

Doth the Lord take pleasure in whole-burnt offerings and sacrifices,
as in hearing the word of the Lord?

Behold, obedience is better than sacrifice, and hearkening than the fat of rams.

The Prophet Samuel to Saul
1 Kingdoms 15:22

ONE OF THE BRETHREN said unto one of the great old men, “If I could find one of the fathers according to my desire, I would choose to die with him,” and the old man said unto him with a laugh, “Good, my lord,” and the brother said, “Such is my desire.” Now he did not understand the mind of the old man. And when the old man saw that the brother was in truth speaking concerning himself that which he thoroughly believed, he said unto him, “If thou didst find an old man according to thy desire, wouldst thou be able to dwell with him?” And he said unto him, “Yea.” The old man said unto him, “Well hast thou said, If I could find [an old man] according to my desire;” and afterwards he said unto him, “Thou dost not wish to be subject to the will of the old man, but the old man must be subject unto thee!” Then the brother rose up, and made apologies to him, saying, “Forgive me, father; I have boasted greatly. I thought that I was saying that which was good, but I find that I possess that which is of no value.”

The Paradise of the Holy Fathers,
Budge, Vol. II, p. 157, #17

THE LORD who makes wise the blind opens the eyes of the obedient to the virtues of their guide, and He blinds them to his defects. But the hater of good does the opposite.

The Ladder of Divine Ascent, St. John Climacus, Step 4:98

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