

**C**ORPOREAL BEAUTY indeed God has confined within the limits of nature, but grace of soul is released from the constraint and bondage arising from that cause inasmuch as it is far superior to any bodily symmetry: and it depends entirely upon ourselves and the grace of God. For our Master, being merciful, has in this special way honored our race, that He has entrusted to the necessity of nature the inferior things which contribute nothing much to our advantage, and in their issue are matters of indifference, but of the things which are really noble He has caused us to be ourselves the artificers. For if He had placed corporeal beauty also under our control we should have been subjected to excessive anxiety, and should have wasted all our time upon things which are of no profit, and should have grievously neglected our soul.

For if, even as it is, when we have not this power in ourselves, we make violent efforts, and give ourselves up to shadow painting, and because we cannot in reality produce bodily beauty, cunningly devise imitations by means of paints, and dyes, and dressing of hair, and arrangement of garments, and penciling of eyebrows, and many other contrivances: what leisure should we have set apart for the soul and serious matters, if we had it in our power to transfigure the body into a really symmetrical shape? For probably, if this were our business, we should not have any other, but should spend all our time upon it: decking the bondmaid [*the body*] with countless decorations, but letting her who is the mistress of this bond-maid [*the soul*] lie perpetually in a state of deformity and neglect. For this reason God, having delivered us from this vain occupation, implanted in us the power of working upon the nobler element, and he who cannot turn an ugly body into a comely one, can raise the soul, even when it has been reduced to the extremity of ugliness, to the very acme of grace, and make it so amiable and desirable that not only are good men brought to long after it, but even He who is the Sovereign and God of all, even as the Psalmist also when discoursing concerning this beauty, said, “And the king shall desire thy beauty.”

Saint John Chrysostom, *Letters to the Fallen Theodore*,  
Letter I.13, NPNF, Vol. IX, pp. 102–3

**C**OUNTS AND GOVERNORS, who have entrance into the palace to the king, are in much fear, how they shall present their accounts, and lest for some mistake in answering for themselves they should be brought to trial and punishment; but simple country folk, who have never set eyes on a prince, pass their days without anxiety. That is the way with this world beneath the sky, from kings down to the poor. Knowing nothing of the glory of Christ, they care only about matters of this life. Not readily does any one bethink himself of the day of judgment. But those who in thought enter in before Christ’s judgment seat, where His throne is, and pass their lives in His presence, are in fear and trembling continually, to make no mistake concerning His holy commandments.

St Macarius the Great, *Fifty Spiritual Homilies*,  
tr. Mason, Homily xv, p. 115

**W**HEN THE LORD strikes you with sore affliction or sickness, or misfortune, then be assured that He will also truly send you consolation, and will afterwards bestow upon you the grace of peace, strength, and joy corresponding to your previous sufferings. For, “Compassionate and merciful is the Lord, long suffering and plenteous in mercy; not unto the end will He be angered, neither unto eternity will He be wroth. Not according to our iniquities hath He dealt with us, neither according to our sins hath He rewarded us.” (Psalm 102:8–10)

Saint John of Kronstadt, *My Life in Christ*, pp. 132–3

## *Pearls from the Holy Fathers*

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