PEARLS

FROM

THE

HOLY

FATHERS

be reckoned by you as dreams. For it is not only with death that you will have release from them, but often before death they retire and leave you alone. But if any of these things that befall you should have communion with your soul, then consider them to be your acquisitions in this age, and they will also go with you into the next. If they are good, rejoice and give thanks to God in your mind. But if they are evil, be grieved and sigh; and as long as you are still in the body, seek to be set free of them.

The Ascetical Homilies of St Isaac the Syrian, Hom. 1, p. 119, © HTM Boston

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HOLY TRANSFIGURATION
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TO ALL God-loving souls, to true Christians, there comes a first month, a Xanthicus, which is called April. It is the day of resurrection; and by the power of the Sun of Righteousness the glory of the Holy Spirit comes out from within, decking and covering the bodies of the Saints - the glory which they had before, but hidden within in their souls. What a man has now, the same then comes forth externally in the body. This month, it says, Ex. 12:2 shall be the first month of the year; this brings forth joy for all the creation; this dresses the naked trees, opening the earth; this brings forth joy for all living things; this displays mirth for all; this for Christians is Xanthicus, the first month, which is the season of resurrection, in which their bodies shall be glorified through the unspeakable light which even now is in them – that is, the power of the Holy Spirit – and which shall then be to them raiment, meat, drink, gladness, joy, peace, robe, eternal life; for all beauty of brightness and of heavenly splendour will then

come to them from that Spirit of the Godhead which they were privileged even now to receive. . . . The glory which the saints now have in their souls, the same, as we said before, shall cover and clothe their naked bodies, and catch them into heaven; and thenceforward we shall rest, in body and soul, in the kingdom with the Lord for ever. . . . Every one of us therefore ought to strive, and take pains, and be diligent in all virtues, and to believe, and to seek from the Lord that the inward man may be made partaker of that glory here and now, and that the soul may have fellowship in that sanctity of the Spirit, in order that we may be cleansed from the defilements of wickedness and may have at the resurrection wherewithal to clothe our bodies as they rise naked, and to robe their uncomeliness, and quicken them, and refresh them for ever in the kingdom of heaven.

> St Macarius the Great, *Fifty Spiritual Homilies*, tr. Mason, Hom. V, pp. 52–5

E OUGHT then to take the utmost care that our inner man as well may cast off and make away with all those possessions of its sins, which it acquired in its former life: which as they continually cling to body and soul are our very own, and, unless we reject them and cut them off while we are still in the flesh, will not cease to accompany us after death. For as good qualities, or charity itself which is their source, may be gained in this world, and after the close of this life make the man who loves it lovely and glorious, so our faults transmit to that eternal remembrance a mind darkened and stained with foul colors. For the beauty or ugliness of the soul is the product of its virtues or its vices, the color it takes from which either makes it so glorious, that it may well hear from the prophet "And the King"

shall greatly desire thy beauty," or so black, and foul, and Ps. 44:10 ugly, that it must surely acknowledge the stench of its shame, and say "My bruises are become noisome and corrupt in the face of my folly," and the Lord Himself Ps. 37:5 says to it "Why is not the wound of the daughter of my people closed?" And therefore these are our very own Jer. 8:22 possessions, which continually remain with the soul, which no king and no enemy can either give or take away from us. These are our very own possessions which not even death itself can part from the soul, but by renouncing which we can attain to perfection, and by clinging to which we shall suffer the punishment of eternal death.

St John Cassian, *Conference of Abbot Paphnutius*, ch. xii, pp. 323–24, NPNF, Second Series, Vol. 11