

At the first wisdom will walk with a man by crooked ways,
and bring fear and dread upon him, and torment him
with her discipline, until she may trust his soul,
and try him by her laws.

Then will she return the straight way unto him,
and comfort him, and show him her secrets.

Ecclesiasticus, or,
The Wisdom of Jesus, the Son of Sirach 4:17-18

THE LORD ALLOWS THE ENEMY to tempt us in order to prove us, in order to strengthen our spiritual powers in our struggle against the enemy, and so that we ourselves may see more clearly towards what our heart inclines, whether it inclines to patience, hope, and love and in general to virtue, or to irritability, incredulity, murmuring, blasphemy, malice, and despair. Therefore we must not be despondent, but must good-humouredly and patiently bear spiritual darkness that descends upon our soul, the fire that weakens and inclines us to impatience and malice, the affliction and oppression, knowing that all these are indispensable in the order of our spiritual life, that by these the Lord is proving us. Do not let us blaspheme against the true way – the way of holy faith and virtue – and do not let us prefer the evil way. We are free, and must strengthen ourselves by every means and with all our power in faith and virtue, unto the laying down of our life for the way of truth; and how can this be if we have no temptations?

St John of Kronstadt, *My Life in Christ*, p. 172

IF THERE ARISE AMONG YOU a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

Deuteronomy, 13:1-4

PEARLS FROM THE HOLY FATHERS

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