

WHEN ALLOYED AND SPURIOUS MEN are tested and known in these temptations, they fall away from God as dross, since giving way to the enemy they leave the field of battle laden with guilt, either because of the laxity of their mind or because of their pride. They were not worthy to receive the power that the saints had working within them, for the power that helps us cannot be defeated. The Lord is almighty and more powerful than all, and at all times He is victorious in the bodies of mortal men when He descends to aid them in their warfare. But if they are defeated, it is evident that they are defeated without Him.

These are men who have voluntarily stripped themselves of God by reason of their ungratefulness, since they have not been accounted worthy of that power which assists the victorious, and they perceive that they are even devoid of their own power which they were accustomed to have at the times of their violent battles. How do they perceive this? They see that their defeat is pleasurable and sweet in their eyes.

St Isaac the Syrian, *Ascetical Homily* 39, p. 327
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I WANT TO PRAY BUT IT ELUDES ME. Can it really be that the Lord is depriving me of His grace?" No, my friend: if, God forbid, this happened, it would be shown first of all by the fact that the person would not regret being in such a state; but if he dreads falling into such alienation, it means that divine grace is dear to him; and if it is dear, then it is not far from him.

Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky, *Letter to a Priest about Prayer*,
ORTHODOX LIFE, Vol. 27, No. 5 • Sept.–Oct. 1977, p. 22

ACERTAIN BROTHER went on one occasion from Egypt to Syria to visit Abba Zeno, and the Egyptian began to make accusations against his thoughts before the old man. And when Abba Zeno heard this, he marvelled and said, "The Egyptians always hide the spiritual excellences which they possess, but they describe the shortcomings which they do not possess; on the other hand, the Syrians and the Greeks declare that they possess the virtues which they do not have, and they hide the shortcomings which they do possess."

Paradise of the Holy Fathers, tr. Budge, Vol. II, p. 110, # 465

PEARLS FROM THE HOLY FATHERS

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