

The work of a Christian is great.
He will either be burnt or he will be saved.

The Elder Ieronymos of Aegina, p. 199

CHRISTIANS HAVE THE COMFORT OF THE SPIRIT, tears, and mourning, and sighing; and even the tears are an enjoyment to them. They have fear also, in the midst of joy and rejoicing, and thus are they like men carrying their blood in their hands, having no confidence in themselves, or thinking themselves to be anything, but despised and rejected above all men.

Saint Macarius the Great, Homily XV, §26, p. 119.

IT WAS SAID OF ABBA AGATHON that he forced himself to fulfill all the commandments. When he sailed in a vessel he was the first to handle the oars, and when the brethren came to see him he laid the table with his own hands, as soon as they had prayed, because he was full of the love of God. When he was at the point of death he remained three days with his eyes fixed, wide-open. The brethren roused him, saying, “Abba Agathon, where are you?” He replied, “I am standing before the judgment seat of God.” They said, “Are you not afraid, Father?” He replied, “Until this moment, I have done my utmost to keep the commandments of God; but I am a man; how should I know if my deeds are acceptable to God?” The brethren said to him, “Do you not have confidence in all that you have done according to the law of God?” The old man replied, “I shall have no confidence until I meet God. Truly the judgment of God is not that of man.” When they wanted to question him further, he said to them, “Of your charity, do not talk to me any more, for I no longer have time.” So he died with joy. They saw him depart like one greeting his dearest friends. He preserved the strictest vigilance in all things, saying, “Without great vigilance a man does not advance in even a single virtue.”

The Desert Christian, pp. 24–25

ABBA ARSENIUS USED TO SAY TO HIMSELF: “Arsenius, why have you left the world? I have often repented of having spoken, but never of having been silent.” When his death drew near, the brethren saw him weeping and they said to him, “Truly, Father, are you also afraid?” “Indeed,” he answered them, “the fear which is mine at this hour has been with me ever since I became a monk.” Upon this, he fell asleep.

Ibid., p. 18

Pearls from the Holy Fathers First Week of November, 2007