

## The Science of Spiritual Medicine

“An important difference between the Orthodox Church and the Western Christian Confessions is that the basis of the Orthodox Tradition is therapeutic. This means that, whereas Western Christianity sees sin in terms of legal and ethical processes and phraseology, the Orthodox Church, as expressed in Holy Scripture and the Tradition of the Fathers, looks at sin from a medical perspective. In other words, it regards sin as an illness of man after his departure from God. Healing is therefore required. Thus the aim of Christ’s Incarnation was not to propitiate divine righteousness, as Western theologians suppose, but to heal human beings, so that self-love could become selfless love (love for God and other people). God is not a spiritual prosecutor, but a Physician Who heals man. “

*“The Science of Spiritual Medicine”*

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“Illness, according to the holy Fathers, is the deadening, death and darkening of the nous. In this state man’s nous malfunctions. It is confused and misidentified with the rational faculty, the passions and its environment. This anomaly is the cause of all so-called psychological problems. Contemporary secular psychologists and psychoanalysts do not have an accurate knowledge of this state and are therefore unable to understand people’s real problems.”

*Humanistic and Orthodox Psychotherapy*

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“According to the teaching of the holy Fathers of the Church, imagination is one of the faculties of the soul that plays an important role in the action and development of passions. It forms the image of a person or thing within us, then provokes sensual pleasure to capture our nous. Once taken captive we commit sin...”

Since the Fall man's imaginative faculty has run wild and is full of fantasies. Apart from man, the devil also has imagination. For precisely this reason fantasy and imagination are an efficient conductor of satanic energy and the devil uses them to ensnare people. Fantasy and imagination are a bridge between man and the demons, which the demons cross to trouble him...

The more spiritually sick a person is, the more he is dominated by all kinds of fantasy and imagination. The healthier he is spiritually, the freer he is from fantasies and imaginings...

All this shows that we must be freed from what the holy Fathers call 'accursed fantasy', which is the source of many bodily and spiritual disorders. We shall identify ways of freeing ourselves from this horrific, disfiguring condition.

In the first place, we have to fight against fantasy and imagination. We must realise that we need to struggle to get rid of them. As St Nicodemus the Hagiorite says, 'Impassioned fantasy has more power and domination over us than the senses themselves.' In order for the senses to sin they need various things or pretexts, whereas the imagination works without anything, even when the senses are not functioning.

In addition, we must not accept any images at all from the imaginative faculty. When we realise that our imaginative faculty is at work, we should immediately stop it. St Diadochos says, 'We can achieve great virtue just by never trusting our imagination'..."

*The Imaginative Faculty, Fantasy and Imagination*

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The devil exists and works to separate us from God. Satan acts mainly in those who accept him, who are spiritually defenceless, but he makes war on all Christians, particularly those striving to attain to deification. Although he fights against everyone externally, he cannot act inwardly in everyone.

As time passes he becomes more terrible in his warfare....The nearer we come to the Second Coming, the more agitated he becomes.

The power of Christ is stronger than the power of the devil. A Christian who is empowered by the grace of God has absolutely nothing to fear. He is strong in Christ. As the Apostle Paul declares, 'I can do all things through Christ Who strengtheneth me' (Phil. 4:13)."

*The Devil and His Wiles*