

ABROTHER SAID TO ABBA SISOES, ‘What shall I do, Abba, for I have fallen?’ The old man said to him, ‘Get up again.’ The brother said, ‘I have got up again, but I have fallen again.’ The old man said, ‘Get up again and again.’ So then the brother said, ‘How many times?’ The old man said, ‘Until you are taken up either in virtue or in sin. For a man presents himself to judgment in the state in which he is found.’

The Desert Christian, Benedicta Ward,
Macmillan Publishing, pp. 219–20

THE HOLY FATHERS were making predictions about the last generation. They said, ‘What have we ourselves done?’ One of them, the great Abba Ischyrion, replied, ‘We ourselves have fulfilled the commandments of God.’ The others replied, ‘And those who come after us, what will they do?’ He said, ‘They will struggle to achieve half our works.’ They said, ‘And to those who come after them, what will happen?’ He said, ‘The men of that generation will not accomplish any works at all and temptation will come upon them; and those who will be approved in that day will be greater than either us or our fathers.’

The Desert Christian, Benedicta Ward,
Macmillan Publishing, p. 111

THE MOON as it waxes and wanes illustrates the condition of man: sometimes he does what is right, sometimes he sins and then through repentance returns to a holy life. The mind of him who sins is not destroyed (as some of you think), just as the physical size of the moon does not diminish, but only its light. Through repentance a man regains his true splendour, just as the moon after the period of waning clothes itself once more in its full light. If a man believes in Christ, ‘even though he dies, yet shall he live’ (John 11:25); he shall know that ‘I the Lord have spoken, and will do it’ (Ezek. 17:24)

St John of Karpathos, *Philokalia*, Faber & Faber,
Vol. I, p. 299

ONCE A FAITHFUL AND PIOUS MAN went and confessed to Saint Parthenius of Chios. He counseled him and helped him in the struggle for virtue. But the same man returned and again confessed the same sin. This was repeated many times. The believer once asked him, “How long, Elder, are the same things going to be repeated? Even though I hate the sin, it surrounds me on all sides.”

The Saint answered him, “That’s it, brother of Christ by adoption: we walk on the earth and gaze toward Heaven. It will be repeated until the grace of God overshadows you, and you emerge a victor.

From the life of Saint Parthenius of Chios,
True Vine #38, p. 18

PEARLS FROM THE HOLY FATHERS

JULY 8–14, 2013

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