

Is the Grace of God Present in the Soviet Church?

“Notes about the
Catacomb Church
in the USSR.”

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Introduction

In the Orthodox Church many of the most profound theological works written by the great Church Fathers were written not for the mere sake of discoursing on the sublime truths, but to defend the faithful against the appearance of an error - an innovation, a human invention alien to the Divinely inspired Truth preserved by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the Church. Often the Fathers of the Church would have preferred to keep silent, continuing in prayer and living the truths of Divine Revelation, which can at best be imperfectly reflected in human words. Their discourses they have left in defense of the Faith are very often more in the nature of fences surrounding the Truth - declaring what God is not, while God in His essence remains unfathomable to the human mind. Nevertheless, as a result (one might say, a by-product) of their polemical writings, we have received from the Church Fathers a rich heritage of inspired theological writings which help us to better understand what Orthodox Christianity really is.

The present work falls into this category. Unfortunately, however, it will not be valued in this way but rather in terms of the reader's sympathies for, or lack thereof, the present day church organization in Russia known as the Moscow Patriarchate. However in future generations if, God willing, these ecclesiastical troubles cease to be of any practical relevance, this little book will continue to be of great value in terms of what it teaches us about Divine Grace and about the subtle but vital distinction between the realm of the soul and the realm of the spirit in man.

Bishop Theophan the Recluse summarizes the traditional teaching of the Church as follows:

“The natural relationship between the component parts of man should follow the law that the lesser should be in submission to the greater, the weaker to the stronger. Thus the body should be in submission to the soul, and the soul should submit to the spirit, while the spirit in accordance with its nature should be fully immersed in God. Man should abide in God with all his being and consciousness. Here the power of the spirit over the soul depends on the indwelling of the Divinity, the power of the soul over the body is dependent on the soul being ruled over by the spirit. When man fell away from God, inevitably man’s whole structure fell into disarray. The spirit, having departed far from God, lost its strength and submitted to the soul, while the soul, no longer being held aloft by the spirit, submitted to the body. In all of his being and consciousness man became mired in sensuality. Before taking upon himself the new life in the Lord Jesus Christ, man finds himself in just this state where the relationship between the component parts of his being is turned on its head, like a telescope when its different sections are collapsed one into the next.”

Professor Andreyev was well qualified to understand

this along with all its practical implications in the Soviet “paradise.” A devout Orthodox believer and confessor of the faith in times of persecution, he was also a qualified physician and psychologist. Ivan Mikhailovitch had three doctorates: in medicine, literature and philosophy, which he obtained from St. Petersburg University shortly after the outbreak of the revolution. However some years earlier he had been expelled from the gymnasia (high school) where he was studying on account of his own revolutionary ideas and sent to study in Switzerland. He had been raised in Orthodox piety but in his late teens went through a period of “rebellion” and became a very serious young man, questioning everything and seeking to find the true meaning of life, which at first he saw in revolutionary ideas which were popular with many of his contemporaries. During his studies in Europe he began to study philosophy (Bergson, Bulgakov, Lossky, Askoldov) and in this way gradually, step by step, came to understand the profundity of what was present in the Orthodox Church. He returned to Russia at the outbreak of the revolution, already clearly understanding the emptiness of materialism and atheism. Unlike many of his contemporaries, he did not become sidetracked in a pseudo-Orthodox combination of traditional teachings and modern inventions. He sought the true spiritual path of Orthodoxy. A decisive point in his life occurred in 1926 when he made a pilgrimage to venerate the relics of St. Seraphim of Sarov at Diveyevo monastery. During the special rule of prayer prescribed for pilgrims he suddenly became vividly aware of the reality and closeness of God and of an entirely

real communion in prayer with Him. He asked to be deprived of all earthly things if only he could remember until his last day this blessed experience of the “quiet, joyful, gentle and fragrant wafting of the Holy Spirit of the Lord.” He wrote: “Everything had become new within me. Previously I had not understood such a simple truth, that spiritual things are more distinct from those of the soul than the latter are from bodily things. But now I understood this well. Within, in the depths of my soul it was quiet, calm, joyful. The outward miracles at the shrine of St. Seraphim, which occurred before my eyes, did not astonish me. All this seemed simple and natural.”¹

This is a quite astonishing statement, that there is a greater difference between the spirit and the soul than there is between the soul and the body. Mostly we do not clearly appreciate this at all - that all the wonderful “heritage” of Orthodoxy which so impresses the outside world - icons, singing, the order of our church services - is only a vessel which contains, and makes us more receptive to the actions of the Divine Grace of God. By the same token it is quite possible to maintain a humanly constructed facade containing all the outward elements of the Orthodox “heritage” but lacking the true contact with the Living God. Blatant examples of this are the Uniate church, which is not Orthodox at all, but Roman Catholic, and the self-consecrated Ukrainian church, which was formed by nationalists in the 1920’s and had no semblance of an apostolic succession in the consecration of its hierarchy whatsoever. It is only in rare moments of enlightenment that we are able to

perceive this distinction between the things of the soul and those of the spirit in full clarity. Mostly we must have recourse to the Canons of the Church to help us in our need to “discern the spirits, whether they be of God,” to avoid the risk of being deceived and accepting a surrogate in place of the Church of Christ. This is not a question of following the letter of the law, or self-righteously claiming to belong to the “right” jurisdiction, but rather following the striving of a loving heart which thirsts for prayerful communion with the Living God.

Thus this theme of distinguishing between the things of the spirit and the things of the soul was fundamental to Andreyev’s understanding of Orthodoxy. It was only natural that he would apply it to find a way through the most burning problems of the day - those caused by the Soviet persecution of Orthodoxy and the creation of a church apparatus subservient to the Soviet state following the infamous Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius in 1927. It is this ecclesiastical organization that Andreyev refers to as the “Soviet Church.” He was actively involved in protesting against the declaration and then suffered imprisonment and exile for his religious views. In the 1930’s he formed part of the “Josephite” movement of the catacomb church.² Thus his convictions were far from being an abstract form of philosophizing, but on the contrary were born out by his own personal sufferings. The article appended at the end of this book gives a vivid illustration of this period in his life. During the German occupation Andreyev managed to escape to the west and in later life he became a teacher at the Holy Trinity Seminary at

Jordanville, New York, where he was buried after his repose in the Lord, in 1976.

During Andreyev's lifetime the Soviet Church was clearly enslaved to the Communist regime. Nobody ever imagined that it could outlive the Soviet system which had created it. In his book, *Motifs of My Life*, Archbishop Vitaly Maximenko wrote of how, in past ages, those who had fallen during times of persecution had been treated with varying degrees of condescension. Looking forward to the day of the collapse of the Soviet system, he urged compassion towards the repentant hierarchs of the Soviet Church who he assumed would be subjected to due ecclesiastical judgment by those who had not submitted to the communist yoke, which group would include the émigré hierarchs of the Church Abroad.³ What never seems to have been contemplated by earlier generations of hierarchs was that the Soviet Church would continue its existence, going from strength to strength, after the collapse of the Soviet system itself. Yet this is precisely what we see today, with the same church organization continuing its existence as a powerful ally of the emerging "post-Soviet" Russian state. Andreyev's profound analysis provides a basis for orientation in approaching the problem of the status of this organization. Specifically, he addresses the fallacy of the widespread "bottom up" approach to ecclesiology, which says that because many suffering, sincere people seek God within a given church organization it must be the true one. This approach, one could say, denies the Divine- Human nature of the Church and makes it only human-democratic. As a professional psychologist and

a Solovki confessor he is the ideal spokesman for explaining this. It should be noted that Andreyev does not conclude with a categorical conclusion that the "Soviet Church" is deprived of the Grace of God, only that there are grounds for uncertainty. "Therefore we refuse any kind of relation, whatever it may be, with the Soviet Church, for we doubt in her grace."



*Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan
in his place of exile.*

We can recall the attitude of Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan, who had initially counseled caution in separating from Metropolitan Sergius. In the late 1930's, shortly before his execution, he wrote in a letter that since enough time had passed since the Declaration and Metropolitan Sergius had shown no sign of repenting, "the Orthodox can have no part or lot with him."⁴ *NO part or lot' may not be a precisely defined scientific term, but its practical implications are quite clear. Andreyev's contribution is to demonstrate quite clearly, and in fact frighteningly, how it is perfectly possible for an organization to have retained all the trappings of an Orthodox "heritage" but have lost the essential thing, the one thing that is needful, the presence of the Holy Spirit of God.

As a philosopher who had come to Orthodoxy after a long intellectual search, Andreyev never lost sight of what is called "Apologetics" - the study of why we believe as we do and how to explain it to others. His understanding of the difference between things of the soul and things of the spirit makes a *very* important contribution in this area in the face of present day indifference and unbelief. On the one hand we are surrounded by other forms of Christianity which appear to have many of the same things as the Orthodox Church. People turn to God in prayer; they read the same Gospels that we have. And yet... an Orthodox soul will find that these religions are just religions, ultimately religions that it is possible not to believe in, because they are missing that "one thing that is needful." They fall down before the onslaughts of present day psychology which says that religions are the opium of the people and just feed certain

needs of the psyche, or human soul. Andreyev is saying in effect, "Yes, you are quite right, it is quite possible to have a religion which is just made up of psychological effects." The same psychologists would look at our churches and say they, too, are just made with human hands. The iconostasis is carved out of wood, the altar table is erected and covered with cloths, we hang a lamp outside the sanctuary, and the lamp is made of glass and metal and filled with olive oil. Then we train our singers and organize church services of astounding majesty and beauty, but these too are all material and psychological effects. And Andreyev as it were replies, with that characteristic twinkle in his eye which you see in photographs of him, "Yes, I agree, it is quite possible to have the most impressive religion which would still be one that I would not believe in. That is why we are so cautious not to be deceived, because all you unbelieving psychologists are quite right, many of these religions really are human creations. What the Orthodox believer is seeking is something which goes beyond all the outward forms and is able to nourish the spiritual side of his being, not just the soul. We understand all your criticisms of religion in general and Orthodoxy in particular, but we invite you to probe more deeply and open yourselves to perceive the presence of God beneath all the outward forms in the Orthodox Church."

Much of the book is devoted to describing the process of formation of the Soviet Church and its separation from the confessing hierarchs who were either exterminated or went into the catacombs. Andreyev writes with the authority and the suffering

heart of one who was personally involved in these tragic events. Yet at the same time there is no trace in his writings of that harshness which can be observed in some present day opponents of the Moscow Patriarchate - those who have fallen into an error opposite to that indifference to the truth which is so generally prevalent today. Professor Andreyev was a man of great learning and a true "aristocrat of the spirit," whose writings will repay serious study.

*Protodeacon Christopher Birchall
Vancouver, British Columbia*



Professor I.M. Andreyev

Professor I.M. Andreyev
In Memoriam
(originally published in 1976)

On December 30, 1976, there reposed an outstanding churchman and statesman, doctor of psychiatry, pedagogue, lecturer, publicist and author of a series of theological textbooks - Professor Ivan Mikhailovich Andreyevsky.

Ivan Andreyevsky was born on March 14, 1894, in St. Petersburg, where he completed the gymnasium. Afterwards, he finished a major in philosophy at the Sorbonne in Paris, and returned to his native city, where he entered the Bekhterev Institute. His reason for such a decision was his intense interest in the works of Dostoyevsky, the depths of whose creativity he wished to examine with the aid of modern psychiatry. After completing his studies at the Institute, he studied philology at the University of St. Petersburg at the same time serving as a doctor at the Nikolaevsky Military Hospital during the civil war. In 1922, Ivan M. Andreyevsky accepted the post of professor at the university, but after his initial lectures, which proved to be inconsistent with official communist ideology, he was dismissed from the university, but forthwith obtained a position as instructor of literature in one of the Petrograd high schools.

Being a courageous man, Ivan Mikhailovich, concurrent with his teaching of literature, attended the underground theological courses and religio-philosophical circles which existed in Petrograd in the 1920's, in particular the circle of St. Seraphim of Sarov, in which

by the monastery press. These latter include: *A Short Survey of the History of the Russian Church from the Revolution until the Present Time* (1952), *A Short Conspectus for a Course of Lectures in Psychology* (1960), *Orthodox-Christian Apologetics* (1965), *Orthodox-Christian Moral Theology* (1966), *A Survey of the History of Russian Literature of the 19th Century* (1968), et al. He also edited *St Vladimir's Calendar*, regularly contributing his own articles on various issues. Professor Andreyevsky always signed his textbooks and articles with the pseudonym I. M. Andreyev," beginning with his first brochure, published in Munich in the periodical *Fire*, entitled: "The Venerable Seraphim of Sarov - Part 1: The Life and Precepts of the Great Intercessor and Mourner for the Russian Land; Part 11, A Pilgrimage to Sarov and Diveyevo in 1926."

Apart from the above-mentioned textbooks, brochures and the articles in the St. Vladimir's Calendar, Professor Andreyevsky published numerous articles devoted to questions on the position of Orthodoxy in the Soviet Union: "Is The Grace of God Present in the Soviet Church?", "On the State of the Orthodox Church in the Soviet Union", "Patriarch Tikhon and the Fate of the Russian Church", etc.

Of his encounters and experiences in the course of the five horrible years he spent on Solovki¹, Professor Andreyevsky wrote a series of articles: "A Jewish Confessor of the Orthodox Faith,"² "Tortures by Children," "The Interrogation of the Academician Platonov," et al.

Separate mention should be made of his article on the feast of the Annunciation: "The Blue Feast." Pro-

fessor Andreyevsky especially cherished this feast, and blue was his favorite color. It was not by chance, therefore, that he was buried in a blue shirt.

Aside from his published works and lectures at the seminary, Professor Andreyevsky produced papers on the most varied topics. He was one of the directors of the Pirogov Society,³ and delivered addresses on medicine at meetings of that society. His appearances in Philadelphia, Syracuse, New York City, and other cities were always events in the lives of local social organizations.

In his personal life Ivan Mikhailovich was an unpretentious, thoughtful, compassionate and loving man, ready to make any sacrifice for his neighbor. A serious illness gradually removed him from social life and from his family these past four years. And now, when this talented, brilliant and righteous Christian has departed this life, the time has come to give an account of *his* contribution to the spiritual life of the Russian Diaspora.

Is the Grace of God Present in the Soviet Church?

Authority is an establishment of God.

“Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.” (Romans 13:1)

This same was claimed by Plato in pre-Christian antiquity, understanding authority as an hierarchy rising toward God.

In other words, only a God-established authority is a genuine authority. But an authority which does not recognize the higher authority of God over her, is not an authority, but despotism.

The Soviet authority in the USSR is not a true authority, but a denial of the essence itself, of the principle itself, of the idea of authority itself, and an affirmation of despotism.

Atheism is a horrible evil. It is generated by either the greatest sin of pride, or is conditioned by a total indifference toward the question of religion and morality (i.e. toward Truth and Love), or it is the result of criminal misconjecture. “The fool hath said in his heart there is no God.” (Psalm 14:1)

The state authority in the USSR, showing itself as an open and cynical despotism, sets as the main task of its ideological politics the spreading of atheism,

helped by the principle of extreme spiritual and physical state force. A system of universal propaganda, brought to perfection, built on state-organized falsehood, deception, temptations and terror, together with the diabolically cruel, perfected system of torture and torments, being systematically and by principle used by the Soviet state for the glory of atheism -is a phenomenon, which is absolutely new, and by nature, profoundly different from all known aspects of cruelty and force in world history.

The main aggression of the Bolshevik state is directed toward Christianity, as the most perfect form of religion, and especially towards Orthodoxy, the most perfect form of Christianity. Bolshevism, the highest phenomenon of anti-Christianity, is the idea of antichrist.¹

If the Orthodox Christian Church is mystically the “Body of Christ,” then the Bolshevik Communist party is mystically the body of antichrist.

The personal, historical, apocalyptic phenomenon of antichrist does not principally add anything new to this idea of antichrist. He is only giving it a final shape, centralizing and universalizing this idea throughout the whole world, creating an absolutely hopeless situation for all humanity. For before every man then arises the question, which one cannot avoid answering (not only verbally, but also in ones deeds): Does he submit to the “authority” of antichrist, in order to receive the stamp of antichrist on “his forehead” or “the hand”? (According to Bishop Damaskin,² “on the forehead” means “voluntary, full spiritual enslavement”, and “on the hand”—association “because of fear.”) Those not receiving the stamp

will be tortured and tormented so that “even the elect will be tempted,” (Mark 13:22) and if time would not be curtailed “no flesh would endure.”(Mark 13:20)

The final goal of Bolshevism is, to establish its “authority” throughout the world with the help of world revolution. If this happens, the Bolshevik communist world government, in the person of “the leader of the nation of the world,” will stand as head of the whole world—and this surely will be the place for the personification of the historical, apocalyptic antichrist.

One must clearly, distinctly and firmly understand, that *the Soviet authority is the first in the history of the world, an original cynically-open antichristian authority, that is - a theomachistic [God-fighting] absolute power.*

Without the acknowledgement of this profoundly and innately, unique evaluation of the “Soviet authority”—there is no “problem with communism.”

If Bolshevik communism is only one out of many systems of government, in quality not a new occurrence in the history of the world, if the “Soviet authority” is only one out of the worst and most cruel systems (let her even be the worst of the worst and the most cruel), then there is no special “spiritual crisis of humanity” and there is altogether no new spiritual problem. Then one must consider the phenomenon of communism only from a political, economical, military or “utilitarian-moral” point of view, just as at the present time the majority of political leaders of the whole world do. We see the results of such interpretation: bolshevism slowly,

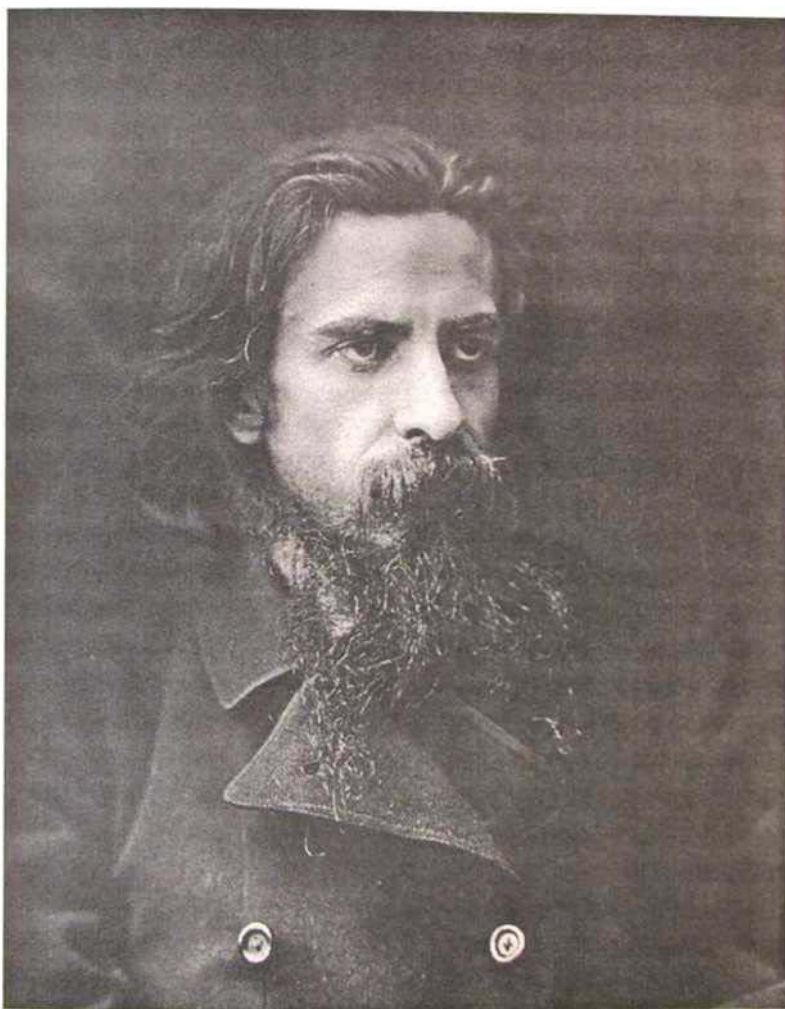
unimpeded is conquering the world.³

Few people understand the mystical force of bolshevism. Let us remember the tremendous scene in the book “Tales about Antichrist” by Vladimir Soloviev,⁴ when the first hierarch of the Orthodox Church, the holy elder John, suddenly understanding who stood before him, exclaimed loudly, clearly, firmly, resolutely, and convincingly: “Children, but this is Antichrist!”

The Russian Orthodox Catacomb Church in the USSR, a church of confessors of faith and martyrs, consider the Soviet state authority to be the authority of the antichrist.

The historical delegation of the Petrograd eparchy in 1927, headed by Bishop Dimitry of Gdov (shot in 1937 after a ten-year incarceration), put the question directly before the substitute and “locum tenens” (guardian) of the Patriarchal throne, Metropolitan Sergius, in Moscow:⁵ “As the Soviet authority is antichrist, can the Orthodox Church be in union with an antichrist authority and pray for her successes and be joyful with her joys?”

Metropolitan Sergius began to laugh and brushed it off: “Well, what antichrist is here?” This was the important, fateful, decisive divergence, after which in 1927, occurred the final schism. Those who defined the Soviet authority as an authority of antichrist (that is, a theomachistic power) were not morally able to accept (not by political consideration, but by religious conscience), that in order to retain their “full autonomy” guaranteed by the “constitution” of the USSR, the Russian Orthodox Church would “only spiritually” submit to Satan.



Vladimir Soloviev

But those who did not agree with these moral motives (either from conviction or fear), followed Metro-

politan Sergius, and today are following “Patriarch” Alexei, “being joyful in the joys” of the theomachistic despotism, “praying for the success of this absolute power, offering the gratitude of the whole nation for the consideration of the needs of the Orthodox population,” disclaiming before the whole world the facts of former and present persecutions of the true Orthodox Christians, also defining martyrs as “political criminals” and “upholders of black deeds,” considering the established relations between a theomachistic and despotic State and the Orthodox Church (which must be the Pure Bride of Christ) to be “ideal” and calling the head of the theomachistic, antichrist state, Stalin, the “chosen, of God.”

When Metropolitan Sergius in 1927, first entered this disastrous path of “new religious politics” (as he himself called it), there came from all corners of Russia a great many “epistles” from the hierarchy, the clergy and laymen, written with tears and the heart’s blood, attempting to persuade him to refuse the planned path.

A multitude of delegations from different dioceses traveled to Moscow and on their knees, crying, they begged him to rectify this fatal mistake. Out of prisons, exile, and concentration camps the protesting voices of confessors of faith and martyrs reached the ears of Metropolitan Sergius.

One could judge the volume, depth and moral strength of the protestors by their numbers and their reserved, spiritual gravity. Among the protestors were the most remarkable church figures in Russia: Metropolitan Peter, who was arrested and exiled, but who did not renounce his rights as legitimate First Pre-

late of the Russian Orthodox Church—Guardian of the throne of the Patriarch; Metropolitan Agafangel, first deputy substitute to the Patriarch; Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd, substitute (deputy) to Metropolitan Peter; Archbishop Seraphim of Uglich, also deputy to Metropolitan Peter; Metropolitan Kyrill of Kazan, much respected by Orthodox Russia; Archbishop Ilarion, the famous associate of Patriarch Tikhon; Archbishop Pachomy of Chernigov, Bishop Victor of Glazov, Bishop Varlaam of Perm; Bishop Eugene of Rostov, Bishop Damaskin of Glukhov, Bishop Basil of Priluska, Bishop Alexei of Voronezh, Bishop Ierofey of Nikolsk, Vicar-Bishop Ilarion of Smolensk, Bishop Dimitry of Gdov; Bishop Sergei of Narva, Bishop Maxim of Serpukhov, the Bishops Gabriel, Averky, Nektaiy, Theodore, Phillip, Stephan, Peter and other bishops, which were in exile, prisons, politically isolated and in concentration camps.

Among the protestors were also the best representatives of the clergy and lay theologians: professor Paul Florensky, professor Theodore Andreyev, former president of the Petersburg Religious-Philosophical Society; professor C.A. Askoldov, professor A. I. Brilliantov, the well-known Russian philosopher; professor M. A. Meier, the renowned publisher of the “Religious-Philosophical Library”; professor M. A. Noveslov; professor V.N. Finke, deacon-docent W.W. Finne, well-known philosopher professor A. F. Losev; professor S. S. Abramovitch-Baranovsky; professor D. I. Abramovitch, professor W. L. Komarovitch, Professor A. N. Kolosov, professor-philosopher Dr. M. N. Marschevsky, and many other professors. Also included are the remarkable archpriests: Father Basil

Veryuschsky, Father Sergei Tikhomirov, Father Valentin Sventitsky, Father Alexander Sidorov, Father Sergei Metchev, Father Victor Dobronravov, Father Nikifor Strelnikov, Father Nikolai Prozorov, Father Alexander Kremishansky, Father Nicolai Piskanovsky, Father Sergei Alexiev, Father Anatoly Schurakovsky, and a great many others. (Note: the above mentioned names are only of those, who were shot, tortured and lost.) The protest and entreaty by the best representatives of Russian Orthodoxy, who gave witness to their confession of faith through martyrdom, did not help.

Metropolitan Sergius violated the fundamental rule of the Orthodox Church, the foundation of the Holy Orthodox canons (specifically the 34th Apostolic canon, according to which the first bishop must not do anything without consulting with all the rest of the bishops)⁶ -he refused vocally, in writing and in print, to heed the voices of the protestors and he silenced the clergy who were in disagreement with him, with the most horrible bans, declaring all those disagreeing with his “new church politics” to be “counter-revolutionaries,” and by this handing them over to torture by the organs of the GPU.

After all those who openly protested were “liquidated” by the punitive organs of the theomachistic state (that is, were shot, tortured, sent into exile), the true Orthodox Church *went into the catacombs*.

In obvious further violation of the holy canons, Metropolitan Sergius, with the help of the despotic state, became patriarch. After his death, with the help of the same means, the head of the Soviet church (let us call it that now) became “Patriarch” Alexei. (Note:

to the question of canonical violations by the Soviet church, review this wonderful book— ***Collection of Documentary Facts*** by Archpriest Michael Polsky: “The canonical situation of the highest church authority in the USSR and abroad,”



Metropolitan Sergius as “Patriarch” of Moscow

The Soviet church violated not only the holy canons; she flouted also the fundamental dogma of Orthodoxy, that is:

—the Dogma regarding the Church. Can one apply to the Soviet church, after all her “deeds” and “words,” (as the “words” of a church are her “deeds”), the words of the holy dogma: the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church”? Does it not now sound blasphemous? Because in her there is no oneness, no holiness, no universality, no Apostolic spirit.

Not a complete unity, but a total conglomerate, not a spiritual organism of the “body of Christ,” but only a formal church organization, in which there is no hint to holiness (because holiness and fundamental falsehood are incompatible), first and foremost, there is no Apostolic spirit of love and zealousness toward purity and truth—that is what constitutes the concept of today’s “Soviet church.”

This church committed something even more terrifying than violating the canons and dogmas: *She betrayed the Holy Spirit*, lying before the whole world, that Russia, now called the USSR, is not being ruled by an impious government of a God-fighting, totalitarian power of an anti-Christian spirit, which detests and persecutes Christ and the true Orthodox Church loyal to Him to the end, but by “a chosen one of the Lord, which leads our fatherland to prosperity and glory.”

“Who is able to listen with a calm heart to this shameful, deceitful praise?” wrote the first Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, Metropolitan Anastassy, on this topic in an epistle,

“where the subservience of man borders already on blasphemy. Really—can one tolerate, that a person stained with blood from

his head to his feet, covered with crimes like a leprosy and poisoned deeply with the poison of godlessness, could be named the chosen of the Lord,' could be destined to lead our homeland to prosperity and glory?" "Does this not mean," continues Metropolitan Anastassy, "to bring slander and abuse unto God the Most High Himself, Who, in such case, would be responsible for all the evil, which is going on already for many years in our land of Bolshevik authority headed by Stalin?" "The atom bomb," concludes Metropolitan Anastassy," and all other destructive means invented by present day technology, are indeed less dangerous than the *moral disintegration*, which the highest representatives of the civil and church authorities put into the Russian soul with their example. The breaking down of the atom brings with it only physical devastation and destruction, whereas the *corruption* of the *mind, heart and will* entails the *spiritual death* of a whole nation, after which there is *no Resurrection*."7

What indeed is the nature of that "*church authority*," which brings "*moral disintegration*" into the Russian soul and the "*corruption of the mind, heart and will*," which brings with it the "*spiritual death of a whole nation*," after which there is "*no Resurrection*"?

"The Soviet church"— writes S. P. in his wonderful booklet: "Concerning the Church in the USSR" (Pans, 1947), "is an establishment of the Soviet anti-Christian

totalitarian state, carrying out its instructions, serving its goals, not being able to freely judge, nor freely pray, nor freely observe the sacrament of confession"...only those who have never read or deeply penetrated the deep Christian meaning of the Canons can consider "Patriarch" Alexei as "the guardian of the Canons." This deep meaning is, first of all, to be free from all human influence "for the pleasure (or good will) of the Holy Spirit" and inspired obedience to His suggestions "therefore, what Alexei can maintain, of course in the welcome and convenient boundaries of the Soviet political police is the traditional exterior of historical Orthodoxy."

Analyzing the motives and the "ecclesiastical" reasoning of the highest Soviet church authority, Mr. S. P. writes in the same work: "For what reason was this done?"

- 1) In order that by *submissiveness to anti- Christ* he might cancel or at least relax the persecution of believers, the clergy and churches: in order "to purchase" a respite at the cost of cooperation with bolshevism in Russia and abroad.
- 2) From fear that, perhaps, Antichrist came to an understanding with the Vatican about a final eradication of Orthodoxy: In order "to *have Antichrist on his side*" in the fight with Roman Catholicism.

"But there is no doubt," writes S. P. further, " that the future of Orthodoxy is not being determined by compromises with Antichrist, but indeed by that heroic stance and confession, from which they (that is,

the representatives of the Soviet church authority) so treacherously disavowed themselves.”

In conclusion Mr. S. P. brings forward a clear, exact, simple and convincing point with which one can only agree:

“The Orthodoxy which subordinated itself to the Soviets and became an instrument of the world’s anti- Christian temptation—is not Orthodoxy, but a seductive *heresy of anti-Christianity*, wrapped in the torn garment of historical Orthodoxy.”

To any unprejudiced Russian Orthodox man it is quite clear how the holy Metropolitan Phillip would have acted, if he were now in Moscow and head of the Russian Church. Having exposed the Orthodox Czar in his evil deeds, would he not also expose a more cruel god-fighting rule doing clearly satanic deeds? For professing *truth* is no less obligatory for the Orthodox Church than professing faith. The path of Metropolitan Philip is a true path, and a betrayal of this path is a betrayal of the spirit of Orthodoxy itself.

True to its father the devil, the “father of lies,” the Soviet government made falsehood her foundation. A “government-organized falsehood” is a phenomena absolutely new in history. “Separated” from the government, the Soviet church followed the footsteps of the Soviet government and presented to the world: a “church-organized falsehood.” In No. 10 of the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, Archbishop Alexander writes: “and today Moscow, the heart of Russia, is a microcosm of all “Holy Russia.” One can agree with this only, by understanding that the microcosm is a “distorting mirror.” Characterizing “Patriarch” Alexei,

this same Archbishop Alexander writes: “Enlightened by the Holy Spirit, made wise by his prelate’s experience, our Most Holy testifies by his patriarchal activity, that the present is not the time for fiercely exposing as did the holy John the Forerunner, but it is a time for mercy, of healing the feeble souls according to the testaments of the venerable Sergius of Radonezh and Seraphim of Sarov.”

Thus writes a Soviet hierarch in the USSR. But the people think differently. Having escaped from the Soviet hell, Mr. G. in his article, “Voice of a New Emigrant,” writes: the people came to the conviction that the great woe which befell them is *God’s punishment* for their transgressions. The healing of people begins by raising religion to such a height, on which she stood only during the first centuries of Christianity. But for this it is necessary that the spiritual pastor is ready to go to his death for the truth, and not bend his soul—communism is going to be defeated not by the atom bomb, but by the cross—and Stalin understood this better than others. At the present, as never before, the clergy needs devotees and zealots who without wavering, would go themselves and lead the people, if it becomes necessary, into battle for the glory of Christ. And the people will follow such pastors, for the fields are ready. That is why at present our main enemy is not communism, but the *priesthood*, which went over into his (Satan’s) service, for it indeed does the work of Cain—We would like, in the name of all Russians living in Italy, to call upon the clergy who crossed over into the camp of antichrist, with an open letter...”

The hypocritical duplicity of Archbishop Alexander

is quite clear. Why “is now not the time” for the fiery accusations of St. John the Forerunner, calling for repentance? Nobody to accuse? Nothing to expose? No one there to repent? There is no need for repentance? And if our times are mostly a time of mercy and tolerance, then why not call Stalin himself to it? But perhaps, today only the *executioners and not the victims* “deserve” mercy and tolerance? The venerable Sergius of Radonezh and venerable Seraphim of Sarov never gave such testaments, for they were teaching with the spirit of truth, and not with a hypocritical love, which especially in the name of “mercy and tolerance” does not exclude also “fiery accusations” - one of the best means to heal souls.

The hypocritical duplicity, equally with subservience and servility, is becoming the most characteristic feature of the representatives of the Soviet church and their defenders abroad. More and more often they speak, write and proclaim on the subject of love, tolerance and forgiveness, about not condemning, about the necessity to end the disputes. This new image of “church Tolstoyism” with its new sermon of “non-resistance to evil” not only by force, but also with *denouncing words*—is the most unbearable *falsehood and deception*.

In the article: “The Legend of the Grand Inquisitor” by Dostoyevsky (Analytic Notes. Munich, 1947), John Shakhovskoy⁸ (today a bishop in America) wrote: “Christ in His silence, which is louder than all exclamations and more significant than all philosophies, approaches His profound enemy and kisses him, kisses his humanness, *through the prattle of all his evil and false words*. If there would not be this love,

who of us would live? The silent love suffering in the world of truth, the love towards us by the truth suffering because of us,—what could be more beautiful than this? Maybe even in heaven, perhaps, there will not be such beauty, for there—is its own home of heavenly beauty. Here she is a serving handmaid, there she is the mistress of the universe.” First of all, for an *Orthodox consciousness* these words are absolutely unacceptable: “even in heaven there will perhaps not be such beauty.” Only a poet, who got carried away, could express himself so, but not an Orthodox monk. The beauty in heaven—is a most perfect beauty, *including* in her all the beauty found on this earth.

What concerns the fundamental thought of Bishop John, seeing a beauty “beyond that in heaven” in the kiss of Christ to antichrist (for the Grand Inquisitor in the “legend” by Dostoyevsky expresses antichrist’s ideas), is totally unorthodox. This thought is not accidental and is one of the fundamental thoughts—beliefs of this “exalted poet-bishop.” The kiss is the “legend,” the false idea of the rationalist Ivan Karamazov. Christ could *never* kiss antichrist, because the truth can not kiss falsehood “Super-Christian” love is a spiritual deception. The devil may seduce by taking up the appearance of an “Angel of Light”—Satan can tempt, that by “denying the truth of Christ,” he “awaits the highest truth more passionately than the seraphim” and is dangerous especially because while he is tempting the soul, the mind perceives him as holy.” (Minsky: “My Demon”).

As Christ cannot kiss antichrist, so a true Orthodox Christian cannot, for example, kiss the “humanness”

of Stalin “through the babble of his mean and false words.” We see true Orthodoxy and genuine Christian love in the testament of Metropolitan Anastassy: “If you see falsehood and hypocrisy *unmask them before all*, even if they are clothed in purple and fine linen.”(Speech at the nomination of the bishop of Serpukhov in 1906.)

The idea “*not to resist evil by unmasking*” is very widespread at present. “Don’t anyone argue, don’t anyone unmask or accuse the other,” citing the prophet Hosea, the same Bishop John Shakhovskoy (the most “abundant in love” out of all “spiritual” children of the Moscow Patriarch Alexei) writes in his epigraph in his “Church Diary.”

Why not accuse and why not unmask? Altogether never, or only “now?” When is it “not the time for the fiery accusation by St. John the Forerunner?”

Arguments and exposure *always* were and will exist: as at the time of the Savior's life on earth, as during the time of the “Acts of the holy Apostles,” as during the Ecumenical councils, and the duration of all the history of the Christian Church, until the very last day of world history, when there shall be false prophets, wolves in sheep’s clothing, false Christs, and finally—Anti-Christ himself, who *must* be unmasked and with whom it will be necessary to argue.

Further, Bishop John Shakhovskoy, in his “Church Diary,” speaking of *being zealous for the purity of the Orthodox Faith*, writes: “Regrettably, it (this zealousness) often comes down these days to an open frame of mind, which is clearly expressed in the Gospels concerning the first preparatory week of Great Lent. The believing souls shrink from these cold waves and icy splashes of our “infallibility.” But the truth is,



Archbishop John Shakhouskoy

that all we Orthodox people are now *sinful* and none of us can wrap himself with the toga of infallibility.”

What relation has the Gospel of the preparatory week, where it speaks about the Publican and the Pharisee, with our arguments and accusations, dictated by sincere and ardent devotion toward the purity of the Orthodox Faith? Why mix up the concept of *“unmasking the mistakes in questions of faith”* with the concept of *“moral condemnation of the sins of our neighbor”*? And why the necessity of slandering the confessors, that “they wrap themselves with the toga of infallibility”?

This attitude (method) is not new. Let us recall the process of the trial of St. Maximus the Confessor.⁹ He was accused of the same thing that Bishop John accused the contemporary confessors and zealots for the purity of the faith. When we, members of the Catacomb Church, after breaking free from Soviet hell, are unmasking “the patriarchs” Sergius and Alexei for their unnatural union with the antichrist authority, and Metropolitan Theophilus and Bishop John for *“bowing with a son’s devotion before the labor and deeds (!) of patriarch Alexei,”* then this is not pharisaism and we don’t wrap ourselves in the toga of infallibility. We speak clearly, plainly, sincerely before the face of God, from the depth of our religious conscience, that *we morally* cannot “thank” the Soviet government, nor “renounce” the confessors and martyrs, by calling them “accomplices of black deeds,” nor regard the relation of the Orthodox Church with the God-fighting government as “ideal,” nor be joyous with the “joys” of the persecutors of any religion, and mostly the Orthodox Church, nor

regard Stalin as the “Lord’s chosen one”, as the Soviet church finds it possible to do, say and even declare.

Our religious *conscience* (and absolutely not our political conscience, as our enemies slander us), does not permit us not only to “bow with a son’s adoration” before the labor and deeds of ‘patriarch’ Alexei, but even to *watch silently and listen*, as others “bow” and defend the Soviet church.

If we are wrong — expose us, give an substantive answer, show us that we are wrong, but don’t slander us, don’t call us Pharisees. Not at all with a feeling of proud superiority, what you are claiming us to be, but with a feeling of sincere love toward Truth, and with a feeling of horror and holy anger before the falsehood-this is what we want to share with all brothers in Christ, by our tragic and agonizing experience, the view of *evil without a mask*.

Sometimes we, who escaped from “there” are being accused, that our evaluations of the Soviet government and the Soviet church are *subjective* and are to be explained by those *psychological traumas* (that is of suffering) which we had to endure there.

Such objection represents a typically coarse mistake of logic, called Argumentum ad hominem (substitution of logical proof by psychological argument). Yes, we lived through very heavy suffering for our exposing the violence and falsehood, which we saw in theory and in the practice of the government and the Soviet church. But it is not the feeling of personal offence or insult and not the desire for vengeance for what we lived through that guides our pronouncements here, abroad. We thank God for the

hard experience we endured, we repeat after St. John Chrysostom — “glory to God for all things!” and we never summon anyone to vengeance.

But also, we cannot and dare not be silent here, where there are still so many people who absolutely do not understand the mystical essence of Bolshevism and even *do not know* many of the facts committed “there.” Our accusation of the Soviet government and Soviet “church” is based on objective documented facts. We cite the actual words of the “patriarchs” Sergius and Alexei, about the “joys”—“gratitude,” of the “abettors of black deeds,” of the “ideal interrelation,” with the “chosen by the Lord.”

To these objective facts we like to add also our personal testimonies, testimonies by believing Orthodox people, for whom the fate of the Orthodox Church is dearer than life, which are testimonies of our religious conscience before the face of God. What have “traumas” to do with anything? These “traumas” (that is, experienced knowledge of Soviet reality) help us to unmask faster and more accurately the cunningly disguised enemy. If “there” we unmasked falsehood and force, then here, abroad, we unmasked *mistakes and thoughtlessness*. Such mistakes and thoughtlessness, we, of course, do not see in the Soviet exarchs, (in them we see only exclusively falsehood and betrayal), but in those who “only spiritually” (!?) identify themselves as “children of the Moscow Patriarchate,” “with the stipulation of keeping their full autonomy.”¹⁰

Such mistakes we see, for example in Bishop John Shakhovskoy who decreed the activity of the Soviet church as “a holy and humble affair,” and therefore

does not find words to express “sufficient gratitude” to the prelates and pastors in the Russian land (who in their turn give their gratitude to the “chosen by the Lord” Stalin for his “concern for Orthodoxy”).

Recently we had the occasion to meet an Orthodox priest who escaped from East Germany, where he spent approximately three years in the “jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate.” While he recounted how the Orthodox priests who did not accept the Moscow Patriarchate suffered cruelly and how, after a summons for a “discussion” to the NKVD (now MVD), *all* Orthodox priests (including the speaker) “could *not* refuse to enter the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate, and entering, were obliged to carry out also the orders of the MVD. His admissions sounded like repentance. One must not accuse the repentant and unmask him for his faint-heartedness. So all of us who listened to him were sadly silent. But when he began to justify himself, that he also “suffered,” for it was “hard for him to submit” and that his “moral sufferings” were greater, than the sufferings of the arrested and those suffering “only physically” —then it became necessary to interrupt and explain, that the “moral suffering” of those who submitted to the antichrist authority is not a merit and justification, but only a legitimate, deserved punishment of the “suffering of conscience.”

To put to one’s credit the “suffering of conscience” — is *morally impossible*, for then one should justify also Judas’ suffering with his suicide. Christian morality gives us a different example — an image, which should be a pattern for our behavior after the sin of renouncing Christ — this is the image of “bitterly weeping” in

the repentance of Apostle Peter.¹¹

The defenders of the Soviet church point out sometimes that the “patriarchs” Sergius and Alexei chose compromises with the government for church-economy in order to avert the entire destruction of the Church in Russia.¹²

This assertion is utterly erroneous.

Until 1927, the Orthodox Church qualitatively only grew from persecutions (as it always has and will do, for the “blood of the martyrs — is the seed of Christianity”). The Soviet government therefore changed their tactic of struggle which only proved the invincibility of the Orthodox faith to persecution and oppression. The “patriarchs” Sergius and Alexei *helped* the Soviet authorities in its fight against the Church. During the War, if there would not have been compromises by Sergius and Alexei, the Soviet government would have been forced to make great concessions to the non-compromising Church of martyrs and confessors. Profoundly accurately and correctly writes one Archpastor abroad (A Letter from a Pastor to a Pastor, 1947, Paris),on this occasion: “As a result of the compromise with the authority by Metropolitan Sergius and the total enslavement of Patriarch Alexei, the authority sold their compromises of the Church for a very high price, *the penetration* into the very structure of the Church’s management.”

Now the Soviet authority is able, while not giving up on their primary mission—the fight with religion, to continue it and at the same time permit the restoration of churches and monasteries, permitting these

churches to fill with worshipers. The reins of the entire management over these churches, these monasteries, and these worshippers lie entirely in the hands of the Soviet authority through the church- administrative apparatus utterly obedient to them.

If all bishops in 1927, would have followed Metropolitan Sergius—the Orthodox faith would have been at present in great decline. Only thanks to the confessors and the martyrdom, principally of the episcopate which did not follow Metropolitan Sergius— there exists to this day in the USSR, the invincible and indestructible Catacomb Church, which spiritually feeds the truly Orthodox people.

Soviet propaganda has tried to convince the whole world that there does not exist any Catacomb Church in the USSR, and has succeeded in persuading some in this.

To disclaim the presence of the Catacomb Church means absolutely not to know and not understand what is going on at present in our homeland. If there is no doubt, that it is the *majority* of people who hate the Soviet authority in the USSR, then it is even more clear that the majority of truly believing Orthodox people do not recognize the Soviet church. Pointing out the overcrowded churches—does not disperse the above-mentioned. The Soviet churches are overcrowded because there are *altogether too few* churches today in the USSR; during the war and after, the number of believers increased tremendously, despite all the efforts and cunning of antichrist propaganda. The demand for an exact account about the Catacomb church with the naming of names and places — is either utter naiveté, or extreme thoughtlessness,

or outright provocation. In the “secret” (we call them Catacomb) churches there are also secret bishops and secret priests and secret silence, but there are too few, in order to feed all (spiritually) who cannot bring themselves to attend the Alexeyev churches. Therefore the secret church services take place far apart. But the common prayers (sometimes called the gathering *around the candle*) mainly with the reading of Akathists¹³ take place very often and draw a huge crowd of worshippers. Besides, the Catacomb church restored the custom of the first centuries of Christianity — during the period of persecution, permitting the faithful to keep reverently in their houses a small part of the Holy Sacraments in order to have the possibility to receive communion during minutes of mortal danger and before tortures. The whole fullness of unspeakable, spiritual beauty of the invisible, secret Russian Catacomb Church will become obvious to the world only then, when the God-fighting Soviet government and the Soviet church, spiritually enslaved by them, will disappear.

“Freedom of prayer and freedom of sermons” do not exist in the Soviet church. The Soviet church demands full *loyalty* to the Soviet government. This “loyalty” is to be understood quite peculiarly. So, for instance, it is not permitted to speak the truth of what is happening in the USSR...for that would be a “political crime.” *One must not criticize atheism and materialism*, for that will also be a “political crime.” One cannot criticize and discredit the Soviet church, for even this will be definitely a “political crime.” Participation in a Catacomb Church is very cruelly punished. One is only per-

mitted to pray *for the success* of the government authority (that is, for the God-fighting, totalitarian power). To pray for the softening of evil hearts, for insight for the strayed or for delivery of the church from persecutions—is categorically forbidden. Also it is forbidden to pray for those in prisons and exiles. *To pray for the persecutors is permitted* (only for their success). *But for the persecuted—it is not permitted.* Anti-religious lectures are being held everywhere throughout the USSR, but *apologetical* (politically indifferent) *discussions* are forbidden. To the declaration by the propagandists of atheism, “science proved that there is no God”—the priests are not permitted to object, and their silence is being explained by these same propagandists of atheism as “the helplessness of darkness and ignorance in the fight with science.” The Soviet church submits to these impudent demands and is *silent*. But then, truly by “silence is God betrayed.” In spite of the horrible terror, among the truly and strongly Orthodox believers one can find sometimes such people, who cannot co-exist with the constant *falsehood*, especially if this falsehood violates their religious conscience (for example the acknowledgement of Stalin as “God’s chosen”). Such Orthodox people wish to be confessors and martyrs for the faith of Christ. But then the Soviet church begins to brand them “political criminals” and “abettors of black deeds,” for to be *a confessor and martyr is not only forbidden in the God-fighting Soviet state by the government, but also by the Soviet church which is “separate” from it.*

After all the above stated about the nature and character of the Soviet church the question guises natu *rally*: Does this church have grace?

Let us look *with special attention* at what is said in defense of the grace of the Soviet church. The “patriarch” Alexei was acknowledged¹³) by all Eastern Patriarchs, consequently he is right and the church he is heading has grace,—say some.

The question of the acknowledgement of the Soviet church by the Ecumenical Patriarch—remains unclear. The relation of the latter with the Moscow Patriarchate, we are deeply convinced, is based *on ignorance, on incomprehension* by the Eastern patriarchs of the essence of the Soviet church. The mistakes of the Eastern patriarchs in their attitudes toward holy Patriarch Tikhon show more clearly today¹⁴ that also the further relations of the Eastern Patriarchs with the Soviet government does not guarantee against new mistakes. If we saw mistakes and thoughtlessness in relation toward the Moscow Patriarchate from the side of the Russian Episcopate (for instance from the group of Metropolitan Theophilus¹⁵ [the O.C.A.]), then mistakes are even more possible from the Eastern Patriarchs, who are much more removed from Russian life in their spiritual attitude.

Relations, which are based on ignorance of the true facts, is not yet *recognition*. In other words, let us repeat, the question of recognition is still unclear.

But even if all Eastern Patriarchs acknowledged falsehood for truth, the falsehood would not thereby become truth. Truth does not cease to be truth, because even some “chosen” renounce her and perhaps even almost all will renounce her, which might become possible in the last days. (“The Son of Man

will come, but will He find faith on earth?" Luke 18:8.) Therefore, remembering the example of St. Maximus the Confessor (against whom were the "synod" and patriarchs and the Emperor), we cannot acknowledge as sufficient only the formal approach, to the settling of religious truth.

There are many more serious and stronger considerations, at first glance, in defense of the grace of the Soviet church.

These arguments are as follows:

The exhausted, wretched, unfortunate Russian people go to the open Soviet churches to obtain consolation there. So, because of these many millions of people who bring into the church their faith, their prayers, their sorrows, their tears, perhaps grace is being retained in the Soviet church and the sacraments are performed despite that the highest church hierarchy had sinned, by entering into a compromise with the Soviet government. Those coming into the Soviet churches hear the services, where the words from the Gospel are being read, they pray before the miracle-working icons, being touched by the wonderful hymns, they repent of their sins and approach the Holy Chalice in fear of God in order to receive the Holy Sacraments. For the sake of these, for the sake of such simple, believing people, who do not understand the complicated and fine theological questions, who do not understand and often do not know anything about the jurisdictional conflicts among the priesthood, maybe for these the Holy Sacraments are being performed. Will the merciful Lord not give to

these simple, naive, guileless people, who's faith is that of children, some solace?

And again...

"We don't need any political discussions, we don't need any explanations about jurisdictions, but better tell us, Batushka, about the heavenly Jerusalem," these simple believing people sometimes say (according to the testimonies of a priest). "At the Last Judgment the Lord will question us not about abstract truths, but about whether we visited the sick, the imprisoned, did we clothe the naked, did we feed and give drink to the hungry and thirsty,"—say others. (The words of one "simply believing" professor).

Let us try to answer all these objections.

First of all: Grace and the performing of Sacraments do not depend on the "merit or unworthiness" of the partakers. The "worthiness" or "unworthiness" depends only upon the *effect* these sacraments have on *their* souls. For what purpose were the holy canons and holy dogmas established? Why then was there a fight with the heresies?

In a graceless church, grace does not appear simply because some believing, but deceived people enter the church¹⁶. Into the "living" and "renovationist church" sometimes also came "simple believing people" who did not understand the "fine points of theology" and absolutely did not understand anything in questions of jurisdictions. Do you really assume that the holy Sacraments were performed there for them?

If the “exhausted, wretched, unfortunate” Russian people “go in great sorrow and in tears, craving consolation” into the Soviet *churches*, then they, of course, will receive consolation there. But *what kind* of consolation is this? Spiritual or mental? Beneficial (full of grace) or just psychological? Consolation through the holy sacraments of grace or through a simple moral “catharsis” ? Because even confession can be only psychological (which has been studied through psychoanalysis), but perhaps it can also be the sacrament of confession. One can pray and cry, and be distressed over sins in one’s own house and receive from God consolation and compassion and forgiveness for many transgressions. That which depends on the person himself, on the strength of his prayers, and the sincerity of his confession, he will receive as in his own house, so in the graceless church. But precisely, what depends on the grace of the holy Sacraments, a church of grace, and her hierarchy—he cannot receive in a Soviet church, if she is without grace.

The Soviet church did not only retain the *raiment* of the Russian Orthodox Church (i.e., the outer image of the church, the external form of the services), but also *her body* (the ceremonial side and the formal church organization) and even *her soul* (the mental experiences (perceptions of praying), but not the spirit of Orthodoxy, the spirit of Christ’s Truth, which revives the soul and body. For it is said: “Do not quench the spirit,” (Thess. 5:19). A graceless church is no threat for people with *soul* (for they receive the consolation of their soul and the satisfaction which they *exclusively* seek), but only for *spiritual* people,

who seek the purely spiritual, grace-filled consolation in the holy mysteries — do not find it. Sincere tears bring also a sincere consolation of the soul in Soviet churches. Aesthetic perceptions of the grandeur of the church and the beautiful church singing—bring also aesthetic enjoyments in these churches, but *spiritual* tears thirsting for the mysterious beneficial help from above—cannot be wiped dry in the Soviet church. That is why spiritual people, “living in the church” and not just entering her— suffocate spiritually in Soviet churches, because they cannot ignore the falsehood and deceit, lies and other vileness of spiritual “desolation” in the holy place.

Pointing out, that the “simple, believing people” do not understand the complicated theological questions and the finer jurisdictional points—is no contribution from these “simple believers,” nor defense for the grace of the Soviet church.

To understand and sense grace, it is not at all necessary to be educated in theological and philosophical questions. On the contrary, too much education often hinders a person to understand the simplicity of the truth of grace (as we see in the example of Berdyaev, Mereshkovsky and others).¹⁷

An honest, chaste mind, who does not depend on himself, but feeds on the mind of Christ, and the loving heart filled with the love of Christ—these are the Orthodox conditions of sobriety and discernment, helping the believing church-going man to correctly understand all questions. He who “lives in the Church” and breathes the aroma of her mysteries, who has in himself even a drop of *spirituality*, cannot misunderstand the “complex theological questions

and the “jurisdictional subtleties,” because indeed in these subtleties it is determined—*where there is Truth and where falsehood*.

To disassociate oneself principally from any politics is also impossible for an Orthodox person, for religion and politics are at the present time organically blended. The question—with Christ or against Christ, has today a political meaning, because it commits one to protest against those political systems which have as their main goal the destruction of Christianity. Whoever denies at present time the necessity of political discussions (reasoning) and jurisdictional explanations (interpretations)—he denies the necessity to distinguish the wolves in sheep’s clothing and to find out—where is Christ and where antichrist.

All of antichrist’s activity will carry undoubtedly also a political character, even if only because without political authority he cannot complete his work. The path “to the heavenly Jerusalem” begins on earth, where even the greatest holy men did not deny the necessity of Christian politics and personally were always within the confines of a strictly defined Church community, which today is called “church jurisdiction.”

On the Day of Judgment, the Lord will ask not only whether we fed the hungry, but *mainly* in *who’s name* and why we did it: for God, for our personal glory or in the interests of antichrist?

For if you, like the communists, will feed only those hungry, who for a piece of earthly bread will renounce the Heavenly Bread — then what reward will be yours for that from the Lord?

The Spirit breathes where It wishes. The Almighty Lord can when He wishes disturb the order of nature.

The Grace of the Holy Spirit can emerge everywhere. The children playing the holy Eucharist—and the Holy Spirit suddenly performed a holy sacrament Laughing and mocking at the Christians, one heathen at the circus parodied the holy sacrament of baptism, and suddenly—the holy sacrament happened.¹⁸ The Lord can create a miracle also in the Soviet church—and perform there the holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. But just because of that, we cannot acknowledge either the children's game, or the circus, or the Soviet church as being a constant establishment of grace.

Knowing the essence of the Soviet government (the spirit of antichrist) and the essence of the Soviet church (collaboration with antichrist), we do not dare refuse to doubt the grace of that church. And can an Orthodox Christian approach the Holy Chalice *with doubt*? But why are we saying “we doubt,” and not saying simply “no”? Because in deference of the possibility of retaining grace also in the Soviet church *for a time*—there is one more consideration. This consideration is being expressed by one of the most remarkable contemporary Archpastors (see “Letter of a Pastor to a Pastor,” Collection *Troitsa*, 1947, Paris).

“The life of the Church is always a process... when the Church of Christ detached herself from the Church of the Old Testament, it was also a long drawn out process, having many phases. Ananias and Caiaphas on one side, the Apostles and their closest followers on the other side; those were landmarks of

two immediately recognizable opposite camps. But in the Sanhedrin were Joseph of Arimathaea, Nicodemus and Gamaliel, who later on became martyrs for Christ, and the Apostles themselves were together in the synagogue everyday (Acts 2:46), and this was a temple led by Ananias and Caiaphas, and already after Pentecost, that is, when the Apostles were already filled with the Holy Spirit.

“The question being decided through these processes stands before each person. “Patriarch” Alexei and his closest collaborators clearly decided it for themselves: they were in full, unequivocally acknowledged unity with the God-fighting authority and against the martyrs of Christ. But the rest, all those people filling the churches, are they indeed with the “patriarch” in this question? No, they do not participate in the council and their actions do not participate in the business of the Patriarchate, that is, in that dark side of their business, which binds them with the enemies of God and separates from Christ. And if they do not formally separate themselves from the patriarch and his clergy, then this is only because of external reasons, because this business is not yet ripened at this moment, like Apostle John, the same who later on will call the synagogue which did not acknowledge Christ—“Satan’s assemblage,” but who originally came to it for prayers together with Apostle Peter (Acts 3:1).”

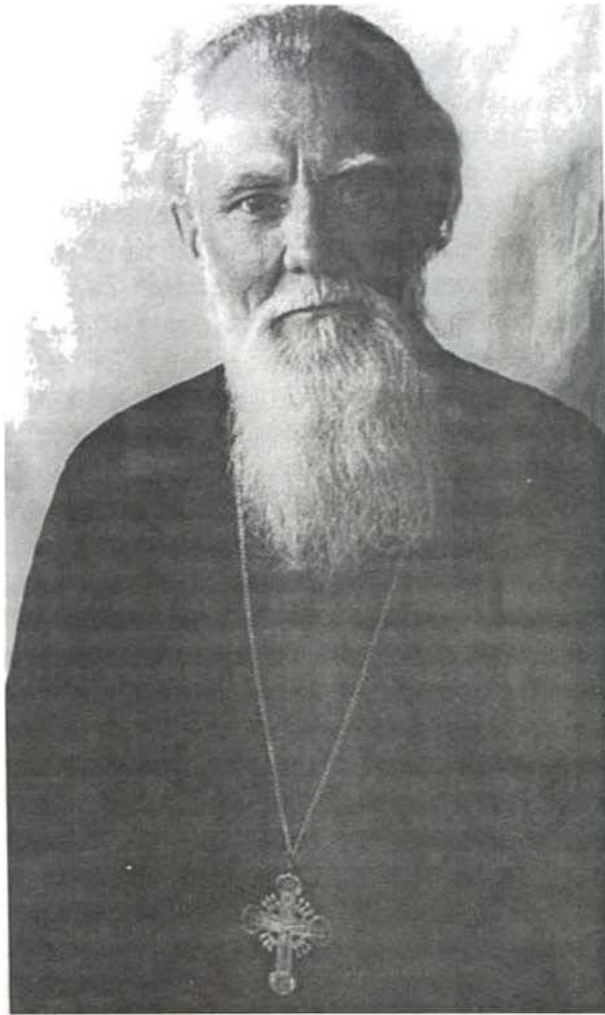
The thoughts expressed here are extremely serious. That the church fell away from God and turned into an “assemblage of Satan” is a *process*, with this one cannot disagree. However, the Soviet church has entered the path, which is leading her to this “assemblage”

— in this there can be no doubt whatsoever. A church, which is in an “ideal” relation with a God-fighting government of absolute power, which puts the business of antichrist as her fundamental mission; a church which disavowed herself from the “pillar and the affirmation” of the truth of Christ—the confession of faith and martyrdom and which is calling us to “deeds” of servility for humanity and the blasphemous church-organized falsehood: a church which called a leader of worldly antichrist forces, Stalin, “the chosen of the Lord”—has entered undisputedly the frightful way of collaboration with antichrist, which will lead her to the transformation from a church of Christ to the “assemblage of Satan.”

This instills terror in us. And we, the Orthodox Russian people, not predetermining the final trial over the Soviet church, a trial, which by the “ruling” of the Holy Spirit will be carried out in its time by the Russian Orthodox Synod, we must speak out clearly and determinedly:

We *refuse* any kind of relation, whatever it may be, with the Soviet church, *for we doubt that she has grace.*

Professor Ivan Andreyev



*Priest Michael Rozhdestvensky
of the Catacomb Church in Russia
who reposed in 1988.*

Notes on the Catacomb Church

Holy Patriarch Tikhon during his short activity as Primate of the Orthodox Church of Russia (1918- 1925), led the ship of the Church through the stormy sea of terrible events with unusual wisdom.

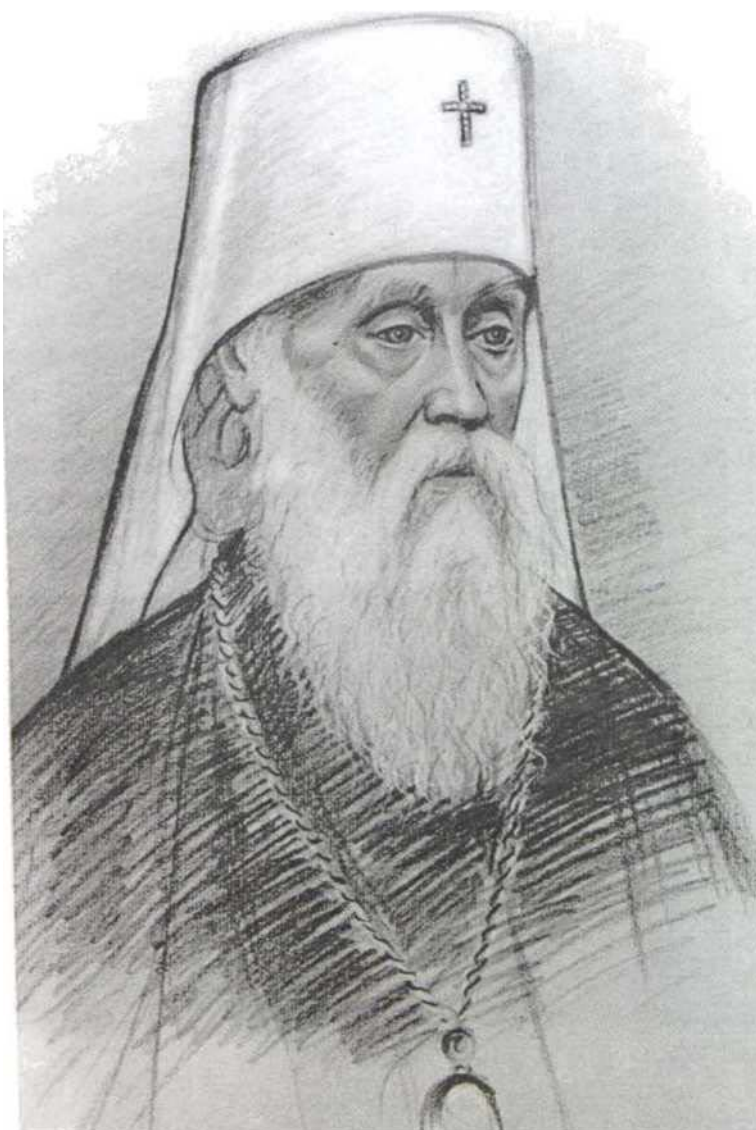
In order to lighten the incredible suffering of the clergy and the laity persecuted by the godless authority, he made a whole series of compromises and concessions. The Soviet authority was not content with these concessions and demanded *spiritual enslavement of the Church to the State*. Then the holy patriarch ceased all concessions, for which he was arrested, and shortly afterwards died, apparently poisoned in 1925.

After the death of the holy patriarch three of his remarkable instructions remained in force, which became the foundation for the true path of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The first is concerned with the essence of the Soviet authority, which the holy Patriarch Tikhon defined as an authority of antichrist, and therefore subject to excommunication. *The Soviet authority was condemned by the holy patriarch.*

The second instruction was his appeal, before his death, to all Russian Orthodox people in Russia: “I call upon you, beloved flock of the Orthodox Church, I call upon you *to suffer* with me!”

The third instruction is in regard to all Russian Orthodox people “who are scattered throughout the world.” In the special 'ukaz' (order) No. 362 from November 7/20, 1920,



Metropolitan Anastassy

it was proposed that all Russian people abroad, outside the USSR, unite and form a Center of the Highest Church Administration. It was proposed that all the Orthodox Russian people, scattered throughout the world, live apart from the Mother-Church of Russia under the administration of this Center until the time freedom and order be reestablished in Her.

According to this 'ukaz' the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad was established under the highest leadership of the Russian Council and Synod, represented, after the death of the Most Eminent Metropolitan Anthony, up to this day, by the Most Eminent Metropolitan Anastassy. This church is the only mystically and canonically and historically true Orthodox Russian Church outside the borders of the USSR.

The enemy of the human race, the great slanderer, liar, and slayer of people—Satan, after the death of the holy Patriarch Tikhon, came down with all his might upon the Russian Orthodox Church, wanting to destroy or, at least, enslave Her.

Outside the boundaries of the USSR there arose discords, divisions, schism, but the Russian Church Abroad, true to the will and instructions of the holy Patriarch Tikhon, under the leadership of the Russian Synod of Bishops abroad, remained the pure bride of Christ, and therefore by the true promise of the Savior Himself, also invincible before hell itself!

If life abroad was abundant in arduous and dramatic events for the Russian Church, then life of the Orthodox Church of Russia in the USSR turned out to be a tragedy indeed!

After the death of Patriarch Tikhon, Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsk became Guardian to the patriarchal throne. He proved to be an unshakable “rock” and a fearless martyr for the purity of the faith of Christ. No temptations, no threats, no tortures and torments were able to move the great martyr, the Highest Prelate of the Russian Orthodox Church. His name will be forever mentioned in the history of the Russian Church together with the names of Metropolitan Phillip and Patriarch Germogen.

Arrested, exiled, tortured by incredible tortures and tormented to death, Metropolitan Peter remained unshakable and did not sign the Declaration which the Soviet authority demanded from him.

His last order was the instruction that his name be offered in prayer during the liturgy throughout the Orthodox world as a symbol of unity in the Russian Church despite rumours of his death, until his death would be quite clearly established (look at the testimony of Bishop Damascene, Vicar of Chernigov).

After the arrest of the Guardian of the patriarchal throne, Metropolitan Sergius of Nizhnegorod became acting deputy of the Guardian of the patriarchal throne in 1926.

In 1927, Metropolitan Sergius betrayed the wills of the holy Patriarch Tikhon and Metropolitan Peter and issued his famous declaration in which he called upon all Orthodox people to “rejoice” with the joys of the god-fighting (theomachistic) authority and give this accursed antichrist authority nationwide gratitude for giving attention to the needs of the Orthodox population.

Remembering the incredible persecutions of the



Metropolitan Peter

Orthodox Church, the martyr's death of Metropolitan Benjamin and "with him" the arrest and death of the holy Patriarch Tikhon, the exile and sufferings of Metropolitan Peter, the demolition of churches, abolition of monasteries, the blaspheming of sacred relics, the prohibition of the sound of church bells, the organization of the "Consomol Pascha,"¹ the incarceration of many hundreds of bishops (In 1927, over 200 bishops languished in concentration camps.), tens of thousands of clergy and monastics and millions of believing Christians convicted because of their church activities—the truly Orthodox people could not accept the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius; a Church schism occurred in 1927.

The head of the truly Orthodox people—who remained loyal to the holy Patriarch Tikhon, who, by condemning the Soviet authority, called the loyal flock of the Orthodox Church to *martyrdom*,² and to Metropolitan Peter, exiled to suffering, because he did not agree to sign that Declaration which Metropolitan Sergius signed—became Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd.

The followers of Metropolitan Sergius came to be called "Sergianists," but the followers of Metropolitan Joseph were called "Josephites."

Approval of Metropolitan Joseph's position was received from Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsk from exile and from Metropolitan Kyrill of Tambov.

The Center of true Orthodoxy through 1928-1929, became the "Church of the Resurrection on the Blood" in Petrograd (on the place of Tsar Alexander 11's assassination). The superior of this church was the mitered Archpriest Father Vasiliy Veryushsky. Besides this Church,



The Church of Our Savior "On the blood "
Built on the site of the assassination of Emperor Alexander II
This was the center of the church community in Petrograd
which opposed the policies of Metropolitan Sergius after 1927.

in the hands of the “Josephites” were still a few more churches in Petrograd and its vicinity: the Petrograd church of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, at the house for aged artists on the island of Petrovsk (the superior of this church was Archpriest Father Victor Dobranoff); the church of the Tikhvin Mother of God in Lesno (where the abbot was Archpriest Father Alexander Sovetov), the church “Strelno” (superior-Father Ishmael) and a few others. At the church of the Resurrection on the Blood, besides Father Vasiliy Veryushsky, other remarkable preachers spoke there: Archpriest Father Theodore Konstantinovich Andreyev, (friend of Paul Florensky), the former professor of the Moscow Theological Academy, and Archpriest Father Sergei Tikhomirov. Father Theodore was the spiritual father to many academics of the Academy of Sciences and professors of the Petrograd University.

In 1924 Father Theodore, (professor Andreyev) died after being tortured during interrogations in prisons and let out “to die at home.” The funeral of this remarkable preacher took on a grandiose demonstrative character. “Since the time of Dostoyevsky’s funeral, Petersburg did not see such an accumulation of people,” wrote professor A.I. Brilliantov to his friend.

By the year 1930, all “Josephite” churches were closed, with the exception of one, the Tikhvinsky Mother of God in Lesna. In 1930, all more or less prominent “Josephites” were shot: Bishop Maxim, Archpreist Nikolai Prozorov, Archpriest Sergei Alekseyev and others. Archbishop Dimitiy of Gdov was incarcerated for ten years in Yaroslav where he



*Archbishop Dimitry
of Gdov*

perished in political isolation. Metropolitan Joseph, Bishop Sergei Narvsky, along with a multitude of clergy and laypeople were sent away into concentration camps. Many lay people were sent away only because they attended the only Josephite church in Lesna. In 1936, this church was also closed down. Already from 1928, onward, secret liturgies began to be served in private homes in Petersburg.

After 1930, the number of secret liturgies considerably increased. And one can say that with the year 1937, the Catacomb Orthodox Church was firmly established. In the rest of Russia, especially in Siberia, catacomb churches were formed somewhat earlier. In Moscow there were not enough catacomb liturgies and many Muscovites were “fed spiritually” in Petrograd. There was no administrative center nor management of the catacomb churches whatsoever. Metropolitan Kyrill and Metropolitan Joseph were regarded as the spiritual leaders. The legal guardian to the patriarchal throne Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsk, was acknowledged as head of the church, and after his death— Metropolitan Joseph. In 1929- 1930, in the Solovetski concentration camp, where many “Josephite” bishops were to be found (Maxim of Serpukov, Victor, Vicar of Vyatsk, Hilarion of Smolensk, and Nectary of Trevinsk), secret consecrations were conducted. Secret bishops emerged and a multitude of secret priests. I personally know only the Petrograd region and the secret catacomb liturgies performed there during the period from 1937 to 1941 inclusive. After that I had the chance to meet participants of catacomb services from 1942-1945, (from different places in Russia): After 1945, I have



Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd

no information.

In Petrograd and the Petrograd region very many catacomb services were conducted from 1937 through 1941. Just where were these divine services held? In the private quarters of some academies, professors of the Military-medical academy and the Petrograd university, on the premises of the marine-technical college, the submarine school, in the school of adults for water transport, in the rooms of hospitals, in some offices, where entry was only by admission permits. Very intense were the divine services conducted in the outskirts of Petrograd and in places further away: in Shuvalova, Ozerki, the village Yiuki close to Levashevo, on the station Popovka, in Kolpino, Sablino, Chudovo, Little Vishera, Okulovka, in the apartment of a follower of the famous ascetic Matushka Maria, in Elizavetino, Volosovo, Oranienbaum, Martyshkino, Strelne (where the remarkable priest Fr. Ishmael) worked and in many other places.

The persecutions of the catacomb church, which Metropolitan Sergius declared as “counter-revolutionary”, and those praying in them, as “political criminals”, — he handed them over to be torn to pieces by the God-fighting authority — were exceptionally brutal.

There were especially many arrested and tortured to death during 1937-1938, during the so-called “Yezhov era” (head of the GPU at that time).

That is why beginning in 1939, the Catacomb Church began to be extremely cautious and it was extremely difficult to enter them. But those who were truly seeking managed. And if the secret catacomb divine services were greatly reduced in 1939, the

spiritual quality increased immensely. Truly, these were new times — like those of the first Christians; the legend of the wonderful invisible city Kitezh became reality!³ As I happened to hear later, during the war, especially after the choosing of Metropolitan Sergius as “Soviet Patriarch,” the catacomb divine services became again very active in spite of the most cruel persecutions, because the truly Orthodox people could not become reconciled with the complete spiritual enslavement of the Orthodox Church to the accursed Anti-christ regime. With Patriarch Alexis (Simanski) the persecutions again increased, for there were no more excuses for those who did not attend the open churches and performed secret divine services in their homes! “The participants of Catacomb Churches were regarded as the most serious political criminals!”

But even the Savior Himself was numbered “among the transgressors!”

From here it is clear why the names of the participants of the catacomb churches must be kept in silence and secrecy, especially the names of bishops and priests. I would like to be able to tell so much about Fr. Alexei, Fr. George, Fr. Alexander, Fr. Peter, Fr. Vladimir, and so many others, well known True Orthodox in the Petrograd region. But it is not yet time! For, perhaps they are alive and still serve secretly to this day! For the smallest detail, which might expose them, threatens them and their families with deadly torture. But they don't await man's glory. They, these many martyrs and martyresses (for among the active workers of the catacomb churches are many nuns), are laying down their lives for each other, by

fulfilling Christ's commandment of the highest love.

Here abroad, one sometimes meets people who, while acknowledging the merit of the Catacomb Church, accept at the same time also the "truth" of the "Sergianist Church." These people should know that in the USSR their position would have been sharply rejected from both sides. For if "Patriarchs Sergius and Alexis" prohibited to conduct services and pronounced the members of the "Josephite Church" as "political criminals", then, the latter, in their turn, forbid their believers to attend the open Soviet churches.

Altogether, one can divide the Russian Orthodox population in the USSR into the following groups:

The first group of strict and true Orthodox Church people, who for the most part live a spiritual life in the interests of the church, as the Body of Christ. This group has in no way ever recognized and does not recognize the Soviet Patriarchate. This group has completely gone into the catacombs.

The second group consists of people of little faith, who rarely attend church, who by tradition believe mechanically in God in a lukewarm way, or are drawn towards the Orthodox Church services in an aesthetic way. They do not understand the finer points of the Church's spirit. They notice only the "outer clothing" of the church, which has not changed. They readily attend the church, kept open by the godless Soviet authority, which permits small doses of "opium for the people."

The third group is represented by "diplomats", rationalists, who live for the interests of the Church as an organization (and not as an organ of the Holy

Spirit). They justify the church politics and Sergius and Alexis, which according to them, is saving the church. Those people gladly visit the Soviet churches, not noticing that the preserved organization has lost the most important thing —the spirit of Christ.

The fourth group consists of those who also accepted the declaration by Metropolitan Sergius in 1927, with a painfully heavy heart, and all following words and actions by the Soviet Patriarchs, but reckon that grace nevertheless has been preserved in the Orthodox Church for the sake of those millions of unfortunate Russian people who receive great comfort in the church. With extreme heavy feelings, listening to the panegyric of the Soviet Church of the godless authority, they continue to come into the open churches and pray with tears before miracle-working icons. These are people with souls which did not yet reach the spiritual understanding of religion. The comfort of their souls they take as spiritual sacraments of grace.

The fifth group consists of those who personally did not speak with the patriarchs and metropolitans of the Soviet Church, and, therefore, are ignorant of the essence of that church. The majority of these people, familiar with some of the facts published in the USSR in different declarations, signed seemingly unknowingly, suppose that everything that was announced in the names of the “patriarchs” Sergius and Alexis or printed in the official church press are just plain lies, manufactured by the Soviet authority. Therefore, not accusing the patriarchs and metropolitans of the Soviet church personally, but not accepting in their hearts what the anti-christ author

ity says in their name— this group, even though they went into the catacombs, still continues to commemorate the names of the highest prelates in their secret liturgies. But the ones who have had the opportunity to personally speak with the representatives of the highest hierarchy know that the latter are freely and consciously in solidarity with the Soviet authority and are sincerely defending the unnatural friendship of Christ's Church with the antichrist state.

It is totally impossible to even roughly determine the percentage of believers who retreated into catacombs. One thing can be said: the best ones went and there are millions!

Not being able to find and exterminate them all, the Soviet authority began to deny the presence of the Catacomb Church and called it a myth.

If there is the "Myth about Christ," written by Prof. Arthur Drevso, then the "Myth about the Catacomb Church in the USSR" is also a possibility. I personally visited the Catacomb Church from 1937, until 1941 inclusive. Later I met people who attended their services from 1942-1945. The spiritual mood (feeling) in that church stayed on a high level and all the time pure.

In 1937, the month of December after leaving the concentration camp, I did not have the right to live in the capital and so I lived 200 kilometers from Petrograd (we call it the city of Saint Peter— Leningrad— only on official occasions).

There, where I lived, there is not one church within a radius of more than 100 km. In Petrograd there are only two churches: The Morskoy Nicolsky Cathedral (near the Marinsky Theater) and the Cathedral

of the Holy Great Prince Vladimir (by the Tutchkov bridge). Both churches are “Sergianist.” I and many friends had not attended the Sergianist churches since the end of 1927, that is, already ten years. I came to Petrograd secretly and went to one of my friends. She was visited by a secret nun. The latter took me to the secret church service of the Catacomb Church. I did not ask, and was not interested where they took me. I conscientiously did not want to know, so I would not be able to say where I went, if after, Lord have mercy, I should be arrested and even tortured.

Late evening... it is dark. We take a seat on a train at one of the railroad stations. We ride for over an hour. We exit at one of the stops and drive 2-3 km into the darkness. We arrive at some kind of village. On the outskirts—the first hut. Almost night. Dark. Quiet. A soft knock on the door. The door opens and we enter the izba (peasants hut). We enter a clean room. The windows are deeply covered. In the corner a few ancient Icons. In front of them burn lampadas (icon lamps). The people—about 15, mostly women in kerchiefs, three men of middle age, a few children 12-14 years old. Batushka—an acquaintance of mine. Some time ago he was a teacher in a high school, which I attended. He remembers me still as a boy. Batushka greets me cordially, blesses me, kisses me. “Well begin now!” —he says, putting on his robe. “And you, in the meanwhile, write out a few prescriptions for medical Vaseline oil (mineral oil)” — he says, turning to me, knowing that I am a doctor —“it is still possible to get this oil in drugstores by prescription. There is no other. The Lord will forgive. But for the

lampadas it is good...”

I write prescriptions for almost all present, warning them not to purchase the oil in one day and at the same drugstore.

The evening service begins. They speak and sing in whispers. Many have emotional tears in their eyes. No disturbances, no distractions. Never and nowhere have I experienced so clearly and deeply the truth in the counsel of Saint John of the Ladder: “enclose your mind in the words of prayer!”

Except for Batushka, all the others are strangers. But they are all related, more than related!...

All of their eyes are pure, so clear, so warm and amiable, their faces—inspired!

I cannot express in words, what I experienced during that vigil service. At the conclusion of the service I drank a cup of tea with bread. In parting I exchanged kisses thrice with everyone... The night is coming to an end. Quietly we are leaving, returning with the nun. The soul is at peace and concentrated. We take the train. Go back to Petrograd. I change to a different station and go home and to my job...

The year 1938. The second terrible year of the “iron rule” (Yezhov Purge). Shortly before Pascha I am arrested. For four days I stand in the “dog house.” So named is the cell, where one stands, because it is impossible to sit down, too crowded. Occasionally one is called to be interrogated. Some return quickly, others are being detained. The longer they are being detained, the more alarming for them. Because they will sign everything anyhow, what had been written down beforehand. They will only be beaten up and tortured. Finally they call me. I go and pray: “Lord

make me understand, save and let me remain faithful!" 1 had never prayed so, because 1 knew that there no human hope was possible. 1 prayed, my eyes closed, with all my heart, all my mind, all my soul: "Lord free me!" 1 clearly felt that God is here, on my right side, He hears all, He knows all, He understands all, He can do all things!...

"Lord, free me! By the prayers of Thy martyrs throughout Russia! By the prayers right now in all the land of Russia of those, who secretly, pray to you in the Catacombs in whispers, with tears!... Lord, free me! Free me, in order that 1 might later, somewhere in freedom, tell others, what is happening now in Russia!..."

The prayer was heard by the Lord. A miracle occurred! How everything turned around— it is hard to say, 1 barely can believe it myself, what happened!...

The provincial district branch of the NKVD. 1 sit on a stool in a large room. The walls are plywood. 1 can hear everything that is said behind the wall.

"Oh, what a fool! — screams the superior at the interrogator (who usually are boys 16-18 years old "probationers", because of the large number of those arrested, there is not sufficient real investigators)— "By what clause did you accuse him?"

—"By the 59th."

—"This clause means what?"

—"Being a bandit!"

—"And whom did you question?..."

—"Well, he acknowledged and signed it!..." —"Oh you fool!, durak! 1 did not ask you about this... now even a dead person will

sign!... the matter is not in his signature... answer me, who is he, this old man, a sectarian!?"

—"Yes, a Tolstoyan."

—"So now you see! And you know, that they don't even wear boots, but walk in galoshes, these Tolstoyans, they even sleep without pillows... why? Well, so as not to exploit the skin of animals and the feathers of chickens... they think, it is a sin to kill a fly... but you... pinned on him the accusation of being a bandit! Go, change the accusation to #58(section 58; article 10 of the USSR— for a campaign against the Soviet authority)...There are no fools in Moscow!" —continued to grumble the head of the department, — "this protocol will go to Moscow! Go, correct it!..."

—"Comrade chief." — a different shy voice is being heard, — "but this I don't quite understand... I interrogated an Old-believer. Explain to me, what is a 'reader,' is it some kind of rank?... or, here— 'those without a priest' what does it mean?"

—"The devil knows what it means," the department head interrupts him...

—"Comrade chief,"— a third quiet voice is being heard,— "they brought here to interrogation some doctor—sectarian, he probably knows all this and can explain!..."

—"Well, call him!"

—"To which sect do you belong?"

—"To none!"

—“And why don’t you attend church?”
—“I pray at home!”
—“Well, do you understand anything about sects?”
—“I understand.”

And so, I became an expert and consultant in a number of questions on schism. As a result of which,



*Prisoners in the Solovki Camp (1924-1926)
Archbishop Hilarion (Troiksy) on the left sitting on a bench
amidst volunteer workers... former monks who
remained on Solovki (in center) and prison workers of the
Filimonov fishing net workshop.*

I suddenly, unexpectedly, found myself released, why? For what reason? True, I was not guilty in anything, unless, that I, a believing Orthodox Christian, for some reason did not attend the Soviet churches.

I was freed recently from a concentration camp and remember well the friendly advice from one of the

heads: “Well, doctor, now that you are free, you must work all the time to the count of 5+ (do better than your best, [an A+]), then we, (that is, the organ of the NKVD will give you a three with two minuses, [C-]). Any mistake of yours—will be a felony.”

And I worked like that, always for an A+, always a “udarnik”, “otlitschnik” (shock-worker, an exemplary worker)... I was without guilt and they gave me freedom! This is an incredible miracle in the conditions of the USSR.

I found myself free in Holy Week. On Holy Saturday, I was able to get to Petrograd with my small five-year old daughter. Matins was served at one of the apartments of a high official of the civil department, where entry was permitted only by special permit. I was given one of these special passes for my small daughter and myself.

We entered a clean and comfortable apartment. There were about thirty people. I found that I knew a few people. The service was conducted by an elderly priest, Fr. George. It is impossible to ever forget this morning service.

“Christ is Risen” was sung quietly and joyously. It seemed that people were not singing but angels! My little daughter stood with a candle in her hands and she herself glowed like a small candle. I have never in my life seen more joyous, more happy eyes than those of hers.

Did this really happen? Or was this a golden dream? I have not the words, or dare not tell, what it was... the heavens came down to earth and people became like angels! A sea of Love!

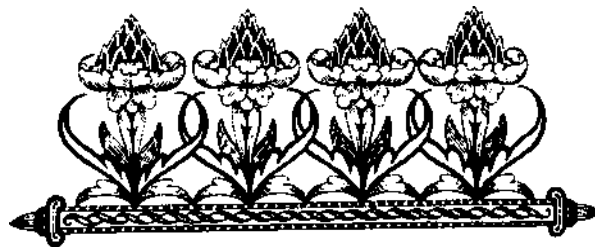
We are embracing each other.

We are forgiving one another.

We enclose the name of Christ within us!

The joy received from this bright morning service in the Catacomb Church still gives me the strength to live, after losing everything: family, homeland, happiness, scientific career, friends, health!...

—1947



Notes

Introduction

1. See *Russia's Catacomb Saints*, Platina, California, 1982, p.23-41.
2. For further information about this period see Archpriest Michael Polsky, *The New Martyrs of Russia*, Monastery Press, Wildwood, Alberta, Canada 2000.
3. Archbishop Vitaly Maximenko, *Motivy MoeiZhizni (Motifs of My Life)*, Jordanville, N.Y., 1955, P.26.
4. "In August, 1936, the Bolsheviks spread the (false) information that Metropolitan Peter had died. Immediately Metropolitan Sergius quite illegally assumed to himself Peter's title of Metropolitan of Krutitsa. From this time, a distinct hardening in Metropolitan Cyril's position is noticeable. Thus in March, 1937, he wrote: With regard to your perplexities concerning Sergianism, I can say that the very same questions in almost the same form were addressed to me from Kazan ten years ago, and then I replied affirmatively to them, because I considered everything that Metropolitan Sergius had done as a mistake which he himself was conscious of and

wished to correct. Moreover, among our ordinary flock there were many people who had not investigated what had happened, and it was impossible to demand from them a decisive and active condemnation of the events. Since then much water has flowed under the bridge. The expectations that Metropolitan Sergius would correct himself have not been justified, but there has been enough time for the formerly ignorant members of the Church, enough incitement and enough opportunity to investigate what has happened; and very many have both investigated and understood that Metropolitan Sergius is departing from that Orthodox Church which the Holy Patriarch Tikhon entrusted to us to guard, and consequently there can be no part or lot with him for the Orthodox. The recent events have finally made clear the renovationist nature of Sergianism. We cannot know whether those believers who remain in Sergianism will be saved, because the work of eternal Salvation is a work of the mercy and grace of God. But for those who see and feel the unrighteousness of Sergianism (those are your questions) it would be unforgivable craftiness to close one's eyes to this unrighteousness and seek there for the satisfaction of one's spiritual needs when one's conscience doubts in the possibility of receiving such satisfaction. Everything which is not of faith is sin.... I am in fraternal communion with Metropolitan Joseph, and I gratefully esteem the fact that it was precisely with his blessing, that there was undertaken from the Petrograd diocese the first protest expressed against Metropolitan Sergius from the Petrograd diocese...,^m (*The New Martyrs of Russia*, Monastery Press, 2000).

“In Memoriam”

1. *Solovki*: An island in the White Sea on which in 1436, Sts. Sabbatius, Herman and Zosima founded the famous Solovetsk Monastery, transformed by the Bolsheviks into a concentration camp after the Revolution.
2. See *Orthodox Life*, January-February, 1977, p. 13- 18.
3. *Pirogov Society*: An organization of Russian doctors in the U.S.A., named after the well-known Russian surgeon and pedagogue, Nikolai I. Pirogov, (1810-1881).

Is the Grace of God Present in the Soviet Church?

1. *Antichrist*: One who denies or opposes Christ.
2. Holy New Martyr Bishop Damascene (Tsedrik), (1877-1937). One of the many hierarchs of the Russian Church who opposed the policy of Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky), he was martyred in the Karaganda concentration camp on September 10, 1937. Prof. Andreyev is referring to his article entitled “The Seal of Christ and the Seal of the Antichrist.” See E.L. “Episkopy-Ispovedniki”, San Francisco, 1971, p. 73.
3. Here Andreyev is talking about the essence of the

ideology of Communism. He is not talking about the particular manifestation that occurred with the institution of the Soviet State in Russia. Today, even though most Communist regimes have decayed (or modified themselves to embrace and reap the material benefits of capitalism), we see throughout the world the infiltration of Socialist ideals and principles, i.e. globalism, international trade blocks, secularism with tolerance of immorality, the principles of Christianity and belief in the One True God replaced by a hostile, dominance of atheistic humanism. Already, some principles of International Communism have been accepted broadly by humanity through a psychological “conditioning” that prepares people to accept as “good,” ideas that are truly evil, but have been cloaked in persuasive and emotional language that speaks of brotherhood, equality and justice, and economic prosperity for all. Once conditioned, it is then possible for people to accept something as “good” because it has been presented to them as such, not because it is. Alexander Solzhenytsin called this “living by a lie.”

4. *Vladimir Soloviev* (1853-1900), son of the famous Russian historian Sergei Soloviev. Vladimir Sergeievitch was a gifted and talented philosopher, yet his religious- philosophical speculations ran far astray of traditional Orthodox theology. He had mystical visions and wrote serious and very eloquent poetry. Towards the end of his short life he foresaw the world succumbing to global, diabolical forces and the dawn of the rule of Antichrist. One of his strongest and well known writings, of a haunting quality, on this

subject is the fictional narrative, "The Tale about Antichrist." Prof. Andreyev refers to a passage from it here. It may be important to note that Vladimir Sergeievitch when dying called the village priest and wholeheartedly confessed, receiving absolution and the Holy Mysteries of Christ. Thus, he died a repentant son of the Holy Orthodox Church.

5. Earlier that year Metropolitan Sergius had entered into an agreement with the Soviet power in his famous "Declaration," whereby the interests of the Soviet power were identified with the interests of the Church.

6. *34th Apostolic Canon.* "It behooves the Bishops of every nation to know the one among them who is the premier or chief, and to recognize him as their head, and to refrain from doing anything superfluous without his advice and approval: but, instead, each of them should do only whatever is necessitated by his own parish and by the territories under him. But let not even such a one do anything without the advice and consent and approval of all. For thus will there be concord, and God will be glorified through the Lord in Holy Spirit, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

7. Paschal Epistle of His Eminence Metropolitan Anastassy, 1948.

8. *Archbishop John (Shakhovskoy), (Prince Dimitry Shakhovskoy):* Well known in Russian Emigre circles as a refined intellectual-hierarch who in his younger

years was close to Metropolitan Anthony (Krapovitsky), yet later became an adamant opponent of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, first in Europe and later in North America. He wrote many books and religious articles. He is also well known for his spiritual poetry under the pseudonym “Wanderer” or “Strannik.”

9. Maximus the Confessor: 6th Century Church Father who opposed the Monothelite heresy and whose writings are contained in the “Philokalia.” He is known for his staunch and unwavering opposition to heresy.

10. The Cleveland Council of November 26-29, 1946: “In preparation for the Council, it was very interesting and characteristic, that the same persons who fought for the Moscow jurisdiction and the split from the Synod and ‘help’ Metropolitan Evlogy in Europe, moved from Paris to America and began to ‘help’ Metropolitan Theophilus. With unusual knowledge of church matters, these professors of engineering and other fine arts began to state authoritatively that the Moscow Patriarchy did not deviate from the dogmas, canons and rites of Orthodoxy in any way and the politics conducted by their head, even though it is condemned today by many, cannot have a decisive influence on her canonical position.’ In this way the Cleveland Council prepared itself by only a formal cooperation with the Synod Abroad and then completely backing down from its position, pronounced this resolution: We are passing the resolution to request that His Holiness, the Patriarch of

Moscow, to reunite us to his bosom and be our spiritual father, under the stipulation that we preserve our full autonomy, which exists at this present time. Because the hierarchical authority of the patriarchy is incompatible with the hierarchical authority of the Synod Abroad of the Russian Orthodox Church, the American Church is discontinuing any administrative subordination to the Synod Abroad.”* (Excerpted from *History of the Russian Church from the Revolution to Our Days*, Prof. I. M. Andreyev, Jordanville, N.Y. 1952.)

11. To further illustrate and explain Prof. Andreyev’s strong comments here, we insert an excerpt from Prof. Andreyev’s article “The Catacomb Church, ”published in *Russia’s Catacomb Saints*, pg. 49, Platina, California, 1982:

“... And not only were we ready to die, but many did die, confident that somewhere there, outside the reach of the Soviet authorities, where there is freedom — there the Truth was shining in all its purity. There people were living by it and submitting to it. There people did not bow down to Antichrist. And what terror overwhelmed me when, fairly recently, I managed to come abroad and found out that some people here ‘spiritually’ recognize the Soviet Church. *Spiritually!* Many of us there fell, for fear of the Jews,’ or giving in to the temptation of outward cooperation with the authorities. I knew priests of the official Church who, at home, tore their hair out, who smashed their

heads making prostrations, begging forgiveness for their apostasy, calling themselves Cain — but nonetheless they did not recognize the Red Church. But these others abroad— it is precisely *spiritually* that they submit to it. What good fortune that our priest-martyrs, in dying, did not find out about this betrayal!”

12. Hieromartyr Simeon Bishop of Persia (commemorated 17th of April): King Sapor of Persia (early 5th Century) proposed to the saint to worship the sun, whereby he would gain all possible honors and gifts, but his refusal would cause the complete and total destruction of Christianity in his kingdom. Already before this was proposed to Simeon, King Sapor had started to kill the clerics and remove church possessions and raze the temples to the ground. When brought to the king to make his reply, St. Simeon not only refused to worship the sun but also upon entering, refused to recognize the king by bowing. This omission of previous consideration for authority was noticed and questioned by the king. St. Simeon replied, “Before I bowed to you, giving honour as king, but now I come being brought to deny my God and Faith. It is not good for me to bow before an enemy of my God!” The king then threatened to destroy the Church in his kingdom... he brought the saint’s priests (about 100) and other Christians (1000) and killed them before the saint’s eyes. The saint encouraged them not to be frightened and to have hope of eternal life. So he watched the earthly destruction of the church in Persia of which he was

entrusted as a bishop... after all were slain, St. Simeon himself was killed.

13. *Akathist*: meaning literally “not sitting.” A liturgical poem of particular construction, usually laudatory.

14. In the spring of 1924, Patriarch Gregory of Constantinople displayed his solidarity with the Soviet authority in the matter of the condemnation of Patriarch Tikhon. Because of the intrigues of the Renovationists, who, together with the Bolsheviks, turned the Eastern Patriarchs towards themselves, Patriarch Gregory tried to interfere in the affairs of the Russian Church with the intention of reconciling the “Tikhonites” and the “living church.” Patriarch Tikhon categorically stood firm against this attempt, and in answer to the statement of Patriarch Gregory VII of Constantinople to “withdraw immediately from the Church administration” (protocol for April/May 1924), entirely rejected his interference in Russian church matters with a special letter to him. Also, in imitation of Patriarch Tikhon, Metropolitan Sergius (before his capitulation) declared in writing (9/22 Sept. 1926, Nizhny Novogorod), that “if the patriarchs of Constantinople and Jerusalem should enter into relations with the Renovationists, the worse for them.”

15. *Metropolitan Theophilus (Pashkovsky)*: A Metropolitan of the Russian Metropolia. This group was the beginning of the present day “O.C.A.”

16. “There were two brothers, Syrian money-dealers, at Constantinople. The elder brother said to the younger: ‘Come, let us go down to Syria and take possession of the paternal home.’ The younger said: Why both of us? We would have to leave our business unattended. You go, and I will stay here. Or let me go, and you stay here.’ They came to an agreement that the younger should go. A little while after his departure, the brother who stayed at Constantinople saw an elder in his sleep who said to him: ‘Do you know that your brother has committed adultery with the tavern-keeper’s wife?’ When he got up, he was distressed. He said to himself: This is my fault. Why did I let him go alone?’ A little later, he saw the same elder again, saying to him: ‘Do you know that your brother has forced his attentions on the tavern-keeper’s wife?’ The brother was grieved again at this. A third time, a little later still, he saw the same elder saying: ‘Do you know that your brother has destroyed an honest woman and has degraded himself with the tavern-keeper’s wife?’ He wrote from Constantinople to Syria to him, to leave everything and return to Byzantium at once, without delay. When the younger brother received the letter, he immediately left everything and went back to his brother. When the elder brother laid eyes on him, he took him to the Great Church and began to reproach him with a heavy heart, saying: ‘Did you do well in fornicating with the tavern-keeper’s wife?’ When the other heard this, he began to swear by almighty God that he did not know what his brother was talking about; that he had never had sinful intercourse, nor any

intercourse at all except with his lawful wife. When the elder brother heard this, he said to him: 'Have you then done something worse?' He denied it: *1 am not aware of having done anything irregular, except that 1 found monks in our village of the Severan persuasion. Not knowing whether this was a bad thing, 1 made my communion with them. 1 have not done anything else, so far as 1 am aware.' The elder brother realized that his brother's fornication consisted of his having left the holy Church for the heresy of Severus Acephalos, a tavern-keeper indeed. In this he had fallen into disgrace and besmirched the nobility of the true faith." (from *Spiritual Meadow*, Saint John Moschus)

17. *Berdyaev and Mereshkovsky*: Intellectual philosophers whose ideas were not in accord with traditional Orthodox theology. Yet, they claimed an affinity with the Russian "religious environment."

18. "Gregory the Governor of the province of Africa, a good Christian and great lover of the poor and the religious, related to us the following history which happened in our times in his native country, the district of Apamea in Syria: There is in that part of the world a place called Gonagus, forty miles distant from the city of Apamea, in the neighborhood of which some country boys, by the way of play took upon themselves to mimic the sacrifice of the Liturgy and the Holy Communion, according to what they had seen done by the priests in the church. For this purpose they appointed one of their number to officiate as priest, and two others to assist as deacon and

sub-deacon. Taking a large stone, in the middle of the field, to serve as an altar, they placed some bread and some wine in an earthen cup upon it. Then he that impersonated the priest, having his two ministers on each hand of him, recited the words of the sacred oblation and consecration, which he had learned by heart, by being near the altar, as in some places the priests recited them aloud, and proceeded in the Liturgy till towards the end of the canon; but before they came to the breaking of the bread and the communion, a fire descended from heaven, which instantaneously consumed both all they had set upon their altar, and the stone itself, so as to leave no mark or trace of them remaining. Upon which they all fell to the ground, half dead with the fright, and for some time could neither recover speech or motion. In this condition they were found by their friends and carried home. As soon as they were able to speak, they recounted all that had happened, whilst the marks of the fire, in the place where it fell, plainly demonstrated the truth of what they related. The bishop of Apamea, on hearing of this extraordinary event, came out with all his clergy, and took cognizance of the whole matter upon the spot, by first examining the boys, and then viewing the imprints of the fire, and in the conclusion caused a monastery to be built and a church to be erected in the field, the altar of which he fixed in the very spot where the fire had fallen. As to the boys, he placed them all in religious houses, one of whom afterwards became a monk in the said monastery, where Gregory, the governor, who related to me this wonderful history, saw him, and knew him." (from *Spiritual Meadow*, St. John Moschus),

St Porphyry the Mime: At first he was a mocker of Christianity. On one occasion, he enacted a mock Christian baptism before the Emperor Julian the Apostate and his court. But something utterly unpremeditated happened. When Porphyry went down into the water and spoke the words of baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity, his soul was suddenly changed within him and he indeed became a Christian. In place of his mocking of the Christian faith, he began to denounce the Emperor for his impure idolatry. For this he was tortured and beheaded.

“Notes on the Catacomb Church”

1. “*Konsomol Pascha*”: On the night of Pascha, the young Communist league “Konsomol” would organize processions using liturgical vestments and banners wherein the participants would sing blasphemous songs mocking the faithful who would be having their own processions in anticipation of the Paschal midnight service. Theatrical performances, again of a mocking nature towards Christianity, were organized afterwards in direct conflict with the services taking place in the churches. Even in the 1970’s, and onward, Paschal night saw the organization of western rock music concerts which were broadcast on television and occurred precisely at midnight in an attempt to keep the youth away from church services.

2. “Morally torturing and tormenting Patriarch Tikhon endlessly, the Soviet authority did not lose

any opportunity to emphasize that all the blood of the persecuted believers was dependent on the immediate behavior of the Patriarch. At one time the Patriarch had to personally participate, as witness, in a trial initiated by the Bolsheviks against a group of clergy. The Patriarch was warned that the fate of those accused rested on his testimony. This was a trial of a large group of priests, which ended in the beginning of May, 1922, and was then made into a “public trial.” Here is the description of an eyewitness of the cross-examination of the Patriarch and the conduct of the accused and the spectators:

“ When the noble figure, all adorned in black came through the door of the hall, escorted by two armed guards, everyone automatically stood up...all heads were bent low in a deep, respectful bow. The most holy Patriarch quietly, majestically blessed the accused with the sign of the cross, and turning toward the judges, standing straight, stately and gravely, leaning on his staff, awaited their questions.

“T)id you give order to read throughout the country your Proclamation invoking the people to insubordination toward the authorities?’ questioned the chairman.

“Calmly the Patriarch answered: The authorities know very well that in my Proclamation there is no summons to resist the authorities, only a call to preserve the holy relics and in order to preserve them, to ask the authorities permission to pay in money for their value. While rendering help to their starving brothers, they preserve their holy relics.’

“Well, and so this summons will cost the lives of your obedient slaves,’ and the chairman pointed,

waving towards the benches of the accused.

“The elderly Patriarch enveloped the servants of the altar with a kindly, loving gaze and said firmly: 7 always said and continue to say, to the inquiring authority, and so to all the people, that in all this only *I alone* am guilty, and this is only my Army of Christ, which simply executes obediently the orders given to them by their God-sent Leader. But if a redeeming sacrifice is needed, the death of *innocent* lambs from Christ’s flock is needed.’ Here the voice of the Patriarch rose, was heard through all corners of the huge hall, and he himself became as if larger, when turning towards the accused, he raised his hand and blessing them, said loudly and precisely, pronouncing his words: 7 *bless the true servants of the Lord Jesus Christ for torture and death for Him/* The accused went down to their knees—the questioning of the Patriarch was finished — the court session did not continue that evening...

“At daybreak of April 25, 1922, the sentence of the ‘just and sincere people’s court’ was pronounced: 18 people—to be shot; the rest—sentenced to hard labor of different durations. The proposal of the chairman to beg the highest authority for mercy—was answered with a fiery speech by Father Archpriest Yezersky with a *refusal in the name of all sentenced* —Only a sigh was heard in the hall at the announcement of the sentence, no moans, no tears. A great redeeming sacrifice was given for the sins of the Russian people and quietly the people dispersed. But not to go home, but to gather in the square, where they awaited all night long for the fated hour...

“It was already daybreak, the sun was coming up,

when the heavy doors of the court building opened and those sentenced to death emerged into the square, guarded heavily by a forest of bayonets. They walked, their heads uncovered, their hands crossed on their chests, their gaze turned high toward heaven, to where their gracious Redeemer of the world awaited them; where all is forgiven, all forgotten, where there is no suffering, no evil—And loudly rejoicing, poured out their song: ‘Christ is risen from the dead!’ Enraptured, the crowd pressed toward them with the answer: In truth He is risen!’...Their [the prisoners] hands and the hems of their clothing were kissed. The guards drove the crowd off with the butts of their rifles, but they were coming and coming, pushing back the soldiers. A detachment of horse guards appeared, driving the people back with their horses, hitting them with rifle butts, with whips—nothing helped.

“The song, full of exaltation kept flowing, the enraptured people hurled themselves towards the martyrs—a truck, full of Red Army soldiers, cut their way through the crowd. They grabbed those sentenced and literally threw them into the van. The truck roared and hurried away. But the joyful Paschal hymn ‘Christ is risen’ was heard long after; it sounded for a long time in the clean air of the sunny, spring morning.

The ‘public hearings’ and trials by deponents’ clearly showed the extraordinary, moral purity and pious deeds of the true believers, the ‘Tikhonites’, and the repugnant lowness and treachery of all kinds of ‘renovationist’ members. And these trials and proceedings became the most powerful, religious ser

mons, rather than being used as anti-religious propaganda.”
(excerpted from *History of the Russian Church from the
Revolution to Our Days*, Prof. I. M. Andreyev, Jordanville, N.Y.
1952.)

3. Kitezh: legendary Russian city that resisted enemy
invasion by submerging itself into a nearby lake. Here the
mention of Kitezh is being used to signify the “mystical” Holy
Russia, that hid itself when the godless seized power.

A profoundly discerning and timely work that discusses the deeper spiritual reality behind the catastrophic events of the Russian Revolution that still imposes its influence on the Russian Orthodox Church today. Also contains the essay by Professor Andreyev, "Notes on the Catacomb Church." These two essays give a deeper, spiritual perspective to any historical understanding of contemporary issues concerning the Russian Orthodox Church. It also introduces the English reader to the important understanding of "things of the soul" as different from "things of the spirit." This understanding goes far beyond the title of this work and serves as a fundamental benchmark to which all "religious phenomena and movements" are to be examined by today's believers.

Professor Andreyev was a confessor of the faith, sentenced to Solovki prison camp and a Catacomb Christian, who was present with the Petrograd delegation that went before Metropolitan Sergius to beg him to denounce his collaboration with the Soviet State. His is a voice that speaks without harshness, but with an unshakable integrity borne out of first hand experience and a deep piety.



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