

# The way of a fool is right in his own eyes; but a man of understanding hearkeneth to counsel.

Proverbs, 12:15

**T**HEY USED TO TALK ABOUT A CERTAIN OLD MAN who fasted for seventy weeks, and only ate each Saturday; and he asked God that understanding of a passage from Holy Scripture might be given unto him, but it was not given. Then he said within himself, “Behold, I have laboured in all these things, and I have omitted nothing; I will arise and go to my brother and question him about it.” And when he had shut the door to depart, an Angel of the Lord appeared, and said unto him, “The seventy weeks wherein thou didst fast have not come nigh unto God, but, inasmuch as thou hast humbled thyself to go to thy brother, I have been sent to make known unto thee the thing thou didst desire, and to give thee rest”; thereupon he made it known to him, and gave him rest, and departed.

*The Paradise of the Holy Fathers, Budge, Vol. II, p. 110, #466*

**T**HE MAN WHO GOES HIS OWN WAY, travelling without understanding of the Gospels and without any guidance, often stumbles and falls into many pits and snares of the devil; he frequently goes astray and exposes himself to many dangers, not knowing where he is going. For many have endured great ascetic labours, much hardship and toil for God’s sake; but because they relied on their own judgment, lacked discrimination, and failed to accept help from their neighbour, their many efforts proved useless and vain.

St Mark the Ascetic, *Letter to Nicolas the Solitary Philokalia*, Faber & Faber, Vol. I, p. 152

**A**N OLD MAN USED TO SAY, “Satan is a twister of cords, and as long as thou givest him threads he will plait them”; now he spake this regarding the thoughts.

*Paradise of the Holy Fathers, Vol. II, p. 176, #102*

**A**BROTHER ASKED ABBA PIMEN, “Why should I not be free to do without manifesting my thoughts to the elders?” Abba Pimen answered, “Abba John the Short said, ‘The enemy rejoices over nothing so much as over those who do not manifest their thoughts.’”

*The Desert Christian, Benedicta Ward, Macmillan Publishing, p. 181*

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