

POKROV

HOLY PROTECTION OF THE THEOTOKOS ORTHODOX CHURCH

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..ибо свет демонов обращается в последствии во тму

Придет ли тебе какая благая мысль? Остановись; никак не устремись к исполнению ея с опрометчивостию, необдуманно. Ощутишь ли в сердце какое благое влечение? Остановись; но дерзай увлечься им. Справься с Евангелием. Разспотри: согласны ли со всесвятим учением Господа благая мысль твоя и твое благое влечение сердечное. Вскоре усмотришь, что нет никакого согласия между евангельским добром

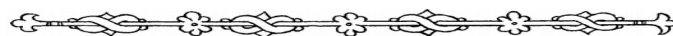
и добром падшаго человеческого естества. Добро нашего падшаго естества перемешано со злом, а потому и само это добро сделалось злом, как делается ядом вкусная и здоровая пища, когда перемешают ее с ядом. Хранись делать добро падшаго естества! Делая это добро, разовьешь свое падение, разовьешь в себе самомнение и гордость, достигнешь ближайшаго сходства с демонами. Напротив того, делая евангельское добро, как истинный и верный ученик Богочеловека, соделаешься подобным Богочеловеку. Любяй душу свою, сказал Господь, погубит ю: и ненавидяй душу свою в мир сем, в живот вечный сохранит ю. Иже хочет по Мне идти, да отвержется себе, и возмет крест свой, по Мне грядет. Иже бо аще хочет душу свою спасти, погубит ю: а иже погубит душу свою Мене ради и Евангелия, той спасет ю.

Господь повелевает полное отвержени падшаго естества, ненависть к его побуждениям, не только к явно злым, но и ко всем без исключения, и ко мнимо добрым. Великое бедствие – последовать нравде падшаго естества: с этим сопряжено отвержение Евангелия, отвержение Искупителя, отвержение спасения. Кто не возненавидит души своей, не может Мой быти ученик, сказал Господь. Объясняя вышеприведенныя слова Господа, Великий Варсанофий говорит; «Как отрекается от себя человек? – Лишь тем, что оставляет естественныя желанія и последует Господу. Посему то и говорит Господь здесь собственно о

естественном, а не о неестественном; ибо если кто оставит только неестественное, то он не оставил еще ничего своего собственного, ради Бога потому что противоестественное не принадлежит ему. А тот, кто оставил естественное, всегда взывает с апостолом Петром: се мы оставихом вся, и в след Тебе идохом, что убо будет нам? И слышит глас Господа, и обетованием удостоверяется в наследовании жизни вечной. Что оставил Петр, будучи не богат, и чем хвалился, если не оставлением естественных своих желаний? Ибо, если человек не умрет для плоти, живя духом, он не может воскреснуть душою. Как в мертвец вовсе нет желаний естественных, так нет их и в духовно-умершем для плоти. «Если ты умер для плоти, то как могут жить в тебе желания естественныя? Если же ты не достиг меры духовной, а еще младенчествуешь умом, то смирись пред учителем, - да накажет тя милостию, и без совета ничего не делай, хотя бы что, и казалось тебе повидимому добрым; ибо свет демонов обращается в последствии во тму». Точно тоже должно сказать и о свете падшаго человеческого естества. Последование этому свету и развитие его в себе производит в душе совершенное омрачение и вполне отчуждает ее от Христа. Чуждый христианства, чужд Бога: всяк, отменяя Сина, ни Отца имам – безбожник.

В наш век, гордый своим преуспеянием большинство человек, провозглашающее себя и христианами и делателями обильнейшаго добра, устремилось к совершению правды папшаго естества, отвергнув с презрением правду евангельскую. Это большинство да услышит определение Господа: приближаются Мне людие сии усты своими, и устнами чтут Мя; сердце же их далече отстоит от Мене. Всуе же чтут Мя, учаще учением заповедем человеческим. Делатель правды человеческой исполнен самомнения, высокоумия, самооболщения: он проповедует, трубит о себе, о делах своих, не обращая никакого внимания на воспрещение Господа; ненавистию и мщением платит тем, которые осмелились бы отворить

уста для самага основательнаго и благонамереннаго противоречия его правде; признает себя достойным и предостойным наград земных и небесных. Напротив того, делатель евангельских заповедей всегда погружен в смирение; сличая с возвышенностию и чистотою всесвятых заповедей свое исполнение их, он постоянно признает это исполнение крайне недостаточным, недостойным Бога; он видит себя заслужившим временныя и вечныя казни за согрешения свои, за нерасторгнутое общение с сатаною, за падение, общее всем человекам, за свое собственное пребывание в падении, наконец за самое недостаточно и часто превратное исполнение заповедей. Пред каждую скорбию, посылаемую промыслом Божиим, он с покорностию преклоняет главу, ведя, что Бог обучает и образует скорбами служителей своих во время их земнаго странствования. Он милосердствует о врагах своих, и молится о них, как о братиях, увлекаемых демонами, как очленах еднаго тела, пораженных болезнию в духе своем, как о благодетелях своих, как о орудиях промысла Божия.



...for the light of demons eventually turns to darkness

Has a good thought come to you? Stop! Whatever you do, do not rush to implement it or carry it out over-hastily, without thinking. Have you felt some good impulse or inclination in your heart? Stop! Do not dare to be drawn by it. Check it with the Gospel. See whether your good thought and your heart's good impulse tally with the Lord's holy teaching. You will soon see that there is no agreement whatever between the good of the Gospel and the good of fallen nature. The good of our fallen nature is always mixed with evil, and therefore this good has itself become evil, just as delicious and wholesome food becomes poison when it is mixed with poison. Guard yourself from doing the good of fallen nature. By doing this good, you develop your own fall, you

develop within you self-opinion and pride, and you will attain the closest conformity with demons. On the other hand by doing the good of the Gospel as a true and faithful disciple of the God Man, you will become like the God-Man. "He who loves his life will lose it. But he who hates his life in this world will keep it in eternal life". "If anyone wants to follow in My steps, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever wants to save his life will lose it, but he who loses his life for Me and for the Gospel's sake will save it".

The Lord orders the complete renunciation of fallen nature, and hatred for its motives and impulses, not only for those that are obviously evil, but for all without exceptions even the apparently good. It is a great disaster to follow the righteousness of fallen nature. This implies and involves rejection of the Gospel, rejection of the Redeemer, rejection of salvation. "Whoever does not hate his own life cannot be My disciple," said the Lord.

Explaining the above words St Varsanuphius the Great says: "How does a man deny himself? Simply by forsaking his natural desires and following the Lord. That is why the Lord speaks here strictly of what is natural, and not of what is unnatural. For if one forsakes only what is unnatural he has not yet forsaken anything of his own for God's sake, because what is unnatural does not properly belong to him. But whosoever has forsaken what is natural always says with the Apostle Peter: *"We have left everything and followed Thee. What will there be for us?"* And he hears the voice of the Lord and by His promise is assured of the inheritance and possession of eternal life."

Since Peter was not rich what did he renounce and what was his claim? Surely he renounced his own natural desires? For unless a man denies the flesh and lives in the spirit, his soul cannot rise. Just as a corpse has no natural desires whatever, so too a person who is spiritually dead to the flesh does not have natural desires either. If you have died to the flesh, how can natural desires live in you? But if you have not attained this measure of spirituality

and are mentally still in your infancy, humble yourself before a teacher, that he may correct you with mercy and do nothing without advice even though it may seem to you apparently good. For the light of demons eventually turns to darkness."

Exactly the same must be said also about the light of fallen human nature. The following of this light and its development within oneself produces a total inner darkness and completely estranges the soul from Christ. A stranger to Christ is a stranger to God. "No one who denies the Son has the Father". (1 John 2: 21) - he is godless. In our time the majority of people, proud of their progress and claiming to be Christians who do a lot of good, having been striving for the perfection of the righteousness of fallen nature and have turned their back with scorn on the righteousness of the Gospel. Let this majority listen to what the Lord says: "This people draws near to Me with their mouth and honours Me with their lips. But their heart is far from Me. So they worship Me in vain, while teaching the doctrines and commandments of men." The man who practices human righteousness is full of self-opinion, arrogance and self-deception. He preaches and blows his own trumpet about his good deeds without paying the least attention to what our Lord forbids. He repays with hatred and revenge those who dare to open their mouths for the most reasonable and well-meaning contradiction of his righteousness. He considers himself deserving and more than that he considers himself to be deserving of both earthly and heavenly rewards. On the other hand, one who practices the commandments of the Gospel is always immersed in humility. Comparing the loftiness and purity of the holy commandments with his own fulfillment of them, he constantly admits that his efforts are extremely unsatisfactory and unworthy of God. He sees himself meriting temporal and eternal punishments for his sins, for his unbroken fellowship with satan, for the fall that is common to all men, for his own continuance in a fallen state and finally for his insufficient and frequently fickle fulfillment of the commandments. Whenever trouble or suffering comes his way by the ordering of Divine Providence, he submissively bows his head, knowing that by means of suffering

God trains and educates His servants during their earthly pilgrimage. He is kind and merciful to his enemies and prays for them as brethren who have been allured away by demons, as members of one body who are spiritually sick, as his benefactors, and as instruments of the providence of God.

Gleanings

From "Place your hope in the Lord" --- The poetic spiritual life of Fr Lazar. P63

"At one time during the liturgy, I was seized with the idea that I am unworthy of receiving the Holy Communion; I don't feel anything, I don't repent, I don't feel contrition; on the contrary, I think about how far we have to walk by foot, how we suffer, how we are nice towards this Father. Suddenly I heard, "With the fear of God, Faith and Love approach." I was petrified, could not even breathe. Wondering why I was not approaching, Father was nodding his head joyfully: "Come on what are you waiting for?!" How could I say "no" to him? His love and his boldness moved me from that frozen state, so I approached him. After liturgy, I spoke to him about everything and he replied:

" Do you think that anyone is worthy of approaching? Why even if I myself was aware of the Sacrament that is being done through me - a sinner- especially when it comes to the consecration of the Holy Gifts, I would fall under the Holy table, and no one would be able to lift me up to continue serving.

"But God's great love made it invisible for us, so that we could serve in peace and with ease, and to be able to give holy Communion to the people. Do not worry: just approach with trust and God will forgive. Do you think that you will be more worthy next week?"

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