

Saint Mark the Ascetic: The greatest passions



All vice is caused by self-esteem and sensual pleasure; you cannot overcome passion without hating them.

‘Avarice is the root of all evil’ (1 Tim. 6:10); but avarice is clearly a product of these two components.

The intellect is made blind by these three passions: avarice, self-esteem and sensual pleasure.

Scripture calls these three the daughters of the horseleech, dearly loved by their mother folly (Prov. 30:15). These three passions on their own dull spiritual knowledge and faith, the foster-brothers of our nature. It is because of them that wrath, anger, war, murder and all other evils have such power over mankind. We must hate avarice, self-esteem and sensual pleasure, as mothers of the vices and stepmothers of the virtues.

Because of them we are commanded not to love ‘the world’ and ‘the things that are in the world’ (1 John 2:15); not so that we should hate God’s creation through

lack of discernment, but so that we should eliminate the occasions for these three passions.

Based on Saint Mark the Ascetic



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