

Question: Is Satan let loose upon us by measure, or does he fight as he pleases?

Answer: As for him, his attack is not directed only against Christians, but against idolaters, and against all the world. If therefore he were allowed to fight as he pleases, he would have demolished all. Why? Because that is his object and will. But as the potter puts his vessels in, and heats the furnace gradually by measure, not overmuch, lest, if they were baked too violently, they should crack, and not too little, lest they should be spoiled by being half-baked; and if the silversmith or goldsmith applies the fire by measure, for if the fire is in excess, the gold and the silver are melted, and get watery, and are spoiled; and if the mind of man knows how to measure the burden to the beast, to the camel or whatever animal it is, according to its burden-bearing capacity; how much rather does God, knowing what vessels men are, let loose the enemy power accordingly, in different degrees?

And as the earth is one, but here is rocky and there rich, and one part is suitable for vine-culture, another for growing wheat or barley, so do these fields of human hearts and wills differ from each other, and so are the gifts of grace from above bestowed. To one is given a ministry of the word, to another *discernment*, to a third *gifts of healings*. God knows a man's capacity for stewardship, and distributes His different gifts accordingly. In the like manner, with regard to warfare, the enemy power is let loose upon men by a kind of measure, according as each man is able to receive and bear the brunt.

Saint Macarius the Great, *Fifty Spiritual Homilies*
Homily XXVI, 3-4, pp. 185-6

Pearls

From the Holy Fathers

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HEARKEN UNTO ME, ye holy children, and bud forth as a rose growing by the brook of the field: And give ye a sweet savour as frankincense, and flourish as a lily, send forth a smell, and sing a song of praise, bless the Lord in all His works.

Magnify His Name, and shew forth His praise with the songs of your lips, and with harps, and in praising Him ye shall say after this manner:

ALL THE WORKS OF THE LORD ARE EXCEEDING GOOD, and whatsoever He commandeth, shall be accomplished in due season. And none may say, What is this? wherefore is that? for at time convenient they shall all be sought out: at His commandment the waters stood as a heap, and at the words of His mouth the receptacles of waters. At His commandment is done whatsoever pleaseth Him, and none can hinder, when He will save.

The Wisdom of Jesus, the Son of Sirach, 39:13-18