

Father Seraphim of Platina

It is later than you think

(From letters preserved by Father Herman of Platina.)

Compiled by Vyacheslav Marchenko.

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“It is later than you think! Hasten, therefore, to do the work of God.”

— Father Seraphim (Rose)

Part I. On the narrow path to salvation.

1. About Christian life and monasticism.

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Monastic obedience cannot possibly be “slavery”; if that were true, then the Church would be divided up into “slaves” and “tyrants.” Some people in the Church at various times have tried to enforce this perverted concept, but it does not come from the Church or from monasticism. All Orthodox Christians, and especially monks and nuns, are trying to cut off their own will and lead a God-pleasing life; but to meekly bow down to tyranny, most especially when this tyranny only destroys a God-pleasing work and extinguishes the Christian and monastic spirit

in its victims—is certainly only a parody and mockery of Orthodoxy and monasticism.

We know that the canons were made for man, and not man for the canons, that above the canons is the spirit that inspired them, and that to preserve this spirit we are prepared even to go against the letter of separate canons, if these are enforced in order to crush our spirit. In actual fact, no one would dream of trying to enforce the letter of every canon today, for then there would be no Orthodox Christians left at all! Our own bishop is in San Francisco “uncanonically,” for it is against the canons to transfer bishops from one Diocese to another (this canon has caused considerable fighting recently in the Church of Greece); it is also against the canons to ordain a deacon before the age of 25, or a priest before 30 (this is strictly enforced in the Greek Church, and one of our priest correspondents in Africa wrote us a year or two ago that a priest was desperately needed for Tanzania, but the only candidate there was 25 years old and under no circumstances could he be ordained before 5 more years—but according to the letter of this canon most of our Russian priests are “uncanonical”). Etc.

(From a letter to Mrs. Kontsevich March 24 / April 6, 1971)

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In the prevailing Russian understanding today a “monastery” is a place with an incidental collection of people, with a definite function in the Church: to serve as a bishop’s summer residence, picnic center, manpower pool for church needs, etc. And “monks” are those people who becomes slaves, crushed by the authorities for the sake of “obedience,” who can be used by the church organization: the more hopeful ones as bishops, the less hopeful ones as hieromonks in parishes that can’t afford anything better, and the complete fools to remain in the monastery and tend the cows. Against such a perverted idea, both of monasteries and of “obedience” and the monastic virtues, we emphatically protest, and if God grants us to have a real monastery here, it will fit into this “accepted” picture only over our dead bodies. In this concept “monasticism” has become some kind of spiritual gymnastics (pokloni, obediences, etc.) which can be acquired by living for a while in a “monastery” and once you have it you can become an incidental member of any other “monastery” and offer others the fruit of your gymnastic experience—in the meantime rising in the hierarchy of church ranks until, if you’re lucky, you become a bishop and you can run your own show. No! Monasticism is a disposition and effort of the soul striving for salvation, and its coenobitic form is forged by living in community with others of the same mind and soul and coming to be one in aspiration with them, each one spurring the others on to salvation. An abbot isn’t supposed to be “promoted” to bishop, but remain where he is for life.

This concept, however, seems to be dying out among Russians, certainly among bishops.

(From a letter to Laurence Campbell 10/23 August 1971)

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Dear Brother in Christ, Laurence,

You have told us of your willingness to drop everything and come to join us here as a full-fledged brother; and you have expressed your doubts. Now it is for us to tell you what you can expect and what we expect of you when and if you join us, no longer as an honored guest and brother from far away, but as a full member of our community.

1. First of all, we welcome you as a full and organic member of our monastic-missionary body, fully sharing our common joys, sorrows, difficulties, and everyday life, and giving your maximum to the common work and responding to the common need without second thought. We will sacrifice ourselves to the utmost to make room for you in our common body, and we will expect the same of you. Under no circumstances will we allow you to live as a “bachelor” and adjust ourselves to your whims and eccentricities, nor as any kind of “guest,” paying or free, who gets room and board in exchange for work or money. You are a full member of us, or there is no point in your coming.

2. Our spiritual orientation is: devotion to St. Herman and discipleship to Vladika John and faithfulness to his testament and tradition to us, which includes in some degree being a “reflection of Valaam.” We have neither startsi nor great spiritual gifts to offer you; we can only invite you to be our fellow-orphan of St. Herman and Vladika John, asking together their help to make up our numerous deficiencies. Many from outside, as you already see, will judge us, will say we are in “prelest,” etc., and you will fall under the general condemnation. We cannot defend ourselves by pointing to any “spiritual” qualities which we do not have, but only by the fruits which God may bring forth from our common labors. We have sufficient testimony from outside to tell us that these fruits so far, even if small, are nonetheless real.

Vladika John divided his day into four parts of six hours each: rest, spiritual reading and reflection, work, and prayer. That is also the formula of our common life, only with the hours adapted to our weakness and needs. The active part of our day is devoted to work and prayer; no idleness. You will be given a chotki and a brief rule of cell prayer; besides this, you will carry the chotki with you everywhere and use it as your chief weapon against idleness and vain imaginings, fighting the devil with the Jesus Prayer.

3. As you know, we are experiencing difficulty with the local “authority,” whose ideas concerning our status and the idea that inspires us are totally opposed to our own. Therefore, you must know that we do not accept him as Head of our community, nor do we accept his Ukase concerning our monastery, concerning which we have reported in writing to the Secretary of the Synod. Sooner or later there will doubtless be an open battle with the “authority,” and you will be expected to stand shoulder to shoulder with us in this, fighting for the common idea that inspires us (without which we will not be faithful to Vladika John), and being counselled by responsible persons in the Church who know us and our work. We may well have to endure disgrace. But know that one bishop (N) has openly encouraged us to “disobedience,” if that be necessary, telling us to “treasure the blessing of Vladika John above everything,” and another (L) has said: “the fact that sorrows come to you testifies to the fact that you are doing a work of God... I think that you should be patient, undertake no dramatic moves, but by your conduct and your ‘line’ show that this (the behavior and ukase of V.A.) goes against your soul and is not suitable to you.” In the meantime we consider that our monastery does not yet have an official status and is in a state of “persecution” until such day as we shall be free to exercise our monastic right to present our own Rule to the Synod and elect our own Head. Until that time we take protection under the name of “Brotherhood” which Vladika John blessed.

4. Our rule being coenobitic, everything is held in common, and no one has anything of his “own”—except, for practical purposes, the personal effects, books, icons, etc., in his own cell. All needs are paid for out of the common treasury; you must come to us poor. We will ask you to put whatever money you have left from the world in a safe place outside and not touch it until you either leave (in which case the money becomes your adjustment money back to the world) or make your final decision to remain with us (in which case you distribute the money to whomever you please, or to the monastery). If you come with your car, you will put the keys in the common treasury and it will be used by the community as needed and with blessing and will not become “yours” again until you make your final decision on staying or leaving, when you will decide how to dispose of it. In other words, you will be entirely dependent on the community, which means also: you on us, and we on you. The worry that we cannot feed another mouth is real only if you do not intend to work; the additional income to be expected from the wholehearted addition of two hands to the work force will more than feed one extra mouth.

5. Authority, when necessary, is exercised by the eldest in our community, Fr. Herman, and after him by Fr. Seraphim. The obediences to be given form a part of the whole work and circumstances of the community, and their importance will generally be evident. If in particular cases you do not always see this, you will just have to trust us. So that the activity of community will proceed by common consent, and not according to the whim of individuals, nothing is undertaken without a blessing, no matter what one may “feel” or “think,” and all obediences are performed according to the rules and spirit of the community. Phrases such as “I insist, I demand, I refuse,” etc., are absolutely forbidden. General questions affecting the whole community will be decided “soborno,” by common consent (such as questions of stoves for winter). We do not acknowledge the right of any

ecclesiastical authority outside the community to issue commands regarding our internal life, organization, or any individual member; any such attempt will be judged and acted on by the common consent of all members of the community. Our community is a monastery and not an episcopal dacha.

6. Worldly actions, conversation, manner, tone, objects, etc., are absolutely prohibited, as being utterly destructive of the monastic spirit. This includes:

- a. Singing worldly songs, whistling, ostentatious spitting, littering.
- b. Radio, newspapers, or magazines besides those received by the community, unless by special blessing for a definite purpose.
- c. Crude or sexually oriented talk, reference to “urination,” etc.
- d. Arguing, proving ones point, raising ones voice, idle comments, complaints, and in general everything that upsets the general peace and order.
- e. Demanding of special treatment or privileges, such as bed pans, special foods or preparation, or other paraphernalia and habits of old maids and self-pampered bachelors. Sufficient allowance will be given in cases of illness, allergy, etc.
- f. Demands to be placed in a position of authority, on a “Board of Directors,” etc.— these concepts are foreign to the nature of our community’s existence.
- g. Nosiness, curiosity, idle questions.
- h. Crossing the legs (for: Life of St. Arsenius the Great).
- i. And free and easy, worldly manner with visitors. After visitors have been greeted one or more brothers will be assigned to them, and the others will continue their work.
- j. No food is kept in kellias, and no eating between meals, unless with blessing (water is allowed between meals).

7. Finally, in everything the spirit of mutual love, trust, and respect must prevail. For infractions of the above rules, penances of pokloni may be given; but the severest punishment will be given to the brother who allows the sun to set on his anger against another brother. According to the rule of St. Cassian, such a one will not be allowed to pray with the brethren until he comes to repentance and begs forgiveness. For without mutual love, trust, and respect, nothing written above makes any sense, and there cannot be any community at all.

And so, dear brother in Christ, you have the picture. We expect much of you, and we will try to give you much in return. Only in principle you must agree with all that is written above; and if you fall, accept correction. As slaves of Christ we cannot offer to God and His Church great spirituality, wisdom, organization, or podvigs; but we can offer our absolute determination and strenuous effort to be faithful to the testament of Vladika John to us and to forge a community which in some way preserves his spirit, helping, encouraging and strengthening each other in our weaknesses and falls, and being open and honest with each other. The rules above are in accordance with the “Decree on Monasteries” of the Russian Church Abroad, which we shall read to you on your next visit.

(From a letter to Laurence Campbell 10/23 August 1971)

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We didn’t come here to “establish a monastery,” but to save our souls and print the OW. If

others are crazy enough to join us, perhaps God will bless a real monastery here; and if He blesses it, then He will give us the means of nourishing it, both physically and spiritually. Vladika John did tell us that he “believed” there would be a missionary monastery such as we dreamed of, but we wait to see what God’s will is for us. We told a few people that in case of need or if your heart feels so moved, there is a refuge here; whereupon Fr. Seraphim started looking for “candidates” to send us—which we don’t need! If a monastery here is God-pleasing, then it will “build itself,” or so we believe.

About you: you’re undecided, the clergy give you various advice.... Can I “advise” you too? If so—then don’t take any advice too seriously, not even (or maybe even especially!) from bishops; 9 out of 10 bishops are entirely preoccupied with their own problems, such as finding priests, etc. The fact that you are undecided means—that you’re undecided, neither more nor less. It doesn’t mean you want to be in the white clergy, for that is a definite decision in itself.

Down deep you want the full uncompromising Orthodox life. You want not merely to “serve the Church” or find a place in the Church establishment” (probably you don’t want that!), but you want to give your whole heart and soul and strength to God. But what form does this take? Apparently you have no one to point the way or inspire you. And you’re faced with an atmosphere wherein the Church has become a habit, even a career, a clique with its own jokes and vices—and worst of all, the means of deadening a living soul and putting out its spark. It’s wrong to douse this spark in the name of humility, patience, obedience, or any other Christian virtue; these too can become habits and deadening. The spark of Christian faith must be nourished; it can survive for a time with little nourishment, but if there is nothing to inspire it, it will not survive long.

I’ll tell you what I’ve felt for a long time, since the time when what we have now was still a dream and you didn’t know what you believed: that if God opened your heart to Orthodox faith, you would think and feel as we do, and you belonged here with us. But you have to have something more definite than that to guide you, and our existence here is, frankly, so precarious that we couldn’t ask anyone to join us who didn’t come to it by himself. And we couldn’t accept you without first having a good long talk with you and presenting to you the real difficulties that face us, which are somewhat by more serious than firewood and “prelest.” But first of all comes your own heart, which must find a place where it can be nourished so that you can produce fruit.

We fear most for you that “public opinion” will force you into a category into which you don’t belong, and that you will be weak enough to accept this and get stuck in it for life—or even worse, as happens too often, get bored with the whole thing and quit the Church altogether. You’re probably not in high repute in Jordanville—a weakling who thinks too much, gloomy, behind in his studies, knows English better than Russian, with some kind of shameful sins in his past; he won’t amount to much—put him in the korovnik, and maybe we can find a parish or some such place for him. If this is anything like the truth—don’t accept it! You’re called to more than that. You still have the “spark”—and you’re called to keep it alive and communicate it to others, producing fruit on Christ’s harvest, perhaps in an unconventional way. Don’t forget it! And don’t let anyone tell you to be “humble” and “obedient” and let someone else—who doesn’t see your heart or care who you are—fit you into a conventional mould that doesn’t fit you.

Keep in mind Vladika John; pray to him. He’s our guiding star, and when we sometimes get gloomy and begin to think that it’s pointless to go against the conventional view, that after all the Church is supposed to be a career and not something to get inspired about and inspire others with, that what we’re doing is too risky, that it’s better to let our enthusiasm die out and let someone else tell us where we can be of “humble service” to the Church—then we bring to mind Vladika John and somehow everything makes sense again, and the “conventional” view doesn’t make sense at all. And then we go back to our lives of Saints and Holy Fathers and get our inspiration from them.

We have always been very sensitive of the rule of St. John Cassian: “It was the advice of the Fathers, an advice always in season, that a monk should at all hazard flee the society of bishops and women; for neither women nor bishops permit a monk to remain at peace in his cell, nor fix his eyes on pure and heavenly doctrine.” Monks and bishops are of most benefit

to each other and to the Church when they are independent of each other, we're thoroughly convinced!

(From a letter to Dimitry 13/26 August 1971)

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We've reflected a little on your problem and will offer the fruits of it, in the form of a few principles and recommendations, which perhaps, when put together, will help you on the way to a decision.

1. Keep the "spiritual" and the "worldly" distinct: both spheres have their own logic. Your decision to join us, and later on to remain with us, God willing, should be taken according to spiritual logic; but preliminary questions such as trip, job, etc., are still subject to worldly logic. It is a dangerous mistake to start applying spiritual logic too early or in the wrong place, for that can hinder one later from making a safe retreat back to the world. Our wandering and ex-monks are living examples of what not to follow; if one is to live in the world (and one can do so fruitfully, from the Christian point of view), it should be with the independence and advantages of anyone else living in the world, and not with the handicap of the spiritual crippling that comes from not knowing where one belongs, trying to mix monastic and worldly life, having regrets about past decisions, etc.

Monastic rules give precisely a trial period of at least 6 months, during which time one's worldly rights, while as it were suspended, remain intact. Therefore it is simply not appropriate for you to make a once and for all decision now about staying with us. We welcome you and hope that you will eventually make this decision, since it appears to us that you would be most fruitful here; but that decision belongs at the end of the trial period, during which period all previously incalculable questions should be resolved. Therefore, definitely, if at all possible, you should take a leave of absence, so that if you do decide to return to the world you will have maximum freedom and security in which to bring forth what fruit you can bring forth in the world (the calendar is a good first fruit) without using up your psychic-spiritual energy on vain regrets and job insecurity.

2. One of your important debts to the world is the visit to your mother, which from what you have said and the way you apparently feel, should be made if at all possible this year.

3. The first two principles being, apparently, mutually exclusive, perhaps you should change some other element in the equation to make them both possible. What about visiting your mother, relatives, and Boston on your vacation (3 weeks?) on borrowed money which you would pay back after Christmas (when your \$400 debt will be finished?), and then joining us in spring instead of November? Of course, I don't know what sums of money this would involve or how long it would take you to pay it back, but your trip would obviously have to be as modest as possible.

Beyond this we don't know what to say or recommend, as we don't see any other alternatives. Pray about it to Vladika John.

Pray for us. And watch out; besides the human factor, the devil is likely to try and disturb you or mix you up in future weeks. Don't trust your feelings too much, and make sense at least by worldly logic.

(From a letter to Laurence Campbell, August 16/29, 1971)

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The day of "unconscious Orthodoxy" is past, and truly it is not enough for Russians to sit aloof and just wait for the restoration of Russia—which, when it comes, may take a surprising form and find most Russians off guard! We are more than ever concerned to preserve the independence of our monastery so that if—God forbid!—there should come a

division in the Synod, we will be free to act according to conscience.

(From a letter to Father Neketas Palasis on August 31 / September 13, 1971.

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May God grant you in His time to take on yourself the angelic habit which protects and separates us from the world—yes, even us poor monks of the autumn (or rather winter) of monasticism. If St. Macarius the Great could say: “I am not a monk, but I have seen monks,” then what are we to say who dare to call ourselves monks and possess not one of the virtues of monks? And yet even we may dare to hope for mercy from God if we “love much,” if we keep alive the flame that brings us to the Orthodox Church, where in monasticism can and should be the surest way to travel the narrow path to salvation. Whatever you do or wherever you go, dear brother in Christ, do not let this flame go out. But know that you cannot follow this path without taking the cross upon yourself, the “chain of suffering” which the Christian life is. And so be prepared for trials, troubles, sufferings, and everything you might expect or want the least. There is no other path of Christian, and least of all monastic, life. Be firm in these trials, knowing that with them you are on the right path, and without them you are on the path straight to hell. “He that endureth to the end, shall be saved.”

About ourselves we must speak frankly to you. We must warn you that without doubt you have illusions about us. Our conditions of life, while somewhat simple, are by no means terribly difficult, especially now with our gas stove and refrigerator and our cistern with one faucet of running water (except when it breaks off after a deep freeze, as it did yesterday). Far from having left the world behind, our machines and visitors (who increase in number) and many cares, and most of all our own worldly selves, persuade us that we have nothing whatever in common with true “wilderness dwellers” except the technical fact that we do live in a wilderness. Our rule of prayer by prayer rope is very modest, and our concentration is on reading and singing the daily services (in English and Slavonic), which often because of our cares and work we barely struggle through. And there are obvious disadvantages, such as the fact that even in the summer we rarely have Liturgy more than once a month; that we constantly have not enough space and are having to build lean-tos; etc. And spiritually we are non-entities, and you can get more from any confessor in Jordanville.

As regards Jordanville (and the rest of us too!), you should know that St. Anthony the Great prophesied that in the last days monasticism would so decline that monks would not be distinguishable from laymen—and yet, because of their enduring of the sufferings of those times, their reward would be greater than that of the early desert monks.

You ask for our advice. First, do nothing quickly (in any case, we are still snowed in, and getting in and out is a problem). If you are in a place where it is possible to serve God and to work on yourself (you aren’t required to eat so much are you?—you’ll find we feed you too much too!), then get the maximum benefit from it, with patience and without judging anyone else. Make any move only after due consideration, and bring with you to any new place what you have acquired in the old place through patient enduring and learning.

Finally: we ourselves came to this place to serve God and to save our souls, not with the intention of acquiring novices. If anyone wants to be a novice with us, it is his choice—we will not persuade him. If, after sufficient reflection, prayer, and advice from whomever you can get sound advice, you choose to come here, we will welcome you to w[armly?] and do the utmost to give you whatever we can give you. But you cannot come here to do what you please, or to reach for spiritual heights on your own before you’ve put the foundation under your feet. We will demand of you obedience, trust, and openness.

Please forgive me if this sounds abrupt. I write praying God that I may say something of use for you. Whatever you do, we would hope to hear from you. And please pray for the worthless monks Herman and Seraphim.

(From a letter to Michael [Farnsworth?] January 25 / February 7, 1972)

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Keep the thought of monasticism in your heart, but don't be too concerned about it now. Be resolved to serve God in your life as He wills, and God will soon enough open the path to you to fulfill this resolve, whether as a monk or in the world. Both monasticism and living in the world have their own advantages and trials, and in neither place can one escape the responsibility of striving to live a God-pleasing life. God will show you His will for you.

Of the three books you mention, *Unseen Warfare* would be the best for you to buy and read now; it is a good guide to the Orthodox Christian life, which is a warfare with the devils and our own passions. *The Rudder* is dangerous for beginners, because most of the canons concern Church administration and are meant for the clergy who are in charge of this and who know how the canons should be interpreted and applied.

Some of Blessed Augustine's books are better not to read, but *the City of God* is good. Of course, now with school beginning again you probably won't have much time for reading, and what time you do have is better spent on spiritual reading such as *Unseen Warfare*.

College life will doubtless give you many temptations. But remember that learning in itself is useful and can be used later in a Christian way. Try to avoid the idle activities and temptations you will meet that serve no useful purpose, so that even in a godless atmosphere you can "redeem the time," as the Apostle Paul says, and make maximum use of the opportunities you are given for learning.

(From a letter to Nicholas [Eastman] 23 August / 5 September 1972)

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Your mixed feelings lately, especially at Holy Transfiguration Monastery, doubtless reveal several things. One of them, as you yourself must realize, is your own immaturity! Clearly, you do not yet know your own mind, and so you should not hurry to make any decision regarding something so important as the monastic life. A decision pleasing to God and which is for your own salvation should not be accompanied by feelings of confusion. If your feelings are confused, stop for a while and let them "settle" and see where your heart really is or wants to be. In the meantime, keep your regular life of spiritual discipline, church services, etc., as well as you can, also doing your duty in the place where you happen to be. In your case, this certainly means applying yourself to study, so as not to lose this opportunity. Do not fall into the trap of thinking (mostly idly!) about "spiritual" things so much that you neglect the humble "worldly" things right in front of your nose. Any learning you can get now, even if it seems very boring or worldly, can be very valuable to you later. Do not waste the opportunity you have and incur judgment later for this! When and if God leads you to the monastic life—then will be time enough to concentrate on "spiritual" things, under proper guidance.

Another cause of your confusion has some substance to it, and about this you should have the right ideas. This is the difference between "Russian" and "Greek" Orthodoxy. Most of the differences are not really substantial, such as the difference in music, details of church services, etc. But a few of them are important and could get you unnecessarily confused. One of these is the practice of confession and receiving Holy Communion: the "Russian" practice is usually not to receive Communion without confession, while the Greeks receive Communion a number of times without confession. Basically, this question is solved for one by one's own spiritual father, and the only confusion arises when someone from "Russian" practice enters a "Greek" church or vice versa. Our own rule (which I practiced, for example, when I visited Fr. Panteleimon and Fr. Nektas in Seattle last week) is always to receive confession before receiving Communion the first time in a "Greek" church, but after that to receive Communion for several days in a row without going to confession again, provided that one keeps the full "Russian" rule of prayer before receiving Holy Communion and that nothing has come up that disturbs one's conscience. This is also the usual "Russian" practice in Passion Week, when those who have confessed on Great Thursday may receive Communion without confession on Great Saturday and on Pascha. The important thing is that one has a regular discipline of confession (which should be rather frequent) and not receiving

Holy Communion carelessly or with an unclean conscience. There is no problem at Holy Transfiguration Monastery, since there the novices and monks confess their thoughts daily to their elder and receive sacramental absolution at least once a week, as I have heard. In your case, you should ask your spiritual father what to do, and not change to “Greek” practice until you should be under a “Greek” spiritual father. There is much more that can be said on this subject, but basically I would say that if frequent Holy Communion is a good thing, then frequent confession is also good!

Most other differences between the “Greek” and “Russian” traditions are of minor importance, and one can find that in some respects the “Russians” are closer to more ancient and traditional practice (as I discovered last week in Seattle when I asked Fr. Ephraim of Holy Transfiguration Monastery about the way they performed the services), and in some respects the “Greeks” are closer. In music, the “Greeks” have preserved the more ancient practice, as 4-part harmony certainly does come from the West. In our Hermitage we try to stay to 2-part harmony, which is closer to “Greek” practice. (Fr. Nektas, the Greek priest from Seattle, found this quite satisfactory when he visited us some time ago.)

You notice that I put “Greek” and “Russian” in quotations marks—because we are one in Christ, and we should by no means let differences of nationality or custom cause rivalries among us. We have much to learn from each other, but both of us must learn first of all from Christ our Saviour and the pure tradition of His Church! Both “Greeks” and “Russians” have faults and have introduced some minor “innovations” into church practice; but if we love each other in Christ, these faults are tolerable, and it is far preferable to tolerate them than to go about “reforming” other people and being overly critical. Each parish and monastery is free to preserve the Orthodox tradition as fully as it wishes and can, preserving all humility and love.

(From a letter to Nicholas [Eastman], February 4/17, 1973)

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We belong to the tradition: do as your conscience says and speak out, and if they persecute you or “retire” you for it, well and good. (Did you ever hear of a “retired” monk? Maybe you will!)

(From a letter to Nina Seko, March 4/17, 1973)

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Regarding Alexey and “lay saints” etc.: I must say frankly that your idea that he has a “soft-sell” approach to Orthodoxy is unjust to him. We have discussed often with him the tone, content, orientation, etc., of Nikodemos, and he and we are quite agreed that Nikodemos is in full harmony with other Synod publications as complementing them, and not as repeating their stands. You have probably noticed that our Orthodox Word, also has had of late much less concerning contemporary subjects, anti-ecumenism, etc.—not at all because we’ve changed our mind about these things or have changed our orientation, but solely because your publications (and a few others) are now doing this work for us. We have no reason to doubt Alexey’s Orthodoxy or his awareness of the dangers of Latin-type thinking, etc.—it’s just that he doesn’t feel it’s his mission to go into that. And on another point: he’s certainly not weak on monasticism, and in fact the reason he was so interested in printing the Life of St. Juliana is because it shows the monastic spirit in a lay person, hence points out that lay life too must be penetrated by monastic ideals. We agree with him that such lives can be very inspiring in just the right way—more directly so than the lives of monk saints.

(From a letter to Father Nektas Palasis 5/18 April 1973)

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To answer your question: did we “canonize a Saint”? We did not! That is the work of bishops. We rather nourished our own piety, which is constantly in danger of being extinguished in

present conditions, and we did so in a way which is by no means foreign to the history of the Church and is approved by present-day Fathers whom we trust, such as Vladika Nektary and Father Panteleimon. Must we call a council of bishops to nourish our piety, six forest-dwellers in a remote cabin, whom any sensible worldly person already regards as crazy? How spoiled rotten you must be, by thinking you know so much about Church history and the “rights” of bishops, in order to think like that!

If you wish to understand under what “category” our actions fall and may be understood, I will tell you by giving an example from the act of a bishop whom you have respected up to now. You know the “secret” which we share with Bishop Nektary, precisely because he did here just what you accuse us of doing. He did not do it in his capacity of bishop, because he does not have episcopal jurisdiction over this piece of land. He did it solely out of love for a Saint, and out of grief over the realization that political and other worldly considerations have made cold the hearts of those, including bishops, who should already be glorifying this Saint; and in doing it he likewise followed the apparently “uncanonical” act of Father Panteleimon, which he applauded. (You must realize, by the way, that by your present behavior you have fallen out of oneness of mind not only with us, but also with Fr. Panteleimon and Vladika Nektary, because you know better what the Church teaches than any of us, and you have judged us all.

And now I must shock your “principles” even more, in order that you will finally understand what is at stake: Vladika Nektary’s act (or rather, acts, for he has repeated it) was done with full knowledge that his own ruling bishop would certainly not approve if he knew of it, but on the contrary would give him great trouble if he heard of it. What?! Does Vladika Nektary, whom you have regarded as “holy,” know so much less of Church “principles” than Daniel Olson, that he would dare to usurp the “competence” of his own ruling bishop? Or does he place himself “above” Church principles?! O you fool, if you dare to think like this! He acted “secretly”—precisely because those who should be shouting the praises of a newly-revealed Saint are silent due to the political considerations and cold hearts that reign in our midst; and if it were not for such loving hearts which beat with holy Orthodoxy, the fire of true Orthodoxy would be completely absent from our midst today. In future, we trust in God, the loving zealous acts of such men (which of course are not at all “uncanonical” because they have nothing to do with any canons whatever) whether they be hierarchs or priests or monks or simple laymen, will be praised and lauded by the whole Church, because throughout the Church’s history these are the stuff of which Orthodoxy is made in practice.

If you wish to know the “principle” on which Vladika Nektary (and others who practice living Orthodoxy) have acted, and that which inspires even us poor ones just to go on under an extremely difficult and unfavorable spiritual climate (which you cold heart does not even see)—it is the principle of catacombness, of nourishing in secret those sprouts of true Orthodoxy which are not being encouraged in official Orthodox circles.

(From a letter to Daniel [Olson] October 25 / November 7, 1973)

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On Tuesday morning Vl. A. himself paid us a surprise visit, together with our starets, Fr. Spyridon, and Deacon Nicholas Porshnikov. Glory be to God, we received Holy Communion, for which we are grateful to Vl. But afterwards we had a talk—which revealed, despite our almost tearful entreaty, that he does not understand not only us, but any of the young idealistic priests or monks, and talks a totally different language, fitting everything into a set “Synodal” pattern. Alas, he will be presiding over empty parishes without priests in a very short time. How many of the young zealots will survive if such attitudes continue at the top? Nonetheless, precisely because the situation seems so hopeless, let us hope in the Lord and continue on the path God has given us—to love the desert-dwellers and keep the desert in our hearts.

Pray for us miserable sinners, who have the name of monks without the deeds.

(From a letter to Nina Seko, February 19, 1974)

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The Orthodox doctrine of human nature is set forth most concisely in the Spiritual Instructions of Abba Dorotheus. This book is accepted in the Orthodox Church as the "ABC," the basic textbook of Orthodox spirituality; it is the first spiritual reading which an Orthodox monk is given, and it remains his constant companion for the rest of his life, to be read and re-read. It is most significant that the Orthodox doctrine of human nature is set forth in the very first page of this book, because this doctrine is the foundation of the entire Orthodox spiritual life.

What is this doctrine? Abba Dorotheus writes in the very first words of his First Instruction:

"In the beginning, when God created man (Gen. 2:20), He placed him in Paradise and adorned him with every virtue, giving him the commandment not to taste of the tree which was in the midst of Paradise. And thus he remained there in the enjoyment of Paradise; in prayer, in vision, in every glory and honor, having sound senses and being in the same natural condition in which he was created. For God created man according to His own image, that is, immortal, master of himself, and adorned with every virtue. But when he transgressed the commandment, eating the fruit of the tree of which God had commanded him not to taste, then he was banished from Paradise (Gen. 3), fell away from the natural condition, and fell into a condition against nature, and then he remained in sin, in love of glory, in love for the enjoyments of this age and of other passions, and he was mastered by them, for he became himself their slave through the transgression."

(The Lord Jesus Christ) "accepted our very nature, the essence of our constitution, and became a new Adam in the image of God Who created the first Adam; He renewed the natural condition and made the senses again sound as they were in the beginning."

"The children of humility of wisdom are: self-reproach, not trusting one's own mind, hatred of one's own will; for through them a man is enabled to come to himself and return to the natural condition through purifying himself by the holy commandments of Christ."

(From a letter to Dr. Kalomiros. Fifth Week of Lent, 1974 [Mar. 2-9, approx.])

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The want of spiritual guides, as indeed of Orthodox Christians who just care about others, is acute. Do you have the Arena of Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov? If not I'll try to get you a copy. Although it's written for monks, it applies to everyone who wants to lead a serious Orthodox life in today's conditions. We are no longer given the way of obedience to a Staretz, he says (even though he wrote when there were remarkable Startsi living); our present way of Orthodox life must be according to the Holy Scriptures and Holy Fathers and by counsel from living Orthodox Christians (i.e., those who give advice but not commands). You will have to be a wise bee, storing up whatever counsels you can get, and not ceasing to read Scriptures and Fathers, whose teaching is for all times, even if applied differently in different times. It would not be bad for you to keep a spiritual diary (if you don't already), putting there your spiritual questionings and struggles, and also answers and light you get from Orthodox sources. The difficulty of your situation is for the good—those who have never been in hopeless situations have little to give others.

Perhaps you do not know "what next"? —after you get your degree? Get the degree first, and then trust in God to open the way. The political-economic situation in U.S., as evidently everywhere in the West, is rapidly deteriorating. Worse, the church situation becomes very bad (your situation is not unique!). In San Francisco suddenly some parishes are becoming empty, as the old priests die and there are no young ones to replace them; and it's doubtful if more than a few see the cause: that Orthodoxy has too long been "taken for granted," and it does not preserve itself "automatically"! But all of this only prepares us for catacomb times when our opportunities are perhaps greater than ever. We can't see the future—but know this, that if you love God and His Orthodox Church and your fellow men—God can and will use you. Only Stay in contact with fellow Orthodox strugglers (they do exist).

(From a letter to Luke [Walmsley] on 24 June / 7 July 1974)

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Concerning the Arena, p. 52, the “moral, hidden obedience, performed in the soul” seems to refer to our obedient orientation to God in general, which we should not think is satisfied if we are merely outwardly obedient to monastic or church authorities. It can happen that outward obedience is so over-emphasized that it becomes a mechanical substitute for the genuine voluntary inward giving up of one’s own will and understanding* The distinction can be felt in the heart: sooner or later an unsound, mechanical obedience will produce a feeling of oppression and tenseness, which are signs that something is wrong. Genuine inward obedience is accompanied by the joy of being relieved of trusting only oneself. This subject is extremely deep and is closely bound up with the whole subject of genuine vs. false Orthodoxy in the 20th century, most acutely in “Sergianism,” where obedience indeed becomes slavery to men and the human church organization. True obedience is accompanied by inward freedom, without which there is no Church life.

(From a letter to Nina Seko on June 24 / July 7, 1974)

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“School” tradition of Orthodox theology—one might say the Russian Church “establishment” of Synod, seminaries, big-city monasteries, etc.—was indeed subject to a foreign influence from the West: not in teaching any new doctrine (for its doctrine always remained Orthodox), but in accommodating itself to Western ways of thinking and church organization (the Synod itself in place of the Patriarch; the large monasteries viewed as “official institutions” whose abbots were often transferred, instead of an intimate community under an elder; etc.). To some extent these developments were inevitable consequences of modern conditions (either intellectual, as when attempts are made to convert Roman Catholics or Protestants to Orthodoxy by using their own language; or physical: the sheer numbers of monks and monasteries made it inevitable that only a few of them would be able to preserve themselves as intimate spiritual communities).

BUT AT THE SAME TIME THE PUREST TRADITION OF ORTHODOXY REMAINED INTACT IN RUSSIA, out of sight or semi-underground, as it were. Even before the disciples of Elder Paisius brought back the authentic ancient monastic tradition in the early 19th century, even during the outright persecution of Orthodoxy under Peter and Catherine—the genuine monastic tradition continued to exist in Russia under the Elders of Sarov (before St. Seraphim), Blessed Theodore of Sanaxar, and others. It was their influence, together with that of Blessed Paisius, that led to the celebrated “Orthodox revival” of the 19th century in Russia.

(From a letter to Alexey Yang on June 30 / July 13, 1974)

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A quote from the Ancient Patericon, used by Archbishop Theophanes of Poltava to encourage us poor strugglers of the latter times:

The Holy Fathers of the Skete (of Egypt) prophesied about the last generation, saying: What did we do? And one of them, great in life, Iskhariion by name, said: we fulfilled, the commandments of God. They asked again: Those who come after us, will they do anything? He said: They will achieve half of what we did. And after them, what? And Ishirion said: The men of that generation will have no deeds whatever; but there will come upon them temptation, and those who are worthy in this temptation will be higher than us and our fathers.”

Other Fathers have said: the psychological trials of dwellers in the last times will equal the

physical trials of the martyrs.

But in order to face these trials we must be LIVING IN A DIFFERENT WORLD. Do you have a notebook for taking down quotes from Holy Fathers in your reading? Do you always have a book of Holy Fathers that you are reading, and can turn to in a moment of gloom? START NOW— this is essential.

(From a letter to Alexey Yang, October 2/15, 1975)

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The monastic community is still possible even in our days, but—as our experience has shown us clearly—it is very difficult and requires constant struggles to maintain. «But a lay community is much more difficult to establish and preserve, because laymen do not have the principle of obedience to an elder, which cuts off arguments and fighting, and also the family is the natural unit for lay people, and a group of families can never be as close as a monastic “family” under an elder.

But still, if one learns to be realistic and does not expect from a lay community as much as one does of a monastic community, this also is a possibility for our days—and actually a very important one. Life in an ordinary Orthodox parish today, in the abnormal big-city atmosphere and surrounded by unheard-of temptations—is not normal for Orthodoxy. We know a very zealous priest in New Jersey, with a very large flock and many young people. But he tells us that he is fighting a losing battle. He has the young people in church school for a few hours on Sunday, and perhaps Saturday night, and for an hour or two of church school on Saturday—and the whole rest of the week they are subject to the contrary influences of the public schools, television, etc. The desire to have an atmosphere where the Church can have more part in life and more influence on children—is a very natural Orthodox desire, and not something “odd” or a sign of “prelest,” as many seem to think.

The basic spiritual principles of such a community we have tried to set forth in our article on Archbishop Andrew. The most apparent outward sign of this community seems to be the Divine services (even if only a minimum of them), whether with a priest or without—but daily, this being the point around which everything else revolves. In our present-day conditions, also, there must be a conscious effort to get away from involvement in the world—thus, small towns in preference to large cities, freedom (as much as possible) from television, newspapers, telephone, etc. And something more: there must be a getting away from the worldly spirit in the Church itself, this means getting away even from ordinary parish life, if possible, for this has become very worldly today.

The Etna community is by no means a highly “idealistic” or “experimental” community; it is rather a natural growth from special conditions which are exceptionally favorable for Orthodox self-preservation—provided, of course, that the basic Orthodox zeal and fervor are present to begin with. The greatest blessing for this community is, paradoxically enough, that they are far from an Orthodox parish—this has forced them to get out of the rut of so many Orthodox people today who take for granted everything about the Church and assume that someone else is “in charge” of the Church and its services, etc. These people have been forced to do the services themselves, and therefore the services are much more dear to them; and the difficulties they must go through to get to a priest and receive Holy Communion are so great that they dearly treasure this privilege and are literally working out their salvation with fear and trembling. Of course, we Americans are also blessed because everything in Orthodoxy is so new to us and therefore precious—every new translation of a saint's life or service is a new discovery for us, all the more so if we can participate in it ourselves.

We ourselves have a feeling—based on nothing very definite as yet—that the best hope for preserving true Orthodoxy in the years ahead will lie in such small gatherings of believers, as much as possible “one in mind and soul.” The history of the 20th century has already shown us that we cannot expect too much from the “Church organization”; there, even apart from heresies, the spirit of the world has become very strong. Archbishop Averky, and our own Bishop Nektary also, have warned us to prepare for catacomb times ahead, when the grace of God may even be taken away from the “Church organization” and only isolated groups of

believers will remain. Soviet Russia already gives us an example of what we may expect—only worse, for the times do not get better.

But it is very difficult to plan for the difficult times ahead. There is much wilderness in our Northern California. Both Alexey Young and we ourselves live at the edge of wilderness areas where there is no dwelling for 30 or 40 miles. But with airplanes and other modern inventions, of course, there will be no “hiding” unless God covers us. From Russian experience we know that believers have been hidden both in large cities and in wildernesses (several forest monasteries were undiscovered for 20 years or more, as I recall). We trust that God will guide us in what to do when the time comes. Until then, we can only try to do our best in the conditions we have, trying to learn the principles of spiritual life, and cutting ourselves off from the world to the best of our ability. Our own skete is quite ideally situated in this regard, being two miles from the nearest human dwelling and totally without “conveniences” (perhaps our greatest blessing is the absence of a telephone, which has already saved us much grief). But as long as we are involved with printing (we have our own electric generator) and with correspondence, of course, our ties to the world remain very great. On feast days we feel the great blessing of the total absence of city noises, and even of country noises such as barking dogs—we are thus able to give ourselves entirely to the feast, with unhindered processions and singing all over our mountain.

The future, it is evident, is very dark. We ourselves do not know from one year to the next whether we will have another year of printing activity or not. We pray that God will give us at least a few more years, if only to print those patristic materials which will help us and others to survive in the dark days ahead. In America this is the “bicentennial” year—and we feel it as especially dark and ominous. Each nation has its guardian angel—thus also each pagan or masonic festival must have its special demon! We in America are grateful for our freedom, but we know the dark masonic origins of our American ideology and tremble for the future when the meaning of the occult symbols of our government (visible in our currency, for example—the unfinished pyramid, the all-seeing eye, the number 13 everywhere, the “novus ordo seclorum”) will begin to be fulfilled. Even without a Communist coup, our future is dark; “democracy,” after all, only prepared the way for Communism, and spiritually they come from the same source and prepare for the same future.

Concerning the pamphlet by Archimandrite Constantine—“Orthodoxy or Heterodoxy before the Face of Antichrist”—it is expressed in such difficult, Germanic-style language that it is easy to see that it might be misunderstood. We know him well (he reposed, by the way, on Nov. 13/26 last, at the age of 88) and therefore are not misled by some phrases which apparently trouble your friend. His thought is not at all “ecumenical,” but is rather abstractly speculative. His basic idea here, I believe, is this: True Orthodox Christians have a natural sympathy for the traditionalist Roman Catholics and fundamentalist Protestants who, even in error, at least stand against the times in their faithfulness to what truth they have; perhaps, in the approaching time of Antichrist, this faithfulness will somehow draw them nearer to the full truth, Orthodoxy; therefore we should increase our missionary labors so that they might become Orthodox. Fr. Constantine, as always, understates his position, assuming the reader knows his basic philosophy, which is uncompromisingly anti-ecumenist.

Our own experience leads us to think that only in a very few cases does the traditionalist papist or fundamentalist Protestant come to Orthodoxy; most remain “faithful” to their denomination—and go down together with the ship! Under Communist rule it seems to be no different, and humanly speaking we see little hope for even in a liberated Russian—but with God all is possible.

(From a letter to Dr. Kalomiros January 21 / February 3, 1976)

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Only great eagerness will be able to endure—not any superhuman struggles, but just the daily unglamorous round of monastic life.

(From a letter to Alexey Yang 2/15 June 1976)

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To our times is given a more humble kind of spiritual life, which Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov in his excellent book *The Arena* (do you have it?) calls “life by counsel” that is, life according to the commandments of God as learned in the Holy Scriptures and Holy Fathers and helped by those who are elder and more experienced. A “Starets” can give commands; but a “counsellor” gives advice, which you must test in experience.

I will venture to give you a word or two of general advice, based on what you have said in your letters, as derived from the experience of our small monastic community and our reading of the Holy Fathers.

(1) Learn first of all to be at peace with the spiritual situation which has been given you, and to make the most of it. If your situation is spiritually barren, do not let that discourage you, but work all the harder at what you yourself can do for your spiritual life. It is already something very important to have access to the Sacraments and regular church services. Beyond this you should have regular morning and evening prayers with your family, and spiritual reading—all according to your strength and the possibilities afforded by your circumstances.

(2) Among spiritual writings you should read especially those addressed to people living in the world, or which give the “ABC’s” of spiritual life—such as St. John of Kronstadt’s *My Life in Christ*, St. Nikodemos’ *Unseen Warfare*, the *Lives of Saints* in general, and Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov’s *The Arena* (this book, while addressed to novices, is also suitable for laymen in so far as it gives in general the “ABC’s” of spiritual life as applied to modern times.)

(3) To help your spiritual growth and remind you of spiritual truths, it would be good to keep a journal (the hard-bound “record” books sold in stationery stores are good), which would include excerpts from the writings of spiritual books which you find especially valuable or applicable to you, and perhaps comments of your own inspired by your reading and reflection, including brief comments on your own shortcomings which you need to correct. St. John of Kronstadt found this especially valuable, as can be seen in his *My Life in Christ*.

(4) Don’t criticize or judge other people—regard everyone else as an angel, justify their mistakes and weaknesses, and condemn only yourself as the worst sinner. This is step one in any kind of spiritual life.

(From a letter to Nicholas on August 10/23, 1976)

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We are by no means idyllic “desert dwellers” either. We have fairly frequent contact with the world, particularly in connection with our printing activities, and we live a life which would not be regarded as very strict at all by the ancient Fathers, but which in our weakness is the best we can manage.

(From a letter to Seraphim on August 16/29, 1976)

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How to Survive as an Orth Chr. in the World
Lect. 10.30.77

A. Introd.: pilgrims will go back to world—here we are protected, have our rhythm, segregated community, oneness of mind, services, Lit. to inspire and recharge—but how to continue inspired in world and remain Orth (w ones children)?

B. This question arises bec. our way of life is so diff. from worlds. Not just a matter of evils + temptations in world, esp. for children, but diff. fr. everyday consciousness. Our aim and way of life totally diff from world's. Forming Orth corns no answer either—no com. can help but feel pressure of surrounding world. Bec. of times, impression is created that “real world” is everyday pagan world, and Orth, world fights losing battle against it. Then how can one survive as Ortho Chr.?

C. Let us take a warning fr. a characteristic phen of our times—fruitless fig trees. Person can be very zealous as Orth Chr., read much, go to sem. or mon.— + then cool off, get bored, + even when he remains as Ortho Chr., is in a state of constant dissatisfaction or boredom. Same th. can happen to a person who was never too zealous, but has simply learned to take Chr ty for granted. This is t. sickness of one who has becomes too familiar w. t. Faith, + bec. of outward familiarity loses inward meaning of it. Such people are worldly, self-satisfied, and “know better”—they have been conquered by world around them, are formally Orth but without t fruits of true Chr'ty. This is quenched spirit of wh Apostle Paul speaks, symbolizing absence of H. Sp.

D. How do we avoid this pitfall and remain zealous Chrs.?

1. It helps, of course, to have spir. fr. for confession + guidance, regular attendance at ch. services, reception of Holy Mysteries, regular prayer at home. But one can do all this + still be fruitless.

2. A hint: St. John Chry.: “He who doesn't read spir. bks. can't save his soul.”

3. What is function of reading spir. bks? They put us in contact w age-old spir. trad., give us spir. formation of cons., develop our mind in Chr. path. Attraction of surrounding world is one of different consciousness, that wh “everyone believes”—we must be in constant contact w. what Ch. believes.

4. Once one gets used to spir. reading, new world opens up—one is constantly learning, no room for boredom (that is only for those who already “know everyth”).

a. Lives of Sts.—constantly new discoveries in how men have pleased God. We meet those w. whom we hope to be in paradise. Vlad. John encouraged knowl + ven. of W. Sts.—as source of inspir. Sts. Romulus and Lepucinus—spir. of Rus. Thebaid in 5th c. Gaul.

b. Spir. writings—to learn ABC's of spir. life wh. we constantly forget. Can be read again + again as we gain in exper. If we are always learning, these bks are always fresh.

1. St. John of Kron.

2. Unseen Warfare, + others of Bp. Theophan (most not in Engl.)

3. Desert Frs.—among monks, but t passions + virtues described are universally Chr., Lausiac Hist. Para, Dialogues

3a. St. Macar. Great.

4. Ladder—esp. for Lent.

5. Coms, on Scriptures.—St. Greg. Diog has excellent ones. Vlad. Aver.

6. Many more not transl.—but these are beg.

A person reading such bks, preferably keeping journal of extracts fr. them, is bldg a world of

his own—not private world, but the real world of Orth Chr'ty thru t ages. This perhaps our main weapon against worldliness wh surrounds us.

(From Father Seraphim's notes for himself on October 30, 1977)

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I will be glad to talk with you about confession. However, you should be encouraged to know that according to Orthodox Church rules there is no sin whatever that can prevent a man from becoming a monk—since the monastic state is supposed to be specifically one of repentance. Priesthood, of course, is something different, but even there, it is possible for a monk to be ordained priest after being divorced in the world and repenting his sins. But this is something you definitely should not think about for some time after becoming Orthodox—it will only cause you unnecessary temptations. God will show you what is right for you when the time comes.

(From a letter to Barry 12/25 May 1979)

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A monastic community, because of its close-knit character, can sometimes be a tense place, and the devil attacks it more powerfully than other places.

Meanwhile, don't give up spiritual life just because you have no immediate guide! The Fathers still speak to us through their writings (have you read *Unseen Warfare* recently?), and life itself is a teacher if we try to live humbly and soberly, and once in a while you may get a good word of advice from somewhere. Treasure everything good (it's good to keep a diary of it), and don't grieve at what you don't have!

Fr. Dimitry Dudko, by the way, is good to read—I think on the whole he speaks more to the heart of Orthodox Christians than just about anyone else today. (Of course, he has his mistakes also.)

(From a letter to Father Theodore Yurevits, May 24/June 6, 1979)

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The idea of “super-strictness” in monastic training is really not workable in our times; it produces too much fakery and posing. It is much better to emphasize simple faith and love and the basic Christian virtues, and work on the monastic life a little at a time, even though this is accompanied by a certain looseness in discipline.

(From a letter to Vanya [Danz, John D'Anci?] 1/14 April 1981)

Part I. On the narrow path to salvation.
2. About the Saint Herman of Alaska.

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We write; this letter to you prompted by nothing but our love of Father Herman, of Orthodox Alaska, and of the unchanging Orthodox Truth which— alas!—only a small flock seems interested to preserve today. As the lamentable situation caused by the “autocephaly” becomes ever more tangled and bitter, we cannot but see the hand of Father Herman himself calling those who will hear out of the politics and confusions of the conflicting “jurisdictions” onto the firm ground of unshaking Orthodoxy.

We are certain that you will find a warm reception among us if you yourself choose this course, and a maximum of support. For ourselves, we shall certainly offer you every assistance we are capable of, whether through the pages of The Orthodox, Word or in any other way we can help the cause of Orthodoxy in Alaska.

(From a letter to Bishop of Sitka and Alaska
Theodosius on February 15/28, 1970)

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As brothers in the name of Father Herman our hearts are with Orthodox Alaska.

May God and Father Herman and the holy New Martyr Peter guide aright His Grace and all of you in Alaska.

(From a letter to Father David [Black] 18 February / 3 March 1970)

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With Father Herman's prayers anything is possible. One nun from Novo-Diveyevo wrote us that the whole Autocephaly scandal is owing to the fact that Father Herman apparently does not want to be canonized by the Metropolia—and perhaps she is right! If Alaska does not come to us, Father Herman will do something, I'm convinced!

(From a letter to Father Photios, March 16/29, 1970)

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We received an interesting comment from a nun in Novo-Diveyevo: this whole scandal arose because Father Herman does not want to be canonized by the Metropolia! I think there may well be something to that. From the history of Spruce Island we know that Fr. Herman has been severe with those who unworthily approach him.

If any whole piece of the Metropolia can be saved, it is Alaska—as far along as it already is on the same general path of decline with the rest of America, nonetheless it has deeper roots and it has Father Herman, and being an isolated diocese it might still revive with a transfusion of real Orthodoxy.

(From a letter to Father Neketas Palasis March 19 / April 1, 1970)

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May Father Herman guide and protect us all!

(From a letter to Father David [Black] 23 March / 5 April 1970)

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Let us pray all the harder to God and to Fr. Herman that we may all be enlightened and saved.

(From a letter to Father David [Black], 3/16 April 1970)

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Father Herman says that “a person who may not know the truth solidly should by all means avoid” books like Saint-Simon’s.

(From a letter to Craig and Susan [Young] April 21 / May 4, 1970)

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May Father Herman pray for and enlighten us all!

(From a letter to Father David [Black] April 23 / May 6, 1970)

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We received the officially approved service to Fr. Herman last week and have translated it. We tried to keep some poetic feeling in the English, not with entire success, I’m afraid. The Slavonic itself is sometimes inspiring, and sometimes rather pale. The troparion is still in doubt; we stand for the old one, but there may be a completely new one...or perhaps a choice of two. This being really the first “American” service, we’ve tried to make it a model, right down to the acrostic, which worked out rather successfully in both languages. The Slavonic committee does not care much for acrostics, but we found it rather inspiring to have to work within the norms of a sacred phrase from the words of Father Herman. Jordanville is printing Fr. Cyprian’s icon of Fr. Herman in 2 sizes—4x5 and 6x9. Were having our icon reprinted in smaller size—something like 2 1/2x3 1/2.

(From a letter to Father Neketas Palasis on May 27 / June 9, 1970)

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May Fr. Herman yet save Alaska, and enlighten and guide us all in the path of Orthodox truth!

(From a letter to Father David Black, 8/21 June 1970)

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Prayers for you and all of Orthodox Alaska. Through the grace of our Saviour and the prayers of Saint Herman, may we yet come to true unity in the undimmed Orthodox Faith.

(From a letter to Father David [Black] June 29 / July 12 1970)

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We are plodding on with The Orthodox Word. We resolved to make the Service to Father Herman a model in every way, including typographically, which means printing every page twice (2 colors), and we printed a number of extras to bind separately. Glory be to God, it is almost finished, and we are sufficiently full of inspiration and hope to want to print a whole series of services to the glory of God and His saints and for the inculcation of genuine Orthodox piety in this direct way.

(From a letter to Father Neketas Palasis on June 29 / July 12, 1970)

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We are glad to see your zeal for Father Herman for the Russian Church Abroad, and we only pray that you will manifest it in due measure, so that genuine fruits may come from it.

(From a letter to Father Michael [Azkoul], July 7/20, 1970)

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Here it is already a week since the great Church events of this year, and only now am I sitting down to try to tell you a little about them.

For us the great celebration began a month early, with the yearly Liturgy in Vladika Johns Sepulchre on the anniversary of his repose (June 19/July 2). Father Herman was commemorated then, too. Then, on the feast of Sts. Sergius and Herman of Valaam (June 29/July 11), Vladika Nektary came to us just after dawn and served Divine Liturgy. This, probably Father Herman's namesday, was the beginning of daily litiyas for the repose of the about to be glorified Saint.

On the feastday of St. Seraphim (July 19/Aug. 1) Vladika Anthony made a surprise visit to us not long after dawn (together with Deacon Nicholas, who brought a beautiful small cupola he had made for our printshop), and served the third Liturgy in our outdoor chapel, followed by a panikhida for Fr. Herman and the first reading of the Ukase of Metr. Philaret which will be in our new OW.

The next week we expected Bp. Laurus, Gleb's onetime instructor at the seminary.

All bishops connected with Father Herman, commemoration was made at the requiem services of Friday night and Saturday morning. We were especially pleased to hear the list of names end each time with Archimandrite Gerasim of Spruce Island (who was also mentioned in Vladika Anthony's sermon on Saturday morning), since he suffered so much in his own lifetime from the local Alaska clergy, and from the other side was criticized by some of our Synodal people for what they thought was his failure to take a definite stand after 1946. But now, when the whole Church was gathered to canonize his beloved Father Herman, Fr. Gerasim too was there where he belonged. In the afternoon Fr. Vladimir of Jordanville arrived, bringing a relic of St. Herman (a tooth which Fr. Gerasim had given him years before), which was placed in the icon Fr. Cyprian painted together with another relic—a piece of Fr. Herman's coffin which Fr. Gerasim had given Bp. Andrew of Novo-Diveyevo.

On Saturday evening at 6 o'clock Metr. Philaret arrived and the final panikhida was served for Father Herman alone. And then the long-awaited service to our newly-glorified Saint began. After the choir sang 3 stichera of the Resurrection, the cliros choir of seminarians and clergy began—loud and clear—the stikhira to St. Herman: "Leap up, ye waters of Valaam." Up to the last minute, Vladika Anthony hadn't decided how much should be sung in English, and he finally decided to begin with the final two stichera on "Lord, I have cried." But rather than the 3 or 4 feeble voices he perhaps expected, there was a veritable crowd of enthusiastic young English-singers, and he blessed us to add the "Glory" in English too, which we did, slowly and solemnly. Here, as throughout the service, all the "special melodies" were followed strictly, whether in Slavonic or English.

At the Litiya there was a procession around the outside of the Cathedral, and the first commemoration was made of "St. Herman, Wonderworker of Alaska." Before the polyeleos, Vladika Anthony gave an inspired sermon which set the tone for the entire celebration. St. Seraphim, our paschal Saint who greeted everyone with the words "Christ is risen," had prophesied the exile of the Russian faithful. And now, in the midst of this exile, the faithful have come together to celebrate the memory of yet another paschal Saint—Saint Herman, who reposed amidst lighted candles and the reading of the Acts, in preparation for eternal Pascha. And therefore Vladika Anthony—who earlier, for seemingly obscure reasons, had instructed all clergy to bring white paschal vestments for the canonization—now ordered all in the cathedral to hold burning candles to greet the newly-glorified Saint as at the Easter service.

After the polyeleos, the Metropolitan unveiled the icon with the relics of St. Herman, and the assembled clergy (20-some priests—32 on Sunday, 5 deacons, plus servers) thunderously sang the first triumphal Magnification of St. Herman, repeated first by the choir, then by the clergy, then by the seminarians on the cliros in English, then again by the clergy.

The veneration of the icon and relics by the multitude of faithful took up the rest of the service, while Gleb and I read the canons—one troparion of each canticle to St. Herman in English. The lauds were sung in Slavonic and English, “O Most glorious wonder” being sung most rousing by the seminarians in both languages. Everyone was inspired with a genuine paschal feeling, and Fr. Nicholas Dombrovsky emphasized this the next morning in his sermon at the early Liturgy by calling the celebration a second “Pascha in the summertime,” occurring just 67 years and 8 days after the first such “Pascha,” St. Seraphim’s canonization, of which the Saint had prophesied in those words. After the evening service the American converts (of whom there were between 50 and 100 present) lined up to receive confession from Fr. Panteleimon, which lasted until 2 a.m.

On Sunday the whole day was one long church service, beginning with the early Liturgy at 7 and the blessing of the water at 8:30 (into which some water from Father Hermans spring was poured). The final prayer was read at 4 in the afternoon, and Fr. Panteleimon, who spent the time between 4 and the evening service in Archbishop Johns Sepulchre, could truthfully tell a group of Greeks to whom he spoke at 9 p.m.—“I came to church at 8 this morning and just got out now— glory be to God!”

The Liturgy proceeded slowly and solemnly. At the Entrance with the Gospel, the icon with relics was carried around the altar table—but not by the two oldest priests, who lifted it up at first, but by Archimandrites Panteleimon and Cyprian, as representing the monastic clergy at this monastic celebration. Vladika Anthony insisted on this understanding of the celebration and enforced it throughout. Before the Communion—in which it seemed the whole church participated—the seminarians sang stikhera in Slavonic and English.

During the moleben there was a procession around the church with the icon and relics, followed by “Many years” sung for the hierarchs, Fr. Panteleimon, Archimandrite Panteleimon of Jordanville—it was surely significant that this monastic festival should coincide with the namesday of the founders of our two leading monasteries in this country!—and for our Brotherhood. The Brotherhood, now of St. Herman, was also presented by Metr. Philaret with a Gramota from the Synod of Bishops, the text of which says perhaps as much about the Synod as it does about us. If anyone doubts that the Synod has missionary interest, the Gramota calls us to be “a missionary brotherhood, in lively contact with Americans seeking instruction.” And it sets forth our future too: “You are establishing a place for an endeavor of prayer and labor.” Indeed, within the next days or weeks, God willing, we will both be tonsured monks here, and then our real life’s labor will begin!

At the conclusion of the services the rite of the “Panagia” was celebrated: all clergy and servers walking in procession to the dining room below, singing the troparion to St. Herman. At the trapeza there were no speeches, but rather a monastic atmosphere of silence (not, unfortunately, fully observed by all!) while the life of St. Herman was read, mostly by Vladika Anthony.

On Monday morning after Divine Liturgy there was another moleben to St. Herman, and then a general panikhida in Vladika Johns Sepulchre, first by Fr. Vladimir in Slavonic, then by Fr. Panteleimon in Greek; and at the conclusion of this, as if summing up the whole paschal feeling of these days, Fr. Panteleimon greeted all in Russian with: Christos voskrese! to which all enthusiastically responded: Voistinu voskrese!

We arrived back home only after midnight on Monday, after seeing Fr. Panteleimon off with Fr. Neketas Palassis and Fr. Ephrem for Seattle, and the next day our great feast continued into a third day when Frs. Cyprian and Vladimir with Deacon Nicholas and four seminarians arrived to spend the day. Fr. Vladimir carried the icon with relics of St. Herman completely around our land, giving us yet another blessing of our Patron Saint.

And now, after all this celebration, we are about to start, God willing, a more productive phase of missionary work.

St. Herman is our recourse and defense in the face of the evils of these times.

(From a letter to Daniel Olson 5/18 August 1970)

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Do you know the Life of St. Maximus the Confessor? All the Orthodox Patriarchs accepted the Monothelite heresy, and he was begged, for the sake of peace and harmony in the Church, to do what everyone else was doing and keep his opinions to himself. And he said: “Even if the whole world enter into communion with the (heretical) Patriarch of Constantinople), I alone will not.” That is the kind of Orthodox confession that has preserved the Church for 2000 years; that is the faith that St. Herman lived; that is what we must follow today. Indeed, we have the example of St. Peter the Aleut who died for refusing to accept Roman Catholicism, which, according to our modern ecumenists, is very little different from Orthodoxy. And we are gladly willing to suffer torture and martyrdom for this faith.

(From a letter to Father Vladimir Bridievey, August 1970)

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By God’s grace Gleb and Eugene are now Fathers Herman and Seraphim, and overwhelmed by the magnitude of what has happened. Our humble place is now the St. Herman of Alaska Hermitage—already a contradiction, since our rule is coenobitic, but we just can’t find a more suitable translation for “Pustyn,” which is the name given us by the Synodal Ukase.

(From a letter to Daniel Olson 17/30 October 1970)

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You talk about the “unity” of your diocese and the “Orthodox preaching” of your bishop, as though these existed in a vacuum that has nothing to do with the betrayal from on high of your whole Church, in which your bishop very actively participated (doubtless in ignorance—may God forgive him!). By our articles in *The Orthodox Word* we have no intention to fragment your “unity,” but only to speak the truth. Where that truth leads, we firmly believe, is in the hands of God—and, for Alaska, St. Herman.

And if St. Herman is truly God-pleasing—as no one now doubts—and the Metropolia’s concordat with Moscow is really the monstrous betrayal we firmly believe it to be: then it can scarcely be that Alaska will escape troubles. You perhaps think it evil of us to have connected St. John of Kronstadt with the burning of St. Michael’s Cathedral—but Orthodox piety has always taken such “coincidences” most seriously. And such acts are signs of God’s love, for “whom God loveth, He chastizeth.” May St. Herman act less severely, yet just as openly, for the salvation of Alaska!

The past of Orthodox Alaska has seen many sorrows and disappointments, and only God knows what the future holds. May His will be done, through the prayers of St. Herman and—if we can be so bold—of Father Gerasim. Amen.

(From a letter to Father David [Black] October 30 / November 12, 1970)

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We rejoice, knowing that the sufferings before us are much less than our sins deserve, that only from such a narrow and difficult path can spiritual fruits come forth, and that in everything God and His saints—St. Herman and Vladika John—are with us.

(From a letter to Vladika Laurus on March 12/25, 1971)

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So much has happened in this last year, and so much has become clearer—by the prayers of St. Herman and Vladika John, we are sure.

(From a letter to Father Panteleimon March 13/26, 1971)

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We are literally reduced to trusting in God and the protection of our patrons, St. Herman and Vladika John.

(From a letter to Father Panteleimon March 21 / April 3, 1971)

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When our Brotherhood of St. Herman was founded, we gave some thought to the variant versions of this name. Then and since we have seen defended (some of them with just as much certainty as you display) such variations as: German, Gherman, Guerman, Germain, Gairman, Germanus, Germanos. We preferred “Herman” for one simple reason: it has long been the accepted English usage of those who love and revere the Saint. If you went to Alaska today, you would scarcely find one person who would know who you are talking about when you mention “St. Germain”; and to call them “Metropolia proletarians” under “German influence” is quite beside the point—they are just simple village people who love St. Herman and would be bewildered to find that it’s a matter of “principle” to change his name. How many prayers the Saint has answered, how many miracles worked, when addressed as St. “Herman”! Surely therefore, the Saint himself does not consider his glory lessened by this name and spelling!

We, therefore, cannot agree that the name “Herman” is “private and peculiar”; and in fact, whatever may be the philological accident or coincidence that produced this result, the spelling “Herman” comes closest in pronunciation to the Slavonic “German” (where G is closer to English H than G). But we are not in the least interested in engaging in controversy over the issue, nor are we concerned to enforce the name “Herman” on the English speaking world. We see no good reason to change our spelling, but there are too many other important things to be doing to be upset if someone else chooses a different spelling. Uniformity on the matter would be desirable, but there are other things much more necessary and critical.

(From a letter to Father Father Innocent on May 1/14, 1971)

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There is so much for just the two of us to be doing, and we are very late in publishing our magazine. But by God’s mercy and the prayers of our patrons, St. Herman and Vladika John, we continue to exist and have hopes to increase our publications.

(From a letter to Father Ambrosius [Pogodin] May 5/18, 1971)

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We are full of hopes and plans for the future, while God gives us the time and opportunity. We are more than ever convinced that Vladika John and St. Herman are with us, and with their help we can do much.

(From a letter to Father Panteleimon on 23 June / 6 July 1971)

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We note that Jordanville celebrates St. Herman on July 27—but somehow this feast hasn't caught on with us.

(From a letter to the Holy Transfiguration brethren on August 13/26, 1971)

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St. Herman's day Dec. 12/25

(From a letter to Alexey Yang, November 10/23, 1973)

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St. Seraphim is my own patron Saint, and it was our Brotherhood of St. Herman that first published the complete text of this "Conversation" in the Russian language in which it was spoken (for the pre-revolutionary edition was incomplete), as well as other of his genuine words which had hitherto been unpublished.

(From a letter to Dr. Kalomiros, March 2-9, 1974)

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We were very glad in reading the decree of the Synod, to see that the Hierarchs have noticed and valued our labors in the compiling and printing of the St. Herman Calendar, and in particular our inclusion of the dates of death of various hierarchs and ascetics. This latter feature, incidentally, has been one of the most popular features of the Calendar, there have been very many comments on it, and we know that our priests serve pannikhidas for a number of the hierarchs and ascetics mentioned there, and in some places every single one of these names is commemorated at every Liturgy. Further, there has never been a single unfavorable comment from anyone regarding our inclusion of these names, which has persuaded us that the idea itself of including these names is indeed "in agreement with the general ecclesiastical attitude of our Church." This idea is not original with us but was taken from the Diocesan Bulletin of the Diocese of Shanghai when our Archbishop John was there. In the Calendar of this Bulletin such names were included (after the listing of the saints of the day) as the Royal Martyrs (July 4), Archbishop Meletius of Kharkov (Feb. 12), St. Herman of Alaska (Dec. 13—this was long before his canonization), and Metropolitan Peter Mogila (Dec. 31).

It is true that the only historical notice of the Aleut Martyr Peter is in the Life of St. Herman of Alaska. But we should note that the person who brought St. Herman the information concerning his martyr's death was himself a man of the highest integrity, first as Governor of Alaska, and later as a monk of righteous life who influenced almost his whole family to follow him into monasticism (Simeon Yanovsky, Schema-monk Sergius), and the person who proclaimed him Saint was none other than St. Herman himself: It should be noted that very often in the past this much has already been sufficient for the acknowledgement of sanctity in the Orthodox Church; among many saints canonized on as little information as this we may mention St. Mary of Egypt, whose life is known to us only from the account of the Monk Zossimas, and whose name was entered among the saints owing to the trust of St. Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, for Zossimas' words. The reform spirit in recent Roman Catholicism, which has begun to "throw out of the Calendar" such saints, because supposedly "we don't know whether they ever existed"—is totally foreign to our Orthodoxy, which is characterized rather by faith and trust in those who hand down the lives of saints, especially if they be of righteous and holy life themselves, as is certainly true in the case of the Aleut Martyr Peter and the one who "canonized" him, St. Herman.

In the service to St. Herman of Alaska, which was given its final form by Bishop (then Hegoumen) Alpy and officially approved by the Synod of Bishops in 1970, the following

troparion occurs in the Canon (Canticle 6): “Aleut Peter’s confession and martyrs blood, O Saint, have sanctified and crowned thine and thy co-evangelizers’ labors, and at his strong faith and patience thou wert amazed. Wherefore, following thee, let us cry out: Holy New Martyr Peter, pray to God for us.” Thus, the Synod of Bishops of our Russian Church Outside of Russia has officially approved the invocation of the Aleut Martyr Peter as a saint.

In view of all this: that the Aleut Martyr Peter was invoked as a saint by St. Herman of Alaska; that Archbishop John Maximovitch called publicly on his prayers; that our Synod of Bishops gave official approval to a Service containing an invocation of St. Peter as a saint; and that the Synod of the American Metropolia did likewise; and that he is popularly venerated as a saint, with no dispute arising because of this; and finally, in view of the fact that the veneration of martyrs has always been accepted in the Orthodox Church with a minimum of official investigation, the very fact of their martyrdom already testifying to their sanctity—we did not believe that there was any controversy or dispute whatever involving the placing of the name of the Aleut Martyr Peter in the Orthodox Calendar. But even so, we were careful to place of the name of the Aleut Martyr Peter in our St. Herman Calendar only with the qualifying words: “who is mentioned in the Service to St. Herman,” thus showing that we were trusting not our own judgment, but were relying on the judgment of the Church Authority (the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Church Outside of Russia) which officially approved the Service.

(From a letter to Vladika Nektary, April 16/29, 1977)

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This summer we will have our St. Herman Pilgrimage again on August 8-9, and then a week of courses on various Orthodox subjects (this year it will probably be a rather intense course).

(From a letter to Barry April 20 / May 3, 1979)

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We’ve just finished our yearly St. Herman Pilgrimage, where we strongly called for a faithful but sober Orthodoxy and warned about perils like the “correctness disease.” It takes time for new converts to understand such things—but with time, experience, and patient explaining, they do begin to get the point.

(From a letter to Father Akakios, August 9/22, 1979)

Part I. On the narrow path to salvation.
3. About Archbishop Vitaly (Maximenko).

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Father Herman read the address of Vladika Vitaly (the elder) on the occasion of his consecration as bishop. One paragraph in it tells of what inspired the great accomplishments of his younger years, what his basic spiritual orientation was. It is precisely the same as ours, and even if we never accomplish a fraction of what he accomplished, this attitude is worthy of imitation, and we are both absolutely convinced that only by its means will we be able to bring forth any fruits at all in the Church of Christ. The Pharisees will doubtless find that these words of Vladika Vitaly are full of “self-will” and “disobedience,” but following them he accomplished great things in and for the Church, and they burn with the very spirit that is so needed in the Church today, the same spirit we long to burn with!

(From a letter to Mrs. Kontsevich March 24 / April 6, 1971)

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If any further good will come from our Brotherhood, it will be from our independently pursuing the path already begun, with Vladika John's blessing, not by meekly accepting directions from without. We recently found, by the way, Vladika Vitalys (Maximenko's) address on his consecration as bishop, in which he movingly speaks of the spiritual-psychological conditions under which he was able to bring such fruit as a missionary of the printed word: in absolute independence, "not bothering anyone and not bothered by anyone." Exactly! And that's normal in the Church, not bending oneself into some other shape for the sake of a purely formal and fictitious "obedience," That's the way Vladika John acted, and that's the inspiration he gave us. If we fall into heresy or give scandal, that's another matter. For us here in the wilds, our idea of a bishop is somewhat modelled on the vultures who circle our mountain constantly now: "overseeing" everything, they nonetheless do not bother those animals that move around doing their own affairs, but come down to examine and clean up only when they smell something rotten!

(From a letter to Father Panteleimon, May 8/21, 1971)

Part I. On the narrow path to salvation.
4. About Archbishop John (Maximovitch).

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Vladiko Ioann, has been confirmed as Archbishop of San Francisco, and if the diocese is still a long way from real peace, at least there is some kind of order at last. I believe work on the new cathedral has finally begun again. Vladiko Ioann is my favorite among our bishops, even though I find it next to impossible to understand him. He is constantly filled with such a deep peace and joy that it is spiritually beneficial just to be in his presence. I was present at several crucial moments in the past months, when Vladiko was surrounded by excited, weeping, practically hysterical crowds (you know how Russians can be!), but he was exactly the same as ever, still calm and even joyful, denying all the angry accusations against other bishops, and exhorting all to spiritual peace and obedience.

(From a letter to Nina Seko on August 28 / September 10, 1963)

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Metro. Philaret and Archbp. John Maximovitch in China—it is formally true that for a few days in 1945, when falsely informed that Metr. Anastassy was dead, the Synod dissolved, the Church situation entirely changed in Russia as a result of the War, and the Patriarch validly elected, did commemorate Patr. Alexy—but when contact was soon resumed with Metr. Anastassy and the truth became known, they both became so staunchly anti-Moscow that Archbp. John is remembered to this day by Moscow as the leader of the "schism" in China, and Metr. Philaret's very life was constantly in danger from his anti-Soviet and anti-Patriarchate statements and sermons.

(From a letter to Father David Black, 3/16 April 1970)

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We were blessed to receive Holy Communion at the Sepulchre of Vladika John last week on the 4th anniversary of his death, and again yesterday when Vladika Nektary visited us on the feast of Sts. Sergius and Herman. Glory be to God! We noticed in S.F. that attendance at the Sepulchre declines each year, and it seems, sadly, that the Russians are forgetting him, and that when the older generation of those who knew him is gone in a few years, his memory will almost vanish among them—and will be preserved then chiefly by those non-Russians, most of whom did not know him, whose acquaintance with him is based not on personal relationships but on the attraction of his sanctity. Thus are God and His saints glorified in unexpected ways.

(From a letter to father Neketas Palasis 29.06 / 12.07.70)

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Our future here—is in God's hands. Everything that has happened so far is so much beyond us that we don't even dare dream of the future. We are trying to go forward one step at a time, watching out for a fall, and trusting in the prayers of Vladika John, who is surely with us now—in fact, in these days we have seen the realization of two prophecies (if it is not too bold to use that word) which he made to us.

(From a letter to Daniel Olson 17/30 October 1970)

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I hope you will read carefully our new Orthodox Word with its two articles on the Catacomb Church. You will see then that is not only we in the free world, but those over there as well (who have earned the right to their judgment by the tortures which they have undergone for Christ and Orthodoxy) who do not accept the Moscow Sergianists. And perhaps you will begin to see that our uncompromising rejection of the Metropolias concordat with Moscow has nothing to do with theoretical concepts of “canonicity,” but is part of the very life-blood of our Orthodoxy; this concordat is not “uncanonical”—it is treason to the Russian Church and to her new martyrs. You cannot begin to imagine the profound sorrow and tears the “autocephaly” has caused us. And if now representatives of the Metropolia begin to deny the existence of the Catacomb Church (we expect they will, for that is the Moscow “line”—in defiance of present-day documents and information in the Soviet press—this will only be another indication of that instinctive “defense-mechanism” which forces the Metropolia into an ardent defense of “Sergianism” with all its propaganda line. And even if not a single Catacomb Christian could be found, that would not change the truth of the Catacomb position in 1927—attested in numerous documents—nor would it make Sergianism true or Orthodox.

And whatever you may say of “certain circles” of the Synod, I can assure you that our bishops and our priests and most devoted faithful think as we do. Bishop Nektary certainly does, however polite he may be on the telephone; Archbishop John Maximovitch most emphatically did.

(From a letter to Father David [Black] October 30 / November 12, 1970)

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You came and saw for yourself the wilderness which God and Vladika John have given into our keeping.

It was due to the evident help of Vladika John, after our fervent prayer to him, that we obtained this land.

Whether God will bless a larger or smaller missionary community here, or whether we will remain two “crazy monks in the forest,” we are prepared to accept anything that God sends us in furtherance of the cause which Vladika John blessed and which brought us here: the mission of the Orthodox printed word, especially in English.

Perhaps we know nothing of monasticism, but we nonetheless firmly believe that in the Church of Christ a legitimate chastisement from ones ecclesiastical superiors should be carried out in mutual trust and end in a peaceful state for all concerned; I myself was on several occasions chastised by Vladika John and always felt the rightness of the chastisement and benefitted from it.

The Orthodox Word cannot be censored: Vladika John blessed us to print without censorship,

and he only made occasional suggestions and we came to him on doubtful points.

(From a letter to Father Panteleimon 4/17 January 1971)

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But such “obedience”—for the sake of a worldly end—is very clearly spiritually illegitimate. We are the disciples of Vladika John, who blessed and inspired our work from the very beginning and, we firmly believe, is with us now in spirit; it is to his blessing, in fact, that we ascribe entirely whatever success we have had so far. And from him we have learned: above canons, church discipline, etc., comes the spirit. If by obedience, by faithfulness to the letter of canons, or by any other thing good in itself, the spirit of a man is crushed and is extinguished, then there is something terribly wrong.

The Orthodox Word and our missionary printing labors, which for seven years now we have followed with great labor and sacrifice, in everything being obedient to the Church and to each other, so that never did one of us exercise his “own will,” obeying rather each other and the common task that united us. Without this we would never have survived; but with this and the blessing of Vladika John we have survived this long and now seem called by the Church to expand our work and bring forth greater fruits.

We rejoice, knowing that the sufferings before us are much less than our sins deserve, that only from such a narrow and difficult path can spiritual fruits come forth, and that in everything God and His saints—St. Herman and Vladika John—are with us.

(From a letter to Vladika Laurus, March 12/25, 1971)

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It does not require much imagination to see what will happen to us if we accept Vladika As “coup” over us. All our “peculiarities” as an independent monastic institution will be abolished. Already when Vladika A. serves here he forbids mentioning “Orthodox Kings” in the troparion to the Cross; “the Synod has approved another text”—but Vladika John left us another tradition which almost no one but us is keeping; our right to follow the Spruce Island tradition of celebrating a second feast to St. Herman on Nov. 15 will doubtless be abolished as an example of “self-will”; if Vlad. A. ever becomes aware of how much we are “irritating Athenagoras” in The Orthodox Word, that will have to be censured out; any special veneration of Vladika John, especially in Russian, will be blocked as too “controversial”; etc., etc., etc. If we give one inch in the beginning, we will end with a completely soulless and pointless “obedience” which has no ability to inspire anyone else.

We are content to let the world bury its dead; but Vladika John gave us a spark and a mission, and we will be faithful to that even to death.

In spite of everything, we will follow Vladika John, and if need be we will flee completely to the wilderness or become “fools” in order to remain faithful to Vladika John.

(From a letter to Father Panteleimon March 13/26, 1971)

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Glory be to God for everything! In all our trials, we become more and more conscious that something is happening that is far beyond us. What the end will be, God alone knows, and it is in His hands. We begin to get a rather definite idea that “Synodal opinion” does not place much confidence in our future. In February Archimandrite Cyprian wrote us from Jordanville, advising us to pack up as soon as possible and come to Jordanville, because we are in danger of falling into prelest, and because Jordanville is dying off and in ten years there won't be anyone left to do the work. Recently Fr. Vladimir also began hinting that we would be best off in Jordanville, and Vladika Laurus last year also emphasized how much they need

people there. With all respect to Jordanville, to which we are absolutely devoted, we are so conscious of the blessing of Vladika John to trod a different path, that we can only accept the opinion of these respected fathers as a “temptation”.

(From a letter to Father Panteleimon March 21 / April 3, 1971)

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Now that our very existence is being attacked, we are more persuaded than ever that the path on which Vladika John blessed and inspired us to go, is correct, and that by his prayers, and in accordance with God’s will, we will go on this path through every suffering, all the way to martyrdom, if God calls us to this. The fact that such a severe attack has come upon us only persuades us that the devil wishes us to give up this path, because it is right.

We are weak and sinful, and what we have undertaken is far, far beyond our strength and our spiritual talents. Nonetheless, God multiplies His favors to us, and we go forward with difficulties and sorrows, yet certain that He is with us, and Vladika John also.

Glory be to God for everything! Do not believe for a moment that we are abandoning the path we began with Vladika John’s blessing. We go forward with absolute trust in God, on the straight monastic path which Vladika John foretold to us when he called our Brotherhood a “reflection of Valaam” and when he told me, when I told him of our hopes for a missionary monastery away from the city: “I too believe that there will be such a missionary monastery in California.”

(From a letter to Mrs. Kontsevich March 24 / April 6, 1971)

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By God’s mercy and the prayers of our patrons, St. Herman and Vladika John, we continue to exist and have hopes to increase our publications.

Because of your situation our contacts with you will have to be “informal” for an indefinite time. With the Moscow Patriarchate, of course, we have no contact, as a matter of principle; but we know that you are not in your present situation because you support their “principle” against ours, but rather by force of circumstances. As you see in *The Orthodox Word*, we believe in the principle of the Church Abroad; but sometimes a living soul becomes caught, as it were, in a net of circumstances that threaten to choke and strangle him, and then it would be a sin of phariseeism not to offer, if one can, at least a word of encouragement. That is the testament we have received from Vladika John, from whom we have also learned that in Christ not all “hopeless” situations are really as hopeless as they seem.... I believe you understand all this well enough, being yourself, just like we are, an “orphan” of Vladika John! As to what form, on the basis of all this, our future contacts will take—surely God, through the prayers of Vladika John, will teach us! We only know that God does not want living souls to be stifled, nor fruitful trees to remain barren.

(From a letter to Father Ambrosius [Pogodin] May 5/18, 1971)

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In San Francisco after Vladika John died we felt distinctly that he almost alone had been the spiritual power of San Francisco’s (or at least the Cathedrals) Orthodoxy, and if there was no counteracting force in the meantime, the services in the Cathedral in 20 years time would be perilously close to the Metropolia spirit. Among Russians there are very few sources of such a spiritual force that can counteract the drift of the times—anywhere!

(From a letter to Father Nektas Palasis, May 6/19, 1971)

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If any further good will come from our Brotherhood, it will be from our independendy pursuing the path already begun, with Vladika Johns blessing, not by meekly accepting directions from without. We recently found, by the way, Vladika Vitalys (Maximenko's) address on his consecration as bishop, in which he movingly speaks of the spiritual-psychological conditions under which he was able to bring such fruit as a missionary of the printed word: in absolute independence, "not bothering anyone and not bothered by anyone." Exactly! And that's normal in the Church, not bending oneself into some other shape for the sake of a purely formal and fictitious "obedience," That's the way Vladika John acted, and that's the inspiration he gave us. If we fall into heresy or give scandal, that's another matter. For us here in the wilds, our idea of a bishop is somewhat modelled on the vultures who circle our mountain constantly now: "overseeing" everything, they nonetheless do not bother those animals that move around doing their own affairs, but come down to examine and clean up only when they smell something rotten!

Soon we will put out our Orthodox Word devoted largely to Vladika John, openly confessing his sanctity. We believe that Vladika A. would prefer the veneration of Vladika John to be quiet and private, and all emphasis on sanctity to be hushed up. If so, he might react adversely to this issue; although we don't know, (all of this would become more evident, of course, if God grants us to print something in Russian.) Then, of course, we would only rejoice if we were to suffer for our veneration of Vladika John.

(From a letter to Father Panteleimon, May 8/21, 1971)

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Life of Blessed Archbishop John in Russian is enclosed—this is our closely guarded "secret project" about which no one knew. Glory be to God, we finished it the evening before Vladika Johns repose and delivered it at 6. a.m. to the Sepulchre before Liturgy. First response from everyone was favorable, after the shock wore off, but we await further repercussions.

We are more than ever convinced that Vladika John and St. Herman are with us, and with their help we can do much.

(From a letter to Father Panteleimon on 23 June / 6 July 1971)

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Yesterday we had a surprise visit from our nearest Orthodox neighbors, the Harveys of Redding (a Russian woman married to an American, at whose baptism by Vladika John, it turns out, I was present). Mrs. Harvey knows much about Vladika's Shanghai days and says, "Vladika performed so many miracles that we took them for granted, and most of them are not written down."

(From a letter to Laurence Campbell on 3/16 August 1971)

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Our spiritual orientation is: devotion to St. Herman and discipleship to Vladika John and faithfulness to his testament and tradition to us, which includes in some degree being a "reflection of Valaam." We have neither startsi nor great spiritual gifts to offer you; we can only invite you to be our fellow-orphan of St. Herman and Vladika John, asking together their help to make up our numerous deficiencies. Many from outside, as you already see, will judge us, will say we are in "prelest," etc., and you will fall under the general condemnation. We cannot defend ourselves by pointing to any "spiritual" qualities which we do not have, but only by the fruits which God may bring forth from our common labors. We have sufficient testimony from outside to tell us that these fruits so far, even if small, are

nonetheless real.

Vladika John divided his day into four parts of six hours each: rest, spiritual reading and reflection, work, and prayer. That is also the formula of our common life, only with the hours adapted to our weakness and needs. The active part of our day is devoted to work and prayer; no idleness. You will be given a chotki and a brief rule of cell prayer; besides this, you will carry the chotki with you everywhere and use it as your chief weapon against idleness and vain imaginings, fighting the devil with the Jesus Prayer.

We may well have to endure disgrace. But know that one bishop (N) has openly encouraged us to “disobedience,” if that be necessary, telling us to “treasure the blessing of Vladika John above everything,” and another (L) has said: “the fact that sorrows come to you testifies to the fact that you are doing a work of God... I think that you should be patient, undertake no dramatic moves, but by your conduct and your ‘line’ show that this (the behavior and ukase of V.A.) goes against your soul and is not suitable to you.” In the meantime we consider that our monastery does not yet have an official status and is in a state of “persecution” until such day as we shall be free to exercise our monastic right to present our own Rule to the Synod and elect our own Head. Until that time we take protection under the name of “Brotherhood” which Vladika John blessed.

As slaves of Christ we cannot offer to God and His Church great spirituality, wisdom, organization, or podvigs; but we can offer our absolute determination and strenuous effort to be faithful to the testament of Vladika John to us and to forge a community which in some way preserves his spirit, helping, encouraging and strengthening each other in our weaknesses and falls, and being open and honest with each other. The rules above are in accordance with the “Decree on Monasteries” of the Russian Church Abroad.

(From a letter to Laurence Campbell 10/23 August 1971)

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We didn’t come here to “establish a monastery,” but to save our souls and print the OW. If others are crazy enough to join us, perhaps God will bless a real monastery here; and if He blesses it, then He will give us the means of nourishing it, both physically and spiritually. Vladika John did tell us that he “believed” there would be a missionary monastery such as we dreamed of, but we wait to see what God’s will is for us.

Keep in mind Vladika John; pray to him. He’s our guiding star, and when we sometimes get gloomy and begin to think that it’s pointless to go against the conventional view, that after all the Church is supposed to be a career and not something to get inspired about and inspire others with, that what we’re doing is too risky, that it’s better to let our enthusiasm die out and let someone else tell us where we can be of “humble service” to the Church—then we bring to mind Vladika John and somehow everything makes sense again, and the “conventional” view doesn’t make sense at all and if this attitude continues to prevail among Russians abroad they will fulfill the threat of Vladika John in 1938 and uzrezhetrcr _____. And then we go back to our lives of Saints and Holy Fathers and get our inspiration from them.

(From a letter to Dimitry on August 13/26, 1971)

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Some years ago I wrote brief articles somewhat in the same vein, at the insistence of Archbishop John, who wanted at least a page or two of English material in the San Francisco diocesan bulletin (now defunct). I don’t know who if anyone read them, and looking back on them now I find them, despite the “feeling” I put into them, somewhat “abstract,” the product of thinking that hadn’t had too much experience as yet either of Orthodox literature or Orthodox life. Still, for me, they served an important function in my understanding and expression of various Orthodox questions, and even in my Orthodox “development,” and Vladika John “pushed” that.

(From a letter to Alexey Yang, August 16/29, 1971)

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Pray to Vladika John. There wouldn't be any Orthodox Word today without him.

(From a letter to Alexey Yang on October 1/14, 1971)

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We have two kinds (or perhaps “traditions”) of bishops: on one side Vladikas John, Averky, Leonty, Nektary, Savva; on the other, those who now seem to have the governing positions. (Metr. Philaret would classify as an “independent,” and as long as he is Metropolitan I see Vlad. Ioann's influence as somehow present.) Not to say that anyone is a heretic or enemy of any kind; but nonetheless the two characteristic dispositions, rather difficult to define, do seem to exist. The one group of bishops has now just about died out, and from them we have inherited some things which, I fear, may make us somewhat “out of fashion” in the Synod in the future, about which we've already had some hints. But perhaps this is too cryptic, or in any case is more suitable for oral communication than written.

(From a letter to Father Neketas Palasis on November 1/14, 1971)

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Of course, there are those who wouldn't like to call Vlad. John a fool for Christ, and in fact (that's the key!) would rather forget him entirely. But we stand and fall with his “foolishness,” which surely one day will be seen to be wiser than the wisdom of many. But we are being watched....

(From a letter to Laurence Campbell 21 March / 3 April 1972)

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We visited San Francisco on Friday (June 10/23) to attend Liturgy in Vladika John's Sepulchre; because June 19/July 2 falls on Sunday this year, Vladika Anthony decided to have the one Liturgy that he allows each year on Vladika John's namesday instead. This is a little strange, as once before when July 2 fell on Sunday there was a Liturgy—without a panikhida following, since it was Sunday, but nonetheless there was a Liturgy to mark the anniversary. Rumor has it, and it's quite plausible, that Vlad. Anthony was acting on advice of the cathedral clergy, who have been opposed to veneration of Vladika John from the first, and used the excuse of its being Sunday to obliterate the “competition” this year.

Being ourselves somewhat upset in general over the sad direction in which Russian Orthodoxy Abroad seems to be going, this seemingly small transference of the day of Vladika John's veneration led us into further reflections. It is now 6 years since Vladika John's repose. The spark of Orthodoxy in the Russian diaspora has continued to decline in those years—and yet here is a God-given fuel to ignite and spread the spark! We thought: why such efforts to limit veneration of an obvious wonderworker and saint for our times? Why not more than one Liturgy a year in his Sepulchre (as there was before Vladika Anthony came, when Vlad. Nektary was temporary ruling bishop)? Why are not regular pilgrimages arranged?

Well, of course there are some definite reasons why not, and these were confirmed for us by our visit to Vlad. Anthony after the Liturgy. He spent most of the time pointing out 3 or 4 places in our Russian Life of Vladika John which people had complained about. Well, it's true that these points could have been expressed or presented better; but in back of these somewhat technical points, we sensed that—just as you mentioned when speaking to Vlad. Vitaly—that we weren't speaking the same language, that Vlad. Anthony was somehow just pushing aside the main point about Vlad. John. He kept saying: the whole thing is too fresh,

too controversial; we always wait at least 50 years before talking about sanctity (by which time, of course, our Russians will have forgotten) etc. At this Fr. Herman finally had to say: But Vladika John is a saint, a wonderworker! Vladika Anthony's reply: Well, you and I can talk like this among ourselves, but not in public! We left feeling that our ruling hierarchy had given us the advice (although he hadn't expressed it in so many words): Your devotion and love are commendable, but don't be so enthusiastic, not so much zeal, don't make Vlad. John such a hero, let his small group of veneration keep it pretty much to themselves.

What to say? We don't judge Vlad. Anthony. Obviously he is in an unenviable position and subject to many pressures and responsible for keeping peace among a difficult flock; and we can think of a bishop or two who probably wouldn't have allowed a Liturgy ever to be served in the Sepulchre. But this is the path to the dying out of Orthodoxy, making it something "non-controversial" and not at all attractive to the younger generation. It's precisely the Orthodox "heroism" of someone like Vladika John that can inflame the youth with fervor for Orthodoxy; but in San Francisco it's obvious that the veneration of Vladika John is going to be allowed to die out if possible.

We left completely discouraged about the possibility of presenting the "Orthodox Word" to Russians. It just happens that a number of the needful topics today are "controversial," but are we therefore supposed to sit back and let the kill-spirits triumph and dampen everyone's spirits? We dread to think of where we would be now if The Orthodox Word had been appearing in Russian all these years—in fact, there aren't many bishops besides Vladika John who would have encouraged us. In our early issues when we began to get complaints about being so outspoken about Athenagoras, about comparing the Pope to Antichrist, etc., we went to Vladika John in some doubt—perhaps we really shouldn't be so outspoken? But glory be to God, Vladika John fully supported us and blessed us to continue in the same spirit.

(From a letter to Father Nektas Palasis 12/25 June 1972)

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We attended the Liturgy at Vladika John's Sepulchre last Friday, which was well attended. Unfortunately, I think the lack of Liturgy on July 2 is a subtle revelation that the veneration of Vladika John is not going to be encouraged among Russians—he's too "controversial" and our booklet on him was not well received in some places. Apparently he is to be a prophet more for those without—the converts, who have spontaneously taken to him and are already glorifying God in him in many languages.

(From a letter to Daniel Olson on 13/26 June 1972)

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We proceed in the belief that we are free and independent and so far Vladika John's blessing protects us and guides us in a very definite way. We are somewhat saddened by Vladika Anthony's "cool" attitude toward Vladika John (he's too "controversial" in S.F.), but Vladika Nektary's warm devotion to him more than makes up for it. Several weeks ago, after the Divine Liturgy which he served here, Vladika Nektary led us in singing the "Magnification" to Vladika John and then had us sing the stikhera from your service (for which we rejoice and thank God!), and he asked us to translate them into Slavonic. This is strictly confidential; but if we correctly sense the difficult road ahead for us Synodal "zealots" there may well come a day when we will have great joy and consolation in remembering that one of our bishops "canonized" Vladika John! (The date was July 12/25.)

(From a letter to Father Panteleimon on July 20 / August 2, 1972)

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I will bow to the obedience, trusting in Vladika John's prayers that I will travel safely (never having travelled in an airplane before).

(From a letter to Father Neketas Palasis, January 7/20, 1973)

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We haven't told you the whole story, but the treatment of Vladika Savva by his fellow hierarchs at the Sobor was simply a disgrace. When asked later why he had to endure such treatment, Vladika Savva only pointed his finger heavenward, and at the end he was very peaceful in soul. He wrote us that he received this because he helped Vladika John (probably as much in a spiritual as in a literal sense). Sadly, in one of his letters to us he wrote that he had given up the idea of printing Vladika John's life in Russian (he wished to print something in Serbian) for fear that the Synod would ban it, although in his last letter he indicated he was going to print something in Russian anyway. But at the present time we, thanks be to God, have a freedom he didn't have, and we won't stop until we're really squashed or it should become evident that we are not doing God's will. Our boldness, it may be, is born of the utter hopelessness of our situation—having no “princes or sons of men” to trust in, we have to trust in God and in Vladika John's prayers. We strongly suspect that Vladika John will be the “stumbling block” against which some who trust in politics and dead formalism will finally fall—and, hopefully, learn a “lesson.”

The new issue of *Nasha Strana* from Buenos Aires has a necrolog of Vladika Savva by Archbishop Afanasy, which dares to mention that “he did not fear or hesitate to accuse unjustness or lying,” and even that “he was a great venerator of Archbishop John Maximovitch of San Francisco.” We've just learned that Vladika Afanasy himself, and also Vladika Savva of Australia, also supported Vladika John. Of course, we don't want to divide everyone into sides or parties because of Vladika John! and also we have no bitter feelings against anyone—it's just that he seems to be a touchstone of Orthodoxy in our days, and those who go against him seem to be off in their whole approach to the critical issues of today.

(From a letter to Father Neketas Palasis 3/16 February 1973)

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Among Vladika's [Savva] papers were the materials for his book on Archbishop John. As we already suspected from our correspondence with him, there is not too much of this material that has not already been printed in *Prav. Rus.* (He complained to us that people in San Francisco and elsewhere just didn't send material when asked.) We will certainly try to get more of it printed in Russian, although it is too early for us to think specifically about a book yet. Vladika Savva himself has now become a part of the whole story of Archbp. John: his concern for his memory and his unashamed acknowledgement of his sanctity are an encouragement for the rest of us who sometimes become dejected over the blindly negative attitude towards him in some places. We plan to tell about Vladika Savva in the new *Orthodox Word* and to begin translating some of his material on Vladika John, together with his own valuable comments. We feel ourselves to be spiritual heirs and debtors of Vladika Savva, and we will certainly do all we can, with God's help, to collect all his material on Archbishop John into one book.

(From a letter to Igor Kapral [future Metropolitan Hilarion] February 7/20, 1973)

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In reading the papers of Bishop Savva, we find addressed to him the usual complaints against Vladika John (these are the worst things they can find about him!): that he is irritable, crude, unthinking of others, (for example because he comes late to services), disrupts the usual order of things, is a poor administrator, can't be understood, mumbles and falls asleep in the midst of the most important (worldly) discussions, that the clergy of the S.F. Cathedral consider it a holiday when he isn't present. I myself had occasion to witness most of these phenomena, and I can testify, for example, that on the several occasions when he was “crude” with me I was extremely grateful and saw only spiritual benefit in it. In all of this I think there is hidden a

significant fact about Vladika which hasn't been brought out much: that he refused to allow the Church to become a habit, and by his seeming crudeness, he tried to jolt people out of the spiritual rut into which it can be so easy to fall. As soon as Vladika was gone, everything became "smooth" in the Cathedral and the clergy were content—because now they could and did make the Church a habit, incapable of inspiring anyone except on the capital of the past which has not yet been used up (but will be before long!).

(From a letter to Father Neketas Palasis, March 1/14, 1973)

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Vladika John taught us that laborers in the missionary field are to be guided and inspired, but not pushed or forced.

(From a letter to Father Neketas Palasis 5/18 April 1973)

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Let us all keep up our own independent labors, relying on the counsel of others in cases of doubt, and trusting in God's grace and the prayers of His God-pleasers to help us. How well Vladika John knew how to inspire and guide without crushing anyone's spirit or dictating his personal opinions to anyone. Let us pray for everyone and continue our path.

(From a letter to Alexey Yang. Holy Wednesday (April 19 / May 2) 1973)

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We are very concerned that we have not gotten across to you the very important point concerning Vladika John's attitude toward missionary labors. Of course, to a large extent this point must be "felt" rather than explained, but please try to realize that Vladika John was not at all "mistaken" on this matter, but on the contrary it was one of the most important aspects of his inspiring and holy life. One might disagree with him on some specific "economies," but his basic approach was right and is indispensable for us today. His point was, as I think I said, previously to guide and inspire, not to push and force. He did not at all leave converts without guidance; he rather knew exactly how and when to give the guidance, so that it would inspire and not crush the spirit. Some people point to the "mistake" of the French Church—but the fact remains that there is a healthy French mission within the Church Abroad today, and without him it is hardly likely that there would be. Which is better, to inspire and let the tree grow and then collect fruits from only half the limbs, or, out of "strictness," to stomp on the plant in the first place and get no tree at all?

(From a letter to Father Neketas Palasis. The week of the Apostle Thomas (23 April / 6 May) 1973)

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We've obtained a cassette of the Akathist to the Mother of God sung in the San Francisco cathedral with Vladika John serving. Hardly a word of his is understandable, but the dear familiar voice is there! You are welcome to make a copy for yourself on one of your visits.

(From a letter to Alexey Yang. The Week of St. Thomas (23 April / 6 May) 1973)

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Pray to Vladika John for guidance. Know that not everything depends on what some people "think" of you, and also that at the proper time others will speak up for you.

(From a letter to Alexey Yang on June 29 / July 12, 1973)

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You say that you wish to “work out your differences” with us. I will give you an example of how that is done—with the heart and not with the mind. Four years ago Fr. Panteleimon visited us, before the canonization of St. Herman. We asked him to serve a panikhida for him, and he replied that he simply couldn’t serve a panikhida for someone to whom his community prays as a Saint. Behold, a “difference” between us and Fr. Panteleimon—and we rejoiced! And how did we work out our “difference,” even as we were rejoicing over it? Fr. Panteleimon served a panikhida for “Monk Herman”—but he prayed for the newly-reposed Jordanville Monk Herman, while we prayed for Fr. Herman of Alaska—to whom for a long time we had already sung the troparion, magnification, and akathist. (How inconsistent” of us!) And how “inconsistent” for Vladika John to end his panikhidas for Fr. Herman with the magnification to him! And how “inconsistent” that we both glorify Elder Nazarius and pray for his Repose! What kind of “canonization” is that?!

(From a letter to Daniel [Olson] October 25 / November 7, 1973)

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Trust in Vladika John’s prayer.

(From a letter to Alexey Yang, November 6, 1973)

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The reading of the Sunday night Passion Gospels during Lent is a custom of many centuries in Western Russia. And don’t start thinking about “Latin influence”—the custom was good enough for Vladika John (which is perhaps why it is still continued in SF) and is also very moving.

(From a letter to Nina Seko. Monday of the 4th week of Great Lent, March 10, 1974)

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Blessed Archbishop John is with us. We attended Liturgy in his Sepulchre on June 19/July 2, and Fr. Mitrophan gave a marvelous sermon, to wit that what a shame for us Russians to be lukewarm about a genuine wonderworker of our times, when the Greeks have printed his icon and venerate him as a saint!

(From a letter to Luke [Walmsley] on June 24 / July 7, 1974)

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The situation seems really desperate. Perhaps it is no accident that the “clergy crisis” seems to be striking S. F. most severely. Fr. Mitrophan well said in his sermon that “it is a shame to us Russians to be so lukewarm to our Wonderworker, Archbishop John, when the Greeks have printed his icon and glorified him!” (Such words haven’t been spoken publicly before!) Here we have such a source of inspiration and grace, and those who revere him are virtual outcasts. No wonder grace is being taken away from this diocese!

(From a letter to Nina Seko on June 24 / July 7, 1974)

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The fast has begun, and nightly we are singing the Supplicatory Canon to the Mother of God,

as Archbishop John did.

(From a letter to Alexey Yang, August 2/15, 1974)

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Christ our God is with us, and Vladika John has pushed us in the right direction (he told us to keep right on accusing Athenagoras, even if people didn't like it!), and all of our trials are only to strengthen us for the very difficult times ahead. God is with us!

(From a letter to Alexey Yang, January 4/17, 1975)

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Fr. Theodoritos, doubtless speaking for other zealots in Greece and on the Holy Mountain, writes us that of course he accepts Augustine as a Saint, because St. Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain does. Our Vladika John had a service written to him and had great devotion for him. St. Nikodemos put him in our Eastern Calendar (much as Vladika John put St. Patrick there).

Has our Orthodoxy in America become so narrow that we must be under the dictation of a "pope-expert" and we must accept a "party-line" on every conceivable subject? This is against everything Vladika John taught and did in missionary labors.

(From a letter to Father Igor Kapral [future Metropolitan Hilarion] September 29 / October 12, 1975)

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If you wish to visit us, it would be good for you to stop on the way to us at the Sepulchre of Archbishop John Maximovitch, a true holy place (in the basement of the San Francisco Cathedral on Geary Blvd.) and pray to him to guide you aright in the path of salvation. He is our powerful intercessor before God.

(From a letter to Thomas October 25 / November 7, 1975)

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Vladika John blessed and named our Orthodox Word, so we go forward trusting in him. Basically we are peaceful, and very full of work.

(From a letter to Alexey Yang, 3/16 December 1975)

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We trust in God and the prayers of Vladika John.

(From a letter to Alexey Yang 3/16 April 1976)

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Such giants as Vlad. Averky and Vladika John have guided us up to now, and their teaching will remain a beacon in the days ahead.

(From a letter to Daniel Olson May 29 / June 11, 1976)

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First of all, of course, our instructors must be the giants of that older generation: Vladika John, Vladika Averky, and those like them. Vladika Nektary is the most precious of that generation remaining to us—may God preserve him yet for many years! Vladika Laurus is also very precious to us—because, despite perhaps some “theoretical” shortcomings, he has several invaluable qualities: simplicity, honesty, “unpoliticalness” (despite being in the center of the Synod!), and being a little “not of this world.”

We feel very crucial times ahead for us and our whole Church, and we want to ask Vladika John very fervently now just what we should do, how we should proceed. By his prayers may we stay on the right path and stay firm in the midst of the temptations ahead!

(From a letter to Alexey Yang, June 2/15, 1976)

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We ask your prayers for us especially in the days ahead and on June 19/July 2, the tenth anniversary of Vladika John's repose. With all the troubles and rumors in the Church, we wish to ask his help very fervently for our further labors. This is the post-Paschal “apostolic” time of the Church year, and there is much apostolic labor still to do in Christ's Church!

(From a letter to Macarius [Schaefer], June 9/22, 1976)

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Please pray for us especially on the day of Archbishop John's repose, June 19/July 2. We need his help to keep going in the true path in the darkening atmosphere.

(From a letter to Christopher Amerling 10/23 June 1976)

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Our Russian book on Vladika John (200 pages) is finally printed, and we only hope we can get some copies sewn and bound in time for his feast, just a week away. We feel we have done our duty to Vladika John and Vladika Savva (whose book it actually is); but we rather expect to be persecuted for it. Vladika Savva told us that the difficulties of his last years were the devil's revenge on him for glorifying Vladika John. May God grant us strength to endure whatever comes and not grow fainthearted. Please pray for us. We feel that very difficult times are ahead for all who wish to stay in the true spirit of Orthodoxy. The church-political atmosphere now is such that we actually feel like some kind of criminals just for saying elementary things, such as that Vladika John heals the sick and works miracles; so we were especially encouraged when, of the several bishops we asked, Archbishop Nikon sent us his brief memoirs of Vlad. John in time to be printed at the end of the book, in which he says this very thing—that because of his love and struggle, Vlad. John was granted by God the grace-given gift of healing those who come to him with faith. Vladika Nikon will probably die soon—another of the older generation to depart, and who among the younger will take the tradition and hand it on?

(From a letter to Daniel Olson 12/25 June 1976)

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Archbishop John taught us that each little Orthodox center is like a sprout whose normal Orthodox growth must be encouraged, without imposing a strait-jacket of conformity upon it.

(From a letter to Father Mark [Wakingham] June 24 / July 7, 1976)

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We have had a quiet summer, but several outward events have caused us trouble. First there was our forest fire (have I written since then?), which came within two miles and forced us to pack up all our rare manuscripts and books in preparation for evacuation (by Vladika John's prayers the fire was turned back by a strong wind at the last minute); then two weeks of the most unseasonable rain, beginning precisely on the feast of St. Elias, with thunder and lightning, and which laid both Fr. Herman and myself low with colds or flu. The tenth anniversary of Vladika John's repose (described in the latest OW) gave us a new bit of inspiration.

(From a letter to Christopher Amerling 22 August / 4 September 1976)

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About the phenomenon of Orthodox saints of the West in general, it is primarily the zeal and interest of Archbishop John Maximovitch which has inspired us and many others to do what we can to speak of and glorify them. I think this is of value not only to Orthodox of Western background, but to all Orthodox, for Russians and Greeks in the full "Eastern" tradition find many of the lives of the early Western saints to be entirely authentic and in the full Orthodox tradition, and thus an unexpected wealth is added to the already rich Eastern tradition.

(From a letter to Mr. Graves on October 1/14, 1976)

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Concerning preparation for Holy Communion: the standard preparation is to read the Three Canons and Akathist, as stated in the Jordanville Prayer Book, usually the night before (in monasteries these are often read at Compline for the whole community, after the Creed), and in the morning the Canon before Communion and the Pre-Communion Prayers. If for some reason one can't read this whole rule, one repents and reproaches oneself and does as much as one can; if need be, the Akathist and/or canons could be read in the afternoon or evening after receiving Communion. As for fasting, the general Russian custom is to fast for three days beforehand, but this is actually a custom which arose with the practice of infrequent communion, and Vladika John once told a woman who wanted to receive Holy Communion but hadn't fasted the day before: "But it wasn't a fast day. If you are keeping the Church's regular fast days, it is sufficient to guard against over-eating, or eating especially tasty foods, for several days before receiving Holy Communion, and especially the day before, but without making a special point of avoiding all non-fast foods, unless you feel the need for it. As for frequency of communion: in your case you should receive as frequently as you can, i.e., just about every time you attend Liturgy. The pre-communion prayers are read aloud in our skete, as in many Russian churches, during the priest's communion.

(From a letter to Alexey Yang January 28 / February 10, 1977)

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We were very glad in reading the decree of the Synod, to see that the Hierarchs have noticed and valued our labors in the compiling and printing of the St. Herman Calendar, and in particular our inclusion of the dates of death of various hierarchs and ascetics. This latter feature, incidentally, has been one of the most popular features of the Calendar, there have been very many comments on it, and we know that our priests serve pannikhidas for a number of the hierarchs and ascetics mentioned there, and in some places every single one of these names is commemorated at every Liturgy. Further, there has never been a single unfavorable comment from anyone regarding our inclusion of these names, which has persuaded us that the idea itself of including these names is indeed "in agreement with the general ecclesiastical attitude of our Church." This idea is not original with us but was taken from the Diocesan Bulletin of the Diocese of Shanghai when our Archbishop John was there.

In blessing the publication of *The Orthodox Word*, Archbishop John wrote the following words for publication: “By the prayers of the Aleut Martyr Peter, who suffered martyrdom in San Francisco.” By doing this he certainly gave his blessing for the veneration of the Aleut Martyr Peter, at least in the Western American Diocese where he suffered martyrdom.

In view of all this: that the Aleut Martyr Peter was invoked as a saint by St. Herman of Alaska; that Archbishop John Maximovitch called publicly on his prayers; that our Synod of Bishops gave official approval to a Service containing an invocation of St. Peter as a saint; and that the Synod of the American Metropolia did likewise; and that he is popularly venerated as a saint, with no dispute arising because of this; and finally, in view of the fact that the veneration of martyrs has always been accepted in the Orthodox Church with a minimum of official investigation, the very fact of their martyrdom already testifying to their sanctity—we did not believe that there was any controversy or dispute whatever involving the placing of the name of the Aleut Martyr Peter in the Orthodox Calendar. But even so, we were careful to place of the name of the Aleut Martyr Peter in our St. Herman Calendar only with the qualifying words: “who is mentioned in the Service to St. Herman,” thus showing that we were trusting not our own judgment, but were relying on the judgment of the Church Authority (the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Church Outside of Russia) which officially approved the Service.

(From a letter to Vladika Nektary, April 16/29, 1977)

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As long as you are in the Anglican Church there is not much we can do to guide you. I would only advise you to pray fervently to God to show you the way to be fruitful in His True Church. The prayers of a recent saint of our Church, Archbishop John Maximovitch, are also very helpful. I am sending you one of our recent publications about him.

(From a letter to R. Goodridge, February 9/22, 1979)

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Both of us in our personal contacts with Vlad. V. have found him cold and pretentious, and totally lacking in the warmth and Christian love of someone like Vladika John Maximovitch, who inspired a spontaneous missionary movement just by these qualities, without Vladika Vitaly's pretensions to be a “theologian,” etc.

(From a letter to Father Yves [Dubois], 1/14 June 1979)

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Archbishop John without fail had a new year's moleben on January 1/14 every year, precisely to mark the civil new year by the old calendar (not the new—he refused to serve a moleben then); this is sound, living “conservatism.” The Church new year is another occasion entirely—which you yourself admit since you don't change the year's number on Sept. 1.

(From a letter to Father Nektas Palasis October 23 / November 5, 1979)

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This Catechism [Metr. Philaret of Moscow] was always the first book Vladika John would give a new convert!

(From a letter to Father Roman Lukyanov on November 1/14, 1979)

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Pray to God (and to our Archbishop John) and He will show you the way.

(From a letter to James [Paffhausen] [future Metropolitan Jonah] January 23 / February 5, 1981)

Part I. On the narrow path to salvation.

5. About the bishops-confessors Averkiy (Taushev), Savva (Sarashevich), Nektariy (Kontsevich), Leonty (Filippovich) and others.

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Vladiko Savva did much in defense of Vladiko Ioann [Maksimovich].

(From a letter to Nina Seko on August 28 / September 10, 1963.

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We received a nice letter from Vl. Leonty, who may perhaps be very important for us in future.

(From a letter to Gleb Podmoshensky [future father Herman] December 30, 1963 / January 12, 1964)

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Vladiko Nektary just visited us for an hour or so on his way to S.F. and brought us a little Paschal joy.

(From a letter to Father Neketas (Palasis) April 26 / May 9, 1970)

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If you happen to see Bp. Laurus, please give him our warmest greetings; we have close ties with him.

(From a letter to Father Michael [Azkoul] on May 26 / June 8, 1970)

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The next week we expected Bp. Laurus, Gleb's onetime instructor at the seminary, to visit us, and we hastily finished a small kellia we had begun some months ago—a lean-to, 8x8 ft., at the back door of our living cabin. He arrived Wednesday but stayed only a few hours and went right back.

(From a letter to Daniel Olson 5/18 August 1970)

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Pray for us—and pray also for Archbishop Leonty of Chile and his flock—a Marxist government is about to be installed, and the future is uncertain. Archbishop Leonty has already been in prison in the USSR and served Catacomb Liturgies there and knows well the character of these times.

(From a letter to Daniel Olson 4/17 September 1970)

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Your Grace, Dear Vladika Laurus,
Bless us, Vladika! Evlogeite!

Our last trial began when we received Vladika Anthony's Ukase last week, and we were very much troubled—but in less than 24 hours, completely unexpectedly, Vladika Nektary and Fr. Boris came with the Kursk Icon, and our trouble was turned into joy and the certain realization that *God is with us!*

We ask your holy prayers and will welcome your advice. Please be assured that we will not do anything rash, and will act only after having consulted others among the clergy who know us well.

(From a letter to Vladika Laurus, March 12/25, 1971)

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Our next step will depend on Vladika Laurus' practical advice as to what we should do next. We hope to speak at length with Vladika Nektary when he comes to celebrate Liturgy for us in the next week or so, and also with our Starets, Archimandrite Spyridon, who wants to serve on Annunciation (or, we hope, Pascha itself), and then we will act.

(From a letter to Father Panteleimon March 13/26, 1971)

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Our life in the wilderness continues to have its trials and temptations, but much more its joys. At one point when our spirits were low Vladika Nektary arrived completely unexpectedly with the Kursk Icon, served a moleben, gave us Holy Communion from the Reserved Gifts (we were in the midst of Vespers when he came and hadn't eaten yet), and let us carry the Icon over our mountain. God's blessings to us just never cease!

(From a letter to Daniel Olson March 25 / April 7, 1971)

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We remain at our battle stations, but we follow the advice of Vladikas Laurus and Nektary not to do anything rash and to wait until we are provoked into action. Meanwhile we will shortly send a new letter to Vladika Laurus and see if he has any further advice.

(From a letter to Father Panteleimon on July 7/20, 1971)

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We are experiencing difficulty with the local "authority," whose ideas concerning our status and the idea that inspires us are totally opposed to our own. Therefore, you must know that we do not accept him as Head of our community, nor do we accept his Ukase concerning our monastery, concerning which we have reported in writing to the Secretary of the Synod. Sooner or later there will doubtless be an open battle with the "authority," and you will be expected to stand shoulder to shoulder with us in this, fighting for the common idea that inspires us (without which we will not be faithful to Vladika John), and being counselled by responsible persons in the Church who know us and our work. We may well have to endure disgrace. But know that one bishop (N) has openly encouraged us to "disobedience," if that

be necessary, telling us to “treasure the blessing of Vladika John above everything,” and another (L.) has said: “the fact that sorrows come to you testifies to the fact that you are doing a work of God... I think that you should be patient, undertake no dramatic moves, but by your conduct and your ‘line’ show that this (the behavior and ukase of V.A.) goes against your soul and is not suitable to you.” In the meantime we consider that our monastery does not yet have an official status and is in a state of “persecution” until such day as we shall be free to exercise our monastic right to present our own Rule to the Synod and elect our own Head. Until that time we take protection under the name of “Brotherhood” which Vladika John blessed.

(From a letter to Laurence Campbell 10/23 August 1971)

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Our relationship to Vladika Nektary, by the way, is quite good, and in fact, although Archimandrite Spyridon (and not Fr. Mitrophan) is officially our “starets,” we do not get to see him too often, and this function is actually performed for us by Vladika Nektary, who has comforted us greatly in our trials.

(From a letter to Dimitry on August 13/26, 1971)

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Some of the decrees of the recent Sobor of Bishops were encouraging, but some of the “undertones” worry us, if you know what I mean! But doubtless we will hear more of these and have something more solid to talk about in the future. From the first “milk” I drank in as an Orthodox Christian in the Synod, I was taught that we have two kinds (or perhaps “traditions”) of bishops: on one side Vladikas John, Averky, Leonty, Nektary, Savva; on the other, those who now seem to have the governing positions. (Metr. Philaret would classify as an “independent,” and as long as he is Metropolitan I see Vlad. Ioann’s influence as somehow present.) Not to say that anyone is a heretic or enemy of any kind; but nonetheless the two characteristic dispositions, rather difficult to define, do seem to exist. The one group of bishops has now just about died out, and from them we have inherited some things which, I fear, may make us somewhat “out of fashion” in the Synod in the future, about which we’ve already had some hints.

(From a letter to Father Neketas (Palasis) on November 1/14, 1971)

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We proceed in the belief that we are free and independent and so far Vladika John’s blessing protects us and guides us in a very definite way. We are somewhat saddened by Vladika Anthony’s “cool” attitude toward Vladika John (he’s too “controversial” in S.F.), but Vladika Nektary’s warm devotion to him more than makes up for it. Several weeks ago, after the Divine Liturgy which he served here, Vladika Nektary led us in singing the “Magnification” to Vladika John and then had us sing the stikhera from your service (for which we rejoice and thank God!), and he asked us to translate them into Slavonic. This is strictly confidential; but if we correctly sense the difficult road ahead for us Synodal “zealots” there may well come a day when we will have great joy and consolation in remembering that one of our bishops “canonized” Vladika John! (The date was July 12/25.)

(From a letter to Father Panteleimon on July 20 / August 2, 1972)

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Fr. Herman was sorry not to see you on the way back, but he had only time for a talk with Vladika Nektary (11 p.m. to 4 a. m.!) before his plane left Wednesday morning. God willing, we will be seeing you more often in future. Fr. Herman was able to visit Vladika Savva’s grave at the convent also and have a good talk with Mother Amvrossia.

Vladika Nektary suggested to Fr. Herman an idea which now won't give us rest until we do something about it: that *he*, as Bishop of Seattle, revive Vladika John's *Blagovestnik* (*Good Tidings*), of which Fr. Herman was once editor, as *his own* publication, but entrusting it entirely to us. (Vladika Anthony several years ago deliberately ceased publication of this, starting an insignificant publication of his own, and told us that we could not use the name—for reasons which now become more and more evident!) Previously *Blagovestnik* was devoted almost entirely to lives and services of saints, ascetics, and new martyrs, but now we would definitely add contemporary editorials, speaking explicitly about Constantinople, telling about old calendarists, etc. We are of course short of hands and time, but 16 pages or so every 2 months I think we could handle.

Vladika Nektary is willing to take the brunt of the attack upon himself, and that makes us bold. We ourselves feel that the pressure will increase on us also now that it is seen that Vladika Savva's trust and blessing rested upon us and not upon any of his fellow hierarchs (except, of course, Vladikas Averky and Nektary, and perhaps one or two other of the older bishops). We haven't told you the whole story, but the treatment of Vladika Savva by his fellow hierarchs at the Sobor was simply a disgrace. When asked later why he had to endure such treatment, Vladika Savva only pointed his finger heavenward, and at the end he was very peaceful in soul. He wrote us that he received this because he helped Vladika John (probably as much in a spiritual as in a literal sense). Sadly, in one of his letters to us he wrote that he had given up the idea of printing Vladika John's life in Russian (he wished to print something in Serbian) for fear that the Synod would ban it, although in his last letter he indicated he was going to print something in Russian anyway. But at the present time we, thanks be to God, have a freedom he didn't have, and we won't stop until we're really squashed or it should become evident that we are not doing God's will. Our boldness, it may be, is born of the utter hopelessness of our situation—having no “princes or sons of men” to trust in, we have to trust in God and in Vladika John's prayers. We strongly suspect that Vladika John will be the “stumbling block” against which some who trust in politics and dead formalism will finally fall—and, hopefully, learn a “lesson.”

The new issue of *Nasha Strana* from Buenos Aires has a necrolog of Vladika Savva by Archbishop Afanasy, which dares to mention that “he did not fear or hesitate to accuse unjustness or lying,” and even that “he was a great venerator of Archbishop John Maximovitch of San Francisco.” We've just learned that Vladika Afanasy himself, and also Vladika Savva of Australia, also supported Vladika John. Of course, we don't want to divide everyone into sides or parties because of Vladika John! and also we have no bitter feelings against anyone—it's just that he seems to be a touchstone of Orthodoxy in our days, and those who go against him seem to be off in their whole approach to the critical issues of today.

(From a letter to Father Nektas (Palasis) 3/16 February 1973)

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We were most moved when we found out that Vladika Savva had willed us his books and papers, and had even left money for Father Herman to come as soon as possible and take care of them. (It would be best not to go into some of the reasons for that!) Thanks be to God, Fr. Herman did so last week, distributing some of the books also to Elizabeth Mandick and another lady in Edmonton in accordance with Vladika Savva's last wishes. When, God willing, we have our Skete library built, it will be in Vladika Savva's memory.

Among Vladika's papers, of course, were the materials for his book on Archbishop John. As we already suspected from our correspondence with him, there is not too much of this material that has not already been printed in *Prav. Rus.* (He complained to us that people in San Francisco and elsewhere just didn't send material when asked.) We will certainly try to get more of it printed in Russian, although it is too early for us to think specifically about a book yet. Vladika Savva himself has now become a part of the whole story of Archbp. John: his concern for his memory and his unashamed acknowledgement of his sanctity are an encouragement for the rest of us who sometimes become dejected over the blindly negative attitude towards him in some places. We plan to tell about Vladika Savva in the new *Orthodox Word* and to begin translating some of his material on Vladika John, together with

his own valuable comments. We feel ourselves to be spiritual heirs and debtors of Vladika Savva, and we will certainly do all we can, with God's help, to collect all his material on Archbishop John into one book.

How true that in Vladika Savva we have lost a spiritual and righteous bishop, and I fear to say, one of the last of them. In the last two weeks both Fr. Herman and I were in Seattle and spoke both with Frs. Panteleimon and Nektas and with Vladika Nektary. No one is optimistic about the future! In Vladika Savva's righteous and patient enduring of the injustice which fell to him in his last months on earth, there seems to be an example and pattern for the rest of us who wish to remain honest and upright Orthodox Christians. Let us make a covenant among ourselves, that wherever we may happen to be in Christ's Church, that we will not be anything but honest and upright, whatever Church politics may say or what we might have to sacrifice for it!

I hope you understand! With Vladika John's repose we were orphaned; but now with the passing of Vladikas Leonty and Savva, and with Vladikas Averky and Nektary in such a frail condition, who will we have left to whom we can speak our hearts?

Please pray for us, and especially for Vladika Nektary.

(From a letter to Igor Kapral [future Metropolitan Hilarion] February 7/20, 1973)

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At any rate, we still have to talk the whole project over again with Vladika Nektary, who at times can be very timid about such things. It may be better to begin not quite so soon, only remembering that no matter what happens, Vladika Nektary *did* give us his blessing to revive Vladika Johns periodical.

We would like very much to print something for the 7th anniversary of Vladika Johns repose. We would also like to do something for Vladika Savva's memory. In reading over his papers and also his articles in *Orthodox Russia*, we see that he had a definite message for the Russian people, which will probably be forgotten now if we don't do something about it. His articles on Vladika John speak more strongly than any of us on the fact that he is a *saint* who is not yet properly valued and who is of great significance for the Orthodox people. His testament to us is, clearly, to continue speaking this truth, even if the "organization" mentality doesn't like to hear it.

In reading the papers of Bishop Savva, we find addressed to him the usual complaints against Vladika John (these are the worst things they can find about him!): that he is irritable, crude, unthinking of others, (for example because he comes late to services), disrupts the usual order of things, is a poor administrator, can't be understood, mumbles and falls asleep in the midst of the most important (worldly) discussions, that the clergy of the S.F. Cathedral consider it a holiday when he *isn't* present. I myself had occasion to witness most of these phenomena, and I can testify, for example, that on the several occasions when he was "crude" with me I was extremely grateful and saw only spiritual benefit in it. In all of this I think there is hidden a significant fact about Vladika which hasn't been brought out much: that *he refused to allow the Church to become a habit*, and by his seeming crudeness, he tried to jolt people out of the spiritual rut into which it can be so easy to fall. As soon as Vladika was gone, everything became "smooth" in the Cathedral and the clergy were content—because now they could and did make the Church a habit, incapable of inspiring anyone except on the capital of the past which has not yet been used up (but will be before long!).

We would very much like to come out with something *now* which would be both for the glory of Vladika John and the memory of Vladika Savva.

All this, of course, is "secret," and we haven't even mentioned it to Vladika Nektary. It's probably better for him if he's kept "uninvolved" anyway! Although our ruling bishop will probably not be pleased with it, we don't think he'll say anything, since after all it's only a "reprint." (If he were informed in advance, of course, he would insist on advising,

discouraging, etc., and in the end destroying the whole idea.)

(From a letter to Father Nektas (Palasis) March 14, 1973)

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The repose of Vladika Savva was a loss for all of us, and as usual, it is only now that we begin really to value him. We have an article on him in the new (Nov-Dec) *OW* and will be printing regularly some of his material on Vladika John. Unfortunately, there is not too much beyond what he already published in *Orthodox Russia*, but some of it is very valuable (for example, a letter from Vladika John's younger brother describing his childhood). We haven't started going through Vlad. Savva's notebooks yet, but they seem at first glance to be full of nothing but Holy Fathers (handwritten!).

There's our "Vladika Savva Memorial Library" to start building.

(From a letter to Nina Seko, March 4/17, 1973)

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The book of Vladika Savva is also not too easy because we will have to add quite a few pages ourselves that were not in *Orthodox Russia*.

(From a letter to Father Nektas (Palasis) 5/18 April 1973)

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You know the "secret" which we share with Bishop Nektary, precisely because he did here just what you accuse us of doing. He did *not do* it in his capacity of bishop, because he does *not* have episcopal jurisdiction over this piece of land. He did it solely out of love for a Saint, and out of grief over the realization that political and other worldly considerations have made cold the hearts of those, including bishops, who should already be glorifying this Saint.

Vladika Nektary's act (or rather, acts, for he has repeated it) was done with full knowledge that his own ruling bishop would certainly *not* approve if he knew of it, but on the contrary would give him great trouble if he heard of it. He acted "secretly"—precisely because those who should be shouting the praises of a newly-revealed Saint are silent due to the political considerations and cold hearts that reign in our midst; and if it were not for such loving hearts which *beat* with holy Orthodoxy, the fire of true Orthodoxy would be completely absent from our midst today. In future, we trust in God, the loving zealous acts of such men (which of course are not at all "uncanonical" because they have nothing to do with any canons whatever) whether they be hierarchs or priests or monks or simple laymen, will be praised and lauded by the whole Church, because throughout the Church's history these are the stuff of which Orthodoxy is made in practice.

If you wish to know the "principle" on which Vladika Nektary (and others who practice *living* Orthodoxy) have acted, and that which inspires even us poor ones just to go on under an *extremely* difficult and unfavorable spiritual climate (which you cold heart does not even see)—it is the principle of *catacombness*, of nourishing in secret those sprouts of true Orthodoxy which are not being encouraged in official Orthodox circles.

(From a letter to Daniel [Olson] October 25 / November 7, 1973)

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Wednesday Vladika Nektary came to us with the Kursk Icon, a moving experience for us all; and then I accompanied the Icon to Etna, where it was well received and everyone sang in English. Little by little, it seems, this barren American land is being sanctified.

(From a letter to Nina Seko on June 24 / July 7, 1974)

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Probably you have received the “semi-open” letter to us from Fr. Alexander Lebed. We plan a brief reply, mostly quoting Vladika Averky, whose idea (and not our own) it is to use the term “True Orthodox.” What a relief it is not to have to dig up our own arguments, but to leave it to those older and wiser.

(From a letter to Alexey Yang, May 16/29, 1975)

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We had planned for a year to have Vladika Averky on the cover—but the final push came just now! Let them think what they will—*this* is a real Orthodox archpastor and theologian without any fakery or politics whatever, and he has suffered greatly himself from “politics” in the Church. We find the cover very comforting—we’ve done our duty by this righteous man!

(From a letter to Alexey Yang, October 2/15, 1975)

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We just asked Fr. Michael Pomazansky: *who* is an authentic Orthodox theological guide for today, and his reply: Archbishop Averky.

Vladika Averky, by the way, replied to us, thanking us for our “moral support” in a very difficult time for him. [letter ends]

(From a letter to Alexey Yang October 22 / November 4, 1975)

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Yes, it was Vladika Nektary’s namesday. Fr. Herman talked to him by phone, about which he seemed happy, but weighed down by the world.

(From a letter to Nina Seko, 3/16 December 1975)

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Our Vladika Averky cover seems definitely to have put us into a certain “category”—which is probably for the best. We feel now some indefinably “weight” resting on us, as if we are carrying the brunt of a “battle” whose front lines are not dear. Probably our isolation (in several senses) makes us better able to bear this weight, so we thank God. May God give us strength. Vladika John blessed and named our *Orthodox Word*, so we go forward trusting in him. Basically we are peaceful, and very full of work.

(From a letter to Alexey Yang, 3/16 December 1975)

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Archbp. Averky has allowed Bp. Petros to serve at Jordanville for many years, and he has not been informed (to our knowledge) of any accusations against Bp. Petros except that he refuses to deny the validity of New-Calendar Sacraments (which our bishops also refuse to deny). If any serious report of “ecumenical” activity on Bp. Petros’ part had been reported to Archbishop Averky, he would certainly have taken it most seriously and investigated it.

The history of the 20th century has already shown us that we cannot expect too much from the “Church organization”; there, even apart from heresies, the spirit of the world has become very strong. Archbishop Averky, and our own Bishop Nektary also, have warned us to prepare for catacomb times ahead, when the grace of God may even be taken away from the “Church organization” and only isolated groups of believers will remain. Soviet Russia already gives us an example of what we may expect—only worse, for the times do not get better.

(From a letter to Dr. Kalomiros January 21 / February 3, 1976)

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God willing, the last *OW* for 1976 [meaning 1975] will be out next week, and the first one for the new year should be out not too long after, but probably only after Pascha. We will be filling several issues with Orthodox Gaul, and of course there may be quibblers, considering the fact that these saints “aren’t in the Calendar,” and also that the shade of Blessed Augustine looms over several of the great figures of this time. Concerning the first point, we were greatly relieved by Vladika Nektary’s reaction—he asked only one question: were they recognized as saints *then* by the Roman Church? If so, then of course they are Orthodox—with perhaps a very few exceptions who should be investigated separately.

(From a letter to Alexey Yang, March 17/30, 1976)

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As far as we know, Fr. Herman made his connections all right and is in Jordanville to say farewell to his Abba [Archbishop Averky]. This is a great, great loss to us. We thank God that we were able to present him as a “living link” while he was still alive rather than (as is usual) waiting until he is gone before starting to appreciate him.

(From a letter to Nina Seko, 3/16 April 1976)

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With Vladika Averky's repose, I sigh and think, is it worth it to get across the real understanding of Orthodoxy, when there are so many now who “know better,” and the ones who don’t are as weak as spaghetti? Or maybe, as our young Thomas once brightly suggested: If everyone else thinks differently, then maybe we’re really wrong? But then I think of Vladika Averky, Fr. Michael Pomazansky, and all that older generation that is now almost gone—and I want to weep for the young “know-it-alls” that have missed the point. But the understanding comes only through suffering, and how many can do that?

(From a letter to Alexey Yang 3/16 April 1976)

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Archbishop Averky reposed on Tuesday before Palm Sunday and was buried on the eve of Lazarus Saturday. A righteous man, little valued. We must now present his teaching—please pray that we can do it fittingly. The burden becomes much heavier for us now.

(From a letter to Christopher Amerling 12/25 April 1976)

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At the Synod you should be in contact first of all with the Secretary, Bishop Laurus—his position is quite moderate and sound, and he is doing superhuman work for the good of the

Church in most difficult circumstances.

We do not need to declare fanatically that we are the “only Orthodox left,” but let us also be aware of the process of apostasy that is taking possession of virtually all the Orthodox Churches now, and to which we too can fall if we are not sober and cautious. Our own Bishop Nektary of Seattle is for us a model of sound moderation when he warns us that some of our bishops are doing a little too much for the sake of being “recognized by world Orthodoxy.” Perhaps the best description of our Church’s status at the present time is something like “moderate, sober,—and aloof.” But in practice this is a difficult path to follow.

(From a letter to Andrew [Bond] April 18 / May 1, 1976)

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Question about “zealotry” comes at a time when we also have been giving much thought to such questions—and in fact, it is now becoming a basic question facing our Church. Especially with the passing of Archimandrite Constantine and Archbishop Averky one stops and wonders: who will now be our guides in the difficult days ahead, and give us the right tone and ideology? Bishop Laurus begged the monks at Archbp. Averky’s funeral to promise, while giving him the farewell kiss, to be faithful to his teaching and to keep Jordanville as it was under him; but it may not be too easy to keep this promise in the storms ahead.

Such giants as Vlad. Averky and Vladika John have guided us up to now, and their teaching will remain a beacon in the days ahead; Vlad. Averky especially has given us some practical pointers which will help us over some difficult hurdles ahead.

Before going ahead, we must stop and find out where we are. We wish to be zealots for true Orthodoxy, and our Church leaders have indicated clearly that we must refrain from participating in ecumenist activities and must be aware that ecumenism is eating away the very Orthodox fiber of most of the Orthodox Churches, beginning with Constantinople; and must be zealously pursuing a path of true Orthodoxy ourselves, not only in outward acts but especially in spiritual life, but without falling into false zealotry “not according to knowledge”—a point that Vlad. Averky especially emphasized.

What, then, should we do?

Let us first of all take guidance from our hierarchs who are most aware of the spiritual situation of the Church today and have spoken out. We have especially Metr. Philaret, who speaks rather about the *spiritual essence* of ecumenism than about its formally heretical nature, and warns other hierarchs and his own flock against participating in ecumenist activities and ideas; and Archbishop Averky, who viewed the whole matter also not in terms of formal heresy but rather as an elemental movement of *apostasy*, the answer to which is first of all a return to *spiritual life*.

On the question of the Serbian Church there has not been unanimity among our bishops. Archbp. Averky thought we should class them with the other Communist-dominated Patriarchates and have no communion with them; but most of our bishops haven’t thought so, and in fact Bishop Savva was so firm on this point that he said he would go into retirement if we broke communion with the Serbian Patriarchate. Our bishops apparently have made no decision on the subject, which means Serbia is classed more or less with the “canonical” Churches of the free world (probably a little better than they, because it is Old Calendar), with whom our relations were strained or discouraged but not entirely broken. We expect Vladika Nektary to visit us in the next week or so and will ask his opinion. This, of course, is not a “zealot” position—but none of our bishops has handed down to us a position of pure “zealotry,” including Archbishop Averky, who always emphasized the *spiritual* aspect without insisting on the letter of the law, and whose chief worry about our Church was not our lack of “strictness” but rather the evaporation of spiritual life and allowing worldly and political considerations to dominate us.

(From a letter to Daniel Olson May 29 / June 11, 1976)

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The “right wing” of Orthodoxy will probably be divided into many small “jurisdictions” in future, most of them anathematizing and fighting with the others. If only our Russian Church Abroad can stay whole and on a sound path, not inclining to the “left” as a reaction against the “zealot” wing—it will be enough for us. We *must* keep up the living contact with the older Russian clergy, even if some of them may seem to us a little too “liberal”—otherwise we will become lost in the “zealot” jungle which is growing up around us! First of all, of course, our instructors must be the giants of that older generation: Vladika John, Vladika Averky, and those like them. Vladika Nektary is the most precious of that generation remaining to us—may God preserve him yet for many years! Vladika Laurus is also very precious to us—because, despite perhaps some “theoretical” shortcomings, he has several invaluable qualities: simplicity, honesty, “unpoliticalness” (despite being in the center of the Synod!), and being a little “not of this world.” The Boston party hates him and laughs at him—but for all their “wisdom” and money, they will never have those qualities he has. By the way, Vladika Laurus was just elected Abbot at Jordanville; may God preserve him for many years and give him wisdom!

We who wish to remain in the true tradition of Orthodoxy will have to be zealous and firm in our Orthodoxy without being fanatics, and without presuming to *teach our bishops* what they should do. Above all we must strive to preserve the true fragrance of Orthodoxy, being at least a little “not of this world,” detached from all the cares and politics even of the Church, nourishing ourselves on the other-worldly food the Church gives us in such abundance. Elder Macarius well says in a letter (in his *Life* which we have just published—the copies arrived Saturday from Taiwan): “Fanaticism limits a man’s way of thinking, but true faith gives him freedom. This freedom is revealed by the firmness of a man in all possible cases of happiness and unhappiness.” That *freedom* is the sign of our Orthodoxy; that is precisely why the “Josephites” separated from Sergius in 1927: not for “incorrect ecclesiology” or violation of canons, but because he deprived the Church of the thing most precious to her: her internal freedom. But to see this one must have the savor of Orthodoxy—let us not lose it!

We feel very crucial times ahead for us and our whole Church, and we want to ask Vladika John very fervently now just what we should do, how we should proceed. By his prayers may we stay on the right path and stay firm in the midst of the temptations ahead!

(From a letter to Alexey Yang, June 2/15, 1976)

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Our Russian book on Vladika John (200 pages) is finally printed, and we only hope we can get some copies sewn and bound in time for his feast, just a week away. We feel we have done our duty to Vladika John and Vladika Savva (whose book it actually is); but we rather expect to be persecuted for it. Vladika Savva told us that the difficulties of his last years were the devil’s revenge on him for glorifying Vladika John. May God grant us strength to endure whatever comes and not grow fainthearted. Please pray for us. We feel that very difficult times are ahead for all who wish to stay in the true spirit of Orthodoxy. The church-political atmosphere now is such that we actually feel like some kind of criminals just for saying elementary things, such as that Vladika John heals the sick and works miracles; so we were especially encouraged when, of the several bishops we asked, Archbishop Nikon sent us his brief memoirs of Vlad. John in time to be printed at the end of the book, in which he says this very thing—that because of his love and struggle, Vlad. John was granted by God the grace-given gift of healing those who come to him with faith. Vladika Nikon will probably die soon—another of the older generation to depart, and who among the younger will take the tradition and hand it on?

(From a letter to Daniel Olson 12/25 June 1976)

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The letter of our Metropolitan on the “Thyateira Confession” does not indicate that we have *broken communion* with Constantinople; the distinct implication, I would say, is that it *threatens* a final break in communion if the rest of the bishops of Constantinople do not condemn the document.

We ourselves follow the confessing stand of Archbishop Averky, who based his stand, however, much less on canons and dogmas than on discernment of the spiritual substance of the apostasy of the “canonical jurisdictions”; the break of our Church and the Catacomb Church with Sergius in 1927 was also not primarily a question of canons or dogmas, but a rather more subtle question which the Catacomb hierarchs expressed most frequently as the loss of “freedom” (that is, inward freedom).

(From a letter to Father Panagiotes [Carras] on June 30 / July 13, 1976)

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Of course, there are grounds for your “mixed feelings” about entering the sphere of “Latin” Orthodoxy, for the Latin West did indeed fall away into a spiritual outlook quite foreign to Orthodoxy. I would not blame the language for this, however—such pillars of Eastern Orthodoxy in our own times as Archbishop Averky of Jordanville have found Latin to be a very rich and expressive language for Orthodox use. The limitation of the Latin West is probably best described as the Russian philosopher Kireyevsky described it over a century ago, as an intellectual narrowness which, being no more than a *tendency* as long as it had the whole Orthodox atmosphere to correct it, became the predominant modern-Western trait of rationalism when Orthodoxy was lost through the pretensions of the later Roman popes.

(From a letter to Mr. Graves on October 1/14, 1976)

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Vladika Nektary on his last visit mentioned again his desire to retire with us here, but said that now he would not, because now we will be taken away for bishops in 2 or 3 years, and then no one knows who will be “appointed to Platina,” and he wouldn’t like it. I suggested to him that we would take the path of Sergius of Radonezh instead of George Grabbe (who says that according to Metr. Anthony one can *not* refuse to be a bishop), and he was consoled a little.

(From a letter to Father Herman (Podmoshensky) April 30 / May 13, 1979)

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We have received Volume II of Vladika Averky’s works, and rejoice to see his words receive wider circulation.

(From a letter to Father Demetrios 23 May / 5 June 1980)

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The article in the latest *Orthodox Word* on “Super-Correctness” should also help you, if your heart is open. Bishop Laurus of Jordanville (a faithful disciple of Archbishop Averky) just wrote to thank us for this article, which he considers just what’s needed today. You aren’t the only one with this problem!

(From a letter to John [Hudanish] 17/30 January 1981)

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Your Grace, dear Vladika Laurus,
Blagoslovite!

First of all, Father Herman and all the brethren send you heartfelt congratulations on your namesday. Spasi, Christe Bozhe! Thank you very much also for your recent visit to us, which was very much appreciated by our pilgrims. Our pilgrimage seems to have been a great success, with much interest aroused in gaining a deeper knowledge of Orthodoxy.

(From a letter to Vladika Laurus, August 18/31, 1981)

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We recently concluded a very successful week of lectures and courses in our summer St. Herman Pilgrimage. About 150 people attended the first day, and nearly 200 were present at some time during the week (most of them converts). All were eager to learn and most respectful of the authority of our bishops, two of whom (Bishops Alypy and Laurus) were present at some time.

(From a letter to Vladika Gregory August 21 / September 3, 1981)

Part I. On the narrow path to salvation.
6. About blessed Augustine.

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How appropriate, too, for the chiliast cause that we live (since 1917) in the “post-Constantinian age”; for it was at the beginning of that age, i.e., at the time of the golden age of the Fathers, that the heresy of chiliasm was crushed—in the West, I believe, chiefly through Augustine and in the East by Origen(?), with their commentary on the thousand years of the Apocalypse not as an earthly “millennium” but as the life of grace in the Church on earth. And indeed, together with the Revolutions that have toppled the Constantinian era we have seen a reform of Christianity that does away with the Church as an instrument of God’s grace for men’s eternal salvation and replaces it with the “social gospel.”

(From a letter to Father Michael [Azkoul] on August 30 / September 12, 1970)

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As regards the “millennium,” unfortunately Vladika Averky does not give specific references in the Fathers. Perhaps some of these can be found in the indexes to English editions of some of these Fathers; besides the ones mentioned in our footnote, Vladika Averky mentions as anti-chiliasts Dionysius of Alexandria, Origen, Eusebius of Caesarea (*Church History*), Epiphanius, Jerome. One definite reference is the Second Ecumenical Council, which specifically condemned the chiliast Apolonarius and introduced into the Creed the phrase “and of His Kingdom there shall be no end” specifically to combat the idea of the millennium. Also, Blessed Augustine has a good account of the Orthodox view in the *City of God*, Book XX, 7-9 (Modern Library edition, pp. 718-728). The Protestant view, which is based upon a literal, “common sense” reading of the Apocalypse involves one in so much confusion that it becomes ridiculous.

By the way, concerning one point on the millennium: I believe Augustine mentions that the millennium lasts *through* the reign of Antichrist, for the Church does not cease to exist even then; and thus the unloosing of the devil occurs during the last years of the millennium, and not after its end.

(From a letter to Daniel Olson on 13/26 June 1972)

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Some of Blessed Augustine's books are better not to read, by the *City of God* is good.

(From a letter to Nicholas [Eastman] 23 August / 5 September 1972)

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How could a saint who wrote so strongly about the "grace-less Papists" (Vladika John) also sing the service to Blessed Augustine? Probably for the same reason that the latter's name was introduced into the Russian Calendar in the 19th century on the authority of St. Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain!

(From a letter to Father Neketas Palassis, 23 April / 6 May 1973)

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Frs. Panteleimon and Neketas have been trying to persuade us to throw Blessed Augustine out of the Orthodox Calendar. We told them we do not have the authority to do this, and besides, we know that Vladika John has great veneration for him and celebrated the service to him every year. Nonetheless, Fr. Neketas says that he is in the Russian Calendar because of "Uniate influence." However, we investigated and found out that he was introduced into the Russian Calendar in the 19th century on the authority of St. Nikodemos the Hagiorite, a Greek anti-Latin zealot! We asked Fr. Theodoritos of Mt. Athos about this, and he wrote back: "Yes, I think Augustine must be a Saint, because St. Nikodemos placed him in the Synaxarion." Of course, we all know that Blessed Augustine had theological errors or at least wrong emphases, but that does not prevent us from paying the due reverence to him.

(From a letter to Vladika Laurus on May 27 / June 9, 1973)

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This is the extremely important Orthodox teaching of St. John Cassian, who thus refuted the error of Blessed Augustine, who indeed believed that man apart from God's grace was "nothing at all." St. Cassian teaches in his Thirteenth Conference:

"That the human race after the fall actually did not lose the knowledge of good is affirmed by the Apostle, who says: 'When the gentiles, who have not the law, *do by nature those things that are of the law*, these who have not the law are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law *written in their hearts*' (Rom. 2:14-16). "And again: "To the Pharisees He said that they can know the truth: 'Why even of yourselves do ye not judge that which is just?' (Luke 12:57). He would not have said this if they could not have discerned what is just *by their natural reason*. Therefore one should not think that human nature is capable only of evil." (Thirteenth Conference, 12.)

Of course, the reason why Augustine (and Roman Catholicism and Protestantism after him) believed that man was nothing without grace, was because *he had an incorrect conception of human nature*, based on a naturalistic view of man. The Orthodox doctrine, on the other hand, *of human nature as it was created in the beginning by God and is even now preserved in part in our fallen state*, prevents us from falling into any such false dualism between what is "man's" and what is "God's". To be sure, *everything good that man has is from God, not the least his very nature*, for the Scripture says, "What hast thou that thou didst not receive" (I Cor. 4:7). Man has no "animal nature" as such and never did have; he has only the fully human nature which God gave him in the beginning, and which he has not entirely lost even now.

(From a letter to Dr. Kalomiros, March 2-9, 1974)

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Fr. Neketas Palassis in his latest *Witness* again makes a self-assured and quite unfounded attack on Blessed Augustine. Everyone knows of the erroneous doctrine of Blessed Augustine on grace—but why this “fundamentalist” attempt to destroy entirely someone who has never in Orthodox tradition been denied a place among the Fathers of the Church? Fr. Theodoritos, doubtless speaking for other zealots in Greece and on the Holy Mountain, writes us that *of course* he accepts Augustine as a Saint, because St. Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain does. Our Vladika John had a service written to him and had great devotion for him. St. Nikodemos put him in our Eastern Calendar (much as Vladika John put St. Patrick there), and our Russian 19th-century Fathers followed him. The Fifth Ecumenical Council ranks Augustine as a theological authority on the same level as Sts. Basil, Gregory and John Chrysostom, with no qualification. The contemporaries of Augustine who disagreed with him (St. Vincent of Lerins, St. John Cassian) corrected his teaching without mentioning his name out of respect, far less calling him a “heretic.” His other contemporaries, including great Fathers, always addressed him with the utmost respect. The universal Orthodox tradition accepts him as an undoubted Holy Father, although with a flaw in this teaching—rather like St. Gregory of Nyssa in the East.

(From a letter to Father Igor [Kapral, future Vladika Hilarion] September 29 / October 12, 1975)

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The last *Witness* of Fr. Neketas (On Blessed Augustine) is an outrage. He calls “untrained theologically” and “Latin-leaning” the following:

1. Fr. Theodoritos and other *Greek* zealots who say *of course* Blessed Augustine is a Saint, if St. Nikodemos thought so.
2. Archbishop John, who had a service written to him and had great devotion for him.
3. St. Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain, who put him in the Calendar.
4. The Greek and Russian theological tradition of the 19th and 20th centuries, which accepted St. Nikodemos’ judgment.
5. The Fifth Ecumenical Council, who ranked Augustine as a theological authority on the same level as Sts. Basil, Gregory, and John Chrysostom.
6. All the Holy Fathers contemporary with Augustine, not one (so far as we know) called him a heretic or denied him a place with the great teachers of the Church, even when they opposed his false teaching on grace.

The universal tradition of the Orthodox Church accepts Blessed Augustine as a Holy Father, albeit with a flaw—very much like St. Gregory of Nyssa in the East. Fr. Neketas’ self-assured, authoritative proclamation is *un-Orthodox* and positively childish.

(From a letter to Alexey Yang, October 2/15, 1975)

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Pray for Paul Bartlett. He writes that he is about to “give up” on Orthodoxy and is “weary” from not having found what he has been searching for 16 years! Sadly, a typical convert story (one of the basic types)—emptiness inside, and he wants to get something from Orthodoxy without *working on himself* i.e., *giving* something to God. I’m writing him to read the *Confessions* of Bl. Augustine—a good “convert” book, although of course Bl. Augustine had

very much inside to begin with! Interestingly, in Book 7 he describes how he and 10 of his friends wanted to start a commune—but then they thought how wives would fit in, and the whole plan collapsed!

(From a letter to Alexey Yang, February 14/27, 1976)

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God willing, the last *OW* for 1976 [meaning 1975] will be out next week, and the first one for the new year should be out not too long after, but probably only after Pascha. We will be filling several issues with Orthodox Gaul, and of course there may be quibblers, considering the fact that these saints “aren’t in the Calendar,” and also that the shade of Blessed Augustine looms over several of the great figures of this time. Concerning the first point, we were greatly relieved by Vladika Nektary’s reaction—he asked only one question: were they recognized as saints *then* by the Roman Church? If so, then of course they are Orthodox—with perhaps a very few exceptions who should be investigated separately.

(From a letter to Alexey Yang, March 17/30, 1976)

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The “new theologians,” when they hear that our recent fathers such as St. Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain or our own Archbishop John had great respect for Blessed Augustine, can only say with disdain—“they were under Western influence”—and throw out their weighty opinions with a quite “Western” lack of feeling and understanding. Anyone who has read Bl. Augustine’s *Confessions* with Sympathy will not readily want to “throw him out of the calendar”—for he will see in this book precisely that fiery zeal and love which is *precisely* what is so lacking in our Orthodox life today!

Archbishop Philaret of Chernigov, in his 19th century Patrology, while setting forth clearly Bl. Augustine’s mistakes—or rather, overemphases—still highly praises this book for its warmth and piety. And perhaps Bl. Augustine’s very “Westernness” makes him more relevant for us today who are submerged in the West and its way of thought.

(From a letter to Nicholas [Eastman?] on March 17/30, 1976)

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It is well known in the Orthodox Church that Bl. Augustine made mistakes, went “too far” on some points—but the Church has never called him a heretic or denied him the name of Father, as is quite clear from the evidence of one Ecumenical Council (perhaps two, but I can’t find the second reference yet), St. Photios the Great (who is repeating explicit on this point), St. Mark of Ephesus, St. Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain, and our own Archbishop John Maximovitch. Yet some now seek to prove “how Orthodox I am” by calling him heretic and various other evil names.

(From a letter to Andrew [Bond] April 18 / May 1, 1976)

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Your futile excursions into “worldliness” are not at all unusual or untypical in our days. Orthodox, by remaining unchanged, has become so out of harmony with the world, and the world itself has become so “glamorous” and “magical” (a symptom of chiliasm!)—that those who wish to be true Orthodox Christians today must suffer in their own souls the power of this disharmony between true and false life before emerging into a relatively stable Orthodox way of life. Be patient—your suffering-through of this painful state, without losing the deep-down desire to be Orthodox in spite of everything, will do you much good. By the way, your experience is not really so different from that of Blessed Augustine especially in the last months of his conversion when he saw clearly the truth of Christianity but just couldn’t

commit himself to it. You should read his *Confessions*—a good book for our days. (There's a readable translation in the Penguin Classics.)

(From a letter to Christopher Amerling 22 August / 4 September 1976)

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The limitation of the Latin West is probably best described as the Russian philosopher Kireyevsky described it over a century ago, as an intellectual narrowness which, being no more than a *tendency* as long as it had the whole Orthodox atmosphere to correct it, became the predominant modern-Western trait of rationalism when Orthodoxy was lost through the pretensions of the later Roman popes.

Blessed Augustine shares in this “Western” limitation by his over-logicalness (I will enclose Kireyevsky's quote on this if I can find the issue of *Nikodemos* in which it was translated), which led him into several mistakes which the East did not fall into, most notably regarding predestination. In general, Augustine was not much read in the East, but there was never any doubt whatever that he was regarded as one of the great teachers of the Orthodox Church, although not without his flaws. (In the East we have St. Gregory of Nyssa, who taught a doctrine rather worse than any of Augustine's errors!) St. Photios the Great in the 9th century was extremely insistent that Augustine, despite his errors, was “not to be cast out of the rank of the Fathers”; St. Mark of Ephesus did not question his status as a Father, calling him “Blessed”; St. Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain put him in the Eastern Calendar (together with many other saints of East and West), and the Orthodox tradition since then, both Greek and Russian, has been universal in accepting him as an Orthodox teacher, albeit of lesser authority than the great Eastern Fathers and also several other Western Fathers, especially St. Ambrose. Our own Archbp. John Maximovitch greatly venerated him and had a church service composed in his honor. Our recent and contemporary Fathers seem to see his greatest value not in his dogmatic writings but in his writings on piety, such as the *Confessions*, which do indeed have a warmth and love which we can certainly learn from today.

The term “Blessed” in the Orthodox Church is rather a comprehensive term which takes in many classes of holy men, some “canonized” and some not. In the case of Augustine, it is used because of his theological flaws which give him a rank something less than that of St. Ambrose, for example.

With Blessed Jerome the case is a little different, since he does not have the theological flaws of Augustine. Apparently his one-time contact with Origenism has given him a slight “taint” in Eastern eyes, which would account for the “Blessed” by which he is usually called—but not always, for he is sometimes called by the term appropriate for all monastic saints. The Orthodox attitude to these two saints is perhaps best indicated by a Western Father who was fully in the Eastern tradition and was contemporary with both saints—St. John Cassian (who taught the Orthodox doctrine of grace as against Augustine's overemphases), in his book against Nestorius, quotes as authorities in the West both “Jerome, the teacher of the Catholics, whose writings shine like divine lamps throughout the whole world,” and “Augustine, bishop of Hippo.” That is, Jerome is highly praised, and Augustine is not—but Augustine is still quoted as an Orthodox authority, as sharply contrasted with someone like Pelagius, whom St. Cassian calls a “wicked heretic.”

Well, this is enough on a subject not very important in itself. I am afraid that some of our Orthodox people, in their anxiety to protect themselves against “Western influences,” are going a little overboard on “throwing our Augustine”—that is not the attitude of the Orthodox Fathers throughout history, who never called him heretic or denied him the rank of Father; to this day he is in all Orthodox Calendars (including those of the Old Calendar jurisdictions of Greece) under the date of June 16—actually, he would more appropriately be placed under the day of his repose, Aug. 28, but perhaps St. Nikodemos wished simply to place him together with Jerome.

It is also an unnecessary exaggeration to blame him for the errors of Calvinism. The Reformers took some “seeds” from Augustine, but their full-blown doctrine of predestination and “salvation by faith alone” was not taught by Augustine. It should also be noted that the

Orthodox West itself corrected Augustine in his chief error—the Council of Orange in 529 anathematized (but without mentioning Augustine, the rest of whose teaching on grace it approved) the doctrine of predestination to damnation, which Augustine had indeed expressed several times.

(From a letter to Mr. Graves on October 1/14, 1976)

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After our first *St. Herman Calendar*—was published in 1971, one of the younger Greek priests in our Church protested to us that the names of Blessed Augustine (June 16) and Blessed Constantine XII, last of the Byzantine Emperors (May 30), should be deleted from our *Calendar* because “they are not saints and were only placed in the Russian Calendar owing to Western influence.” We replied to this priest that it was not within our authority to delete names from the Calendar, nor to add names on our own authority, but that such a thing required the approval of the bishops; and since the names of Blessed Augustine and Blessed Emperor Constantine were in the standard Russian Calendars which were our primary sources, they would have to remain in the Calendar until the Russian bishops should order them deleted.

Then, for our own information, we conducted research on this question. Concerning Blessed Augustine, we discovered that his name is included in all Russian and Greek Calendars, that our Synod approved the Service to him, and that throughout the history of the Orthodox Church he has always been regarded as a Holy Father and a Saint in West and East alike, even though his errors have been criticized. Therefore, there can be no question of his right to be in the Calendar, and this young priest's objection was based on his own ignorance.

Concerning the second name, that of the Blessed Emperor Constantine, we did not have at hand the materials necessary for an investigation of our own, and therefore we appealed to Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, both to Hieromonk Ioannikios, who would have the time to make such an investigation, and to Archbishop Averky for an authoritative judgement on the question. Fr. Ioannikios found that the name of Blessed Constantine does indeed appear in the best Russian Calendar sources (such as the Calendar of Bishop Sergius), and Archbishop Averky gave as his judgement that his name should by all means remain in the Calendar.

I give this information in order to show on what principles we have acted in compiling our *St. Herman Calendar* and in settling any disputed questions with regard to it. We can assure you that we have always tried to act in accordance with the “general ecclesiastical attitude” of our Church and not “by our own judgment alone.” Even in our listing of commemorations in italics, where we have made our own selection (since this is not a part of the official calendar of saints, but a separate listing), we have made a deliberate attempt (as we have noted above) not to choose names solely out of our own “zeal,” but on the basis of the principles set forth in the *Ascetics of Piety* of Bishop Nikodim, and on the common church opinion.

(From a letter to Vladika Nektary (Kontsevich) June 16/29, 1977)

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Our two-part article on Blessed Augustine is an attempt in this direction—to correct the onesidedness of some upstart “theological experts” without engaging in a battle over it, pointing rather to the ordinary Christian virtues of moderation, forgiveness, tolerance, etc.—which are often lost sight of when the emphasis is placed on “correctness.”

(From a letter to Father Chrysostomos, June 16/29, 1978)

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We have recently written an article, in this connection, on Blessed Augustine, whom some

converts would like to regard as simply a “heretic,” without seeing that despite his errors he is actually more Orthodox than the modern, formally-correct “theologians” who criticize him

The *Confessions* of Blessed Augustine is good reading for repentance and the warming up of the heart.

(From a letter from Barry April 20 / May 3, 1979)

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The attacks on Blessed Augustine are an insult to the views of virtually every one of our bishops in the Russian Church Outside of Russia.

The errors of Bl. Augustine have been recognized from an early century in the Orthodox Church, but never was Bl. Augustine himself regarded as a heretic, as our own historical investigation in *The Orthodox Word* has shown. Some years ago we asked one of our true Orthodox theologians, Fr. Michael Pomazansky of Jordanville, what he thought of the opinion that Bl. Aug. was a “heretic,” and he only replied that yes, he did distort several Orthodox doctrines (as Fr. Michael has set forth himself in his book on *Dogmatic Theology*), but he could not at all understand this “campaign” against a man who, after all, is a Father of the Church and on the whole taught correctly.

(From a letter from Mrs. Prokopchuk, June 16/29, 1979)

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Archbishop John without fail had a new year’s moleben on January 1/14 every year, precisely to mark the civil new year by the old calendar (not the new—he refused to serve a moleben then); this is sound, living “conservatism.” The Church new year is another occasion entirely—which you yourself admit since you don’t change the year’s number on Sept. 1. But some of your “correct convert” readers, when they hear that Archbishop John did this, will very likely begin to suspect further his Orthodoxy—and you will have helped put a new poison in the air without realizing it. (Don’t think it isn’t so—how many already show disdain for Archbishop John because he venerated Blessed Augustine and did other things the “Patristic revival” forbids!) There must be a whole different *tone* to the preaching of Orthodox truth!

(From a letter to Father Neketas Palassis October 23 / November 5, 1979)

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The place to look for the Church’s opinion on Blessed Augustine, I think, is not the official calendars of saints (which have always been very incomplete, and still are), but the actual opinions of Orthodox Fathers. This is what I tried to do in my article on Blessed Augustine, and I think the opinion set forth there will stand no matter how many “ancient calendars” Bl. Augustine fails to appear on.

(From a letter to Michael 5/18 August 1980)

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The “Augustine is a heretic” theme was quite emphasized, and this is only one of the subjects which helps to undermine the authority of our own bishops and our theological tradition.

(From a letter to Vladika Gregory November 22 / December 5, 1980)

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The new issue of Fr. Lev's *Tlingit Herald* (nos. 8-9, renamed for some reason *Orthodox Missionary*) contains another example of his polemical approach on questions which no one but him is interested in arguing about. In his life of St. John Cassian he states: "In his time, the two great false teachings in the West were those of Pelagius of Britain and Augustin of Hippo," and in his footnote to this passage he writes: "Augustin of Hippo and his followers wrote several works against the Orthodox faith. They called the Orthodox faithful, who were led by St. John Cassian and St. Vincent of Lerins, "semi-Pelagians," and tried to have them condemned."

Besides the obvious errors in these statements (Blessed Augustine, while he had errors in his teachings, certainly never wrote any "works against the Orthodox faith"; the term "semi-Pelagians" is of much later origin; and Blessed Augustine never tried to have St. Cassian "condemned," but wrote in a most loving and uncontroversial spirit regarding what he thought were his errors)—the belligerent and polemical tone of his mistaken accusations against Blessed Augustine, an Orthodox Father whose name is included in our Calendar of Saints, is most unfitting for one who claims to be transmitting the Orthodox tradition. All the more in an article written for children are such comments out of place, having as their aim to raise up "fanatics" of his own distorted views—some of whom later, like himself, will probably be challenging the Church's teaching and attitudes.

(From a letter to Vladika Gregory on December 9/22, 1980)

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I have no time (and probably not the sources) to find out how much St. Photios or St. Mark read of Bl. Augustine. I would suspect that St. Photios had read rather little apart from the texts under dispute, and St. Mark probably more (in fact, St. Mark can probably be shown to be under Augustine's "influence" in some way if you search hard enough!—his disciple Gennadius, after all, was the translator of Thomas Aquinas into Greek). Undoubtedly their respect for Augustine was based on the general respect for him in the Church, especially in the West from the very beginning.

And this brings up the only real question I think you might fruitfully research: what did the Western Church think of Blessed Augustine in the centuries when it was Orthodox? The West knew him as one of their own Fathers; it knew his writings well, including the disputes over them. What did the Western Fathers who were linked with the East think of him? We know St. Cassian's opinion—he challenged (politely) Augustine's teaching on grace while accepting his authority on other questions. St. Vincent of Lerins' argument is more with the immoderate followers of Augustine. In neither case was there talk of "heresy," or of someone who was totally un-Orthodox. St. Faustus of Lerins—if anyone, he should be an enemy of Augustine, but the evidence seems to the contrary. St. Caesarius of Arles, St. Gregory the Great—admirers of Augustine, while not following his exaggerations on grace. I don't mention some of the enthusiastic followers of Augustine.

There is room for research here in Latin sources, but no research can overthrow the obvious fact (it seems to me)—the Orthodox West accepted him as a Father. If he's really a "heretic," then doesn't the whole West go down the drain with him? I'm sure you can find enough signs of "Western mentality" in Gregory the Great, for example, to disqualify him as a Father and Saint in the eyes of many of today's Orthodox scholars—he also is accepted in the East on the basis of his general reputation in the West, and on the basis of his *Dialogues* (which I'm sure a few would now question as having a right to be called an Orthodox book).

I think the "heresy hunt" over Augustine reveals at least two major faults in today's Orthodox scholars who are pursuing it:

1. A profound insecurity over their own Orthodoxy, born of the uncertainties of our times, the betrayal of ecumenism, and their own purely Western education. Here Augustine is a "scapegoat"—hit him hard enough and it proves how Orthodox you yourself really are!
2. An incipient sectarian consciousness—in attacking Augustine so bitterly, one not only attacks the whole Orthodox West of the early centuries, but also a great many Orthodox

thinkers of recent centuries and today. I could name you bishops in our Church who think like Augustine on a number of points—are they, then, “heretics” too? I think some of our anti-Augustinians are coming close to this conclusion, and thus close to schism and the formation of an “Orthodox” sect *that prides itself on the correctness of its intellectual views*. A number of people have already left our Russian Church Abroad for the Mathewites after being infected with this consciousness (not just over the issue of Augustine—the Mathewites are more pro-Augustine than anyone in our Church—but over the whole idea of “intellectual correctness” as an ideal).

I myself am no great admirer of Augustine’s doctrines. He does indeed have that Western “super-logicalness” which the Eastern Fathers don’t have (the same “super-logicalness” which the critics of Augustine today display so abundantly!). The one main lovable and Orthodox thing about him is his Orthodox *feeling, piety, love for Christ*, which comes out so strongly in his non-dogmatic works like the *Confessions* (the Russian Fathers also love the *Soliloquies*). To destroy Augustine, as today’s critics are trying to do, is to help destroy also this piety and love for Christ—these are too “simple” for today’s intellectuals (even though they also claim to be “pious” in their own way). Today it is Augustine; tomorrow (and it’s already begun) the attack will be on the “simple” bishops and priests of our Church. The anti-Augustine movement is a step towards schism and further disorders in the Orthodox Church.

Let us assume that one’s exegesis of Romans 5:12 is incorrect; that one believes like Augustine on the transmission of original sin; that one knows little of the difference between the “transcendent” and the “economic” Trinity and sometimes confuses them. Can’t one still be Orthodox? Does one have to shout so loudly one’s “correctness” on such matters, and one’s disdain (and this disdain is strongly felt!) for those who believe thus? In the history of the Church, opinions such as these which disagree with the consensus of the Church have not been a cause for heresy hunts. Recognizing our fallible human nature, the Fathers of the past have kept the best Orthodox views and left in silence such private views which have not tried to proclaim themselves the only Orthodox views.

I myself fear the cold hearts of the “intellectually correct” much more than any errors you might find in Augustine. I sense in these cold hearts a preparation for the work of Antichrist (whose imitation of Christ must also extend to “correct theology”!); I feel in Augustine the love of Christ.

An important point I didn’t specify in the letter above—the extreme criticism of Augustine show such a lack of *trust* in the Orthodox Fathers and bishops of the past who accepted him as a Father (including the whole Orthodox West before the Schism). This lack of trust is a symptom of the coldness of heart of our times.

(From a letter to Father Michael [Azkoul], 13/26 June 1981)

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We plan nothing further on Blessed Augustine either, apart from re-issuance of our earlier articles on him; those who hate him do so for personal reasons and won’t be convinced by anything we could say.

(From a letter to Father Gregory August 21 / September 3, 1981)

Part I. On the narrow path to salvation.
7. About confession.

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Your article will go in the May-June issue, together with another long and important article on the Catacomb Church, about which all too little has appeared in English. The anti-Sergianist texts of 1927, which we also hope to start printing, have a quite contemporary

relevance; as with the Greeks and the Calendar-modernist question, so in the Russian Church the basis of today's disorders dates to the '20 s, and was already answered then.

Truly, may God grant peace to His Church! But judging from the pace of contemporary apostasy, our immediate prospect is for much battle. May God help us.

(From a letter to Father Michael [Azkoul] on May 26 / June 8, 1970)

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We are beginning a new series on "Documents of the Catacomb Church," as ignorance on this subject seems almost complete in America.

Bp. Theodosius of Sitka has, to our great disappointment, entered whole-heartedly into the Soviet spirit. He has reported that in the USSR he found "smiling, happy faces"; if some complain about the government there, so do Americans about their government! Of course, he says nothing about prison camps, persecutions, Catacomb Church, Boris Talantov, the 10,000 churches closed in the last 10 years.

(From a letter to Daniel Olson 5/18 August 1970)

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We begin in our new issue of OW a series on the Catacomb Church in the USSR—perhaps giving us a foretaste of what is to come even in America.

(From a letter to Daniel Olson, August 14/27, 1970)

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Do you not realize the seriousness of our firm conviction that the Metropolias concordat with Moscow is a betrayal of the Orthodox Church and of the faithful both within and without the USSR? Do you know of the propaganda benefits which the Moscow Church and the Soviet Government have already obtained from the autocephaly? (Thanks, for instance, to published statements of the Bishop of Sitka that are pure Soviet propaganda.) Do you know the whole story, from 1927 to today, of the Catacomb Church and its persecution by the Soviet Secret Police according to indications given by the Moscow hierarchs? Your Metropolia now supports this persecution by its support of the Patriarchate, and when your bishops appear in the Soviet Union as honored guests of the Patriarchate, the faith of every Catacomb Christian is publicly trampled upon. Do you see, in a word, how we are opponents of your autocephaly and protest publicly because of sorrow in our hearts that is too deep to hold back?

(From a letter to Fr. Vladimir S. [Bridievey, OCA] Possibly Aug. 1970)

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Most of the issue is devoted to two very moving accounts of the Catacomb Church in the USSR, by someone who spent five years in the Solovki concentration camp. I believe the whole question of the Catacomb Church is extremely hazy in the minds of most Orthodox, and with God's help we will try to correct that with a whole series of articles—for the basic issues are, after all, quite clear and can even be named: "Sergianism" vs. Orthodoxy. The statements of the non-Sergianist hierarchs in 1927 were quite explicit and should serve as a foundation for further discussion of the question. The only change in the situation since 1935 is that we no longer know the name of the head of the Catacomb Church, or even if there is one; but the existence of the Catacomb Church is attested in Soviet sources themselves.

(From a letter to Father Michael Azkoul on August 30 / September 12, 1970)

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Truly, the Orthodox way in our times is not easy, and more and more we begin to look to the time of martyrdom. Our new issue has two articles on the Catacomb Church in Russia, and the relevancy to our own situation already becomes visible. We are beginning a collection of statements from the Metropolia on the situation in the USSR today (“things there are changing, full churches, happy people,” etc.), and its service to the Communist cause is only too apparent—and this at a time when many documents exist concerning the actual situation there, some of them positively bloodcurdling—such as Anatoly Marchenko’s *My Testimony*, which Gleb just read, concerning the satanic tortures he has undergone just recently (and for smuggling the book out he was put back in concentration camp) where he indicates that treatment is getting worse, if that is possible! The writer A. Kuznetsov (who recently escaped) writes: “If you are a citizen of Soviet Russia, you automatically cannot be a 100-per-cent decent person”; and Marchenko writes that when he was in freedom he couldn’t bear to look at happy, successful people, knowing how they had to sell their souls (and often help out in torturing others) in order to achieve this status. But Bp. Theodosius of Alaska says he was surprised how well off and happy people were...

As I see it, there are two great gifts that God has given Orthodox people today: in the Soviet world, the difficult gift of suffering, which by God’s grace will probably be the salvation of Russia; and in the free world, the gift of freedom—to speak and witness the truth and tell what is going on. How poorly this gift is being used among us—and how soon, perhaps, it will be taken from us. While there is daylight, we must speak out.

Pray for us—and pray also for Archbishop Leonty of Chile and his flock—a Marxist government is about to be installed, and the future is uncertain. Archbishop Leonty has already been in prison in the USSR and served Catacomb Liturgies there and knows well the character of these times.

(From a letter to Daniel Olson 4/17 September 1970)

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The Metropolia runs straight into the arms of Moscow, which is currently competing with Constantinople for the lead in spectacular un-Orthodox acts and statements, and Fr. Meyendorff states that anyone outside of communion with Athenagoras (I believe you realize he is a heretic?) is outside the Orthodox Church.

And against the witness of the brave protesters within the Patriarchate in the USSR, who openly call their hierarchs traitors to Orthodoxy, not to mention other more personal names. Your best people become such apologists—witness your own Bp. Theodosius and his remarks “life is not uncomfortable, people are not unhappy.... We have to reassess our ideas of life in the Soviet Union,” etc. Such remarks can be excused only on the grounds of absolute ignorance—of the prison camps and tortures behind those “not unhappy” people, of the most recent testimony such as that in the book of A. Marchenko (*My Testimony*), articles and press conferences of A. Kuznetsov, etc., etc. that prison treatment is if anything getting worse, that the only “happy” people are those who escaped the concentration camps through hypocrisy and (often) through willingness to torture others, that “it is impossible to be a Soviet citizen and at the same time a decent human being.” (These are from people who lived the Soviet Life.) Even Bp. Theodosius, in his ignorance, becomes the apologist of the bestial Soviet system—but he literally has to, in order to defend his own position. No, you are not “soft on Communism,” but you are beyond all doubt the dupes of the very skillful politicians of the Soviet Patriarchate.

I hope you will read carefully our new Orthodox Word with its two articles on the Catacomb Church. You will see then that is not only we in the free world, but those over there as well (who have earned the right to their judgment by the tortures which they have undergone for Christ and Orthodoxy) who do not accept the Moscow Sergianists. And perhaps you will begin to see that our uncompromising rejection of the Metropolias concordat with Moscow has nothing to do with theoretical concepts of “canonicity,” but is part of the very life-blood

of our Orthodoxy; this concordat is not “uncanonical”—it is treason to the Russian Church and to her new martyrs. You cannot begin to imagine the profound sorrow and tears the “autocephaly” has caused us. And if now representatives of the Metropolia begin to deny the existence of the Catacomb Church (we expect they will, for that is the Moscow “line”—in defiance of present-day documents and information in the Soviet press—this will only be another indication of that instinctive “defense-mechanism” which forces the Metropolia into an ardent defense of “Sergianism” with all its propaganda line. And even if not a single Catacomb Christian could be found, that would not change the truth of the Catacomb position in 1927—attested in numerous documents—nor would it make Sergianism true or Orthodox.

The Metropolia has chosen her path—then what rosy-pink idea of Christianity must you have to turn to us for “reconciliation” now? Orthodoxy is more serious than that!

And whatever you may say of “certain circles” of the Synod, I can assure you that our bishops and our priests and most devoted faithful think as we do. Bishop Nektary certainly does, however polite he may be on the telephone; Archbishop John Maximovitch most emphatically did; and as for Father Gerasim,—the fact that he remained in communion with the Metropolia while considering himself a priest of the Synod should not mislead you into rosy ideas about him either. His past statements leave no doubt whatever as to which side he would have been on today; and his correspondence, of which we have seen a large part, contains some statements about the Metropolia and its clergy (by name) that are so strong we would rather not print them.

What, then, would you have us do when our conscience says that the Church has been betrayed? Keep silent—when we are free (for God knows how much longer!) and can speak the truth as we see it? St. Mark of Ephesus was not silent, though he was called a troublemaker; St. Maximus the Confessor would not keep his opinion to himself, even though this “confused” the faithful: the whole history of the Church is an inspiration to us to cry with a loud voice when the Church has been wronged.

If you and the vast majority of even the clergy of the Metropolia were not in fact ignorant of Russian Church history for the last 43 years you would know that Metropolitan Sergius’ act in 1927 was condemned by many bishops in the USSR as initiating a “neo-renovationist schism,” that those bishops were imprisoned and/or killed because they opposed Sergius, and that therefore in your ignorance you are not only receiving “legalization” from a neo-renovationist schismatic body but are acting fully in accord with the Soviet “new church politics” whose aim is to use the Church to destroy itself, after giving maximum benefit to the Soviet Government itself.

(From a letter to Father David [Black] October 30 / November 12, 1970)

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In the meantime we have to live with the situation that exists, and choose whether to have contact and communion with Moscow or not; and therefore we have to somehow penetrate to the spirit of this question and make our decision on this basis. A very great help in this is the “Documents of the Catacomb Church” which we are now printing, because in them the bishops who were present at the very outbreak of “Sergianism” give their judgements on what was then the central question of the day, and most of those who opposed Sergius did so because they believed he had placed himself outside the Church, and they had to speak out in order to remain within the Church themselves.

Just the other day I read an astute comment on the iconoclastic crisis of the 7th-8th centuries. Before the Seventh Ecumenical Council the Orthodox Church did not have any explicit “doctrine on icons,” and so one could argue that the Iconoclasts were not heretics at all, and the dispute was one over the secondary issue of “rite” or “practice.” Nonetheless, the Church (in the person of Her champions, the leading icon-venerators) felt She was fighting a heresy, something destructive of the Church Herself; and after Her champions had suffered and died for this Orthodox sensitivity, and Her theologians had finally managed to put down explicitly the doctrine She already knew in Her heart—then the cause of Orthodoxy triumphed at the Seventh Ecumenical Council, and the Iconoclasts were clearly singled out as heretics.

I suspect that the very same thing, only much vaster and more complicated, is happening today: that those who feel Orthodoxy (through living its life of grace and being exposed to and raised on its basic treasures—lives of saints, patristic writings, etc.) are battling together against an enemy, a heresy, that has not yet been fully defined or manifested. Separate aspects or manifestations of it (chiliasm, social Gospel, renovationism, ecumenism) may be identified and fought, but the battle is largely instinctive as yet, and those who do not feel Orthodoxy in their heart and bones do not really know what you're talking about and they can't understand how you can become so excited over something which no council has ever identified as heresy. In the testimony of the Catacomb bishops of the late 1920's one finds again and again that the GPU agents asked them first of all whether they were for or against Sergius, and if they were against, then these agents demonstrated that Sergius had "violated neither dogmas nor canons"! Thus, either the atheist torturers are "defending the Church"—or else there is something dreadfully wrong, and the Church is up against an extremely formidable enemy. As it turns out, however, there are several dogmatic and canonical grounds on which Sergius was wrong; but first of all the Orthodox soul sensed that he was on the wrong side.

So the first part of the battle comes down to presenting basic Orthodoxy and raising people in the real spirit of Orthodoxy—above all the example of those who have lived Orthodoxy, God's saints and confessors. That's why, for our times, the most important thing is not general and abstract knowledge of Orthodox history, dogmas, canons, etc. (St. Sergius' and St. Vladimir's Seminaries turn out many who know these pretty well, but they do not become defenders of Orthodoxy, WHICH IS WHAT is needed), but rather the examples that have been given for our time—most especially Russia's new martyrs and confessors. The layman Boris Talantov in the USSR has openly called Nikodim a betrayer of the Church, a liar, and an agent of world anti-Christianity, for which statements (among others) he was imprisoned by the Soviets; Metr. Nikodim tells the West that he was in prison for "anti-governmental activities". On Jan. 4 of this year Boris Talantov died in prison, undoubtedly the victim of Nikodim (among others).

I think I've said enough for a while! Our "Catacomb Documents" and "New Martyrs" will doubtless give a clearer picture, once we've got more of them translated and presented. Our new issue will have Metr. Joseph—a real champion of the Church! Interestingly, in him as well as in others the statement comes out that Sergius has done something that is "worse than heresy," THAT HE has murdered the Church from within.

(From a letter to Daniel Olson March 25 / April 7, 1971)

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The New Martyrs can be presented, not just at random, but according to a definite scheme. The Polsky volumes are just a first collection of materials, a starting point, for a presentation of the New Martyrs.

Therefore: a systematic approach, all the way down to an index of all martyrs mentioned in Polsky and elsewhere, which we are doing. (Part I of the System, as you can see, is: witnesses of the Catacomb Church). But this requires hands and minds. So far 90% of our hand and mind labor is devoted to the sheer physical problem of printing (and chopping wood, etc.), and our translation and intellectual work is snatched fitfully between hours at the printing machines. (That's not a complaint—it's probably our salvation!) Therefore our presentation of the New Martyrs comes out painfully slow; but the plan is there, and there is quite a bit of material.

(From a letter to the Holy Transfiguration brethren on August 13/26, 1971)

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Glory be to God, we are surviving, although amid various adventures and trials. Monday the truck broke down (fuel pump) and is now in Cottonwood, whither it went at AAA expense. Hopefully I'll get a ride somehow this morning to go pick it up.

But how close is God! —As I was sitting in the truck waiting for the tow truck, I read the days mail—in which there were the fantastic catacomb documents which are mentioned on p. 3 of this issue, the likes of which have not been seen since 1927-29. The day after receiving them, we printed that page—as if we had been waiting for them!

(From a letter to Laurence Campbell 13/26 April 1972)

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High circles are indifferent to the “fighting” Orthodoxy that we want. It sometimes occurs to us that we are really all “fools” who are doing the fighting; hopelessly outnumbered, we march into battle with the full expectation of being cut down—if not from in front, then from behind, which is worse. But glory be to God, let us fight while it is day and we have the chance; truly it is not for an earthly kingdom that we are fighting, and if we have to stop for “politics” we are not going to do much fighting. We are very much inspired by the new “Catacomb” documents which we will start setting up next week—which give probably the best insight yet into true Orthodox life in the USSR, with sharp observations on the use of “obedience” and “humility” for political ends. These weapons are used not only in the USSR!

(From a letter to Father Neketas Palassis 12/25 June 1972)

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Frankly, the time ahead looks so dark, that one only marvels that we still have the freedom to speak out (how much longer?). Obviously, everything that can be said must be said soon. And the brightest spot in the whole picture is the New Martyrs and the Catacomb Church—after all, one does not have to sell one’s soul!

(From a letter to Father Neketas Palassis, All Saints 72)

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If you wish to know the “principle” on which Vladika Nektary (and others who practice living Orthodoxy) have acted, and that which inspires even us poor ones just to go on under an extremely difficult and unfavorable spiritual climate (which you cold heart does not even see)—it is the principle of catacombness, of nourishing in secret those sprouts of true Orthodoxy which are not being encouraged in official Orthodox circles.

(From a letter to Daniel [Olson] October 25 / November 7, 1973)

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The church situation becomes very bad. In San Francisco suddenly some parishes are becoming empty, as the old priests die and there are no young ones to replace them; and it’s doubtful if more than a few see the cause: that Orthodoxy has too long been “taken for granted,” and it does not preserve itself “automatically”! But all of this only prepares us for catacomb times when our opportunities are perhaps greater than ever. We can’t see the future—but know this, that if you love God and His Orthodox Church and your fellow men—God can and will use you. Only Stay in contact with fellow Orthodox strugglers (they do exist).

Blessed Archbishop John is with us.

(From a letter to Luke [Walmsley] on June 24 / July 7, 1974)

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The Church questions today are just not as simple as they used to be, at least as they are in our comfortable historical perspective, and many submerged rocks lie ahead. An important key to the whole church situation seems to lie precisely in “Sergianism,” which will become a sharper issue than ever now that the Catacomb Church of Russia begins to make itself known and felt again. The heart of Sergianism is bound up with the common problem of all the Orthodox Churches today—the losing of the savor of Orthodoxy, taking the Church for granted, taking the “organization” for the Body of Christ, trusting that Grace and the Mysteries are somehow “automatic.” Logic and reasonable behavior are not going to get us over these rocks; much suffering and experience are required, and few will understand.

(From a letter to Alexey Yang February 18 / March 3, 1975)

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Our Brotherhood has been mercilessly attacked by N. Struve in the Paris Messenger for our article (which Vladika Averky published in Russian) on Solzhenitsyn and the Catacomb Church. We’re glad they at least read what the “fanatics” are saying!

(From a letter to Alexey Yang 3/16 January 1976)

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The history of the 20th century has already shown us that we cannot expect too much from the “Church organization”; there, even apart from heresies, the spirit of the world has become very strong. Archbishop Averky, and our own Bishop Nektary also, have warned us to prepare for catacomb times ahead, when the grace of God may even be taken away from the “Church organization” and only isolated groups of believers will remain. Soviet Russia already gives us an example of what we may expect—only worse, for the times do not get better.

(From a letter to Dr. Kalomiros January 21 / February 3, 1976)

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We ourselves follow the confessing stand of Archbishop Averky, who based his stand, however, much less on canons and dogmas than on discernment of the spiritual substance of the apostasy of the “canonical jurisdictions”; the break of our Church and the Catacomb Church with Sergius in 1927 was also not primarily a question of canons or dogmas, but a rather more subtle question which the Catacomb hierarchs expressed most frequently as the loss of “freedom” (that is, inward freedom).

(From a letter to Father Panagiotes [Carras] on June 30 / July 13, 1976)

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By the way, with regard to Moscow, you should realize that the cause for the break in 1927 was not for any of the reasons you mention, but was a much subtler thing. “Sergianism” in 1927 was not a question of ecumenism, modernism, the new calendar, the acceptance of non-Orthodox Mysteries, violation of canons, or teaching of new dogmas; and it was not of course a question only of politics, either. What then is left?—something very difficult to define and which the Catacomb hierarchs of 1927 in their epistles usually identified as the “loss of inner freedom.” (To be sure, new factors have entered the situation in recent years.) Before such a subtle temptation it is precisely a feeling for the spirit behind the phenomena which is the decisive factor, and not merely “correctness” in canons or dogmas.

(From a letter to Father Nektas Palassis, July 16/29, 1976)

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The Patriarch of Moscow and the leading bishops openly preach communism (both in the political and in a religious sense) and brazenly lie to the world about “freedom of religion” in Russia. We know that most of them do so under compulsion, and therefore we do not judge them too harshly. We in the Russian Church Abroad have our own bishops and have no communion with the Moscow Patriarchate, leaving its final judgment to a future council of bishops in a free Russia (which we pray will one day exist). But priests and laymen in the Moscow Patriarchate in Russia itself are today loudly protesting the anti-Christian acts of their own bishops, and some even proclaim that the Church there is governed by communist agents in bishops’ robes. At the same time there exists a Catacomb Church which for fifty years has had no communion with the Patriarchate and is mercilessly persecuted by the Soviet government (we have published much material on these new martyrs in *The Orthodox Word*). Again—a sad state of division and alienation. How can we be neutral, unless by retreating into the cowardly state of being “uncommitted” which is so common today?

The martyrs and confessors in Russia write to us that the best hope for them right now is the loud protest of free people against their persecutors. I personally would feel myself a betrayer of my brothers in Christ there if I were not to use the opportunity given me to speak the truth about them; but to do this I cannot help but contradict the lies of their bishops who say even now that “there is no persecution of religion in the USSR; those who suffer are only political criminals.” I do not feel in the least that I am sinning against the commandment of loving my brethren by doing this. On the contrary, my silence would betray love, and would only help the deliberate campaign of the Moscow church representatives to silence and exert influence on the Orthodox Churches of the free world.

(From a letter to Mr. Stamos, Palm Sunday 1978)

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We feel the signs of the times point more and more to a coming “catacomb” existence, whatever form it may take, and the more we can prepare for it now the better. I think you should have no hesitation in having Sunday services in your own building, even temporary or unfinished; it would probably even be helpful to those who attend to participate in your struggles in establishing yourself.

You will probably go through many trials and difficulties in your new location, the devil’s envy being what it is. May Christ our God strengthen you to bear them courageously. Every such monastery or community we look on as a part of the future catacomb “network” of strugglers for true Orthodoxy; probably in those times (if they will really be as critical as they look from here) the “jurisdictional” question will recede into the background.

(From a letter to Father Chrysostomos 19 May / 1 June 1978)

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As for the Catacomb Church in Russia, it certainly exists, and quite a bit of material has been published on it (from eyewitnesses) in the Russian language/press in recent years. Its chief bishop, as far as we know, is still Metropolitan Theodosius (who is of course a different person from the OCA Metropolitan), who issued a declaration that was circulated in Moscow and Leningrad when the present Patriarch Pimen was elected in 1970.

(From a letter to Anna, March 7/20, 1979)

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The whole question of the Moscow Patriarchate is, I think, a little more subtle' and complex than the position you have set forth (either the Patriarchate or the Catacomb Church). We will be publishing in *The Orthodox Word* some texts from and about the Catacomb Church which I hope will make this a little clearer. We ourselves do pray at the Liturgy for Metropolitan

Theodosius (assuming he is still alive), but I can understand why our bishops would rather not make an official proclamation about this. It is also possible to make a false idealization of the Catacomb Church; they also have their weaknesses underground, and the “answer” to this question will hardly come before the fall of the Communist regime and the restoration of some kind of normality to [the] Russian Church situation.

(From a letter to Michael 5/18 August 1980)

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I think the whole question of the Moscow Patriarchate is much more subtle and complex than you seem to think. When you quote our own article on the “Catacomb Tikhonite Church,” I find no contradiction between it and our article on Fr. Dimitry: in the former article, we stated only that “if normal Orthodox Church life is not restored to Russia, the Moscow Patriarchate will eventually wither and die in apostasy, and the innocent people who follow it will find themselves beyond any doubt outside the Church of Christ.” I still believe this to be true; but it does not follow that we must regard the Moscow Patriarchate today as being without the grace of God (this very question was discussed in that same article), nor does the article deny that normal Orthodox Church life could be restored to Russia—and I think the phenomenon of Fr. Dimitry and the other confessing priests of the Moscow Patriarchate gives us good hope that such will eventually be the case (after the fall of Communism).

(From a letter to George and Margaret December 28 / January 10, 1981)

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I think that the comfortableness of our Western life (in particular, the absence of the agonizing choices that sometimes present themselves to clergy in Russia) only helps one to be “strictly logical” without seeing the whole context of church life in Soviet Russia. I believe the statement on the church situation in the “Catacomb Epistle” printed in our same issue no. 96 says nicely what needs to be said on this subject; it sets forth the very position of our Russian Church Abroad: no communion with the Soviet Patriarchate, but no statement about “lack of grace,” and compassion for those who have no other source of church life.

(From a letter to Dr. Johnstone 13/26 August 1981)

Part I. On the narrow path to salvation.
8. About Father Herman of Platina.

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Most of your ideas seem fine to me. The only thing is, they should be put in the right order. Having a rather practical mind myself (in addition to being a dreamer), I offer a concrete procedure of action.

(From a letter to Gleb Podmoshensky [future father Herman] December 18/31, 1963)

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Dear Brother in Christ, Gleb,
I received your letter yesterday, which answered my questions very well and was encouraging. I myself grow more and more optimistic.

(From a letter to Gleb Podmoshensky on December 30, 1963 / January 12, 1964)

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In my own Gospel reading (one chapter daily) I read today St. Luke X—which, if you recall, was the same passage I opened at random and we both read when we were returning by train from Carmel almost exactly a year ago, “The Lord sent them two and two before His face into every city and place, whither He Himself would come. Then He saith unto His disciples, the Harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore to the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest.... Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way...”

(From a letter to Gleb Podmoshensky on January 14/27, 1964)

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Dear Brother in Christ, Gleb,

The passage to which I turned in the Gospel this morning was St. Luke XI “Our Father”, and then: “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.” Can anything be clearer?

(From a letter to Gleb Podmoshensky on January 15/28, 1964)

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Dear Gleb,

You are not the only one who is possessed by depression. I have been attacked especially strongly in the last week or so. This only means that the devil doesn’t want us to start a magazine. But with the aid of the Lord and His Saints, we can fight him!

(From a letter to Gleb Podmoshensky on October 14/27, 1964)

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The Devil has begun his work against us. A Russian lady came in this morning to look us over and tell us of the rumors about us in the Russian colony: that we are Communists with a store full of Soviet books; that we are Soviet diplomats using the store as some kind of front; that we are American converts (!); etc. By the time she discovered I wasn’t Russian, she was so charmed that she didn’t mind too much and even bought ten dollars worth of eggs, icons, and cards.

(From a letter to Gleb Podmoshensky on March 26 / April 8 [1965])

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We shall have many enemies, not least among the modernist Orthodox, but it is our duty to speak the truth. Please pray for me, a sinner, and for Gleb.

(From a letter to Father Panteleimon (Mitropoulos) August 18/31, 1965)

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By God’s grace onetime brothers Gleb and Eugene are now (for four days already) Fathers Herman and Seraphim, and still overwhelmed by the magnitude of what has happened. Our humble place is now the St. Herman of Alaska Hermitage—already a contradiction, since our rule is coenobitic, but we just can’t find a more suitable translation for “Pustyn,” which is the name given us by the Synodal Ukase. After a time of some agitation and uncertainty—ten days of rain which ended only the day before our tonsure, which was a beautiful calm, sunny day (though cold), fear that the church wouldn’t be finished (it wasn’t, but we managed to put

up temporary walls and roof), both of our trucks broke down, etc.—we are now in our fourth day of calm monastic life, although of course not without trials. We were unable to follow the full monastic custom of spending five days in church, or even three (as in Jordanville), but Vladika Nektary stayed over for a second day and so we did spend the better part of two days in church and received Holy Communion both days. And now we are alone, trying to adjust to our now somewhat stricter rule of life, reading the holy Fathers and praying for guidance in our still somewhat uncertain first days until we shall be confirmed in our permanent rule of life—with, God willing, our own priest to serve Liturgy and keep our good Archbishop from worrying about us. Already we've had a sign of how close God is to us, for on our first trip to the post office after our tonsure we found a letter from our longtime friend Priest-monk Theodore (one of Vladika John's orphans from Shanghai), who for several years has been priest at an Old-Calendarist convent in Greece and now unexpectedly is in America and wants to come to us right away—whether for a short or long time only God knows, but he was a member of our Brotherhood from the beginning, and his sudden reappearance now after so many years is surely providential.

What more is there to say? Our new Orthodox Word weighs upon us, and now we must get back into the rhythm of a full working life. The new issue will be double and will be mostly devoted to the canonization, with a great many pictures. There is a great deal else we should be doing—getting our wood supply ready (the nearby mountains are already covered with snow and our cold season has started), finishing our kitchen on the balcony, building new kellias—but we have only four hands and must do what our strength allows. Fortunately Deacon Nicholas has taken the building of the church entirely in his hands and—except for last week when we worked full time with him—we can concentrate on printing.

Our future here—is in God's hands. Everything that has happened so far is so much beyond us that we don't even dare dream of the future. We are trying to go forward one step at a time, watching out for a fall, and trusting in the prayers of Vladika John, who is surely with us now—in fact, in these days we have seen the realization of two prophecies (if it is not too bold to use that word) which he made to us.

Just imagine the names that were given us! And Vladika Anthony didn't even realize that the day of our tonsure was the namesday of Abbot Nazary of both Sarov and Valaam! (the one who is mentioned in the service.) Glory be to God!

(From a letter to Daniel Olson 17/30 October 1970)

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In everything we have done we have always acted together and in absolute unanimity, doing nothing without the other's blessing.

We are quite aware that the monastic life is not supposed to be easy, and also that we must be prepared to accept responsibilities that we would frankly rather avoid—for our very status as a missionary monastery is an open invitation to American truth-seekers and would-be monks to come and disturb our blessed peace and quiet, even if only to find out how unworthy we are. Whether God will bless a larger or smaller missionary community here, or whether we will remain two “crazy monks in the forest,” we are prepared to accept anything that God sends us in furtherance of the cause which Vladika John blessed and which brought us here: the mission of the Orthodox printed word, especially in English.

The warning of the Saviour, “Beware when all men shall think well of you,” has long troubled us.

Here we are alone. We have our Russian friends and advisers among the clergy, but they do not see us as we really are, but place us in some Russian frame of reference which does not encompass that mission to which God has evidently called us and Vladika John blessed.

He [Vladika Anthony (Medvedev)] called us to his quarters—rather, he called Fr. Herman, and had me sit below for two hours alone. At this I was extremely upset, and imagined to

myself that my brother was sitting upstairs being subjected to all the tricks of Russian psychology in order to force him into some kind of breakdown—for what crimes and to what purpose I did not know, knowing only that I would be expected meekly to accept the result, as an American “without rights.” My imaginings, it turned out, were precisely correct. I have not prayed so hard, especially to our Vladika John in front of his kellia, in many, many months. I looked at the portrait of the Tsar-Martyr and begged him to help us too! It was evident immediately that a powerful monastic temptation had struck us; and while rejoicing that our path was now not too smooth, that at least someone was no longer “thinking well” of us, I already feared for the very existence of our young Hermitage and of our entire work.

After two hours I was ushered upstairs to hear the rather quiet conclusion of the whole event. Vladika informed me that he was very disappointed in us because we did not see him first to receive his blessing to go to Marinas, to Monterey, etc., because we wore our mantias (not proper for visiting monks)—for which he thought of depriving us of them for a while so we would not show them off—because we did not attend the late Liturgy so that people (and he himself) could look at us, because we went to confession to our former secular priest instead of visiting our Starets in Palo Alto, not to mention lesser transgressions such as not staying with him, etc. To this I begged forgiveness, as Fr. Herman had done. But one other point astonished me: he complained of recently receiving a letter from us in which (as we had orally agreed with him months before) we spoke of presenting the Rule of our Hermitage for his approval, and we apologized for not presenting it by Dec. 12/25 as we had promised. He told us now that it was not for us to present our Rule to him, but for him to give us a Rule. In conclusion he had decided that he had misplaced his confidence in us and had mistakenly tonsured us without sufficient trial, and that now he would have to see how we pass through his trials of us. He then smiled, gave us a cake and two bottles of wine, and blessed us to leave.

From Fr. Herman I learned that in the preceding two hours Vladika had indeed played fully on the Russian psychology, had shouted, bullied, pointed out the monastic vows accused him of disobedience to his Abbot, using crude language and telling him that he had not been “tonsured in a barbershop,” and in general brought Fr. Herman to tears and breakdown in front of him. Finally Fr. Herman in desperation replied to Vladika in the same manner, and to his dismay he found that Vladika liked this kind of combat and in general gave the impression of “playing” at being Abbot and threatening with his authority, etc. In substance Fr. Herman protested that Vladika had blessed us as an independent church organization and should leave us alone, to which Vladika loudly stated: “I will not leave you alone!” And he proceeded to tell him of those monastic obediences which we should owe him as Abbot: not to write anyone or invite anyone to come to us without his blessing, to sign over our property to him, to have our publications supervised by him, etc. etc.

This meeting I have received one of the greatest disillusionments of my life, and both Fr. Herman and I have been given a wound that will last all our lives. I cannot say that we had not been warned. Vladika Nektary had warned us that Vladika Anthony will allow no individual initiative within his Archdiocese and that he feels himself to be his slave, and that his attempt to take away Vladika Nektary's podvorye had so exasperated Vladika Nektary that he had replied to him: “You can talk about this to my lawyer.” Father Alexei Poluektov had told us of his extremely bitter experience with him in his own parish, and how under the guise of “confirming” the printed word he has been smothering Fr. Alexei's own printing activity, taking and keeping manuscripts without further word. Deacon Nicholas Porshnikov had described his own unpleasant experience which had completely destroyed his trust in his own Archbishop. And others had warned us in the most alarming terms, even telling us not to put our fingers in his mouth or “he will bite them off.” All these warnings we attributed to the particular circumstances of these individuals, and our trust in our Archbishop did not waver. Now this trust and confidence has been completely and absolutely shattered. Perhaps we know nothing of monasticism, but we nonetheless firmly believe that in the Church of Christ a legitimate chastisement from ones ecclesiastical superiors should be carried out in mutual trust and end in a peaceful state for all concerned; I myself was on several occasions chastised by Vladika John and always felt the rightness of the chastisement and benefitted from it. But for over a week now we are completely upset and almost despair over our very future and the future of The Orthodox Word.

Our concern is not that we have been chastised for our monastic transgressions; whether justly or unjustly accused of them, we will gladly bow down in obedience to our Archbishop,

who indeed tonsured us, and follow his advice in future trips to San Francisco. Further, our concern is not that in administering this chastisement to us our Archbishop used means which we feel to be utterly wrong and extremely painful to us, and which have only served to undermine and destroy the mutual trust and confidence which existed between us until now. This is a secondary and transitory matter, even though it has left a deep scar in both of us. And we have no personal feelings whatever against our Archbishop, and no desire to cause him any trouble or shake his legitimate authority in any way. We understand also that Vladika Anthony had only the highest motives in all that he said to us: to uphold his own authority and to apply a chastisement in order to make “real monks” of us (in his own understanding!); he even told us that one day we would be in his position and administering the same kind of chastisement to others—to which Fr. Herman cried out from his heart: “God forbid!”

Rather, what we are deeply concerned about is that this incident has revealed Vladika Anthony’s hitherto hidden idea of what we are as a church organization; perhaps, indeed, he used this incident as a pretext to make this known to us. Vladika Anthony believes—in complete contradiction of our oral understanding with him before our tonsure that we are simply monks in absolute dependence on and obedience to him alone as “abbot.” But this conception of our Hermitage can result in nothing but the total destruction of what we have built up for seven years now, and it is based on nothing but the Archbishop’s own purely external preconceptions of us.

In Vladika Anthony’s conception our Hermitage is evidently a Diocesan institution of which Vladika is Abbot and dictator, and wherein nothing will be done without his express blessing. He himself, I believe, has only come to this conception gradually, through feeling out our weaknesses, and now he feels that the time has come to strike out for his conception. But now that we look back we can see many signs that very early Vladika Anthony did not see us for what we are and are doing, but that even then he was already fitting us into his own picture of what we should or could be in his Diocese. Thus, when we first told him of our plan to move to Platina he smiled and said: “I am not against having a monastery in my Diocese.” On the day of our tonsure, when he could not persuade us to accept priesthood immediately, he shook his head and said: “But what am I going to say at the Synod?”—meaning obviously that he had already informed the Synod of his plans for us, which did not in the least correspond with our own ideas. (To this Vladika Nektary very sensibly told him: “Just tell the Synod the way it is; there should be no problem in that!”) On that same day, just before the services and our tonsure (as if as a final temptation of the devil to dissuade us at the last moment from this decisive step) Vladika Nektary informed us that at the Synod and everywhere else everyone was talking about us, and report had it that we would be ordained priests within the week, would soon rise in the clergy ranks, and “you won’t be here very long!” etc. etc. And what kind of spiritual picture must Vladika Anthony have of us if in October he considered mature enough to become immediately hieromonks (i.e., already spiritual fathers) and in January, for the sins which I enumerated above—which we, in spite of ourselves, cannot see as anything more than formal and external—he loses all trust in us and feels it needful to take us over completely?

Our own picture, which we have built up over seven years, is this: we must follow exactly the Synod’s Ukase which founded our Hermitage: “to conduct in the monastic calling the very same missionary and publishing work which they have conducted up to this time.” There are only two changes in our present status: our Brotherhood has become a Hermitage, and we have entered the monastic calling. God willing, our missionary and publishing work will continue and expand, but it will do so only under the previously-existing conditions of independence and freedom. The Orthodox Word cannot be censored: Vladika John blessed us to print without censorship, and he only made occasional suggestions and we came to him on doubtful points. For the rest, we take most seriously into account your opinion and the opinion of other of our fathers and try to print nothing solely on our own authority. Even the Zeytoon article to which you took such exception we printed only after long talks with Archimandrite Cyprian of Jordanville, who really talked us into it and overcame our doubts; and Vladika Anthony himself looked at all the pictures in that article before the issue was printed. (At that time we did not even suspect the existence of a contrary opinion in the Greek press.) This is a policy of prudence and council and mutual trust, which censorship would utterly destroy. Again, to fulfill our monastic and missionary function we must be absolutely free and trusted to write to whom we feel the need, we must be able to tell anyone at a moment’s notice to come here in time of trouble, we must have all authority to dismiss troublemakers, and in a word we cannot afford the idle luxury of waiting while someone 250 miles away, on the basis of opinion and hearsay, makes our decisions for us. There are at least

5 or 6 people to whom we have confidentially said: If ever you have trouble or need, this is a place of refuge for you. Now this would become impossible.

We are in all things obedient and respectful of legitimate ecclesiastical authority, and that we have never tried to impose any kind of authority over others (this if anything is our great weakness!) or seek for ourselves any kind of position or tide in the Church. But if it now comes down to practicing “humility” and “obedience” and allowing a complete outsider to take over and destroy our work, our conscience will not allow it. Vladika Anthony has never given any comments on The Orthodox Word and has told us that he does not read it; he knows nothing of our daily life or ride of prayer and asked nothing about these even on the day of tonsure, by which we assumed that he gave his blessing for us to continue as we are with full trust in us, our relation to him being exactly that of St. Sergius of Radonezh to the Abbot Metrophan who tonsured him and then left him alone in the wilderness; he knows nothing of Americans or of the needs of the American Mission and has never spoken to either of us about these things, even though the Synodal Gramota and Ukase have blessed us precisely as a “missionary” organization. In a word, he is not capable of assuming responsibility before God, as Abbot, of our work.

And worse, as we now see: he views everything in his Diocese precisely as a “Diocesan” activity for which he alone is responsible—and if we let him do it The Orthodox Word too would become a Diocesan publication, and there are already a number of articles which he would doubtless not have allowed us to print (for reasons of his personal taste) if he had been censoring us as he would now like to do.

We have thus been led into a situation where, in order to preserve our independence and continue our Orthodox Word as before, we will have sooner or later to show open “disobedience” to our Archbishop, insofar as he regards himself as our “Abbot.” And we believe that he, being of an extremely dominating character, will try to crush this “disobedience” even if he has to break us or destroy our work in doing it. I am not exaggerating! For Vladika Anthony there exists no other principle except the authority of the Archbishop. We had only to mention to him the word “Stavropignialny” in connection with the independence of our Hermitage to cause him to shout: “Too late! That will never be!”

In our minds there is only one way out, and that is to become absolutely independent of Archbishop Anthony. Since the Synod (without our approval) has made him temporary Abbot, we will have to petition the Synod to let us have an abbot from among our own number, while granting us Stavropignialny status, dependent directly on the Synod. Before doing this we will have to do what, if we were wiser, we should have done before our tonsure: let Vladika Anthony know exactly how we regard ourselves, in writing; to which he will give us a reply which should state clearly enough how different his own conception of us is. The unfortunate part of this is that Vladika will most certainly not give up his hold over us without a fight; and since he occupies an important position on the Synod, we already have much against us. It should not be too difficult to paint a suitable picture of us: young, self-willed, proud, disobedient, untrustworthy, milk-drinking novices, etc.

Now, as always before in our activities in the Church, we wish to act not on the basis solely of our own opinion, but with the counsel of others wiser than we.

We firmly believe that Vladika Anthony will stop at nothing to get his way with us as well as with others—not because he has bad intentions, but because he is possessed to an extreme degree with the sense of his own authority and rights. We sorrow all the more over the necessity of writing this letter in that we sincerely love and pity our Archbishop. He is apparently a lonely man; all fear him, but there is no one close to him, and he regards us as “his own” whom he will force to be his obedient disciples. We cannot do it! Vladika John blessed us for an entirely different path, and by his prayers and God’s grace we have travelled for seven years on this path. If we had wished to be a Bishops disciples, we would long ago have joined Bishop Nektary, who has wanted to establish such a monastery. For the sake of the independence of our own work, we have already had to preserve carefully our separate status with respect to him also, and to this day our relationship with him is very good. If our Hermitage requires supervision by the Synod, we would gladly welcome him as our “supervisor”—but not as “Abbot”—all the more so as he has already promised to drop in on us every time when travelling between San Francisco and Seattle. Our relationship to Vladika

Anthony could also be quite good—on the condition of our absolute independence from him.

(From a letter to Father Panteleimon (Mitropoulos) 4/17 January 1971)

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When you pray, please pray for the sinful monks Herman and Seraphim, who are trying to serve God in the monastic calling. Please write again, and feel free to ask any questions, and I will try my best to answer them.

(From a letter to Nina [Kojevnikov] on January 23 / February 5, 1971)

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Your Grace, Dear Vladika Laurus,
Bless us, Vladika! Evlogeite!

We hasten to inform you of an extremely serious situation which has arisen with us, and which already threatens the whole future of the missionary work which we have conducted now for seven years. We beg you to give us your help and advice. We are writing in English, inasmuch as that is the language of our publications and our everyday life, and because our whole existence is for the sake of English-speaking people, above all Americans, who form the majority of our 1500 subscribers.

First we should tell you that we are laboring to the best of our strength in the monastic life, rejoicing in God's great mercy in granting us to wear the angelic habit. The trials that have come upon us since we received the monastic tonsure we understand and accept as a part of the hard and narrow path of Christ's Cross which we have taken on ourselves, and not for a moment have we regretted receiving the tonsure.

Please read what follows not as any kind of "complaint"—for we are not protesting against any individual act, and we are not in any immediate trouble—but rather as a statement of principle concerning the nature of our existence as an organization within the Russian Church Outside of Russia. However, we must tell you at the very beginning that our Archbishop Anthony does not understand this principle and in fact is trying to substitute for it his own plans, and in a very short time, if we do not act very soon, his misunderstanding will lead to a crisis that could bring an end to The Orthodox Word and to our work in the name of St. Herman. The Synod itself has acknowledged the value of our missionary work, and we are therefore all the more certain that to preserve this work we must act decisively, even if by this we must incur the anger—which we believe would be completely unjustified—of our Archbishop.

Already before our tonsure we had occasion to believe that Vladika Anthony was beginning to form unrealistic ideas about us, and we sent you a copy of our letter to him in which we tried to give him a more realistic picture of us. To this he replied with a letter saying that he fully understood and agreed with us and would apply no "episcopal coercion" of any kind on us. We had complete trust in Vladika Anthony and thought that he did understand us. We had made clear to him that whatever official status we might have (whether as a "monastery" or not), we could only operate with complete independence from the local Diocesan Bishop, just like our monasteries in Jordanville and Boston, and he readily agreed with us, telling us that one of us would have to be the Head. We informed him that we were preparing our Rule and would present it to him by St. Herman's feast day in December, to which he also agreed. We realize now that in order to obtain the status that was necessary for us we should have appealed directly to the Synod instead of allowing our local Bishop to be intermediary for us; but such was our trust of Vladika Anthony that, even though we did not know all that he was doing and saying at the Synod, we had no suspicions whatsoever that any kind of misunderstanding would arise later.

On the day of our tonsure, October 14/27, we heard for the first time that the Synod had blessed the opening of the St. Herman of Alaska Hermitage, which we accepted with joy, and

also that Vladika Anthony had been appointed Head (“for the time being”)—which upset us very much. But we still did not understand what was happening, and we waited for the Synod’s Ukase to see exactly what it said. For the next two months we were extremely busy with the Canonization Issue of The Orthodox Word, with difficulties caused by bad weather, etc., and we did not find out anything more definite until Christmas, when we went to San Francisco. At the end of December we saw the Synod’s Ukase for the first time, and then at Christmas we were subjected by Vladika Anthony to a terrifying “inquisition” lasting several hours, in which when we tried to make clear our position he merely threatened us with his rights as “Head” of our monastery (all the way to supervising our daily correspondence), telling us that an independent or stavropignialny status for us is “out of the question” and that we had no right to write a Rule for our own monastery, but that he would give us one. If we do not agree to all this, he told us, we are guilty of “self-will” and “disobedience.” After this we were completely shocked and shattered and did not know what to do. For several nights we could not sleep, and we thought of writing to you and a few other of our friends in the clergy; but we were in such a state of shock that we really did not know what to say, and we were afraid that our letter would merely sound like another “complaint,” of which you probably already see too many. Also, we simply could not believe what had happened, and we waited for some written document from Vladika Anthony that would give us something definite to act on. We are very glad that we waited before writing to you, because now we have a written document to base ourselves on, and in the 2 1/2 months that have passed since our last meeting with Vladika Anthony we have gotten over our shock and are able to think and act clearly and calmly, without any agitation in our souls and without any bad feelings against Vladika Anthony. In spite of everything, we have the utmost respect and love for him, especially because of all that he has done for the canonization of our patron, St. Herman; we have no intention of questioning or disturbing his legitimate ecclesiastical authority, and it is only with the greatest sorrow and heaviness of heart that we are now about to undertake those steps which will preserve our independence from him. However, this is an obligation which we owe, not only to our own work, but to Vladika Anthony; because before God he cannot take responsibility for an activity he is not familiar with, in a language he does not know.

Enclosed is a copy of Vladika Anthony’s Ukase of Feb. 25/Mar. 10, which we received last week, and which makes clear what he thinks he has done: he has opened a Diocesan monastery with himself as Head, and we are in absolute obedience to him.

Dear Vladika: you know us as loyal sons of the Russian Church Outside of Russia, in everything obedient to lawful ecclesiastical authority, not in the least inclined to “rebellion” of any kind, and that in The Orthodox Word we have defended the Synod and every one of its bishops with such firmness and devotion that it is no exaggeration to say that a large number of our readers look up to the bishops of the Synod with extreme respect, as virtually the only pillars of Orthodoxy and true bishops in the world today. Further, we must tell you that so far Vladika Anthony has not given us any specific “obedience” against which we protest; therefore, we repeat, this is not a letter of “complaint,” and Vladika Anthony himself could not give you any case where we have disobeyed him.

The question, therefore, is much bigger: the whole organization of the “St. Herman of Alaska Hermitage” was devised entirely without us, who are its only members, and now that we see what is involved we must decisively declare: the Ukase of Vladika Anthony establishing a Diocesan monastery with himself as Head, is not acceptable to us and we do not accept it. Not only in principle must we oppose a Diocesan monastery which cannot preserve the independence that is absolutely necessary for a work such as ours, but we have discovered to our great sorrow that Vladika Anthony himself is a man we cannot and do not trust. He has badly deceived us—of which, perhaps, he is not even aware, for we now suspect that he has never even listened to what we have told him, but always had in mind his own completely different plans for his own monastery—and he is now trying to force us to accept what he has accomplished by his deception for the sake of obedience.

But such “obedience”—for the sake of a worldly end—is very clearly spiritually illegitimate. We are the disciples of Vladika John, who blessed and inspired our work from the very beginning and, we firmly believe, is with us now in spirit; it is to his blessing, in fact, that we ascribe entirely whatever success we have had so far. And from him we have learned: above canons, church discipline, etc., comes the spirit. If by obedience, by faithfulness to the letter of canons, or by any other thing good in itself, the spirit of a man is crushed and is extinguished, then there is something terribly wrong. Vladika Anthony has already accused

us of a tendency to “disobedience” and “self-will”—and, while admitting that we are in all ways sinful, we can only say that in the present case these accusations are beside the point. Before such virtues as obedience have any meaning, they must have a place in a definite context, in a common task, in a fruitful work. Such a context would be, for example, a monastery with a Elder responsible for the souls of everyone living in it (such as Fr. Panteleimon's monastery in Boston), or an established working monastery such as Jordanville; in our case, the context is The Orthodox Word and our missionary printing labors, which for seven years now we have followed with great labor and sacrifice, in everything being obedient to the Church and to each other, so that never did one of us exercise his “own will,” obeying rather each other and the common task that united us. Without this we would never have survived; but with this and the blessing of Vladika John we have survived this long and now seem called by the Church to expand our work and bring forth greater fruits.

But now Vladika Anthony, not knowing our work (he does not read The Orthodox Word and knows almost nothing of the American mission) is trying to impose his own “work” upon us—a “monastery” governed by him from San Francisco, where one of the “obediences” at the present time happens to be the printing of The Orthodox Word. But since he does not know us or our work, all of his plans and Ukases are based purely on external appearances—on what kind of role it looks as though we could play in his diocese, or (he used these exact words with us once) on “what will they think at the Synod?” We tell you frankly, Vladika: this is not serious; it is some kind of game with him, enforced precisely through the “episcopal coercion” he promised he would never use on us, and the result is precisely that it harms our common work and instills in us such a sense of gnawing, inner frustration that if it is allowed to continue it will completely destroy our missionary work and extinguish the spark, the spirit, that Holy Orthodoxy has given us, and that Vladika John knew how to fan into a flame of desire to serve the Holy Church. Perhaps that flame is weak in us, but it exists, and it is quite possible for it to be extinguished.

It is not our intention to start a fight, or to force anyone to accept our word against Vladika Anthony's—because undoubtedly he will have a completely different version or interpretation of everything that has happened to us. We can only make it clear that, whatever may have happened in the past, in the future we can have no tie with Vladika Anthony: he cannot be any part of our monastery (if the Synod affirms that we are a monastery), and our monastery cannot be a Diocesan institution. If Vladika Anthony has opened a monastery, we are not a part of it. We promised obedience to him, “God helping us,” and in our conscience we cannot believe that God will help us to destroy the blessing of Vladika John and that small beginning of service to the Holy Church that we have begun with his blessing. Doubtless Vladika Anthony thinks we are inexperienced and he must “take us in his hands” and “make something of us” for the sake of the growth of the monastery. We have our own candidates who may in future be joining us—but if Vladika Anthony is to be our Head, we must tell them to stay away or go elsewhere, rather than to become a part of his totally unrealistic plans. And we will tell you frankly: Vladika Anthony has no one who would be interested in joining “his” monastery, and in fact that is why he has to act through us.

All of this is probably shocking to you, and you may wish to advise us to be patient, to accept what ever Vladika Anthony imposes on us for the sake of obedience, or to try to “negotiate” or “compromise” with him. But we tell you firmly: no compromise is possible. Vladika Anthony does not listen to us, and in fact he thinks we have no right to tell him anything. He has already shown us his intentions, and as long as he has any direct authority over us we will be filled with mistrust, suspicion, and gnawing frustration. These are the fruit, not of legitimate authority, but of usurpation.

However, we will listen most carefully to whatever you may advise us to do. In particular, we beg you to help us with practical advice: how can we achieve our independence? We wish henceforth to talk with the Synod not through the intermediary of Vladika Anthony, but directly. Should we appeal to be declared a stavropignialny monastery? We had always thought it too far above us even to be called a “monastery,” but the Synod has already approved this in principle, and Vladika Anthony still thinks highly enough of us to appoint one of us as Blagochinny. Or, if the Synod will not bless us as a monastery, what status can we have directly dependent on the Synod? We do not ask anything “special,” but only that status Fr. Panteleimons monastery and Jordanville have enjoyed from the beginning: independence, not for the sake of self-will, but for the sake of the common work which the

Synod has already blessed. You and others among the bishops and clergy know both us and our work far better than Vladika Anthony does

In the meantime, we urgently request of you:

(1) Not to sign any documents about us based on material coming to the Synod through Vladika Anthony;

(2) If Vladika Anthony's Ukase of Feb. 25/Mar. 10 is going to be published in Orthodox Russia or elsewhere, please try to stop it, as it does not correspond to reality and will only cause trouble if it becomes widely known.

Please do not think that we are despondent. We are in good spirits, even though we are quite worried about our future. This attack upon us has convinced us more than ever that we are doing a God-pleasing work and it has strengthened our resolve to continue and stand firm in it. Our few months of monastic life have already given us so many trials and temptations—yet in every one of them God's help has been close, and we only marvel at how close God is to us. Our last trial began when we received Vladika Anthony's Ukase last week, and we were very much troubled—but in less than 24 hours, completely unexpectedly, Vladika Nektary and Fr. Boris came with the Kursk Icon, and our trouble was turned into joy and the certain realization that God is with us!

And now we approach the difficult time ahead as a literal Golgotha—for we fully expect Vladika Anthony to be furious when he finds out what we are trying to do, and he will doubtless do everything against us that he can. But at the same time we rejoice, knowing that the sufferings before us are much less than our sins deserve, that only from such a narrow and difficult path can spiritual fruits come forth, and that in everything God and His saints—St. Herman and Vladika John—are with us.

A final point: in Vladika Anthony's Ukase the name of our Staretz, Archimandrite Spyridon, is mentioned. We are on the best of terms with him and we would hope that after, God willing, we achieve our independence, he will continue as our Staretz. But in the meantime, for obvious reasons, we do not want to involve him in our difficulties, and so we emphasize that the responsibility for this letter and for everything we may do in future rests solely with the two of us.

We ask your holy prayers and will welcome your advice. Please be assured that we will not do anything rash, and will act only after having consulted others among the clergy who know us well.

With love and respect in Christ our Saviour,
Monk Herman Monk Seraphim

(From a letter to Vladika Laurus, March 12/25, 1971)

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Last Wednesday we received Vladika Anthony's Ukase of Feb. 25/Mar. 10, apparently sent to all priests of the Diocese, which says in part: "A coenobitic monastery for men has been opened by us.... Headship of this new monastery has been taken by me upon myself" (in ink there is added in our copy—whether it is in the original or not we don't know—"for the time being"); "for the regulation of the monastic life of the brethren, who may increase in number, by the present Ukase MONK HERMAN is appointed BLAGOCHINNY (one in charge of 'good order') of the monastery. The Blagochinny is responsible for the doings of the monastery immediately before me, as its Head..."; "the publication of the magazine The Orthodox Word...the brethren should now look upon as their monastic obedience... Concerning everything else additional instructions will be given to the Blagochinny."

In a word, our worst fears are realized: Vladika Anthony has taken us over, and although so

far he has not given us any “obedience” to which we object, it is clear that our work, blessed by Vladika John, has lost all independence and will now proceed solely on instructions from San Francisco. Clearly, if we are going to do anything about this intolerable situation we must begin to act now.

We have written—in English—a letter to Vladika Laurus (we will send you a Xerox copy next week when we go to Redding again), informing him that we do not accept this Ukase and have lost all trust in Vladika Anthony, and asking his advice on what to do to become independent of Vladika Anthony.

Vladika Anthony, under the guise of outward correctness and good form, is a “quencher of the spirit.” Vladika Nektary was here last week, and he told us: “You are fortunate that you have someone to complain to; I have no one. But if you only knew what a gnawing frustration he instills in me....” Vladika Anthony is an excellent “peacemaker,” but he crushes every good initiative. Vladika Nektary wanted to do something about Alaska, travel there, etc.—but Vladika Anthony forbade it outright. We gave Fr. Alexei Poluektov the text—smuggled out of the Soviet Union by a Catacomb nun—of an akathist to St. Nina which apparently exists nowhere else in the free world; Vladika A. heard of it and exclaimed: “it must be approved,” and he took it and it was never seen again. Even the Service to St. John of Tobolsk—which Vladika John served for many years—was printed in Blagovestnik without Vladika A. knowing of it, and he forbade the last part of it to be printed—on the grounds that it was never “approved.” Vladika A., when he first came to San Francisco, said he would continue everything started by Vladika John; but he forbade the Liturgy to be served in the Sepulchre more than once a year, and the people in the Archbishop John Society tell us that Vladika A. is not devoted to the memory of Vladika John and they feel he is a foreigner. Laurence Campbell, I believe, grasped exactly Vladika A.’s psychology when he recently told us: Vladika A. does not encourage veneration of Vladika John because he still has many enemies and thus Vladika A. regards his memory as a divisive factor in his diocese. Vladika A. deliberately omits the name of Fr. Nektas Palassis from the Jordanville calendar of clergy because, he told us in December, “we don’t want to irritate Athenagoras”! And a few weeks ago Deacon Nicholas Porshnikov visited us and told us straight: “Vladika A. has killed my spiritual life”—that, of course, is an exaggeration, because the Deacon himself should be doing something about it, but it has meaning when you contrast it with another statement he made to us several years ago: “Vladika John saved me; without his encouragement and pushing me to be a Deacon, I probably wouldn’t be in the Church at all today”—that is all the difference between a bishop who inspires and a bishop who stifles the soul under the form of external correctness.

It does not require much imagination to see what will happen to us if we accept Vladika A.’s “coup” over us. All our “peculiarities” as an independent monastic institution will be abolished. Already when Vladika A. serves here he forbids mentioning “Orthodox Kings” in the troparion to the Cross; “the Synod has approved another text”—but Vladika John left us another tradition which almost no one but us is keeping; our right to follow the Spruce Island tradition of celebrating a second feast to St. Herman on Nov. 15 will doubtless be abolished as an example of “self-will”; if Vlad. A. ever becomes aware of how much we are “irritating Athenagoras” in The Orthodox Word, that will have to be censured out; any special veneration of Vladika John, especially in Russian, will be blocked as too “controversial”; etc., etc., etc. If we give one inch in the beginning, we will end with a completely soulless and pointless “obedience” which has no ability to inspire anyone else. Lev and Vasya are returning to America in May and will probably come here—frankly, we think they fit here, and they seem to have no other place, and their spirits could well be quenched and their service to the Church wiped out if they don’t find their place; but do you think Vladika A. could understand that, or care? Laurence Campbell visited us last weekend and told us of the uninspired and uninspiring condition of church life in the midst of the city; and we were horrified most of all that souls are thirsting and perishing and almost no one cares; even the clergy and shepherds are minding their own business or “establishing monasteries” (by force!) for the glory of the diocese without even seeing these perishing souls. We are content to let the world bury its dead; but Vladika John gave us a spark and a mission, and we will be faithful to that even to death.

Our eyes have been opened, and we are absolutely resolved not to fall into the hands of a man who only wants to use us for his grandiose external plans. We are acting with great sorrow and heaviness of heart, with all love and pity for our Archbishop, but with unflinching

resolve.

Since our last letter to you we have become much calmer and much firmer. All the events of Christmas are of minor importance beside the main issue: are we to continue independent, in the tradition and with the blessing of Vladika John, or do we become the slaves of someone who thinks only of the Church's outward prosperity and success and probably thinks he is assuring us a good "career" in the Church? In spite of everything, we will follow Vladika John, and if need be we will flee completely to the wilderness or become "fools" in order to remain faithful to Vladika John.

In these last months we have been very conscious of how close God is to us. On Feb. 1 we finished the Canonization issue with Daniel Olson's help (another one who fits very well with us but would wither away under Vladika A.), and no sooner had we returned from delivering the issue to the Post Office and seeing off Daniel, then immediately our truck broke down and would not move an inch. We thanked God and began carrying water a half mile from a newly-discovered spring (not on our property) and carrying mail, groceries, and gasoline up hill from town on foot—very difficult, but good for us. Then, in the middle of the new OW, our generator broke, and Fr. Herman for the first time heard me fall close to despondency: "maybe what we're doing is not right, after all"—but in 24 hours Deacon Nicholas arrived with two mechanics (without knowing about our desperate plight), fixed our truck enough to take it back to San Francisco for major repairs, and left us another truck on which we took the generator to be repaired, and just now mailed the new OW. But then again in Redding the Post Office inspectors discovered a technicality according to which we cannot have a 2nd Class Mailing Permit unless we open an office in Redding; but this has resulted now in a change whereby we will mail here in Platina instead of Redding (assuming everything is approved by the Post Office bureaucrats). And then last Wednesday we received Vladika As Ukase—but in 24 hours Vladika Nektary arrived with the Kursk Icon, which he allowed us to carry around our mountain, and we received Holy Communion from the Reserved Gifts.

Therefore, in spite of our troubles, we are bold and joyful; for truly God and His saints are with us.

Our next step will depend on Vladika Laurus' practical advice as to what we should do next. We hope to speak at length with Vladika Nektary when he comes to celebrate Liturgy for us in the next week or so, and also with our Starets, Archimandrite Spyridon, who wants to serve on Annunciation (or, we hope, Pascha itself), and then we will act.

So much has happened in this last year, and so much has become clearer—by the prayers of St. Herman and Vladika John, we are sure.

(From a letter to Father Panteleimon (Mitropoulos) March 13/26, 1971)

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Our Staretz, Archimandrite Spyridon, is planning to come to us for a week or more—from Annunciation to Palm Sunday, and then just after Pascha (he has to serve Passion Week and Pascha in Palo Alto), and so, God willing, we shall have the Divine Liturgy several times here.

Glory be to God for everything! In all our trials, we become more and more conscious that something is happening that is far beyond us. What the end will be, God alone knows, and it is in His hands. We begin to get a rather definite idea that "Synodal opinion" does not place much confidence in our future. In February Archimandrite Cyprian wrote us from Jordanville, advising us to pack up as soon as possible and come to Jordanville, because we are in danger of falling into prelest, and because Jordanville is dying off and in ten years there won't be anyone left to do the work. Recently Fr. Vladimir also began hinting that we would be best off in Jordanville, and Vladika Laurus last year also emphasized how much they need people there. With all respect to Jordanville, to which we are absolutely devoted, we are so conscious of the blessing of Vladika John to trod a different path, that we can only accept the opinion of these respected fathers as a "temptation" to get us off our path. The devil, it appears, is trying his utmost to get us out of here, and we are thereby all the more convinced

that we are where we should be. Two days ago, as if we didn't have problems enough already, I met an Indian at the Post Office in Platina, who asked me what we were building, and when I replied "A chapel," he told me, "this land belongs to us Indians, and I'll do everything I can to stop you." I don't know exactly what he meant, but as we are unarmed and two miles from the nearest neighbor, it is not difficult to imagine what could be done to us. And so we are literally reduced to trusting in God and the protection of our patrons, St. Herman and Vladika John. May God's holy will be done!

(From a letter to Father Panteleimon (Mitropoulos) March 21 / April 3, 1971)

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After Vladika John, it is you and Ivan Michaelovich who have helped and inspired us on this path, and nothing would cause us more sorrow than for you to become convinced that our Orthodoxy was in danger, or that our missionary work is about to come to an end.

It is true that we are presently threatened, and we take this threat very seriously. But the cause of this threat is not difficult to understand, and it does not in itself place us in any uncanonical position. In a word: our bishop does not understand us or our work, and he is trying to "use" us for his own plans. Spiritually and canonically, we are in the right: it is absurd and impossible to "establish a monastery" against the wishes of the only monks in that monastery; the very "Decree on Monasteries" of our Synod of Bishops sets forth the right of monks to elect their own Head; and the very idea of monasteries in Orthodox history is clearly that of independent spiritual centers that have their own autonomous life and are not subject to interference from bishops unless they try to introduce novelties in dogmas or church life. This is the ideal, and this is the way Jordanville and Father Panteleimon's monastery in Boston are operated today; and this is why monasteries can be inspirers for the rest of the Orthodox people—because they offer the possibility to preach and live Orthodox Christianity free from all external influences—whether the cares of parish life, the whims of bishops, or whatever.

In our present case, we have a fundamental disagreement with our bishop over the organization of our monastery: we wish to be independent and continue the tradition of Jordanville and Father Panteleimon, while our bishop wants to control everything himself which would mean the end of our missionary work (as you yourself very well realize). Therefore, the question of "obedience" does not enter in at all, and it is spiritually illegitimate for our bishop to try to impose his ideas concerning the organization of our monastery by this means. When Fr. Panteleimon was received into the Synod, no bishop appointed himself "Head" over his monastery; and we have exactly the same right to independence. Our mistake was that we did not in the very beginning stand up for this principle, and this allowed our bishop to believe that we were weak and that he could do whatever he wanted with us. We misplaced our trust in him, and we confess that you were right all along about him. But now we are prepared to stand up and fight for the independence which the Church and its canons guarantee to monasteries.

Monastic obedience cannot possibly be "slavery"; if that were true, then the Church would be divided up into "slaves" and "tyrants." Some people in the Church at various times have tried to enforce this perverted concept, but it does not come from the Church or from monasticism. All Orthodox Christians, and especially monks and nuns, are trying to cut off their own will and lead a God-pleasing life; but to meekly bow down to tyranny, most especially when this tyranny only destroys a God-pleasing work and extinguishes the Christian and monastic spirit in its victims—is certainly only a parody and mockery of Orthodoxy and monasticism.

We are absolutely resolved, in all obedience to the Church and lawful ecclesiastical authority, not to become a part of any such mockery. We pray that our firmness will not lead to any scandal, and that we can proceed according to the letter as well as the spirit of all the Church's canons. But we know also that the canons were made for man, and not man for the canons, that above the canons is the spirit that inspired them, and that to preserve this spirit we are prepared even to go against the letter of separate canons, if these are enforced in order to crush our spirit. In actual fact, no one would dream of trying to enforce the letter of every canon today, for then there would be no Orthodox Christians left at all! Our own bishop is in San Francisco "uncanonically," for it is against the canons to transfer bishops from one

Diocese to another (this canon has caused considerable fighting recently in the Church of Greece); it is also against the canons to ordain a deacon before the age of 25, or a priest before 30 (this is strictly enforced in the Greek Church, and one of our priest correspondents in Africa wrote us a year or two ago that a priest was desperately needed for Tanzania, but the only candidate there was 25 years old and under no circumstances could he be ordained before 5 more years— but according to the letter of this canon most of our Russian priests are “uncanonical”. Etc.

Please believe that despite our recent trials we are not crushed in spirit. In fact, on the contrary, now that our very existence is being attacked, we are more persuaded than ever that the path on which Vladika John blessed and inspired us to go, is correct, and that by his prayers, and in accordance with God’s will, we will go on this path through every suffering, all the way to martyrdom, if God calls us to this. The fact that such a severe attack has come upon us only persuades us that the devil wishes us to give up this path, because it is right.

You seem to believe that we cannot continue the path we have begun as monks. But we believe, on the contrary, that only in monasticism, with all the suffering and trials that this choice must inevitably bring upon us, can our work spread and bring the maximum good. While we were “in the world” everything came easy to us—we had much work but no great trials and attacks—but now everything is difficult, on every side we are attacked, trials and temptations are many. But these are spiritual proofs that our path is right, even more right now than it was before.

We are weak and sinful, and what we have undertaken is far, far beyond our strength and our spiritual talents. Nonetheless, God multiplies His favors to us, and we go forward with difficulties and sorrows, yet certain that He is with us, and Vladika John also. The form which our future existence will take is still uncertain. We always thought that to be a “monastery” was beyond us, but in principle the Synod has blessed this and the only problem now is one of organization and independence—and this has happened without our own will being involved at all, in fact it has been forced upon us. If our work so far has pleased God, then surely He will not leave us now or abandon us to the path of pseudo-Orthodoxy!

Glory be to God for everything! Do not believe for a moment that we are abandoning the path we began with Vladika John’s blessing. We go forward with absolute trust in God, on the straight monastic path which Vladika John foretold to us when he called our Brotherhood a “reflection of Valaam” and when he told me, when I told him of our hopes for a missionary monastery away from the city: “I too believe that there will be such a missionary monastery in California.”

Only pray for us, dear Elena Yurevna, and do not lose hope in us; and do not cease to tell us what is right!

After I had written the above, Father Herman read the address of Vladika Vitaly (the elder) on the occasion of his consecration as bishop. One paragraph in it tells of what inspired the great accomplishments of his younger years, what his basic spiritual orientation was. It is precisely the same as ours, and even if we never accomplish a fraction of what he accomplished, this attitude is worthy of imitation, and we are both absolutely convinced that only by its means will we be able to bring forth any fruits at all in the Church of Christ. The Pharisees will doubtless find that these words of Vladika Vitaly are full of “self-will” and “disobedience,” but following them he accomplished great things in and for the Church, and they burn with the very spirit that is so needed in the Church today, the same spirit we long to burn with!

(From a letter to Mrs. E.Y. Kontsevich March 24 / April 6, 1971)

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We heard from San Francisco that Vladika Anthony knew or suspected our attitude toward him, and that he was resolved not to lose his reputation of “peacemaker” for our sakes, and so he would not touch us for the time being. Perhaps Vlad. Nektary advised him not to be so hard on us, or perhaps he just guessed at our feelings. At any rate, we received a striking

confirmation of this diagnosis very soon. On the Feast of the Ascension, when we were still unable to travel to San Francisco because of our truck, we were astonished when shortly after dawn who should arrive but Vladika Anthony himself! He acted as though it were the most natural thing in the world for an Archbishop not to be serving in his own Cathedral on such a feast day (Vladika Nektary served there), and told us he had wanted to come to us after Pascha but only now got the opportunity. We of course were quite nervous, but resolved to place all our hope in God, and His saints, to accept gratefully the spiritual gifts of Divine Liturgy and Holy Communion, and then see what God would send us—we rather hoped that we would finally “have it out” with Vladika and bring everything into the open.

After Liturgy Vladika said we would have no reading at Trapeza, as we had “much to talk about.” After some small talk, the Russian who had driven Vladika retired to rest, and we waited to see what Vladika would say. To our great astonishment we found that he was just as tense and nervous as we were—and that he didn’t say anything at all! He asked about our service on Pascha, without expressing any disapproval of the fact that we didn’t try harder to get to San Francisco then; he told us about the service at Fort Ross the next week without even suggesting that we come to “be seen”; and said not a word about “obedience,” “prelest,” or anything of the sort!

After Vladika himself retired to rest for a while (to my kellia, where Fr. Herman had placed in a conspicuous place a small card with the text in Russian, to inspire us: “Stavropigialny missionary Brotherhood of St. Job of Pochaev—Vladika Vitaly”), Fr. Herman and I consulted: we decided he had indeed come as a “peacemaker,” and that if he himself does not raise any issues we also should say nothing, following Vlad. Laurus’ advice not to do anything rash but simply to continue acting independently. After resting, Vladika briefly looked at our printshop, where he made the offhand comment (with a nervous laugh) that perhaps he had offended us in the past?—to which we said nothing at all. And he left.

Nonetheless, with this visit our situation did not change in the least; only a “cease-fire” had been declared, as it were. We simply continued our independent printing activities expecting war to break out again when we finished our Russian Life of Vladika John, which we issued as published by the Brotherhood of St. Herman of Alaska—which Vladika had supposedly abolished! We left San Francisco on the same day we came, and Vladika Anthony had time only to read the text hurriedly before we left, and obviously he had not yet “digested” it thoroughly. To our surprise, in principle he did not seem opposed to it, did not even protest that he hadn’t been informed in advance, and about the text he only wondered “what will people in the Kazan church think?” (Here is the life of a saint of universal significance, a patron saint of the Russian Diaspora—and he wonders what the local trouble-makers might think! That surely reveals something about restriction to a narrow, “diocesan” outlook, to say the least!) But we fully expect some later repercussions, and do not expect the “ceasefire” to last indefinitely!

So you see, we have “peace” for a while, and we continue to operate independently; but the basic unhealthy situation remains unchanged. How long it will be before the next battle breaks out we do not know, but we suspect it will not be until after the Sobor of Bishops in Sept., at which Vladika will doubtless wish to present himself as “head” of a peaceful and flourishing monastery. We remain at our battle stations, but we follow the advice of Vladikas Laurus and Nektary not to do anything rash and to wait until we are provoked into action. Meanwhile we will shortly send a new letter to Vladika Laurus and see if he has any further advice. Our present idea is to wait until Vladika Anthony makes some new attack against our independence, and then to present him with an outspoken letter, full of respect and love but very firm, telling him what we will not do. We are convinced that he will listen only to strong words and actions; meek requests he will simply ignore or crush. We are quite certain that he will fight long and hard against a stavropigialny monastery in his Diocese (Matushka Ariadna has that status, and he can’t do a thing with her!), and that he would never have permitted it if we had asked for it explicitly before our tonsure; doubtless he will finally grant it, if at all, only to avoid a scandal. If only he could be made to see that as independent we will be his best friends, whereas as his crushed slaves we would be only his secret enemies! Our resolve to be unflinchingly firm is only reinforced by seeing Vladika Nektary—who, facing death, finds his most difficult trial is to accept spiritually Vladika Anthony’s unjust and condescending treatment of him, not allowing bitterness to creep in. Vladika Nektary chose the path of meekness; but we cannot afford that! We are only sad that we ourselves cause Vladika Nektary sorrow because we would not become his disciples when he himself

wanted to establish a monastery—but we realized then that that would be the end of our independent mission of the printed word, and we hate to think of the position we would now be in if we had agreed to follow him out of politeness or pity. We do not regret that we have faithfully followed the words of St. John Cassian: “Flee women and bishops!”

We regretfully come to the conclusion that in the San Francisco Archdiocese, under the present leadership, there is simply no room for monks; they can exist and flourish only independently of that lead leadership, as Abbess Ariadna does. Vladika Anthony’s relentless (but apparently unintentional—that’s just the way he operates) persecution of his monks is emphasized by his visit to Vladika Nektary in the hospital, where he so upset the sick and dying man that the nurse had to make him leave” (He was apparently chastising him for opening a parish in Portland without his knowledge—he needn’t worry, that parish seems to be in the process of closing itself down, and almost certainly will do so without Vladika Nektary.)

A bad sign—word reaches us from S.F. that laymen (whom we know) close to Vlad. Anthony are spreading the story that we are in “prelest,” have no one in charge of us, etc. Why doesn’t the ruling hierarch tell us his “suspicions” instead of laymen?

(From a letter to Father Panteleimon (Mitropoulos) on 7/20 July 1971)

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Fr. Fyodor’s being so upset is apparently significant of something; he complained also to Deacon Nicholas. As for giving advice, he asked for it, telling Fr. Herman that he was dissatisfied where he was, that he had a chance to go to Vlad. Vitaly, or maybe he would join us, and what did Fr. Herman think? Fr. Herman’s reply was by no means unkind or sharp, but it was very definitely based on the idea that we could not possibly ask someone to travel 3000 miles to our primitive conditions when he was no more than casually (if at all) interested in what we are doing. Fr. Herman suggested that he read several issues of the OW if he wanted to know what makes our community “tick,” but that probably he would find himself more at home with Vlad. Vitaly’s Russian-oriented work. That Fr. Fyodor could get so upset at this leads one to suspect that he indeed did have in mind just what he told you: that he, being experienced (?) in monasticism, wanted to come and “run the show.”

But of course he is correct when he says that what we are doing is “irregular”—from the point of view of the prevailing Russian Church practice. There are, however, plentiful precedents from the lives of Saints—St. Sergius, for example—for going to the wilderness to save your soul. “Establishing a monastery” is another matter, but we did not come here with the intention of “establishing a monastery,” and in fact we’ve had nothing but trouble since Vladika A. “established a monastery” for us; but if this is what God wills and the Church desires that we have, then we will fight to have a real one, and not a fake one that is just a bishop’s whim, and we will fight for the genuine, independent monastic spirit and not be tempted by any barren fig trees that come around boasting of their “experience,” ukases, organizational ability, or whatever.

In the prevailing Russian understanding today a “monastery” is a place with an incidental collection of people, with a definite function in the Church: to serve as a bishop’s summer residence, picnic center, manpower pool for church needs, etc. And “monks” are those people who become slaves, crushed by the authorities for the sake of “obedience,” who can be used by the church organization: the more hopeful ones as bishops, the less hopeful ones as hieromonks in parishes that can’t afford anything better, and the complete fools to remain in the monastery and tend the cows. Against such a perverted idea, both of monasteries and of “obedience” and the monastic virtues, we emphatically protest, and if God grants us to have a real monastery here, it will fit into this “accepted” picture only over our dead bodies. This is what V. A. has in mind (and Vlad. Vitaly also, who recently forbade an Athonite hieromonk to reestablish the skete at Grad Kitezh or anywhere else), and this is apparently what Fr. Fyodor thinks also. In this concept “monasticism” has become some kind of spiritual gymnastics (pokloni, obediences, etc.) which can be acquired by living for a while in a “monastery” and once you have it you can become an incidental member of any other “monastery” and offer others the fruit of your gymnastic experience—in the meantime rising in the hierarchy of church ranks until, if you’re lucky, you become a bishop and you can run

your own show. No! Monasticism is a disposition and effort of the soul striving for salvation, and its coenobitic form is forged by living in community with others of the same mind and soul and coming to be one in aspiration with them, each one spurring the others on to salvation. This, from all signs, is what Fr. Panteleimon has, and the Greeks in general seem still very aware of monasticism in itself and not just as a function in the Church at the mercy of bishops. Fr. Neketas was shocked when we spoke to him of Fr. Panteleimon as a candidate for bishop; an abbot isn't supposed to be "promoted" to bishop, but remain where he is for life; and if Fr. Panteleimon did become a bishop, except in an extreme emergency, he would lose all respect in Greece.

This concept, however, seems to be dying out among Russians, certainly among bishops.

(From a letter to Laurence Campbell 10/23 August 1971)

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Our spiritual orientation is: devotion to St. Herman and discipleship to Vladika John and faithfulness to his testament and tradition to us, which includes in some degree being a "reflection of Valaam."

Our rule being coenobitic, everything is held in common, and no one has anything of his "own"—except, for practical purposes, the personal effects, books, icons, etc., in his own cell. All needs are paid for out of the common treasury.

Authority, when necessary, is exercised by the eldest in our community, Fr. Herman, and after him by Fr. Seraphim. The obediences to be given form a part of the whole work and circumstances of the community, and their importance will generally be evident. If in particular cases you do not always see this, you will just have to trust us. So that the activity of community will proceed by common consent, and not according to the whim of individuals, nothing is undertaken without a blessing, no matter what one may "feel" or "think," and all obediences are performed according to the rules and spirit of the community. Phrases such as "I insist, I demand, I refuse," etc., are absolutely forbidden. General questions affecting the whole community will be decided "soborno," by common consent (such as questions of stoves for winter). We do not acknowledge the right of any ecclesiastical authority outside the community to issue commands regarding our internal life, organization, or any individual member; any such attempt will be judged and acted on by the common consent of all members of the community. Our community is a monastery and not an episcopal dacha.

Worldly actions, conversation, manner, tone, objects, etc., are absolutely prohibited, as being utterly destructive of the monastic spirit. This includes:

- a. Singing worldly songs, whistling, ostentatious spitting, littering.
- b. Radio, newspapers, or magazines besides those received by the community, unless by special blessing for a definite purpose.
- c. Crude or sexually oriented talk, reference to "urination," etc.
- d. Arguing, proving ones point, raising ones voice, idle comments, complaints, and in general everything that upsets the general peace and order.
- e. Demanding of special treatment or privileges, such as bed pans, special foods or preparation, or other paraphernalia and habits of old maids and self-pampered bachelors. Sufficient allowance will be given in cases of illness, allergy, etc.
- f. Demands to be placed in a position of authority, on a "Board of Directors," etc.— these concepts are foreign to the nature of our community's existence.

g. Nosiness, curiosity, idle questions.

h. Crossing the legs (for: Life of St. Arsenius the Great).

i. And free and easy, worldly manner with visitors. After visitors have been greeted one or more brothers will be assigned to them, and the others will continue their work.

j. No food is kept in kellias, and no eating between meals, unless with blessing (water is allowed between meals).

Finally, in everything the spirit of mutual love, trust, and respect must prevail. For infractions of the above rules, penances of pokloni may be given; but the severest punishment will be given to the brother who allows the sun to set on his anger against another brother. According to the rule of St. Cassian, such a one will not be allowed to pray with the brethren until he comes to repentance and begs forgiveness. For without mutual love, trust, and respect, nothing written above makes any sense, and there cannot be any community at all.

(From a letter to Laurence Campbell 10/23 August 1971)

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Fr. Cyprian apparently took too seriously some comments Fr. Herman made to him, which were not intended seriously. In January we received a letter from Fr. Cyprian: “immediately pack up and come to Jordanville by the beginning of Lent; we’ll send Holowka to help you move. Your situation is hopeless and you’ll fall into prelest, and besides Jordanville is dying off and in ten years there’ll be no one left to do the work, and if you don’t come nobody else will be inspired to come either.” Needless to say, we took this as another temptation, of which we’ve gotten quite a share since our tonsure (that, by the way, is supposed to be a sign that what we’re doing is good after all), and we stayed put. Last month we saw Fr. C. again in S.F., and his refrain now is: “You’re bezpopovtsi, you must get ordained or you’ll fall into prelest” (which logic is not too clear to us).

Well, in the meantime we stay put, do our work (which never stops piling up), and remain more convinced than ever that we are right where we should be.

(From a letter to Dimitry on August 13/26, 1971)

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Fr. Herman was sorry not to see you on the way back, but he had only time for a talk with Vladika Nektary (11 p.m. to 4 a. m.!) before his plane left Wednesday morning. God willing, we will be seeing you more often in future. Fr. Herman was able to visit Vladika Savva’s grave at the convent also and have a good talk with Mother Amvrossia.

Vladika Nektary suggested to Fr. Herman an idea which now won’t give us rest until we do something about it: that he, as Bishop of Seattle, revive Vladika Johns Blagovestnik (Good Tidings), of which Fr. Herman was once editor, as his own publication, but entrusting it entirely to us. (Vladika Anthony several years ago deliberately ceased publication of this, starting an insignificant publication of his own, and told us that we could not use the name—for reasons which now become more and more evident!) Previously Blagovestnik was devoted almost entirely to lives and services of saints, ascetics, and new martyrs, but now we would definitely add contemporary editorials, speaking explicitly about Constantinople, telling about Fr. Panteleimon and old calendarists, etc. We are of course short of hands and time, but 16 pages or so every 2 months I think we could handle.

(From a letter to Father Neketas Palasis 3/16 February 1973)

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We were most moved when we found out that Vladika Savva had willed us his books and papers, and had even left money for Father Herman to come as soon as possible and take care of them. (It would be best not to go into some of the reasons for that!) Thanks be to God, Fr. Herman did so last week.

How true that in Vladika Savva we have lost a spiritual and righteous bishop, and I fear to say, one of the last of them. In the last two weeks both Fr. Herman and I were in Seattle and spoke both with Frs. Panteleimon and Neketas and with Vladika Nektary. No one is optimistic about the future! In Vladika Savva's righteous and patient enduring of the injustice which fell to him in his last months on earth, there seems to be an example and pattern for the rest of us who wish to remain honest and upright Orthodox Christians. Let us make a covenant among ourselves, that wherever we may happen to be in Christ's Church, that we will not be anything but honest and upright, whatever Church politics may say or what we might have to sacrifice for it!

I hope you understand! With Vladika John's repose we were orphaned; but now with the passing of Vladikas Leonty and Savva, and with Vladikas Averky and Nektary in such a frail condition, who will we have left to whom we can speak our hearts?

(From a letter to Father Igor [Kapral, future Metropolitan Hilarion] February 7/20, 1973)

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[Signature:]
With heartfelt love in Christ our Saviour,
Seraphim, monk
with the blessing of Father Herman

(From a letter to Father Neketas Palasis August 19 / September 1, 1973)

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Both Mrs. Kontzevitch and her husband have entrusted to our Brotherhood the work of editing, translating, and correcting the writings of I. M. Kontzevitch and have given us instructions concerning this. This is all the more important, by the way, in the case of the book Optina and Its Era of which Fr. Herman was co-editor with Mrs. Kontzevitch.

(From a letter to Deacon Lev Pukhalo 10/23 November 1973)

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Father Herman returns tomorrow morning. According to the account of his talk at Jordanville in "Orthodox Russia," it left a powerful impression—with 150 people present.

(From a letter to Alexey Yang on December 20, 1973)

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Don't be upset about Nina's ideas on evolution and the like. As Fr. Herman says, she's been "Panteleimonized," which means: in general, the right attitudes, but a little "too-intellectual," too sophisticated tone, with thinking a little divorced from reality.

(From a letter to Alexey Yang on January 9/22, 1974)

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Everything that I write will be read and criticized by my co-laborer Father Herman, to whom I am in obedience.

(From a letter to Dr. Kalomiros February 25, 1974)

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Hopefully in a week or so I will have the Dobzhansky article (which I finally found in the Paschal cleanup which, fortunately, Father Herman forces us to make).

(From a letter to Alexey Yang on April 10, 1974)

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Enclosed finally is my re-doing of the chapter on “Christian Evolutionism,” incorporating some suggestions of Father Herman.

(From a letter to Alexey Yang, August 2/15, 1974)

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We received the two sections on Evolution. The “scientific” part Father Herman and I read together and found problems.

(From a letter to Alexey Yang September 21 / October 4, 1974)

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Enclosed is my working over of Part I of the evolution [book] (which I read this morning to Fr. Herman, and he approved).

Christopher left us two days ago for the first leg of his pilgrimage, to Canada. He got worse before he left, just plain defiantly lazy and self-willed, and I gave up on him; but Fr. Herman gave him a real talking-to, with the result that he got scared and now has asked us to help him get on the path to salvation. He is supposed to return in 3 weeks and undertake a “course” under Fr. Herman together with the new convert [Symeon Hill].

(From a letter to Alexey Yang 23 May / 5 June 1975)

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Have you been suffering like that all the time since Friday?! Your state is very familiar to us—we’ve been going through attacks of the same “disease” for some time now! Fortunately, when I get the “rash,” Fr. Herman is usually over his, and vice versa, and we are able to come out of the depths of despair and get on with the necessary work.

I think the cause of the “disease” is very simple: you, like us, are very trusting and always looking on the good side of people, no matter what they might do; and then, when their acts or words reveal that they have no such trust in return, but rather are spreading distrust everywhere, and then on top of it all accuse you of spreading distrust—it is truly enough to plunge one into discouragement.

The remedy is simple, and consists of exactly the same thing we told you several years ago when you were last attacked by the “Greeks”: JUST PAY NO ATTENTION WHATEVER TO THEM. Don’t answer them, don’t justify yourself or anyone else before them, but also:

don't trust a single word they say, and don't do anything they might demand.

We ourselves feel badly betrayed by our "Greeks." All these years we trusted that they were of one mind and soul with us, giving everything they had for the cause of the English-speaking mission. But really, it seems that all this time they were only building for their own glory, cruelly abusing the trust of our simple Russian bishops, priests, and laymen, in order finally to "take over" and proclaim themselves the sole Orthodox authorities and experts.

We still pray that we are mistaken in this, but let them prove it now by their acts and words—not by their long-winded self-justifications.

For years we have "excused" their excesses and mistakes.

(From a letter to Alexey Yang on October 2/15, 1975)

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Br. Laurence returned safely and, after thinking it over, wants to "try again" to stay. What can we say? By now it's obvious that he just isn't after what we're striving for, but is just tagging along, and is emotionally attached to us; we hate simply to tell him to find someplace else where he can be of one mind and soul (knowing he will never find such a place), and we also hate just to "drag him along" with us, requiring him to act in a way which must be voluntary in order to work. His "fits" sometimes (as for example, this time) make an immense drain on me, and Fr. Herman also, for actually what he does is call into question our whole way of life, not seeing or valuing it; and this way of life is already so difficult, requiring great struggle and sensitivity, that it can be destroyed. He wants an "idiorhythmic" way—i.e., old-maidism—and he just can't see that this is ridiculous and tragic when we have someone like Fr. Herman who can lead us in oneness of soul and mind (something we poor Americans can't do, as long as Orthodoxy is so frail in us).

(From a letter to Alexey Yang October 22/November 4, 1975)

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What you want will come in God's time, if it is truly His will; just don't think you are so wise.

This comes from me; Fr. Herman would probably say it stronger! As far as we know, he made his connections all right and is in Jordanville to say farewell to his Abba [Archbishop Averky]. This is a great, great loss to us. We thank God that we were able to present him as a "living link" while he was still alive rather than (as is usual) waiting until he is gone before starting to appreciate him.

(From a letter to Nina Seko on April 3/16, 1976)

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Father Herman instructs me to tell you: Orthodoxy is a mystery of God's love which cannot be defined; fear to lose it.

(From a letter to Father Alexy from Boston on June 10/23, 1976)

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[Signature:]
With love and respect in Christ,
Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

By assignment from the Superior,
Hieromonk Herman

(From a letter to Bishop Nektary on June 16/29, 1977)

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When Fr. Herman identified the writer of the Boston epistle as “not believing in God,” he was of course speaking a little strongly. Reduced to plain prose, this statement means: this was not written with love and pastoral concern, but with a coldly calculating mind that is smug in its own “correctness” and relishes the opportunity to spread this “party line” to others—with now already disastrous results.

(From a letter to Andrew Bond on March 22/April 4, 1978)

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If after all that I have written here, there remain differences in our approach to the Faith, these differences have not yet gone so far that it is impossible for us to pray together. The question of receiving Holy Communion is something deeper; this is a spiritual question which our Superior, Father Herman, decides individually in confession.

(From a letter to Mr. Stamos, Palm Sunday 1978)

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As for the title Living Orthodoxy, the idea is good, but Fr. Herman fears the word “living” is already “polluted” for us because of the “Living Church” in Russia and now has an overtone of “renovated.”

(From a letter to Donald in Tennessee January 28/February 10, 1979)

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Dear Rev. [Roy] Goodridge [Wales, UK],

Thank you for your letter, expressing your anguish over the present state of the Anglican Church. Fr. Herman has directed me to reply to [you.]

(From a letter to R. Goodridge 9/22 February 1979)

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We were glad to hear from you from Jordanville, and look forward to news from Mt. Athos. Friday night we sang the canon to St. Demetrius the Great Martyr, praying that he would be able to open the way to the Holy Mount for you, and every day we sing his magnification.

Why do they want you to stay in Jordanville for two weeks? If it’s absolutely necessary or useful, then of course you should. But if it’s just so they can “test” you and see if you’re “worthy” to be having an independent existence outside of Jordanville, or to prepare you for bishop—then run from it as fast as possible. Vladika Nektary on his last visit mentioned again his desire to retire with us here, but said that now he would not, because now we will be taken away for bishops in 2 or 3 years, and then no one knows who will be “appointed to Platina,” and he wouldn’t like it. I suggested to him that we would take the path of Sergius of Radonezh instead of George Grabbe (who says that according to Metr. Anthony one can not

refuse to be a bishop), and he was consoled a little.

I deeply, deeply feel that we have God's work to do here, and if we allow ourselves to be taken from it we will betray our calling, and probably be flops besides. Vladika Laurus apparently looks on us with the eyes of the organization, not giving much importance or value to what we do, and only looking for the right hole to plug us into for the "good of the whole." Your two weeks in Jordanville (if it is not really very necessary or useful) would hurt not so much we as our common work—making it seem less urgent to the church world, and making you very "visible."

Forgive me if I'm not looking at this right. You will know best what to do when you return.

I think most of all about our summer Pilgrimage, which could be a magnificent opportunity for "Orthodox enlightenment" such as is not being given very much nowadays. How are the sermons in Jordanville? I have the impression that a heavy "church" atmosphere is hanging over everything and stifling a much needed freshness, and we could be helping to give this freshness. Perhaps when we're dead they'll even recognize our labors—but at least we have to help those we can. Is this wrong?

With love in Christ,
Your brother, hieromonk Seraphim

(From a letter to Father Herman (Podmoshensky) on the way to Greece on April 30/May 13, 1979)

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Please pray for Fr. Herman. God willing, he is already on Mt. Athos.

(From a letter to Father Roman Lukyanov on May 1/14, 1979)

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Dear Brother [Fr. Herman],

Christ is Risen!

Glory be to God that you arrived on Athos—may God grant that your stay be fruitful, both for now and the future.

We are working well. I get time for writing only on Sundays—if this were a permanent situation I wouldn't get much done. The two of us can accomplish much, but separately not much, I think.

Give thanks to God for everything, and take what you can of value from the old world. May God return you safely. We miss you!

With love in Christ,
Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

(From a letter to Father Herman (Podmoshensky) in Greece on May 9/22, 1979.)

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We do not know Fr. Chrysostomos well.
I read his letters with great sympathy, seeing him as someone broken and humbled by his

own over-critical approach in earlier years, as well as by the factions and jealousies of the Greek Old Calendarist movement. Fr. Herman, however (who is sharper psychologically) noted that his letters were too humble and too complicated, and that he probably wasn't too different from the other Greek factions we already knew about.

The lesson to you is probably: sobriety. Yes, you should trust your heart (I'm sure Fr. Herman will agree with me)—what thing better do we have? Certainly not our calculating mind.

Years ago, when Fr. Herman and I were young and naive, we dreamed of a vigorous, single-minded movement of zealous Orthodoxy among young converts, Russians, Greeks, etc. Alas, we have become older and wiser and no longer expect much. All our confessors of Orthodoxy have their all- too-human side also.

God is with us, and we have many joys. We remember you with much love. Hopefully, Fr. Herman will have a word for you when he returns. Pray for him. On his last postcard he says he might have a chance to go to Romania to venerate the relics of Blessed Paisius, and the thought is rather frightening—too close to the Russian NKVD, and Fr. Herman's father was an "enemy of the people."

(From a letter to Father Feodor Yurevits May 24/June 6, 1979)

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I've been invited to speak at Jordanville on St. Herman's day (Dec 12/25) when there will be a youth pilgrimage. The people in back of it are of the anti-Boston clergy, and this pilgrimage, God willing, will be part of the call to spiritual life and awareness not in the framework of narrowness and fanaticism. Please pray that I will be able to say a fruitful word there. Fr. Herman spoke at the pilgrimage there in 1973 and gave a flaming word, but people weren't as prepared for it then as they are beginning to be now. Only I'm a dull speaker compared to Fr. Herman, so please pray that I will be able to get some "punch" over.

(From a letter to Andrew [Bond] 8/21 November 1979)

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People like Father Herman who try to help others to see their own shortcomings and overcome them literally turn gray when their good words are returned to them as a slap in the face. That is very crude of you. When Fr. Herman tells you that you act out of pride in your good deeds (which is so obvious I shouldn't think it would need proof), only a totally insensitive person could draw the conclusion that it is the good deeds that should be abandoned and not the pride. But let me repeat it for you in simpler language: Many of your good deeds, indeed probably all of them to some extent, are spoiled because they are mixed with pride; continue to do good deeds, but pray God to make you humble so you will not spoil them. The effect of a good deed done with humility is 100 times greater than the effect of a good deed done with pride—first of all inwardly, but then outwardly also. It is just a slander, caused by spiritual insensitivity, to say or imply that Fr. Herman told you not to do good deeds; you are probably thinking this just to justify your anger against him, which is caused by the fact that he tells you the truth about yourself.

(From a letter to John [Hudanish] March 13/26, 1980)

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Thinking about my Genesis course this summer, I was rereading part of Dr. Kalomiros' letters. How discouraging! One loses all inspiration to get tangled up in this subject, seeing how he handles it. I wondered why, and Fr. Herman answered me: They're trying to keep up with the "advanced" fashions of the universities; and I think that's probably the answer.

(From a letter to Father Alexey Yang. Meatless Saturday, 1981)

Part I. On the narrow path to salvation.
9. About Father Dimitriy Dudko.

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We are reading the book of talks of Fr. Dimitry Dudko, given last year in his parish (before he was arrested) in Moscow. Very inspiring! He's in the Moscow Patriarchate, and his philosophy is sometimes imprecise—but how boldly he speaks against hypocrisy, atheism, church politics! The people he speaks to (he answers their questions) are on a very primitive level.

(From a letter to Alexey Yang on October 2/15, 1975)

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By the way, we are very impressed by the book by Fr. Dimitry Dudko. We should not call him a “confessor” (as one of your critics does!) so as not to confuse people into thinking he is “the real thing” 100%, and also some of his ideas are a little off—but his voice comes through as very genuine, as spoken through suffering—which seems to be the dimension lacking in our poor “convert-Ortho- doxy.”

(From a letter to Father Valery Lukyanov on October 5/18, 1975)

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We want out of this phoney atmosphere of “know-it-all,” of “humble instruction” of the lower classes. As Fr. Dimitry Dudko so well says (and for all his mistakes, he is Orthodox), this is the religion of the West: “Spirituality with comfort.”

(From a letter to Nina Seko 9/22 October 1975)

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Fr. Dimitry Dudko has an answer for the new convert leading a lonely life in the world: Enter as much as possible into the Church's spirit and way of thought and life. (In Russian this is called “churchification”).

(From a letter to Paul [Bartlett] November 27/December 10, 1975)

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We've received some new talks of Fr. Dimitry Dudko—and he really does have much of what is necessary not only in the Soviet Union, but here also. He speaks to the point against making “popes” out of our bishops and spiritual fathers, of everyone thinking for himself instead of leaving it to others. His is one of the soundest and freshest voices in Orthodoxy today (despite some “theoretical” errors), and gives great hope for the future of Orthodoxy in Russia. With this in mind, we must be “open” rather than “closed” with regard to the Moscow Patriarchate. The whole question of ecumenism and apostasy cannot be placed simply on the canonical-dogmatic-formal level, but must be viewed first spiritually. Fr. Dimitry also speaks forcefully against letting a purely formal approach to the canons bind us spiritually and actually strangle church life—thus allowing the Protestants to take over with their fresher approach.

(From a letter to Alexey Yang on July 29/August 11, 1976)

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We find that Fr. Dimitry Dudko has just the right spirit for us today.

(From a letter to Vladika Laurus on October 18/31, 1978)

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Fr. Dimitry Dudko, by the way, is good to read—I think on the whole he speaks more to the heart of Orthodox Christians than just about anyone else today. (Of course, he has his mistakes also.) We've received two brief notes from him—all the rest of our correspondence with him is probably in the GPU files.

(From a letter to Father Theodore Yurevits May 24/June 6, 1979)

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Almost all of our younger Russian priests, in America at least, are getting inspiration chiefly from Russia, and especially from Fr. Dimitry Dudko. This is what you should be doing too.

Read Fr. Dimitry Dudko and start to learn; you cannot help but be inspired by him. His constant theme is: there's hope for us, because we suffer. He is now putting out a weekly newsletter which is tremendously inspiring. Fr. Dimitry, by the way, gives us a chance to get around some of our own problems here; here they don't like us to talk about uncanonized saints—but Fr. Dimitry openly refers to "Holy New Martyr Nicholas" (the Tsar).

(From a letter to Andrew Bond on 10/23 August 1979)

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We are trying to direct our missionary labors to a simple kind of flock, and we do have responses from it. Fr. Dimitry Dudko still seems to us to be nearest the center of the true spiritual concern today.

(From a letter to Father Hilarion on September 20/October 3, 1979)

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For the time being it may still look as though fanaticism is still in fashion, but things are changing. The whole attitude towards Fr. Dimitry Dudko in our Church is one sign of it— all the Russians receive him with open arms, and there is no talk about his "grace" at all— anyone who can talk like that is Orthodox, period. The problem of his bishops, intercommunion, etc., still remain—but all the time it becomes more obvious that these questions, in the Russian Church at least, are temporary and superficial and do not hinder the deeper unity between us and true sons of the Russian Church like Fr. Dimitry. Incidentally, his "rebellious" attitude towards his "correct" and "bureaucratic" bishops is also instructive for us.

(From a letter to Andrew [Bond] on November 8/21, 1979)

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The latest Orthodox Christian Witness contains a new attack against us. Now the attack is against Fr. Dimitry Dudko, and we (and Father Alexey Young) who have defended him are publicly accused of "telling outright fibs" and of being "unprincipled and irresponsible."

Again, we are not primarily concerned with the attack against us personally. But this is an attack against one of the best representatives of living Orthodox, the Orthodoxy of the heart! The author of * this article is most unfair (omitting Fr. Dimitry's other statements on the Catacomb Church and on the Ecumenical Movement, after he had been told something of what "ecumenism" actually means in the free world), uncharitable (extracting the maximum of "error" from Fr. Dimitry's words, without understanding the point of his words), and filled with a jesuitical logic that is most un-Orthodox.

(From a letter to Father Demetrios on May 23/June 5, 1980)

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For the sake of church harmony and peace, I myself went to visit you in Seattle a few weeks ago. On this visit, among other things, I told you how deeply Father Dimitry Dudko speaks to Orthodox Russians—and Americans too, for that matter; I have really met no Orthodox person who has read him seriously and sympathetically who has not been deeply moved by his Orthodox message for all of us today. And now, just a week or two after my visit, you have published a new attack, consigning Father Dimitry in effect to the ranks of the heretics and calling us who have printed about and defended him "unprincipled and irresponsible" and tellers of "outright fibs" (that is, lies) about him (p. 14, Orthodox Christian Witness, May 12/25). The specific quotations that are attacked in this article are from The Orthodox Word and Nikodemos, but Orthodox Russia and other periodicals in our Church have made similar defenses of Father Dimitry. These are serious accusations against members of one and the same Russian Church Abroad, and the anonymous author should certainly be identified and made responsible for his words.

This new attack is uncharitable in the extreme, both to Father Dimitry and to us who have supported him. And how unfair and inaccurate it is! The author of the article has selected a few statements made by Father Dimitry, but has passed over other statements which show him in a much more favorable light with regard to the question of ecumenism and the Russian jurisdictions (after he was better informed about these things by sympathetic people living abroad); he does not mention that, concerning the Catacomb Church, Father Dimitry has said nothing different from what some members of that Church themselves have said in recent years, and his words do not at all have the evil intent the author reads into them: he has not tried to understand what Father Dimitry is really trying to say in the statements that are criticized (they are not statements about "ecclesiology" at all, but warnings to his listeners not to make Orthodoxy into a "sect"—a warning which I believe you yourself should take to heart); he has not covered such shortcomings as Father Dimitry does have with love and sympathy, he has entirely missed the point of Father Dimitry's message in his haste to "catch" him in an error and discredit him as an Orthodox spokesman, and thereby also to brand us who defend him as unprincipled and irresponsible liars and opportunists, as though the reason we speak about Father Dimitry is in order to gain glory from this "celebrity," as the article calls him.

I deeply feel that it is terribly wrong, that it is a crime against Orthodoxy, for you to print such attacks, for you to grieve and insult your fellow Orthodox Christians so needlessly and without foundation!

You are not the only one to rise up against Father Dimitry; the Russian press also has its detractors of him, some going so far as to suspect him of being a KGB agent. Father Dimitry himself suffers immeasurably from these slanders and criticisms. Let me quote for you what he has written about his critics abroad, in a recent letter which describes his "sleepless nights":

"You are bold to criticize us without seeing what is what, and not knowing our circumstances... Is it not time to learn to understand each other, to help each other, to rejoice for each other?... Russia is perishing, the whole world is perishing, protecting itself behind a false prosperity; and we hinder each other from doing the work of God... The people for whom I have decided to give over my whole life have suddenly begun to poison me. O Lord, forgive them!... Help me to bear this very heavy cross!"

With all my heart I hope that you will learn from courageous Orthodox pastors like Father Dimitry and cease trying to “catch” them for phrases which may (or may not) be in error. Surely in your own heart—if you have read his writings with any kind of sympathy—you know that he is not an “ecumenist,” and any errors he may make in his writings come solely from his simplicity.

It is true that, at the present time, we clergy of the Russian Church Abroad could not concelebrate with Father Dimitry, but our unity with him in the faith is much deeper than this. As Father Dimitry himself has well said, our deeper unity is best expressed today (owing to the enslavement of the Moscow Patriarchate) by our external disunity, but this does not prevent us from being true brothers in the Orthodox faith and learning from and supporting each other. This is why our bishops have decreed that Father Dimitry and other imprisoned for the Orthodox faith in the USSR should be remembered by name at the Proskomedie.

I myself would love to speak to the Orthodox faithful on the message of Father Dimitry Dudko, which is so needed now by us all. But I could not do this now in Seattle, because this subject too has become “controversial,” the air has been “poisoned,” and whatever I say will be discounted and undermined. Anyone who trusts your publications will surely suspect me of being an “ecumenist” myself if I dared to defend him. Forgive me, but I just cannot take part in your conference. The struggle for salvation and preaching the Orthodox Gospel in today's world is difficult enough without having to suffer obstacles from one's own brothers in Christ.

We are living in a time of world-wide spiritual crisis, when the best people in the West are beginning to wake up to the truth of Orthodoxy and are coming to drink of its living waters. We have the common task of feeding the Orthodox flocks, not attacking the shepherds who really care for the flock, as Father Dimitry does. In such a time, you should not be occupying yourself with needless and unfair accusations, nor with uncharitable deductions about the views of others or with legalistic “inescapable conclusions” about the Russian jurisdictions, such as you have published in your latest attack (p. 17); any of the bishops or theologians of our Church could have told you how over-simplified and false these “conclusions” are. I think that in your haste to prove how “correct” you yourself are, you are losing sight of the bigger picture of Orthodoxy in today's world and are pushing yourself into a deadend, cut off from some of the most positive and genuine manifestations of Orthodoxy today.

May you be able to open your heart to what our bishops and the suffering Orthodox people in Russia and abroad can teach you. Then we will all rejoice and be one with you.

(From an open letter (written by Father Herman) to Father Nektas (Palassis) on June 2/15, 1980)

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The evils of our time are so great that sometimes we lose sight of the greater power of what we have to oppose them with—I think this is the mistake of those who are attacking Fr. Dimitry Dudko, who almost more than anyone else today is preaching the positive Orthodox Gospel, even though he is overwhelmed with the evils of contemporary society.

Archbishop Anthony and Bishop Nektary are both literally crushed by the attack on Fr. Dimitry Dudko.

...

Since writing the above, we've heard of Fr. Dimitry Dudko's “confession” on Soviet television. May God help this poor man in his hour of trial; one can only imagine the pressures and tortures placed upon him to extract this (chiefly, I would think, threats against his family and spiritual children). I hope there will be no gloating over this on the part of his enemies. For my part, I think the lesson in this for us is to go deeper within ourselves. It can be very consoling to know that someone there is a “hero” and is saying boldly what even we in freedom seldom have the courage or strength to say; but now we can appreciate a little better the suffering we must all go through to be true Orthodox Christians in these terrible times. This “confession” does not invalidate a single word he said before, as I see it; but now

it is others who will have to continue this work. We must all pray for each other more, and have more love and sympathy for each other. May God help us all! I sense the clouds becoming ever darker over America too.

(From a letter to Father Demetrios on June 9/22, 1980)

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Is Fr. Dimitry Dudko an ecumenist or not? This is a “red herring” if there ever was one. Call someone an “ecumenist,” and say it loud enough, and you will frighten people away for sure! Read Fr. Dimitry’s books and articles yourself and surely you won’t be able to accuse him of this.

In Fr. Nektas’ letter one cannot but note the glee with which he reports Fr. Dimitry’s “retraction.” Simple decency would have dictated a refusal to take advantage of this unfortunate event, which should cause us to pray for and sympathize with this poor man, apparently broken in his sense of mission (but not in his Christianity). But not only does he gloat over it, he deliberately rubs it in by quoting some Western news services (which at times can be so notoriously insensitive and inaccurate, as Fr. Nektas surely knows) who said Fr. Dimitry was “cheerful” and the like. This is playing dirty; and when one considers that Fr. Nektas omitted quoting other Western news reports which said just the opposite—that Fr. Dimitry was obviously “nervous and ill at ease”—it again adds up to dishonesty: the aim is not to tell the truth, but to discredit Fr. Dimitry. Such innuendo and half-truth should have no part in the Church, in polemics and otherwise.

Those who regard Fr. Dimitry Dudko simply as an “enemy of the regime have certainly missed the point about him. His words on the spiritual crisis of our times, and the need to start being Orthodox Christians right here and now, no matter what the circumstances, are a message we all need. His writings are most inspiring and helpful for us poor strugglers today, and it is tragic that many who could benefit from him may now turn away from his writings because of the “red herring” about him.

(From a letter to John [Hudanish] July 19/August 1, 1980)

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I read Fr. Roman’s letter again after reading your letter, and it’s obvious to me that his letter comes from the heart and was written with suffering and compassion, and certainly with no bad feelings. If there are one or two phrases you may have interpreted as “sarcastic,” they are certainly outweighed by the heartfelt sincerity of the letter as a whole. In any case, you should certainly not be judging Fr. Roman for “pride,” especially on the basis of a single word (and that from a person who is obviously not at home in the English language!). This temptation to make too-quick judgments of others is one into which we all fall, but that’s where we have to fight our first impulses and try to correct ourselves. In actual fact Fr. Roman is a very humble, simple man, and he would never even have spoken out on such an issue if he did not feel something very wrong in the Witness attack on Fr. Dimitry Dudko. If even he speaks out, you can be sure that many of our silent bishops and priests are also disturbed (as indeed we know).

Fr. Roman uses a very good phrase in his letter (which I don’t interpret as sarcastic at all): “theological microscope.” That is what you are using in your reflections on Fr. Dimitry Dudko. To make him into an “ecumenist” because his Patriarch gives communion to Roman Catholics is certainly theological nit-picking.

Our attitude towards Fr. Dimitry does not mean the acceptance of any views of his which may be mistaken, nor does it mean that we are in formal communion with him. We simply recognize him as a voice of the true Orthodox spirit which is so lacking in our world today, and even in most of our own church circles; his voice is a pledge that our lack of communion with the Moscow Patriarchate is only a temporary thing, because the Orthodoxy of someone like Fr. Dimitry is one with our own.

There is the question: Why does Fr. Dimitry not leave the Patriarchate and join the Catacomb Church? He has been criticized for saying he must stick with the Patriarchate because “that is what has been given us.” But did you ever think, realistically, about his alternatives?

(a) The Catacomb Church by its very nature is hidden and never reveals itself to outsiders, especially to such famous ones as Fr. Dimitry. It not only does not seek converts, it positively runs away from them, knowing the chances of being found out by KGB agents.

(b) To “join the Catacomb Church” Fr. Dimitry would surely want to meet some of its bishops and clergy and find out their real position on Church matters as opposed to hearsay opinions (would you join a Church or jurisdiction you knew only by hearsay?). This is virtually impossible under Soviet conditions. And there are many questions one would want to ask the Catacomb hierarchs before actually placing oneself under obedience to them: are the rumors that there are “sectarian” elements in their outlook true or false? Are the rumors true that they place “Russia” above “Orthodoxy”? etc. Wouldn’t you want these things cleared up before you joined such a Church? The point here is: the matter is by no means simple.

(c) Even if he could find the Catacomb Church and talk to its bishops, the decision to join it immediately puts an end to his activity, since this Church is totally illegal and all known members are instantly arrested. If you say that he should be ready to suffer this, then you should say the same thing about the clergy and laymen of the Catacomb Church—why don’t they “confess” their faith and be arrested instead of hiding in the catacombs and not making their faith available to all?

For these and other reasons it is totally unrealistic to expect Fr. Dimitry to “join the Catacomb Church” (if he did, glory to God, it would be a big message for all; but we can’t expect or demand it). This is not to say that we “recognize” the Moscow Patriarchate or deny the witness of the Catacomb Church; it is only to look at church matters in Russia realistically and compassionately. The Orthodox picture of the Russian Church situation today does not exactly correspond to the jurisdictional picture. Fr. Nektas and others, by trying to limit our view to the jurisdictional picture, and prove everyone a “heretic” who doesn’t belong to our jurisdiction, in my opinion are doing a disservice to the Orthodox Church and leading people in the direction of a sectarian outlook, away from the Orthodox outlook.

(From a letter to John [Hudanish] 3/16 September 1980)

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I personally feel that one of the present disagreements which has been caused by their attitude (the disagreement over Fr. Dimitry Dudko) is of such a magnitude that my participating in the Conference, knowing that public prayer for Fr. Dimitry and his fellow sufferers in the Moscow Patriarchate (whom Bishop Gregory calls “our brothers in one and the same Church”) could not be offered publicly, and open support for and defense of them could not be given—would be a betrayal of Orthodoxy on my part. I would be turning my back on my suffering Orthodox brothers and telling others not to pray for them, while justifying the pharisaic “correctness” that is spreading like a disease among us.

(From a letter to Father Demetrios on October 14/27, 1980)

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The article on Father Dimitry Dudko in our latest Orthodox Word is an attempt to give an Orthodox answer to this harsh attitude—especially the section “Is Fr. Dimitry an Ecumenist and a Heretic?”

In the end, I think, Fr. Dimitry Dudko’s attitude is the correct one: We should view the non-Orthodox as people to whom Orthodoxy has not yet been revealed, as people who are

potentially Orthodox (if only we ourselves would give them a better example!). There is no reason why we cannot call them Christians and be on good terms with them, recognize that we have at least our faith in Christ in common, and live in peace especially with our own families. St. Innocent's attitude to the Roman Catholics in California is a good example for us. A harsh, polemical attitude is called for only when the non-Orthodox are trying to take away our flocks or change our teaching.

(From a letter to Anna, read November 14/27, 1980)

Part I. On the narrow path to salvation.
10. About the Turin Shroud.

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Concerning the "Shroud," we poor ignorant ones are not even informed on the subject because we've been too busy and lazy to read about it! We're favorably disposed to the subject and wonder what possible proof there can be that it's a "fraud"—one might be uncertain or dubious, but to call it a "fraud" one must be quite definite and have proof.

(From a letter to Alexey Yang on August 16/29, 1972)

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I would question the very large emphasis given to the Shroud in the article as a *scientific proof*, such phrases as "the most important verification of Christianity outside of Holy Scripture," and "It can establish that Jesus Christ is true God and true man." How can *science* establish such a non-scientific truth?! As secondary evidence it might corroborate the fact of Christ's Resurrection, true—but not unless we have other then scientific grounds to accept the Shroud. "Scientific" knowledge by its nature is the least reliable form of human knowledge, very subject to revision and deception; not to mention the very real possibility of demonic counterfeits.

Almost no attention is given to what from the Orthodox point of view is crucial: actually identifying the Shroud as an Orthodox holy object. It's extremely important that the Orthodox history of the Shroud be made quite certain; *then* the scientific corroboration becomes stunning. But to build almost the whole argument on the scientific evidence is extremely risky.

All this is said not to throw any cold water!—but just to emphasize that to make the Shroud convincing to many Orthodox people much more than the scientific evidence is needed—the whole Orthodox *context* must be established. There must be found, for example, a sufficient answer for those who argue that it couldn't be genuine because there is no Orthodox feast day or service to it. All this requires thought and research.

(From a letter to Alexey Yang on February 13/26, 73)

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Point on Latin influence is brought out by Fr. Grabbe's letter: indeed, Orthodox tradition is quite certain about the *four* nails, i.e., the feet of the Saviour were nailed separately, and the RC crossed feet is definitely a later innovation (13th century, I believe). This point, by the way, is also emphasized in the Jordanville [article] on the Shroud. Evidently the Shroud itself does not give proof one way or the other on this point. To overthrow or cast doubt on this quite firm and certain Orthodox tradition, although it might seem like a "small point," would be very bad. For the Shroud to be Orthodox (i.e., authentic), it *cannot contradict firm Orthodox tradition in any respect*. Otherwise science is placed before tradition, and the gates are opened! (By the way, I don't think such as point as the nails through the wrists and not through the palms can be criticized on this ground; there has been no actual *tradition* about

the palms, only a general conception, which is not infallible.)

Research should also be done on the history and texts of the services of Great Friday, the background of the bringing out of the Winding Sheet at Great Friday Vespers, etc. I admit that it rather looks as though all of this material will fit soundly and stunningly together—but until this is done, i.e., as I said before, the Orthodox *context* of the Shroud is fully established, it will still remain in the realm of private opinion and not something generally and wholeheartedly accepted (or reaccepted!) by the Church.

We must repeat that we are not impressed with the *scientific* evidence of the Shroud *in itself*; it needs confirmation from Church tradition. 75 years ago a new scientific discovery unlocked the truly remarkable secret of the Shroud; but what if a new scientific discovery tomorrow would reveal (to make just one out of many possible speculations!) that a body could separate from such a Shroud and leave the markings intact *without* being resurrected? Science restored faith, and then took it away!? No—science is only the *handmaid* of higher knowledge and must be kept in its place. I really think the idea of the Shroud as chiefly self-authenticating is onesided and insecure.

As a conclusion: the question of the Shroud and its acceptance among Orthodox Christians is of course not finished.

We are inclined to agree on its authenticity (although we are waiting for the articles on the services and history!).

We hadn't heard of Vladika John's attitude toward the Shroud, though of course it's very likely that he accepted it.

(From a letter to Alexey Yang February 25/March 10, 1973)

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What about the Shroud itself. Until very recently we have never been the slightest bit interested in it and could not even bring ourselves to read the Jordanville pamphlet on it or anything else pro or contra. Finally, however, we saw that in view of all the controversy (our Russians as a whole certainly accept it, and by no means are they all papophiles) we reluctantly decided that we would have to at least become informed on the subject, to the extent of reading a few works on it. This task was assigned to me, and I must confess my initial repugnance at approaching a sacred object by means of laboratory experiments on cadavers and the like. But I swallowed that and read on to get the whole picture.

Well, I got a pretty good picture of the whole and presented the leading points of it to Father Herman. Now brace yourself: we think it extremely likely that it is genuine. We are not entirely convinced as yet, the absolutely crucial point for Orthodox believers will be the thorough documentation of its history and the evidence for the Church's veneration of it.

Where is the service to it? —the Vespers of Great Friday and the Matins of Great Saturday! (This startling idea, by the way, has occurred to several people we've asked quite independently.) When is its feast day—Great Friday and every Friday, if we are to believe the 11th century testimony that it was brought out for veneration by the faithful every Friday (in the Blachernae Temple, I believe).

Well, that's enough to suggest that we think there might be a case for it. We are completely open on the subject, but frankly sympathetic toward it. The "bloody detail" of the Shroud itself does not bother us— if it is what it is claimed to be, then of *course* it is full of bloodstains! How one should write about it if it is genuine—that, of course, is another question.

(From a letter to Father Nektas Palasis, Palm Sunday (April 9/22), 1973)

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We are wary of relying too much on scientific evidence; nonetheless, the scientific evidence in the case of the Shroud is so striking that it cannot be avoided.

We would gladly listen with open mind to any genuine arguments against the Shroud; but there is no point just sitting and being beaten over the head with someone else's opinions (and probably emotions) about it.

The "Shroud" article with its Latinisms *was* a mistake in that form, but I really doubt that it will do any harm ultimately to the cause of defending the Shroud, whose acceptance or rejection within Orthodoxy must be decided, ultimately, in a free and objective manner. Whether or not the Latins venerate it, and no matter with what kind of piety they have surrounded it—makes no difference whatever to us, one way or the other.

(From a letter to Alexey Yang. Bright Wednesday (April 19/May 2), 1973)

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Dear Irina Constantinovna [Vagin],

We ourselves hadn't read anything on the Shroud until very recently, but from what we have read now we find ourselves very disposed to accept it as authentic, as indeed many of our Russian clergy do; in fact, it seems to explain the very existence of our *plashchanitsa* with the image of the Saviour on it.

(From a letter to Irina [Vagin] 14/27, 1973)

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We ourselves do not claim to know absolutely that the Holy Shroud is genuine, but from all the evidence it seems very likely to be so, and we respect the opinion of Archimandrite Constantine and others who have accepted it; but when the Greeks shout to us that it is some kind of demons' work, we feel very uneasy, especially because so far they do not give any definite evidence to prove the fact. It seems, in fact, that their reaction is very largely emotional, based on their violent anti-Catholicism.

(From a letter to Vladika Laurus on May 27/9 June 1973)

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We are very much interested in a sober and objective investigation of the Shroud *according to Orthodox sources*—until such a thing is done, we hesitate to give full acceptance to it, despite the impressive scientific argument. The argument that it is "unknown" in Orthodox tradition seems not to be backed up by any investigation at all of even the traditional evidence that has been offered so far. The Shroud, if it is genuine, could have a very powerful influence on faith in the USSR—*precisely* because the religious level there is so primitive and in need of some kind of "scientific evidence" to combat the influence of decades of "scientific atheism."

(From a letter to Father Igor Capral [the future Metropolitan Hilarion] September 29 / October 12, 1975)

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We are reading the book of talks of Fr. Dimitry Dudko, given last year in his parish (before he was arrested) in Moscow. Very inspiring! He's in the Moscow Patriarchate, and his philosophy is sometimes imprecise—but how boldly he speaks against hypocrisy, atheism,

church politics! The people he speaks to (he answers their questions) are on a very primitive level—and the thought keeps coming back to us (as Mrs. Kontzevitch has told us)—the Shroud of Turin is for them! It is *precisely* the “scientific” answer to a whole generation of people stupefied by “scientific atheism.” But we would still like to see a better investigation into the evidence of it in Orthodox history and iconography.

(From a letter to Alexey Yang October 2/15, 1975)

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The Shroud of Turin is indeed a very interesting question to anyone willing to look at the evidence; there are some difficulties and “holes” in the evidence, but also much that is persuasive. There is a new book (by Ian Wilson in England) that explains the “missing links” in the Shroud’s history by hypothesizing that it is actually the same as the Image not Made with Hands, and that it wasn’t until the 11th or 12th century that it became generally known that the folded-over image was actually the whole body and not just the face. This theory seems rather plausible to me, but unfortunately he has no very solid evidence to back it up, just circumstantial evidence. Probably there will never be “certainty” on this question—but the very fact that someone like Fr. Constantine of Jordanville should accept the Shroud so wholeheartedly is already enough to silence any arrogant denials of its authenticity—at least for those who are sensitive and respectful of opinions outside one’s own circle (a rare quality nowadays, which is itself a symptom of the lowness of our church life).

(From a letter to Father Laurence Campbell May 12/25, 1979)

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It sometimes happens, of course, that there are differences of opinion among writers on Orthodox subjects, but in such cases one should always have a moderate tone and full respect for those with whom one differs, as well as a humble awareness of one's own fallibility and the possibility of making mistakes or distortions oneself. The articles in the *Tlingit Herald* on life after death, on the contrary, have been marked by a sometimes very crude tone and a crass disrespect for those whose views the author criticizes. We have noticed the same thing in the articles on Blessed Augustine, the Shroud of Turin, etc. This is all the more inexcusable in that the views the author criticizes are often not those of heretics or of theological amateurs, but often of respected theologians and hierarchs of the Orthodox Church. The attacks on Blessed Augustine, for example, are an insult to the views of virtually every one of our bishops in the Russian Church Outside of Russia. Even in a matter that is legitimately open to different interpretations, such as the Shroud of Turin, such a disrespectful tone simply cannot be taken, if only for the reason that a number of venerable Orthodox authorities do accept it as authentic (such as Archimandrite Constantine of Jordanville, who wrote a moving article in *Orthodox Life* some years ago on its significance for our times).

(From a letter to Mrs. Prokopchuk 16/29 June 1979)

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The Turin Shroud, of course, is a whole question in itself, but is there really such evidence that it is a fraud? All the evidence I’ve seen points to the opposite, although I’m not quite persuaded of Ian Wilsons theory that the Shroud is really identical with the “Image not made with hands.”

(From a letter to Andrew Bond on 10/23 August 1979)

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We think issues like the “Shroud of Turin” should be freely discussed in the Church press, with pro’s and con’s weighed and individual Orthodox Christians free to think and act about

it as they wish. But Fr. Nektas wants to suppress any discussion of it, since it's "obviously a demonic fraud," and anyone who discusses it openly or sympathetically is considered "Roman Catholic." I think this is hopelessly narrow and unnecessary and smells a little of "papalism."

(From a letter to Michael on August 5/18, 1980)

Part I. On the narrow path to salvation.
11. Orthodox view of evolution.

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Dear Dr. Kalomiros,
Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

At last I am writing my reply to your letter on "evolution." This reply expresses the view of our Brotherhood on this question. I will repeat to you that I have written this reply not as an "expert" on the Holy Fathers, but as a "lover" of the Holy Fathers, which I believe you are also. Most of the citations I have made here from the Holy Fathers I have translated from the Russian Patristic translations of the 19th century, with some also from the English translations of the 19th century which are printed in the "Eerdmans" Nicene Fathers Series. I have given the sources as fully as possible so that you can read them in Greek. If you have any questions about these or any other Patristic citations I will be glad to discuss them further with you. I am not at all concerned merely to find citations that "prove my point," and in fact you will notice that I have also included some citations which do not seem to "prove my point"—for I am interested first and only in finding how the Holy Fathers thought on these questions, for I believe that is the way we should think also. May Christ our God bless me to speak truthfully.

The question of "evolution" is an extremely important one for Orthodox Christians, for in it are involved many questions which directly affect our Orthodox doctrine and outlook: the relative worth of science and theology, of modern philosophy and» Patristic teaching; the doctrine of man (anthropology); our attitude toward the writings of the Holy Fathers (do we really take seriously their writings and try to live by them, or do we believe first of all in modern "wisdom," the wisdom of this world, and accept the teaching of the Holy Fathers only if it harmonizes with this "wisdom"?); our interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, and especially the book of Genesis. In what follows I will touch on all these subjects.

Before one begins to discuss the question of evolution, one must have a clear idea of what he is talking about. I say this because I have had very surprising experiences with very learned people who speak as if they knew all about this subject and yet they make very elementary mistakes which reveal that there is much that they do not know about it. In particular, almost everyone who writes about evolution assumes that he knows what "evolution" is—and yet what he says reveals that he has a very confused idea of it. The question of evolution is by no means a simple one, and there is so much confusion in people's minds about it—including the minds of most Orthodox Christians—that we cannot even talk about it until we are quite sure that we know what we are talking about.

You have asked us to "clear your mind very carefully of all Western conceptions, whether these are theological, philosophical, or scientific." I assure you that I have tried to do this, and throughout this letter I will constantly be on the watch not to think in terms of Western conceptions, because I agree with you that these conceptions falsify the subject matter, and by means of them one cannot understand the question of evolution. But in turn I ask you to try very carefully to cleanse your mind of whatever preconceptions about the question of evolution you may have—what you have learned in school, what you have read in scientific books, what you may think about "anti-evolutionists," what Greek theologians may have said about the subject. Let us try to reason together, not in the manner of Western rationalists, but

as Orthodox Christians who love the Holy Fathers and wish to understand their teaching, and also as rational beings who do not accept the teaching of any modern "wise men," whether they be theologians or philosophers or scientists, unless that teaching accords with the Scriptural and Patristic teaching and does not come from some foreign philosophy.

1. First of all, I agree entirely with you when you say (p. 4): "You must not confuse pure science with the "different philosophical theories written to explain the facts discovered by science. Facts are one thing (pure science) and explanations of facts is another (philosophy)."

I must tell you first of all that at one time I believed entirely in evolution. I believed not because I had thought very much about this question, but simply because "everyone believes it," because it is a "fact," and how can one deny "facts"? But then I began to think more deeply on this question. I began to see that very often what calls itself "science" is not fact at all, but philosophy, and I began very carefully to distinguish between scientific facts and scientific philosophy. After many years I came to the following conclusions:

a. Evolution is not "scientific fact" at all, but philosophy.

b. It is a false philosophy which was invented in the West as a reaction against Roman Catholic-Protestant theology, and which disguised itself as "science" in order to make itself respectable and deceive people who are willing to accept scientific fact. (In the West almost all modern errors do this same thing; even "Christian Science" claims to be "scientific," so also Spiritism, various Hindu cults, etc.)

c. It is contrary to the teaching of the Holy Fathers on very many points.

I have deliberately given you my conclusions before explaining them to you, in order to make you stop and think: are you sure that you have put away all your preconceptions about evolution and are prepared to think clearly and dispassionately on this subject? Are you willing to admit that there may be some truth in what I will now have to say on this subject? I must tell you frankly that most "evolutionists" will stop at this point and say: this man is crazy, he is denying facts. I am trusting that your mind is at least open enough to read the rest of what I will say, which I try to base entirely on the Holy Fathers. If I make mistakes, I hope that you will tell me.

2. Many of the arguments between "evolutionists" and "anti-evolutionists" are useless, for one basic reason: they are usually not arguing about the same thing. Each one of them means one thing when he hears the word "evolution," and the other means something else, and they argue in vain because they are not even talking about the same thing. Therefore, in order to be precise, I will tell you exactly what I mean by the word "evolution," which is the meaning it has in all textbooks of evolution. But first I must show you that in your letter you have used the word "evolution" to mean two entirely different things, but you write as if they were the same thing. You have failed here to distinguish between scientific fact and philosophy.

a. You write (p. 2): "The first chapters of the Holy Bible are nothing else but the history of creation progressing and being completed in time... Creation did not come into being instantly, but followed a sequence of appearances, a development in six different 'days.' How can we call this progress of Creation in time if not evolution?"

I answer: all that you say is true, and if you wish you can call this process of creation "evolution"—but this is not what the controversy over evolution is about. All scientific textbooks define evolution as a specific theory concerning HOW creatures came to be in time: BY MEANS OF THE TRANSFORMATION OF ONE KIND OF CREATURE INTO ANOTHER, "COMPLEX FORMS BEING DERIVED FROM SIMPLER FORMS" IN A NATURAL PROCESS TAKING COUNTLESS MILLIONS OF YEARS (Storer, General Zoology). Later on, when you talk about the "evolved beast" Adam, you reveal that you believe in this specific scientific theory also., I hope to show you that the Holy Fathers did not believe in this specific scientific theory, even though this is certainly not the most important aspect of the doctrine of evolution, which more fundamentally is in error concerning the nature of man, as I will show below.

b. You say (p. 4): "We all came into being by evolution in time. In our mothers uterus each one of us was at first one single cell organism...and finally a perfect man." Of course everyone believes this, whether he is an "evolutionist" or an "anti-evolutionist." But this has nothing to do with the doctrine of evolution which is being disputed.

c. Again you say (p. 27): "Adam was of which race, white, negro, red, or yellow? How did we become so different from one another when we are descendants of one single couple? Is this differentiation of man in different races not a product of evolution?"

I answer again: No, this is not what the word "evolution" means! There are very many books in the English language which discuss the question of evolution from a scientific point of view. Perhaps you do not know that many scientists deny the fact of evolution (meaning the derivation of all existing creatures by transformation from other creatures), and very many scientists state that it is impossible to know by science whether evolution is true or not, because there is no evidence whatever that can conclusively prove or disprove it. If you wish, in another letter I can discuss with you the "scientific evidence" for evolution. I assure you that if you look at this evidence objectively, without any preconceptions about what you will find in it, you will discover that there is not one piece of evidence for evolution that cannot be explained by a theory of "special creation."

Please be very clear that I am not telling you that I can disprove the theory of evolution by science; I am only telling you that the theory of evolution can neither be proved nor disproved by science. Those scientists who say that evolution is a "fact" are actually interpreting the scientific facts in accordance with a philosophical theory, those who say that evolution is not a fact are likewise interpreting the evidence in accordance with a different philosophical theory. By pure science alone it is not possible conclusively to prove or disprove the "fact" of evolution.

You should also know that many books have likewise been written about "the difficulties of the evolutionary theory." If you wish, I will be glad to discuss with you some of these difficulties, which seem to be totally unexplainable if evolution is a "fact."

3. I wish to make very clear to you: I do not at all deny the fact of change and development in nature. That a full-grown man grows from an embryo; that a great tree grows from a small acorn; that new varieties of organisms are developed, whether the "races" of men or different kind of cats and dogs and fruit trees—but all of this is not evolution; it is only variation within a definite kind of species; it does not prove or even suggest (unless you already believe this for non-scientific reasons) that one kind or species develops into another and that all present creatures are the product of such a development from one or a few primitive organisms). I believe that this is clearly the teaching of St. Basil the Great in the Hexaemeron, as I will now point out.

In Homily V:7 of the Hexaemeron, St. Basil writes: "Let no one, therefore, who is living in vice despair of himself, knowing that, as agriculture changes the properties of plants, so the diligence of the soul in the pursuit of virtue can triumph over all sorts of infirmities." No one, "evolutionist" or "anti-evolutionist," will deny that the "properties" of creatures can be changed; but this is not a proof of evolution unless it can be shown that one kind of species can be changed into another, and even more, that every species changes into another in an uninterrupted chain back to the most primitive organism. I will show below what St. Basil says on this subject.

Again St. Basil writes (Hexaemeron, V, 5):

"How then, they say, does the earth bring forth seeds of the particular kind, when, after sowing grain, we frequently gather this black wheat? This is not a change to another kind, but as it were some disease and defect of the seed. It has not ceased to be wheat, but has been made black by burning." This passage would seem to indicate that St. Basil does not believe in a "change to another kind"—but I do not accept this as conclusive proof, since I wish to know what St. Basil really teaches, and not make my own arbitrary interpretation of his words. All that can really be said of this passage is that St. Basil recognizes some kind of a

"change" in the wheat which is not a "change to another kind." This kind of change is not evolution.

Again, St. Basil writes (Hexaameron, V, 7): "Certain men have already observed that, if pines are cut down or burned, they are changed into oak forests." This quote really proves nothing, and I use it only because it has been used by others to show that St. Basil believed (1) that one kind of creature actually changes into another (but I will show below what St. Basil actually teaches on this subject); and (2) that St. Basil made scientific mistakes, since this statement is untrue. Here I should state an elementary truth: modern science, when it deals with scientific facts, does indeed usually know more than the Holy Fathers, and the Holy Fathers can easily make mistakes of scientific facts; it is not scientific facts which we look for in the Holy Fathers, but true theology and the true philosophy which is based on theology. Yet in this particular case it happens that St. Basil is scientifically correct, because it often in fact happens that in a pine forest there is strong undergrowth of oak (the forest in which we live, in fact, is a similar kind of mixed pine-oak forest), and when the pine is removed by burning the oak grows rapidly and produces the change from a pine to an oak forest in 10 or 15 years. This is not evolution, but a different kind of change, and I will now show that St. Basil could not have believed that the pine is actually transformed or evolved into an oak.

Let us see now what St. Basil believed about the "evolution" or "fixity" of species. He writes:

"There is nothing truer than this, that each plant either has seed or there exists in it some generative power. And this accounts for the expression 'of its own kind.' For the shoot of the reed is not productive of an olive tree, but from the reed comes another reed; and from seeds spring plants related to the seeds sown. Thus, what was put forth by the earth in its first generation has been preserved until the present time, since the species persisted through constant reproduction." (Hexaameron, V, 2.)

Again, St. Basil writes:

"The nature of existing objects, set in motion by one command, passes through creation without change, by generation and destruction, preserving the succession of the species through resemblance, until it reaches the very end. It begets a horse as the successor of a horse, a lion of a lion, and an eagle of an eagle; and it continues to preserve each of the animals by uninterrupted successions until the consummation of the universe. No length of time causes the specific characteristics of the animals to be corrupted or extinct, but, as if established just recently, nature, ever fresh, moves along with time." (Hexaameron, DC, 2.)

It seems quite clear that St. Basil did not believe that one kind of creature is transformed into another, much less that every creature now existing was evolved from some other creature, and so on back to the most primitive organism. This is a modern philosophical idea.

I should tell you that I do not regard this question as being of particular importance in itself; I shall discuss below other much more important questions. If it were really a scientific fact that one kind of creatures can be transformed into another kind, I would have no difficulty believing it, since God can do anything, and the transformations and developments we can see now in nature (an embryo becoming a man, an acorn becoming an oak tree, a caterpillar becoming a butterfly) are so astonishing that one could easily believe that one species could "evolve" into another. But there is no conclusive scientific proof that such a thing has ever happened, much less that this is the law of the universe, and everything now living derives ultimately from some primitive organism. The Holy Fathers quite clearly did not believe in any such theory—because the theory of evolution was not invented until modern times. It is a product of the modern Western mentality, and if you wish I can show you later how this theory developed together with the course of modern philosophy from Descartes onward, long before there was any "scientific proof" for it. The idea of evolution is entirely absent from the text of Genesis, according to which each creature is generated "according to its kind," not "one changing into another." And the Holy Fathers, as I will show below in detail, accepted the text of Genesis quite simply, without reading into it any "scientific theories" or allegories.

Now you will understand why I do not accept your quotations from St. Gregory of Nyssa

about the "ascent of nature from the least to the perfect" as a proof of evolution. I believe, as the sacred Scripture of Genesis relates, that there was indeed an orderly creation in steps; but nowhere in Genesis or in the writings of St. Gregory of Nyssa is it stated that one kind of creature was transformed into another kind, and that all creatures came to be in this manner! I quite disagree with you when you say: "Creation is described in the first chapter of Genesis exactly as modern science describes it" (p. 4). If by "modern science" you mean evolutionary science, then I believe you are mistaken, as I have indicated. You have made a mistake by assuming that the kind of development described in Genesis, in St. Gregory of Nyssa and in other Fathers, is the same as that described by the doctrine of evolution; but such a thing cannot be assumed or taken for granted—you must prove it, and I will gladly discuss with you later the "scientific proof" for and against evolution, if you wish. The development of creation according to God's plan is one thing; the modern scientific (but actually philosophical) theory which explains this development by the transformation of one kind of creature into another, starting from one or a few primitive organisms, is quite a different thing. The Holy Fathers did not hold this modern theory; if you can show me that they did hold such a theory, I will be glad to listen to you.

If, on the other hand, by "modern science" you mean science which does not bind itself to the philosophical theory of evolution, I still disagree with you; and I will show below why I believe, according to the Holy Fathers, that modern science cannot attain to any knowledge at all of the Six Days of Creation. In any case, it is very arbitrary to identify the geological strata with "periods of creation." There are numerous difficulties in the way of this naive correspondence between Genesis and science. Does "modern science" really believe that the grass and trees of the earth existed in a long geological period before the existence of the sun, which was created only on the Fourth Day? I believe you are making a serious mistake in binding up your interpretation of Holy Scripture with a particular scientific theory (not at all a "fact"). I believe that our interpretation of Holy Scripture should be bound up with no scientific theory, neither "evolutionary" nor any other. Let us rather accept the Holy Scriptures as the Holy Fathers teach us (about which I will write below), and let us not speculate about the how of creation. The doctrine of evolution is a modern speculation about the how of creation, and in many respects it contradicts the teaching of the Holy Fathers, as I shall show below.

Of course I accept your quotations from St. Gregory of Nyssa; I have found others similar to them in other Holy Fathers. I will certainly not deny that our nature is partly an animal nature, nor that we are bound up with the whole of creation, which is indeed a marvelous unity. But all this has nothing whatever to do with the doctrine of evolution, that doctrine which is defined in all textbooks as the derivation of all presently-existing creatures from one or more primitive creatures through a process of the transformation of one kind of species into another.

Further, you should realize (and now I begin to approach the important teachings of the Holy Fathers on this subject) that St. Gregory of Nyssa himself quite explicitly did not believe in anything like the modern doctrine of evolution, for he teaches that the first man Adam was indeed created directly by God and was not generated like all other men. In his book *Against Eunomius* he writes:

"The first man, and the man born from him, received their being in a different way; the latter by copulation, the former from the molding of Christ Himself, and yet, though they are thus believed to be two, they are inseparable in the definition of their being, and are not considered as two beings.... The idea of humanity in Adam and Abel does not vary with the difference of their origin, neither the order nor the manner of their coming into existence making any difference in their nature." (*Against Eunomius*, I, 34)

And again:

"That which reasons, and is mortal, and is capable of thought and knowledge, is called 'man' equally in the case of Adam and Abel, and this name of the nature is not altered either by the fact that Abel passed into existence by generation, or by the fact that Adam did so without generation" (*Answer to Eunomius*, Second Book, p. 299 in the English "Eerdmans" edition.)

Of course I agree with the teaching of St. Athanasius which you quote (p. 35), that "the first-

created man was made of dust like everyone, and the hand which created Adam then, is creating now also and always those who come after him." How can anyone deny this obvious truth of God's continuous creative activity? But this general truth does not at all contradict the specific truth that the first man was made in a way different from all other men, as other Fathers also clearly teach. Thus, St. Cyril of Jerusalem calls Adam "God's first-formed man," but Cain "the first-born man" (Catechetical Lectures, 7). Again, he teaches clearly, discussing the creation of Adam, that Adam was not conceived of another body. "That of bodies should be conceived, even if wonderful, is nevertheless possible; but that the dust of the earth should become a man, this is more wonderful" (Catechetical Lectures, XII, 30).

Yet, again, the divine Gregory the Theologian writes:

"They who make 'Unbegotten and 'Begotten natures of equivocal Gods would perhaps make Adam and Seth differ in nature, since the former was not born of flesh (for he was created), but the latter was born of Adam and Eve." (Oration on the Holy Lights, XII).

And the same Father says even more explicitly:

"What of Adam? Was he not alone the direct creature of God? Yes, you will say. Was he then the only human being? By no means. And why, but because humanity does not consist in direct creation? For that which is begotten is also human." (Third Theological Oration, "On the Son," ch. XI.)

And St. John Damascene, whose theology gives concisely the teaching of all the early Fathers writes:

"The earliest formation (of man) is called 'creation and not 'generation.' For 'creation is the original formation at God's hands, while 'generation is the succession from each other made necessary by the sentence of death imposed on us on account of the transgression." (On the Orthodox Faith, II, 30.)

And what of Eve? Do you not believe that, as the Scripture and Holy Fathers teach, she was made from Adam's rib and was not born of some other creature? But St. Cyril writes:

"Eve was begotten of Adam, and not conceived of a mother, but as it were brought forth of man alone." (Catechetical Lectures, XII, 29.)

And St. John Damascene, comparing the Most Holy Mother of God with Eve, writes:

"Just as the latter was formed from Adam without connection, so also did the former bring forth the new Adam, who was brought forth in accordance with the laws of parturition and above the nature of generation." (On the Orthodox Faith, IV, 14.)

It would be possible to quote other Holy Fathers on this subject, but I will not do so unless you question this point. But with all of this discussion I have not yet come to the most important questions raised by the theory of evolution, and so I shall now turn to some of them.

4. In what I have written about Adam and Eve, you will note that I quoted Holy Fathers who interpret the text of Genesis in a way that might be called rather "literal." Am I correct in supposing that you would like to interpret the text more "allegorically" when you say (p. 34) that to believe in the immediate creation of Adam by God is "a very narrow conception of the Sacred Scriptures"? This is an extremely important point, and I am truly astonished to find that "Orthodox evolutionists" do not at all know how the Holy Fathers interpret the book of Genesis. I am sure you will agree with me that we are not free to interpret the Holy Scriptures as we please, but we must interpret them as the Holy Fathers teach us. I am afraid that not all who speak about Genesis and evolution pay attention to this principle. Some people are so concerned to combat Protestant Fundamentalism that they go to extreme lengths to refute

anyone who wishes to interpret the sacred text of Genesis "literally"; but in so doing they never refer to St. Basil or other commentators on the book of Genesis, who state quite clearly the principles we are to follow in interpreting the sacred text. I am afraid that many of us who profess to follow the Patristic tradition are sometimes careless, and easily fall into accepting our own "wisdom" in place of the teaching of the Holy Fathers. I firmly believe that the whole world outlook and philosophy of life for an Orthodox Christian may be found in the Holy Fathers', if we will listen to their teaching instead of thinking we are wise enough to teach others from our own "wisdom," we will not go astray.

And now I ask you to examine with me the very important and fundamental question: how do the Holy Fathers teach us to interpret the book of Genesis? Let us put away our preconceptions about "literal" or allegorical" interpretations, and let us see what the Holy Fathers teach us about reading the text of Genesis.

We cannot do better than to begin with St. Basil himself, who has written so inspiringly of the Six Days of Creation. In the Hexaemeron he writes:

"Those who do not admit the common meaning of the Scriptures say that water is not water, but some other nature, and they explain a plant and a fish according to their opinion. They describe also the production of reptiles and wild animals, changing it according to their own notions, just like the dream interpreters, who interpret for their own ends the appearances seen in their dreams. When I hear 'grass,' I think of grass, and in the same manner I understand everything as it is said, a plant, a fish, a wild animal, and an ox. "Indeed, 'I am not ashamed of the Gospel'.... Since Moses left unsaid, 'as useless for us, things in no way pertaining to us, shall we for this reason believe that the words of the Spirit are of less value than the foolish wisdom (of those who have written about the world)? Or shall I rather give glory to Him Who has not kept our mind occupied with vanities but has ordained that all things be written for the edification and guidance of our souls? This is a thing of which they seem to me to have been unaware, who have attempted by false arguments and allegorical interpretations to bestow on the Scripture a dignity of their own imagining. But theirs is the attitude of one who considers himself wiser than the revelations of the Spirit and introduces his own ideas in pretense of an explanation. Therefore, let it be understood as it has been written." (Hexaemeron, DC, 1).

Clearly, St. Basil is warning us to beware of "explaining away" things in Genesis which are difficult for our common sense to understand; it is very easy for the "enlightened" modern man to do this, even if he is an Orthodox Christian. Let us therefore try all the harder to understand the sacred Scripture as the Fathers understand it, and not according to our modern "wisdom." And let us not be satisfied with the views of one Holy Father; let us examine the views of other Holy Fathers as well.

One of the standard Patristic commentaries on the book of Genesis is that of St. Ephraim the Syrian. His views are all the more important for us in that he was an "Easterner" and knew the Hebrew language well. Modern scholars tell us that "Easterners" are given to "allegorical" interpretations, and that the book of Genesis likewise must be understood in this way. But let us see what St. Ephraim says in his commentary on Genesis:

"No one should think that the Creation of Six Days is an allegory; it is likewise impermissible to say that what seems, according to the account, to have been created in the course of six days, was created in a single instant, and likewise that certain names presented in this account either signify nothing, or signify something else. On the contrary, one must know that just as the heaven and the earth which were created in the beginning are actually the heaven and the earth and not something else understood under the names of heaven and earth, so also everything else that is spoken of as being created and brought into order after the creation of heaven and earth is not empty names, but the very essence of the created natures corresponds to the force of these names." (Commentary on Genesis, ch. I.)

These are still, of course, general principles; let us look now at several specific applications by St. Ephraim of these principles.

"Although both the light and the clouds were created in the twinkling of an eye, still both the

day and the night of the first day continued for 12 hours each." (Ibid.)

Again:

"When in the twinkling of an eye (Adam's) rib was taken out and likewise in an instant the flesh took its place, and the bare rib took on the complete form and all the beauty of a woman, then God led her and presented her to Adam." (Ibid.)

It is quite clear that St. Ephraim reads the book of Genesis "as it is written"; when he hears "the rib of Adam" he understands "the rib of Adam," and does not understand this as an allegorical way of saying something else altogether. Likewise he quite explicitly understands the Six Days of Creation to be just six days, each with 24 hours, which he divides into an "evening" and "morning" of 12 hours each.

I have deliberately taken the "simple" commentary on Genesis of St. Ephraim the Syrian, before quoting other more "mystical" commentaries, because this "simple" understanding of Genesis is the most offensive to the "enlightened" modern mind. I suspect that most Orthodox Christians who are not well read in the Holy Fathers will immediately say: "This is too simple! We know more than that now. Give us more sophisticated Fathers." Alas for our modern "wisdom"—there are no more "sophisticated" Fathers, for even the most "mystical" Fathers understand the text of Genesis in just the "simple" way St. Ephraim does! Those who wish more "sophistication" in the Holy Fathers are under the influence of modern Western ideas which are entirely foreign to the Holy Fathers of the Orthodox Church. But I will have to show this by quoting many Holy Fathers.

Let us examine now specifically the question of the "length" of the Six Days of Creation. I believe that this is still a question of secondary importance among those raised by the theory of evolution, but it certainly will not hurt us to know what the Holy Fathers thought of this, all the more so because here we will begin to glimpse the great difference which exists between the modern Western idea of creation, and the Patristic idea of creation. No matter how we understand them, these "Days" are quite beyond the comprehension of us who know only the corrupt "days" of our fallen world; how can we even imagine those Days when God's creative power was mightily at work? Blessed Augustine well says (unless you refuse to accept anything he wrote!): "What kind of days these were is very difficult for us to conceive, or even completely impossible; and all the more impossible is it to speak of this." (City of God, XI, 6).

The Holy Fathers themselves do not seem to speak much about this question, doubtless because for them it was not a problem. It is a problem for modern men chiefly because they try to understand God's creation by means of the laws of nature of our fallen world. It seems to be assumed by the Fathers that those Days, in duration, were not unlike the days we know, and some of them indeed specify that they were 24 hours in length, as does St. Ephraim. But there is one thing about these Days which it is most important for us to understand, and that concerns what you have written about whether God created "instantly."

You write (p. 33): "Since God created time, to create something 'instantly' would be an act contrary to His own decision and will.... When we speak about the creation of stars, plants, animals and man we do not speak about miracles—we do not speak about the extraordinary interventions of God in creation but about the 'natural' course of creation." I wonder if you are not substituting here some "modern wisdom" for the teaching of the Holy Fathers? What is the beginning of all things but a miracle? I have already showed you that St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Gregory the Theologian, and St. John Damascene (and indeed all the Fathers) teach that the first man Adam appeared in a way different from the natural generation of all other men; likewise the first creatures, according to the sacred text of Genesis, appeared in a way different from all their descendants: they appeared not by natural generation but by the word of God. The modern theory of evolution denies this, because the theory of evolution was invented by unbelievers who wished to deny God's action in creation and explain the creation by "natural" means alone. Do you not see what philosophy is behind the theory of evolution?

What do the Holy Fathers say about this? I have already quoted St. Ephraim the Syrian whose

whole Commentary on Genesis describes how all God's creative acts are done in an instant, even though the whole "Days" of creation last for 24 hours each. Let us now see what St. Basil the Great says about God's creative acts in the Six Days.

In speaking of the Third Day of Creation, St. Basil says:

"At this saying all the dense woods appeared; all the trees shot up.... Likewise, all the shrubs were immediately thick with leaf and bushy; and the so-called garland plants...all came into existence in a moment of time, although they were not previously upon the earth."
(Hexaemeron, V, 6.)

Again, he says:

"'Let the earth bring forth.' This brief command was immediately mighty nature and an elaborate system which brought to perfection more swiftly than our thought the countless properties of plants." (Hexaemeron, V, 10.)

Again, on the Fifth Day:

"The command came. Immediately rivers were productive and marshy lakes were fruitful of species proper and natural to each." (Hexaemeron, VII, 1.)

Likewise, St. John Chrysostom, in his commentary on Genesis, teaches:

"Today God goes over to the waters and shows us that from them, by His word and command, there proceeded animate creatures. What mind, tell me, can understand this miracle? What tongue will be able worthily to glorify the Creator? He said only: 'Let the earth bring forth'—and immediately He aroused it to bear fruit... As of the earth He said only: 'Let it bring forth'—and there appeared a great variety of flowers, grasses, and seeds, and everything occurred by His word alone; so also here He said: 'Let the waters bring forth'... and suddenly there appeared so many kinds of creeping things, such a variety of birds, that it is impossible even to enumerate them with words." (Homilies on Genesis, VII, 3.)

Here I will repeat: I believe that modern science in most cases knows more than St. Basil, St. John Chrysostom, St. Ephraim, and other Fathers about the properties of fishes and such specific scientific facts; no one will deny this. But who knows more about the way in which God acts: modern science, which is not even sure that God exists, and in any case tries to explain everything without Him; or these God-bearing Holy Fathers? When you say that God does not create instantly, I believe that you are giving the teaching of modern "wisdom," not the teaching of the Holy Fathers.

Of course, there is a sense in which it is true that God's creation is not the work of an instant; but here also the Fathers are quite precise in their teaching. I have quoted St. Ephraim, who says: "It is likewise impermissible to say that what seems, according to the account, to have been created in the course of six days, was created in a single instant." With this in mind, let us look at the passage you have quoted from St. Gregory of Nyssa: "Man was created last after the plants and animals because nature follows a path which leads gradually to perfection." "It is as if by steps that nature makes its ascent in life properties from the least to the perfect." In quoting these passages, you have tried to understand them in the sense of the modern doctrine of evolution. But certainly it is not proper to read into these ancient texts the conclusions of modern philosophy! Here St. Gregory of Nyssa is surely teaching nothing different from what many other Fathers taught, based on a very "literal" understanding of Genesis.

Thus, St. Gregory the Theologian teaches, when he, like St. Ephraim also states that the creation is not "instantaneous":

"To the days (of creation) is added a certain firstness, secondness, thirdness, and so on to the

seventh day of rest of works, and by these days is divided all that is created, being brought into order by unutterable laws, but not produced in an instant by the Almighty Word, for Whom to think or to speak means already to perform the deed. If man appeared in the world last, honored by the handiwork and image of God, this is not in the least surprising; since for him, as for a king, the royal dwelling had to be prepared and only then was the king to be led in, accompanied by all creatures." (Homily 44, "On New Week, Spring, and the Commemoration of the Martyr Mamas.")

Again, St. John Chrysostom teaches:

"The Almighty right hand of God and His limitless wisdom would have had no difficulty in creating everything in a single day. And what do I say, in a single day?—in a single instant. But since He created everything that exists not for His own benefit, because He needs nothing, being All-sufficient unto Himself, on the contrary He created everything in His love of mankind and goodness, and so He creates in parts and offers us by the mouth of the blessed Prophet a clear teaching of what is created so that we, having found out about this in detail, would not fall under the influence of those who are drawn away by human reasoning's.... And why, you will say, was man created afterwards, if he surpassed all these creatures? For a good reason. When a king intends to enter a city, his armsbearers and others must go ahead, so that the king might enter chambers already prepared for him. Precisely thus did God now, intending to place as it were a king and master over everything earthly, at first arrange all this adornment, and only then did He create the master." (Homilies on Genesis, III, 3; VIII, 2)

Thus the Patristic teaching is clearly that God, although He could have created everything instantly, chose instead to create it in stages of increasing perfection, each stage being the work of an instant or a very short time, culminating in the creation of man, the king of creation; and the whole work is completed, neither in an instant not in an indefinitely long time, but as it were a mean between these two extremes, precisely in six days.

St. Ephraim and St. John Chrysostom, in their commentaries on Genesis, clearly regard God's creation as being the work of six "literal" days, on each one of which God creates "immediately" and "instantly." And St. Basil the Great also, contrary to a widespread belief of "Christian evolutionists," viewing God's creations as "immediate" and "sudden," regarded the Six Days as being precisely of 24 hours duration; for he says, regarding the First Day:

"'There was evening and morning.' This means the space of a day and a night.... 'And there was evening and morning, one day.' Why did he say 'one' and not 'first'?... He said one' because he was defining the measure of day and night and combining the time of a night and a day, since the 24 hours fill up the interval of one day, if, of course, night is understood with day." (Hexaemeron, II, 8.)

But even St. Gregory the Theologian, this most "contemplative" of Fathers, believed precisely the same thing, for he says:

"Just as the first creation begins with Sunday (and this is evident from the fact that the seventh day after it is Saturday, because it is the day of repose from works), so also the second creation begins again with the same day," i.e., the day of Resurrection (Homily 44, "On New Week...")

And again the Theologian says, giving the Patristic view of the kind of world into which Adam was placed:

"The Word, having taken a part of the newly-created earth, with His Immortal hands formed my image..." (Homily 7, "On the Soul.")

As I have said, I do not regard this question as one of the first importance in discussing the question of evolution; but it is nevertheless quite symptomatic of the influence of modern philosophy on them, that "Christian evolutionists" are so anxious to reinterpret these Six Days so as not to appear foolish before the "wise men" of this world, who have "proved

scientifically" that whatever "creation" there was took place over countless millions of years. Most importantly, the reason why "Christian evolutionists" have such difficulty believing in the Six Days of creation, which gave no problem to the Holy Fathers, is because they do not understand what happened in those Six Days: they believe that long natural processes of development were going on, according to the laws of our present corrupt world: but in actual fact, according to the Holy Fathers, the nature of that first-created world was quite different from our world, as I will show below.

Let us look now more closely at another basic Patristic commentary on the book of Genesis, that of St. John Chrysostom. You will note that I am not quoting obscure or dubious Fathers, but only the very pillars of Orthodoxy, in whom our whole Orthodox teaching is the most clearly and divinely expressed. In him once again we find no "allegory" at all, but only the strict interpretation of the text as it is written. Like the other Fathers, he tells us that Adam was formed literally from dust, and Eve literally from Adam's rib. He writes:

"If the enemies of truth will insist that it is impossible to produce something from what is non-existent, we will ask them: Was the first man created from earth, or not? Without doubt they will agree with us and say, Yes, from earth. Then let them tell us, how was flesh formed from earth? From earth there can be dirt, bricks, clay, tile: but how was flesh produced? How were bones, nerves, sinews, fat, skin, nails, hair (produced)? How, from the single material at hand, are there so many things of different qualities? To this they cannot even open their mouths (to reply)." (Homilies on Genesis, XV, 4.)

And again, St. Chrysostom writes:

"God took a single rib, it is said: but how from this single rib did He form a whole creature? Tell me, how did the taking of the rib occur? How did Adam not feel this taking? You can say nothing about this; this is known by Him Who created.... God did not produce a new creation, but taking from an already existing creation a certain small part, from this part He made a whole creature. What power the Highest Artist God has, to produce from this small part (a rib) the composition of so many members, make so many organs of sense, and form a whole, perfect, and complete being." (Homilies on Genesis, XV, 2-3.)

If you wish, I can quote many other passages from this work, showing that St. John Chrysostom—is he not the chief Orthodox interpreter of Sacred Scripture?—everywhere interprets the sacred text of Genesis as it is written, believing that it was nothing else than an actual serpent (through whom the devil spoke) who tempted our first parents in Paradise, that God actually brought all the animals before Adam for him to name, and "the names which Adam gave them remain even until now" (Homily XIV, 5). (But according to evolutionary doctrine, many animals were extinct by the time of Adam—must we then believe that Adam did not name "all the wild beasts" (Gen. 2:19) but only the remnant of them?) St. Chrysostom says, when speaking of the rivers of Paradise:

"Perhaps one who loves to speak from his own wisdom here also will not allow that the rivers are actually rivers, nor that the waters are precisely waters, but will instill in those who allow themselves to listen to them, that they (under the names of rivers and waters) represented something else. But I entreat you, let us not pay heed to these people, let us stop up our hearing against them, and let us believe the Divine Scripture, and following what is written in it, let us strive to preserve in our souls sound dogmas." (Homilies on Genesis, XIII, 4.)

Is there need to quote more from this divine Father? Like St. Basil and St. Ephraim he warns us:

"Not to believe what is contained in the Divine Scripture, but to introduce something else from one's own mind—this, I believe, subjects those who hazard such a thing great danger." (Homilies on Genesis, XIII, 3.)

Before going on I will briefly answer one question which I have heard from those who defend evolution: they say that if one reads all the Scripture "as it is written" one will only make oneself ridiculous. They say that if we must believe that Adam was actually made from dust and Eve from Adam's rib, then must we not believe that God has "hands," that He

"walks" in Paradise, and the like absurdities? Such an objection could not be made by anyone who has read even a single commentary of the Holy Fathers on the book of Genesis. All the Holy Fathers distinguish between what is said about creation, which must be taken "as it is written" (unless it is an obvious metaphor or other figure of speech, such as "the sun knoweth his going down" of the Psalms; but this surely does not need to be explained to any but children), and what is said about God, which must be understood, as St. John Chrysostom says repeatedly, "in a God-befitting manner." For example, St. Chrysostom writes:

"When you hear, beloved, that 'God planted Paradise in Eden in the East,' understand the word 'planted' befittingly of God: that is, that He commanded: but concerning the words that follow, believe precisely that Paradise was created and in that very place where the Scripture has assigned it" (Homilies on Genesis, XIII, 3.)

St. John of Damascus explicitly describes the allegorical interpretation of Paradise to be part of a heresy, that of the Origenians:

"They explain paradise, the heaven, and everything else in an allegorical sense. (On Heresies, 64.)

But what, then, are we to understand of those Holy Fathers of profound spiritual life who interpret the book of Genesis and other Holy Scriptures in a spiritual or mystical sense? If we ourselves had not gone so far away from the Patristic understanding of Scripture, this would present no problem whatever to us. The same text of Holy Scripture is true "as it is written," and it also has a spiritual interpretation. Behold what the great Father of the desert, St. Macarius the Great, a clairvoyant Saint who raised the dead, says:

"That Paradise was closed and that a Cherubim was commanded to prevent man from entering it by a flaming sword: of this we believe that in visible fashion it was indeed just as it is written, and at the same time we find that this occurs mystically in every soul." (Seven Homilies, IV, 5.)

Our modern "Patristic scholars," who approach the Holy Fathers not as living founts of tradition but only as dead "academic sources," invariably misunderstand this very important point. Any Orthodox Christian who lives in the tradition of the Holy Fathers knows that when a Holy Father interprets a passage of Holy Scripture spiritually or allegorically, he is not thereby denying its literal meaning, which he assumes the reader knows enough to accept. I will give a clear example of this.

The divine Gregory the Theologian, in his Homily on the Theophany, writes concerning the Tree of Knowledge:

"The tree was, according to my view, Contemplation, upon which it is only safe for those who have reached maturity of habit to enter." (Homily on the Theophany, XII.)

This is a profound spiritual interpretation, and I do not know of any passage in this Fathers writings where he say explicitly that this tree was also a literal tree, "as it is written." Is it therefore an "open question," as our academic scholars might tell us, whether he completely "allegorized" the story of Adam and Paradise?

Of course, we know from other writings of St. Gregory that he did not allegorize Adam and Paradise. But even more important, we have the direct testimony of another great Father concerning the very question of St. Gregory's interpretation of the Tree of Knowledge.

But before I give this testimony I must make sure you agree with me on a basic principle of interpreting the writings of the Holy Fathers. When they are giving the teaching of the Church, the Holy Fathers (if only they are genuine Holy Fathers and not merely ecclesiastical writers of uncertain authority) do not contradict each other, even if to our feeble understanding there seem to be contradictions between them. It is academic rationalism that pits one Father against another, traces their "influence" on each other, divides them into "schools" and "factions," and finds "contradictions" between them. All of this is foreign to

the Orthodox Christian understanding of the Holy Fathers. For us the Orthodox teaching of the Holy Fathers is one single whole, and since the whole of Orthodox teaching is obviously not contained in any one Father (for all the Fathers are human and thus limited), we find parts of it in one Father and other parts in another Father, and one Father explains what is obscure in another Father; and it is not even of primary importance for us who said what, as long as it is Orthodox and in harmony with the whole Patristic teaching. I am sure that you agree with me on this principle and that you will not be surprised that I am now going to present an interpretation of the words of St. Gregory the Theologian by a great Holy Father who lived a thousand years after him: St. Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonica.

Against St. Gregory Palamas and the other hesychast Fathers who taught the true Orthodox doctrine of the "Uncreated Light" of Mt. Tabor, there rose up the Western rationalist Barlaam. Taking advantage of the fact that St. Maximus the Confessor in one passage had called this Light of the Transfiguration a "symbol of theology," Barlaam taught that this Light was not a manifestation of the Divinity, but only something bodily, not "literally" Divine Light, but only a "symbol" of it. This led St. Gregory Palamas to make a reply which illuminates for us the relation between the "symbolical" and "literal" interpretation of Holy Scripture, particularly with regard to the passage from St. Gregory the Theologian which I have quoted above. He writes that Barlaam and others

"do not see that Maximus, wise in Divine matters, has called the Light of the Lord's Transfiguration a 'symbol of theology' only by analogy and in a spiritual sense. In fact, in a theology which is analogical and intended to elevate us, objects which have an existence of their own become themselves, in fact and in words, symbols and homonymy; it is in this sense that Maximus calls this Light a 'symbol'... Similarly, Gregory the Theologian has called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil 'contemplation,' having in his contemplation considered it as a symbol of this 'contemplation,' which is intended to elevate us; but it does not follow that what is involved is an illusion or a symbol without existence of its own. For the divine Maximus also makes Moses the symbol of judgment, and Elijah the symbol of foresight! Are they too then supposed not to have really existed, but to have been invented 'symbolically'? And could not Peter, for one who would wish to elevate himself in contemplation, become a symbol of faith, James of hope, and John of love?" (Defense of the Holy Hesychasts, Triad II, 3:21-22.)

It would be possible to multiply such quotations which show what the Holy Fathers actually taught about the interpretation of Holy Scripture, and in particular of the book of Genesis; but I have already presented enough to show that the genuine Patristic teaching on this subject presents grave difficulties for one who would like to interpret the book of Genesis in accordance with modern ideas and "wisdom," and indeed the Patristic interpretation makes it quite impossible to harmonize the account of Genesis with the theory of evolution, which requires an entirely "allegorical" interpretation of the text in many places where the Patristic interpretation will not allow this. The doctrine that Adam was created, not from the dust, but by development from some other creature, is a novel teaching which is entirely foreign to Orthodox Christianity.

At this point the "Orthodox evolutionist" might try to salvage his position (of believing both in the modern theory of evolution and in the teaching of the Holy Fathers) in one of two ways.

a. He may try to say that we now know more than the Holy Fathers about nature and therefore we really can interpret the book of Genesis better than they. But even the "Orthodox evolutionist" knows that the book of Genesis is not a scientific treatise, but a Divinely-inspired work of cosmogony and theology. The interpretation of the Divinely-inspired Scripture is clearly the work of God-bearing theologians, not of natural scientists, who ordinarily do not know the very first principles of such interpretation. It is true that in the book of Genesis many "facts" of nature are presented. But it must be carefully noted that these facts are not facts such as we can observe now, but an entirely special kind of facts: the creation of the heaven and the earth, of all animals and plants, of the first man. I have already pointed out that the Holy Fathers teach quite clearly that the creation of the first man Adam, for example, is quite different from the generation of men today; it is only the latter that science can observe, and about the creation of Adam it offers only philosophical speculations, not scientific knowledge.

According to the Holy Fathers, it is possible for us to know something of this first-created world, but this knowledge is not accessible to natural science. I will discuss this question further below.

b. Or again, the "Orthodox evolutionist," in order to preserve the unquestioned Patristic interpretation of at least some of the facts described in Genesis, may begin to make arbitrary modifications of the theory of evolution itself, in order to make it "fit" the text of Genesis. Thus, one "Orthodox evolutionist" might decide that the creation of the first man must be a "special creation" which does not fit into the general pattern of the rest of creation, and thus he can believe the Scriptural account of the creation of Adam more or less "as it is written," while believing in the rest of the Six Days' Creation in accordance with "evolutionary science"; while another "Orthodox evolutionist" might accept the "evolution" of man himself from lower creatures, while specifying that Adam, the "first-evolved man," appeared only in very recent times (in the evolutionary time-scale of "millions of years"), thus preserving at least the historical reality of Adam and the other Patriarchs as well as the universally-held Patristic opinion (about which I can speak in another letter, if you wish) that Adam was created about 7500 years ago. I am sure you will agree with me that such rationalistic devices are quite foolish and futile. If the universe "evolves," as modern philosophy teaches, then man "evolves" with it, and we must accept whatever all-knowing "science" tells us about the age of man; but if the Patristic teaching is correct, it is correct regarding both man and the rest of creation.

If you can explain to me how one can accept the Patristic interpretation of the book of Genesis and still believe in evolution, I will be glad to listen to you; but you will also have to give me better scientific evidence for evolution than that which so far exists, for to the objective and dispassionate observer the "scientific evidence" for evolution is extremely weak.

5. Now I come at last to the two most important questions which are raised by the theory of evolution: the nature of the first-created world, and the nature of the first-created man Adam.

I believe you express correctly the Patristic teaching when you say (p. 36): "The animals became corrupted because of man; the law of the jungle is a consequence of the fall of man." I also agree with you, as I have already said, that man, on the side of his body, is bound together with and is an organic part of the whole of the visible creation, and this helps make it understandable how the whole creation fell together with him into death and corruption. But you think that this is a proof of evolution, a proof that man's body evolved from some other creature! Surely if this is the case, the God-inspired Fathers would have known about it, and we would not have had to wait for the atheist philosophers of the 18th and 19th centuries to discover this and tell us about it!!

No, the Holy Fathers believed that the whole creation fell with Adam, but they did not believe that Adam "evolved" from some other creature; why should I believe differently from the Holy Fathers?

Now I come to a very important point. You ask: "How is it that the fall of Adam brought corruption and the law of the jungle to the animals, since animals have been created before Adam? We know that animals died, killed, and devoured one another since their first appearance on earth and not only after the appearance of man."

How do you know this? Are you sure that this is what the Holy Fathers teach? You explain your point, not by quoting any Holy Fathers, but by giving a philosophy of "time." I certainly agree with you that God is outside of time; to Him everything is present. But this fact is not a proof that animals, who died because of Adam, died before he fell. What do the Holy Fathers say?

It is true, of course, that most Holy Fathers speak about animals as already corruptible and mortal; but they are speaking about their fallen state. What about their state before the transgression of Adam?

There is a very significant hint about this in the Commentary on Genesis of St. Ephraim the Syrian. When speaking of the "skins" which God made for Adam and Eve after their transgression, St. Ephraim writes:

"One may suppose that the first parents, touching their waists with their hands, found that they were clothed with garments made of animal skins—killed, it may be, before their very eyes, so that they might eat their meat, cover their nakedness with the skins, and in their very death might see the death of their own body." (Commentary on Genesis, ch. 3.)

I will discuss below the Patristic teaching of the immorality of Adam before his transgression, but here I am only interested in the question of whether animals died before the Fall. Why should St. Ephraim suggest that Adam would learn about death by seeing the death of animals—if he had already seen the death of animals before his transgression (which he certainly had according to the evolutionary view)? But this is only a suggestion; there are other Holy Fathers who speak quite definitely on this subject, as I will show in a moment.

But first I must ask you: if it is true as you say that animals died and the creation was corrupted before the transgression of Adam, then how can it be that God looked at His creation after every one of the Days of Creation and "saw that it was good," and after creating the animals on the Fifth and Sixth Days He "saw that they were good," and at the end of the Six Days, after the creation of man, "God saw all the things that He had made, and behold, they were very good." How could they be "good" if they were already mortal and corruptible, contrary to God's plan for them? The Divine services of the Orthodox Church contain many moving passages of lamentation about the "corrupted creation," as well as expressions of joy that Christ by His Resurrection has "recalled the corrupted creation." How could God see this lamentable condition of the creation and say that it was "very good. "?

And again, we read in the sacred text of Genesis: "And God said, Behold I have given to you every seed-bearing herb sowing seed which is upon all the earth, and every tree which has in itself the fruit of seed that is sown, to you it shall be for food. And to all the wild beasts of the earth, and to all the flying creatures of heaven, and to every reptile creeping on the earth, which has in itself the breath of life, even every green plant for food, and it was so" (Gen. 1:29-30). Why, if the animals devoured each other before the Fall, as you say, did God give them, even "all the wild beasts and every reptile" (many of which are now strictly carnivorous) only "green plants for food"? Only long after the transgression of Adam did God say to Noah: "And every reptile which is living shall be to you for meat; I have given all things to you as the green herbs" (Gen 9:3). Do you not sense here the presence of a mystery which so far has escaped you because you insist on interpreting the sacred text of Genesis by means of modern evolutionary philosophy, which will not admit that animals could ever have been of a nature different from that which they now possess?

But the Holy Fathers clearly teach that the animals (as well as man) were different before the transgression of Adam! Thus St. John Chrysostom writes:

"It is clear that man in the beginning had complete authority over the animals... But that now we are afraid and terrified of beasts and do not have authority over them, this I do not deny... In the beginning it was not so, but the beasts feared and trembled and submitted to their master. But when through disobedience he lost boldness, then also his authority was diminished. That all animals were subject to man, hear what the Scripture says: He brought the beasts and all irrational creatures 'to Adam to see what he would call them' (Gen. 2:19). And he, seeing the beasts near him, did not run away, but like another lord he gives names to the slaves which are subject to him, since he gave names to all animals.... This is already sufficient as proof that beasts in the beginning were not frightful for man. But there is another proof not less powerful and even clearer. Which? The conversation of the serpent with the woman. If the beasts had been frightful to man, then seeing the serpent the woman would not have stopped, would not have taken his advice, would not have conversed with him with such fearlessness, but immediately on seeing him would have been terrified and run away. But behold, she converses and is not afraid; there was not yet then any fear." (Homilies on Genesis, IX, 4.)

Is it not clear that St. John Chrysostom reads the first part of the text of Genesis "as it is

written," as an historical account of the state of man and creation before the transgression of Adam, when both man and animals were different from what they now are? Similarly, St. John Damascene tells us that

"at that time the earth brought forth of itself fruits for the use of the animals that were subject to man, and there were neither violent rains upon the earth nor wintry storms. But after the fall, 'when he was compared to senseless beasts and was become like to them'...then the creation subject to him rose up against this ruler appointed by the Creator (On the Orthodox Faith, Book II, ch. 10.)

Perhaps you will object that in the same place St. John Damascene also says, speaking of the creation of animals, "Everything was for the suitable use of man. Of the animals, some were for food, such as deer, sheep, gazelles, and the like." But you must read this passage in context; for at the end of this paragraph we read (just as you have noted that God created man male and female foreknowing Adam's transgression):

"God knew all things before they were made and He saw that man in his freedom would fall and be given over to corruption; yet for man's suitable use He made all the things that are in the sky and on the earth and in the water." (Ibid.)

Do you not see from the Holy Scripture and the Holy Fathers that God creates creatures so that they will be useful to man even in his corrupted state; but He does not create them already corrupted, and they were not corrupted until Adam sinned.

But let us turn now to a Holy Father who speaks quite explicitly about the incorruption of the creation before Adam's disobedience: St. Gregory the Sinaite. He is a Holy Father of the highest spiritual life and theological soundness, who attained to the heights of Divine vision. In the Russian Philocalia he writes:

"The presently-existing creation was not originally created corruptible; but afterwards it fell under corruption, 'being made subject to vanity,' according to the Scripture, 'not willingly, but by reason of him,' Adam, 'who hath subjected it in hope' of the renewal of Adam who had become subject to corruption (Rom. 8:20). He who renewed and sanctified Adam has renewed the creation also, but He has not yet delivered it from corruption." ("Chapters on Commandments and Dogmas," 11.)

Further, the same Father gives us remarkable details about the state of the creation (in particular, Paradise) before Adam's transgression:

"Eden is a place in which there was planted by God every kind of fragrant plant. It is neither completely incorruptible nor entirely corruptible. Placed between corruption and incorruption, it is always both abundant in fruits and blossoming with flowers, both mature and immature. The mature trees and fruits are converted into fragrant earth which does not give off any odor of corruption, as do the trees of this world. This is from the abundance of the grace of sanctification which is constantly poured forth there. (Ibid., 10) (This passage is expressed in the present tense—because the Paradise in which Adam was placed is still in existence, but it is not visible to our normal sense organs.)

What will you say of these passages? Will you still be so certain, as "uniformitarian" evolutionary philosophy teaches, that the creation before the fall was just the same as it is now after the fall? The Holy Scripture teaches that "God made not death" (Wisdom 1:13), and St. John Chrysostom teaches that

"Just as the creature became corruptible when your body became corruptible, so also when you body will be incorrupt, the creature also will follow after it and become corresponding to it." (Homilies on Romans, XIV, 5.)

And St. Macarius the Great says:

"Adam was placed as the lord and king of all creatures... But after his captivity, there was taken captive together with him the creation which served him and submitted to him, because through him death came to reign over every soul." (Homily 11.)

The teaching of the Holy Fathers, if we accept it "as it is written" and do not try to reinterpret it by means of our human wisdom, is clearly that the state of creatures before the transgression of Adam was quite different from their present state. I am not trying to tell you that I know precisely what this state was; this state between corruption and incorruption is very mysterious to us who live entirely in corruption. Another great Orthodox Father, St. Simeon the New Theologian, teaches that the law of nature we now know is different from the law of nature before Adams transgression. He writes:

"The words and decrees of God become the law of nature. Therefore also the decree of God, uttered by Him as a result of the disobedience of the first Adam—that is, the decree to him of death and corruption—became the law of nature, eternal and unalterable." (Homily 38, Russian edition.)

What the "law of nature" was before Adam's transgression, which of us sinful men can define? Certainly natural science, bound up entirely with its observation of the present state of creation, cannot investigate it.

Then how do we know anything at all about it? Obviously, because God has revealed something of it to us through the Sacred Scripture. But we know also, from the writings of St. Gregory the Sinaite (and other writings which I shall quote below), that God has revealed something besides what is in the Scriptures. And this brings me to another extremely important question raised by evolution.

6. What is the source of our true knowledge of the first-created world and how is it different from science? How can St. Gregory the Sinaite know what happens to, the ripe fruits of Paradise, and why can natural science not discover such a thing? Since you are a lover of the Holy Fathers, I believe you already know the answer to this question. Still, I will set forth the answer, based not on my own reasoning but on the unquestionable authority of a Holy Father of the highest spiritual life, St. Isaac the Syrian, who spoke of the souls ascent to God based on his own experience of it. In describing how the soul is enraptured at the thought of the future age of incorruption, St. Isaac writes:

"And from this one is already exalted in his mind to that which preceded the composition of the world, when there was no creature, nor heaven, nor earth, nor Angels, nothing of that which was brought into being, and to how God, solely by His good will, suddenly brought everything from non- being into being, and everything stood before Him in perfection." (Homily 21, Russian edition; Homily 85, Greek edition.)

Do you see that St. Gregory the Sinaite and other Holy Fathers of the highest spiritual life beheld the first-created world in the state of Divine vision, which is beyond all natural knowledge? St. Gregory the Sinaite himself states that the "eight primary visions" of the state of perfect prayer are: (1) God, (2) the Angelic powers, (3) "the composition of visible things," (4) the condescension of the Word (the Incarnation), (5) the universal resurrection, (6) the Second Coming of Christ, (7) eternal torments, (8) the eternal Kingdom of Heaven. (Chapters on Commandments and Dogmas, 130, in the Russian Phtlokalia.) Why should the "composition of visible things" be included together with the other objects of Divine vision which are all within the sphere of theological knowledge alone, and not scientific knowledge? Is it not because there is an aspect and state of creatures beyond the sphere of scientific knowledge, which can only be seen, as St. Isaac himself saw Gods creation, in vision by God's grace? The objects of these visions, St. Gregory teaches, "are clearly beheld and known by those who have attained by grace complete purity of mind." (Ibid.)

In another place St. Isaac the Syrian clearly describes the difference between natural knowledge and faith, which leads to vision.

"Knowledge is a rule of nature, and this rule preserves it in all its steps. But faith performs its journey above nature. Knowledge does not attempt to permit anything to come to it which is

subversive to nature, but avoids this; but faith permits this and says: 'Thou shalt tread upon the asp and the basilisk, and thou shalt trample on the lion and dragon (Ps. 90:13)... Many by faith have entered flames, bridled the burning power of fire and passed unharmed through its midst, and walked on the surface of the sea as on dry land. But all this is above nature, contrary to the capabilities of knowledge, and it is shown that the latter is vain in all its capabilities and laws. Do you see how knowledge preserves the bounds of nature*. Do you see how faith goes above nature and there traces the steps of its path? The capabilities of knowledge for 5000 years, or a little more or less than this, governed the world, and man in no way could raise his head from the earth and acknowledge his Creator, until our faith shone forth and delivered us from the darkness of earthly doing and vain submission to the empty soaring of the mind. And even now, when we have found an imperturbable sea and an inexhaustible treasure, again we desire to turn away toward tiny springs. There is no knowledge that would not be poor, no matter now much it might be enriched. But the treasures of faith can be contained neither by the heaven nor by the earth." (Homily 25, Russian edition; Homily 62, Greek edition.)

Do you now see what is at stake in the argument between the Patristic understanding of Genesis and the doctrine of evolution? The doctrine of evolution attempts to understand the mysteries of God's creation by means of natural knowledge and worldly philosophy, not even allowing the possibility that there is something in these mysteries which places them beyond its capabilities of knowing; while the book of Genesis is an account of God's creation as seen in Divine vision by the God-seer Moses, and this vision is confirmed also by the experience of later Holy Fathers. Now, even though revealed knowledge is higher than natural knowledge, still we know that there can be no conflict between true revelation and true natural knowledge. But there can be conflict between revelation and human philosophy, which is often in error. There is thus no conflict between the knowledge of creation contained in Genesis, as interpreted for us by the Holy Fathers, and the true knowledge of creatures which modern science has acquired by observation; but there most certainly is an irreconcilable conflict between the knowledge contained in Genesis and the vain philosophical speculations of modern scientists, unenlightened by faith, about the state of the world in the Six Days of Creation. Where there is a genuine conflict between Genesis and modern philosophy, if we wish to know the truth we must accept the teaching of the Holy Fathers and reject the false opinions of scientific philosophers. The world has not become so infected by vain modern philosophy posing as science that very few, even among Orthodox Christians, are willing or able to examine this question dispassionately and discover what the Holy Fathers really taught, and then accept the Patristic teaching even if it seems utter foolishness to the vain wisdom of this world.

Concerning the true Patristic view of the first-created world, already I think I have indicated enough to you of the Patristic views which at first sight seem "surprising" to an Orthodox Christian whose understanding of Genesis has been obscured by modern scientific philosophy. Most "surprising" of all, perhaps, is the fact that the Holy Fathers understood the text of Genesis "as it is written," and do not allow us to interpret it "freely" or allegorically. Many Orthodox Christians with a "modern education" have become accustomed to associate such an interpretation with Protestant Fundamentalism, and they are afraid of being considered "naïve" by sophisticated scientific philosophers; but it is clear how much more profound is the true Patristic interpretation than that of the Fundamentalists, on the one hand, who have never even heard of Divine vision and whose interpretation sometimes coincides with that of the Holy Fathers only accidentally, as it were; and on the other hand, how much more profound is the Patristic interpretation than that of those who uncritically accept the speculations of modern philosophy as if they were true knowledge.

It may help the "modern" Orthodox Christian to understand how the incorruption of the first-created world is beyond the competence of science to investigate, if he would examine the fact of incorruption as it has been manifested by God's action even in our present corrupted world. We can find no higher manifestation of this incorruption than in the Most Holy Mother of God, of Whom we sing: "Thee Who without corruption gavest birth to God the Word, true Mother of God, we magnify." The Theotokia of our Orthodox Divine services are full of this doctrine. St. John Damascene points out that in two respects this "incorruption" is beyond the laws of nature. "So far as He had no father, (Christ's) birth was above the nature of generation," and "in that His birth was painless, it was above the laws of generation" (On the Orthodox Faith, IV, 14). What does the Orthodox Christian say when a modern unbeliever, under the influence of modern naturalistic philosophy, insists that such "incorruption" is "impossible," and demands that Christians believe only what can be proved or observed by

science? Does he not hold to his faith, which is a revealed knowledge, in spite of "science" and its philosophy? Does he not indeed tell this pseudo-scientist that he cannot possibly know or understand this fact of incorruption, inasmuch as the works of God are above nature? Then why should we hesitate to believe the truth about the creation before Adams fall, if we become convinced that the Holy Fathers indeed teach us that it is something quite beyond the competence of science to investigate or know? One who accepts the evolutionary philosophy of the creation before Adam's transgression, and thus rejects the Patristic teaching, only prepares the way in his own soul, and in the souls of others, to accept an evolutionary or other pseudo-scientific view of many other Orthodox doctrines also. We hear today many Orthodox priests who tell us, "Our faith in Christ does not depend on how we interpret Genesis. You can believe as you wish." But how can it be that our negligence in understanding one part of Gods revelation (which, by the way, is indeed closely bound up with Christ, the Second Adam, Who became incarnate in order to restore us to our original state) 'will not lead to negligence in understanding the whole doctrine of the Orthodox Church? It is not for nothing that St. John Chrysostom closely binds together the correct and strict interpretation of Scripture (specifically Genesis) and the correct dogmas which are essential for our SALVATION. Speaking of those who interpret the book of Genesis allegorically, he says:

"Let us not pay heed to these people, let us stop up our hearing against them, and let us believe the Divine Scripture, and following what is said in it, let us strive to preserve in our souls sound dogmas, and at the same time to lead also a right life, so that our life would both testify of the dogmas, and the dogmas would give firmness to our life.... If we live well but will be negligent over right dogmas, we can acquire nothing for our salvation. If we wish to be delivered from Gehenna and receive the Kingdom, we must be adorned both with the one and with the other—both with rightness of dogmas, and strictness of life." (Homilies on Genesis, XIII, 4)

There is one other question regarding the state of the first-created world about which you may wonder: what about the "millions of years" of the world's existence which science "knows to be a fact"? This letter is already too long and I cannot discuss this question here. But if you wish, in another letter I can discuss this question also, including the "radio-carbon" and other "absolute" dating systems, giving you the views of reputable scientists about them and showing you how these "millions of years" also are not at all a fact but only more "philosophy." This very idea was never even thought of until men, under the influence of naturalistic philosophy, began already to believe in evolution and saw that if evolution is true, then the world must be millions of years old (since evolution has never been observed, it is conceivable only under the supposition of countless millions of years which can bring about those processes which are too "minute" for contemporary scientists to see). If you will examine this question objectively and dispassionately, separating genuine evidence from suppositions and philosophy, you will see, I believe, that there is no genuine factual evidence which requires us to believe that the earth is more than 7500 years old. What one believes about this is entirely dependent on his philosophy of the creation.

To sum up the Patristic teaching of the first-created world I can do no better than to copy out the divine words of a Holy Father who so shone forth in mental prayer that he was only the third Father to be called by the entire Orthodox Church "Theologian": I mean St. Simeon the New Theologian. In his 45th Homily (Russian edition), speaking from Patristic tradition and probably also from his own experience, he says:

"God, in the beginning, before He planted Paradise and gave it over to the first-created ones, in five days established the earth and what is in it, and the heaven and what is in it, and on the Sixth Day He created Adam and placed him as lord and king of the whole visible creation. Paradise then did not yet exist. But this world was from God as a kind of Paradise, although it was material and sensual. God gave it over into the authority of Adam and all his descendants.... And God planted Paradise in Eden in the East. And God made to spring up also out of the earth every tree beautiful to the eye and good for food' (Gen. 2:9), with various fruits which never spoiled and never ceased, but were always fresh and sweet and afforded a great satisfaction and pleasantness for the first-created ones. For it was necessary that an incorruptible delight be furnished for those bodies of the first-created ones, which were incorrupt... Adam was created with a body that was incorrupt, even though material and not yet spiritual, and he was placed by the Creator God as an immortal king over an incorrupt world, not only over Paradise, but also over the whole creation which was under the

heavens...."

(After Adam's transgression) "God did not curse Paradise...but he cursed only the whole rest of the earth, which was also incorrupt and produced everything by itself.... He who had become corrupt and mortal by reason of the transgression of the commandment, in all justice had to live also on a corruptible earth and eat corruptible food.... Then also all creatures, when they saw that Adam was banished from Paradise, no longer wished to submit to him the transgressor.... But God restrained all these creatures by His power, and in His compassion and goodness He did not allow them immediately to rush against man, and He commanded that the creation should remain in submission to him and, having become corruptible, should serve corruptible man for whom it was created, with the intention that when man should again be renewed and become spiritual, incorrupt, and immortal, and the whole creation, which had been subjected by God to man in bondage to him, should be delivered from this bondage, it would be renewed together with him and become incorrupt and as it were spiritual....

"It is not fitting for the bodies of men to be clothed in the glory of resurrection and become incorrupt before the renewal of all creatures. But as in the beginning, first the whole creation was created incorrupt, and then from it was taken and created man, so also it is fitting that first the whole creation should become incorrupt, and then the corrupt bodies of men should be renewed and become incorrupt, that again the whole man might be incorrupt and spiritual and that he might dwell in an incorrupt, eternal and spiritual dwelling.... Do you see that this whole creation in the beginning was incorrupt and created by God in the order of Paradise? But afterwards it was subjected by God to corruption and submitted to the vanity of men.

"You should know likewise that kind of glorification and bright-shining the creation will have in the future also. For when it will be renewed it will not be again the same as it was when it was created in the beginning. But it will be such as, according to the word of the divine Paul, our body will be.... The whole creation, by God's command, after the general resurrection is to be not such as it was created—material and sensual—but it will be re-created and will become a certain immaterial and spiritual dwelling, far above every organ of sense."

Could there be any clearer teaching of the state of the first-created world before the transgression of Adam?

7. And now I come to the final and most important question which is raised for Orthodox theology by the modern theory of evolution: the nature of man, and in particular the nature of the first-created man Adam. I say that this is the "most important question raised by evolution because the doctrine of man, anthropology, touches most closely upon theology, and here, perhaps, it becomes most possible to identify theologically the error of evolutionism. It is well known that Orthodoxy teaches quite differently from Roman Catholicism regarding man's nature and Divine grace, and now I shall attempt to show that the theological view of man's nature which is implied in the theory of evolution, and which you have explicitly set forth in your letter, is not the Orthodox view of man, but is much closer to the Roman Catholic view; and this is only a confirmation of the fact that the theory of evolution, far from being taught by any Orthodox Father, is simply a product of the Western apostate mentality and even, despite the fact that it originally was a "reaction" against Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, has deep roots in the Papist scholastic tradition.

The view of human nature and the creation of Adam which you set forth in your letter is very much influenced by your opinion that Adam, in his body, was an "evolved beast." This opinion you have obtained, not from the Holy Fathers (for you cannot find one Father who believed this, and I have already showed you that the Fathers indeed believe quite "literally" that Adam was created from the dust and not from any other creature), but from modern science. Let us then look, first of all, at the Orthodox Patristic view of the nature and value of secular, scientific knowledge, particularly in relation to revealed, theological knowledge.

The Patristic view is very well set forth by the great hesychast Father, St. Gregory Palamas, who was forced to defend Orthodox theology and spiritual experience precisely against a Western rationalist, Barlaam, who wished to reduce the spiritual experience and knowledge of hesychasm to something attainable by science and philosophy. In answering him, St. Gregory set forth general principles which are well applicable in our own day when scientists

and philosophers think they can understand the mysteries of creation and man's nature better than Orthodox theology. He writes:

"The beginning of wisdom is to be sufficiently wise to distinguish and prefer to the wisdom which is low, terrestrial and vain, that which is truly useful, heavenly, and spiritual, that which comes from God and conducts toward Him and which renders conformable to God those who acquire it." (.Defense of the Holy Hesychasts, Triad I, 2.)

He teaches that the latter wisdom alone is good in itself, while the former is both good and evil:

"The practice of the graces of different languages, the power of rhetoric, historical knowledge, the discovery of the mysteries of nature, the various methods of logic...all these things are at the same time good and evil, not only because they are manifested according to the idea of those who use them and easily take the form which is given them by the point of view of those who possess them, but also because the study of them is a good thing only to the degree that it develops in the eye of the soul a penetrating view. But it is bad for one who gives himself over to this study in order to remain in it until old age." (Ibid., Triad I, 6.)

Further, even

"If one of the Fathers says the same thing as do those from without, the concordance is only verbal, the thought being quite different. The former, in fact, have, according to Paul, 'the mind of Christ' (I Cor. 2:16), while the latter express at best a human reasoning. 'As the heaven is distant from the earth, so is My thought distant from your thoughts' (Is. 55:9), saith the Lord,' Besides, even if the thinking of these men were at times the same as that of Moses, Solomon, or their imitators, what would it benefit them? What man of sound spirit and belonging to the Church could from this draw the conclusion that their teaching comes from God?" (Ibid, Triad I, 11.)

From secular knowledge, St. Gregory writes,

"we absolutely forbid to expect any precision whatever in the knowledge of Divine things; for it is not possible to draw from it any certain teaching on the subject of God. For 'God hath made it foolish'." (Ibid., Triad I, 12.)

And this knowledge can also be harmful and fight against true theology:

"The power of this reason which has been made foolish and non-existent enters into battle against those who accept the traditions in simplicity of heart; it despises the writings of the Spirit, after the example of men who have treated them carelessly and have set up the creation against the Creator;" (Ibid., Triad I, 15.)

There could hardly be a better account than this of what modern "Christian evolutionists" have tried to do by thinking themselves wiser than the Holy Fathers, using secular knowledge to reinterpret the teaching of the Sacred Scripture and the Holy Fathers. Who can fail to see that the rationalistic, naturalistic spirit of Barlaam is quite close to that of modern evolutionism?

But notice that St. Gregory is speaking of scientific knowledge which, on its own level, is true: it becomes false only by warring against the higher knowledge of theology. Is the theory of evolution even true scientifically?

I have already spoken in this letter of the dubious nature of the scientific evidence for evolution in general, about which I would be glad to write you in another letter. Here I must say a word specifically about the scientific evidence for human evolution, since here we already begin to touch on the realm of Orthodox theology.

You say in your letter that you are happy not to have read the writings of Teilhard de Chardin

and other exponents of evolution in the West; you approach this whole question "simply." But I am afraid that this is where you have made a mistake. It is well and good to accept the writings of the Holy Scripture and the Holy Fathers simply; that is the way they should be accepted, and that is the way I try to accept them. But why should we accept the writings of modern scientists and philosophers "simply," merely taking their word when they tell us that something is true—even if this acceptance forces us to change our theological views? On the contrary, we must be very critical when modern wise men tell us how we should interpret the Holy Scriptures. We must be critical not only with regard to their philosophy, but also with regard to the "scientific evidence" which they think supports this philosophy; for often this "scientific evidence" is itself philosophy.

This is especially true of the Jesuit scientist Teilhard de Chardin; for not only has he written the most thorough and influential philosophy and theology based on evolution, but he was also closely connected with the discovery and interpretation of almost all the fossil evidence for the "evolution of man" that was discovered in his lifetime.

And now I must ask you a very elementary scientific question: what is the evidence for the "evolution of man"? This question too I cannot go into in detail in this letter, but I will discuss it briefly. I can write more in detail later, if you wish.

The scientific fossil evidence for the "evolution of man" consists of: Neanderthal Man (many specimens); Peking Man (several skulls); the "men" called Java, Heidelberg, Piltdown (until 20 years ago), and the recent finds in Africa: all extremely fragmentary, and a few other fragments.' The total fossil evidence for the "evolution of man" could be contained in a box the size of a small coffin, and it is from widely separated parts of the earth, with no reliable indication of even relative (much less "absolute") age, and with no indication whatever of how these different "men" were connected with each other, whether by descent or kinship.

Further, one of these "evolutionary ancestors of man," "Piltdown Man," was discovered 20 years ago to have been a deliberate fraud. Now it is an interesting fact that Teilhard de Chardin was one of the "discoverers" of "Piltdown Man"—a fact which you will not find in most textbooks or in biographies of him. He "discovered" the canine tooth of this fabricated creature—a tooth which had already been dyed with the intent to cause deception regarding its age when he found it! I do not have the evidence to say that Teilhard de Chardin consciously participated in fraud; I think it more likely that he was the victim of the actual perpetrator of the fraud, and that he was so anxious to find proof for the "evolution of man" in which he already believed that he simply did not pay any attention to the anatomical difficulties which this crudely fabricated "man" presented to any objective observer. And yet in evolutionary textbooks printed before the discovery of the fraud, Piltdown Man is accepted as an evolutionary ancestor of man without question; his "skull" is even illustrated (even though only fragments of a cranium had been discovered); and it is confidently stated that "he combines human characteristics with others far retarded" (Tracy L. Storer, *General Zoology*, N.Y., 1951). This, of course, is just what is required for a "missing link" between man and ape; and that is why the Piltdown fraud was composed precisely of a mixture of human and ape bones.

Some time later this same Teilhard de Chardin participated in the discovery, and above all in the "interpretation," of "Peking Man." Several skulls were found of this creature, and it was the best candidate that had been found until then as the "missing link" between modern man and the apes. Thanks to his "interpretation" (for by then he had established a reputation as one of the world's leading paleontologists), "Peking Man" also entered evolutionary textbooks as an ancestor of man—in utter disdain of the uncontested fact modern human bones were found in the same deposit, and to anyone without "evolutionary" prejudices it was clear that this "Peking Ape" had been used for food by human beings (for there was a hole in the base of every skull of "Peking Man" by which the brains had been drawn out).

Teilhard de Chardin was also connected with the discovery and above all the interpretation of some of the finds of "Java Man," which were fragmentary. In fact, everywhere he went he found "evidence which exactly matched his expectations—namely, that man has "evolved" from ape-like creatures.

If you will examine objectively all the fossil evidence for the "evolution of man," I believe

you will find that there is no conclusive or even remotely reasonable evidence whatever for this 'evolution.' The evidence is believed to be proof for human evolution because men want to believe this; they believe in a philosophy that requires that man evolved from ape-like creatures. Of all the fossil "men" only Neanderthal Man (and of course Cro-Magnon Man, which is simply modern man) seems to be genuine; and he is simply "Homo Sapiens," no different from modern man than modern men are different from each other, a variation within one definite kind or species. Please note that the pictures of Neanderthal Man in evolutionary textbooks are the invention of artists who have a preconceived idea of what "primitive man" must have looked like, based on evolutionary philosophy!

I have said enough, I believe, not to show that I can "disprove" the "evolution of man" for who can prove or disprove anything with such fragmentary evidence?!), but to indicate that we must be very critical indeed of the biased interpretations of such scanty evidence. Let us leave it to our modern pagans and their philosophers to become excited with the discovery of every new skull, bone, or even a single tooth, about which newspaper headlines declare: "New Ancestor of Man Found." This is not even the realm of vain knowledge; it is the realm of modern fables and fairy tales, of a wisdom which truly has become astonishingly foolish.

Where does the Orthodox Christian turn if he wishes to learn the true doctrine of the creation of the world and man? St. Basil tells us clearly:

"Whence shall I begin my narration? Shall I refute the vanity of the heathens? Or shall I proclaim our truth? The wise men of the Greeks wrote many works about nature, but not one account among them remained unaltered and firmly established, for the later account always overthrew the preceding one. As a consequence, there is no need for us to refute their words; they avail mutually for their own undoing? (Hexaemeron, I, 2.)

Like St. Basil,

"let us leave the accounts of outsiders to those outside, and turn back to the explanation of the Church," (Hexaemeron, III, 3.)

Let us, like him,

"examine the structure of the world and contemplate the whole universe, beginning, not from the wisdom of the world, but from what God taught His servant when He spoke to him in person and without riddles." (Hexaemeron, VI, 1.)

Now we shall see that the evolutionary view of man's origin not only teaches us nothing in reality of man's origin, but rather teaches a false doctrine of man, as you yourself prove when you are forced to express this doctrine in order to defend the idea of evolution.

When setting forth your view of man's nature, based on your acceptance of the idea of evolution, you write, (p. 22): "Man is not naturally the image of God. Naturally he is an animal, an evolved beast, dust from the ground. He is the image of God supernaturally." And again (p. 25): "We see that by himself man is nothing, and let us not be scandalized for his natural origin." "God's breath of life transformed the animal to man without changing a single anatomical feature of his body, without changing a single cell. I would not be surprised if Adam's body had been in all aspects the body of an ape" (p. 26). Again (p. 27): "Man is what he is not because of his nature, which is dust from the ground, but because of the supernatural grace given to him by the breath of God."

Now, before examining the Patristic teaching of man's nature, I will admit that this word "nature" can be a little ambiguous, and that one can find passages where the Holy Fathers use the expression "human nature" in the way it is used in common discourse, as referring to this fallen human nature whose effects we observe every day. But there is a higher Patristic teaching of human nature, a specific doctrine of human nature, given by Divine revelation, which cannot be understood or accepted by one who believes in evolution. The evolutionary doctrine of human nature, based on a "common sense" view of fallen human nature, is the Roman Catholic, not the Orthodox teaching.

The Orthodox doctrine of human nature is set forth most concisely in the Spiritual Instructions of Abba Dorotheus. This book is accepted in the Orthodox Church as the "ABC," the basic textbook of Orthodox spirituality; it is the first spiritual reading which an Orthodox monk is given, and it remains his constant companion for the rest of his life, to be read and re-read. It is most significant that the Orthodox doctrine of human nature is set forth in the very first page of this book, because this doctrine is the foundation of the entire Orthodox spiritual life.

What is this doctrine? Abba Dorotheus writes in the very first words of his First Instruction:

"In the beginning, when God created man (Gen. 2:20), He placed him in Paradise and adorned him with every virtue, giving him the commandment not to taste of the tree which was in the midst of Paradise. And thus he remained there in the enjoyment of Paradise; in prayer, in vision, in every glory and honor, having sound senses and being in the same natural condition in which he was created. For God created man according to His own image, that is, immortal, master of himself, and adorned with every virtue. But when he transgressed the commandment, eating the fruit of the tree of which God had commanded him not to taste, then he was banished from Paradise (Gen. 3), fell away from the natural condition, and fell into a condition against nature, and then he remained in sin, in love of glory, in love for the enjoyments of this age and of other passions, and he was mastered by them, for he became himself their slave through the transgression."

(The Lord Jesus Christ) "accepted our very nature, the essence of our constitution, and became a new Adam in the image of God Who created the first Adam; He renewed the natural condition and made the senses again sound as they were in the beginning."

"The children of humility of wisdom are: self-reproach, not trusting one's own mind, hatred of one's own will; for through them a man is enabled to come to himself and return to the natural condition through purifying himself by the holy commandments of Christ."

The same doctrine is set forth by other ascetic Fathers. Thus Abba Isaiah teaches:

"In the beginning, when God created man, He placed him in Paradise, and he had then sound senses, which stood in their natural order, but when he obeyed the one who deceived him, all his senses were changed into an unnatural state, and he was then cast out from his glory." ("On the Natural Law," Russian Philokalia, II, 1.)

And the same Father continues:

"And so, let him who desires to come into his natural condition cut off all his fleshly desires, so as to place himself in the condition according to the nature of the (spiritual) mind." (Ibid., II, 2.)

The Holy Fathers clearly teach that, when Adam sinned, man did not merely lose something which has been added to his nature, but rather human nature itself was changed, corrupted, at the same time that man lost God's grace. The Divine services of the Orthodox Church also, which are a foundation of our Orthodox dogmatic teaching and spiritual life, clearly teach that the human nature which we now observe is not natural to us, but has been corrupted:

"Healing human nature, which had become corrupted by the ancient transgression, without corruption a child is born anew." (Menaion, Dec. 22, Matins, Theotokion of 6th Canticle of the Canon.)

And again:

"The Creator and Lord, desiring to save from corruption the corrupted human nature, having come to dwell in a womb cleansed by the Holy Spirit, is unutterably formed," (Menaion, Jan. 23, Theotokion of the 6th Canticle of the Canon of Matins.)

It can be noted in such hymns also that our whole Orthodox conception of the Incarnation of Christ and our salvation through Him is bound up with a proper understanding of human nature as it was in the beginning, to which Christ has restored us. We believe that we will one day live with Him in a world very much like the world that existed, here on this earth, before the fall of Adam, and that our nature will then be the nature of Adam—only even higher, because everything material and changeable will then be left behind, as the quote already given from St. Simeon the New Theologian clearly indicates.

And now I must show you further that even your doctrine of human nature as it is now in this fallen world, is incorrect, is not according to the teaching of the Holy Fathers. Perhaps it is a result of careless expression on your part—but I believe it is probably precisely because you have been led into error by believing the theory of evolution—that you write (p. 24): "Apart from God man is from his nature nothing at all, because his nature is the dust from the ground, like the nature of the animals." Because you believe in the philosophy of evolution, you are forced either to believe that human nature is only a low, animal nature, as you indeed express by saying that "man is not naturally the image of God" or at best (since I think that you do not really believe this, being Orthodox) you divide human nature artificially into two parts: that which is from "nature" and that which is from God. But the true Orthodox anthropology teaches that human nature is one, it is that which we have from God; we do not have some nature "from the animals" or "from the dust" which is different from the nature with which God created us. And therefore, even the fallen, corrupted human nature which we have now is not "nothing at all," as you say, but it still preserves in some degree the "goodness" in which God created it. Behold what Abba Dorotheus writes of this doctrine:

"We have naturally the virtues given to us by God. For when God created man, He sowed virtues in him, as also He said: 'Let us create man in our image and likeness' (Gen. 2:26). It is said: 'In our image,' inasmuch as God created the soul immortal and with authority over itself, and 'in our likeness,' referring to virtues... By nature God gave us virtues. But passions do not belong to us by nature, for they do not even have any substance or composition... But the soul in its love of pleasure, having inclined away from virtues, instills the passions in itself and strengthens them against itself." (Instruction XII, "On the Fear of Future Torment.")

Further, these God-given virtues still exercise themselves even in our fallen state. This is the extremely important Orthodox teaching of St. John Cassian, who thus refuted the error of Blessed Augustine, who indeed believed that man apart from God's grace was "nothing at all." St. Cassian teaches in his Thirteenth Conference:

"That the human race after the fall actually did not lose the knowledge of good is affirmed by the Apostle, who says: 'When the gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature those things that are of the law, these who have not the law are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts (Rom. 2:14-16). "And again: "To the Pharisees He said that they can know the truth: 'Why even of yourselves do ye not judge that which is just?' (Luke 12:57). He would not have said this if they could not have discerned what is just by their natural reason. Therefore one should not think that human nature is capable only of evil." (Thirteenth Conference, 12.)

Likewise, with regard to the righteous Job, St. Cassian asks whether "he conquered the various snares of the enemy in this battle apart from his own virtue, but only with the assistance of God's grace," and he answers:

"Job conquered him by his own power. However, the grace of God also did not abandon Job; lest the tempter burden him with temptations above his strength, it (God's grace) allowed him to be tempted as much as the virtue of the tempted one could bear." (Conference XIII, 14.)

Again, with regard to the Patriarch Abraham,

"God's righteousness wished to test the faith of Abraham, not that which the Lord had instilled in him, but that which he showed by his own freedom." (Ibid.)

Of course, the reason why Augustine (and Roman Catholicism and Protestantism after him) believed that man was nothing without grace, was because he had an incorrect conception of human nature, based on a naturalistic view of man. The Orthodox doctrine, on the other hand, of human nature as it was created in the beginning by God and is even now preserved in part in our fallen state, prevents us from falling into any such false dualism between what is "man's" and what is "God's". To be sure, everything good that man has is from God, not the least his very nature, for the Scripture says, "What hast thou that thou didst not receive" (I Cor. 4:7). Man has no "animal nature" as such and never did have; he has only the fully human nature which God gave him in the beginning, and which he has not entirely lost even now.

Is it necessary to quote for you the multitude of clear Patristic evidence that the "image of God," which is to be found in the soul, refers to man's nature and is not something added from without? Let it suffice to quote the marvelous testimony of St. Gregory the Theologian, showing how man by his constitution stands between two worlds, and is free to follow whichever side of his nature he will:

"I do not understand how I became joined to the body and how, being the image of God, I became mixed with dirt.... What wisdom is revealed in me, and what a great mystery! Was it not for this that God led us into this warfare and battle with the body, that we, being a part of Divinity," (how boldly the Theologian speaks of man's nature, so boldly that we cannot take his words absolutely literally!) "and proceeding from above, might not be haughty and exalt ourselves because of our dignity, and might not disdain the Creator, but might always direct our gaze toward Him, and so that our dignity might keep within bounds the infirmity joined to us?—So that we might know that at the same time we are both immensely great and immensely low, earthly and heavenly, temporal and immortal, inheritors of light and inheritors of fire or darkness, depending upon which side we incline towards? So was our constitution established, and this, as far as I can see, was in order that the earthly dust might humble us if we should imagine to exalt ourselves because of the image of God." (Homily 14, "On Love for the Poor.")

This image of God which man possesses by his nature was not completely lost even among the pagans, as St. John Cassian teaches; it has not been lost even today, when man, under the influence of modern philosophy and evolutionism, is trying to turn himself into a sub-human beast—for even now God awaits man's conversion, awaits his awakening to the true human nature which he has within him.

And this brings me to the very important point of your interpretation of the teaching of the God-bearing Father of almost our own times, St. Seraphim of Sarov, contained in his famous "Conversation with Motovilov."

St. Seraphim is my own patron Saint, and it was our Brotherhood of St. Herman that first published the complete text of this "Conversation" in the Russian language in which it was spoken (for the pre-revolutionary edition was incomplete), as well as other of his genuine words which had hitherto been unpublished. So you may be sure that we do not believe that he taught a false doctrine of the nature of man, one that contradicts that of other Holy Fathers. But let us examine what St. Seraphim himself says.

As you correctly quote him, St. Seraphim says:

"Many explain that when it says in the Bible 'God breathed the breath of life' into the face of Adam the first-created, who was created by Him from the dust of the ground, it must mean that until then there was neither human soul nor spirit in Adam, but only the flesh created from the dust of the ground. This interpretation is wrong, for the Lord created Adam from the dust of the ground with the constitution which our dear little father, the holy Apostle Paul describes: 'May your spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ' (I Thes. 5:23). And all these parts of our nature were created from the dust of the ground, and Adam was not created dead, but an active being like all the other animate creatures of God living on earth. The point is that if the Lord God had not breathed afterwards into his face the breath of life (that is, the grace of our Lord God the Holy Spirit...), Adam would have remained without having within him the Holy Spirit Who raises him to God-like dignity. However perfect he had been created and superior to all the other

creatures of God, as the crown of creation on earth, he would have been just like all the other creatures, which, though they have a body, soul and spirit, each according to its kind, yet have not the Holy Spirit within them. But when the Lord God breathed into Adam's face the breath of life, then, according to Moses' word, Adam became a living soul' (Gen. 2:7), that is, completely and in every way like God, and, like Him, forever immortal."

This is the one Patristic quote you give which seems to support your view that man was first a beast, and then (later in time) received the image of God and became man. This is indeed what you must believe if you accept the theory of evolution, and I am glad to see that you have the courage to express clearly what all "Orthodox evolutionists" actually believe (even if in a rather confused manner) but are often afraid to express openly for fear of offending other Orthodox believers who are "naive" and in their "simplicity" refuse to believe that man in actual fact is "descended from apes" or ape-like creatures.

But here let us remember the words of St. Gregory Palamas which I have already quoted:

"If one of the Fathers says the same thing as do those from without, the concordance is only verbal, the thought being quite different. The former, in fact, have, according to Paul, 'the mind of Christ' (I Cor. 2:16), while the latter express at best a human reasoning.... What man of sound spirit and belonging to the Church could from this conclude that their teaching comes from God?" (Defense of the Holy Hesychasts, Triad I, 11.)

And in fact, I must tell you that you have completely misunderstood the teaching of St. Seraphim, who is not at all teaching what the doctrine of evolution teaches. This I can show by quoting both the clear teaching of other Holy Fathers and that of St. Seraphim himself.

But first I must explain what might seem to a rationalist to be a "contradiction" between the teaching of St. Seraphim and that of other Fathers. First, we should be clear that when St. Seraphim speaks of man as being composed of "spirit and soul and body" he is not contradicting those many other Holy Fathers who speak of human nature as merely "soul and body"; he is merely making a distinction between different aspects of the soul and speaking of them separately, as many Holy Fathers also speak. Second, in saying that the "breath of life" which God breathed into the face of Adam is the grace of the Holy Spirit, he is not contradicting the very many Holy Fathers who teach that the "breath of life" is the soul, but is only giving a perhaps more profound and precise interpretation of this passage from Scripture. But is he actually making the rationalistic distinction which you make between the nature of man which existed "before" this breathing, and the grace which was communicated by it? Does Orthodox theology accept the rigid dichotomy which Roman Catholic teaching makes between "nature" and "grace," as though men knew everything there is to know about these two great mysteries?

No; Orthodox theology does not know such a rigid dichotomy, and that is why rationalist scholars find so many "contradictions" between different Orthodox Fathers on this subject, as will be clear from a single example: Does immortality belong to the human soul by nature or by grace? Different Orthodox Fathers who are of equal authority answer differently on this question, not because they teach differently about man and thus "contradict" each other, but because they approach the question from different sides. Those who approach the question of man's nature more from the side of the present corrupted human nature say that man's soul is immortal by grace; while those (especially the ascetic and mystical Fathers) who begin with the view of man's nature as it was in the beginning, view the soul rather as immortal by nature. It may be that one and the same Father views the question now from one and now from the other side, as does St. Gregory of Nyssa when he says in one place (Answer to Eunomius, Second Book): "That which reasons, and is mortal, and is capable of thought and knowledge, is called 'man'"; but in another place he says: "Man did not in the course of his first production have united to the very essence of his nature the liability to passion and to death." ("On Virginity," ch. XII.) Does this great Father "contradict" himself? Of course he does not.

What belongs to first-created Adam by nature and what by grace} Let us not make false rationalistic distinctions, but let us admit that we do not fully understand this mystery. Nature and grace both come from God. The nature of first-created Adam was so exalted that we can only faintly understand it now by our own experience of grace, which has been given to us by

the Second Adam, Our Lord Jesus Christ; but Adam's state was also higher than anything we can imagine even from our own experience of grace, for even his high nature was made you more perfect by grace, and he was, as St. Seraphim [says], "completely and in every way like God, and, like Him, forever immortal."

What is absolutely clear, and what is sufficient for us to know, is that the creation of man—of his spirit and soul and body, and of the Divine grace which perfected his nature—is a single act of creation, and it cannot be artificially divided up, as though one part of it came "first," and another part "later." God created man in grace, but neither the Holy Scriptures nor the Holy Fathers teach us that this grace came later in time than the creation of man's nature. This teaching belongs to Medieval Latin scholasticism, as I will show below.

St. Seraphim only appears to teach this doctrine, because he speaks in terms of the simple narrative of the sacred text of Genesis. But it is clear enough, as St. Gregory Palamas says, that "the concordance is only verbal, the thought being quite different." To be convinced of this we have only to examine how the Holy Fathers instruct us to interpret the sacred narrative of Genesis at this point.

Fortunately for us, this very question was raised and answered by the Holy Fathers. This answer is summed up for us by St. John Damascene:

"From the earth (God) formed his body and by His own inbreathing gave him a rational and understanding soul, which last we say is the divine image.... The body and the soul were formed at the same time—not one before and the other afterwards, and the ravings of Origen would have it." (On the Orthodox Faith, II, 12.)

Here let us be sure again that we understand that although St. John speaks of the inbreathing of God as the soul, he does not teach a doctrine different from St. Seraphim, who speaks of this inbreathing as the grace of the Holy Spirit. St. John in fact hardly speaks of grace at all in the creation of man, for it is understood as being present in the whole process of creation, above all in the creation of the image of God, the soul, which he teaches is part of our nature. St. Gregory of Nyssa likewise speaks of the creation of man without paying special attention to what comes from "nature" and what from "grace," only ending his whole treatise with the words:

"May we all return to that Divine grace in which God at the first created man, when He said, 'Let us make man in our image and likeness.'" (On the Creation of Man, XXX, 34.)

St. John Damascene and others who speak of the inbreathing of God as the soul view this matter from an aspect slightly different from that of St. Seraphim; but clearly the teaching of all these Fathers regarding the whole creation of man, and in particular regarding the question of whether the narrative of Genesis indicates a difference in time between the "forming" and "inbreathing" of man—is the same. St. John Damascene speaks for all the Holy Fathers when he says that they occurred "at the same time—not one before and the other afterwards."

In saying this, St. John Damascene was refuting in particular the Origenist heresy of the "pre-existence of souls." But there was also a heresy opposed to this, which taught the "pre-existence" of the human body, just as it is taught by modern "Christian evolutionists." This heresy was specifically refuted by St. Gregory of Nyssa, whom I shall now quote.

After discussing the Origenist error of the "pre-existence of souls," St. Gregory continues:

"Others, on the contrary, marking the order of the creation of man as stated by Moses, say that the soul is second to the body in order of time, since God first took dust from the earth and formed man, and then animated the being thus formed by His breath: and by this argument they prove that the flesh is more noble than the soul, that which was previously formed than that which was afterwards infused into it: for they say that the soul was made for the body, that the thing formed might not be without breath and motion, and that everything that is made for something else is surely less precious than that for which it is made.... The doctrine of both is equally to be rejected." (On the Creation of Man, XXVIII, 1, 8.)

Specifically refuting the doctrine of the "pre-existence of the body." St. Gregory says:

"Nor again are we in our doctrine to begin by making up man like a clay figure, and to say that the soul came into being for the sake of this; for surely in that case the intellectual nature would be shown to be less precious than the clay figure. But as man is one, the being consisting of soul and body, we are to suppose that the beginning of his existence is one, common to both parts, so that he should not be found to be antecedent and posterior to himself, if the bodily element were first in point of time, and the other were a later addition.... For as our nature is conceived as twofold, according to the apostolic teaching, made up of the visible man and the hidden man, if the one came first and the other supervened, the power of Him that made us will be shown to be in some way imperfect, as not being completely sufficient for the whole task at once, but dividing the work, and busying itself with each of the halves in turn." (Ibid. XXIX, 1, 2.)

Do I need to point out that the "God" of "Christian evolution" is precisely this kind of God who is not "completely sufficient for the whole task at once"; and the very reason why the doctrine of evolution was invented was to account for the universe on the assumption that God either does not exist or is incapable of creating in six days or bringing the world into existence by His mere word?. EVOLUTION WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN THOUGHT OF BY MEN WHO BELIEVE IN THE GOD WHOM ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS WORSHIP.

The account of the creation of man in the book of Genesis must be understood in a "God-befitting manner." Here you had made the mistake of accepting a literal interpretation of the text precisely where the Holy Fathers do not allow this! How important it is for us to read the Holy Scriptures as the Holy Fathers instruct us, and not according to our own understanding!

It is quite clear that St. Seraphim did not understand the text of Genesis in the way in which you have interpreted it. Indeed, there are other passages in the same "Conversation with Motovilov" which reveal that St. Seraphim viewed the creation and nature of Adam in precisely the same way as the whole Patristic tradition.

Thus, immediately after the passage which you quote, and which I have reproduced above, there follow these words which you did not quote (the English translation here is not precise, and so I am translating from the Russian original):

"Adam was created to such an extent immune to the action of every one of the elements created by God, that neither could water drown him, nor fire burn him, nor could the earth swallow him up in its abysses, nor could the air harm him by its action in any way whatsoever. Everything was subject to him...." »

This is precisely a description of the incorruption of Adam's body in a creation subject to laws quite different from today's "laws of nature"—in which as an "evolutionist" you cannot believe, since you must believe with modern philosophy that the material creation was "natural," that is, corrupted, even before the fall of Adam!

Again, shortly after this passage, St. Seraphim says:

"To Eve also the Lord God gave the same wisdom, strength, and unlimited power, and all the other good and holy qualities. And He created her not from the dust of the ground but from Adam's rib in the Eden of delight, in the Paradise which He had planted in the midst of the earth."

Do you believe in this creation of Eve from Adam's rib as an historical fact, as all the Holy Fathers do? No, you cannot, because from the point of view of evolutionary philosophy it is quite absurd: why should "God" evolve Adam's body from beasts "naturally," and then create Eve miraculously? The "God" of evolution does not preform such miracles!

Let us look now specifically at the Orthodox Patristic view of the body of first-created Adam, which according to the evolutionary doctrine had to be corruptible like the corruptible world from which it "evolved," and might even have been, as you state, entirely that of an ape.

The Holy Scripture explicitly teaches: "God created man incorruptible" (Wisdom 2:23).

St. Gregory the Sinaite teaches:

"The body, theologians say, was created incorruptible, which is how it will arise, just as the soul was created passionless, but just as the soul had the freedom to sin, so the body had the possibility to become subject to corruption." ("Chapters on Commandments and Dogmas," 82.)

And again:

"The incorruptible body will be earthly, but without moisture and coarseness, having been unutterably changed from animate to spiritual, so that it will be both of the dust and heavenly. Just as it was created in the beginning so also will it arise, that it may be conformable to the image of the Son of Man by entire participation in deification." (Ibid., 46.)

Notice here that the body in the future age will still be "of the dust." When looking at the corruptible dust of this fallen world, we are humbled to think of this side of our nature; but when we think of that incorruptible dust of the first-created world out of which God made Adam, how exalted we are by the grandeur of even this, the lowest part of God's unutterable creation!

St. Gregory the Theologian suggests giving a symbolical interpretation of the "garments of skins" with which God clothed Adam and Eve after their transgression, that the flesh of our present human body is different from the flesh of first-created Adam.

Adam "is clothed in garments of skin (perhaps a coarser, mortal, and antagonistic flesh" (Homily 38, "On the Nativity of the Saviour.")

Again, St. Gregory the Sinaite says:

"Man was created incorruptible, as also he will arise; but not unchangeable, nor yet changeable, but having the power at his own desire to change or not." "Corruption is the offspring of flesh. To eat food and excrete the excess, to hold the head proudly, and to lie down to sleep—are the natural attributes of beasts and cattle, into which we also, having become like to the cattle through the transgression, fell away from the God-given good things natural to us, and became from rational cattle-like, and from divine bestial." ("Chapters on Commandments and Dogmas," 8, 9.)

Concerning Adam's state in Paradise, St. John Chrysostom teaches:

"Man lived on earth like an Angel; he was in the body, but he had no bodily needs; like a king, adorned with purple and a diadem and clothed in royal garb, he took delight in the dwelling of Paradise, having an abundance in everything.... Before the fall men lived in Paradise like Angels; they were not inflamed with lust, were not kindled by other passions either, were not burdened with bodily needs; but, being created entirely incorruptible and immortal, they did not even need the covering of clothing." (Homilies on Genesis, XIII, 4; XV, 4.)

St. Simeon the New Theologian likewise speaks clearly of first-created Adam in Paradise, and his final state in the future age:

"If now, after we transgressed the commandment and were condemned to die, people have multiplied so much, just imagine how many of them there would have been if all who have

been born from the creation of the world had not died? And what a life they would have lived, being immortal and incorrupt, strangers to sin, sorrows, and cares and serious needs?! And how, having advanced in the keeping of the commandments and in the good ordering of the dispositions of the heart, in time they would have ascended to the most perfect glory and, having been changed, would have drawn near to God, and the soul of each would have become as it were light-shining by reason of the illuminations which would have been poured out upon it from the Godhead! And this sensual and crudely- material body would have become as it were immaterial and spiritual, above every organ of sense; and the joy and rejoicing with which we would then have been filled from contact one with another in truth would have been unutterable and beyond the thought of man.... Their life in Paradise was not weighed down by labors and was not made difficult by misfortunes. Adam was created with a body incorruptible, even though material and not yet spiritual.... Concerning our body the Apostle says: 'It is sowed a natural body, it will arise' not such as the body of the first-created one was before the transgression of the commandment—that is, material, sensual, changeable, having need of sensual food—but 'it will arise a spiritual body (I Cor. 15:44), and unchangeable, such as was the body, after His Resurrection, of our Lord Jesus Christ, the second Adam, the first-born from among the dead, which is incomparably more excellent than the body of the first-created Adam." (Homily 45.).

From our experience of our own corruptible body it is not possible for us to understand the state of the incorruptible body of Adam, which had no natural needs as we know them, which ate of "every tree" of Paradise without excreting any excess, and which did not know sleep (until God's direct action caused him to sleep, so that Eve might be created from his rib). And how much less are we able to understand the even more exalted state of our bodies in the future age! But we know enough from the Church's teaching to refute those who think they can understand these mysteries by scientific knowledge and philosophy. The state of Adam and the first-created world has been placed forever beyond the knowledge of science by the barrier of Adam's transgression, which changed the very nature of Adam and the creation, and indeed the nature of knowledge itself. Modern science knows only what it observes and what may be reasonably inferred from observation; its guesses about the earliest creation have no more and no less validity than the myths and fables of the ancient pagans. The true knowledge of Adam and the first-created world—as much as is useful for us to know—is accessible only in God's revelation and in the Divine vision of the Saints.

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All that I have said in this letter, derived strictly from the Holy Fathers, will come as a surprise to many Orthodox Christians. Those who have read some of the Holy Fathers will perhaps wonder why they "haven't heard it before." The answer is simple: if they have read many of the Holy Fathers, they have encountered the Orthodox doctrine of Adam and the creation; but they have been interpreting the Patristic texts hitherto through the eyes of modern science and philosophy, and therefore they have been blinded to the true Patristic teaching. It is also true that the doctrine of the body of Adam and the material nature of the first-created world is taught most clearly and explicitly in the later Fathers of exalted spiritual life such as St. Simeon the New Theologian and St. Gregory the Sinaite, and the writings of these Fathers are not widely read even today in Greek or Russian, and hardly any of them exist at all in other languages. (In fact, several of the passages I have quoted from St. Gregory the Sinaite have been mistranslated in the English Philokalia.)

I was very interested to read in your letter (p. 16) that you set forth the correct Patristic teaching that "The creation of God, even the angelic nature, has always, in comparison with God, something material. Angels are incorporeal in comparison with us, biological men. But in comparison with God they are also material and bodily creatures." This teaching, which is set forth most clearly in the ascetic Fathers such as St. Macarius the Great and St. Gregory the Sinaite, helps us to understand the "spiritual body" with which we shall be clothed in the fixture age, which is in some way of the dust, earthly, but has no moisture or coarseness, as St. Gregory the Sinaite teaches; and it also helps us to understand that third state of our body, that which first-created Adam had before his transgression. Likewise, this doctrine is essential in our understanding of the activity of spiritual beings, Angels and demons, even in the present corruptible world. The great Russian Orthodox Father of the 19th century, Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov, devotes an entire volume of his collected works (volume 3) to this subject, and to comparing the authentic Orthodox Patristic doctrine with the modern Roman Catholic doctrine, as set forth in 19th century Latin sources. His conclusion is that the

Orthodox doctrine on these matters—on Angels and demons, heaven and hell, Paradise—even though it is given to us by sacred tradition only in part, nonetheless is quite precise in that part which we can know; but the Roman Catholic teaching is extremely indefinite and imprecise. The reason for this indefiniteness is not far to seek: from the time Papalism began to abandon the Patristic teaching, it gradually gave itself over to the influence of worldly knowledge and philosophy, first that of such philosophers as Barlaam, and then of modern science. Even by the 19th century Roman Catholicism no longer had a certain teaching of its own on these subjects, but had grown accustomed to accept whatever "science" and its philosophy say.

Alas, our present-day Orthodox Christians, and not least those who have been educated in "theological academies," have followed the Roman Catholics in this and have come to a similar state of ignorance of the Patristic teaching. This is why even Orthodox priests are extremely vague about the Orthodox teaching of Adam and the first-created world and blindly accept whatever science says about these things. It may be that the Holy Trinity Seminary at Jordanville, N.Y., is the only remaining Orthodox school where the attempt is made to teach the Holy Fathers not "academically" but as living parts of a whole tradition; and it is significant that a Professor of this seminary, Dr. I. M. Andreyev, who is also Doctor of Medicine and Psychology, has expressed in print the very idea I have tried to communicate above, and which seems beyond the understanding of those who approach the Holy Fathers from the wisdom of this world instead of vice versa. Dr. Andreyev writes:

"Christianity has always viewed the present state of matter as being the result of a fall into sin... The Fall of man changed the whole of nature, including the nature of matter itself, which was cursed by God (Gen. 3:17)." ("Scientific Knowledge and Christian Truth," in St. Vladimir National Calendar for 1974, N.Y., p. 69.)

Prof. Andreyev finds that Bergson and Poincare have glimpsed this idea in modern times—but of course it is only our Orthodox Holy Fathers who have spoken clearly and authoritatively about it.

The vague teaching of Paradise and creation of Roman Catholicism—and of those Orthodox Christians who are under Western influence in this matter—has deep roots in the past of Western Europe. The Roman Catholic scholastic tradition, even at the height of its Medieval glory, already taught a false doctrine of man, and one which doubtless paved the way for the later acceptance of evolutionism, first in the apostate West, and then in the minds of Orthodox Christians who are insufficiently aware of their Patristic tradition and so have fallen under foreign influences. In fact the teaching of Thomas Aquinas, unlike the Orthodox Patristic teaching, in its doctrine of man is quite compatible with the idea of evolution which you advocate.

Thomas Aquinas teaches that

"In the state of innocence, the human body was in itself corruptible, but it could be preserved from corruption by the soul." Again: "It belongs to man to beget offspring, because of his naturally corruptible body t" (Summa Theologica, I, Quest. 98, Art. 1.)

Again:

"In Paradise man would have been like an angel in his spirituality of mind, yet with an animal life in his body." (Ibid., I 98, 2.) "Man's body was indissoluble, not by reason of any intrinsic vigor of immortality, but by reason of a supernatural force given by God to the soul, whereby it was enabled to preserve the body from all corruption so long as it itself remained subject to God.... This power of preserving the body from corruption was not natural to the soul, but the gift of grace." (Ibid. I, 97, 2.) "Now it is clear that such a subjection of the body to the soul and of the lower powers to reason (as Adam had in Paradise) was not from nature, or otherwise it would have remained after sin." (Ibid, I, 95, 1.)

This last quote show clearly that Thomas Aquinas does not know that mans nature was changed after the transgression. Again:

"The immortality of the first state was based on a supernatural force in the soul, and not on any intrinsic disposition of the body." (Ibid., I, 97,.)

So far is Thomas Aquinas from the true Orthodox vision of the first-created world that he understands it, as do modern "Christian evolutionists," solely from the viewpoint of this fallen world; and thus he is forced to believe, against the testimony of Orthodox Holy Fathers, that Adam naturally slept in Paradise (Ibid., I, 97, 3.) and that he voided faecal matter, a sign of corruption:

"Some say that in the state of innocence man would not have taken more than necessary food, so that there would have been nothing superfluous. This, however, is unreasonable to suppose, as implying that there would have been no faecal matter. Therefore there was need for voiding the surplus, yet so disposed by God as not to be unbecoming." (Ibid., I, 97, 4.)

How low is the view of those who try to understand God's creation and Paradise when their starting point is the everyday observation of this present fallen world! As against St. Seraphim's splendid vision of man's invulnerability to the elements in Paradise, behold Thomas Aquinas' purely mechanistic explanation of the rationalistic question: what happened when a hard body came into contact with the soft body of Adam?

"In the state of innocence, man's body could be preserved from suffering injury from a hard body, partly by the use of his reason, whereby he could avoid what was harmful; and partly also by divine providence, which so preserved him, that nothing of a harmful nature could come upon him unawares." (Ibid., I, 97, 3.)

Finally, Thomas Aquinas himself does not teach, but other Medieval scholastics (William of Auxerre, Alexander of Hales, Bonaventure) did teach, the very foundation of present-day "Christian evolutionary" views of man's creation:

"Man was not created in grace, but grace was bestowed on him subsequently, before sin." (See Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I, 85, 1.)

In a word: according to Orthodox doctrine, which comes from Divine vision, Adam's nature in Paradise was different from present human nature, both in body and soul, and this exalted nature was perfected by God's grace; but according to Latin doctrine, which is based on rationalistic deductions from the present fallen creation, man is naturally corruptible and mortal, just as he is now, and his state in Paradise was a special, supernatural gift.

I have quoted all these passages from a heterodox authority, not in order to argue over details of Adam's life in Paradise, but merely to show how far one corrupts the marvelous Patristic vision of Adam and the first-created world when one approaches it with the wisdom of this fallen world. Neither science nor logic can tell us a thing about Paradise, and yet many Orthodox Christians are so cowed by modern science and its rationalistic philosophy that they are actually afraid to read seriously the first chapters of Genesis, knowing that modern "wise men" find so many things there that are "dubious" or "confused" or need to be "reinterpreted," or that one may obtain the reputation of being a "Fundamentalist" if one dares to read the text simply, "as it is written," as all the Holy Fathers read it.

The instinct of the simple Orthodox Christian is sound when he recoils from the "sophisticated," fashionable view that man is descended from an ape or any other lower creature, or even (as you say) that Adam might have had the very body of an ape. St. Nectarios of Pentapolis rightly expressed his righteous anger against those who try to "prove that man is an ape, from which they boast that they are descended." That is the view of Orthodox holiness, which knows that creation is not as modern wise men describe it by their vain philosophy, but as God revealed it to Moses "not in riddles," and as the Holy Fathers have seen it in vision. Man's nature is different from ape nature and has never been mixed with it. If God, for the sake of our humility, had wished to make such a mixture, the Holy Fathers, who say the very "composition of visible things" in Divine vision, would have known it.

HOW LONG WILL ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS REMAIN IN CAPTIVITY TO THIS VAIN WESTERN PHILOSOPHY? Much is said about the "Western captivity" of Orthodox theology in recent centuries; when will we realize that it is a far more drastic "Western captivity" in which every Orthodox Christian finds himself today, a helpless prisoner of the "spirit of the times," of the dominating current of worldly philosophy which is absorbed in the very air we breathe in an apostate, God-hating society? An Orthodox Christian who is not consciously fighting against the vain philosophy of this age simply accepts it into himself, and is at peace with it because his own understanding of Orthodoxy is distorted, does not conform to the Patristic standard.

The sophisticated, worldly-wise laugh at those who call evolution a "heresy." True, evolution is not strictly speaking a heresy; neither is Hinduism, strictly speaking, a heresy: but like Hinduism (with which it is indeed related, and which probably had an influence on its development) evolutionism is an ideology that is profoundly foreign to the teaching of Orthodox Christianity, and it involves one in so many wrong doctrines and attitudes that it would be far better if it were simply a heresy and could thus be easily identified and combatted. Evolutionism is closely bound up with the whole apostate mentality of the rotten "Christianity" of the West; it is a vehicle of the whole "new spirituality" and "new Christianity" in, which the devil is now striving to submerge the last true Christians. It offers an alternative explanation of creation to that of the Holy Fathers; it allows an Orthodox Christian under its influence to read the Holy Scriptures and not understand them, automatically "adjusting" the text to fit his preconceived philosophy of nature. Its acceptance cannot but involve the acceptance also of alternative explanations of other parts of Divine revelation, of an automatic "adjustment" of other Scriptural and Patristic texts to fit in with modern "wisdom."

I believe that in your feeling for God's creation, as you describe it in your letter, you are Orthodox, but why do you feel that you must corrupt this feeling with modern wisdom, and justify this new ideology which is so foreign to Orthodoxy? You have written most movingly "against false union"; how we wish that you would now become just as great a zealot "against false wisdom." and tell the Greek-speaking Orthodox Christians who have accepted this new doctrine much too uncritically that our only wisdom comes from the Holy Fathers, and all that contradicts it is a lie, even if it calls itself "science."

I beg your forgiveness is anything the I have said seems harsh; I have tried only to speak the truth as I see it in the Holy Fathers. If I have made any mistakes in my citations from the Holy Fathers, I beg you to correct them, but not to let any small mistakes keep you from seeing what I have tried to say. There is much else that I could say on this subject, but I will wait for your reply before doing so. Above all, I have the heartfelt wish that both you and we might see the true Patristic teaching on this subject, which is so important for our whole Orthodox world-view. I ask your prayers for myself and our Brotherhood.

With love in Christ our Saviour,
Seraphim, monk

(Fifth Week of Lent, 1974
[Mar. 2-9, approx.])

Part II. On the broad road of apostasy.
1. About the yoke of foreigners and infidels.

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I believe the author is deceived in regarding Communism as purely a political phenomenon that wears no "masks." Perhaps he is thinking of it in terms of the Turkish Yoke—an external yoke whose intent was to enslave a nation and allow the conquerors to live well. But Communism applies an internal yoke, since it is essentially a *spiritual* movement (in an inverted sense). Its aim is not to conquer the world and enslave the nations, but to *fight* God,

primarily by destroying faith in the hearts of men. There is no comparison in previous history with such as system. Communism's whole aim is to prepare the world for Antichrist, and its most subtle work is to gain control of the Church and make it over into a new Church for Antichrist. This it is very successfully doing with the Patriarch of Moscow and is now attempting to do with the whole Orthodox Church through its representatives at Rhodes. To believe that Communism is satisfied with political influence is, I believe, completely to misunderstand its nature.

(From a letter to Father Panteleimon, no date [during Archbishop John's lifetime, before Jan. 66])

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Your question on the difference between the Turkish and the Communist Yoke is a very important one, but the answer is not entirely simple, and those who think only in terms of "canonical-uncanonical" will probably find it much too complicated. I think it's important, first of all, to realize that the question of the Moscow Patriarchate is *not* primarily one of "canonicity".

To answer the question, one can say that first of all, in so far as the *political* situation is concerned, the situation of Moscow under the Soviets and Constantinople under the Turks is exactly the same. But those who are satisfied with this argument do not realize how Greeks outside of the Turkish boundaries reacted in the 19th century. (I'm paraphrasing now an article on the "Russian Church Abroad" by our Archbishop John). When the Patriarchate of Constantinople obeyed the Turkish political demands and excommunicated the Greek rebels, the latter in their turn, while not doubting the Patriarch's Orthodoxy and remaining with him in spirit, nonetheless declared his decrees invalid and governed themselves in complete independence from him—and when an independent Greek state was formed, this independence took the form of the autocephalous Church of Athens. A similar situation prevailed under the Serbian Patriarchs Arsenius III and IV, who went into exile with their flocks and refused to submit to the new Patriarchs elected inside the Turkish boundaries. Thus, from the political point of view, the existence of the Russian Church Abroad is fully justified by Orthodox history, while the Metropolia is chiefly to be criticized for being insensitive to the whole situation of the Russian Church and for helping, even if ever so little, the political schemes of the Soviet State.

But there is a deeper dimension to the question. The Turks persecuted the Church and, when possible, used it for political purposes. But their worst intention did not go beyond making Christians slaves and, in some cases, forcibly converting them to Islam. The Christian thus might be a slave or martyr, but on the spiritual side he was free; the Turkish Yoke was *external*.

But with the Soviets, the aim is much deeper: ultimately, to destroy the Church entirely, using the Church's hierarchs themselves (when possible) as the agents of this scheme; and, on the way to this end, getting the Church to defend Communism abroad and to preach a "Communist Christianity" that prepares the way ideologically for the coming triumph of world Communism, not only as a universal political regime, but as an ideological and pseudo-religious tyranny as well. In order to appreciate this one has to realize what Communism is: not merely a power-mad political regime, but an ideological-religious system whose aim is to overthrow and supplant all other systems, most of all Christianity. Communism is actually a very powerful heresy whose central thesis, if I'm not mistaken is chiliasm or millennialism: history is to reach its culmination in an indefinite state of earthly blessedness, a perfected mankind living in perfect peace and harmony. Examine the printed sermons of the Moscow hierarchs: again and again one finds the same theme of the coming of the "Kingdom of God on earth" through the spread of Communism. This is outright heresy, or perhaps something even worse: the turning aside of the Church from its very purpose—the saving of souls for eternal life—and giving them over to the devil's kingdom, promising a false blessedness on earth and condemning them to everlasting damnation.

The whole of modern Western Christianity is permeated already with this worldly, basically chiliastic orientation, and the more "liberal," more worldly Orthodox Churches (such as the Metropolia) have been infected from this source; and probably the reason why most people in

the Metropolia so easily accepted the autocephaly is because inwardly they do not grasp what is happening, they are themselves already halfway on the same path that the Moscow Patriarchate has taken.

(From a letter to Daniel Olson, March 25/April 7, 1971)

Part II. On the broad road of apostasy.
2. About the false teaching of Archpriest Sergiy Bulgakov.

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From Archbishop John Maximovitch, “The Veneration of the Theotokos and John the Baptist and the New Direction of Russian Religio-philosophical Thought,” in *Church Life*, 1936, no. 6, pp. 94-96: After refuting Bulgakovs quotes on the “sinlessness” of the Mother of God from the Holy Fathers, he goes on to refute his quotes from Orthodox Divine services (I take this citation because it is doubtless impressive to the riot-completely-informed to hear: Bulgakov cites 50 passages from Divine services to prove his point—how deep into the Fathers and Divine services he is:)

“Archpriest Bulgakov says that the Holy Orthodox Church firmly and clearly teaches the sinlessness of Mary in her innumerable Divine services which are devoted to the Mother of God. As a proof he cites about fifty excerpts from hymns in honor of Her. However, not in a single one of these is She named either sinless or any other equivalent term. In them She is called holy; but, even though in the full sense only “One is holy, One is God, Jesus Christ,” all the pleasers of God can also be called holy, relatively. In their ranks is such a number of great sinners who repented that there is no need to prove that the word ‘holy does not signify ‘sinless.’

“The Theotokos is called blameless, [as Bulgakov notes]. Blame is a growing hard in sin, devotion to sin, sinful habit. A man is called blameless if he leads a God-pleasing life without being enslaved to any passion. ‘Go before Me and be blameless,’ said God to Abraham (Gen. 17:1). In sacred Scripture Job is called blameless and considered himself such (Job 1:1, 8; 2:3, 9:21). Concerning the righteous Zachary and Elizabeth it is said that they ‘walked in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord blameless’ (Luke 1:6). Using the word ‘blameless’ many times in the Psalms, David understands by it a fulfiller of God’s law. ‘Blessed are the blameless in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord’ (Ps. 118:5). This expression is applied also to certain saints in the Church services.* (*For example, Dec. 6, Canticle 6; Dec. 12, Canticle 7; the canon to Martyrs Juliana and Eugenia.) Nevertheless, none of the Old or New Testament righteous ones are considered sinless, and in the accounts of the lives of those who are called blameless, their sins and temptations are not concealed. Thus, in calling the Theotokos Blameless, and even All-Blameless, Most Blameless, the Church indicates Her devotion to the law of the Lord and the absence in Her of any blame of any kind, but not at all the absence of sins in Her.

“Like wise, one cannot see indications of the sinless [ness] of the Theotokos in the words ‘undefiled’ (which is used of the Three Youths*) (*Irmos of the 8th Canticle of Great Monday), ‘Pure,’ ‘Incorrupt,’ ‘Faultless,’ since here only Her exalted moral character is referred to, but not the absence of any sin whatever. The expression, ‘the body did not receive the course of sin speaks of the chastity and inviolate virginity of Mary.

“The remaining expressions cited by Archpriest Bulgakov from church hymns have even less relation to the question of sinlessness. ‘Sanctified’ (Jer. 1:5), the One Foretold,’ ‘Full of Grace,’ ‘Blessed,’ ‘Dwelling of God,’ ‘Most Glorious’—all these are exalted names of the Mother of God, but they nevertheless give no answer to the present question. And it is totally incomprehensible why there are quoted various figurative expressions such as ‘New Heaven,’ ‘Book sealed by the Divine Spirit,’ ‘Divine Ladder,’ ‘Great Throne,’ and the like, which clearly depict the great dignity of the Mother of God without touching at all on the present question, not to mention the fact that expressions which must be understood in a metaphorical sense cannot be set against those in which the Church’s teaching is expressed clearly and definitely.

“By his proofs’ taken from the Divine services, Archpriest Bulgakov demonstrates only that he could find nothing which confirms his view in the Orthodox Divine services and prayers, in which it is only to God that it is said: ‘There is no man who shall live and not sin; for Thou alone art without sin (Prayer after the Ectene for the Reposed); and ‘Thou alone art sinless’ (Prayer for the Rite of Confession and many other prayers). The doctrine of the sinlessness of the Theotokos is not only foreign to Orthodox doctrine, but is contrary to it. Having many testimonies against itself, it has none for itself. Therefore, in order to prove its Orthodoxy, Archpriest Bulgakov has to resort to a selection of fragmentary expressions which either prove nothing at all, to else give the impression that his teaching is really confirmed by them if only one does not [consider] as a whole the work from which the expression is taken.”

CONCERNING BULGAKOV

(My comments always in parenthesis, outside quotes.)

I. From the article “Tri Obraza” (Three Images”) by Archpriest Alexander Schmemmann, in the Vestnik (Messenger) of the Russian Student Christian Movement, Paris, No. 101-102, III-IV, 1971, pp. 9-24.

“Let us even allow that his teaching is ‘heretical’ and worthy of condemnation. But men have written and continue to write about heretics also, and not one of them was condemned without a real and conscientious analysis of his teaching.” (p. 10)

(Thus, your study of him should be welcome! Long overdue! Let’s give him his due!)

“Of him (Bulgakov) men have written and said that he is a ‘heretic.’ But despite this, following after him, or, in the phrase of V. V. Weidle, ‘delighting’ in him, I felt with all my being: no, this man is not heretic, but on the contrary, he is shining with the most important, most authentic thing which is contained in Orthodoxy.” (p. 12)

After describing Fr. Sergius Bulgakov serving at the All-night Vigil of Palm Sunday: “I will never forget his eyes, shining with some kind of quiet ecstasy, and his tears, and all this striving forwards and upwards, precisely to that ‘upper room’ where Christ is preparing the last Pascha with His disciples.

“Why do I remember this minute so well? Because, I think, the remembrance of it involuntarily returns to me every time I have read and heard accusations against Fr. Sergius of ‘pantheism’ and gnosticism,’ of obliterating the boundary between God and creature, of the divinization of the world, and so forth. I do not know to what extent one might objectively draw this out of the texts of Fr. Sergius; for, I repeat, a real, serious analysis of his writings has not yet been begun; but he himself rejected these accusations with disgust. I know, however, that this remembrance returned because these accusations so evidently contradicted that which, in all probability, then struck me and has always struck me most of all in Fr. Sergius: his ‘eschatologism,’ his constant, joyful, bright orientation towards the end. Of all the people whom I have happened to meet, only Fr. Sergius was ‘eschatological’ in the direct, simple, early-Christian sense of this word, meaning not only a teaching about the end, but also an expectation of the end.” (pp. 16-17).

“I do not know of such an eschatological orientation as compatible with ‘pantheism.’ But with my whole being I feel that it is impossible without a personal, all-embracing love for Christ.... It was precisely this love for Christ that streamed from the image of Fr. Sergius and it, of course, struck me at that Palm Sunday Vigil.... Without understanding this, without feeling this penetration of the whole creative work of Fr. Sergius by eschatological expectation, it is impossible, I think, either to understand rightly or value rightly his theological thought.” (p. 18)

(Schmemmann sees in Bulgakov system of Sophiology a “fall”; his experience and ideas, he thinks, are richer than Bulgakov’s system.)

“He himself, I do not doubt, will remain in the Church’s memory what he actually was: a prophet and seer of mysteries, a leader into some exalted and splendid land, into which he has called us all by his countenance, his burning, his spiritual authenticity.” (p. 22)

(Comments:)

(1. An interesting thought for a “theologian”: that we are to understand someone’s theology by how he felt (or how we feel). It may be Schmemmann is right: Bulgakov is better than his theology; but then the answer is clear—see the end of our quote from Archbishop John below: “Then let him renounce what he has written....”)

(2. A footnote on Schmemmann: his whole defense of Bulgakov here is typical of his writings in Russian—he uses an emotionalism that plays on the feelings of Russians about certain Church customs or words, which allows him to be quite vague intellectually.)

(3. A deeper point: Bulgakov is probably worse and more dangerous than the icy-cold Berdyaev because he attracts to his heresies not only by logic and words, but also by his personality and “spirituality.” So what if Bulgakov is “eschatological,” is oriented toward the end—he was oriented toward the end in a chiliastic sense, was he not—and therefore not only his words, but his very feelings are heretical. He not only thinks, he also lives and feels his heresy!)

CONCERNING BULGAKOV (Archbishop John)

II. Archbishop John Maximovitch: from his article “The Veneration of the Mother of God and John the Baptist and the New Current of Russian Religio-Philosophical Thought,” (actually a review of two of Bulgakov’s books: *The Unburnt Bush*, 1926; and *Friend of the Bridegroom*, 1927), in *Church Life* (Tserkovnaya Zhizni), Yugoslavia, 1936, nos. 6, 7, 8-9, 10-11, and 1937, no. 1. (This was written by Archbp. John when he was Hieromonk in Yugoslavia, and was first printed in *Golos Vernopoddannago* (Voice of the Loyal Subject, the newspaper of Count (later Protopresbyter George Grabbe, in 1928.)

(In the issue of 1937, no. 1, p. 134, after criticizing in detail Bulgakovs teaching and showing his many blunders in church knowledge—this fact by the way is proof that at least part of Bulgakovs teaching has certainly been subjected to close analysis, Schmemmann notwithstanding—[Archbp. John] writes:)

“The teaching of Archpriest Bulgakov on the veneration of the Mother of God and John the Forerunner, which, as has been explained, can in no way be considered Orthodox, is dangerous not so much in itself as because, in the present case as in many others, the author appears as the mouthpiece of ideas which have taken possession of certain circles of Russian intellectual society. These ideas are bound up with the teaching of Sophia the Wisdom of God.” (Here follows a brief discussion of Sophia, created vs. uncreated, which I omit because it is rather general and without quotes from Bulgakov, and you probably have something more specific—but if you want I can translated this paragraph also.)

p. 14: “One recalls the first centuries of Christianity, when as a result of a striving to obtain a precise knowledge of God, and the world there appeared the new, harmonious system of Valentinus, which presented fifteen pairs of Aeons, proceeding one from the other, where likewise in each pair there are sharply distinguished a masculine and feminine principle. The new philosophers (i.e. of today) have not gone as far as the conclusions of Valentinus; there are no grounds as yet, likewise, to affirm that they have borrowed their teaching from him. However, the same foundations have been placed both there and here—human reasoning being adjusted to oneself and not yielding before Divinely revealed truths. This is an effort to analyze and confuse what God has revealed and what man has found himself. Both before and now, similar results are obtained from this. Our philosophers as it were feel their closeness to the ancient heretics, not concealing their sympathies toward them and seeing in them preachers of the truth. (Thus, Karsavin, “The Holy Fathers and Teachers of the Church.”) The

prideful mind cannot be reconciled with the humble falling down before God. It is more pleasant to pluck the fruit oneself than to receive it from the Creator. This is what Vladimir Soloviev expressed in his speech in honor of Auguste Comte when he cried out that religion must become Divine-human, that more of the human should be fused into it, because now it is too Divine.

“Without concealing it, the partisans of the new philosophical current are striving to reform Orthodoxy. ‘The Orthodox order of things must be remade. A new style is arising in Orthodoxy,’ writes Berdyaev. From the editor of their organ *Put’* is proclaimed: A new order of the Orthodox soul is being formed, one more active, creative, more manful, fearless.’ (*Put’*, Sept. 1925). Thus it is declared outright that Orthodoxy up until now has been unsatisfactory on all sides. The Fathers of the Church did not sufficiently understand Christian teaching, the holy Martyrs were not sufficiently fearless and manful, and probably Sts. Peter, Alexis, Jonah, Philip, and Hermogenes of Moscow, Sabbas of Serbia, and Peter Tsetinsky (d. 1830) were totally inactive, even though these enlighteners, while being spiritual shepherds, were also outstanding men of active life in public life. They wish to create a new Orthodoxy’ with a new teaching, a new order of life, even a ‘new soul.’

“But will this be Orthodoxy, or even Christianity at all? It is incomprehensible how this is not noticed by some people who are evidently sincerely devoted to Orthodoxy. It is incomprehensible how Archpriest Sergius Bulgakov, while zealously performing the Divine services, studying with love the Church hymns, can preach what is contrary to them. Perhaps in the depths of his soul he feels his incorrectness, and this explains the wavering in his conclusions, the blunders which do not suit his calling and position (note: Archbp. John had pointed these out in detail in the earlier part of this article), things which one can fail to see only by closing one’s eyes. But if so, then let him renounce what he has written and not lead into error those who read his works. Let those who desire to remake the Church, which is ‘the pillar and ground of truth’ (I Tim. 3:15), stop their work. Let us hope that they will hear, if not our voice, then the voice of the Apostle Paul: ‘O Timothy, keep the tradition, avoiding the profane novelties of words and oppositions of knowledge false so-called, which some professing have erred concerning the Faith’ (I Tim. 6:20-21). But if, all the same, the seeking for a new faith and a new wisdom should continue, let the true sons of the Church remain unwavering in Orthodoxy, singing with one heart and one mouth: ‘Not in wisdom and power and wealth shall we boast, but in Thee, the Hypostatic Wisdom of the Father, O Christ; for there is none holy but Thee, O Lover of mankind,’” (end of article; this last quote is a 4th-tone *Irmos*; I can look up the exact reference if you need it.)

III. Archbishop John Maximovitch: summary and excerpts from the rest of the same article as above (If you need any of these specific points, I can translate them for you.)

1. Bulgakov’s teaching on the perfect sinlessness of the Most Holy Theotokos. Archbishop John shows how Bulgakov’s teaching is against the Holy Fathers, that all his patristic quotes are unconvincing, and quotes B. who says that one of his sources is “the testimony of immediate feeling,” which, Archbp. John notes, “without the testing of it by the positive Church teaching, has often led to heresy.” Archbp. John refutes one by one Bulgakov’s “sources” for this new teaching—several Holy Fathers whom he misunderstands, and fifty quotations from the Divine services. Archbp. John concludes: “The teaching of the sinlessness of the Mother of God is not only foreign to Orthodox teaching, it is contrary to it. Having many testimonies against itself, it has none for itself. Therefore, in order to prove its Orthodoxy, Archpriest Bulgakov has to resort to a selection of fragmentary expressions which either prove nothing at all, or else give the impression that his teaching is really confirmed by them if only one does not read as a whole the work from which the expression is taken.” (Church Life, 1936, No. 6, pp. 95-96.) This whole passage takes up 5 pages in Archbishop John’s Russian text.

2. Bulgakov identifies the Theotokos with Sophia and makes a parallel between Christ and the Theotokos. Here Archbp. John notes: “Making use of many Orthodox expressions, the author puts into them an entirely different meaning.” (1936, no. 7, no page numbers visible in my Xerox copy.) Bulgakov declares that the nature of the Theotokos is no longer human nature, but a “creaturely revelation of the Holy Spirit”: the Holy Spirit acts in the world through Mary. Here Archbp. John remarks: “According to him it turns out that the Holy Spirit cannot appear in the world without the intermediary of the Virgin Mary. From where did Archpriest Bulgakov take his teaching? In this part of his teaching he does not cite any works

of the Holy Fathers or any Church prayers at all. Here he is philosophizing, reasoning, but he is not in the least setting forth or seeking for the teaching of the Church.” (no. 7, no page no.) Again Archbp. John says: “Archpriest Bulgakov wished to depict the Virgin Mary as a link binding together the Deity and humanity. Finding it insufficient that ‘there is one God and one Intermediary between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself as a redemption for all,’ he wishes to find yet another intermediary, uniting the feminine principles in the Deity and in humanity. It need not be said that in these searchings he no longer even tries to base his teaching on the Holy Fathers and Church prayers...” Here Archbp. John thoroughly sets forth the Church teaching on these subjects. (5 pages altogether on these subjects.)

3. St. John the Baptist. Archbp. John points out how Bulgakov exaggerates his importance, make him something “special” (as he has done to the Theotokos). B. teaches that in His Baptism Christ became perfect God-man, to which Archbp. John replies: “This thought is completely un- Orthodox and is a deviation toward the ancient Gnostic teaching that Jesus precisely in the Baptism became Christ.” (1936, no. 8-9, p. 144) Archbp. John sets forth Bulgakovs and the Church’s teaching thoroughly. Then Bulgakov’s ideas of the “sinlessness” of the Forerunner etc. To emphasize specialness of the Forerunner, B. cites his “Synaxis” (“Sobor” in Russian) in service books, Jan. 7—to which Archbp. John answers in detail how “this view of the author testifies only of his complete ignorance of the Church books and the Typicon.” (1936, no. 10-11, p. 167). Bulgakov then cites the Proskomedia to emphasize special position of the Forerunner—but Archbp. John shows he is mistaken in his facts and interpretations. This whole part is 6 pages long.

4. After all this Archbp. John remarks: “Perhaps it will seem that all these are such insignificant mistakes of Archpriest Bulgakov, that it would not be worthwhile to touch on them; but they show upon what fantastical and theologically unfounded proofs he builds his theories.” (1937, no. 1, p. 10)

5. Next Archbishop John refutes, with some humor, Bulgakov’s demonstration that the Forerunner has the nature of an angel, was an “angelman,” and gives the Church’s true teaching on the Forerunner. This part is 3 pages long. Then comes the conclusion which I have already translated in Part II above.)

(Comments: Bulgakov’s many quotations from Holy Fathers and Divine services apparently create the impression in many readers that he is quite an “expert” in them, and our Brotherhood has been accused by Schmemmann and Archbp. Silvester of base “slanders” against him by printing in Russian that he knew the Fathers very poorly. Against this common belief it might not be bad to quote one whole section from Archbp. John, where he refutes Bulgakovs quotations point by point and shows what a rank amateur he was in the study of the Church’s sources; Archbp. John himself quotes many other sources with obvious broad and deep knowledge of them.)

(From a letter to Father Michael [Azkoul] on October 10/23, 1975)

Part II. On the broad road of apostasy.

3. About the liberal clergy - about Schmemmann, Meyendorff, Shakhovsky, Florovsky and others.

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Lives of Saints are one thing desperately needed in America to give a dose of real Orthodoxy for those withering away from the two-dimensional academic Orthodoxy of Schmemmann and the new “autocephalous” monstrosity.

(From a letter to Father Photios on March 16/29, 1970)

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Scandal arose because Father Herman does not want to be canonized by the Metropolia! I think there may well be something to that. From the history of Spruce Island we know that Fr. Herman has been severe with those who unworthily approach him, and he was definitely on Fr. Gerasim's side! If (as it now looks) the canonization was intended by the Metropolia leadership to be a part of their political trickery (for Meyendorff says that only a "Local" Church can canonize saints), Fr. Herman will do something and is already doing it.

We're praying especially hard for Alaska, and if it could be saved then Schmemmann and Iakovos could keep the Atlantic and Pacific and the Moon as well!

(From a letter to Father Nektas Palasis, March 19/April 1, 1970)

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I am no Russian, do not share particularly in any Russian psychology, and don't think I'm viewing the issues through any rose-colored glasses. Nonetheless, I don't think it's possible, in the long run, to stand above the question of "jurisdictions,"—not in the Russian Church, at least. We share your respect for Fr. Georges Florovsky as a theological scholar and interpreter of the Fathers; such respect is widespread in the Synodal Church—his books on the Fathers are basic textbooks. Br. Gleb knows him and received his blessing to go to Jordanville to study. But there is also a reason for the lower opinion of him that is widespread in our Church, often among the same people who respect his theological scholarship. Orthodoxy—as is particularly noticeable in times of crisis such as our whole century has been—is not merely a doctrine to be understood, but a conception of life to be lived. Fr. George, it seems to me, has failed in the vital dimension of *Orthodoxy in practice*. What is the result of his many years of appearances at ecumenical gatherings? Orthodoxy, to be sure, has become better known—but not as *the* Church of Christ, rather as a "fourth major faith" which used sometimes to give trouble to the Protestants by insisting on making "separate statements," but now has come around to the general heretical view of the Church which the Protestants expound (Archbp. Iakovos, indeed, states clearly: "The Church in all its denominational forms is *the body of Christ*"!). In the situation which Vladika Vitaly describes (*Orthodox Word*, 1969, p. 150-1), Fr. George himself gave a push in the direction of this heresy: not by saying anything heretical himself, but by giving in to the pressures that always exist at ecumenical gatherings to say something that will please the Protestant majority and will be interpreted by *them* in a heretical fashion. The Orthodoxy of Fr. George at such gatherings is formally correct, but it is thus only *formal* Orthodoxy, not *living* Orthodoxy, not *Orthodoxy in practice*. And Orthodoxy today is being destroyed from within precisely by this lack of living Orthodoxy. Orthodoxy has one thing to say to the ecumenical movement: here is the truth, join yourself to it; to remain to "discuss" this truth not merely weakens the Orthodox witness, it destroys it. The Protestants long ago were right when they said: If you have the truth, why are you participating in the ecumenical movement, which is a *search* for an unknown truth.

A second aspect of Fr. Georges failure at "Orthodoxy in practice" was his failure to stay and support the Russian Church Abroad. Where is the heresy or sectarianism involved in the basic idea of the Church Abroad: that all Russian hierarchs should remain united, at least with their fellow hierarchs abroad, but also the extent possible with the Catacomb Church in Russia—and when God shall finally permit, with the visible Church in Russia too? The Metropolia has cut the Church Abroad out of her history books, but she nonetheless was an organic part of it, and the most objective view of the history of Russian Orthodoxy abroad in the last 50 years cannot but conclude that the *Metropolia does not want to be in communion with the Church Abroad* and has several times deliberately broken off from it. Read the history of Metr. Platon vs. Bishop Apollinary in 1927 (that will be in our new issue!), of Metr. Theophilus who was devoted to our Church and *-was forced* to leave it, of the infamous Cleveland Sobor (cathedral) vs. Archbp. Vitaly: where is Church truth and justice, where are our confessors who stand for peace and unity—all in the Church Abroad, no doubt of it!

When Fr. George speaks of our supposed tendency to "Catharist sectarianism"—I do not take it lightly. He is a man whose words are to be taken seriously. But how can he back up such an extreme statement? I suspect that he doesn't make much of an attempt, and that the statement is more emotional than rational—as is Archbp. John Shahovskoy's recent paid advertisement which accuses the entire Church Abroad of being in a state of "delirium, hatred, and Pharisaic

pride”! This is not merely unfair, it is slander! Yes, we are a minority; yes, the rest of the Orthodox Church tries to cut us off— and will redouble its efforts if the “autocephaly” is signed; yes, we are conscious of defending Orthodoxy, which is trampled on today by Orthodox hierarchs themselves. But how are we different in this from St. Athanasius in the 4th century, who found every Church in the city except one in the Arians hands? How are we different from St. Maximus the Confessor, who when informed that three Patriarchs had entered into communion with the Monothelites said: “Even if all the world enter into communion with them, I alone will not!”? (This statement was repeated, by the way, by Metr. Anthony Khrapovitsky in 1927 against Metr. Sergius.) How are we different from St. Mark of Ephesus, who defied an “Ecumenical Council” and every single hierarch with the “Catharist, sectarian, delirious” belief that *he alone* was in the truth?!!

Forgive me if my zeal runs away with me, but I wanted you to see my point clearly: the Church Abroad today is the focal point of the battle for Orthodox truth and principle. Of course we have many faults, of course the general decay has infected some of our members too—but we are still *fighting* for the truth, and there is frankly no sign that any of the “Fourteen Autocephalous Churches” or the American jurisdictions is doing so. If you are encouraged by Fr. Schmemmann’s recent semi-conservative statements—well, I can only say that they seem to be a faint reaction to Metr. Philaret and to the effect he has produced on the conscience of a part of the Metropolia; but that will soon pass, and particularly if the autocephaly is put over the path of the “American Church” is clear: in harmony with the spirit of the times to the Unia and “Eastern-rite Protestantism.”

Every Orthodox Church has its faults and weaknesses, and there are times when one can only suffer in silence certain things that are done by the Church’s representatives; but if this silence must be stretched to include actual violence to one’s conscience and the defense of unprincipled “canonical” acts that affect the very validity of the sacraments—then how can one be Orthodox at all any more?

(From a letter to Father David [Black], March 23/April 5, 1970)

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What’s the state of the autocephaly? We don’t hear anything but vague rumors. Have you seen Meyendorff’s attack on the Synod in the last *Orthodox Church*? That should be answered, at least for the sake of the three hierarchs who are slandered most cheaply there. Are you planning a reply? If no one else does, we’ll write him an Open Letter. The full text, by the way, of Shahovskoy’s super-political hymn of praise of the German Army in 1941 was recently printed in *Orthodox Russia* (the supplement for March)—and such a man dares to talk of “politics in the Church”?!

(From a letter to Father Panteleimon and the monks on March 31/April 13, 1970)

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What must be our response when we read the attack of Fr. Meyendorff? One can perhaps understand his over-simplified view of Church history since 1917, when he quotes documents that favor his stand and ignores the others (however, one of his documents is an acknowledged forgery!—see the new *OW*); one becomes a little puzzled that he can so easily dismiss the canonicity of the Synod without seeing that his remarks must surely also apply to the Metropolia, from 1920-26 and 1936-46 (and he neglects to mention that *no one* recognized the Metropolia from 1926-36): one sighs at the lack of “consistency” he finds in the Synod’s recent history—for it is his own narrow view of “consistency,” based on a caricature of our stand, that is violated, not the Synods; one is, frankly quite disturbed that virtually all of the “facts” he cites are distorted, inaccurate, or simply imaginary.

But when he attacks personalities, one cannot be silent. In the first place, the argument is on the childish level—if we cooperate with the Communists, you did too, and you’re Fascists as well! Even if that were true, it would not affect the *principle* involved; but it is actually a *slander* based on half-truths and innuendo. Metr. Anastassy did not ever invoke any “blessing” on Hitler’s “state police”; he did, in 1938, thank the German government in a very

proper note for money given for a church and for a law legalizing our Church. Later, when the German treatment of Jews, Russians, etc., became known, Metr. Anastassy was so outspoken that his office was subject to several crude searches by the SS. To imply that he was pro-Nazi, as Fr. Meyendorff does, is irresponsible (and to put the words “blessing” of “state police” in quotations is *dishonest*—he is quoting only his own imagination); to say that his attitude is equivalent Metr. Nikodim’s active service for Communism simply has no relation to facts and is a “defense mechanism” of the cheapest sort. And all this when there is a *real* Hitler supported in the Metropolia—Archbishop John Shahovskoy, who (having left the Synod 10 years earlier) in 1941, after Hitler had overrun Western Europe and his activities in Germany were better known than in 1938, published an astonishing hymn of praise of Hitler’s army on the occasion of the invasion of Russia: “The bloody operation of overthrowing the Third International is entrusted to the expert, experienced German physician.... This required the iron-precise hand of the German Army, a professional military experienced in the most responsible battles.... This army, having passed through the whole of Europe in its victories (over Western civilization!!!), is now powerful not only in the might of its arms and principles, but also in obedience to a higher call, to Providence.... Above everything human operates the sword of God....” (*Novoye Slovo*, June 29, 1941, Berlin.) Our bishops, who are supposed to be involved in “politics,” were careful to refrain from such partisan involvements even when it looked as though the Soviets might be overthrown. And yet Archbp. Shahovskoy has an honored place in the autocephaly arrangements and constantly accuses the Synod of “politics” (in fact, his harangues against the Synod in Cleveland were instrumental in causing the schism of 1946), while our Metropolitan, a man of staunch principle, is slandered! Frankly, I would rather not touch this side of Archbishop Shahovskoy—but if Fr. Meyendorff is convinced that pro-Naziism is a valid argument against a hierarch and a Church, he should know to whom he had better direct his criticism!

The same thing is true of Metro. Philaret and Archbp. John Maximovitch in China—it is formally true that for a few days in 1945, when falsely informed that Metr. Anastassy was dead, the Synod dissolved, the Church situation entirely changed in Russia as a result of the War, and the Patriarch validly elected, did commemorate Patr. Alexy—but when contact was soon resumed with Metr. Anastassy and the truth became known, they both became so staunchly anti-Moscow that Archbp. John is remembered to this day by Moscow (see *One Church*, for example) as *the* leader of the “schism” in China, and Metr. Philaret’s very life was constantly in danger from his anti-Soviet and anti-Patriarchate statements and sermons. It is complicated—and frankly boring—to tell you this in a letter, but I know you will listen to facts—but Fr. Meyendorff has built a few misleading half-truths into a monstrous innuendo against three of our leading hierarchs with the intent to discredit our whole Church, and thousands will believe his few simple words and will never be informed of the facts. It remains to be seen whether he will print our answer (if no one else writes first)—not in the interests of presenting the “other side,” but simply to correct inaccuracies, falsehood, and defamation of character.

(From a letter to Father David [Black], April 3/16, 1970)

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We would like to print your letter, and the same issue to document some of your statements about Archbishop John Shahovskoy and Fr. Schmemmann. We hope to prepare also an Open Letter to Fr. Meyendorff about his recent irresponsible attack on our Synod. If such are the arguments they have against us, then they have no case at all and are operating on the basis of their emotions— and exactly according to the plan by which Nikodim, who knows their psychology, is conducting his warfare against Orthodoxy!

(From a letter to Father Seraphim [Bobich] on April 4/17, 1970)

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These three men *are* traitors to Orthodoxy, on the same level (although more refined) as Patr. Athenagoras and Archbp. Iakovos, and it is time that the Orthodox faithful be informed of this. Archbp. John Shahovskoy for 40 years has been preaching a “poetical” Christianity that is against monasticism and every kind of strict Orthodoxy; Fr. Schmemmann is clearly attempting to Protestantize Orthodoxy; and Fr. Meyendorff, by his irresponsible and

slanderous attack against the hierarchs and faithful of the Russian Church Abroad (in the Feb. *Orthodox Church*) shows himself so anxious to follow in their footsteps that he departs even from ordinary honesty and fairness. These men are clearly leading the Metropolia into “Eastern-rite Protestantism,” and now the Metropolia hierarchs have unanimously joined with the enemies of Christ’s Church in order to speed up this aim—it is too late to do anything for the Metropolia, anyone who wishes to remain in Christ’s Church must leave her now before being caught in her snares.

(From a letter to Father Seraphim Bobich, April 19/May 2, 1970)

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With the March-April *Orthodox Word* we are beginning an occasional series of articles on “Renovated Orthodoxy,” in which we hope to pinpoint some of the leading currents and figures that are trying to lead Orthodoxy off the straight and narrow traditional path into positions that, if not always identifiable as heresy, are nonetheless no longer Orthodox. The first article, by a leading Russian theologian, Fr. Michael Pomazansky, points out the Protestantism of Fr. A. Schmemmann’s “liturgical theology.” We ourselves hope later to write an article on the ethereal “esoteric chiliasm” of Archbp. John Shahovskoy. For another topic we thought you might be able to give us an article: the theological-philosophical background, assumptions, implications, etc., of the activities and words of Athenagoras, Iakovos, et al. There is at least one outright heresy involved here, which Iakovos recently expressed by saying “all Christian denominations make up the Body of Christ”; but there seems to be much more involved than that. Athenagoras seems to be a chiliast, talking of the “third age of the Holy Spirit,” seeing *visions* of a “common chalice,” etc. Their “reforming” zeal seems to extend to the overturning of everything Orthodox and traditional while bowing down to the cheapest kind of atheistic humanism. (See Fr. Patrinos’ editorials in recent issues of the *Orthodox Observer*—he even says that we don’t have to pray for good weather any more, because man now “controls” it! I can send you copies if you don’t have them.) Etc., etc.

(From a letter to Father Michael [Azkoul] April 21/May 4, 1970)

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The case of the Synod is based upon one thing: faithfulness to Orthodoxy, first in *spirit*, and then to every possible canon.

If they wish, world Orthodox “leaders” can condemn the Synodal Church (as Fr. Schmemmann does) for “apocalyptic fruitlessness”—but the spiritual fruits and examples which God has granted to the Church Abroad, recognized by many outside our Church, would seem to be strong evidence against such an easy condemnation.

The Synod *almost* alone is carrying on the battle for Orthodoxy today on the main fronts (against ecumenism-communism-renovationism, et al). I would rather call the Synodal Church the voice of the Orthodox *conscience* today; however much Fr. Schmemmann was displeased over it and misunderstood the fact, nonetheless Metr. Philaret in his “Sorrowful Epistle” addressed the world episcopate in a plea—not to join the Synod—but to return to Orthodoxy. The Synod has not “condemned” Athenagoras and Iakovos, but merely warned the Orthodox faithful against their heresy and un-Orthodoxy, and some among the Greeks have obeyed the canons and departed from a heretical bishop before his condemnation so as to be free of his heresy.

To speak of “spirituality” brings us back to Fr. Florovsky and “Catharism“. Of course, these evident spiritual fruits are not the criterion or proof of the Synod’s soundness, but rather a result of it. But when Fr. Florovsky cites the “spirituality” of the Catharists, one’s Orthodox head swims: what possible standard of “spirituality” can he be applying to those fanatical and most anti-Christian sectarians? True, there is a Hindu “spirituality”—and I know people who have experienced it at first hand and called it beyond doubt satanic: and there is a kind of “spirituality” which fervent sectarians of many sorts have—but these have nothing to do with Orthodoxy, and none of them can be called “Christian” in any but a marginal sense. Whereas the spiritual fruits of our Orthodox pillars of the Church Abroad are unquestionably *Orthodox*

spiritual fruits and testify to a sound *Orthodox* formation and environment. And by the way, the Orthodox Church *still* considers St. Isaac the Syrian as an *Orthodox* Saint, whatever Catholic scholars (and those Orthodox academics who follow them) may have deduced for themselves. (I'm not sure even Fr. Florovsky doubts this.)

(From a letter to Father David [Black], April 23/May 6, 1970)

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But now that Metropolia considers itself *the* Orthodox Church in America, it's time to open fire on the most general front: to show what kind of "Orthodoxy" it represents. This issue we have an excellent article criticizing Fr. Schmemmann's "liturgical theology," by probably the leading Russian theologian today, Fr. Michael Pomazansky—now 80 years old and living in Jordanville. Frankly, up until recently I had more or less accepted Fr. Schmemmann by his reputation, as an "Orthodox" scholar, somewhat open to criticism but probably not too dreadful after all. But after *this* article, with liberal quotations from his book, he appears as nothing less than an open Protestant. We hope before long to have an article on Archbp. John Shahovskoy also. If Fr. Schmemmann is their "theologian," he is their "spiritual" man— and what a twisted, self-deceived and deceiving "spirituality" he expounds! We're corresponding with Fr. David Black, who shows all the deficiencies of a St. Vladimir's education—and he's becoming hard-pressed to defend his Metropolia. He admits its spiritual impoverishment and the Synod's spiritual wealth (but his idol, Fr. Florovsky, told him we are like Catharists, who were also "spiritual"—good heavens, what an upside-down notion of "spirituality"!); he admits the Soviet bishops may have compromised their episcopacy—but no council has condemned them, and some of Peter's and Catherine's bishops were also no good! He even prays that the Metropolia bishops haven't "sold out Orthodoxy." We mince few words with him, but he keeps writing back, so there is at least a seed planted there.

(From a letter to Father Neketas Palasis April 26/May 9, 1970)

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Dear Father Michael [Azkoul],

We would most certainly like to see your answer to Fr. Schmemmann, the sooner the better. We might even be able to substitute it for our already prepared article on Fr. S's "liturgical theology," which has no particular timeliness—depending on length. We ourselves thought of writing something by way of reply to that, as also to Fr. Meyendorff's attack in *Orthodox Church*, but we couldn't find the time and concentration, and then Fr. George Grabbe's replies came out. Fr. Grabbe's replies, while always sober and factual, are really addressed to Russians who can't get excited about people like Frs. S & M. because they've long recognized them as apostates and just don't listen to them any more. But for English-speaking people there should be a more fighting approach, I think; in English these people are "theological authorities," and it's up to us to prove that they aren't. We heard just yesterday from Fr. Neketas that you had written such an article; he plans to print it together with Fr. Schmemmann's original to give the complete picture and avoid any charges of unfairness.

Fr. Meyendorff is apparently aware of addressing a very limited audience who can't be trusted to distinguish the "right" point of view (evidently the party line) from any others. We're still hoping to get the time to write him an Open Letter on this subject, with a note on its implications for their new "American Orthodoxy."

(From a letter to Father Michael [Azkoul] May 10/23, 1970)

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We hear that Fr. Michael has come to the Synod and has written a reply to Schmemmann—who truly deserves to be brought down from his ridiculous pedestal. We're firing one shot in this direction with our new issue. We're anxiously awaiting Fr. Michael's article.

(From a letter to Father Panteleimon and the monks on May 10/23, 1970)

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Fr. Michael Azkoul sent us an excellent answer to Fr. Schmemmann's attack on the Russian Church Abroad (his answer to Metr. Philaret's Sorrowful Epistle)? In their mutual correspondence, Fr. Schmemmann finally admitted that he simply didn't have the facts about the Russian Church Abroad. The manuscript was turned down by Fr. Meyendorff for *The Orthodox Church* (Fr. Michael notes that Fr. Meyendorff is extremely emotional about the Synod and simply can't reason about it, while Fr. Schmemmann is somewhat more reasonable, half of his own family being in the Synod!), but is extremely objective and fair, and mentions a fact that hasn't been brought out before— that the Moscow-Metropolia negotiations took place in Geneva and New York under WCC auspices, with representatives of the WCC present!

(From a letter to Daniel [Olson] on June 1/14, 1970)

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What is there to say: The Metropolia has gone through with its coup, which for the present involves only itself, but obviously has possibilities for a future union of all those who think a "unified Orthodox Church" is *the* answer for American Orthodoxy. No, it is not the answer, and is the product of very superficial thinking on the question. The answer is a return to real Orthodoxy, so sorely diluted in this century in America. The Metropolia move, I believe, is the watershed of 20th-century Orthodoxy—from now on there will be two "Orthodoxies" in America: the real one (of which no one can doubt that our Synod has become the beacon-light) and the imitation, the product of the Protestantized-academicized Paris school joined to the practical indifference and secular Protestantism of American life. The proof of the case against the Metropolia (and the other like-thinking jurisdictions) lies not in its dubious tactics or even its criminal negotiations with the Soviets, but in the fact that its leadership is not preaching Orthodoxy but a cheap surrogate thereof. Yes, some priests still try, but the future belongs to Frs. Schmemmann and Meyendorff, who are not Orthodox, and the future generation is being raised on the blasphemous parody of Orthodoxy contained in the official publications, from *Young Life* to *Concern*. These people doubtless mean well, but they have been drastically miseducated, and now they try to enforce their abysmal ignorance of Orthodoxy upon the whole Church.

The issues are critical: Orthodoxy vs. non-Orthodoxy. In worldly terms the Metropolia has all the odds on its side: numbers, prestige, publication of wide circulation with an editor who, frankly, is not to be accused of fairness or honesty. But the Metropolia does not have principle or truth on her side, nor can she be considered any longer as within the Church. The *official* representatives of the Metropolia either do not know the facts of Church history of the last 50 years (Fr. Schmemmann has admitted to Fr. Michael Azkoul that he doesn't know the facts about the Synod!) or else they are deliberately distorting them. The "ship" of the Metropolia, as a Church, has come to shipwreck; from now on individuals can still be rescued, but the judgment of the whole body can only be given over to the free Russian Church of the future.

The Synod's position of truth and principle, of what Orthodoxy is and what it is not, will be presented in detail in future publications. Our *Orthodox Word* will soon print Fr. Michael Azkoul's excellent reply to Fr. Schmemmann's attack on the "Sorrowful Epistle" (Fr. Meyendorff turned it down, predictably), in the hope of setting straight Fr. Schmemmann's distortions and faulty theology. Fr. Michael has now come to the Synod—not because he thinks that Metr. Philip is a heretic, but because in not breaking off with Moscow over the issue of giving communion to Roman Catholics he enters also into crypto-Uniatism, as the Metropolia already has done far more decisively. "Global Orthodoxy" has not listened to the Synod's pleas, and therefore those who wish to remain Orthodox have no choice but to leave "global Orthodoxy." In the 15th century those who were not with St. Mark of Ephesus were *not in the Church*—and this situation is being approached today.

Alas, the basic Church issues of today are disguised in clouds of rhetoric and academic half-truths. The capitulation of Orthodoxy today comes not in the forms of signatures to a pseudo-Union, but as a gradual series of acts of apostasy. Those who love the truth must now separate themselves from this relentless and soul-destroying process. The Church as seen through the eyes of the Metropolia presents a timid voice to the world, ever ready to apologize for its deviations and to accommodate itself to the times and to the powerful of the world. Not such is the Church of Christ! And there is precious little time left for us to thunder the truth to an indifferent world!

(From a letter to Father David Black, June 8/21, 1970)

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Do you not yet begin to see the enormous implications of the most important part of your agreement with Moscow—i.e., the *unwritten* part? Do you not yet see how your supposed “independence” binds you so tightly that you must now begin to do things that you would never have dreamed of before? With all our heart we would like to be one with you at least with those of you who sincerely love the Church and want to serve Her above all but we can be one with you only in the Truth, not in false friendliness. And this uncompromising attitude of ours will only inspire even more bitter feelings in some of you than Fr. Meyendorff has already shown in his slanderous attack, and men like Fr. Meyendorff will echo every last bit of the Moscow propaganda against us—not realizing that this is one of the most important “clauses” of the Autocephaly Agreement: to join in destroying the “Karlovitz Schismatics.”

I will tell you another of the unwritten “clauses” of that agreement, which you yourself are following in your arguments for Moscow: “Every bishop, priest, and layman of the Metropolia agrees to defend the Moscow Patriarchate, not merely as a persecuted organization that cannot be judged by those outside the USSR, not merely as a Church that *may* yet possess the grace of the Holy Spirit, but as a *fully canonical*, in no wise dubious Orthodox Church, entitled to a role of leadership among the Orthodox Churches of the world.” One can even paraphrase the Declaration of 1927 to read: “Every blow directed against the Patriarchate of Moscow is a blow against the Metropolia, and her joys and sorrows are those of the Metropolia.”

Do you not yet begin to grasp the immensity of your spiritual bondage? Do you not see that the Metropolia can no longer look at the Church situation in the USSR with objective eyes? That it is no longer in the interests of the Metropolia to have a complete exposure of that situation? That the Metropolia cannot welcome the publication of the statements of many hierarchs in 1927 unequivocally condemning the Declaration of Metr. Sergius and the Church organization based on it? That it would not be in the interests of the Metropolia that Boris Talantov be released from prison and allowed to continue his writings on “Sergianism” as the root of the evils of Russian Church life today? That the Metropolia has taken its unequivocal stand on the side of Sergianism and against the Catacomb Church, about whose very existence the Metropolia now would prefer not to hear? Indeed, if any word can describe the Metropolia’s present state, it is surely: “Neo-Sergianism.”

Yes, our statements about Frs Schmemmann and Meyendorff will be documented in *The Orthodox Word*. The small deviations of yesterday are already resulting in great divergences, which we hope some will yet see in time.

(From a letter to Father David [Black], June 29/July 12, 1970)

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It is time to apply strictness in Orthodox reading material. It just can’t be assumed that the Orthodox reader will get through a book by Schmemmann etc. unaffected by the big and little discrepancies from Orthodoxy, which by now have added up to a whole new approach to Orthodoxy.

(From a letter to Father Neketas Palasis on June 29/July 12, 1970)

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I believe the whole question of the Catacomb Church is *extremely* hazy in the minds of most Orthodox, and with God's help we will try to correct that with a whole series of articles—for the basic issues are, after all, quite clear and can even be named: "Sergianism" vs. Orthodoxy. The statements of the non-Sergianist hierarchs in 1927 were quite explicit and should serve as a foundation for further discussion of the question. An interesting revelation of the ignorance touching this subject: Fr. J. Meyendorff in a recent note in *The Orthodox Church*, trying to explain how the Metropolia was *really* not under the Synod in 1935-46, notes that in the agreement of 1935 both the Metropolia and the Synod commemorated first of all "Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsky"—i.e., the leader of the opposition to Metr. Sergius, the head of the Catacomb Church! The Metropolia from top to bottom is simply absolutely *ignorant* of the facts and principles of the Russian Church situation in the 20th century. The only change in the situation since 1935 is that we no longer know the name of the head of the Catacomb Church, or even if there is one; but the existence of the Catacomb Church is attested in Soviet sources themselves.

The present crisis within Orthodoxy is not at all superficial but profound and doctrinal. What Constantinople is coming up with is simply unbelievable (and Fr. Meyendorff in the June-July *Orth. Church* puts the Metropolia fully with Athenagoras & Co. by stating that those not in communion with him are "outside the communion of world Orthodoxy"), and the only other question is—not whether heresy is involved—but where to start describing such an all-embracing apostasy. By the way, Fr. Constantine Dombalis has recently appealed in the *Hellenic Chronicle* for the canonization of Athenagoras while alive! In the face of such Orthodox disorientation, the burden of proof would rather lie with the Athenagorists to show that their teaching has anything in common with Orthodoxy. But the times being what they are, most Orthodox will have to be shown why and how Athenagoras and Iakovos are not Orthodox.

Therefore, the question is: how to make the situation dear? The most obvious doctrinal issue is the heresy concerning the nature of the Church; both Ath. and Iak. can be quoted on this. But that does not say too much yet, because this heresy seems to be an only *incidental* part of their teaching. But what is it, then, that actually motivates them? I have always found, in trying to understand and criticize systems of thought, that the most effective criticism must first understand the basic motivation of the thinker and then strike at the heart of the whole system, letting incidental heresies and errors fall into proper perspective.

Now, of course, the frustrating thing about Athenagoras and Iakovos is precisely that they seem to have no system, no real ideological motivation, at all, but are simply at the mercy of every wind of doctrine that falls in with their own ambition. But I think one should take as an axiom that *ideas*, after all, *are primary*, and even those who themselves are not motivated by ideas are nonetheless at the mercy (in that case) of someone else's ideas. And certainly, the present crisis of Greek Orthodoxy cannot be traced to Iakovos' ambition or any other *personal* motive—these existed in past times and did not cause the crisis in *ideas*, in *theology*, which exists today.

And so it was (getting back to Iakovos) that the other day, as I was reading Iakovos' article in the July-Aug. *Orthodox Observer*: "A New Epoch?" that I suddenly felt that I had found an insight into the "essence of Iakovism." Is not, indeed, the basic heresy *chiliasm*? What else, indeed, could justify such immense changes and monstrous perversions in Orthodoxy except the concept that we are entering entirely new historical circumstances, an entirely new *kind* of time, in which the concepts of the past [are] no longer relevant, but must be guided by the voices of the new time? Does not Fr. Patrinos, in past issues of the *Orthodox Observer*, justify Athenagoras—not as a theologian, not as traditionalist, but precisely as *prophet*, as one whose heresies cannot be condemned because he already lives in the "new time," ahead of his own times? Athenagoras himself has been quoted (I can't find this source now!) as speaking of the coming of the "Third Age of the Holy Spirit"—a clearly chiliastic idea which has its chief recent champion in N. Berdyaev, and can be traced back directly to Joachim of Floris, and indirectly to the Montanists. The whole idea of a "new age," of course, penetrates every fiber of the last two centuries with their preoccupation with "progress," is *the* key idea of the very concept of Revolution (from French to Bolshevik), is a central idea of modern

occultism (visible on the popular level in today's talk of the "age of Aquarius," the astrological post-Christian age) and has owed its spread probably chiefly to Freemasonry (there's a Scottish Rite publication in America called *New Age*). (I regret to say that the whole philosophy is also present in the American dollar bill with its masonic heritage, with its "novus ordo seclorum" and its unfinished pyramid, awaiting the 13th stone on top!" In Christian terms, it is the philosophy of Antichrist, the one who will turn the world upside down and "change times and seasons." Indeed even the Calendar is involved, for the most thorough Revolutions (the French; and Bolshevik tried and failed and had to be satisfied with the compromise of the Gregorian calendar) introduce new calendars. The Pope and Athenagoras have already expressed themselves as for the new "universal" calendar. And the whole concept of ecumenism is, of course, permeated with this heresy and the "refounding of the Church."

The recent "thought" of Constantinople (to give it a dignified name!) is full either of outright identification of the Kingdom of Heaven with the "new epoch" (the wolf lying down with the lamb) or of emphasis on an entirely new kind of time and/or Christianity that makes previous Christian standards obsolete: new morality, new religion, springtime of Christianity, refounding the Church, the need no longer to pray for crops or weather because *Man* controls these now, etc.

How appropriate, too, for the chiliast cause that we live (since 1917) in the "post-Constantinian age"; for it was at the beginning of that age, i.e., at the time of the golden age of the Fathers, that the heresy of chiliasm was crushed—in the West, I believe, chiefly through Augustine and in the East by Origen(?), with their commentary on the thousand years of the Apocalypse not as an earthly "millennium" but as the life of grace in the Church on earth. And indeed, together with the Revolutions that have toppled the Constantinian era we have seen a reform of Christianity that does away with the Church as an instrument of God's grace for men's eternal salvation and replaces it with the "social gospel." Iakovos' article has not one word about salvation, but is concerned only for the "world."

(From a letter to Father Michael Azkoul on August 30/September 12, 1970)

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Meanwhile, even though Athenagoras did not recognize the autocephaly, the Metropolia is clinging to him, and Fr. Meyendorff writes in the new *Orthodox Church* that anyone who does not recognize Athenagoras as a genuine Orthodox Patriarch is simply "outside the communion of world Orthodoxy." And this at a time when Athenagoras is being driven to wilder and wilder statements (he's afraid that Moscow will turn out to be more modernist than he, and thus will take over the leadership of "world Orthodoxy"!), and when a Greek Archpriest in America (Fr. Dombalis) has seriously called for the canonization of Athenagoras while alive!!!

(From a letter to Daniel Olson 4/17 September 1970)

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The Metropolia runs away from Metropolitan Philaret straight into the arms of Moscow, which is currently competing with Constantinople for the lead in spectacular un-Orthodox acts and statements, and Fr. Meyendorff states that anyone outside of communion with Athenagoras (I believe you realize he is a heretic?) is outside the Orthodox Church.

(From a letter to Father David [Black], October 30/November 12, 1970)

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It is no secret that Metropolia bishops eat meat (we used to know a cook at St. Tikhon's, who prepared meat even—to our surprise—for Shakhovskoy) and that no one expects them not to; and this really reveals their attitude toward podvig and church tradition. But unfortunately the Metropolia mentality is such that if they found even one of our monks eating meat it would

offset their whole Sobor of Bishops and justify their calling us “pharisees” for bringing up the issue.

(From a letter to Father Neketas Palasis on June 12/25, 1972)

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Fr. Michael doesn’t get the *point* about Schmemmann—which is not his “incorrect views” in this or that subject, but this whole hothouse approach to theology, which our simple Russian priests grasp immediately from their genuine Orthodox instinct without needing a theological degree; a Vasnetsov “icon” (how much we’ve fought in the Russian Church over him) which is a *blasphemy* against the saints; a mediocre article on holiness (apparently revealing Vlad. Vitaly’s apologetic approach) over the signatures of one who is the leading *public* scandal of the Church Abroad; etc., etc.

(From a letter to Father Neketas Palasis, April 9/22, 1973)

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Do you see how far off you can get by making vast generalizations about “Catholic influence” or “Latin captivity”? The very notion of “Latin captivity” is played up by Schmemmann and his kind precisely with the aim of destroying the idea of the continuity of Orthodox tradition throughout the centuries. DO NOT FALL INTO THAT TRAP!

(From a letter to Father Neketas Palasis on August 19/September 1, 1973)

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Father Sergei Shukin writes us that in the decrees of the Bishops he feels the “influence of Solzhenitsyn.” Yes, we feel this too; and I remember you mentioned something like this when you visited us also. Solzhenitsyn is important as a *moral* force, standing up boldly in the face of tyranny, encouraging people to *stop lying*. This is good, but very limited; and it is obvious that Solzhenitsyn himself does not have a very deep *Church consciousness*. He is a kind of “confessor”—but not like St. Maximus the Confessor or St. Mark of Ephesus. He wants Russians to be *united*—but he probably does not even see that *truth* must come before unity. (And even though he is against “living by lies”— he has not yet seen the terrible *lie* of Schmemmann and that whole fake Orthodoxy.) Thus Solz. can be a great scandal today—and really, he seems to have exerted a great influence on our Bishops. How discouraging to see the Bishops running after the world, trying to keep in “fashion.”

To sum up: the Bishops look very much like a worldly “Board of Directors” who are leading the Church *according to their human understanding*, not by the guidance of God. This means *trouble ahead*. Right now, Vlad. Anthony told us, Grabbe and Schmemmann are “negotiating”—about what? About confessing the truth? Or about how to present a pleasing face to the world and look as though you are friends with everyone? If the “negotiations” succeed, are we supposed to accept the innovations and the whole false Orthodoxy of Schmemmann & Co? This make us very uneasy—the ground is being dug away from beneath our feet.

(From a letter to Father Valery [Lukianov] on February 1/14, 1975)

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Bound up with chiliasm and the “new age” is the “superman,” which I see that Florevsky explicitly endorses. Soloviev was against Nietzsche—but is not his “Godmanhood” a more “theological” form of the same idea?—as when on p. 25 of your MS he says that man ceases to be “merely human.” (Cf. Dostoyevsky who correctly contrasted the Orthodox God-man with the new revolutionary mangod; thus *The Possessed*) Perhaps more emphasis could likewise be placed on this idea of man becoming a “god” *in a new historical epoch*, as opposed to becoming a god by grace in Orthodox.

The tradition to which Kireyevsky joined himself continued right up to the Revolution and beyond—i.e., it is the “traditional” Orthodoxy represented today by the Russian Church Abroad, which stands with its whole philosophy and theology against the gnostic tradition of Soloviev-Florensky-Bulgakov, etc. There are no theses written on this traditionalist Orthodoxy, both because it is out of step with the times, and because its representatives are almost all clerics (with the exception of a few thinkers like Constantine Leontiev).

(From a letter to Father Michael [Azkoul] on August 25/September 7, 1975)

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The fact that we refuse to enter into the campaign of distrust of Vlad. Laurus or of any of those accused of “Western influence” (and those who use this accusation are clearly under Schmemmann’s influence), does *not* mean that we agree entirely with them on any given issue. We suspect, for example, that the most sober position with regard to the Old Calendarists lies somewhere between Vlad. Laurus’ position and that of Dr. Kalomiros. But we continue on the best of relations with both, because we all realize that we are human and do not have all the answers.

(From a letter to Nina Seko 9/22 October 1975)

Part II. On the broad road of apostasy.
4. About Metropolitan Vitaly (Ustinov).

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The True Vine. And frankly, considering the material which Vlad. Vitaly had to work with, the first issue really is a disgrace. Knowing Vlad. Vitaly and his Russian publications (the article on “Ecumenism” is a rather notable exception) we expected something like this; and in fact I told Fr. Herman sometime before the first issue appeared: “if he puts a Dore on the cover, it’s the last straw! That will crush the Greeks and converts!” Mercifully, he saved his Dore for an inside page! We will make three frank comments:

(1) The editor does not have the feeling for what’s going on: what inspires converts, iconographic taste, the approach to the whole subject of mission. The periodical is not conceived as a missionary publication; it is an immigrant jurisdictional publication, Victorian in taste, the contents of which are entirely incidental and do not point up a single theme or point of view. Its power to inspire is zero.

(2) The “Editorial Staff” cannot possibly be responsible for this! We heard Fr. Panteleimon was to be in charge of art—if so, he should be fired immediately! It would seem that whatever advice the “editorial staff” gave was not listened to very seriously—on the principle, most likely, that the “bishop knows best.” Do you know how Vlad. Vitaly referred to The True Vine in his Diocesan bulletin in Russian?—“under the editorship of Archbp. Vitaly with the cooperation of the most outstanding theologians of true Orthodoxy.” This all sounds to us suspiciously as though advantage is being taken of the “editorial staff” in order to put across something they don’t entirely sympathize with! They don’t claim to be “outstanding theologians” at all; they are zealots of Orthodoxy—but “theologians” sounds more important and official!

(3) We’ve known for years that Vlad. Vitaly does not approve of the “Jordanville ideology,” that (at least 10 years ago when Fr. Herman visited him) he purposely does not even receive Orthodox Russia, that at the Synod’s 50th anniversary celebrations he spoke of the need not only for an English publication but also for a Russian one “because there is no satisfactory Orthodox publication in Russian” (approximate quotation). (We also have our complaints about Orth Russia—but nonetheless it’s fully Orthodox, has its definite function in our common Orthodox task, and now that Fr. Constantine is failing in health we dread to think of

any conceivable alternative to it; many people are “tired of Antichrist”—but the subject is precisely becoming most relevant right now!) We know also that despite his many words about the need for English publications, Vlad. Vitaly has never even mentioned in his Russian publications or in his small correspondence with us (except to grant us permission to translate and print his article) either Orthodox Life or Orth Word—the reason in our case being apparently, as he once told a friend of ours, that we have “gone overboard” on the subject of Archbishop John, with whom his differences were apparently not merely personal, but seem to involve a whole different orientation to Orthodox life and mission.

And now in The True Vine we find that no other Synodal publication is mentioned (except for the Witness, which is not however identified). Further, the lengths he goes to avoid using the word “Jordanville” are truly astonishing: he lifts a whole article from OL without a word as to source; he reprints “Feofil” and barely manages to say “Holy Trinity Monastery” (but not “Jordanville”); he “steals” the whole translation, word for word (and it is still in print!) of “St. Mary of Egypt” from Jordanville (and he sets it up again himself, while one of his priests tells us that his English-language publications have cost him a great deal of effort), and goes out of his way to say that he “encountered it in the English language”!!! Likewise the “New Martyrs” gives no credit to Jordanville.

All this is quite distressing to us, because it shows a total and evidently deliberate setting aside of the “common task” which the rest of us have been working and sweating over for some years now. It is almost as if, now that the “official” publication has come, all the rest of us “unofficial” laborers in the vineyard can quietly retire, or perhaps pay our dues to the central organization!

Well, we don’t want to upset you, which is also why before The True Vine came out we never mentioned to you or others our fears about Vl. V. We have always placed the common missionary and Orthodox cause for which we were all working above every kind of personal difference or suspicion, and will continue to do so. But it is essential for all of us for whom this cause is not merely an “official” assignment, but our very life’s blood, to be aware of certain tendencies and dangers. Judging from the first issue we personally doubt that The True Vine will ever amount to much, and very likely it will more or less die out by the third or fourth (increasingly tardy) issue—unless a real “official” campaign is made for it and it becomes fully subsidized. In any case, the “unofficial” labors of the rest of us become all the more important!

About this whole thing there are other points we would like to mention, but we will save them until we see you personally. The ground is a little dangerous!

(From a letter to Father Nektas Palasis on April 18/May 1, 1972)

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Yesterday’s mail brought the second issue of The True Vine and we’d like to make a few comments.

The new True Vine is technically improved over the first, from the printing point of view very impressive, and of course almost all of the articles are good, even irreproachable. To be sure, the “ecology” article, and especially the illustration, give a worldly tone that is not pleasant, and Vladika Vitaly seems to make a point of insisting on Dore (and the engraving seems to have been ordered especially for The True Vine, as it’s too large to have been printed in his Russian magazine), and in this he reveals much more about himself than one could infer from the articles! But that’s perhaps not a major point. Again, one does not sense that anyone on the editorial staff, except for Dr. Johnstone, had anything to do with this issue.

More importantly, the deliberate blackout on Jordanville continues (at least two articles are reprints from Jordanville without acknowledgement, although the word “Jordanville” does appear in one or two articles). But still more importantly, one wonders: what place is this periodical supposed to have among the already existing Synod English publications? It seems not to be trying to find its “place” among the others, but rather to be encroaching on the others, and especially on your publications. Again the thought occurs to us: is The True Vine

trying to put the rest of us out of business? We have a definite feeling that something is going on, some “plan” we don’t know about, and it makes us uneasy. We will welcome The True Vine as long as it has a definite function in the “common task” of all of us. A little duplication among our periodicals is not harmful,—but a systematic process of duplication (amounting to some 3/4 if the new issue of The True Vine) raises some fundamental questions.

Hopefully, we can discuss all this when, God willing (we always say this too!), you visit us next month. In the meantime, we fear that you may be in a discouraged and uncertain state. Specifically we don’t know what you might be thinking—whether to revise or rethink the Newsletter or whatever. But please believe us: your continued existence as an independent voice within the Church Abroad is extremely important, and perhaps much more important than you may realize. It may be that some will try to persuade you that your Newsletter has already “served its function” and can be absorbed into The True Vine. But I think we do not exaggerate in telling you that it probably has not even begun to serve its main function.

We can say frankly that we do not trust Vladika Vitaly to give the “one thing needful.” So far his basic attitudes as revealed in English are “correct”—but there are certain things in which he has not yet revealed himself (which are evident in his Russian publications) But first of all there is lacking in his “correctness” a certain spark, a certain indefinable Orthodox “fragrance” which may be, when the time comes, the only thing that will enable us to discern and cling to Orthodoxy. It is the “spark,” and not correctness, which draws the converts, and when we sense its absence in Vlad. Vit. we become uneasy. (“Sergianism” also seems to be bound up with the loss of this spark.)

Second, more tangibly, there is in the Synod a “dogmatic” issue which is potentially not only explosive, but absolutely catastrophic. We would rather not even hint at what it is until we can explain it more fully from the materials we have and from the opinion of bishops we know. For now the important thing is: Vladika Vitaly is on the wrong side of this issue, a side that has not been accepted by the best Synod theologians living and dead; and if, as seems quite possible, the Synod’s enemies grab hold of this issue, and Vlad. Vit. is called on to defend the Synod—his “defense” (if he follows what he has printed in Russian) will be disastrous for the Synod.

This is only one “small” issue about which we know something, and which convinces us that in the perilous days ahead there must be not only an “official” Synod press, but also an “independent” Synod press.

Please forgive us for being so cryptic and alarming, but I think you will realize that not everything in the Synod is the same quality of gold, and for our own sake and the sake of those who trust and listen to us we must find out and cling to only the best quality. All of us who have the “one thing needful” at heart should become even closer together in the dangerous days ahead. Right now there are indications that Jordanville (again) is in danger. Probably you have heard the tragedy there last month when one seminarian stabbed another to death (both on marijuana). This has caused a great scandal, police investigations, etc.—so much so that the last issue of Orthodox Russia brings the whole thing out in print, apparently in an effort to defend the monastery’s reputation. Our Vladika Anthony (who basically is a very good man, but is subject to “political” pressures) was sent to investigate, and when he went to the Synod Vladika Vitaly launched into such a violent attack against Vladika Averky (who was absent) that the cell-attendant of Vladika Laurus (through whom we heard about it) was absolutely sick about it. Fortunately our Vladika Anthony came to Vlad. Averky’s defense. It’s well known that for years Vlad. Vit. has wanted to move the seminary away from Jordanville to Mahopac (where presumably he would be in charge), but he’s never been able to make it sound practical.

(From a letter to Father Neketas Palasis on June 3/16, 1972)

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You are perhaps thinking that inexperienced people like Alexey should be “taken in hand” and not simply “counseled,” as we have tried to do. To this we will disagree, for two reasons:

(1) Vladika John gave us the path which we are following in this respect, and he is our guiding star, and we see pretty clearly the meaning of his approach to missionary labor and why he chose it; and (2) what is the alternative? We were frankly horrified when we heard that Fr. Panteleimon had suggested a year or so ago that Vladika Vitaly be somehow placed “in charge” of converts or convert priests, to avoid the “mistakes” of the past. Well, yes, that might mean the end of the “mistakes” of the past (but somehow we doubt even that), but it would also mean the end of the Orthodox missionary movement in the Church Abroad, period. (And it wouldn’t help to have someone better in charge—the principle itself is the dangerous thing.)

But speaking of Vlad. Vitaly (can I speak more frankly, now?)—do you see now something of what this alternative to Nikodemos and a reasonably free missionary movement is? We could have told you two years ago everything you now know about him and his approaches and more besides, but we deliberately refrained from this, not because of his high rank (which we respect, but we still speak the truth when it is called for), but chiefly for fear of causing any kind of hindrance to the possible good that might come out of the “missionary committee” (or whatever it was called) of which he was head. We do not believe in discouraging any kind of missionary labors which seem to be heading in the right direction. We even gave a notice to The True Vine after this first tentative issue when its full orientation was not yet visible—and not as a duty to an Archbishop, but as a duty to the missionary movement. (We would be glad to give such a notice to The Celtic Cross, by the way, but we have been waiting for another issue or two to test its stability first.)

Now we’ve just received the fourth (Jan.) issue, and there at last is Vlad. Vitaly in full color: a sub-mediocre sermon that reveals him as a disciple of the worst (“literary-sentimental”) side of Metr. Anthony Khrapovitsky—and such discipleship will only serve to discredit someone who in other respects was a great hierarch; a Protestant “childrens legend” which, Fr. Herman urges me to say, is an absolute mockery of Orthodox Russians, who do not believe in German “Christmas trees” (and Jordanville is so strict on the subject that the fathers won’t even allow greens inside the church during the feast days around Christmas); an endorsement of “Schmemannism” (p. 11) which reveals to our dismay that Fr. Michael doesn’t get the point about Schmemann—which is not his “incorrect views” in this or that subject, but this whole hothouse approach to theology, which our simple Russian priests grasp immediately from their genuine Orthodox instinct without needing a theological degree; a Vasnetsov “icon” (how much we’ve fought in the Russian Church over him) which is a blasphemy against the saints; a mediocre article on holiness (apparently revealing Vlad. Vitaly’s apologetic approach) over the signatures of one who is the leading public scandal of the Church Abroad; etc., etc.

This publication is a disgrace; it is not merely off the beam and completely unaware of what is needed today, it is positively harmful, and it presents our Church’s official stand!?? Whatever is good in it is swallowed up and given the tone of the rest.

(From a letter to Father Neketas Palasis, April 9/22, 1973)

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Fr. Panteleimon and his followers think that he alone is truly Orthodox in our Synod, that almost all the Russians are “backward,” theologically naive, and under “Western influence”—and only Fr. Panteleimon and his followers are true theologians, sophisticated, free of all un-Orthodox influences and able to lead everyone else in true Orthodoxy. He never attacked our Brotherhood directly, but after a while it became apparent that he was waging a campaign against us in private, and now we have the testimony of several people that he “warns” people against us, apparently because we are “Russians,” do not ask him for advice, and do not even have a telephone (so he can call us up and “correct” us whenever he feels like it!).

But with whom does Fr. P. have close contact in our Synod? I tell you this in confidence: from the beginning Fr. P. began playing “politics” with our bishops, and he chose for his patron precisely the one bishop we have who is not Russian in spirit, who does not have the simple piety and faith of most of our Russian bishops and priests, but who prides himself on being better and more “sophisticated” than they, who would like to “reform” the Synod to make it more in harmony with his philosophy, who himself plays “politics” and now is the

most powerful figure in the Synod (and who ten years ago was the leader in the persecution of our own Archbishop John Maximovitch, whom he disdained for his lack of “sophistication” and “administrative ability”), and who was educated in a Jesuit seminary and is a Jesuit through and through in spirit, even though outwardly he is very “traditionalist.” This is Archbishop Vitaly of Montreal. We know him personally, and several venerable bishops have warned us about him. It was with some apprehension that we saw how Fr. P. tried to “use” Archbp. Vitaly to make himself important in the Synod, and in turn how Archbp. Vitaly tried to “use” Fr. P. claiming to the Russians that “great Greek theologians” (and not simple Russian priests) were his supporters and followers. By his attitude and actions Fr. P. revealed that he does not have the “feel” for true and simple Orthodox people, or if he once did have it, he has lost it by his indulging in “politics.” Together, Archbp. Vitaly and Fr. P. produced several issues of *The True Vine*, an “official” Synod periodical, which was a lamentable failure—which we already predicted, knowing the publications of Archbp. Vitaly in Russian. He does not know what is desperately needed today, but only prints what he thinks is “fashionable,” makes him look “sophisticated,” and will give him success with “university graduates,”—but the result is only ridiculous, because the Roman Catholics can do this so much better. Incidentally, Archbp. Vitaly from the very beginning, even though he himself has written many times that Orthodox literature in English is desperately needed, has never once mentioned our Orthodox Word in print, as if our labors did not exist or were not Orthodox.

(From a letter to Dr. Kalomiros August 26/September 8, 1975)

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We received your note of alarm and hasten to reply. Not knowing the specific nature of your encounter with Archbishop Vitaly, as well as the other problems you have had in the last three months, I will only give you our impressions both of the article you enclosed and of Archbishop Vitaly in general, as we know him.

The article struck both of us as extremely unrealistic, rather elitist and snobbish, and obviously written by someone with very little real experience in the missionary field. It corresponds not at all to the realities of missionary labor in our Church.

Why then was it written? I would guess, knowing Vladika Vitaly: it expresses chiefly the personal jealousy of Vlad. V. for the successful missionary labors in our Church which he would like to be heading himself, but is not. We noticed years ago that Vlad. V. has had not a single good word to say of the labors of our Brotherhood, for example. He sometimes justifies this privately by saying that we are in “prelest” for our veneration of Vladika John; but it is actually, I think, out of jealousy because he has been unable to do much in the mission field himself, despite his talk about it. Lately he seems to have developed the same jealousy for Fr. Panteleimon and his missionary labors. The article seems to be his “sour grapes”—since the convert movement in our Church is not under his control, it is not really very good. (All this began with him years ago, when he had great hopes that Timothy Ware would remain with him and put his—Vlad. Vitaly's—missionary plans into action. After all his failures in this direction, he has gotten sour on converts in general, and neither trusts nor understands them.)

Both of us in our personal contacts with Vlad. V. have found him cold and pretentious, and totally lacking in the warmth and Christian love of someone like Vladika John Maximovitch, who inspired a spontaneous missionary movement just by these qualities, without Vladika Vitaly's pretensions to be a “theologian,” etc.

All of this I write not out of any bitterness toward Vladika Vitaly (who has never caused us personally any trouble at all, apart from our disappointment that he never supported our work), but only so that you might not have any false picture of him or false hopes in him; he does not represent what our Church stands for and stands outside the vital currents in our Church, whether Russian or convert (the Russians, for example in Jordanville, have no more rapport with him than we do). He happens to be “powerful” in the Synod—but this is largely a superficial thing, having to do with church politics and hardly affecting at all the grass roots labors of such as you or we.

We are puzzled as to what Vladika Vitaly can possibly mean when he says that this very unsuccessful article has become “Synod policy.” Of course, it has become no such thing; and in any case, the article presents no proposals or programs as such and only expresses one mans reflections (rather poor ones) on the question. What Vlad. V. probably means is that the Bishops listened to the report and expressed their appreciation of it without thinking at all of any practical consequences of it. The Bishops could not but have noticed the total impracticality of implementing any such ideas, since almost every diocese (certainly in this country) already has well-developed church services in the English or other non-Russian languages, and Vlad. V. himself must often have been present at such services.

I hope you understand that one does not have to take very seriously some of the things our bishops say—that is, sometimes some of them say things just to “save face” or protect their sense of authority, and no one, least of all the bishops themselves, expect such statements to be put into practice. And please don’t let Vlad. Vitaly’s coldness upset you. We would advise you to stay as far away from him as possible—he doesn’t have the right spirit at all, and is more concerned with church politics than the real needs of the flock today.

We ourselves have had complete freedom in developing our American mission. Our services both in the monastery and in our missions are almost entirely in English, and Vladika Anthony when he visits makes a point of encouraging us to do everything in English, and he himself does as much as he can in English. This is certainly the “normal” attitude of our bishops, and Vlad. Vitaly’s remarks are surely atypical.

(From a letter to Father Yves [Dubois] on June 1/14, 1979)

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Vladika Vitaly has just published Metr. Anthony’s Dogma of Redemption in English, and Bishop Grabbe praises it sky-high. Please don’t advertise or sell this book—Metr. Anthony’s teaching on this subject has been controversial for decades, and our best bishops and theologians have rejected it. Jordanville and other book centers here are deliberately not stocking it, and our Bishop Nektary has asked Fr. Nektas also not to distribute it. Years ago, at the instigation of Bishop Nektary, we warned Fr. Panteleimon about this teaching, but for political reasons he fell for it; now, however, even Fr. Michael Azkoul has written a review against it, and his fashionability will probably come to an end now. His ideas on this subject are sloppy theology, at best.

(From a letter to Andrew Bond on 10/23 August 1979)

Part II. On the broad road of apostasy.
5. About Sergianism.

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Yes, we are a minority; yes, the rest of the Orthodox Church tries to cut us off— and will redouble its efforts if the “autocephaly” is signed; yes, we are conscious of defending Orthodoxy, which is trampled on today by Orthodox hierarchs themselves. But how are we different in this from St. Athanasius in the 4th century, who found every Church in the city except one in the Arians hands? How are we different from St. Maximus the Confessor, who when informed that three Patriarchs had entered into communion with the Monothelites said: “Even if all the world enter into communion with them, I alone will not!”? (This statement was repeated, by the way, by Metr. Anthony Khrapovitsky in 1927 against Metr. Sergius.) How are we different from St. Mark of Ephesus, who defied an “Ecumenical Council” and every single hierarch with the “Catharist, sectarian, delirious” belief that he alone was in the truth?!!

(From a letter to Father David [Black], March 23/April 5, 1970)

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One misconception which, I believe, causes you unnecessary “problems” about the Synodal Church, is unfortunately widespread: that the Synod builds its case largely on canonical questions, big or small. The opposite is, if anything, the case: our hierarchy, well realizing the irregularity of the times, goes out of its way not to enforce the letter of the canons or condemn anyone only on this basis. Even with the Metropolia, its own free sister, for 25 years it has been extremely lenient and even now does not rush to apply the canonical penalty which she deserves. It is rather Moscow, at the bidding of its Communist masters, which tries to use canons to have the Synod condemned, to crush those few who protest in the USSR, etc.—in feet, if there are Pharisees in Orthodoxy today, it is surely the Moscow leaders and no one else, who are consciously destroying the Church and at the same time using the Church’s laws to do it.

No, the case of the Synod is based upon one thing: faithfulness to Orthodoxy, first in spirit, and then to every possible canon. Contrary to one widespread misconception, the Synod has never condemned or judged the Soviet Church or declared it to be without grace; it has many times emphasized (chiefly in the Russian language, to be sure) that the judgement of this Church and its hierarchs must be left to a future All-Russian Sobor in a free Russia, and that until such a Sobor can be called no question affecting the whole of Russian Orthodoxy—as well as any pan-Orthodox questions—can be resolved. And until that time the free Russian Church can and will enter into no contact whatever, no negotiations, no dialogue, will not even sit at the same table with the representatives of Moscow—not because they are uncanonical (although there is much that is uncanonical in their behavior) but because they collaborate with and serve the most determined enemies the Church of Christ has yet fought against. If every Orthodox Christian is commanded by the canons to depart from a heretical bishop even before he is officially condemned, or be guilty also of his heresy, how much more must we depart from those who are worse (and more unfortunate) than heretics, because they openly serve the cause of Antichrist?

But there, probably, is the crux of the issue and the root of our differences: for there can be no doubt that the Synod as a Church views our times as apocalyptic (as indeed St. Paul and all the Apostles did their times) and Communism not as merely another tyranny like the Moslem yoke, but as a radical evil in the direct service of satan for the destruction of Christ’s Church and the enslavement of mankind (all of which can be read in the writings and seen in the actions of Communism). A few outside our Church share this view, but clearly the consensus of “Orthodox opinion” today (not the conscience of the Church—that is sometimes expressed by only a few), at least among world Orthodox leaders, is that this is just another of many similar crisis in the Church’s history. But really, can the restrictions of the Moslem yoke (although, it is true, the free parts of both the Serbian and Greek Churches were at one time forced to break off with the Church authority inside the Moslem territory and form church organizations similar to the present Russian Church Abroad) be seriously compared to the behavior of quite evident and conscious enemies of Christ’s Church, who hold their office at the will of the atheists in order to discredit and destroy the Church? Have you read some of the recent statements of Boris Talantov, who within the USSR has come to the same conclusion concerning the Soviet Church that our Church holds?—that its root disease is “Sergianism” (i.e., the concordat of the Patriarchate with the Soviet Government) and that its leaders (no one would think of condemning the ordinary clergy and faithful or even a courageous bishop like Germogen) are consciously destroying the Church? The Metropolia cannot possibly take the side of Talantov when he says openly that Nikodim betrays the Church abroad, for it has received its autocephaly precisely as one of these acts of betrayal! The Metropolia can continue to talk about “persecutions” in the USSR, but now its hands are tied and it dare not look with absolute openness at the church situation in the USSR for fear of finding itself compromised if a radically negative view of the Patriarchate should be expressed or prevail. And what happens if in future (as some Communist officials have said will finally happen) the Soviet Government decides finally to liquidate the Patriarchate by saying that it is not even a valid ecclesiastical organization but exists only to fulfill the will of atheism, and that even some bishops (quite possible!) were unconsecrated?! Well, this latter point is speculation, but I think the Metropolia has enough reason already to continue to be uneasy over the church situation in Russia, and that the autocephaly will not set everyone’s conscience at ease.

If they wish, world Orthodox “leaders” can condemn the Synodal Church (as Fr. Schmemmann does) for “apocalyptic fruitlessness”—but the spiritual fruits and examples which God has granted to the Church Abroad, recognized by many outside our Church, would seem to be strong evidence against such an easy condemnation.

(From a letter to Father David [Black], April 23/May 6, 1970)

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About the Moscow Patriarchate, contrary to common impression our Synod has never “condemned” it, reserving that judgement to a future All-Russian Sobor; but the Synod’s position is unbending that until such a Sobor there can be no communion or contact with such a dubious ecclesiastical organization. Speaking of the 1920’s, we’ve printed almost nothing yet of the available material on the schism of 1927—when the majority was anti-Sergian, and the “Soviet Church” triumphed only because its opponents were imprisoned, murdered, and driven underground. And now the Metropolia, for the sake of the “Patriarch’s” signature, has prejudged the case of the Soviet Church and found it “canonical”—because everyone else says so! Our Synod has yet to issue its final statement on the matter, but certainly the situation of the Metropolia has become now so dubious that no further communion with it is possible. Spiritually and theologically, also, its direction is already clear— with the current of the times.

(From a letter to Dr. [John] Johnstone May 6/19, 1970)

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The anti-Sergianist texts of 1927, which we also hope to start printing, have a quite contemporary relevance; as with the Greeks and the Calendar-modernist question, so in the Russian Church the basis of today's disorders dates to the ‘20 s, and was already answered then.

Truly, may God grant peace to His Church! But judging from the pace of contemporary apostasy, our immediate prospect is for much battle. May God help us.

(From a letter to Father Michael [Azkoul], May 26/June 8, 1970)

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From the tone of your letters, and from what I have heard of the words and actions of Bishop Theodosius, I would gather that you would like nothing better than to be in full peace and concord with Moscow and with the Synod. I can tell you frankly: impossible! There are issues at stake which cannot be solved by reference to canons. Above the canons is He Who inspired them: the Holy Spirit, Whose guidance is apprehended by the immediate feeling (not emotion!) of the believing Orthodox heart. On the question of canons there is no better example in the world today of Phariseeism than the Moscow Patriarchate, which insists on the letter of the law where its own worldly interests are concerned, while in everyday practice it is surpassed by none in laxness, as is quite noticeable in the former Exarchate.

But it is not as despisers of canons that our Church will have nothing to do with the Moscow hierarchs; and few in our midst even raise the question of whether there is grace within the Moscow Church—this is not for us to decide under present conditions. It is rather the indissoluble tie of the Moscow Patriarchate with an unquestionably God-hating and Satanic power that makes all contact with her impossible. You will find in our midst great sympathy and pity for all but the leading hierarchs of Moscow—and even for some of them you will find fellow-feeling owing to the inhuman circumstances under which they have been forced to betray Orthodoxy. (Rumor has it that Metr. Sergius was given the alternative in 1927: sign the Declaration, or every church will be destroyed and believers arrested and killed. If so, he signed out of faintheartedness, trusting more in the power of the Soviets to destroy than in the power of God to preserve the Church.) But this fellow-feeling cannot allow us who are free to recognize the Patriarchate and thereby freely place ourselves in the same trap she was forced

into! And this the Metropolia has done, thus fixing the gulf between us as absolute. From my contact with our people I can tell you: with every fiber of our body and every feeling of our soul we are repulsed by this free act of betrayal, and the feeling of sympathy which we do have for all but the leaders of the Moscow Patriarchate we do not have for the Metropolia. No, we do not “hate” you, and we recognize that most of you have followed this act out of a lack of awareness of the Church situation today; but thereby the Metropolia has alienated herself from us even more than Moscow, where the Church consciousness is forcibly crushed, but not freely given away!

Do you not yet begin to see the enormous implications of the most important part of your agreement with Moscow—i.e., the unwritten part? Do you not yet see how your supposed “independence” binds you so tightly that you must now begin to do things that you would never have dreamed of before? With all our heart we would like to be one with you at least with those of you who sincerely love the Church and want to serve Her above all but we can be one with you only in the Truth, not in false friendliness. And this uncompromising attitude of ours will only inspire even more bitter feelings in some of you than Fr. Meyendorff has already shown in his slanderous attack, and men like Fr. Meyendorff will echo every last bit of the Moscow propaganda against us—not realizing that this is one of the most important “clauses” of the Autocephaly Agreement: to join in destroying the “Karlovitze Schismatics.”

I will tell you another of the unwritten “clauses” of that agreement, which you yourself are following in your arguments for Moscow: “Every bishop, priest, and layman of the Metropolia agrees to defend the Moscow Patriarchate, not merely as a persecuted organization that cannot be judged by those outside the USSR, not merely as a Church that may yet possess the grace of the Holy Spirit, but as a fully canonical, in no wise dubious Orthodox Church, entitled to a role of leadership among the Orthodox Churches of the world.” One can even paraphrase the Declaration of 1927 to read: “Every blow directed against the Patriarchate of Moscow is a blow against the Metropolia, and her joys and sorrows are those of the Metropolia.”

Do you not yet begin to grasp the immensity of your spiritual bondage? Do you not see that the Metropolia can no longer look at the Church situation in the USSR with objective eyes? That it is no longer in the interests of the Metropolia to have a complete exposure of that situation? That the Metropolia cannot welcome the publication of the statements of many hierarchs in 1927 unequivocally condemning the Declaration of Metr. Sergius and the Church organization based on it? That it would not be in the interests of the Metropolia that Boris Talantov be released from prison and allowed to continue his writings on “Sergianism” as the root of the evils of Russian Church life today? That the Metropolia has taken its unequivocal stand on the side of Sergianism and against the Catacomb Church, about whose very existence the Metropolia now would prefer not to hear? Indeed, if any word can describe the Metropolia’s present state, it is surely: “Neo-Sergianism.”

(From a letter to Father David [Black], June 29/July 12, 1970)

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Most of the issue ["The Orthodox Word"] is devoted to two very moving accounts of the Catacomb Church in the USSR, by someone who spent five years in the Solovki concentration camp. I believe the whole question of the Catacomb Church is extremely hazy in the minds of most Orthodox, and with God’s help we will try to correct that with a whole series of articles—for the basic issues are, after all, quite clear and can even be named: “Sergianism” vs. Orthodoxy. The statements of the non-Sergianist hierarchs in 1927 were quite explicit and should serve as a foundation for further discussion of the question.

(From a letter to Father Michael Azkoul on August 30/September 12, 1970)

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That is not only we in the free world, but those over there as well (who have earned the right to their judgment by the tortures which they have undergone for Christ and Orthodoxy) who do not accept the Moscow Sergianists. And perhaps you will begin to see that our

uncompromising rejection of the Metropolias concordat with Moscow has nothing to do with theoretical concepts of “canonicity,” but is part of the very life-blood of our Orthodoxy; this concordat is not “uncanonical”—it is treason to the Russian Church and to her new martyrs. You cannot begin to imagine the profound sorrow and tears the “autocephaly” has caused us. And if now representatives of the Metropolia begin to deny the existence of the Catacomb Church (we expect they will, for that is the Moscow “line”—in defiance of present-day documents and information in the Soviet press—this will only be another indication of that instinctive “defense-mechanism” which forces the Metropolia into an ardent defense of “Sergianism” with all its propaganda line. And even if not a single Catacomb Christian could be found, that would not change the truth of the Catacomb position in 1927—attested in numerous documents—nor would it make Sergianism true or Orthodox.

Our bishops and our priests and most devoted faithful think as we do. Bishop Nektary certainly does, however polite he may be on the telephone; Archbishop John Maximovitch most emphatically did; and as for Father Gerasim,—the fact that he remained in communion with the Metropolia while considering himself a priest of the Synod should not mislead you into rosy ideas about him either. His past statements leave no doubt whatever as to which side he would have been on today; and his correspondence, of which we have seen a large part, contains some statements about the Metropolia and its clergy (by name) that are so strong we would rather not print them.

What, then, would you have us do when our conscience says that the Church has been betrayed? Keep silent—when we are free (for God knows how much longer!) and can speak the truth as we see it? St. Mark of Ephesus was not silent, though he was called a troublemaker; St. Maximus the Confessor would not keep his opinion to himself, even though this “confused” the faithful: the whole history of the Church is an inspiration to us to cry with a loud voice when the Church has been wronged.

“Autocephaly,” by the way, is surely a euphemism for the event that has occurred, when the Metropolia remains exactly what it was, when Moscow keeps every one of its parishes and even sends a new bishop and priests, when no Churches outside the Soviet block recognize it and Athenagoras calls it “non-existent” (and surely we will be allowed to agree with Athenagoras when he speaks the truth?). No, what has occurred is a concordat, a “legalization” of the Metropolia like that of the Soviet Patriarchate in 1927; and if you and the vast majority of even the clergy of the Metropolia were not in fact ignorant of Russian Church history for the last 43 years you would know that Metropolitan Sergius’ act in 1927 was condemned by many bishops in the USSR as initiating a “neo-renovationist schism,” that those bishops were imprisoned and/or killed because they opposed Sergius, and that therefore in your ignorance you are not only receiving “legalization” from a neo-renovationist schismatic body but are acting fully in accord with the Soviet “new church politics” whose aim is to use the Church to destroy itself, after giving maximum benefit to the Soviet Government itself. At the very least, you should have refrained from any kind of concordat when there is the slightest doubt that any of this might not be false, and when the majority of free Russian hierarchs do not agree with you; you should have waited (even [if] it takes a hundred years—truth is that important for the Church!) for a true and free All-Russian Council, instead of accepting the poisoned gift of the Moscow Robber Council.

(From a letter to Father David [Black], October 30/November 12, 1970)

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Question on the difference between the Turkish and the Communist Yoke is a very important one, but the answer is not entirely simple, and those who think only in terms of “canonical-uncanonical” will probably find it much too complicated. I think it’s important, first of all, to realize that the question of the Moscow Patriarchate is not primarily one of “canonicity”—that question ultimately will be resolved only by a free Russian Church Council (after the Soviet Yoke is overthrown). At that Council doubtless much will be forgiven owing to the unprecedented difficulties of these times, and those who will be justified then are not necessarily those who regarded themselves as “canonically correct,” but rather those who kept alive the spirit of the Church, which is after all above the canons and inspires them. But in the meantime we have to live with the situation that exists, and choose whether to have contact and communion with Moscow or not; and therefore we have to somehow penetrate to

the spirit of this question and make our decision on this basis. A very great help in this is the “Documents of the Catacomb Church” which we are now printing, because in them the bishops who were present at the very outbreak of “Sergianism” give their judgements on what was then the central question of the day, and most of those who opposed Sergius did so because they believed he had placed himself outside the Church, and they had to speak out in order to remain within the Church themselves.

To answer the question, one can say that first of all, in so far as the political situation is concerned, the situation of Moscow under the Soviets and Constantinople under the Turks is exactly the same. But those who are satisfied with this argument do not realize how Greeks outside of the Turkish boundaries reacted in the 19th century. (I’m paraphrasing now an article on the “Russian Church Abroad” by our Archbishop John, which we hope to print soon). When the Patriarchate of Constantinople obeyed the Turkish political demands and excommunicated the Greek rebels, the latter in their turn, while not doubting the Patriarch’s Orthodoxy and remaining with him in spirit, nonetheless declared his decrees invalid and governed themselves in complete independence from him—and when an independent Greek state was formed, this independence took the form of the autocephalous Church of Athens. A similar situation prevailed under the Serbian Patriarchs Arsenius III and IV, who went into exile with their flocks and refused to submit to the new Patriarchs elected inside the Turkish boundaries. Thus, from the political point of view, the existence of the Russian Church Abroad is fully justified by Orthodox history, while the Metropolia is chiefly to be criticized for being insensitive to the whole situation of the Russian Church and for helping, even if ever so little, the political schemes of the Soviet State.

But there is a deeper dimension to the question. The Turks persecuted the Church and, when possible, used it for political purposes. But their worst intention did not go beyond making Christians slaves and, in some cases, forcibly converting them to Islam. The Christian thus might be a slave or martyr, but on the spiritual side he was free; the Turkish Yoke was external.

But with the Soviets, the aim is much deeper: ultimately, to destroy the Church entirely, using the Church’s hierarchs themselves (when possible) as the agents of this scheme; and, on the way to this end, getting the Church to defend Communism abroad and to preach a “Communist Christianity” that prepares the way ideologically for the coming triumph of world Communism, not only as a universal political regime, but as an ideological and pseudo-religious tyranny as well. In order to appreciate this one has to realize what Communism is: not merely a power-mad political regime, but an ideological-religious system whose aim is to overthrow and supplant all other systems, most of all Christianity. Communism is actually a very powerful heresy whose central thesis, if I’m not mistaken is chiliasm or millennialism: history is to reach its culmination in an indefinite state of earthly blessedness, a perfected mankind living in perfect peace and harmony. Examine the printed sermons of the Moscow hierarchs: again and again one finds the same theme of the coming of the “Kingdom of God on earth” through the spread of Communism. This is outright heresy, or perhaps something even worse: the turning aside of the Church from its very purpose—the saving of souls for eternal life—and giving them over to the devil’s kingdom, promising a false blessedness on earth and condemning them to everlasting damnation.

The whole of modern Western Christianity is permeated already with this worldly, basically chiliastic orientation, and the more “liberal,” more worldly Orthodox Churches (such as the Metropolia) have been infected from this source; and probably the reason why most people in the Metropolia so easily accepted the autocephaly is because inwardly they do not grasp what is happening, they are themselves already halfway on the same path that the Moscow Patriarchate has taken.

Just the other day I read an astute comment on the iconoclastic crisis of the 7th-8th centuries. Before the Seventh Ecumenical Council the Orthodox Church did not have any explicit “doctrine on icons,” and so one could argue that the Iconoclasts were not heretics at all, and the dispute was one over the secondary issue of “rite” or “practice.” Nonetheless, the Church (in the person of Her champions, the leading icon-venerators) felt She was fighting a heresy, something destructive of the Church Herself; and after Her champions had suffered and died for this Orthodox sensitivity, and Her theologians had finally managed to put down explicitly the doctrine She already knew in Her heart—then the cause of Orthodoxy triumphed at the Seventh Ecumenical Council, and the Iconoclasts were clearly singled out as heretics.

I suspect that the very same thing, only much vaster and more complicated, is happening today: that those who feel Orthodoxy (through living its life of grace and being exposed to and raised on its basic treasures—lives of saints, patristic writings, etc.) are battling together against an enemy, a heresy, that has not yet been fully defined or manifested. Separate aspects or manifestations of it (chiliasm, social Gospel, renovationism, ecumenism) may be identified and fought, but the battle is largely instinctive as yet, and those who do not feel Orthodoxy in their heart and bones (e.g., those who are brought up on Concern and Young Life instead of lives of saints!) do not really know what you're talking about and they can't understand how you can become so excited over something which no council has ever identified as heresy. In the testimony of the Catacomb bishops of the late 1920's one finds again and again that the GPU agents asked them first of all whether they were for or against Sergius, and if they were against, then these agents demonstrated that Sergius had "violated neither dogmas nor canons"! Thus, either the atheist torturers are "defending the Church"—or else there is something dreadfully wrong, and the Church is up against an extremely formidable enemy. As it turns out, however, there are several dogmatic and canonical grounds on which Sergius was wrong; but first of all the Orthodox soul sensed that he was on the wrong side.

So the first part of the battle comes down to presenting basic Orthodoxy and raising people in the real spirit of Orthodoxy—above all the example of those who have lived Orthodoxy, God's saints and confessors. That's why, for our times, the most important thing is not general and abstract knowledge of Orthodox history, dogmas, canons, etc. (St. Sergius' and St. Vladimir's Seminaries turn out many who know these pretty well, but they do not become defenders of Orthodoxy, WHICH IS WHAT is needed), but rather the examples that have been given for our time—most especially Russia's new martyrs and confessors. And one of the saddest signs in the present controversy over Moscow is that those who defend the Metropolia, instead of setting forth such inspiring examples, quote the most shameful documents and examples of Turkish and Russian history (Fr. David Black quoted several unedifying examples from the Synodal period of the Russian Church to us, and he probably doesn't even know the worst ones!) thinking thereby to defend their own position. That is, the Church has always been bad, and it's no worse now than before! But what a horrible, what a psychologically and spiritually crippling defense! If that's how they have to defend themselves, then wouldn't it be better to avoid doing the things that reduce them to such an extremity? Is "stepping out on the world Orthodox scene" really so important to the Metropolia that it must do it at the expense of the suffering Russian Orthodox faithful? To give one small example: Metr. Nikodim is the Metropolia's great "benefactor," and no one can doubt that his success with the Metropolia has strengthened his position with the Moscow Patriarchate. On the other hand, the layman Boris Talantov in the USSR has openly called Nikodim a betrayer of the Church, a liar, and an agent of world anti-Christianity, for which statements (among others) he was imprisoned by the Soviets; Metr. Nikodim tells the West that he was in prison for "anti-governmental activities". On Jan. 4 of this year Boris Talantov died in prison, undoubtedly the victim of Nikodim (among others). Can the Metropolia feel itself to be on the side of this confessor? I don't see how it can.

(From a letter to Daniel Olson, March 25/April 7, 1971)

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Concerning the Arena, p. 52, the "moral, hidden obedience, performed in the soul" seems to refer to our obedient orientation to God in general, which we should not think is satisfied if we are merely outwardly obedient to monastic or church authorities. It can happen that outward obedience is so over-emphasized that it becomes a mechanical substitute for the genuine voluntary inward giving up of one's own will and understanding* The distinction can be felt in the heart: sooner or later an unsound, mechanical obedience will produce a feeling of oppression and tenseness, which are signs that something is wrong. Genuine inward obedience is accompanied by the joy of being relieved of trusting only oneself. This subject is extremely deep and is closely bound up with the whole subject of genuine vs. false Orthodoxy in the 20th century, most acutely in "Sergianism," where obedience indeed becomes slavery to men and the human church organization. True obedience is accompanied by inward freedom, without which there is no Church life.

(From a letter to Nina Seko, June 24/July 7, 1974)

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In general the Church questions today are just not as simple as they used to be, at least as they are in our comfortable historical perspective, and many submerged rocks lie ahead. An important key to the whole church situation seems to lie precisely in “Sergianism,” which will become a sharper issue than ever now that the Catacomb Church of Russia begins to make itself known and felt again. The heart of Sergianism is bound up with the common problem of all the Orthodox Churches today—the losing of the savor of Orthodoxy, taking the Church for granted, taking the “organization” for the Body of Christ, trusting that Grace and the Mysteries are somehow “automatic.” Logic and reasonable behavior are not going to get us over these rocks; much suffering and experience are required, and few will understand.

(From a letter to Alexey Yang February 18/March 3, 1975)

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We who wish to remain in the true tradition of Orthodoxy will have to be zealous and firm in our Orthodoxy without being fanatics. Above all we must strive to preserve the true fragrance of Orthodoxy, being at least a little “not of this world,” detached from all the cares and politics even of the Church, nourishing ourselves on the other-worldly food the Church gives us in such abundance. Elder Macarius well says in a letter (in his *Life* which we have just published—the copies arrived Saturday from Taiwan): “Fanaticism limits a man’s way of thinking, but true faith gives him freedom. This freedom is revealed by the firmness of a man in all possible cases of happiness and unhappiness.” That freedom is the sign of our Orthodoxy; that is precisely why the “Josephites” separated from Sergius in 1927: not for “incorrect ecclesiology” or violation of canons, but because he deprived the Church of the thing most precious to her: her internal freedom. But to see this one must have the savor of Orthodoxy—let us not lose it!

Please pray for us in the weeks ahead, and especially on the day of Vladika John’s repose (especially during the Liturgy in the Sepulchre, between 6 and 8 a.m. our time). We feel very crucial times ahead for us and our whole Church, and we want to ask Vladika John very fervently now just what we should do, how we should proceed. By his prayers may we stay on the right path and stay firm in the midst of the temptations ahead!

(From a letter to Alexey Yang on June 2/15, 1976)

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We ourselves follow the confessing stand of Archbishop Averky, who based his stand, however, much less on canons and dogmas than on discernment of the spiritual substance of the apostasy of the “canonical jurisdictions”; the break of our Church and the Catacomb Church with Sergius in 1927 was also not primarily a question of canons or dogmas, but a rather more subtle question which the Catacomb hierarchs expressed most frequently as the loss of “freedom” (that is, inward freedom). We as much as you wish to be separate from the “canonical jurisdictions”; but we wonder how adequate is the stand that this separateness must be defined on canonical and dogmatic grounds. The Old Believers to this day defend their separation from the Orthodox Church precisely on canonical and dogmatic grounds; and our hierarchs, in what you probably regard as their excessive caution in breaking formally with the “canonical jurisdictions,” have very much in mind our Russian experience with a tragic mistake made on the “right” side out of immoderate zeal. Dr. Kalomiros and others in Greece who follow the Old Calendar have written to us of the “legalism” and “fanaticism” of some of the Old Calendarists; are we supposed only to praise such people even though we see that they are sowing distrust and discord in the name of “correctness”?

We fear that the future for true Orthodoxy may be indeed with isolated groups of believers cut off from each other and even anathematizing each other over points of “strictness” and “correctness.” While we have our free Russian Church Outside of Russia we should treasure it, even while we may have disagreements among ourselves over questions such as breaking

communion. If some in our Church are going to insist that their opinions on such questions must prevail—there will be discord and possibly schism, which indeed would do more harm than any possible good, for it would prove to “canonical Orthodoxy” that “true Orthodoxy” is only a conglomeration of fighting sects. May God preserve us from this—this is what made us write the article. Our “correctness” must always be accompanied by humility, and with sufficient doubt in our own opinions as to listen to what those who differ may say, without calling them betrayers or heretics. Thus far the circle of betrayers and heretics is fairly clear, and we should not cease to denounce their path and remain separate from them; but with those who sincerely wish to remain in the tradition of Orthodoxy we must have a spirit of conciliation and openness to listen.

(From a letter to Father Panagiotes [Carras] on June 30/July 13, 1976)

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“Sergianism” in 1927 was not a question of ecumenism, modernism, the new calendar, the acceptance of non-Orthodox Mysteries, violation of canons, or teaching of new dogmas; and it was not of course a question only of politics, either. What then is left?—something very difficult to define and which the Catacomb hierarchs of 1927 in their epistles usually identified as the “loss of inner freedom.” (To be sure, new factors have entered the situation in recent years.) Before such a subtle temptation it is precisely a feeling for the spirit behind the phenomena which is the decisive factor, and not merely “correctness” in canons or dogmas. Several highly-respected Old Calendarists in Greece have written us that it is precisely the “fatal disease of correctness” which has caused such anarchy there now in the church situation—a “disease” which they place second only to ecumenism itself as a destroyer of souls. Do you have any idea what this means? If you don’t, there is something very much lacking in your awareness of the Orthodox situation today, and this should make you all the more humble and cautious and unsure that everything you say and think is right. You must try to see things as other sincere zealots of Orthodoxy see them, or else your godly zeal will only end in causing divisions and strife and you yourself will be helping the devil’s work of destroying Orthodoxy. We all (we as much as you) must be ready to see that we do not have “all the answers,” that we are sometimes wrong or express ourselves poorly.

I don’t know what more to say at this time. We will continue to be outspokenly anti-ecumenist. But we pray that you too will begin to realize some of the more subtle temptations that lie before us. Our emphasis and desire not to lose contact with our more cautious bishops is different, but no more. You say: “All the Patriarchates have lapsed into heresy”; we would prefer to say “Are lapsing ”.

(From a letter to Father Neketas Palasis on July 16/29, 1976)

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The Metropolias reception of “autocephaly” and “canonicity” from Moscow in 1970 (which is now the chief “official” reason for the strained relation between us) seems to us an example of crude “legalism”: the reduction of Orthodoxy to a purely outward question of church forms, no matter what alien spirit might be using those forms. (This is the sin of “Sergianism.”) The episcopate of the Moscow Patriarchate is the puppet of an atheist organization (the Communist Party of the Soviet Union) whose aim is the destruction of the Church; granting full and normal recognition to it (whatever ones aims in doing this) means giving aid to this alien organization and its purpose, and crushing the spirit of those in Russia itself who are trying to preserve the genuine Orthodox view of church life and organization (the “True Orthodox” or “Catacomb Church” of whose present existence we have many proofs). The over-abundant journeys of OCA clergy to the USSR are propaganda fodder for the enemies of Orthodoxy (religious enemies first, not political).

(From a letter to Father Basil [Rhodes] February 14/27, 1979)

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Fr. Roman uses a very good phrase in his letter (which I don't interpret as sarcastic at all): "theological microscope." That is what you are using in your reflections on Fr. Dimitry Dudko. To make him into an "ecumenist" because his Patriarch gives communion to Roman Catholics is certainly theological nit-picking.

Firstly, to give communion to Roman Catholics is surely an anti-canonical act, but in itself it does not constitute a "heresy" that deprives a whole Church of the grace of God and makes everyone in the Church a "heretic"—that is Jesuit thinking, not Orthodox. You can ask your own bishop what he thinks about that. Because we defend Fr. Dimitry does not in the least mean we defend this anti-canonical practice or approve of his Patriarchate; those are not the issues at all.

Secondly, this anti-canonical act is only one of many disorders in the Moscow Patriarchate, the worst of which is its acceptance of the dictation of the atheist authorities as a matter of principle (this is "Sergianism"). It is for this reason that our Church has no communion with Moscow. But our Church recognizes this as a temporary situation which will end when the Communist regime comes to an end. Until that time we refrain from judging the Church situation there; we simply stay clear of the Moscow Patriarchate and have no communion with it.

(From a letter to John [Hudanish] 3/16 September 1980)

Part II. On the broad road of apostasy.
6. About Catholicism.

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I have become what the world would call a "fanatic"; in fact, all true Orthodox believers are "fanatics." Such "fanaticism" is justified by the fact that the Orthodox Church is the one true Church of Christ; it is the reality of which Roman Catholicism and all other churches are but pale shadows at best.

(From a letter to Alison Engler, July 15, 1963)

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Concerning the dead, Orthodox tradition has preserved much, both of theory and of practice, that the Catholic Church has long since abandoned. Of practice, there is the custom of remembering the dead at every Liturgy and at other special services. Everyone present who so desires submits a list of his own (one list for the living, one for the dead), and the priest reads all the names aloud, besides his own lists. If many people are present this sometimes takes 15 or 20 minutes (which the Catholic Church would surely regard as "inefficient" and a "waste of time"!), but it is a wonderful sign of the unity of all believers, living and dead, present and absent. Another sign of the Orthodox attitude to the dead is the marvelous joyousness—restrained, but still joyous—of the services for the dead, with the constant refrain of "Alleluia" and the emphasis placed rather upon rebirth in a new realm than upon the departure from this world. The coffin of a dead man is placed in Church for the whole day of the requiem service, and other services are celebrated while it is there; the holy atmosphere is beneficial for the departed, and I have found it very beneficial and comforting for myself when I attend such services. I have told non-Orthodox friends and relatives of this custom and I am always surprised at their uniform reaction: "How depressing!" I find it to be just the opposite; and how can it be otherwise, if we believe in Heaven?

(From a letter to Alison Engler, October 3, 1963)

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We've just written a personal appeal to Bp. Theodosius to stand up for the truth and put

Alaska on the right path—for I'm sure you and the other priests and the whole of Alaska will follow him if he does choose this path. Of course there are tremendous obstacles in the way of such a difficult decision, but if it is not made now it probably never will be. To go with the "autocephaly" is to choose the way of the "general trend" of the times, which is away from the Church entirely. (Indeed, Moscow couldn't even wait for the Metropolia to sign before she announced that she will give communion to Catholics that is, that the Unia is already here and the martyrdom of St. Peter the Aleut, instead of a sign and inspiration for all Orthodox faithful, becomes an absurd and futile gesture. But to stand against it means to stand with our modern-day confessors and those unashamed of real, "narrow" Orthodoxy (the Orthodoxy that Father Herman, Bp. Innocent, and others brought to Alaska).

(From a letter to Father David [Black], February 18/March 3, 1970)

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And now I'd like to mention a few things you didn't ask about, with the hope that you will enter the Orthodox Church with as few "residues" from Roman Catholicism as possible. For there are certain Catholic practices which, whatever secondary benefits they may have, are not in accordance with the Orthodox way of life and could interfere with adjusting oneself to it. You mention "meditation." The Catholic practice of calling up images, memories, etc., of a sacred character is considered by our Fathers as unnecessary and improper. To reflect on one's reading is one thing, as is likewise to say the Prayer of Jesus or any other prayer in silence; but "meditation" as such is quite foreign to Orthodoxy and in fact can be the entrance to a refined path of spiritual deception. You are on the right path when you find yourself substituting the Prayer of Jesus for it—if in fact what you mean by "meditation" is the standard Catholic practice. The principle involved here is that one should not trust one's own thoughts and feelings, but fit oneself to the standard of the Church.

In Catholicism, I believe, there is a special connotation to the word "devotion"—a special concentration on one aspect of our Saviour's Life, etc.—which is again, foreign to Orthodoxy. We have no special "devotion" to the exposed Sacrament, because for us the Holy Gifts have their proper place in the Liturgy and in the life of the faithful without needing any "special" or "extra" devotion. And of course we do not accept at all such later "devotions" as the Sacred Heart, which seem to us immoderate or out of balance and context with the rest of our Holy Faith.

We saw Archbishop Anthony on Tuesday, and he approves May 31 (Sunday) as the date of your reception into the Church. By Church "economy" your baptism and confirmation will be accepted and you will be received by confession of faith before the Liturgy on Sunday. This will involve reciting the Creed, probably renouncing the errors of Catholicism in general, and confession of sins.

(From a letter to Craig and Susan [Young], April 21/May 4, 1970)

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I certainly pray that you successfully fight off the Uniate temptation. I have heard of so many Catholics coming to a spiritual dead-end there, that even if I weren't Orthodox I would advise you to stay clear of it. The universal complaint of these Catholics is that they finally realize that they are "play-acting," they go through the motions of Orthodoxy without being Orthodox, and at the same time they lose their identity as Catholics and feel themselves to be neither Orthodox nor Catholic but in some strange limbo—and end by becoming Orthodox, going back to "Western" Catholicism, or worse.

(From a letter to Craig and Susan Young, May 5/18, 1970)

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Those who wish to remain Orthodox have no choice but to leave "global Orthodoxy." In the 15th century those who were not with St. Mark of Ephesus were not in the Church—and this

situation is being approached today.

Alas, the basic Church issues of today are disguised in clouds of rhetoric and academic half-truths. The capitulation of Orthodoxy today comes not in the forms of signatures to a pseudo-Union, but as a gradual series of acts of apostasy. Those who love the truth must now separate themselves from this relentless and soul-destroying process.

(From a letter to Father David Black, June 8/21, 1970)

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One can see all the more urgency in not budging one inch in the “ecumenical” direction. The new “theologians” can talk until they are blue in the face about “witnessing Orthodoxy,” but to anyone who loves Orthodoxy it is plain that their intellectual discussions and tea parties with the Protestants are simply a pleasant way of betraying Orthodoxy. Recently a group of Catholic and Orthodox “theologians” had a “dialogue” on the Eucharist, issuing in a joint statement that fundamentally the two Churches are in agreement, with a footnote to the effect that intercommunion is still premature. But how can one be “witnessing Orthodoxy” if one doesn’t even inform the Catholics that they have no sacraments and that all their intellectual formulations are a million miles from the life-saving grace to be found in the Orthodox Church? Either these Orthodox “theologians” are dishonest (and thus trying to trick the Catholics?!) or they’ve already changed Orthodoxy in their own minds to make union easier. In any case, it’s not “Orthodoxy” that is being witnessed!

(From a letter to Daniel [Olson] June 22/July 5, 1970)

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One can’t help but think of the Roman Catholics: probably a thousand years ago they were still more or less Orthodox, but having separated themselves from the Church and followed leaders who took as their standard various contemporary currents instead of unchanging Orthodox standards of piety, they gradually evolved for themselves a piety no longer in the least recognizable as Orthodox, permeated with prelest. Today the situation is worse, because the contemporary currents that will be taken are no longer even vaguely Christian, but at best are a humanistic “social gospel” or worse—as Bp. Theodosius has already suggested—Hippyism, which is already strongly permeated with open satanism.

(From a letter to Daniel Olson 14/27 August 1970)

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Do you know the Life of St. Maximus the Confessor? All the Orthodox Patriarchs accepted the Monothelite heresy, and he was begged, for the sake of peace and harmony in the Church, to do what everyone else was doing and keep his opinions to himself. And he said: “Even if the whole world enter into communion with the (heretical) Patriarch of Constantinople, I alone will not.” That is the kind of Orthodox confession that has preserved the Church for 2000 years; that is the faith that St. Herman lived; that is what we must follow today. Indeed, we have the example of St. Peter the Aleut who died for refusing to accept Roman Catholicism, which, according to our modern ecumenists, is very little different from Orthodoxy. And we are gladly willing to suffer torture and martyrdom for this faith.

(From a letter to Father Vladimir Bridivey, August 70)

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And truly, it is important for our small flock of true Orthodox Christians to have contact with each other, for the days are evil, and many seek to destroy the Orthodox Church today—even some of those who are called “Orthodox bishops.” Here in America we are very familiar with the apostasy of “Athenagoras & Co.,” and unfortunately the other national jurisdictions in

America are hardly any better; all of them fraternize and pray with Catholics and Protestants and are ashamed to tell the heterodox that they have wandered far from the Truth, which is only in Orthodoxy.

(From a letter to the Mission in Madrid on 4/17 September 1970)

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Do not read any books on “spirituality” by Catholics, Protestants, psychologists, or anyone who is not Orthodox, because they will only mix you up. There may be wisdom or insights in some of these, but only in our Orthodox Faith is there to be found the whole path of salvation, the infallible way of coming to God. Many people spend a lifetime trying to find what is only to be found in the Orthodox Church.

(From a letter to Nina [Kojevnikov] January 23/February 5, 1971)

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T. de Chardin was a “heretic”—because he is obviously a heretic, being a Catholic.

(From a letter to Father Neketas on August 19/September 1, 1973)

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Kireyevsky’s thoughts on the difference between the Catholic-Western mentality and Orthodoxy might well serve as an article or pamphlet also, which would be very instructive especially for converts today. The answer to Medieval Scholasticism, he says, is the great Orthodox Fathers who lived at the same time—namely, St. Simeon the New Theologian, St. Gregory the Sinaite, St. Gregory Palamas.

And speaking of this contrast, my research into the Fathers concerning evolution has turned up something remarkable—the Catholic and Orthodox doctrines of Adam and creation are significantly different, and “evolution” can be fitted rather nicely precisely into the Catholic doctrine, but not at all into the Orthodox! This point can be made pretty well by comparing several passages of the Summa Theologica of Thomas Aquinas (I always wondered why I kept that book!) with the passage from St. Simeon which you have, and another from St. Gregory the Sinaite. The whole discussion of “evolution,” if it is presented just right, can be very important for giving our genuine Orthodox outlook on contemporary science and “wisdom.”

It might be good to give a brief resume somewhere in study on the response of Catholic theology to evolution—how they gave way point by point, ending in the Rahner “theology”.

(From a letter to Alexey Young on January 9/22, 1974)

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Now, before examining the Patristic teaching of man’s nature, I will admit that this word “nature” can be a little ambiguous, and that one can find passages where the Holy Fathers use the expression “human nature” in the way it is used in common discourse, as referring to this fallen human nature whose effects we observe every day. But there is a higher Patristic teaching of human nature, a specific doctrine of human nature, given by Divine revelation, which cannot be understood or accepted by one who believes in evolution. The evolutionary doctrine of human nature, based on a “common sense” view of fallen human nature, is the Roman Catholic, not the Orthodox teaching.

I was very interested to read in your letter (p. 16) that you set forth the correct Patristic teaching that “The creation of God, even the angelic nature, has always, in comparison with

God, something material. Angels are incorporeal in comparison with us, biological men. But in comparison with God they are also material and bodily creatures." This teaching, which is set forth most clearly in the ascetic Fathers such as St. Macarius the Great and St. Gregory the Sinaite, helps us to understand the "spiritual body" with which we shall be clothed in the fixture age, which is in some way of the dust, earthly, but has no moisture or coarseness, as St. Gregory the Sinaite teaches; and it also helps us to understand that third state of our body, that which first-created Adam had before his transgression. Likewise, this doctrine is essential in our understanding of the activity of spiritual beings, Angels and demons, even in the present corruptible world. The great Russian Orthodox Father of the 19th century, Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov, devotes an entire volume of his collected works (volume 3) to this subject, and to comparing the authentic Orthodox Patristic doctrine with the modern Roman Catholic doctrine, as set forth in 19th century Latin sources. His conclusion is that the Orthodox doctrine on these matters—on Angels and demons, heaven and hell, Paradise—even though it is given to us by sacred tradition only in part, nonetheless is quite precise in that part which we can know; but the Roman Catholic teaching is extremely indefinite and imprecise. The reason for this indefiniteness is not far to seek: from the time Papalism began to abandon the Patristic teaching, it gradually gave itself over to the influence of worldly knowledge and philosophy, first that of such philosophers as Barlaam, and then of modern science. Even by the 19th century Roman Catholicism no longer had a certain teaching of its own on these subjects, but had grown accustomed to accept whatever "science" and its philosophy say.

The vague teaching of Paradise and creation of Roman Catholicism—and of those Orthodox Christians who are under Western influence in this matter—has deep roots in the past of Western Europe. The Roman Catholic scholastic tradition, even at the height of its Medieval glory, already taught a false doctrine of man, and one which doubtless paved the way for the later acceptance of evolutionism, first in the apostate West, and then in the minds of Orthodox Christians who are insufficiently aware of their Patristic tradition and so have fallen under foreign influences.

(From a letter to Dr. Kalomiros March 2-9, 1974)

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The Fathers state specifically, by the way, that Adam and Eve did not have sexual union (nor, of course, eat meat) in Paradise. I believe Thomas Aquinas says that they did—which would accord with the RC doctrine of human nature.

(From a letter to Alexey Young, March 25/April 7, 1975)

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Today Roman Catholic evolutionists deny paradise altogether because they can't reconcile it with evolutionary philosophy.

(From a letter to Father Ioannikios on August 8/21, 1977)

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In 1439, the Greek Church accepted Roman Catholicism at the false Council of Florence. One Greek bishop (St. Mark of Ephesus) refused to sign the decree of Union, accused those who accepted the Union, aroused the people against it, refused to allow the Patriarch of Constantinople even to be present at his funeral—all of these "negative" things he did out of love for Orthodoxy, and because of him the Greek people is still Orthodoxy today; if they had followed those who preached "peace" at that time, the Greek people would be Roman Catholics today and thus, according to the teaching of the Orthodox Church, deprived of the grace of God. (The Russian Church at that time refused to accept the Union, and broke off communion with the Greek Church until the Patriarch of Constantinople himself renounced the Union and returned to Orthodoxy.) Such champions of Orthodoxy are precisely the ones the Orthodox Church has canonized and accepts as her standard of how to act when the Faith

is threatened.

(From a letter to Mr. Stamos, Palm Sunday 1978)

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About life after death: Yes, I think that the experiences of the “sectarians and idiots” should be taken seriously, because the experiences are obviously real, and while on the one hand they confirm what Orthodox sources say about the first moments of death (and thus give an opportunity for some people to find out about and accept the whole Orthodox teaching), on the other they most logically point to a non-Orthodox conclusion about life after death. The object of our articles is to place them in the whole context of Orthodox teaching, and incidentally to set forth this teaching in detail. Our model is Bishop Ignaty Brianchaninov’s volume III, where he speaks in detail of the Roman Catholic teaching in order to set forth the Orthodox teaching. Many of our Orthodox people, I think, have very vague notions about this teaching—as witness the support some of the parishes are giving to Fr. Lev’s lecture on the subject, which, judging from what I have seen, is far from the Orthodox teaching and falls into several of the Roman Catholic pitfalls which Bp. Ignatius warns against. Even after all the Patristic citations in our article on the toll-houses, and Fr. Michael Pomazansky’s article on the same subject, Fr. Lev continues to repeat his Schmemmannisms about the toll-houses.

(From a letter to Father Laurence Campbell May 12/25, 1979)

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I have just learned, from a seemingly reliable source, that one of the chief reasons Metr. Nikodim was “demoted” in the hierarchy of the Soviet Church in the early 1970’s (the official reason was his health), was precisely because he had given communion to Roman Catholics in Rome at the Russicum, and the conservative hierarchs of the Patriarchate had enough courage to protest against it. This “proves” nothing, of course, but it certainly shows that church life in Russia is by no means simple and our judgments about it should take into consideration the many facets of it and not just the narrow letter of the law.

(From a letter to John [Hudanish] 3/16 September 1980)

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In the end, I think, Fr. Dimitry Dudko’s attitude is the correct one: We should view the non-Orthodox as people to whom Orthodoxy has not yet been revealed, as people who are potentially Orthodox (if only we ourselves would give them a better example!). There is no reason why we cannot call them Christians and be on good terms with them, recognize that we have at least our faith in Christ in common, and live in peace especially with our own families. St. Innocent’s attitude to the Roman Catholics in California is a good example for us. A harsh, polemical attitude is called for only when the non-Orthodox are trying to take away our flocks or change our teaching—as the Roman Catholics tried to do in western Russia in past centuries. This explains why some people even today continue this harsh tone.

(From a letter to Anna, Catechumen, November 14/27, 1980)

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I think you should be very careful when you draw conclusions from the statements of the Bishops of our Russian Church Outside of Russia. When our bishops in 1971 condemned the decision of the Moscow Patriarchate to give communion to Roman Catholics, they used strong language, calling it a “heretical” act; but they did not proclaim the Moscow Patriarchate to be deprived of grace, or to be totally fallen away from the Church. The bishops, on various occasions, have specifically refused to make such a proclamation; and in their statement at the 1976 Sobor they specifically addressed the sincere and struggling priests of the Moscow Patriarchate in terms reserved only for priests who possess and dispense the grace of God.

(From a letter to George and Margaret, December 28/January 10, 1981)

Part II. On the broad road of apostasy.

7. About ecumenism.

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There is something missing in the Western Churches; what is missing, I think, is precisely faith. For several centuries now men have been turning their eyes more and more to the earth and chasing the fantasy of earthly happiness and worldly comfort. In such a world even those who still believe in the other world find their faith more and more difficult to preserve; the “spirit of the age” becomes so dominated by worldly concerns that one sometimes begins to doubt one’s sanity in continuing to believe what “everyone” regards as incredible. But that is only a passing temptation; there is something worse, and that is what you have noticed: people continue to believe outwardly, and go through the motions of Christian worship, but somehow the substance of faith has evaporated. The spirit of the world is so strong and persuasive that it acts without our knowing it. Of course the world has always been making war on Christian faith, but today it has very nearly succeeded in winning the war. Do you remember the terrible words of Our Lord: “When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?” In the last days faith is to be almost entirely extinguished. And yet the appearance of faith will probably be maintained; Antichrist, we know, will attempt to imitate Christ. Probably the “world Church” that is being formed by the “ecumenical movement” today (whose center, of course, will be Rome) will keep intact most of the externals of Christian worship and dogma—but its heart, true faith, will be missing, and so it will be simply an imitation of Christianity.

(From a letter to Alison Engler, September 12, 1963)

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I encountered, by the way, a group of English-speaking Orthodox young people the other night who are forming a group of their own. I don’t know why I was invited, but it was a good way of finding out what life there is among other Orthodox. The answer is: NONE. Dead, absolutely. They are sincere, their intentions are good; but they simply have nothing to work from. Not only are they unprepared for spiritual meat, they are hardly even ready for milk. I’ll tell you about them next time I see you. (The ones I met were Syrian, Russian-Metropolia, and Ukrainian, and they are planning to expand.) Actually, we will not be in competition with them, since their plans do not go beyond “inter-Orthodox” understanding, and study of Orthodox “traditions” on a very elementary level; beyond that, their interest is vaguely ecumenical, not missionary. They are turned inward upon themselves and are trying to “understand” their own religion; whereas we are going out to bring to the world riches of which we are not worthy, but of whose value we are certain. One of the Ukrainians let slip a disdainful remark about some of the Russians he has known who think they are preserving the “real” Orthodoxy. That’s us, and I think we should do just what he accuses us of doing: forget the other Orthodox (with a few exceptions, like Mt. Athos and the Old Calendarists, who still take Orthodoxy seriously), and concentrate on Russians and on American converts. Our adherence to the Church Outside of Russia should be made clear from the beginning; that will help frighten off at least some of the well-meaning who think they are as “Orthodox” as anyone; all their cooperation would have as its object the attempt to drag us into the mire of ecumenism and compromise.

(From a letter to Gleb Podmoshensky December 30, 1963 / January 12, 1964)

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I am no Russian, do not share particularly in any Russian psychology, and don’t think I’m viewing the issues through any rose-colored glasses. Nonetheless, I don’t think it’s possible, in the long run, to stand above the question of “jurisdictions,”—not in the Russian Church, at

least. We share your respect for Fr. Georges Florovsky as a theological scholar and interpreter of the Fathers; such respect is widespread in the Synodal Church—his books on the Fathers are basic textbooks. Br. Gleb knows him and received his blessing to go to Jordanville to study. But there is also a reason for the lower opinion of him that is widespread in our Church, often among the same people who respect his theological scholarship. Orthodoxy—as is particularly noticeable in times of crisis such as our whole century has been—is not merely a doctrine to be understood, but a conception of life to be lived. Fr. George, it seems to me, has failed in the vital dimension of Orthodoxy in practice. What is the result of his many years of appearances at ecumenical gatherings? Orthodoxy, to be sure, has become better known—but not as the Church of Christ, rather as a “fourth major faith” which used sometimes to give trouble to the Protestants by insisting on making “separate statements,” but now has come around to the general heretical view of the Church which the Protestants expound (Archbp. Iakovos, indeed, states clearly: “The Church in all its denominational forms is the body of Christ“!). In the situation which Vladika Vitaly describes (Orthodox Word, 1969, p. 150-1), Fr. George himself gave a push in the direction of this heresy: not by saying anything heretical himself, but by giving in to the pressures that always exist at ecumenical gatherings to say something that will please the Protestant majority and will be interpreted by them in a heretical fashion. The Orthodoxy of Fr. George at such gatherings is formally correct, but it is thus only formal Orthodoxy, not living Orthodoxy, not Orthodoxy in practice. And Orthodoxy today is being destroyed from within precisely by this lack of living Orthodoxy. Orthodoxy has one thing to say to the ecumenical movement: here is the truth, join yourself to it; to remain to “discuss” this truth not merely weakens the Orthodox witness, it destroys it. The Protestants long ago were right when they said: If you have the truth, why are you participating in the ecumenical movement, which is a search for an unknown truth.

Orthodoxy is not merely one other denomination but the Church of Christ. Whereas the ecumenist heresy is the current in which all Orthodox will be carried unless they stand apart and confess Orthodoxy, at the risk of being cut off by the others and condemned to absolute aloneness.

(From a letter to Father David [Black], March 23/April 5, 1970)

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Many thanks for your letter and the article from America—a truly sad commentary on what can be done by “reformers” who have no love for what they’re “reforming.” One can see it coming in Orthodoxy too, and those who do not consciously stand up in defense of the Faith will most likely have the ground pulled out from under them. One can see all the more urgency in not budging one inch in the “ecumenical” direction. The new “theologians” can talk until they are blue in the face about “witnessing Orthodoxy,” but to anyone who loves Orthodoxy it is plain that their intellectual discussions and tea parties with the Protestants are simply a pleasant way of betraying Orthodoxy. Recently a group of Catholic and Orthodox “theologians” had a “dialogue” on the Eucharist, issuing in a joint statement that fundamentally the two Churches are in agreement, with a footnote to the effect that intercommunion is still premature. But how can one be “witnessing Orthodoxy” if one doesn’t even inform the Catholics that they have no sacraments and that all their intellectual formulations are a million miles from the life-saving grace to be found in the Orthodox Church? Either these Orthodox “theologians” are dishonest (and thus trying to trick the Catholics?!) or they’ve already changed Orthodoxy in their own minds to make union easier. In any case, it’s not “Orthodoxy” that is being witnessed!

(From a letter to Daniel [Olson] June 22/July 5, 1970)

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In the Aug. 10 New York Times Bp. Theodosius is quoted as saying, “Father Herman was a hippy”! This is sacrilege! St. Herman is our recourse and defense in the face of the evils of these times, of which hippyism is only one misguided symptom, but to mix his holy name with those very evils...! I had better not say any more. At best, this is just another sign of the ecclesiastical immaturity of the new autocephalous Church; another sign of it is the Metropolia’s “service” to St. Herman—a product of embarrassing illiteracy which, the way it is written, cannot even be performed properly, as it omits several Theotokia. It has a

“velichaem” in place of “yblazhaem,” inserts the Beatitudes into every troparion of the canon (whether this is just plain ignorance or an attempt at novelty is difficult to say), includes several errors of fact about St. Herman, confuses a service with polyeleos with an ordinary weekday service, has at least one inadmissible “ecumenical” troparion in the canon, etc.

(From a letter to Daniel Olson 5/18 August 1970)

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Do you know the Life of St. Maximus the Confessor? All the Orthodox Patriarchs accepted the Monothelite heresy, and he was begged, for the sake of peace and harmony in the Church, to do what everyone else was doing and keep his opinions to himself. And he said: “Even if the whole world enter into communion with the (heretical) Patriarch of Constantinople, I alone will not.” That is the kind of Orthodox confession that has preserved the Church for 2000 years; that is the faith that St. Herman lived; that is what we must follow today. Indeed, we have the example of St. Peter the Aleut who died for refusing to accept Roman Catholicism, which, according to our modern ecumenists, is very little different from Orthodoxy. And we are gladly willing to suffer torture and martyrdom for this faith, but we will never recognize either the Patriarchate or the Metropolia, which have betrayed this faith.

(From a letter to Fr. Vladimir S. [Bridievey, OCA], 08.70)

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And so it was Iakovos’ article in the July-Aug. Orthodox Observer. “A New Epoch?” that I suddenly felt that I had found an insight into the “essence of Iakovism.” Is not, indeed, the basic heresy chiliasm? What else, indeed, could justify such immense changes and monstrous perversions in Orthodoxy except the concept that we are entering entirely new historical circumstances, an entirely new kind of time, in which the concepts of the past [are] no longer relevant, but must be guided by the voices of the new time? Does not Fr. Patrinos, in past issues of the Orthodox Observer, justify Athenagoras—not as a theologian, not as traditionalist, but precisely as prophet, as one whose heresies cannot be condemned because he already lives in the “new time,” ahead of his own times? Athenagoras himself has been quoted (I can’t find this source now!) as speaking of the coming of the “Third Age of the Holy Spirit”—a clearly chiliastic idea which has its chief recent champion in N. Berdyaev, and can be traced back directly to Joachim of Floris, and indirectly to the Montanists. The whole idea of a “new age,” of course, penetrates every fiber of the last two centuries with their preoccupation with “progress,” is the key idea of the very concept of Revolution (from French to Bolshevik), is a central idea of modern occultism (visible on the popular level in today’s talk of the “age of Aquarius,” the astrological post-Christian age) and has owed its spread probably chiefly to Freemasonry (there’s a Scottish Rite publication in America called New Age). (I regret to say that the whole philosophy is also present in the American dollar bill with its masonic heritage, with its “novus ordo seclorum” and its unfinished pyramid, awaiting the 13th stone on top!) In Christian terms, it is the philosophy of Antichrist, the one who will turn the world upside down and “change times and seasons.” Indeed even the Calendar is involved, for the most thorough Revolutions (the French; and Bolshevik tried and failed and had to be satisfied with the compromise of the Gregorian calendar) introduce new calendars. The Pope and Athenagoras have already expressed themselves as for the new “universal” calendar. And the whole concept of ecumenism is, of course, permeated with this heresy and the “refounding of the Church.”

The recent “thought” of Constantinople (to give it a dignified name!) is full either of outright identification of the Kingdom of Heaven with the “new epoch” (the wolf lying down with the lamb) or of emphasis on an entirely new kind of time and/or Christianity that makes previous Christian standards obsolete: new morality, new religion, springtime of Christianity, refounding the Church, the need no longer to pray for crops or weather because Man controls these now, etc.

How appropriate, too, for the chiliast cause that we live (since 1917) in the “post-Constantinian age”; for it was at the beginning of that age, i.e., at the time of the golden age of the Fathers, that the heresy of chiliasm was crushed—in the West, I believe, chiefly

through Augustine and in the East by Origen(?), with their commentary on the thousand years of the Apocalypse not as an earthly “millennium” but as the life of grace in the Church on earth. And indeed, together with the Revolutions that have toppled the Constantinian era we have seen a reform of Christianity that does away with the Church as an instrument of God’s grace for men’s eternal salvation and replaces it with the “social gospel.” Iakovos’ article has not one word about salvation, but is concerned only for the “world.”

I have said enough!

(From a letter to Father Michael [Azkoul] August 30/September 12, 1970)

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Entertain whatever abstract ideas you like about “good ecumenism,” —can’t you see that those who invented it understand it in a heretical sense, and they see Orthodox involvement in it as a more or less grudging acceptance of that heresy?—or that the actual practice of it is literally dissolving the fabric of the Orthodoxy of those who participate (“the Truth which we have not known”; “re-found your Church,” invocations of “Saints” Gandhi, Martin Luther King, etc.).

(From a letter to Father David [Black], October 30/November 12, 1970)

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The other day I read an astute comment on the iconoclastic crisis of the 7th-8th centuries. Before the Seventh Ecumenical Council the Orthodox Church did not have any explicit “doctrine on icons,” and so one could argue that the Iconoclasts were not heretics at all, and the dispute was one over the secondary issue of “rite” or “practice.” Nonetheless, the Church (in the person of Her champions, the leading icon-venerators) felt She was fighting a heresy, something destructive of the Church Herself; and after Her champions had suffered and died for this Orthodox sensitivity, and Her theologians had finally managed to put down explicitly the doctrine She already knew in Her heart—then the cause of Orthodoxy triumphed at the Seventh Ecumenical Council, and the Iconoclasts were clearly singled out as heretics.

I suspect that the very same thing, only much vaster and more complicated, is happening today: that those who feel Orthodoxy (through living its life of grace and being exposed to and raised on its basic treasures—lives of saints, patristic writings, etc.) are battling together against an enemy, a heresy, that has not yet been fully defined or manifested. Separate aspects or manifestations of it (chiliasm, social Gospel, renovationism, ecumenism) may be identified and fought, but the battle is largely instinctive as yet, and those who do not feel Orthodoxy in their heart and bones do not really know what you’re talking about and they can’t understand how you can become so excited over something which no council has ever identified as heresy. In the testimony of the Catacomb bishops of the late 1920’s one finds again and again that the GPU agents asked them first of all whether they were for or against Sergius, and if they were against, then these agents demonstrated that Sergius had “violated neither dogmas nor canons”! Thus, either the atheist torturers are “defending the Church”—or else there is something dreadfully wrong, and the Church is up against an extremely formidable enemy. As it turns out, however, there are several dogmatic and canonical grounds on which Sergius was wrong; but first of all the Orthodox soul sensed that he was on the wrong side.

So the first part of the battle comes down to presenting basic Orthodoxy and raising people in the real spirit of Orthodoxy—above all the example of those who have lived Orthodoxy, God’s saints and confessors. That’s why, for our times, the most important thing is not general and abstract knowledge of Orthodox history, dogmas, canons, etc. (St. Sergius’ and St. Vladimir’s Seminaries turn out many who know these pretty well, but they do not become defenders of Orthodoxy, WHICH IS WHAT is needed), but rather the examples that have been given for our time—most especially Russia’s new martyrs and confessors. And one of the saddest signs in the present controversy over Moscow is that those who defend the Metropolia, instead of setting forth such inspiring examples, quote the most shameful documents and examples of Turkish and Russian history (Fr. David Black quoted several unedifying examples from the Synodal period of the Russian Church to us, and he probably

doesn't even know the worst ones!) thinking thereby to defend their own position. That is, the Church has always been bad, and it's no worse now than before! But what a horrible, what a psychologically and spiritually crippling defense! If that's how they have to defend themselves, then wouldn't it be better to avoid doing the things that reduce them to such an extremity? Is "stepping out on the world Orthodox scene" really so important to the Metropolia that it must do it at the expense of the suffering Russian Orthodox faithful? To give one small example: Metr. Nikodim is the Metropolia's great "benefactor," and no one can doubt that his success with the Metropolia has strengthened his position with the Moscow Patriarchate. On the other hand, the layman Boris Talantov in the USSR has openly called Nikodim a betrayer of the Church, a liar, and an agent of world anti-Christianity, for which statements (among others) he was imprisoned by the Soviets; Metr. Nikodim tells the West that he was in prison for "anti-governmental activities". On Jan. 4 of this year Boris Talantov died in prison, undoubtedly the victim of Nikodim (among others). Can the Metropolia feel itself to be on the side of this confessor? I don't see how it can.

I think I've said enough for a while! Our "Catacomb Documents" and "New Martyrs" will doubtless give a clearer picture, once we've got more of them translated and presented. Our new issue will have Metr. Joseph—a real champion of the Church! Interestingly, in him as well as in others the statement comes out that Sergius has done something that is "worse than heresy," THAT HE has murdered the Church from within.

(From a letter to Daniel Olson, March 25/April 7, 1971)

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I have always regarded evolution, in all its ramifications, as an important part of the "American modern" intellectual baggage which I left behind when I became Orthodox, and it never before occurred to me that any aware Orthodox Christian would regard it as an unimportant, especially now when many scientists have abandoned it (purely on scientific grounds), when the pseudo-religious presuppositions of its supporters are so evident, and when it is so much bound up with masonry-ecumenism and the whole pseudo-religious modern outlook.

We Orthodox are not afraid to be "narrow" on the question of ecumenism; why should we be afraid to be "narrow" on the question of evolution? The two issues, after all, are very closely bound up with each other.

(From a letter to Father Neketas on April 5/18, 1973)

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Some of our bishops are trying to maintain communion with "ecumenical Orthodoxy," which is a disastrous and fatal path. But we trust that God allows all these difficult and bitter trials to come upon us for our salvation and so that we can be of help to others.

(From a letter to Dr. Kalomiros August 26/September 8, 1975)

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Such giants as Vlad. Averky and Vladika John have guided us up to now, and their teaching will remain a beacon in the days ahead; Vlad. Averky especially has given us some practical pointers which will help us over some difficult hurdles ahead.

Before going ahead, we must stop and find out where we are. We wish to be zealots for true Orthodoxy, and our Church leaders have indicated clearly that we must have no contact with the Moscow Patriarchate and similarly enslaved Churches; must refrain from participating in ecumenist activities and must be aware that ecumenism is eating away the very Orthodox fiber of most of the Orthodox Churches, beginning with Constantinople; and must be zealously pursuing a path of true Orthodoxy ourselves, not only in outward acts but

especially in spiritual life, but without falling into false zealotry “not according to knowledge”—a point that Vlad. Averky especially emphasized. About the latter danger we have been learning much of late from the situation of the Old Calendarists in Greece, which can help us to avoid some mistakes “on the right side.”

Ecumenism itself is not a clear-cut heresy like Arianism, or a clearly-distinguishable body such as the Roman Catholic church. It is seldom preached boldly in so many words by its Orthodox participants, and even when outrageous statements are made by Patrs. Athenagoras and Demetrius, or by the new “Thyateira Confession,” they are often accompanied by at least a verbal confession that Orthodoxy still is the one true Church of Christ. There is therefore some justification for those who refuse to break off with ecumenist hierarchs, or who do not know at what point they actually become “heretics.”

Ecumenism, rather than a formal heresy, is more like an elemental movement, an intellectual attitude which is “in the air” and takes possession of individuals and groups and whole Churches to the degree of their worldliness and openness to intellectual fashions. Thus, it is in our Church also, and even in our minds, unless we are waging a conscious warfare against the “spirit of the times.”

There is a fear, increased by knowledge of the Greek Old Calendarist situation, of falling into a sectarian mentality—that “we alone are pure.”

What, then, should we do?

Let us first of all take guidance from our hierarchs who are most aware of the spiritual situation of the Church today and have spoken out. We have especially Metr. Philaret, who speaks rather about the spiritual essence of ecumenism than about its formally heretical nature, and warns other hierarchs and his own flock against participating in ecumenist activities and ideas; and Archbishop Averky, who viewed the whole matter also not in terms of formal heresy but rather as an elemental movement of apostasy, the answer to which is first of all a return to spiritual life.

(From a letter to Daniel Olson May 29/June 11, 1976)

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“Sergianism” in 1927 was not a question of ecumenism, modernism, the new calendar, the acceptance of non-Orthodox Mysteries, violation of canons, or teaching of new dogmas; and it was not of course a question only of politics, either. What then is left?—something very difficult to define and which the Catacomb hierarchs of 1927 in their epistles usually identified as the “loss of inner freedom.” (To be sure, new factors have entered the situation in recent years.) Before such a subtle temptation it is precisely a feeling for the spirit behind the phenomena which is the decisive factor, and not merely “correctness” in canons or dogmas. Several highly-respected Old Calendarists in Greece have written us that it is precisely the “fatal disease of correctness” which has caused such anarchy there now in the church situation—a “disease” which they place second only to ecumenism itself as a destroyer of souls.

(From a letter to Father Neketas on July 16/29, 1976)

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We’ve received some new talks of Fr. Dimitry Dudko—and he really does have much of what is necessary not only in the Soviet Union, but here also. He speaks to the point against making “popes” out of our bishops and spiritual fathers, of everyone thinking for himself instead of leaving it to others. His is one of the soundest and freshest voices in Orthodoxy today (despite some “theoretical” errors), and gives great hope for the future of Orthodoxy in Russia. With this in mind, we must be “open” rather than “closed” with regard to the Moscow Patriarchate. The whole question of ecumenism and apostasy cannot be placed simply on the canonical-dogmatic-formal level, but must be viewed first spiritually. Fr. Dimitry also speaks

forcefully against letting a purely formal approach to the canons bind us spiritually and actually strangle church life.

(From a letter to Alexey Young on July 29/August 11, 1976)

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We continue to regard the danger from the “right side”—which is a Patristic dictum and not an expression of party politics—to be quite real and menacing, and this opinion has been reinforced for us by recent communications we have received from respected members of the Old Calendar Church in Greece, who tell us that “correctness” has become a “disease” in Greece second in its spiritual harm only to the apostasy of ecumenism.

(From a letter to Father Panagiotes on August 10/23, 1976)

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The big questions facing Orthodoxy today, from ecumenism on down, are often complex and with subtle overtones or ramifications for which sledgehammer tactics don’t give sufficient answers.

Let us all try to be a little “aloof” and not quite so passionately involved in defining the details of the big disputes of the day. Who precisely is a heretic? When precisely does responsibility for the heresy of a chief hierarch spread to the whole church body? Where are the precise lines between simply not having communion with a hierarch or jurisdiction, regarding them as schismatics, and recognizing that they have no grace? Must we take a “definite stand” on all these questions, even if Orthodox zealots themselves disagree on them? If we do, it will mean schisms and church disturbances without end.

(From a letter to Father Neketas on 22.08/4.09.76)

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The whole Orthodox Church in the free world is in a state of near paralysis; our Russian Church Abroad is better off in that it has at least kept more of the traditions and piety of the past and doesn’t betray Orthodoxy in the Ecumenical movement. But God has given us the talent of freedom, and we who can walk and write and print have an obligation to inspire those we can with the true Orthodoxy of the heart.

(From a letter to Andrew Bond on 10/23 August 1979)

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I think the theme of the conference should be expressed in positive terms. “Modernism and ecumenism” are good to talk about as dangers facing us, but I think they shouldn’t set the tone for a conference. If they’re mentioned in the title, perhaps it could be something like: “Preaching the Orthodox Gospel in the midst of 20th-century modernism and ecumenism,” or something similar. The evils of our time are so great that sometimes we lose sight of the greater power of what we have to oppose them with.

(From a letter to Father Demetrios on June 9/22, 1980)

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I will set forth briefly what I believe to be the Orthodox attitude towards non-Orthodox Christians.

1. Orthodoxy is the Church founded by Christ for the salvation of mankind, and therefore we should guard with our life the purity of its teaching and our own faithfulness to it. In the Orthodox Church alone is grace given through the sacraments (most other churches don't even claim [to] have sacraments in any serious sense). The Orthodox Church alone is the Body of Christ, and if salvation is difficult enough within the Orthodox Church, how much more difficult must it be outside the Church!

2. However, it is not for us to define the state of those who are outside the Orthodox Church. If God wishes to grant salvation to some who are Christians in the best way they know, but without ever knowing the Orthodox Church—that is up to Him, not us. But when He does this, it is outside the normal way that He established for salvation—which is in the Church, as a part of the Body of Christ. I myself can accept the experience of Protestants being “born again” in Christ; I have met people who have changed their lives entirely through meeting Christ, and I cannot deny their experience just because they are not Orthodox. I call these people “subjective” or “beginning” Christians. But until they are united to the Orthodox Church they cannot have the fullness of Christianity, they cannot be objectively Christian as belonging to the Body of Christ and receiving the grace of the sacraments. I think this is why there are so many sects among them—they begin the Christian life with a genuine experience of conversion to Christ, but they cannot continue the Christian life in the right way until they are united to the Orthodox Church, and they therefore substitute their own opinions and subjective experiences for the Church's teaching and sacraments.

About those Christians who are outside the Orthodox Church, therefore, I would say: they do not yet have the full truth—perhaps it just hasn't been revealed to them yet, or perhaps it is our fault for not living and teaching the Orthodox Faith in a way they can understand. With such people we cannot be one in the faith, but there is no reason why we should regard them as totally estranged or as equal to pagans (although we should not be hostile to pagans either—they also haven't yet seen the truth!). It is true that many of the non-Orthodox hymns contain a teaching or at least an emphasis that is wrong—especially the idea that when one is “saved” he does not need to do anything more because Christ has done it all. This idea prevents people from seeing the truth of Orthodoxy which emphasizes the idea of struggling for one's salvation even after Christ has given it to us, as St. Paul says: “Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.” But almost all of the religious Christmas carols are all right, and they are sung by Orthodox Christians in America (some of them even in the strictest monasteries!).

The word “heretic” is indeed used too frequently nowadays. It has a definite meaning and function, to distinguish new teachings from the Orthodox teaching; but few of the non-Orthodox Christians today are consciously “heretics,” and it really does no good to call them that.

In the end, I think, Fr. Dimitry Dudko's attitude is the correct one: We should view the non-Orthodox as people to whom Orthodoxy has not yet been revealed, as people who are potentially Orthodox (if only we ourselves would give them a better example!). There is no reason why we cannot call them Christians and be on good terms with them, recognize that we have at least our faith in Christ in common, and live in peace especially with our own families. St. Innocent's attitude to the Roman Catholics in California is a good example for us. A harsh, polemical attitude is called for only when the non-Orthodox are trying to take away our flocks or change our teaching—as the Roman Catholics tried to do in western Russia in past centuries. This explains why some people even today continue this harsh tone.

As for prejudices—these belong to people, not the Church. Orthodoxy does not require you to accept any prejudices or opinions about other races, nations, etc.

(From a letter to Anna, Catechumen 14/27, 1980)

Part II. On the broad road of apostasy.

8. About evolutionism.

As for evolution, which is a hoax and fraud if ever anything was, we have long wanted to have a good objective exposé (because of its devastating anti-Christian religious overtones and even foundation). We know of no conceivable watering down or modification of the evolutionary hypothesis which would make it acceptable either to theology, philosophy, or science—certainly the more sophisticated scientists today no longer take it seriously, and recognize that it became popular solely by an act of faith and highly rigged evidence!

Evolution seems to be such a key in the whole program of anti-Christianity.

(From a letter to Alexey Young on August 16/29, 1972)

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“Theistic” evolution, as I understand its motives, is the invention of men who, being afraid that physical evolution is really “scientific,” stick “God” in at various points of the evolutionary process in order not to be left out, in order to conform “theology” to the “latest scientific discoveries.” But his form of artificial thinking is satisfactory only to the most vague and confused minds (for whom, apparently, “God” supplies the energy and order that can’t be explained according to the Second Law of Thermodynamics): it is satisfactory neither for theology nor for science, but just mixes the two realms up. Again, “spiritual” evolution applies the “conclusions” of atheistic physical evolution to the “spiritual” realm and comes to results which are monstrous and unacceptable either from the scientific or the theological point of view: a mixup and confusion which can only disguise itself in fantastic jargon a la Teilhard de Chardin. Both these kinds of evolution depend entirely on acceptance of physical evolution, and if that is shown to be unsound they fall; and in addition they are self-contradictory because the whole purpose and intent of the theory of physical evolution is to find an explanation of the world without God; i.e., physical evolution is by its nature atheistic, and it’s only ridiculous when “theologians” run after the latest “scientific” theory in order not to be left behind by the times.

Evolution is not at all “scientific, but rather a kind of science-fiction theology, the product of faith (an atheistic faith, but nonetheless faith). That it is still so widely accepted surely shows how low not only theology, but just plain common-sense thinking have fallen today. (I still remember my freshman professor of zoology expatiating on the “great ideas of man”: for him the greatest idea man ever invented was the idea of evolution; much greater, he believed than the “idea of God.”)

On every level, from common sense on up, evolution is nonsense! Behold what real, unredeemed foolishness they fall into who try to do without God!

(From a letter to Alexey Young January 31/February 13, 1973)

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Evolution precisely claims to be “scientific” (which it certainly is not, it is religious philosophy masquerading as science), and it is quite impossible to discuss it at all without examining its scientific evidence (which simply does not exist—and why should we be afraid to say so, just to avoid being called obscurantists who think the earth is flat?).

I have always regarded evolution, in all its ramifications, as an important part of the “American modern” intellectual baggage which I left behind when I became Orthodox, and it never before occurred to me that any aware Orthodox Christian would regard it as an unimportant, especially now when many scientists have abandoned it (purely on scientific grounds), when the pseudo-religious presuppositions of its supporters are so evident, and when it is so much bound up with masonry-ecumenism and the whole pseudo-religious modern outlook.

“Modern” ideas are after all one whole: they are formed first outside the Church, develop in

atheist-agnostic minds, and then move through the whole of society until they reach the Church, changing form in the meantime to fit in with each current of ideas. "Evolution" is one such idea (but it's not really an "idea"—see below) that has not yet directly attacked Orthodoxy. But look what it has already done to papism: is it not true that the whole dissolution of papism in the past decade is directly bound up with the "unleashing" of Teilhardism (whose books were more or less banned up to then) in that same period, a process which was presented for popular consumption 10 years ago in a rather cheap but symptomatic novel, *The Shoes of the Fisherman*? By this I do not mean that a certain number of Teilhardian theses were opposed to so many papist theses and conquered them: for his evolution is not really a "heresy" (we will agree that this term applied to him, especially from the Orthodox side, is imprecise!), but rather a whole rival thought-pattern offering a whole different approach to life (and, consequently, religion); and being already so much a part of the "spirit of the age," its approach was persuasive not by argument but by fitting in with unconscious attitudes of people who were outwardly papist.

"Evolution is one of the most dangerous concepts that faces the Orthodox Christian today"—perhaps it is the very key (intellectual) to the assault upon the Church, to the very "philosophy" (and there is such a thing!) of the coming Antichrist.

"Evolution" is a whole mind-set that is quite incompatible with Orthodoxy.

Evolution is a crucial question, and destructive of Orthodoxy not so much because of its theses as because of its intellectual-spiritual orientation.).

Significantly, the same mail that brought your letter brought also Concern, with the article of Theodosius Dobzhansky (who just received a Doctorate honoris causae from St. Vladimir's Seminary) on "Evolution: God's Method of Creation." Well, here are the arguments of an "Orthodox evolutionist," and they are the same as all other evolutionary arguments, emotional faith with not one shred of genuine evidence to support it (although he presents material that looks very formidable and "scientific"). But more important: read between the lines and answer: does this man believe in God as a true Orthodox Christian believes in Him? He does not! He believes in Him as "modern" man believes; he is a deist. And very revealing is his conclusion: "One of the great thinkers of our age, Teilhard de Chardin, wrote the following: 'Is evolution a theory, a system, or a hypothesis? It is much more—it is a general postulate to which all theories, all hypotheses, all systems must henceforward bow and which they must satisfy in order to be thinkable and true. Evolution is a light which illuminates all facts, a trajectory which all lines of thought must follow—this is what evolution is.'"

This indeed is Teilhardism, and by "all theories and systems" he means in particular theology and spirituality, as being part of the highest evolutionary layer, the "noosphere," which is just now converging in the evolutionary apex called the "Omega Point" or "Super Christ." I hate to appear "fundamentalist," but his mammoth structure rests on just a few little "fundamental" facts (or fabrications), which most people seem afraid to get near because they seem so "scientific," beginning with the transition of one species into another and so up the ladder.

Evolution is a real problem which we cannot avoid: that ideological orientation and value-system which is taught in all public schools as fact and which poisons and stupefies Orthodox minds without ever attacking Orthodoxy as such. We Orthodox are not afraid to be "narrow" on the question of ecumenism; why should we be afraid to be "narrow" on the question of evolution? The two issues, after all, are very closely bound up with each other.

(From a letter to Father Nektas Palassis on April 5/18, 1973)

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What we must keep in mind and get across, is not really evolution as a heresy or wrong idea, on the same level with other ideas, and therefore go out fighting with the ordinary weapons of polemics. Evolution is not that kind of idea—but rather a kind of deep-seated primordial force which seems to capture people quite apart from their conscious attitudes and reasoning. (There's a good reason for that: it's been drilled into everyone from the cradle, and therefore

is very hard to bring out and look at rationally.) It's a rival thought-pattern to Orthodoxy, not just another idea.

(From a letter to Alexey Young on April 5/18, 1973)

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The argument against the supposed "scientific" theory of evolution is not itself scientific, for "science" itself can neither prove nor disprove it, for science its only guesswork: the argument against it is theological, that it involves implications which are entirely unacceptable for Orthodoxy, and these implications can't be escaped, and every propounder of evolution uses them, the theists and spiritualists being worse than the atheists.

(From a letter to Father Neketas Palassis, April 9/22, 1973)

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Anything written on evolution, I think, should be quite extensive, with much reference to sources, and treating thoroughly the questions which "evolution" raises for faith and which people seem afraid to bring up.

(From a letter to Alexey Young, April 23/May 6, 1973)

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"Evolution" is an extremely complicated question, all aspects of it considered, and not one of us is in a position to know "all about it" and give a definitive judgment on all its aspects. Calling it a "heresy," of course is a great simplification, for it is much more complex than that, and it is evident that different people have quite different things in mind when they hear the word "evolution," which complicates matters even more.

(From a letter to Father Neketas Palassis, August 19/September 1, 1973)

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My research into the Fathers concerning evolution has turned up something remarkable—the Catholic and Orthodox doctrines of Adam and creation are significantly different, and "evolution" can be fitted rather nicely precisely into the Catholic doctrine, but not at all into the Orthodox! This point can be made pretty well by comparing several passages of the Summa Theologica of Thomas Aquinas (I always wondered why I kept that book!) with the passage from St. Simeon which you have, and another from St. Gregory the Sinaite. The whole discussion of "evolution," if it is presented just right, can be very important for giving our genuine Orthodox outlook on contemporary science and "wisdom."

I've also found commentaries on Genesis by St. Ephraim the Syrian and St. John Chrysostom, and some more isolated statements in other Fathers. There can be no doubt at all how the Fathers understood Genesis—quite "literally"! I was at first a little uncertain about a quote from St. Gregory the Theologian, showing that he regarded the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as a symbol; and some Fathers, such as St. Gregory of Nyssa, are full of such symbols, leading a scholar like Florovsky to ask: does he understand the account of creation as entirely symbolic or not? And then, to resolve my uncertainty, leafing through a French translation we have of St. Gregory Palamas, I found that, in opposing those who say that the Uncreated Light of Mt. Tabor is only a "symbol," he cites the very passage from St. Gregory the Theologian about the tree of knowledge, and says that of course he also accepted it as having an existence of its own! All of these quotes put together should do much to give our Orthodox people the sound Orthodox approach to Genesis and creation, which I think many are now afraid of, due to the prestige of "science."

In general, it seems that no one has really thought through the whole question of evolution, and many Russian priests are satisfied just not to think about the “species” and the “six days,” as long as Adam is kept as an historical person who lived about 7500 years ago. But “evolution” will hardly tolerate such a concession to theology in any case! It might be good, by the way, to give a brief resume somewhere in your study on the response of Catholic theology to evolution—how they gave way point by point, ending in the Rahner “theology”.

(From a letter to Alexey Young on January 9/22, 1974)

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For Orthodoxy DOES NOT FOLLOW THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE AGE, rather Orthodoxy has its own philosophy based on Revelation. (The Holy Fathers have a complete theology of the origin of man and creation which) This Revelation is not bound up with any intellectual fashion that passes away. It is a doctrine not modified with every passing philosophy, not bound up with either the static universe of perfect harmony of Newton (which departed from Orthodoxy by making the universe purely naturalistic—and evolution is actually just the present philosophy of the naturalized universe divorced from God and His action), nor with the “developing” universe of T. de C. and other fashionable thinkers today. Orthodox philosophy is NOT OF THIS WORLD; but it is THE ANSWER to the vain speculations of modern man, and certainly the answer to a mankind filled with the “spiritual malaise” D. [Dostoyevsky] perceives.

(From a letter to Alexey Young, January 24/February 6, 1974)

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We received yesterday the long-awaited epistle of Dr. Kalomiros on “evolution”—40 pages long! I must confess that it is shocking beyond our expectations—giving the “evolutionary” teaching quite unadorned and unqualified, complete with the “evolved beast Adam” and “he who denies evolution denies the Sacred Scriptures.” In a way, however, we are rather glad of this—because now for the first time we have found a reputable Orthodox “evolutionist” who is willing to be quite frank about matters which others, I believe, are afraid to speak up about for fear of offending “weak consciences” which are under “Western influences.”

I have written him a short letter saying I wish to make a long and detailed reply to him and to start a “dialogue” with him on this subject.

In general this is my feeling about it:

1. Patristically it is very weak. Very few Fathers are quoted, and the only really “evolutionary” quote is a passage from St. Gregory of Nyssa—a passage which I noted a few weeks ago, by the way, and thought at the time: “I’d better use this and explain it, because one who already believes in evolution will be sure to think it ‘proves evolution.’” It does not, of course—it is merely a general statement of the orderly progression of God’s creation from the lowest to the highest, with the most perfect creature, man, coming last. Nothing is said about man or any creature “evolving,” and in another part of the same book (“On the Creation of Man”) St. Gregory says explicitly that Adam was ««generated, but was created directly by Christ.
2. There is a long “theological” discourse on man’s nature, which is very partial and one-sided, but will require a solid answer with quotes from Holy Fathers—for evolution above all involves a false anthropology, doctrine of man.
3. It is quite obvious that Kalomiros has gone to the Fathers already knowing that evolution is a “fact.” He obviously has not given deep thought to examining the presuppositions of the “fact” of evolution, so we will have to challenge him to start thinking and not bring to the Holy Fathers his preconceptions based on modern Western “wisdom.”

4. He is very imprecise on the very meaning of the word “evolution”—he thinks the development from embryo to mature man is “evolution,” and that the existence of different races of men is due to “evolution.” Very naive.

5. The man is not a theologian, but reads the Fathers by hit and miss.

(From a letter to Alexey Young February 25/March 10, 1974)

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The Fathers doctrine touching on “evolution” is so clear once one puts it all together, that I am simply amazed at the power “evolution” has over even educated Orthodox minds. Such is the power of this world and its fashionable ideas.

(From a letter to Alexey Young 2/15 March 1974)

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The objective scientific approach is very necessary—not enough to get bogged down in “scientific proofs”—but just enough to show that the scientific proofs cancel each other out, as it were, leaving the question of evolution in its real sphere of philosophy and theology.

The weakness of evolution as science and philosophy will only serve to emphasize the importance of the Patristic view, which is so definite and really powerful.

(From a letter to Alexey Young on March 9/22, 1974)

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Evolution is philosophy, and science had nothing to do with it; the scientific evidence of anything is against evolution.

(From a letter to Alexey Young September 21/October 4, 1974)

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We are aware that scientists don’t believe everything they give the high school student, and even realize that much there comes from “faith”—but still have the basic evolutionary faith that the universe “explains itself” and can be understood in “natural” terms. Our argument is only secondarily against the particular theory of evolution, and primarily against the larger idea of naturalism—that the universe explains itself.

(From a letter to Alexey Young on February 14/27, 1976)

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I have read the Life book on Evolution and found it very disappointing, because I hoped to find in it demonstrations of facts (because I am sincerely interested to know whether evolution is true or not!), and instead I found only diagrams and pictures and descriptions which are not convincing to anyone with an open mind, but only to someone who already believes in evolution on other grounds. The great mass of scientific literature in recent years which is highly critical of the evolutionary theory, which talks about relegating it to poetry and metaphors instead of scientific theory (Prof. Constance, professor of botany at the University of California, Berkeley), or even deny its validity altogether. If you wish (but it is quite pointless!), I could indeed compile a list of hundreds (if not thousands) of reputable scientists who now either disbelieve in evolution entirely or state that it is highly questionable as a scientific theory. Many of them state quite openly that a “literal” creation in six 24-hour

days is one possible interpretation of the scientific facts which we now have. There is also now much scientific evidence that the world is no older than 8 to 10,000 years. Are you going to tell me that I am crazy or “against science” when I can quote doctors of geological and biological sciences (Many of whom are not “fundamentalists”) who say things like this?

(From a letter to Dr. Kalomiros February 22/March 6, 1976)

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Symptomatic is Fr. Ephraim's confession (either there or elsewhere) that he has never read T. de Chardin and doesn't need to, as also his evident ignorance of the whole scientific side of the question. Likewise with Dr. Kalomiros: he prides himself on knowing nothing at all of Western teachings on evolution (apart from what he regards as “scientific facts”) and insists that we pay attention only to what he teaches on the subject, which is “patristic.”

1. This brings us to Axiom no. 1 in our approach to the question (not the most important one, but first in order of discussion): the question of evolution can't be discussed at all if one doesn't have a basic grasp of the scientific side of it (the “scientific proofs” of evolution) as well as the broader philosophy of evolution based on it (T. de Chardin, etc.). This is precisely what the Boston Fathers seem to be afraid of, and in general our Orthodox theologians also (including Fr. Michael Pomazansky if I'm not mistaken): once you get into “science,” the theologian is out of his depth, there are endless fruitless debates, etc. I think this is why Dr. Kalomiros' evolution articles in the Greek religious press stirred up uneasiness but no distinct protests: because “theologians” in general just don't know how to handle the scientific side.

By this I don't mean that one has to be a scientific specialist in order to discuss the scientific side of the question—the scientific side is not the most important one, and specialists usually trip themselves up by concentrating too much on it; but if one isn't sufficiently aware of the scientific side one won't be able to grasp the question in its full scope. One can't say with assurance, for example, whether man has been on earth some seven or eight thousand years (“more or less,” as the Fathers often say) if one is totally ignorant of the principle of radiometric dating, geologic strata, etc., which “prove” that man is “millions of years” old. And such knowledge is not esoteric at all—the basic principles of radiometric dating (enough to know its strong and weak points) can be explained in a rather short article. And the question of whether man has been on earth for some thousands of years or some millions of years is one that certainly touches on some basic Orthodox questions—whether the genealogies of the Scripture are actually genealogies (as all the Fathers certainly believed) or just sketchy lists with many long blanks in them; whether some of the Patriarchs of the Old Testament (if these are not genealogies) might not be “symbols” instead of concrete people; whether Adam himself ever existed (especially in view of what seems the prevailing theory now among evolutionists—“polygenism,” that new species begin in many pairs simultaneously); etc. This is just a sample to show that to get anywhere in this question one must have a basic, layman's awareness of the scientific evidences for and against evolution. If one is reasonably objective and not out to “prove ones point” at any cost, such questions need not arouse passionate debates. As a basic principle, of course, we must assume that scientific truth (as opposed to various opinions and prejudices) can not contradict revealed truth, if only we understand them both correctly.

Your point—to start with basic theological principles—I think is good, and these should always be fundamental. And one must always be well aware of the different modes of knowledge and not mix them up. The trouble is, the question of evolution is so complex that one isn't always aware which aspect of it has ceased to be scientific and has intruded on theology or philosophy, or exactly where the real conflicts arise. There, I think it is very important, as a second axiom:

2. To be aware of the basic philosophies underlying or derived from evolutionism and various other views of origins. The evolutionary philosophy of “up from the beasts” certainly seems irreconcilable with the Christian view of “fall from paradise,” and our whole view of history will certainly be determined by which why we believe! The Catholics used to solve this problem with a deus ex machina: when the body had evolved sufficiently, God “specially created” a soul for it—there evolution is correct, and so is Genesis, broadly interpreted. Kalomiros has basically the same view, though he has more patristic vocabulary to describe it

—but such views are very artificial and contrived: the Christians wait for the latest evolutionary hypothesis and twist the text of Genesis to fit in with it. This won't do! An awareness of how evolutionary philosophers (such as T. de Chardin) view the whole question of evolution, while it may not solve any specific question, will still give a broader view of the whole intellectual background behind evolution.

Axiom 3: The whole question of Genesis can not be well approached by Orthodox people without appealing to the basic Orthodox sources: the Holy Fathers. Especially valuable: the Hexaemera of St. Basil and St. Ambrose; commentaries on Genesis by St. John Chrysostom and (perhaps less important because they are more "fundamentalistic" and easier to "dismiss") St. Ephraim the Syrian; Homilies on Adam, paradise, and the first-created world by St. Simeon the New Theologian (especially homily 45 in the Theophan the Recluse edition of 1894 or so), St. Gregory the Sinaite (in the Russian Philocalia), St. Abba Dorotheus (Instruction I); commentaries of various Fathers on related passages of Scripture (for example, Romans 8:19-22 concerning the "vanity" or "corruption" of the post-Adamic world) or St. Gregory the Theologian on the Genealogies of Christ; Homilies on the subject of the Resurrection, or whenever the question of "seed" or "growth" is discussed; treatises on the origin of man (St. Gregory of Nyssa); patristic discussions on reincarnation and the pre-existence of souls (which are philosophically related to the question of evolution); etc.

A good Orthodox approach to the subject is that of I. M. Andreyev—a man well-equipped scientifically, as well as philosophically, who is not afraid of coming to conclusions that most scientists (being in step with the intellectual fashions that generally govern science) might not agree with. But he has said only a few things on the subject (in his Apologetics)—that mankind can not be more than 8000 years old, that the laws of nature before the fall were different than those now in force, and therefore are not subject to Reliable scientific interpretation, etc.

(From a letter to Father Ioannikios on July 3/16, 1977)

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A few notes on our continuing "dialogues on evolution".

1. Concerning "day-age"—I agree entirely with the proposal to measure them "not chronologically but theologically." I only suggest we be consistent in doing so. Dr. Kalomiros and others, when they say that "day-age" or "a thousand years in the sight of God is as one day" immediately conclude that the way is open to accepting the "geologic ages" with their fabulous millions of years as compatible with the Genesis "days." They thus measure the "ages" quite "chronologically"—which makes not one bit more sense than the fundamentalists' "24 hour days." The best position, I think, on this point is that of Blessed Augustine: "What kind of days these were it is extremely difficult or perhaps impossible for us to conceive, and how much more to say!" (City of God, XI, 6.) The eight "day," we know, is to be without end; the seventh "day" is a definite duration of at least some thousands of years; the first six "days," if they could be measured chronologically at all (and we shouldn't say they absolutely couldn't be, since such Fathers as St. Ephraim of Syria say they could), might be 24-hours long, or perhaps of some other duration. We should only be aware of the mystery of those first "days" which eludes our precise apprehension.

2. The question of the "age of the earth" is a different question, raised by science (which cannot give it a completely satisfactory answer) and touching on Revelation and certain theological questions. From the point of view of Biblical interpretation, this question is dependent on a more fundamental one: "the age of mankind." Here the text of Genesis does not need to fear the evidence of science; and since modern science does talk about this, we have to have an intelligent answer to the opinion concerning the "millions of years" which, supposedly, not merely "galaxies" existed, but even man himself and his near "ancestors" have been walking on earth. One cannot escape the question of the existence of man in chronological time (since both Genesis with its patristic interpreters and science seem to be talking about the same kind of "years" we know) by reference to the formation of galaxies and the relativity of time—the "primordial galaxies" themselves are a product of the scientific speculations of modern thinkers, and neither more or less deserving of credence than ancient Greek speculations concerning the origin of the world.

3. This raises another fundamental question: how much should we use science in a commentary on Genesis? I would say, as a very minimum: we must know enough about science and its modern speculations to have an answer to those who use it to “disprove Genesis.” Thus its chief function today is perhaps negative. But beyond that, I think that our attitude should be that of St. Basil in his *Hexaemeron*: the legitimate conclusions of science should be used whenever they help the task of interpreting the sacred text. The “science-phobia” which has been caused among some Orthodox Christians by the false use of science on the part of anti-Christians should be overcome. In the case of evolution, I don’t see how the question can be discussed at all without a basic knowledge of the “scientific proofs” for and against. I don’t mean we should become passionately attached to them or place them on the same level as theology—we should just be aware of them and know how to assess their relative value. The “scientific creationists” are very helpful in this regard, because they have hunted up evidence which had been selectively disregarded by pre-disposed evolutionists (for example, the remarkable evidence of an earth “under 10,000 years old,” which must definitely be weighted against the evidence for an earth much older; the overlapping human and dinosaur tracks in Texas, etc.)

4. But is the question of the age of the human race (some 7000 or 8000 years vs. a million or more years) really theological, or important? You doubt whether it is. I offer two observations:

a. The Holy Fathers (probably unanimously) certainly have no doubt that the chronology of the Old Testament, from Adam onwards, is to be accepted “literally.” They did not have the fundamentalist’s over-concern for chronological precision, but even the most mystical Fathers (St. Isaac the Syrian, St. Gregory Palamas, etc.) were quite certain that Adam lived literally 900 years, that there were some 5500 years (“more or less”) between the creation and the Birth of Christ, etc. (Blessed Augustine has a good discussion as to the differences between the Greek and Hebrew chronologies—the thousand years “more or less” didn’t bother him any more than it did the other Fathers—but the assertion that Adam lived a million or more years ago, and that thus the Old (and New) Testament chronology is quite arbitrary or fanciful, could not but have evoked numerous patristic discussions.) Can we be so trusting of the conclusions of modern science (especially if we have a basic knowledge of radiometric dating procedures and the philosophy underlying them!) as to totally overturn the Patristic opinion? Dr. Kalomiros and other Orthodox evolutionists say we should, without a second thought—I would say this is dangerous presumption, and an intrusion of dubious science into the realm of revealed truth. When Dr. K. dismisses the patristic interpretation of the OT chronology as “Jewish rationalism,” I even begin to wonder what his basic attitude to the Fathers is? It seems to have an element of disrespect, to say the least.

b. More important (more theological): one’s picture of reality, of the world, definitely influences one’s view of God. I offer you (very briefly) two pictures (“models”) of man and his world:

(1) Man created some 7000-8000 years ago, separately from other creatures (not descended from others), dispassionate by nature (in soul and body), with Eve miraculously created from his rib (in a way we can not describe with scientific precision, as St. John Chrysostom indicates), in a world of creatures with natures basically stable and not in process of becoming other natures. Much could be said on separate details of this picture, and knowledge of many of the details can never be precise, but basically: it does not contradict the text of Genesis and is harmonious with the Orthodox view of God.

(2) Man descended from lower creatures, passionate by his origin and nature, becoming dispassionate in paradise (when grace brought him out of his bestial state, according to Kalomiros) at a moment very hazy chronologically and theologically (today Roman Catholic evolutionists deny paradise altogether because they can’t reconcile it with evolutionary philosophy), existing in his fallen state perhaps a million or more years, during which time he gradually came up from savagery to civilization, the record of him in the OT being extremely sketchy and not to be taken seriously when it speaks of “years”; the world around man being in a constant state of change and ascent from one nature to another, and this whole process being explainable (“more or less”) by science, except for the original impulse of creation itself (which produced a rather undifferentiated mass with the “potentiality” of all future

developments). (Kalomiros insists there is nothing “miraculous” about the Six Days of creation—they all proceeded according to scientific laws!). This picture, that of “theistic” or “God- guided” evolution, can be reconciled with the text of Genesis and its patristic interpretation only by means of many jumps and improvisations and wholesale disregard of patristic evidence. The chief reason, I suspect, why it does not give the horrors to Orthodox believers in “God-guided evolution” (as, for example, Fr. Nektas Palassis professes himself to be)—is simply because they put their heads in the sand and don’t bother to think about it at all, because of a very unhealthy science-phobia. But my point here is: is not one’s view of God basically affected by such a picture of the world? For example, the view of an “Orthodox evolutionist” like Theodosius Dobzhansky (in his address on receiving an honorary doctorate from St. Vladimir’s Seminary!) utterly denies the Providence of God in the world; his “God” is the Deist God. St. John Damascene (following St. Gregory of Nyssa and others) states that it is unworthy of God to believe that He created man’s body and soul in separate moments, as if He did not have power for the whole act at once; this act of creation was simultaneous; here the text of Genesis is not to be interpreted literally or “chronologically” (Kalomiros specifically denies this—his interpretation of St. Seraphim’s words would collapse otherwise!). How much less worthy of God, then, to believe that He created only some kind of material ocean of potentiality and left everything to “evolve by itself” according to natural laws!

All this, as you can see, is an informal discussion presented for your reflection—precise citations will have to be given when I have time.

5. A different point, from your letter to Br. Makarios. On the “coats of skin”—yes, I recall that St. Gregory the Theologian also gives the interpretation (as his personal opinion) that these could signify the “coarse flesh” of Adam after his fall. A very important point, bound up with the curse and the change in the nature of the world and man, as opposed to the “very good” (i.e. incorrupt) state in the beginning. Dr. Kalomiros says: the world was obviously corrupt and mortal before Adam’s fall; it was only incorrupt in God’s idea of it before the actual creation, the “first creation” as opposed to the “second creation” of St. Gregory of Nyssa. As opposed to this, one could collect patristic evidence (for example, St. Simeon the New Theol., Homily 45, where it is very explicit) that shows, the material creation (and not just paradise) before Adam’s fall to be incorrupt and without death. But here I think we should beware taking the opposite side from Kalomiros and thinking we know with “scientific certainty” (as he thinks he does) what the nature of material reality was before the fall. Bishop Theophan the Recluse (in his commentary on Rom. 8:21) has a word of caution on this. I think it is enough to point out the different state of the world before the fall, its rather mysterious nature (to us who never saw it), and the inappropriateness of applying the law of scientific “uniformitarianism” to it. (Andreyev makes this point.)

6. A final point for now: it seems to me that in the “intellectual space” where science and theology overlap (a good description!) in the question of evolution, there are two quite different spheres of conflict and/or agreement between them:

a. Everything related to the “Six Days” and in general the state of the world before Adam: this is shrouded in some mystery (because of the different state of the world then) and it would be foolish for us to try to be “scientifically precise” about it. This is the biggest mistake of Kalomiros (and also of many fundamentalists). The creation of Adam from the dust is a mystery (for example); we can’t picture it. But still we can know enough of it from the Fathers to avoid unworthy opinions about it. (It was instantaneous; Adam came from no other creature; etc.) The evolutionists remove the mystery from it—all is according to scientifically-known natural processes; from an Orthodox person, this is inexcusable rationalism.

b. Everything related to Adam after his fall—i.e., human history as a whole—is much more accessible to us according to our present knowledge. Thus, a discussion of the “chronology” of the Six Days is useless; but the “chronology” of mankind from Adam on down is accessible to us, limited only by physical factors (documents, paleontology, archeology). Here we should apply our God-given minds to find the most worthy explanations of the supposed “conflicts” between Genesis and paleontology. And this means: reading the patristic commentaries, and understanding the scientific evidence.

(From a letter to Father Ioannikios on August 8/21, 1977)

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Speaking of Genesis, I see no reason why this course on Genesis couldn't be turned into the main portion of our long-lost "evolution" book. The whole outline of it now becomes clear to me. It should be called something positive (no evolution in the title), such as "Genesis, Creation and Early Man: An Orthodox View," and the first and main part should be simply an Orthodox interpretation (according to St. John Chrysostom, St. Ephraim, etc) of the first chapters of Genesis, discussing "problems" raised by modern men in the course of the discussion. Then, as the secondary thought (less than half the book), a discussion of the whole question of evolution, something like this:

1. Evolution as a scientific theory: the "proofs" of evolution. This would be a brief discussion of everything people think proves evolution—just enough to show that these aren't really proofs at all, and evolution can neither be proved nor disproved. The chapter you've already written should take care of most of this already, perhaps even shortened to make our contact with the scientific side of the question as brief as possible, since this is the most debatable part of it.
2. Evolution as popular science—basically your chapter on "Early Man" to show how textbooks fill in the "gaps" of scientific knowledge and present a picture much more solid than any facts warrant. Eugene Zavarin will be satisfied to see we aren't using a highschool textbook as a scientific treatise, but only showing how evolution filters down to this level.
3. Evolution as mythology and cosmic speculation, —some remarks on Carl Sagan's "Cosmos" television series and book. I add this here because one of our subscribers just sent a dipping about this, which seems to be much in the air now, and it seems typical of the way evolution is preached today as dogma and almost religion.
4. Where did the idea of evolution come from?—to explain how it got in the air. I've written about half of this already.
5. "Christian" evolution and T. de Chardin.
6. The new reaction against evolution: towards a Christian-inspired scientific approach to origins, with citations from the Creationist literature.

Rereading Kalomiros' letters, I see that there is something quite basic at stake in our differences with the Greeks. In this particular case, it is obvious that Kalomiros has no intention whatever to humble himself before the mind of the Fathers. He "knows better" than they, and therefore he easily categorizes as "absurd" opinions which they held because he himself has thought it out better, with the aid of modern science. In this case he is broader than the Fathers; in most cases, perhaps, our Greeks are narrower—but it is their own wisdom that they trust and which they wish to impose on others. Our key is—sticking to the wisdom of the Church, trusting our own Fathers and the Holy Fathers who lived before. People are ready to hear this.

(From a letter to Father Alexey Young, Meat-fare Saturday, 1981)