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You are a world within a world. Become quiet and look within yourself, and see there the whole creation. Do not look at exterior things but turn all your attention to that which lies within. Gather together your whole mind within the intellectual treasure-house of your soul, and make ready for the Lord a shrine free from images.

Nilus of Ancyra (363-430)

The contemplation of nature abates the fever of the soul, and banishes all insincerity and presumption.

Basil the Great (329-379)

There is then only one God, Maker of souls and bodies; one Creator of heaven and earth, the Maker of angels and archangels.... This Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is not circumscribed in any place, nor is He less than the heavens; but the heavens are the works of His fingers, and the whole world is held in His grasp: He is in all things and around all things.

Cyril of Jerusalem (315-386)

Monastery of the Syrians, Egypt

For he who holds possessions, and gold, and houses, as the gifts of God, and ministers from them to God who gives them for the salvation of men, and knows that he possesses them more for the sake of the brethren than his own, and is superior to the possession of them, not the slave of the things he possesses, and does not carry them about in his soul, nor bind his life within them, but is ever laboring at some good and divine work, even should he be deprived of them, this man is able with cheerful mind to bear their removal equally with their abundance. This is he who is blessed by the Lord, and a meet heir of the Kingdom of Heaven, not one who could not live rich.

Clement of Alexandria (150-220)

If evil is neither uncreated nor created by God, from whence comes its nature? Certainly that evil exists, no one living in the world will deny. What shall we say then? Evil is not a living, animated essence; it is a condition of the soul opposed to virtue, developed in the careless on account of their falling away from good.

Basil the Great (329-379)

We practice the virtues in order to achieve contemplation of the inner essences of created things, and from this we pass to contemplation of the Logos who gives them their being; and He manifests Himself when we are in a state of prayer.

Evagrius of Pontus (512-582)

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piritual insight is characterized first by awareness of one's own failings before they issue in outward signs … and second by the knowledge of the mysteries hidden in the divine Scriptures and in the sensible creation.

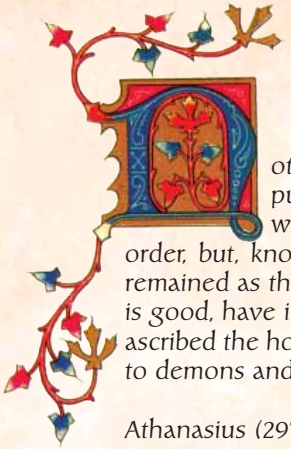
Peter of Damascus (1027-1107)

Let us not esteem worldly prosperity or adversity as if they were real things or things of any importance, but let us live elsewhere, and raise all our attention to heaven; counting sin as the only true evil, and nothing truly good but virtue, which unites us to God.

Gregory Nazianzus (329-389)

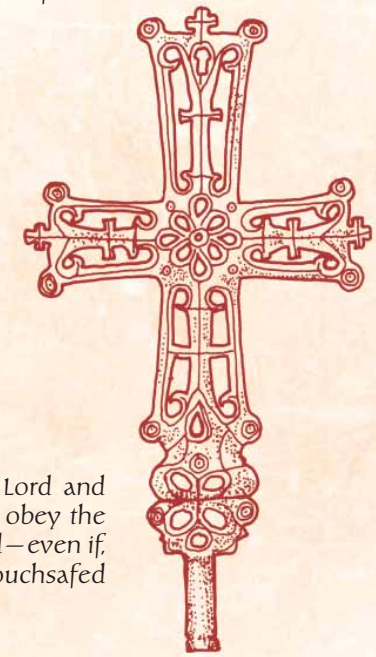
To know oneself has always been, so it seems, the greatest of all lessons. For, if anyone knows himself, he will know God; and in knowing God, he will become like Him, not by wearing golden ornaments or by trailing long flowing robes, but by performing good deeds and cultivating an independence of as many things as possible. God alone has no needs, and He rejoices in a particular way when He sees us pure in the adornment of our minds and our bodies clothed with the adornment of the holy garment of self-control.

Clement of Alexandria (150-220)



Nothing in creation has erred from the path of God's purpose for it, save only man. Sun, moon, stars, water, air, none of these has swerved from their order, but, knowing the Word as their Maker and their King, remained as they were made. Men alone, having rejected what is good, have invented nothings instead of the truth, and have ascribed the honor due to God and knowledge concerning Him to demons and men in the form of stones.

Athanasius (297-373)



The soul possesses freedom; and though the Devil can make suggestions, he doesn't have the power to compel you against your will.

Cyril of Jerusalem (315-386)

A man might seem to confess the Lord and hear His words, yet if he does not obey the Lord's commands, he is condemned—even if, by some divine concession, he is vouchsafed an endowment of spiritual gifts.

Basil the Great (329-379)

He who is educated and eloquent must not measure his saintliness merely by his fluency. Of two imperfect things, holy rusticity is better than sinful eloquence.

Jerome (340-420)

Men go abroad to wonder at the height of mountains, at the huge waves of the sea, at the long courses of the rivers, at the vast compass of the ocean, at the circular motion of the stars—yet they pass by themselves without wondering.

Augustine of Hippo (354-430)

Suppose we were to … draw the outline of a circle. … Let us suppose that this circle is the world, and that God Himself is the center; the straight lines drawn from the circumference are the lives of men. … The closer those lines are to God, the closer they become to one another; and the closer they are to one another, the closer they become to God.

Dorotheos of Gaza (500-560)

No man can use his visual sense alone and properly comprehend the greatness of the heavens, or the extent of the earth, or the order of all things. How could bodily eyes ever manage to grasp things that transcend mind and understandings? It is only with difficulty that the mind can gain a true contemplation of existing reality, and only then after it has been purified of its own opinions, freed of its prejudices, and illumined by the grace and mercy of God. Even then, it only perceives insofar as it has been illumined.

John Scotus Eriugena (810-877)

Sacred scripture does not set men and women in opposition to one another in respect to gender. Sex does not constitute any difference in the sight of God.

Origen (185-254)

Have you begun to stop trying to defend your sins? Then you have made a beginning of righteousness.

Augustine of Hippo (354-430)

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