

choice, but also through the power of God and with the help of the Holy Spirit, you will be able to deliver yourself from the three powerful giants of the devil. For when real knowledge, mindfulness of God's word and true ardour are firmly established in the soul through active grace and are carefully guarded, the combination of these three expels from the soul and obliterates every trace of forgetfulness, ignorance, and laziness, and henceforth grace reigns within it, through Christ Jesus our Lord. May He be glorified through all the ages. Amen.

ST HESYCHIOS THE PRIEST

Introductory Note

St Nikodimos identifies the writer of the work that follows, *On Watchfulness and Holiness*, with Hesychios of Jerusalem, author of many Biblical commentaries, who lived in the first half of the fifth century. But it is today accepted that *On Watchfulness and Holiness* is the work of an entirely different Hesychios, who was abbot of the Monastery of the Mother of God of the Burning Bush (Vatos) at Sinai. Hesychios of Sinai's date is uncertain. He is probably later than St John Klimakos (sixth or seventh century), with whose book *The Ladder of Divine Ascent* he seems to be familiar; possibly he lived in the eighth or ninth century. As well as drawing upon Klimakos, he incorporates in his work passages from St Mark the Ascetic and St Maximos the Confessor.¹

St Nikodimos commends the work of St Hesychios especially for its teaching on watchfulness, inner attentiveness and the guarding of the heart. Hesychios has a warm devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus, and this makes his treatise of particular value to all who use the Jesus Prayer.*

We have followed the numbering of sections as given in the Greek *Philokalia*, which differs from that in Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, xciii.

¹For further details, see the footnotes to our translation; and compare J. Kirchmeyer, 'Hésychios le Sinaïte et ses Centuries', in *Le Millénaire du Mont Athos 963-1963. Études et Mélanges*, i (Chevetogne, 1963), pp. 319-29.

On Watchfulness and Holiness

WRITTEN FOR THEODOULOS

1. Watchfulness is a spiritual method which, if sedulously practised over a long period, completely frees us with God's help from impassioned thoughts, impassioned words and evil actions. It leads, in so far as this is possible, to a sure knowledge of the inapprehensible God, and helps us to penetrate the divine and hidden mysteries. It enables us to fulfil every divine commandment in the Old and New Testaments and bestows upon us every blessing of the age to come. It is, in the true sense, purity of heart, a state blessed by Christ when He says: 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God' (Matt. 5:8); and one which, because of its spiritual nobility and beauty – or, rather, because of our negligence – is now extremely rare among monks. Because this is its nature, watchfulness is to be bought only at a great price. But once established in us, it guides us to a true and holy way of life. It teaches us how to activate the three aspects of our soul correctly, and how to keep a firm guard over the senses. It promotes the daily growth of the four principal virtues, and is the basis of our contemplation.

2. The great lawgiver Moses – or, rather, the Holy Spirit – indicates the pure, comprehensive and ennobling character of this virtue, and teaches us how to acquire and perfect it, when he says: 'Be attentive to yourself, lest there arise in your heart a secret thing which is an iniquity' (Deut. 15:9. LXX). Here the phrase 'a secret thing' refers to the first appearance of an evil thought. This the Fathers call a provocation introduced into the heart by the devil. As soon as this thought appears in our intellect, our own thoughts chase after it and enter into impassioned intercourse with it.

3. Watchfulness is a way embracing every virtue, every com-

mandment. It is the heart's stillness and, when free from mental images, it is the guarding of the intellect.

4. Just as a man blind from birth does not see the sun's light, so one who fails to pursue watchfulness does not see the rich radiance of divine grace. He cannot free himself from evil thoughts, words and actions, and because of these thoughts and actions he will not be able freely to pass the lords of hell when he dies.

5. Attentiveness is the heart's stillness, unbroken by any thought. In this stillness the heart breathes and invokes, endlessly and without ceasing, only Jesus Christ who is the Son of God and Himself God. It confesses Him who alone has power to forgive our sins, and with His aid it courageously faces its enemies. Through this invocation enfolded continually in Christ, who secretly divines all hearts, the soul does everything it can to keep its sweetness and its inner struggle hidden from men, so that the devil, coming upon it surreptitiously, does not lead it into evil and destroy its precious work.

6. Watchfulness is a continual fixing and halting of thought at the entrance to the heart. In this way predatory and murderous thoughts are marked down as they approach and what they say and do is noted; and we can see in what specious and delusive form the demons are trying to deceive the intellect. If we are conscientious in this, we can gain much experience and knowledge of spiritual warfare.

7. In one who is attempting to dam up the source of evil thoughts and actions, continuity of watchful attention in the intellect is produced by fear of hell and fear of God, by God's withdrawals from the soul; and by the advent of trials which chasten and instruct. For these withdrawals and unexpected trials help us to correct our life, especially when, having once experienced the tranquillity of watchfulness, we neglect it. Continuity of attention produces inner stability; inner stability produces a natural intensification of watchfulness; and this intensification gradually and in due measure gives contemplative insight into spiritual warfare. This in its turn is succeeded by persistence in the Jesus Prayer and by the state that Jesus confers, in which the intellect, free from all images, enjoys complete quietude.

8. When the mind, taking refuge in Christ and calling upon Him, stands firm and repels its unseen enemies, like a wild beast facing a pack of hounds from a good position of defence, then it inwardly

anticipates their inner ambushes well in advance. Through continually invoking Jesus the peacemaker against them, it remains invulnerable.

9. If you are an adept, initiated into the mysteries and standing before God at dawn (cf. Ps. 5:3), you will divine the meaning of my words. Otherwise be watchful and you will discover it.

10. Much water makes up the sea. But extreme watchfulness and the Prayer of Jesus Christ, undistracted by thoughts, are the necessary basis for inner vigilance and unfathomable stillness of soul, for the deeps of secret and singular contemplation, for the humility that knows and assesses, for rectitude and love. This watchfulness and this Prayer must be intense, concentrated and unremitting.

11. It is written: 'Not everyone who says to Me: "Lord, Lord" shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of My Father' (Matt. 7:21). The will of the Father is indicated in the words: 'You who love the Lord, hate evil' (Ps. 97:10). Hence we should both pray the Prayer of Jesus Christ and hate our evil thoughts. In this way we do God's will.

12. Through His incarnation God gave us the model for a holy life and recalled us from our ancient fall. In addition to many other things, He taught us, feeble as we are, that we should fight against the demons with humility, fasting, prayer and watchfulness. For when, after His baptism, He went into the desert and the devil came up to Him as though He were merely a man, He began His spiritual warfare by fasting and won the battle by this means – though, being God, and God of gods, He had no need of any such means at all.

13. I shall now tell you in plain, straightforward language what I consider to be the types of watchfulness which gradually cleanse the intellect from impassioned thoughts. In these times of spiritual warfare I have no wish to conceal beneath words whatever in this treatise may be of use, especially to more simple people. As St Paul puts it: 'Pay attention, my child Timothy, to what you read' (cf. 1 Tim. 4:13).

14. One type of watchfulness consists in closely scrutinizing every mental image or provocation; for only by means of a mental image can Satan fabricate an evil thought and insinuate this into the intellect in order to lead it astray.

15. A second type of watchfulness consists in freeing the heart from all thoughts, keeping it profoundly silent and still, and in praying.

16. A third type consists in continually and humbly calling upon the Lord Jesus Christ for help.

17. A fourth type is always to have the thought of death in one's mind.

18. These types of watchfulness, my child, act like doorkeepers and bar entry to evil thoughts. Elsewhere, if God gives me words, I shall deal more fully with a further type which, along with the others, is also effective: this is to fix one's gaze on heaven and to pay no attention to anything material.

19. When we have to some extent cut off the causes of the passions, we should devote our time to spiritual contemplation; for if we fail to do this we shall easily revert to the fleshly passions, and so achieve nothing but the complete darkening of our intellect and its reversion to material things.

20. The man engaged in spiritual warfare should simultaneously possess humility, perfect attentiveness, the power of rebuttal, and prayer. He should possess humility because, as his fight is against the arrogant demons, he will then have the help of Christ in his heart, for 'the Lord hates the arrogant' (cf. Prov. 3:34. LXX). He should possess attentiveness in order always to keep his heart clear of all thoughts, even of those that appear to be good. He should possess the power of rebuttal so that, whenever he recognizes the devil, he may at once repulse him angrily; for it is written: 'And I shall reply to those who vilify me; will not my soul be subject to God?' (Pss. 119:42; 62:1. LXX). He should possess prayer so that as soon as he has rebutted the devil he may call to Christ with 'cries that cannot be uttered' (Rom. 8:26). Then he will see the devil broken and routed by the venerable name of Jesus – will see him and his dissimulation scattered like dust or smoke before the wind.

21. If we have not attained prayer that is free from thoughts, we have no weapon to fight with. By this prayer I mean the prayer which is ever active in the inner shrine of the soul, and which by invoking Christ scourges and sears our secret enemy.

22. The glance of your intellect should be quick and keen, able to perceive the invading demons. When you perceive one, you should at once rebut it, crushing it like the head of a serpent. At the same time, call imploringly to Christ, and you will experience God's unseen help. Then you will clearly discern the heart's rectitude.

23. Just as someone in the midst of a crowd, holding a mirror

and looking at it, sees not only his own face but also the faces of those looking in the mirror with him, so someone who looks into his own heart sees in it not only his own state, but also the black faces of the demons.

24. The intellect cannot conquer a demonic fantasy by its own unaided powers, and should never attempt to do so. The demons are a sly lot: they pretend to be overcome and then trip us up by filling us with self-esteem. But when we call upon Jesus Christ, they do not dare to play their tricks with us even for a second.

25. Do not become conceited like the ancient Israelites, and so betray yourself into the hands of your spiritual enemies. For the Israelites, liberated from the Egyptians by the God of all, devised a molten idol to help them (cf. Exod. 32:4).

26. The molten idol denotes our crippled intellect. So long as the intellect invokes Jesus Christ against the demons, it easily routs them, putting their invisible forces to flight with the skill born of knowledge. But when it stupidly places all its confidence in itself, it falls headlong like a hawk. For it is written: 'My heart has trusted in God and I am helped; and my flesh flowers again' (Ps. 28:7. LXX); and 'Who but the Lord will rise up for me and stand with me against the host of wicked thoughts?' (cf. Ps. 94:16). Whoever places his confidence in himself and not in God will indeed fall headlong.

27. If you wish to engage in spiritual warfare, let that little animal, the spider, always be your example for stillness of heart; otherwise you will not be as still in your intellect as you should be. The spider hunts small flies; but you will continually slay 'the children of Babylon' (cf. Ps. 137:9) if during your struggle you are as still in your soul as is the spider; and, in the course of this slaughter, you will be blessed by the Holy Spirit.

28. It is impossible to find the Red Sea among the stars or to walk this earth without breathing air; so too it is impossible to cleanse our heart from impassioned thoughts and to expel its spiritual enemies without the frequent invocation of Jesus Christ.

29. Be watchful as you travel each day the narrow but joyous and exhilarating road of the mind, keeping your attention humbly in your heart, reproaching yourself, ready to rebut your enemies, thinking of your death and invoking Jesus Christ. You will then attain a vision of the Holy of Holies and be illumined by Christ with deep mysteries. For in Christ 'the treasures of wisdom and know-

ledge' are hidden, and in Him 'the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily' (Col. 2:3, 9). In the presence of Christ you will feel the Holy Spirit spring up within your soul. It is the Spirit who initiates man's intellect, so that it can see with 'unveiled face' (2 Cor. 3:18). For 'no one can say "Lord Jesus" except in the Holy Spirit' (1 Cor. 12:3). In other words, it is the Spirit who mystically confirms Christ's presence in us.

30. Those who love true knowledge should also be aware that the demons in their jealousy sometimes hide themselves and cease from open spiritual battle. Begrudging us the benefit, knowledge and progress towards God that we derive from the battle, they try to make us careless so that they can suddenly capture our intellect and again reduce our mind to inattention. Their unremitting purpose is to prevent the heart from being attentive, for they know how greatly such attentiveness enriches the soul. We on the contrary, through remembrance of our Lord Jesus Christ, should redouble our efforts to achieve spiritual contemplation; and then the intellect again finds itself engaged in battle. Let all we do be done with great humility and only, if I may put it like this, with the will of the Lord Himself.

31. We who live in coenobitic monasteries should of our own free choice gladly cut off our whole will through obedience to the abbot. In this way, with God's help, we shall become to some degree tractable and free from self-will. It is good to acquire this art, for then our bile will not be aroused and we shall not excite our incensive power unnaturally and uncontrollably, and so be deprived of communion with God in our unseen warfare. If we do not voluntarily cut off our self-will, it will become enraged with those who try to compel us to cut it off; and then our incensive power will become abusively aggressive and so destroy that knowledge of the warfare which we have gained only after great effort. The incensive power by nature is prone to be destructive. If it is turned against demonic thoughts it destroys them; but if it is roused against people it then destroys the good thoughts that are in us. In other words, the incensive power, although God-given as a weapon or a bow against evil thoughts, can be turned the other way and used to destroy good thoughts as well, for it destroys whatever it is directed against. I have seen a spirited dog destroying equally both wolves and sheep.

32. We should shun loose speech like an asp's venom and too

much company like a 'progeny of vipers' (Matt. 3:7), for it can plunge us into total forgetfulness of the inner struggle and bring the soul down from the heights of the joy that purity of heart gives us. This accursed forgetfulness is as opposed to attentiveness as water to fire, and forcibly fights against it all the time. Forgetfulness leads to negligence, and negligence to indifference, laziness and unnatural desire. In this way we return to where we started, like a dog to his own vomit (cf. 2 Pet. 2:22). So let us shun loose speech like deadly poison. As for forgetfulness and all its consequences, they can be cured by the most strict guarding of the intellect and by the constant invocation of our Lord Jesus Christ. For without Him, we can do nothing (cf. John 15:5).

33. One cannot befriend a snake and carry it about in one's shirt, or attain holiness while pampering and cherishing the body above its needs. It is the snake's nature to bite whoever tends it, and the body's to defile with sensual pleasure whoever indulges it. When it offends, the body should be whipped mercilessly like a drunken runaway slave; it should taste the Lord's scourge. Slavish nocturnal thing of perishable clay that it is, there must be no dallying allowed it; it must be made to recognize its true and imperishable mistress. Until you leave this world, do not trust the flesh. 'The will of the flesh,' it is said, 'is hostile to God; for it is not subject to the law of God. The flesh desires against the Spirit. They that are in the flesh cannot conform to God's will; but we are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit' (cf. Rom. 8:7-9; Gal. 5:17).

34. The task of moral judgment is always to prompt the soul's incisive power to engage in inner warfare and to make us self-critical. The task of wisdom is to prompt the intelligence to strict watchfulness, constancy, and spiritual contemplation. The task of righteousness is to direct the appetitive aspect of the soul towards holiness and towards God. Fortitude's task is to govern the five senses and to keep them always under control, so that through them neither our inner self, the heart, nor our outer self, the body, is defiled.

35. 'His majesty is upon Israel' (Ps. 68:34. LXX) – that is, upon the intellect that beholds, so far as this is possible, the beauty of the glory of God Himself. 'And His strength is in the clouds' (*ibid.*), that is, in radiant souls that gaze towards the dawn. In such souls it reveals the Beloved, He who sits at the right hand of God

and floods them with light as the sun's rays flood the white clouds.

36. A single sinner, says the Holy Scripture, destroys much righteousness (cf. Eccles. 9:18); while an intellect that sins loses its heavenly food and drink (cf. Eccles. 9:7).

37. We are not mightier than Samson, wiser than Solomon, more knowledgeable about God than David, and we do not love God better than did Peter, prince of the apostles. So let us not have confidence in ourselves; for he who has confidence in himself will fall headlong.

38. Let us learn humility from Christ, humiliation from David, and from Peter to shed tears over what has happened; but let us also learn to avoid the despair of Samson, Judas, and that wisest of men, Solomon.

39. The devil, with all his powers, 'walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour' (1 Pet. 5:8). So you must never relax your attentiveness of heart, your watchfulness, your power of rebuttal or your prayer to Jesus Christ our God. You will not find a greater help than Jesus in all your life, for He alone, as God, knows the deceitful ways of the demons, their subtlety and their guile.

40. Let your soul, then, trust in Christ, let it call on Him and never fear; for it fights, not alone, but with the aid of a mighty King, Jesus Christ, Creator of all that is, both bodiless and embodied, visible and invisible.

41. The more the rain falls on the earth, the softer it makes it; similarly, Christ's holy name gladdens the earth of our heart the more we call upon it.

42. Those who lack experience should know that it is only through the unceasing watchfulness of our intellect and the constant invocation of Jesus Christ, our Creator and God, that we, coarse and cloddish in mind and body as we are, can overcome our bodiless and invisible enemies; for not only are they subtle, swift, malevolent and skilled in malice, but they have an experience in warfare gained over all the years since Adam. The inexperienced have as weapons the Jesus Prayer and the impulse to test and discern what is from God. The experienced have the best method and teacher of all: the activity, discernment and peace of God Himself.

43. Just as a child, young and guileless, delights in seeing a

conjurer and in his innocence follows him about, so our soul, simple and good because created thus by its Master, delights in the delusive provocations of the devil. Once deceived it pursues something sinister as though it were good, just as a dove is lured away by the enemy of her children. In this way its thoughts become entwined in the fantasy provoked by the devil, whether this happens to be the face of a beautiful woman or some other thing forbidden by the commandments of Christ. Then, seeking to contrive some means through which it can actually attain what attracts it, the soul assents to the provocation and, to its own condemnation, turns this unlawful mental fantasy into a concrete action by means of the body.

44. Such is the cunning of the evil one, and with these arrows he poisons every soul. It is therefore not safe to allow these thoughts to enter the heart in order to increase the intellect's experience of warfare, especially to start with, when the soul still greatly enjoys these demonic provocations and delights in pursuing them. But as soon as we perceive them, we should counter-attack and repulse them. Once the intellect has matured in this excellent activity, it is disciplined and perceptive. From then on it is unceasingly engaged in the battle of perceiving in their true light these 'little foxes', as the Prophet calls them (S. of S. 2:15), and it easily lays hold of them. Only when we have such knowledge and experience should we admit them and censure them.

45. Just as it is impossible for fire and water to pass through the same pipe together, so it is impossible for sin to enter the heart without first knocking at its door in the form of a fantasy provoked by the devil.

46. The provocation comes first, then our coupling* with it, or the mingling of our thoughts with those of the wicked demons. Third comes our assent to the provocation, with both sets of intermingling thoughts contriving how to commit the sin in practice. Fourth comes the concrete action – that is, the sin itself. If, however, the intellect is attentive and watchful, and at once repulses the provocation by counter-attacking and gainsaying it and invoking the Lord Jesus, its consequences remain inoperative; for the devil, being a bodiless intellect, can deceive our souls only by means of fantasies and thoughts. David was speaking about these provocations of the devil when he said: 'Early in the morning I destroyed all the wicked of the earth, that I might cut off all evildoers

from the city of the Lord' (Ps. 101:8. LXX); and Moses was referring to the act of assent to a provocation in his words: 'You shall make no covenant with them, nor with their gods' (Exod. 23:32).

47. Intellect is invisibly interlocked in battle with intellect, the demonic intellect with our own. So from the depths of our heart we must at each instant call on Christ to drive the demonic intellect away from us and in His compassion give us the victory.

48. Let your model for stillness of heart be the man who holds a mirror into which he looks. Then you will see both good and evil imprinted on your heart.

49. See that you never have a single thought in your heart, whether senseless or sensible; then you can easily recognize that alien tribe, the firstborn sons of the Egyptians.

50. Watchfulness is a graceful and radiant virtue when guided by Thee, Christ our God, and accompanied by the alertness and deep humility of the human intellect. Its branches reach to the seas and to deep abysses of contemplation, its shoots to the rivers of the beautiful and divine mysteries (cf. Ps. 80:11). Again, it cleanses the intellect consumed in ungodliness by the brine of demonic thoughts and the hostile will of the flesh, which is death (cf. Rom. 8:6-8).

51. Watchfulness is like Jacob's ladder: God is at the top while the angels climb it. It rids us of everything bad, cuts out loose chatter, abuse, backbiting, and all other evil practices of this kind. Yet in doing this, not for an instant does it lose its own sweetness.

52. We should zealously cultivate watchfulness, my brethren; and when – our mind purified in Christ Jesus – we are exalted by the vision it confers, we should review our sins and our former life, so that shattered and humbled at the thought of them we may never lose the help of Jesus Christ our God in the invisible battle. If because of pride, self-esteem or self-love we are deprived of Jesus' help, we shall lose that purity of heart through which God is known to man. For, as the Beatitude states, purity of heart is the ground for the vision of God (cf. Matt. 5:8).

53. An intellect that does not neglect its inner struggle will find that – along with the other blessings which come from always keeping a guard on the heart – the five bodily senses, too, are freed from all external evil influences. For while the intellect is wholly

attentive to its own virtue and watchfulness and longs to enjoy holy thoughts, it does not allow itself to be plundered and carried away when vain material thoughts approach it through the senses. On the contrary, recognizing the wiliness of these thoughts, it withdraws the senses almost completely into itself.

54. Guard your mind and you will not be harassed by temptations. But if you fail to guard it, accept patiently whatever trial comes.¹

55. Just as the bitterness of absinth helps a poor appetite, so misfortunes help a bad character.

56. If you do not want to suffer evil, do not inflict it, since the suffering of it inevitably follows its infliction. 'For whatever a man sows he will also reap' (Gal. 6:7). Reaping unwillingly the wickedness we deliberately sow, we should marvel at God's justice.

57. The intellect is made blind by these three passions: avarice, self-esteem and sensual pleasure.

58. These three passions on their own dull spiritual knowledge and faith, the foster-brothers of our nature.

59. It is because of them that wrath, anger, war, murder and all other evils have such power over mankind.

60. He who does not know the truth cannot truly have faith; for by nature knowledge precedes faith. What is said in Scripture is said not solely for us to understand, but also for us to act upon.

61. We should therefore set about our task, for by doing so and advancing steadily we will find that hope in God, sure faith, inner knowledge, release from temptations, gifts of grace, heart-felt confession and prolonged tears come to the faithful through prayer. For not only these blessings, but the patient acceptance of affliction, sincere forgiveness of our neighbour, knowledge of the spiritual law, the discovery of God's justice, frequent visitations of the Holy Spirit, the giving of spiritual treasures and all that God has promised to bestow to men of faith now and in the future age – in short, the manifestation of the soul in accordance with the image of God – can come only through God's grace and man's faith when he guards his mind with great humility and undistracted prayer.

¹ §§ 54–60 are identical with St Mark the Ascetic, *On the Spiritual Law*, §§ 163, 115–17, 101, 103–4 and 110 (see above, pp. 121, 118–117). Hesychios, § 61, is also identical with a passage in one of Mark's writings not found in the *Philokalia: Dispute with a Lawyer*, § 8 (Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, lxxv, 1081D–1084A).

62. We have learned from experience that for one who wishes to purify his heart it is a truly great blessing constantly to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus against his intelligible enemies. Notice how what I speak of from experience concurs with the testimony of Scripture. It is written: 'Prepare yourself, O Israel, to call upon the name of the Lord your God' (cf. Amos. 4:12. LXX); and the Apostle says: 'Pray without ceasing' (1 Thess. 5:17). Our Lord Himself says: 'Without Me you can do nothing. If a man dwells in Me, and I in him, then he brings forth much fruit'; and again: 'If a man does not dwell in Me, he is cast out as a branch' (John 15:5–6). Prayer is a great blessing, and it embraces all blessings, for it purifies the heart, in which God is seen by the believer.

63. Because humility is by nature something that exalts, something loved by God which destroys in us almost all that is evil and hateful to Him, for this reason it is difficult to attain. Even if you can easily find someone who to some extent practises a number of virtues, you will hardly find the odour of humility in him, however you search for it. It is something that can be acquired only with much diligence. Indeed, Scripture refers to the devil as 'unclean' because from the beginning he rejected humility and espoused arrogance. As a result he is called an unclean spirit throughout the Scriptures. For what bodily uncleanness could one who is completely without body, fleshless and weightless, bring about in himself so as to be called 'unclean' as a result? Clearly he was called unclean because of his arrogance, defiling himself thus after having been a pure and radiant angel. 'Everyone that is arrogant is unclean before the Lord' (Prov. 16:5. LXX), for it is written that the first sin was arrogance (cf. Eccles. 10:13). And it was in arrogance that Pharaoh said: 'I do not know the Lord, neither will I let Israel go' (Exod. 5:2).

64. If we are concerned with our salvation, there are many things the intellect can do in order to secure for us the blessed gift of humility. For example, it can recollect the sins we have committed in word, action and thought; and there are many other things which, reviewed in contemplation, contribute to our humility. True humility is also brought about by meditating daily on the achievements of our brethren, by extolling their natural superiorities and by comparing our gifts with theirs. When the intellect sees in this way how worthless we are and how far we fall short of the perfection

of our brethren, we will regard ourselves as dust and ashes, and not as men but as some kind of cur, more defective in every respect and lower than all men on earth.

65. St Basil the Great, mouthpiece of Christ and pillar of the Church, says that a great help towards not sinning and not committing daily the same faults is for us to review in our conscience at the end of each day what we have done wrong and what we have done right.¹ Job did this with regard both to himself and to his children (cf. Job 1:5). These daily reckonings illumine a man's hour by hour behaviour.

66. Someone else wise in the things of God has said that as the fruit begins with the flower, so the practice of the ascetic life begins with self-control.² Let us then learn to control ourselves with due measure and judgment, as the Fathers teach us. Let us pass all the hours of the day in the guarding of the intellect, for by doing this we shall with God's help and with a certain forcefulness be able to quell and reduce the evil in us. For the spiritual life, through which the kingdom of heaven is given, does indeed require a certain forcefulness (cf. Matt. 11:12).

67. Dispassion and humility lead to spiritual knowledge. Without them, no one can see God.³

68. He who always concentrates on the inner life will acquire self-restraint. He will also be able to contemplate, theologize and pray. This is what the Apostle meant when he said: 'Walk in the Spirit, and you will not fulfil the desire of the flesh' (Gal. 5:16).

69. One ignorant of the spiritual path is not on his guard against his impassioned thoughts, but devotes himself entirely to the flesh. He is either a glutton, or dissipated, or full of resentment, anger and rancour. As a result, he darkens his intellect, or he practises excessive asceticism and so confuses his mind.

70. He who has renounced such things as marriage, possessions and other worldly pursuits is outwardly a monk, but may not yet be a monk inwardly. Only he who has renounced the impassioned thoughts of his inner self, which is the intellect, is a true monk. It is

¹ See St Basil, 'An Ascetic Discourse' (323CD), in W. K. Lowther Clarke, *The Ascetic Works of Saint Basil* (London, 1925), p. 139.

² A quotation from a work by Neilos (or possibly by Evagrius), *On the Eight Spirits of Wickedness* (Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, lxxix, 1145A).

³ §§ 67-75 are identical with St Maximus the Confessor, *Fourth Century on Love*, §§ 58, 64, 65, 50-52, 63; *Second Century*, § 40; *First Century*, § 76; *Fourth Century*, § 72.

easy to be a monk in one's outer self if one wants to be; but no small struggle is required to be a monk in one's inner self.

71. Who in this generation is completely free from impassioned thoughts and has been granted uninterrupted, pure, and spiritual prayer? Yet this is the mark of the inner monk.

72. Many passions are hidden in the soul; they can be checked only when their causes are revealed.

73. Do not devote all your time to your body but apply to it a measure of asceticism appropriate to its strength and then turn all your intellect to what is within. 'Bodily asceticism has only a limited use, but true devotion is useful in all things' (1 Tim. 4:8).

74. We grow proud when the passions cease to be active in us, and this whether they are inactive because their causes have been eradicated or because the demons have deliberately withdrawn in order to deceive us.

75. Humility and ascetic hardship free a man from all sin, for the one cuts out the passions of the soul, the other those of the body. It is for this reason that the Lord says: 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God' (Matt. 5:8). They shall see God and the riches that are in Him when they have purified themselves through love and self-control; and the greater their purity, the more they will see.

76. David's watchman prefigures the circumcision of the heart; for the guarding of the intellect is a watchtower commanding a view over our whole spiritual life (cf. 2 Sam. 18:24).

77. Just as in the world of the senses we are harmed when we see something harmful, so in the world of the intellect the same is true.

78. Just as someone who wounds the heart of a plant withers it completely, so too sin, when it wounds a man's heart, withers it completely. We must watch for such moments, because brigands are always at work.

79. Wishing to show that to fulfil every commandment is a duty, whereas sonship is a gift given to men through His own Blood, the Lord said, 'When you have done all that is commanded you, say: "We are useless servants: we have only done what was our duty"' (Luke 17:10). Thus the kingdom of heaven is not a reward for works, but a gift of grace prepared by the Master for His faithful servants. A slave does not demand his freedom as a reward: but he

gives thanks as one who is in debt, and he receives freedom as a gift.¹

80. 'Christ died on account of our sins in accordance with the Scriptures' (1 Cor. 15:3); and to those who serve Him well He gives freedom. 'Well done, good and faithful servant,' He says, 'you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things: enter into the joy of your Lord' (Matt. 25:21). He who relies on theoretical knowledge alone is not yet a faithful servant: a faithful servant is one who expresses his faith in Christ through obedience to His commandments.

81. He who honours the Lord does what the Lord bids. When he sins or is disobedient, he patiently accepts what comes as something he deserves. If you love true knowledge, devote yourself to the ascetic life; for mere theoretical knowledge puffs a man up (cf. 1 Cor. 8:1).

82. Unexpected trials are sent by God to teach us to practise the ascetic life.

83. Light is the property of a star, as simplicity and humility are the property of a holy and God-fearing man. Nothing distinguishes more clearly the disciples of Christ than a humble spirit and a simple way of life. The four Gospels shout this aloud. Whoever has not lived in this humble manner is deprived of his share in Him who 'humbled Himself . . . to death, even the death of the cross' (Phil. 2:8), the actual Lawgiver of the divine Gospels.

84. It is said that those who thirst should go to the waters (cf. Isa. 55:1). Those who thirst for God should go in purity of mind. But he who through such purity soars aloft should also keep an eye on the earth of his own lowliness and simplicity, for no one is more exalted than he who is humble. Just as when light is absent, all things are dark and gloomy, so when humility is absent, all our efforts to please God are vain and pointless.

85. 'Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep His commandments' (Eccles. 12:13), both where the intellect and where the senses are concerned. If you force yourself to keep the commandments on the plane of the intellect, you will seldom need great effort to keep those that refer to the senses. In the words of David the Prophet, 'I wished to carry out Thy will and Thy law in my inward parts' (cf. Ps. 40:8. LXX).

¹ §§ 79-82 are identical with St Mark the Ascetic, *On Those who Think that They are Made Righteous by Works*, §§ 2-8 (see above, pp. 125-6).

86. If a man does not carry out the will and law of God 'in his inward parts', that is, in his heart, he will not be able to carry them out easily in the outward sphere of the senses either. The careless and unwatchful man will say to God: 'I do not want to know Thy ways' (Job 21:14. LXX), obviously because he lacks divine illumination. But he who participates in that light will be confident and steadfast in matters that concern God.

87. Just as salt seasons our bread and other food and keeps certain meats from spoiling for quite a time, so the spiritual sweetness and marvellous working which result from the guarding of the intellect effect something similar. For in a divine manner they season and sweeten both the inner and the outer self, driving away the stench of evil thoughts and keeping us continually in communion with good thoughts.

88. Many of our thoughts come from demonic provocation, and from these derive our evil outward actions. If with the help of Jesus we instantly quell the thought, we will avoid its corresponding outward action. We will enrich ourselves with the sweetness of divine knowledge and so will find God, who is everywhere. Holding the mirror of the intellect firmly towards God, we will be illumined constantly as pure glass is by the sun. Then the intellect, having reached the term of its desires, will in Him cease from all other contemplation.

89. Because every thought enters the heart in the form of a mental image of some sensible object, the blessed light of the Divinity will illumine the heart only when the heart is completely empty of everything and so free from all form. Indeed, this light reveals itself to the pure intellect in the measure to which the intellect is purged of all concepts.

90. The more closely attentive you are to your mind, the greater the longing with which you will pray to Jesus; and the more carelessly you examine your mind, the further you will separate yourself from Him. Just as close attentiveness brilliantly illumines the mind, so the lapse from watchfulness and from the sweet invocation of Jesus will darken it completely. All this happens naturally, not in any other way; and you will experience it if you test it out in practice. For there is no virtue - least of all this blessed light-generating activity - which cannot be learnt from experience.

91. To invoke Jesus continually with a sweet longing is to fill

the heart in its great attentiveness with joy and tranquillity. But it is Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Himself God, cause and creator of all blessings, who completely purifies the heart; for it is written: 'I am God who makes peace' (cf. Isa. 45:7).

92. The soul that is being given blessings and sweetness by Jesus repays her Benefactor by offering thanks to Him with a certain exultation and love; joyfully and gratefully she calls upon Him who gives her peace, and with the eyes of the intellect she sees Him within herself destroying the demonic fantasies.

93. 'My spiritual eyes have looked upon my spiritual enemies,' says David the Prophet, 'and my ear shall hear those who in their wickedness rise up against me' (cf. Ps. 92:11, LXX). And again: 'I have seen God's requital of sinners take place within me' (cf. Ps. 91:8). When there are no fantasies or mental images in the heart, the intellect is established in its true nature, ready to contemplate whatever is full of delight, spiritual and close to God.

94. Watchfulness and the Jesus Prayer, as I have said, mutually reinforce one another; for close attentiveness goes with constant prayer, while prayer goes with close watchfulness and attentiveness of intellect.

95. The unremitting remembrance of death is a powerful trainer of body and soul. Vaulting over all that lies between ourselves and death, we should always visualize it, and even the very bed on which we shall breathe our last, and everything else connected with it.

96. If you want never to be wounded, do not succumb to sleep. There are only two choices: to fall and be destroyed, stripped of all virtue; or, armed with the intellect, to stand firm through everything. For the enemy and his host stand always ready for battle.

97. A certain God-given equilibrium is produced in our intellect through the constant remembrance and invocation of our Lord Jesus Christ, provided that we do not neglect this constant spiritual entreaty or our close watchfulness and diligence. Indeed, our true task is always the same and is always accomplished in the same way: to call upon our Lord Jesus Christ with a burning heart so that His holy name intercedes for us. In virtue as in vice, constancy is the mother of habit; once acquired, it rules us like nature. When the intellect is in such a state of equilibrium, it searches out its enemies like a hound searching for a hare in a thicket. But the hound searches in order to get food, the intellect in order to destroy.

98. Whenever we are filled with evil thoughts, we should throw the invocation of our Lord Jesus Christ into their midst. Then, as experience has taught us, we shall see them instantly dispersed like smoke in the air. Once the intellect is left to itself again, we can renew our constant attentiveness and our invocation. Whenever we are distracted, we should act in this way.

99. Just as it is impossible to fight battles without weapons, or to swim a great sea with clothes on, or to live without breathing, so without humility and the constant prayer to Christ it is impossible to master the art of inward spiritual warfare or to set about it and pursue it skilfully.

100. That great spiritual master David said to the Lord: 'I shall preserve my strength through Thee' (cf. Ps. 59:9, LXX). So the strength of the heart's stillness, mother of all the virtues, is preserved in us through our being helped by the Lord. For He has given us the commandments, and when we call upon Him constantly He expels from us that foul forgetfulness which destroys the heart's stillness as water destroys fire. Therefore, monk, do not 'sleep unto death' (Ps. 13:3, LXX) because of your negligence; but lash the enemy with the name of Jesus and, as a certain wise man has said, let the name of Jesus adhere to your breath, and then you will know the blessings of stillness.¹

101. When in fear, trembling and unworthiness we are yet permitted to receive the divine, undefiled Mysteries of Christ, our King and our God, we should then display even greater watchfulness, strictness and guard over our hearts, so that the divine fire, the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, may consume our sins and stains, great and small. For when that fire enters into us, it at once drives the evil spirits from our heart and remits the sins we have previously committed, leaving the intellect free from the turbulence of wicked thoughts. And if after this, standing at the entrance to our heart, we keep strict watch over the intellect, when we are again permitted to receive those Mysteries the divine body will illumine our intellect still more and make it shine like a star.

102. Forgetfulness can extinguish our guard over our intellect as water extinguishes fire; but the continuous repetition of the

¹ See St John Klimakos, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, § 27 (Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, lxxxviii, 1112C; English translation by Archimandrite Lazarus Moore, London, 1959, p. 246).

Jesus Prayer combined with strict watchfulness uproots it from our heart. The Jesus Prayer requires watchfulness as a lantern requires a candle.

103. We should strive to preserve the precious gifts which preserve us from all evil, whether on the plane of the senses or on that of the intellect. These gifts are the guarding of the intellect with the invocation of Jesus Christ, continuous insight into the heart's depths, stillness of mind unbroken even by thoughts which appear to be good, and the capacity to be empty of all thought. In this way the demons will not steal in undetected; and if we suffer pain through remaining centred in the heart, consolation is at hand.

104. The heart which is constantly guarded, and is not allowed to receive the forms, images and fantasies of the dark and evil spirits, is conditioned by nature to give birth from within itself to thoughts filled with light. For just as coal engenders a flame, or a flame lights a candle, so will God, who from our baptism dwells in our heart, kindle our mind to contemplation when He finds it free from the winds of evil and protected by the guarding of the intellect.

105. The name of Jesus should be repeated over and over in the heart as flashes of lightning are repeated over and over in the sky before rain. Those who have experience of the intellect and of inner warfare know this very well. We should wage this spiritual warfare with a precise sequence: first, with attentiveness; then, when we perceive the hostile thought attacking, we should strike at it angrily in the heart, cursing it as we do so; thirdly, we should direct our prayer against it, concentrating the heart through the invocation of Jesus Christ, so that the demonic fantasy may be dispersed at once, the intellect no longer pursuing it like a child deceived by some conjuror.

106. Let us exert ourselves like David, crying out 'Lord Jesus Christ' until our throats are sore; and let our spiritual eyes never cease to give us hope in the Lord our God (cf. Ps. 69:3).

107. If we constantly bear in mind the parable of the unjust judge, which the Lord related in order to show us that we ought always to pray and not to lose heart, we shall both profit and be vindicated (cf. Luke 18:1-8).

108. Just as he who looks at the sun cannot but fill his eyes with light, so he who always gazes intently into his heart cannot fail to be illumined.

109. Just as it is impossible to live this present life without eating or drinking, so it is impossible for the soul to achieve anything spiritual and in accordance with God's will, or to be free from mental sin, without that guarding of the intellect and purity of heart truly described as watchfulness; and this is so even if one forces oneself not to sin through the fear of punishment.

110. Nevertheless, those who force themselves to refrain from active sin are blessed by God, angels and men; for they take the kingdom of God by force (cf. Matt. 11:12).

111. The intellect's great gain from stillness is this: all the sins which formerly beat upon the intellect as thoughts and which, once admitted by the mind, were turned into outward acts of sin, are now cut off by mental watchfulness. For, with the help of our Lord Jesus Christ, this watchfulness does not allow these sins to enter our inner self and so to burgeon into outward acts of evil.

112. The Old Testament is an ikon of outward bodily asceticism. The Holy Gospel, or New Testament, is an ikon of attentiveness, that is, of purity of heart. For the Old Testament did not perfect or fulfil the relationship of the inner self to God – 'the law made no one perfect', as the Apostle says (cf. Heb. 7:19) – it simply forbade bodily sins. But to cut off evil thoughts from the heart, as the Gospel commands, contributes much more to purity of soul than an injunction against putting out a neighbour's eye or knocking out his teeth. Similarly, it contributes more than other bodily discipline and ascetic practice, such as fasting and self-control, sleeping on the ground, standing, vigils and the rest, which are related to the body and stop that aspect of the body which is vulnerable to passion from committing sinful acts. Like the Old Testament itself, these things are also good, for they train the outer self and are guard against the workings of passion; but they are not a defence against and they do not prevent mental sins, so as to free us, with God's help, from jealousy, anger, and so on.

113. If we preserve, as we should, that purity of heart or watch and guard of the intellect whose image is the New Testament, this will not only uproot all passions and evils from our hearts; it will also introduce joy, hopefulness, compunction, sorrow, tears, an understanding of ourselves and of our sins, mindfulness of death, true humility, unlimited love of God and man, and an intense and heartfelt longing for the divine.

114. Just as it is impossible when walking not to part the air, so it is impossible for a man's heart not to be assailed continually by demons or be secretly energized by them, however great his bodily asceticism.

115. If you wish to be 'in the Lord', do not just *seem* to be a monk, and good, and gentle, and always at one with God; decide to *be* such a person in truth. With all your strength pursue the virtue of attentiveness – that guard and watch of the intellect, that perfect stillness of heart and blessed state of the soul when free from images, which is all too rarely found in man.

116. This is the path of true spiritual wisdom. In great watchfulness and fervent desire travel along it with the Jesus Prayer, with humility and concentration, keeping the lips of both the senses and the intellect silent, self-controlled in food and drink and in all things of a seductive nature; travel along it with a mind trained in understanding, and with God's help it will teach you things you had not hoped for; it will give you knowledge, enlightenment and instruction of a kind to which your intellect was impervious while you were still walking in the murk of passions and dark deeds, sunk in forgetfulness and in the confusion of chaos.

117. Just as valleys produce copious wheat, so this wisdom produces copious blessings in the heart – or, rather, our Lord Jesus Christ produces them, for without Him we can do nothing (cf. John 15:5). At first, you will find that it is a ladder; then, a book to be read; then, as you advance, you will find that it is the heavenly city of Jerusalem, and you will have a clear spiritual vision of Christ, King of the hosts of Israel, together with His co-essential Father and the Holy Spirit, adored in our worship.

118. The demons always lead us into sin by means of deceitful fantasies. Through the fantasy of gaining wealth they led the wretched Judas to betray the Lord and God of all; through the deceit of worthless bodily comfort and of esteem, gain and glory they put the noose around his neck and brought him to age-long death. The scoundrels requited him with precisely the opposite of what their fantasy, or provocation, had suggested to him.

119. Do you see how the enemies of our salvation make us fall by means of their fantasies, deceits and empty promises? Satan himself was cast down like lightning from the heights because he fancied himself to be the equal of God (cf. Luke 10:18); and he sundered

Adam from God by making him fancy that he could be of divine rank (cf. Gen. 3:5). In the same way the lying and crafty enemy deceives all who fall into sin.

120. We embitter the heart with the poison of evil thoughts when we are led by forgetfulness to long neglect of inner attention and the Jesus Prayer. But we sweeten it with the sense of blessed delight when in intense desire for God we practise this attention and prayer resolutely, keenly and diligently in the mind's workshop. Then we are eager to pursue stillness of heart simply for the sweetness and delight it produces in the soul.

121. The science of sciences and art of arts is the mastery of evil thoughts. The best way to master them is to see with spiritual vision the fantasy in which the demonic provocation is concealed and to protect the mind from it. It is just the same as the way in which we protect our bodily eyes, looking sharply about us and doing all we can to prevent anything, however small, from striking them.

122. Just as snow will not produce a flame, or water a fire, or the thorn-bush a fig, so a person's heart will not be freed from demonic thoughts, words and actions until it has first purified itself inwardly, uniting watchfulness with the Jesus Prayer, attaining humility and stillness of soul, and eagerly pressing forward on its path. But in its lack of spiritual understanding, the inattentive soul will be devoid of every good and perfect thought, and barren and stupid as the mule. The soul's true peace lies in the gentle name of Jesus and in its emptying itself of impassioned thoughts.

123. When the soul conspires with the body in wickedness, then together they build a city of vanity and a tower of pride, and they people them with unholy thoughts. But the Lord disrupts and destroys their concord through the fear of hell (cf. Gen. 11:1-9), forcing the soul, our ruling part, to think and say things opposed to the body. Out of this fear there arises a division, 'because the will of the flesh is hostile to God, for it is not subject to the law of God' (Rom. 8:7).

124. Each hour of the day we should note and weigh our actions and in the evening we should do what we can to free ourselves from the burden of them by means of repentance – if, that is, we wish, with Christ's help, to overcome wickedness. We should also make sure that we perform all our outward tasks in a manner that accords

with God's will, before God and for God alone, so that we are not mindlessly seduced by the senses.

125. For if with God's help we make progress daily by means of our watchfulness, we should not behave indiscriminately and damage ourselves through a host of random meetings and conversations. On the contrary, we should scorn all vanities for the sake of the beauty and blessings of holiness.

126. We should use the three aspects of the soul fittingly and in accordance with nature, as created by God. We should use our incensive power against our outer self and against Satan. 'Be incensed', it is written, 'against sin' (cf. Ps. 4:4), that is, be incensed with yourselves and the devil, so that you will not sin against God. Our desire should be directed towards God and towards holiness. Our intelligence should control our incensive power and our desire with wisdom and skill, regulating them, admonishing them, correcting them and ruling them as a king rules over his subjects. Then, even should they rebel against it, our inmost intelligence will direct the passions in a way that accords with God's will, for we shall have set it in charge of them. The brother of the Lord declares: 'He who does not lapse in his inmost intelligence is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body' (Jas. 3:2). For the truth is that every sin and transgression is brought about through these three aspects of the soul, just as every virtue and good action is also produced through them.

127. Our intellect is darkened and remains fruitless whenever we speak words of worldly import or, entertaining such words in our mind, begin to give them our attention, or whenever the body and the intellect waste their time in some outward matter, or whenever we give ourselves over to vanities. For then we immediately lose our fervour, our sense of compunction, and our intimacy with God and knowledge of Him. So long as we concentrate our attention on the intellect, we are enlightened; but when we are not attentive to it we are in darkness.

128. Whoever aspires day and night to peace and stillness of intellect finds it easy to be indifferent to all material matters and so does not labour in vain. But if he scorns or cheats his own conscience, he will sleep bitterly the death of forgetfulness. This is the death that David prayed not to sleep (cf. Ps. 13:3); and the Apostle says: 'To know how to do good and yet not to do it is sin' (Jas. 4:17).

129. If we give attention to the intellect and assiduously re-establish its activity, it will stop being neglectful and will regain its proper state and its watchfulness.

130. A donkey going round and round in a mill cannot step out of the circle to which it is tethered; nor can the intellect which is not inwardly chastened advance in the path of holiness. With its inner eyes blinded, it cannot perceive holiness or the radiant light of Jesus.

131. A proud and spirited horse steps out delightedly once the rider is in the saddle. But the delighted intellect delights in the light of the Lord when, free from concepts, it enters into the dawn of spiritual knowledge. By continually denying itself, it advances from the wisdom necessary for the practice of the virtues to an ineffable vision in which it contemplates holy and ineffable things. Then the heart is filled with perceptions of infinite and divine realities and sees the God of gods in its own depths, so far as this is possible. Astounded, the intellect lovingly glorifies God, the Seer and the Seen, and the Saviour of those who contemplate Him in this way.

132. When the heart has acquired stillness it will perceive the heights and depths of knowledge; and the ear of the still intellect will be made to hear marvellous things from God.

133. A traveller setting out on a long, difficult and arduous journey and foreseeing that he may lose his way when he comes back, will put up signs and guideposts along his path in order to make his return simpler. The watchful man, foreseeing this same thing, will use sacred texts to guide him.

134. For the traveller it is a source of joy to return to where he started. But for the watchful man to turn back is the death of his deiform soul and the sign of his apostasy from thoughts, words and actions that accord with God's will. In the lethal sleep of his soul he will have thoughts stirring him up like goads with remembrance of the heavy torpor and indolence that is his because of his negligence.

135. When we are in trouble or despair or have lost hope, we should do what David did: pour out our hearts to God and tell Him of our needs and troubles, just as they are (cf. Ps. 142:2). It is because He can deal with us wisely that we confess to God: He can make our troubles easy to bear, if this is for our benefit, and can save us from the dejection which destroys and corrupts.

136. The incensive power roused in an unnatural fashion against

men, sorrow that does not accord with God's will and listlessness are all equally destructive of holy thoughts and spiritual knowledge. If we confess these things the Lord will rid us of them and fill us with joy.

137. When combined with watchfulness and deep understanding, the Jesus Prayer will erase from our heart even those thoughts rooted there against our will.

138. When under the pressure of stupid thoughts, we will find relief and joy by rebuking ourselves truthfully and unemotionally, or by confessing everything to the Lord as to a human being. In both these ways we will always find tranquillity, whatever troubles us.

139. The Fathers regard Moses the Lawgiver as an ikon of the intellect. He saw God in the burning bush (cf. Exod. 3:2-4:17); his face shone with glory (cf. Exod. 34:30); he was made a god to Pharaoh by the God of gods (cf. Exod. 7:1); he flayed Egypt with a scourge; he led Israel out of bondage and gave laws. These happenings, when seen metaphorically and spiritually, are activities and privileges of the intellect.

140. Aaron, the brother of Moses, is an ikon of the outer self. On this account we too should bring angry accusations against our outer self as Moses did against Aaron when he sinned: 'In what way did Israel do you wrong, that you should hasten to turn them from the Lord, the living God and Ruler of all?' (cf. Exod. 32:21).

141. Among many other good things, the Lord showed us, when He was about to raise Lazarus from the dead (cf. John 11:33), that we should reject with angry indignation all that is womanish and unstable in our soul; we should strive after firmness of character, for this is able to free our self-reproach from arrogance, pride and self-love.

142. Just as it is impossible to cross the sea without a boat, so it is impossible to repulse the provocation of an evil thought without invoking Jesus Christ.

143. Rebuttal bridles evil thoughts, but the invocation of Jesus Christ drives them from the heart. Now when the provocation has taken the form of a mental image of a sensory object, the evil thought behind it can be identified. For instance, if the image is of the face of someone who has angered us, or of a beautiful woman, or of gold or silver, it can at once be shewn that it is the thought of rancour, or of unchastity, or of avarice that fills our heart with fantasies. And if our

intellect is experienced, well-trained and used to guarding itself and to examining clearly and openly the seductive fantasies and deceits of the demons, it will instantly 'quench the fiery darts of the devil' (cf. Eph. 6:16), counter-attacking by means of its power of rebuttal and the Jesus Prayer. It will not allow the impassioned fantasy to consort with it or allow our thoughts passionately to conform themselves to the fantasy, or to become intimate with it, or be distracted by it, or give assent to it. If anything like this happens, then evil actions will follow as surely as night follows day.

144. If our intellect is inexperienced in the art of watchfulness, it at once begins to entertain whatever impassioned fantasy appears in it, and plies it with illicit questions and responds to it illicitly. Then our own thoughts are conjoined to the demonic fantasy, which waxes and burgeons until it appears lovely and delectable to the welcoming and despoiled intellect. The intellect then is deceived in much the same way as lambs when a stray dog comes into the field in which they happen to be: in their innocence they often run towards the dog as though it were their mother, and their only profit in coming near it is that they pick up something of its stench and foulness. In the same way our thoughts run ignorantly after demonic fantasies that appear in our intellect and, as I said, the two join together and one can see them plotting to destroy the city of Troy like Agamemnon and Menelaus. For they plot together the course of action they must take in order to bring about, in practice and by means of the body, that purpose which the demons have persuaded them is sweet and delectable. In this way sins are produced in the soul: and hence the need to bring out into the open what is in our hearts.

145. The intellect, being good-natured and innocent, readily goes in pursuit of lawless fantasies; and it can be restrained only on condition that its intelligence, the ruler of the passions, always bridles it and holds it back.

146. Contemplation and spiritual knowledge are indeed the guides and agents of the ascetic life; for when the mind is raised up by them it becomes indifferent to sensual pleasures and to other material attractions, regarding them as worthless.

147. The life of attentiveness, brought to fruition in Christ Jesus, is the father of contemplation and spiritual knowledge. Linked to humility, it engenders divine exaltation and thoughts of the

wisest kind. As the prophet Isaiah says: 'They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings and soar aloft through the power of the Lord' (cf. Isa. 40:31).

148. To human beings it seems hard and difficult to still the mind so that it rests from all thought. Indeed, to enclose what is bodiless within the limits of the body does demand toil and struggle, not only from the uninitiated but also from those experienced in inner immaterial warfare. But he who through unceasing prayer holds the Lord Jesus within his breast will not tire in following Him, as the Prophet says (cf. Jer. 17:16. LXX). Because of Jesus' beauty and sweetness he will not desire what is merely mortal. Nor will he be disgraced by his enemies, the wicked demons that walk on every side; for he confronts them at the entrance to his heart and, with Jesus' help, drives them away.

149. If the soul has Christ with it, it will not be disgraced by its enemies even at death, when it rises to heaven's entrance; but then, as now, it will boldly confront them. But let it not tire in calling upon the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, day and night until the time of its departure from this mortal life, and He will speedily avenge it in accordance with the promise which He Himself made when speaking of the unjust judge (cf. Luke 18:1-8). Indeed, He will avenge it both in this present life and after its departure from its body.

150. As you sail across the sea of the intellect, put your trust in Jesus, for secretly in your heart He says: 'Fear not, my child Jacob, the least of Israel; fear not, you worm Israel, I will protect you' (cf. Isa. 41:13-14). If God is for us, what evil one is against us (cf. Rom. 8:31)? For He has blessed the pure of heart and given the commandments; and so Jesus, who alone is truly pure, in a divine way readily enters into hearts that are pure and dwells in them. Therefore, as Paul counsels, let us ceaselessly exercise our intellect in devotion (cf. 1 Tim. 4:7). For devotion uproots the seeds sown by the devil, and is the path of the intelligence.

151. David's words, 'He will delight himself in the abundance of peace' (cf. Ps. 37:11), apply to him who is not taken in by the appearance of man and who judges injustice in his heart. That is to say, they apply to one who is not taken in by the forms of the demons and who is not led to meditate sin because of these forms, judging unjustly in the land of his heart and giving over to sin what is

righteous. For the great gnostic Fathers in some of their writings call the demons 'men' because demons too are endowed with intelligence. For example, in the gospel passage the Lord says: 'An evil man has done this, and mixed tares among the wheat' (cf. Matt. 13:24-30). Those who commit evil lack the power swiftly to rebut their evil thoughts. Hence they are consumed and destroyed by them.

152. We will travel the road of repentance correctly if, as we begin to give attention to the intellect, we combine humility with watchfulness, and prayer with the power to rebut evil thoughts. In this way we will adorn the chamber of our heart with the holy and venerable name of Jesus Christ as with a lighted lamp, and will sweep our heart clean of wickedness, purifying and embellishing it. But if we trust only in our own watchfulness and attentiveness, we shall quickly be pushed aside by our enemies. We shall be overturned and cast down by their extreme craftiness. We will become ever more fully entangled in their nets of evil thought, and will readily be slaughtered by them, lacking as we do the powerful sword of the name of Jesus Christ. For only this sword, swift turning in the undivided heart, is able to cut them down, to burn and obliterate them as fire the reed.

153. It is the task of unceasing watchfulness – and one of great benefit and help to the soul – to see the mental images of evil thoughts as soon as they are formed in the intellect. The task of rebuttal is to counter and expose such thoughts when they attempt to infiltrate our intellect in the form of an image of some material thing. What instantly extinguishes and destroys every demonic concept, thought, fantasy, illusion and idol is the invocation of the Lord. And in our intellect we ourselves can observe how our great God, Jesus, triumphs over them all, and how He avenges us, poor, base and useless as we are.

154. Most of us do not realize that all evil thoughts are but images of material and worldly things. Yet if we persist in watchful prayer, this will rid our mind of all such images; it will also make it conscious both of the devices of our enemies and of the great benefit of prayer and watchfulness. 'With your eyes you will see how spiritual sinners are recompensed; you yourself will see spiritually and understand', says David the divine poet (cf. Ps. 91:8).

155. Whenever possible, we should always remember death, for this displaces all cares and vanities, allowing us to guard our intellect

and giving us unceasing prayer, detachment from our body and hatred of sin. Indeed, it is a source of almost every virtue. We should therefore, if possible, use it as we use our own breathing.

156. A heart that has been completely emptied of mental images gives birth to divine, mysterious intellections that sport within it like fish and dolphins in a calm sea. The sea is fanned by a soft wind, the heart's depth by the Holy Spirit. 'And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying: "Abba, Father"' (Gal. 4:6).

157. Every monk will be uncertain about his spiritual work until he has achieved watchfulness of intellect. Either he will be ignorant of the beauty of this watchfulness or, if he is aware of it, he will fail to achieve it because of his negligence. He will resolve his uncertainty only when he has learnt to guard his intellect. This guarding is rightly called mental philosophy or the practical wisdom of the intellect. Through it one finds the way of Him who said, 'I am the way, the resurrection and the life' (cf. John 11:25; 14:6).

158. Again, every monk will be at a loss when he sees the abyss of his evil thoughts and the swarming children of Babylon. But again Christ will resolve this doubt if we always base our mind firmly on Him. By dashing them against this rock we can repulse all the children of Babylon (cf. Ps. 137:9), thus doing what we want with them, in accordance with the sayings: 'Whoever keeps the commandment will know no evil thing' (Eccles. 8:5. LXX), and 'Without Me you can do nothing' (John 15:5).

159. A true monk is one who has achieved watchfulness; and he who is truly watchful is a monk in his heart.

160. Human life extends cyclically through years, months, weeks, days and nights, hours and minutes. Through these periods we should extend our ascetic labours – our watchfulness, our prayer, our sweetness of heart, our diligent stillness – until our departure from this life.

161. The hour of death will come upon us, it will come, and we shall not escape it. May the prince of this world and of the air (cf. John 14:30; Eph. 2:2) find our misdeeds few and petty when he comes, so that he will not have good grounds for convicting us. Otherwise we shall weep in vain. 'For that servant who knew his lord's will and did not do it as a servant, shall be beaten with many stripes' (cf. Luke 12:47).

162. 'Woe to those who have lost their heart; what will they do at the visitation of the Lord?' (cf. Eccles. 2:14. LXX). Therefore, brethren, we should labour in earnest.

163. Impassioned thoughts follow hard upon thoughts that appear to be innocent and dispassionate: the latter open the way for the former. This we have found through years of experience and observation.

164. We should indeed be cut in two by a wise decision of our own free will; we should be our own worst enemy. If we want to fulfil the first and greatest commandment – by which I mean the Christ-like way of life, blessed humility, the life of the incarnate God – we should have the same feelings toward ourselves as a person might have toward someone who had time and again grievously injured him and treated him unjustly. Indeed, we should have even stronger feelings than these. Hence the Apostle says: 'Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? . . . For it is not subject to the law of God' (Rom. 7:24; 8:7). Here he shows that to subject the body to the will of God is something within our own power. 'For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged; but when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord' (1 Cor. 11:31–32).

165. The fruit starts in the flower; and the guarding of the intellect begins with self-control in food and drink, the rejection of all evil thoughts and abstention from them, and stillness of heart.

166. While we are being strengthened in Christ Jesus and beginning to move forward in steadfast watchfulness, He at first appears in our intellect like a torch which, carried in the hand of the intellect, guides us along the tracks of the mind; then He appears like a full moon, circling the heart's firmament; then He appears to us like the sun, radiating justice, clearly revealing Himself in the full light of spiritual vision.

167. Jesus mystically reveals these things to the intellect that perseveres in the commandment: 'Circumcise the foreskin of your heart' (Deut. 10:16). As has been said, the assiduous practice of watchfulness teaches a man marvellous thoughts. 'For God is impartial' (Rom. 2:11); and therefore the Lord says: 'Hear Me and understand: for to him who has, more shall be given and he shall have in abundance; and from him who has not, shall be taken even what he thinks he has' (cf. Luke 8:18). 'All things work together for

good to them that love God' (Rom. 8:28); how much the more, then, will the virtues work together in the case of such people?

168. A ship does not go far without water; and there is no progress whatsoever in the guarding of the intellect without watchfulness, humility and the Jesus Prayer.

169. Stones form the foundation of a house; but the foundation of sanctity – and its roof – is the holy and venerable name of our Lord Jesus Christ. A foolish captain can easily wreck his ship during a storm, dismissing the sailors, throwing the sails and oars into the sea, and going to sleep himself; but the soul can be sent to the bottom even more swiftly by the demons if it neglects watchfulness and does not call upon the name of Jesus Christ when they begin their provocations.

170. We write of what we know; and for those who want to understand what we say, we bear witness to all that we have seen as we journeyed on our path. He Himself has declared: 'If a man does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch; and men gather it, and cast it into the fire, and it is burned. If he abides in Me, I abide in him' (cf. John 15:5-6). The sun cannot shine without light; nor can the heart be cleansed of the stain of destructive thoughts without invoking in prayer the name of Jesus. This being the case, we should use that name as we do our own breath. For that name is light, while evil thoughts are darkness; it is God and Master, while evil thoughts are slaves and demons.

171. The guarding of the intellect may appropriately be called 'light-producing', 'lightning-producing', 'light-giving' and 'fire-bearing', for truly it surpasses endless virtues, bodily and other. Because of this, and because of the glorious light to which it gives birth, one must honour this virtue with worthy epithets. Those who are seized by love for this virtue, from being worthless sinners, ignorant, profane, uncomprehending and unjust, are enabled to become just, responsive, pure, holy, and wise through Jesus Christ. Not only this, but they are able to contemplate mystically and to theologize; and when they have become contemplatives, they bathe in a sea of pure and infinite light, touching it ineffably and living and dwelling in it. They have tasted that the Lord is good (cf. Ps. 34:8), and in these harbingers are fulfilled the words of David: 'Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto Thy name; and the upright shall dwell in Thy presence' (Ps. 140:13). Such men alone

truly call upon God and give thanks to Him, and in their love for Him continually speak with Him.

172. Woe to what is within from what is without! For the inner self suffers great distress from the outer senses, and when it suffers in this way it scourges the outer senses. He who has experienced this knows already what it means.

173. According to the Fathers, if our inner self is watchful it can protect the outer self. But we and the demons combine in committing sins. The demons work through evil thoughts alone by forming in the intellect what fanciful pictures they wish; while we sin both inwardly through evil thoughts and outwardly through our actions. Lacking the density of physical bodies, the demons through deceitfulness and guile are purveyors of torment, both to themselves and to us, by means of evil thoughts alone. If they did not lack the density of physical bodies, they would always be sinning through outward actions as well, for their will is always disposed to ungodliness.

174. The single-phrased Jesus Prayer destroys and consumes the deceptions of the demons. For when we invoke Jesus, God and Son of God, constantly and tirelessly, He does not allow them to project in the mind's mirror even the first hint of their infiltration – that is to say, their provocation – or any form, nor does He allow them to have any converse with the heart. If no demonic form enters the heart, it will be empty of evil thoughts, as we have said; for it is the demons' habit to converse with the soul by means of evil thoughts and so deceitfully to pervert it.

175. It is through unceasing prayer that the mind is cleansed of the dark clouds, the tempests of the demons. And when it is cleansed, the divine light of Jesus cannot but shine in it, unless we are puffed up with self-esteem and delusion and a love of ostentation, and elevate ourselves towards the unattainable, and so are deprived of Jesus' help. For Christ, the paradigm of humility, loathes all such self-inflation.

176. Let us hold fast, therefore, to prayer and humility, for together with watchfulness they act like a burning sword against the demons. If we do this, we shall daily and hourly be able to celebrate a secret festival of joy within our hearts.

177. Every evil thought is subsumed in the eight principal evil thoughts and all take their origin from these eight, much as every

accursed demon-god of the Greeks derives from Hera and Zeus according to their myths. These eight approach the heart's entrance and, if they find the intellect unguarded, one by one they enter, each in its own time. Whichever of the eight enters the heart introduces a swarm of other evil thoughts as well; and having thus darkened the intellect, it stimulates the body and provokes it to sinful actions.

178. Whoever, then, watches out for the head of the serpent, and strikes it vehemently with all his power of rebuttal, will ward off the fight. By crushing the serpent's head he repulses a host of evil thoughts and actions. The mind then remains undisturbed, God approving its vigilance over its thoughts. In return it is given the ability to know how to overcome its adversaries, and how little by little to purify the heart from thoughts that defile the inner self. As the Lord Jesus said, 'Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, and these are the things which defile a man' (cf. Matt. 15:19-20).

179. In this way the soul can attain in the Lord that state of beauty, loveliness and integrity in which it was created by God in the beginning. As Antony, the great servant of God, said, 'Holiness is achieved when the intellect is in its natural state.' And again he said: 'The soul realizes its integrity when its intellect is in that state in which it was created.' And shortly after this he adds: 'Let us purify our mind, for I believe that when the mind is completely pure and is in its natural state, it gains penetrating insight, and it sees more clearly and further than the demons, since the Lord reveals things to it.' So spoke the renowned Antony, according to the *Life of Antony* by Athanasios the Great.¹

180. Every evil thought produces in the intellect the image of some material thing; for since the devil is an intellect he cannot deceive us except by making use of things we are in the habit of perceiving by means of the senses.

181. Since we are human beings, it is not in our nature to pursue birds through the air or to fly as they do. Similarly, without watchful and frequent prayer we cannot prevail over bodiless, demonic thoughts, or fix the eye of the intellect fully and intently upon God. Without such prayer, we merely hunt after earthly things.

182. If you really wish to cover your evil thoughts with shame,

¹ See Athanasios, *Life of Antony*, §§ 20, 34.

to be still and calm, and to watch over your heart without hindrance, let the Jesus Prayer cleave to your breath, and in a few days you will find that this is possible.

183. Letters cannot be written on air; they have to be inscribed on some material if they are to have any permanence. Similarly, we should weld our hard-won watchfulness to the Jesus Prayer, so that this watchfulness may always be attached to Him and may through Him remain with us for ever.

184. Bring your works to the Lord, and you will find grace. Then the words of the Prophet will not be spoken of you: 'Thou art near in their mouth, O Lord, and far from their reins' (cf. Jer. 12:2). None but Jesus Christ Himself, unifier of what is disunited, can give your heart lasting peace from passions.

185. Both mental converse with evil thoughts and external encounters and chatter alike darken the soul. If we are not to injure the intellect, we must not spare either of these chatterboxes, whether they be our own thoughts or other people. And we must not spare them for a most cogent reason: because otherwise our intellect will be darkened and we will lose our watchfulness. If we are darkened by forgetfulness, we destroy the intellect.

186. He who with all diligence keeps his purity of heart will have Christ, establisher of that purity, as his teacher, and Christ will secretly communicate His will to him. 'I will hear what God the Lord will speak within me', says David, giving expression to this (Ps. 85:8. LXX). Speaking of the intellect's investigation of itself in the course of the unseen war, and of the help given by God, he says: 'And a man will say, Is there a reward for the righteous?' Then, giving the solution to this problem, he says: 'Truly, he is a God that judges those in the earth' (Ps. 58:11. LXX) – that is to say, judges the wicked demons in the earth of the heart. And elsewhere he says: 'A man shall approach, and the heart is deep, and God shall be exalted' (Ps. 64:6-7. LXX). Then we will regard the attacks of the demons as stones thrown by infants.

187. Let us live every moment in 'applying our hearts to wisdom' (Ps. 90:12), as the Psalmist says, continually breathing Jesus Christ, the power of God the Father and the wisdom of God (cf. 1 Cor. 1:24). If, however, we are distracted by some circumstance or other and grow slack in our spiritual effort, the following morning let us again gird up the loins of our intellect and once more set to

work forcefully. There is no excuse for us if, knowing what is to be done, we do not do it.

188. Noxious foods give trouble when taken into the body; but as soon as he feels the pain, the person who has eaten them can quickly take some emetic and so be unharmed. Similarly, once the intellect that has imbibed evil thoughts senses their bitterness, it can easily expel them and get rid of them completely by means of the Jesus Prayer uttered from the depths of the heart. This lesson, and the experience corresponding to it, have by God's grace conveyed understanding to those who practise watchfulness.

189. With your breathing combine watchfulness and the name of Jesus, or humility and the unremitting study of death. Both may confer great blessing.

190. The Lord said: 'Learn from Me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls' (Matt. 11:29).

191. The Lord said: 'Whoever humbles himself as this little child will be exalted; and whoever exalts himself will be abased' (cf. Matt. 18:4; 23:12). 'Learn from Me', He said. Do you see how this learning means humility? For His commandment is eternal life (cf. John 12:50), and this in turn is humility. Thus he who is not humble has lost life and obviously will be found with its opposite.

192. If every virtue comes into being through soul and body, and soul and body are the creation of God, how shall we not be utterly mad if we boast of accidental adornments of soul or body, and puff ourselves up, supported by our vanity as by a flimsy staff? Worst of all, how, through our extreme wickedness and folly, shall we not rouse against us God who transcends us so infinitely? 'For God ranges Himself against the proud' (Jas. 4:6). Because of our arrogance and vanity, instead of imitating the Lord in humility, we embrace His enemy, the demon of pride. It was with reference to this that the Apostle said: 'For what do you have which you did not receive?' (1 Cor. 4:7). Did you create yourself? And if you received from God both soul and body, from which and in which and through which every virtue comes into being, 'why do you boast as if you had not received?' (1 Cor. 4:7). For it is the Lord who has given you these things.

193. Purification of heart, through which we acquire humility and every blessing that comes from above, consists simply in our not letting evil thoughts enter the soul.

194. If with God's help and for His sake alone we manage to guard the intellect for some time, it acquires a certain good sense in pursuing the spiritual battle. This good sense in its turn gives us, in no small measure, the ability to arrange our work and regulate our words with a judgment that accords with God's will.

195. The high priest's emblems in the Old Testament are models for purity of heart. They teach us so to give attention to the gold disc of the heart (cf. Exod. 28:22. LXX) that, should we tarnish it through sin, we should cleanse it with tears, repentance and prayer. For the intellect is very receptive and hard to hold back from illicit thoughts. It pursues with equal readiness both good and evil images.

196. Truly blessed is the man whose mind and heart are as closely attached to the Jesus Prayer and to the ceaseless invocation of His name as air to the body or flame to the wax. The sun rising over the earth creates the daylight; and the venerable and holy name of the Lord Jesus, shining continually in the mind, gives birth to countless intellections radiant as the sun.

197. When clouds are scattered the air is clear; and when the fantasies of passion are scattered by Jesus Christ, the sun of righteousness, bright and star-like intellections are born in the heart, for the heart is then illumined by Jesus. Solomon says: 'They that trust in the Lord shall understand truth, and the faithful in love shall abide with Him' (Wisd. 3:9).

198. One of the saints has said: 'Let the rancorous man vent his rancour on the demons, and let the belligerent man turn his hostility once and for all against his own body. The flesh is a treacherous friend, and the more it is coddled the more it fights back.' And again: 'Be hostile to your body, and fight against your stomach.'

199. In the paragraphs up to this point – those comprising the first and second centuries – we have set down how to learn the difficult art of stilling the intellect. These paragraphs are the fruit not of our mind alone, but also of what the holy Fathers teach us about purity of intellect. Now, after a few words indicating the value of guarding the intellect, we shall draw to a close.

200. Come, then, you who long in spirit to see days of blessing, follow me towards that union attained through the guarding of the intellect; and I, in the Lord, will instruct you in your task on earth and the angelic life. For neither the angels nor the intellect rivalling them in purity will ever be sated with praising the Creator. And

just as the angels, being immaterial, do not concern themselves with food, so neither do material beings when once they have entered the heaven of the intellect's stillness and have themselves become angelic.

201. Just as the angels do not concern themselves with property and money, so those who have purified the soul's vision and who have attained the state of holiness are not troubled by the evil ploys of the demons. And just as the richness that comes from moving closer to God is evident in the angels, so love and intense longing for God is evident in those who have become angelic and gaze upwards towards the divine. Moreover, because the taste of the divine and the ecstasy* of desire make their longing ever more intense and insatiable as they ascend, they do not stop until they reach the Seraphim; nor do they rest from their watchfulness of intellect and the intense longing of their aspiration until they have become angels in Christ Jesus our Lord.

202. There is no venom more poisonous than that of the asp or cobra, and there is no evil greater than that of self-love. The winged children of self-love are self-praise, self-satisfaction, gluttony, unchastity, self-esteem, jealousy and the crown of all these, pride. Pride can drag down not men alone, but even angels from heaven, and surround them with darkness instead of light.

203. This, then, Theodoulos, comes to you from Hesychios, who bears the name of stillness even if he belies it in practice. Yet perhaps it is not from us, but has been given by God, who is praised and glorified in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit by every spiritual being, men and angels, and by all creation fashioned by the Holy Trinity, the one God. May we, too, reach His glorious kingdom through the prayers of the most pure Mother of God and of our holy Fathers. To the unattainable God be everlasting glory. Amen.

ST NEILOS THE ASCETIC

Introductory Note

St Neilos the Ascetic was abbot of a monastery near Ankyra (Ankara) in the early decades of the fifth century, and seems to have died around the year 430. Possibly he was a disciple of St John Chrysostom. According to the traditional biography of Neilos – accepted as authentic by St Nikodimos, but now considered legendary – he was originally from Constantinople, and after serving as prefect of the city during the reign of Theodosios the Great (379–95) he became a hermit near Sinai. There seems in fact to be no good reason for connecting him with the Sinaite peninsula.

The *Ascetic Discourse* of Neilos contains a valuable section on the relationship between the spiritual father and his disciples. In other of his writings, although not in this work, St Neilos refers to the invocation of the name of Jesus. Along with St Diadochos of Photiki, his younger contemporary, Neilos is the earliest writer to refer explicitly to the Jesus Prayer.¹

¹ See Neilos, *Letters*, ii, 140, 214; iii, 273, 278 (Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, lxxix, 160A, 261D, 312C, 520C, 521BC). Compare I. Hausherr, *Noms du Christ et voies d'oraison* (*Orientalia Christiana Analecta*, 157, Rome, 1960), pp. 195–6.

The Philokalia

THE COMPLETE TEXT

compiled by

St Nikodimos of the
Holy Mountain

and

St Makarios of Corinth

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*G.E.H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard
Kallistos Ware*

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