solitude until he became blind as an old man, and then returned to a community of monks who looked after him. He wrote extensive sermons advising his monastic followers. In the 9th century these were translated into Greek and exercised a great influence on Byzantine spiritual thought. Isaac lays special emphasis on the movement of the heart to the vision of God, as being the chief thing required in a spiritual life. He died some time around 700.

John of Apamea**1.13. 1.20.**

Very little is known about the identity of John of Apamea, though he was certainly active in the early 5th century. He is also known as John the Solitary, but has often been confused with another Palestinian writer named John of Lycopolis. John's chief work was his 'Dialogue on the Soul', and he also wrote other letters and small treatises. He enjoyed a great reputation as a spiritual master while alive, and his works have a directness and freshness which is greatly appealing.

John Cassian**1.16. 1.17. 1.18.**

John lived between 360 and sometime after 430. He was a Romanian (Scythian) by birth and left as a young man to join a monastery at Bethlehem, then moving to Egypt where he was much influenced by the thought of Evagrius of Pontus. He became a deacon in Constantinople and was sent by John Chrysostom, the archbishop, on a diplomatic mission to the West. He remained in the West for the remainder of his life, founding a monastery at Marseilles which became one of the great centres of ascetic life in the Latin world. His two greatest works were the 'Institutes' and the 'Conferences' which became standard reference works for Benedictine monks after him. In them he brought Evagrius' doctrine, in a moderated form, to a much wider audience.

John of Dalyutha**1.19. 3.7.**

John is also known as John the Elder or John Sabaites. He was a native of Iraq and for many years was a mountain hermit, known for his austere lifestyle. His doctrine was circulated among a dedicated band of disciples. He fell into disfavour with local bishops for aspects of his doctrinal teaching but his reputation as a master of the spiritual life was never diminished by any of the controversy. He was active in the 8th century.

John of Damascus**3.15.**

John (circa 655-750) was a high ranking politician, who was the Caliph's main minister of state for relations with the conquered Christian population of Damascus. He retired from political life and took refuge from intrigues in the Palestinian monastery of St. Saba, near Bethlehem. Here he became known as a great hymn-writer and systematic theologian. He was involved in the Byzantine controversy over images (Iconoclasm) and wrote works defending the validity of venerating (though not worshipping) images of Christ and the saints, as important media of prayer. He composed many reference works on theology which had a lasting influence.

John of Karpathos

2. 12. 2.13. 3. 25. 3.26.

John is more or less totally unknown apart from his short treatise written to advise the monks of 'India.' This probably meant the monks of the highlands of Ethiopia who had asked for words of advice in times of troubles. It is presumed he was a native of the Greek island of Karpathos in the Sporadic isles. Even the century in which he wrote is not known.

John Klimakos

**1.7. 1.47. 1.48. 1.49. 1.50. 1.51. 1.52. 1.53. 1.54. 1.55.
1.56. 1.57. 1.58. 1.59. 1.60. 1.82. 2.78**

John the abbot of the monastery at Sinai is known as Klimakos from the title (The Ladder) of his most famous work. He lived circa 570-649. He was for many years a solitary, loosely attached to Sinai monastery, and at the end of a long life spent in solitude he returned to the monastery to serve as its leader. In this capacity he composed his 'Ladder of Divine Ascent' as a manual of instruction for monks. It is still the most influential treatise on the monastic life in the eastern church, and is read as a basic preparatory text by novices to this day.

Makarios the Great

**1.14. 1.83. 1. 84. 1.85. 2.8. 3. 36. 3.37. 3.38. 3.39.
3.40. 3.41. 3.42. 3. 43. 3.44. 3.45. 3.46. 3.47. 3.48.
3.49. 3.50. 3.51. 3.52. 3.53. 3.54. 3.55. 3.56. 3.57.
3.58. 3.59. 3.60. 3.61. 3.62. 3.63. 3.64. 3.65. 3.66.
3.67. 3.68. 3.69. 3.70. 3.71. 3.72.**

Makarios the Great is an anonymous Syrian master of the spiritual life. His works attracted some controversy in his lifetime, and were opposed by writers such as Diadochos of Photike. As a result, his name has been forgotten and the works themselves were somehow 'fathered' pseudepigraphically onto another writer – the famous Macarius of Egypt who had, in fact, left no written texts behind him. This was a common way the early Christians had of recycling material that had been officially censured, if it struck them as of continuing importance. Makarios was active in the late 4th and 5th centuries in the border regions between Cappadocia (Turkey) and Syria. He stressed in his teachings the need for a 'felt experience' of God in the spiritual life, and his works enjoyed a great vogue in their own time, and again in the medieval period in Constantinople where they exercised a formative influence over Hesychasm.

Mark the Ascetic.

1. 12. 1.15.

Very little is known about the life of this author. He is known also as Mark the Monk, or Mark the Hermit. He is probably late 5th or early 6th century. He was certainly a hermit, either in the monastic communes of Egypt or Palestine. His work lays great stress on the futility of relying on personal merits in the quest for God, and advocates a reliance on mercy and gracefulness, while attempting to do one's best, with great hope in God.

Maximus the Confessor

**1. 71. 1.72. 1.73. 1.74. 1.75. 1.76. 1.77. 1.78. 1.79.
1.80. 2.53. 2.54. 2.55. 2.56. 2.57. 2.58. 2.59. 2.60.
2.61. 2.63. 2.64. 2.65. 2.66. 2.67. 2.68. 2.69. 2.70.
2.71. 2.72. 2.73. 2.74. 2.75. 2.76. 2.77. 2.79. 2.80.
2.81.**

Maximus (c.580-662) is known as the Confessor because of the tradition that he was tortured by the Byzantine emperor because of his dissident writings in theology. He is one of the most important mystics and philosophers of the Byzantine era. He was an aristocrat in the court at Constantinople before becoming a monk. He travelled widely in the Greek and Latin world and his writings were prolific. He lays great stress on a mystical vision of the cosmos permeated by the presence of God, and focused in the grace of Christ. This grace of redemption and transformation he sees as constantly working to bring back 'equilibrium' to an unbalanced world.

Narsai of Edessa

3.5. 3.6.

Narsai is also known as Narses. Born around 399, he died some time in the early years of the 6th century. He was one of the most important East-Syrian teachers of the 5th century, probably head of the church school (or university) at Edessa.

Nicholas Cabasilas

3. 73. 3.74. 3.75.

Nicholas Cabasilas (born. 1322) was the nephew of Nilus, the archbishop of Thessalonica, and one of the active members of the Hesychast school of spirituality. He wrote an influential explanation of the liturgical rites of the church, laying stress on their symbolic meanings, and also treatises on the spiritual life where he emphasises the hope of luminous transfiguration. It is thought that he became a monk late in life.

Niketas Stethatos

2. 3. 2. 4. 3.1. 3. 88. 3.89. 3.90. 3.91. 3.92. 3.93.

3.96. 3.97. 3.98.

Niketas was born around the beginning of the 11th century and became a monk at the famous Studium monastery at Constantinople. He had some knowledge of Symeon the New Theologian, the most rhapsodic mystic of his age, and after the death of Symeon, composed his Life, and was partly responsible for the dissemination of his teachings on the vision of divine light, and the transfiguring mercy of God. Later in life, as abbot of the Studite monastery, Niketas was one of those involved in controversy with the papacy, and witnessed the great schism that occurred between the Latin and Greek churches in 1054. His spiritual doctrine is consistently insightful and optimistic in character.

Origen of Alexandria

2. 1.

Origen (c. 185-254) was the most important philosopher-theologian of the early church, probably its most creative mind after the generation of the apostles. He laid down basic architectural structures in Christianity that have hardly been altered in their main outline since his day; such as an understanding of the scriptures as canonical, and the necessity of composing 'commentaries' on them. His own writings are filled with a

mystical desire to ascend in the soul to a restored union with the divine principle of the cosmos (the Logos). He sees the tragedy of the world as a fall from this primeval destiny of the human race.

***Abba Philemon of Egypt* 1.5. 1.6. 1.21.**

Philemon was a priest who lived an ascetic life in Egypt sometime during the Roman period, which suggests the late 6th or 7th century. Nothing else is known of him. He wrote an influential 'Discourse' about spiritual attentiveness. He is known as one of the important advocates of the 'Jesus Prayer', the frequently repeated phrase : 'Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me', which became a standard prayer-form, and focus of meditation, of the eastern church.

***Sahdona the Syrian* 2.15. 2. 16. 2.17. 2.18. 2.19. 2.20.**

Sahdona the Syrian is also known (in Greek) as Abba Martyrius. He was a 7th century spiritual writer, a native Persian who became a monk, and eventually served as bishop of Mahoze in the Chaldaean church. He was involved in controversies because of his theology, and retired to an ascetical life at Edessa where he wrote his chief work, 'The Book of Perfection', which is regarded as a masterpiece of world literature, as well as being the most important spiritual writings of the Syrian church.

***Sayings of the Egyptian Fathers* 1.65. 1.66. 1.67. 1.68. 1. 69. 1.70.**

An edition of the monastic wisdom sayings collated from a variety of Egyptian teachers. Some sayings are listed alphabetically, others in more random collections. The collections show a lively oral tradition of spirituality in the desert monasteries. Most are directed at the training of monks in the early stages of ascetical life.

***Sayings of the Elders* 1.2. 1.3. 1.63. 1.64.**

A Latin collection of the Egyptian wisdom sayings (Apophthegmata) which had a wide dissemination and influenced much later Latin monastic thought as a standard book of recommended reading throughout the middle ages.

***Symeon the New Theologian* 1. 86. 1.87. 2.10. 2.11. 2. 82. 2. 83. 3. 76. 3.77.**

3.78. 3.79. 3.80 . 3.81. 3.82. 3.83. 3.84. 3.85. 3.86.

3.87. 3.100.

Symeon (949-1022) is one of the greatest mystic-poets of world literature. He was an aristocrat who became a monk in Constantinople and was head of a small monastery there, for whom he wrote extensive treatises (Catecheses) outlining the elements of the ascetical life. He experienced hostility from the court and was deposed as abbot in 1005 and sent into exile in 1009. His disciples accompanied him, and founded a new monastery under his leadership. He wrote in exile some of the most rhapsodic of all Greek mystical poetry (Hymns of Divine Love). His doctrine laid great stress on the necessity for a real and personal experience of God, and the need for affective passion in the search for God. He spoke about his own visions of the Divine in the form of radiant light. His later follower, Niketas Stethatos, wrote a

biography , and arranged that his relics would be brought back into Constantinople, thirty years after his death.

Thalassios the Libyan

2. 84. 2.85. 2.86. 2.87. 2.88. 2.89. 2.90. 2.91. 2.92.

2.93. 2.94. 2.95. 2.96. 2.97. 2.98. 2.100. 3. 10.

3.11. 3.12. 3.13. 3.14.

Thalassios (late 6th and early 7th century) was a contemporary and friend of Maximus the Confessor, who dedicated one of his major works to him, and calls himself a ‘disciple’ of Thalassios. He was a priest and archimandrite, leader of a monastery in Libya. His main works are in the form of ‘Centuries’ of advice on the spiritual life. He shows reliance on Evagrius, but his teaching, like that of Maximus, lays greater stress on the need for a more balanced harmony between body and soul in the spiritual quest.

Theodoros the Ascetic

1. 88. 1.89. 1.90. 1.91. 1.92. 1.93. 1.94. 1.95. 1.96.

1.97. 1.98. 1.99. 1.100. 2. 50. 2.51. 2.52.

Very little is known about the life of Theodoros, except that he was a monk of St. Saba monastery in Palestine (near Bethlehem) and eventually became the bishop of the church of Edessa in Syria. He probably lived in the mid 7th century (though some see him as a 9th century writer). His ‘Centuries’ draw largely on the writings of Evagrius and Maximus.

Theognostos the Priest

3. 16. 3.17. 3. 18. 3.19.

This spiritual writer is largely unknown, but his great interest in the priesthood and the sacraments show that he was certainly a priest himself. He quotes writers of the 8th century, and must be later than that period himself. His writing is vivid and cheerful, and he has a lively interest in the higher states of mystical consciousness.

