



On Spiritual knowledge

Instructions of St. Isaac the Syrian

When someone acquires a will corresponding to the fear of God and to the right way of thinking, then he will soon receive the revelation of what is hidden. Spiritual knowledge is the perception of what is hidden, and in its perception contemplative faith is born, which begins to shine in the soul from the light of grace and which by the testimony of the mind fortifies the heart, lest it waver in the doubtlessness of hope far from every doubt. And this faith is revealed not through increased hearing of the ears, but through spiritual eyes, which see the mysteries hidden in the soul, the invisible and divine wealth, hidden from the eyes of the sons of the flesh and revealed by the Spirit to those who are nourished from Christ's table, in the study of Christ's laws, as the Lord said: "*If ye keep my commandments (John 15:10)...I will send unto you a Comforter (cf. John 15:26)...the Spirit of Truth; whom the world cannot receive (John 14:17)...and He shall teach you all truth*" (cf. John 14:26, 16:13).

Ask of God that he grant thee to come to a measure of faith, and if thou perceivest this enjoyment in thy soul, then it is not difficult for me to say at this that nothing shall any longer turn thee away from Christ. Pray about this without laziness, beg for this with ardor, entreat about this with great assiduity, until thou receivest.

When God sees this will in thee, that with all purity of thought thou hast trusted in God Himself more than in thyself, then this unknown power will dwell in thee, and thou shalt perceptibly feel that power is undoubtedly with thee that power by which many who have perceived it in themselves go into fire and are not afraid, and walk on water and are not shaken in their thoughts by the danger of drowning, because faith strengthens the senses of the soul, and a man perceives in himself as if something invisible is exhorting him not to heed the sight of terrifying things unbearable for the senses.

The soul, while it is ill with the passions, does not perceive by its senses what is spiritual and is unable to desire it, but desires only in accordance with the hearing of the ears and writings. Cognizance of the mystery of the spiritual world in the presence of the passions does not bring benefit and is insufficient in order to open the door that is closed before the face of purity. If the passions are taken away from the soul, then the mind is enlightened, sees the hidden mysteries of the Spirit, fully contemplates the glory of Christ and enjoys the mysteries of a new world.

For keeping the commandments, the mind is vouchsafed the grace of mystical contemplation and the revelation of spiritual knowledge. Dost thou want through thy mind to be in communion with God? Give alms. Whoever is chaste, humble minded, abhors license in speech and has expelled irritability from his heart, he, as soon as he stands for prayer, sees the light of the Holy Spirit in his soul. He who lives in love smells this air of the resurrection while still in this world.

Source: <http://www.stjohndc.org/Russian/english.htm>