

# **THE MYSTERY OF REDEMPTION**

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## INTRODUCTION

*Of mercy and judgement shall I sing unto Thee, O Lord.*  
Psalms 100.1.

*He wiped out our debt, by paying for us a most admirable and precious ransom. We are all made free through the blood of the Son, which pleads for us to the Father.*  
St. John of Damascus, First Word on the Divine Images, 21.

Two works by Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), *The Dogma of Redemption* and the *Catechism*, have been a subject of controversy in the Orthodox Church for nearly a century. The controversy consists in the fact that in these works Metropolitan Anthony attacks the Orthodox Christian teaching on redemption as expounded by Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow (+1867), labeling it “scholastic”. The purpose of this little book is to defend Metropolitan Philaret’s teaching as being indeed the traditional teaching of the Orthodox Church by an examination and refutation of Metropolitan Anthony’s thesis, especially as it is reiterated in a document recently written by the Bishops of the “Holy Orthodox Church in North America” (HOCNA), and entitled “Resolution of the Sacred Synod of the True Orthodox Church of Greece concerning *The Dogma of Redemption* by Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky”.<sup>1</sup>

Metropolitan Anthony’s *Catechism*, which expressed the same theology as *The Dogma of Redemption* in a more concise form, was at first accepted by the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR) in 1926 as a substitute for Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow’s *Catechism* in schools. The Synod did not call Metropolitan Philaret’s *Catechism* heretical, simply saying that Metropolitan Anthony’s was “shorter and more convenient for assimilation”. And Metropolitan Anthony himself did not ask for Metropolitan Philaret’s *Catechism* to be removed from use in favour of his own, writing only (in a report to the Synod dated April 9/22, 1926): “In my foreword to *An Attempt at an Orthodox Christian Catechism* I wrote: ‘In publishing my work as material, I in no way wished that it should completely *overshadow* the *Catechism* of [Metropolitan] Philaret in schools, but I have nothing against the idea that this or that teacher of the Law of God should sometimes, in his interpretation of the dogmas and commandments, use my thoughts and references to Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition, thereby filling in the gaps in the textbook catechism with regard to various religious questions, of which very many have arisen in the time since the death of the author’”.<sup>2</sup>

All this sounds innocent and cautious enough. And yet the fact is, as Metropolitan Anthony made clear on many occasions, the real motive for the writing of his *Catechism* and *Dogma of Redemption* was that he considered Metropolitan Philaret’s *Catechism* “scholastic” and heretical, being identical with the Roman Catholic teaching on redemption of Anselm and Aquinas. Thus in his letters to the Russian Athonite monk and theologian, Hieromonk Theophan (later Hieroschemamonk Theodosius of Karoulia), a firm opponent of Metropolitan Anthony’s thesis, he expressed fundamental disagreement “with the juridical theory of Anselm and Aquinas, which was completely accepted by P[eter] Moghila and Metropolitan Philaret”<sup>3</sup> And again he wrote: “We must not quickly return to Peter Moghila, Philaret and Macarius: they will remain subjects for historians”<sup>4</sup> And again: “Apparently you together with your namesake [Archbishop Theophan of Poltava, the main opponent of Metropolitan Anthony’s teaching in the ROCOR Synod] have fallen into spiritual deception”.<sup>5</sup> So it is clear that, for Metropolitan Anthony, as for his opponents, this was a fundamental matter of doctrine. Either Metropolitan Philaret’s *Catechism* was heretical and Metropolitan Anthony’s was

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<sup>1</sup> <http://deltard.org/hocna/defense.htm>

<sup>2</sup> *Protocols of the Hierarchical Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad*, 9/22 April, 1926 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> *The Letters of His Beatitude Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky)*, Jordanville, 1998 (in Russian), № 83, p. 235.

<sup>4</sup> *Letters*, op. cit., № 91, p. 244.

<sup>5</sup> *Letters*, op. cit., № 31, p. 169.

Orthodox, or Metropolitan Anthony's was heretical and Metropolitan Philaret's was Orthodox. And whoever was wrong was "in spiritual deception".

But the consequences of "victory" for either side would have been unthinkable; it would have meant condemning as a heretic either the greatest Russian hierarch of the 19<sup>th</sup> century or, in many people's opinion, the greatest Russian hierarch of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and would quite simply have torn the Russian Church Abroad apart at a time when it was fighting for its life against communism, sergianism and sophianism.

So it is not surprising that both sides exhibited signs of trying to "cool" the conflict. On the one hand, Metropolitan Anthony's *Catechism* did not replace that of Metropolitan Philaret, and the Synod under Metropolitan Anastasy refused to review the question again. And on the other, Metropolitan Anthony's chief opponent, Archbishop Theophan departed to live a hermit's life in France...

But the conflict has resurfaced in the 1990s, both in Russia and in America.

Now the HOCNA hierarchs refrain from directly calling any of the major players in this controversy a heretic. At the same time, however, they extend the label "scholastic" to all those who espouse what they call "the juridical theory" of redemption, including even such renowned hierarchs as Bishop Ignaty Brianchaninov and Bishop Theophan the Recluse. Thus for the sake of defending the complete correctness of Metropolitan Anthony's *Dogma of Redemption*, they are prepared to condemn the three most famous and revered hierarchs of the Russian Church in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as heretics! Where will it stop? How many more "juridical theorists" will be found in the annals of Orthodox Church history and among the ranks of the Orthodox saints? As will be shown here, a consistent witch-hunt in search of "scholastic" heretics will go much further than the HOCNA hierarchs may realise, to include most of the greatest Fathers of the Orthodox Church!

So what is the alternative? Continue to bury the question again as it was buried in the course of several decades by the ROCOR? Or thrash it out once and for all? In our opinion, it is no longer possible to bury this conflict, for it has extended beyond the boundaries of the ROCOR and is debated in Russia and in other countries. Moreover, it is not in the nature of the Orthodox Church, which is "the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Timothy 3.15), to leave fundamental questions of dogma unresolved when conflict has arisen over them. One may hope that the issue will simply "fade away"; but time and again, after a brief quiescence it re-emerges with renewed vigour. On the other hand, while the issue of truth cannot be deferred forever, it is reasonable to hope that at the end of the process those who are in the wrong will not be labelled heretics and condemned as such. St. Gregory of Nyssa, Blessed Augustine of Hippo and others were found to be wrong on certain important issues; but the Church has accepted them, without accepting their errors (as St. Photius the Great said of St. Augustine). We may hope that the same will be concluded concerning the errors contained in Metropolitan Anthony's *Dogma of Redemption*.

For, on the one hand, he did not publicly insist on their acceptance.<sup>6</sup> And on the other, as one of his fairest critics, Fr. Seraphim Rose, writes, "it is a question not of heresy (in his most sympathetic critics and we won't be examining others), but rather of imperfection, of theology not thought through and consistent. He is not known as a careful theologian, rather as a great *pastor* whose theology was one of fits and starts. The question of 'heresy' arises when his critics try to make him strictly accountable for every expression and when they place him above all the Holy Fathers of the Church, for in several points the teaching of

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<sup>6</sup> However, in a handwritten note dated February 16/29, 1932, Archbishop Theophan wrote that "under the influence of objections made [against it] Metropolitan Anthony was about to take back his *Catechism*, which had been introduced for school use instead of the *Catechism* of Metropolitan Philaret. But, as was soon revealed, he did this insincerely and with exceptional insistence continued to spread his incorrect teaching *On the Redemption* and many other incorrect teachings included in his *Catechism*." (Archive of the present writer (in Russian)).

Metropolitan Anthony clearly contradicts the Fathers. His theology is at times closer to *expressionism*. Almost all but a few of his absolute devotees admit that *Dogma of Redemption* especially is very loose”.<sup>7</sup>

One of the earliest critics of Metropolitan Anthony was New Hieromartyr Archbishop Victor of Vyatka. He noted already in 1912 that the “new theology” of Metropolitan Anthony and his pupil, Metropolitan (and future “Patriarch”) Sergius (Stragorodsky) “would shake the Church”. And he saw in Metropolitan Sergius’ disastrous “Declaration” of 1927 a direct result of his teaching on salvation – which teaching was openly praised by Metropolitan Anthony in *The Dogma of Redemption*.<sup>8</sup> Hieromartyr Victor was not the only critic of Metropolitan Anthony’s theory in the Catacomb Church. According to the witness of Hieromartyr Paul Borotinsky, the Petrograd Hieromartyrs Bishop Demetrius of Gdov and Fr. Theodore Andreyev were also critical of it.<sup>9</sup>

Nor was criticism of Metropolitan Anthony’s work confined to the Russian Church. Thus immediately after the publication of *The Dogma of Redemption* in 1926, Protopriest Milosh Parenta wrote in the Serbian Church’s official organ: “The tragedy of Metropolitan Anthony is amazing! A pillar of the faith in soul, a great Orthodox in his heart, a strict fulfiller and preserver of Church discipline to the smallest details. But when he approaches a scientific-theological examination and explanation of the dogmas, then he either insufficiently comprehends them, or he cannot avoid the temptation of, and enthusiasm for, modernism. The explanation of the dogma of redemption offered by the author in this work openly destroys the teaching on this truth faithfully preserved by the Orthodox Church, and with it the Christian Religion itself, because the truth of the redemption together with the truth of Christ’s incarnation is its base and essence. However, it is necessary to recognize that it is very difficult to analyse this work of the author, because in it there are often no definite and clear concepts, although there are many extended speeches which hide the concepts or say nothing, and because in part there are no logical connections in it, nor any strictly scientific exposition, nor systematic unity”.<sup>10</sup>

However, in spite of these obstacles, an attempt will be made to undertake such an analysis in this work; for, whatever the dangers of criticising such a revered figure, the danger of allowing his mistaken opinions to spread and be exalted to the status of Orthodox dogma are still greater...

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<sup>7</sup> Rose, in Fr. Michael Pomazansky, *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*, Platina: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1994, Appendix IV: On the New Interpretation of the Dogma of Redemption, p. 403.

<sup>8</sup> Hieromartyr Victor, “The New Theologians”, *The Church*, 1912; reprinted in the series “On the New Heresies”, Moscow: Orthodox Action, № 1 (11), 2000 (in Russian).

<sup>9</sup> M.B. Danilushkin (ed.), *A History of the Russian Church from the Restoration of the Patriarchate to the Present Day*, vol. I, St. Petersburg, 1997, pp. 989-990 (in Russian).

<sup>10</sup> Parenta, *Herald of the Serbian Orthodox Patriarchate*, 1926, N II (1/14 June), pp. 168-174 (10-34) (in Serbian).

## **1. THE “JURIDICAL THEORY”**

*In essence the wrath of God is one of the manifestations of the love of God, but of the love of God in its relation to the moral evil in the heart of rational creatures in general, and in the heart of man in particular.*  
Archbishop Theophan of Poltava, On Redemption.

Metropolitan Anthony’s ambitious claims to originality in his teaching on redemption put us on our guard right from the beginning of his work. Thus he writes: “No one has as yet given a direct and at least somewhat clear answer to the question, why Christ’s incarnation, sufferings and resurrection are saving for us, unless we take into consideration the small leading article published in the *Ecclesiastical Herald* of 1890 and the little article in the *Theological Herald* of 1894 composed by the author of the present work. But let not the reader not think that we force our solution to this inquiry upon him as something irrefutable. Supposing it were entirely incorrect, we nevertheless maintain that it is still the only direct and positive answer to the above-mentioned dogmatic query yet formulated.”<sup>11</sup>

The question arises: why should it be given to Metropolitan Anthony, nearly 1900 years after the Death and Resurrection of Christ, to expound *for the first time* “the only direct and positive answer” to the question of the meaning of redemption? Why were the Holy Fathers silent (if they were indeed silent)? Metropolitan Anthony’s answer to this is that “the contemporaries of the Fathers so clearly understood the Saviour’s redeeming grace that it was unnecessary to elucidate upon it. In the same way, in our days there is no need to explain to rural Christians what humility, compunction, and repentance are, yet the intellectual class is in great need of an explanation of these virtues since they have alienated themselves from them. Thus, educated Christians who from medieval times have been caught in the mire of juridical religious concepts, have lost that direct consciousness or spiritual awareness of their unity with Christ Who suffers with us in our struggle for salvation, a unity which the early Christians kept so fervently in their hearts that it never occurred to the interpreters of the sacred dogmas and the commentators on the words of the New Testament to explain what everyone perceived so clearly”.<sup>12</sup>

This is unconvincing. The problem of semi-believing intellectuals did not appear for the first time towards the end of the second millennium of Christian history. Nor did the Holy Fathers fail to explain the significance of Christ’s death and resurrection. Such explanations involved the development and exploration of those images and metaphors to be found in the New Testament, of which the juridical metaphor is undoubtedly the chief. This metaphor was evidently not to Metropolitan Anthony’s liking, for “the juridical theory” forms the chief target of his attack; but there is no evidence that the Apostles had some more “positive” explanation which they were hiding from the general Christian public and which was revealed to the Church some 1900 years later. After all, the Church has no esoteric teaching like that of the Gnostics. The whole truth was revealed to, and handed down by, the Apostles, and the task of subsequent generations is to explicate and explore that heritage, not speculate about hidden teachings.

What, then, is the so-called “juridical theory”? If we reply: “An understanding of the redemption of mankind expressed in legal or juridical terms or metaphors”, this hardly implies heresy, for many passages of Holy Scripture, as is well-known to both sides in this debate, use juridical terms when speaking about our redemption. If we add to this definition the words: “combined with terms of a passionately negative or pagan connotation, such as ‘wrath’, ‘curse’, ‘sacrifice’, ‘propitiation’,” then we are no nearer to the definition of a heresy, for these phrases, too, are to be found in abundance in Holy Scripture. Since the critics of the juridical theory often describe it as “scholastic”, we might expect that the Catholic scholastic theory of redemption as found in the works of Anselm and Aquinas, is meant. Certainly this is part of the meaning. And yet the metropolitan offers no serious analysis of this theory, and no quotations from Catholic sources.

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<sup>11</sup> *The Dogma of Redemption*, Montreal: Monastery Press, 1979, pp. 1-2.

<sup>12</sup> *The Dogma of Redemption*, p. 10.

The real targets of Metropolitan Anthony and his supporters are the works of certain *Orthodox* writers who supposedly embrace the scholastic theory, especially Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow. Metropolitan Anthony adds the names of Peter Moghila, metropolitan of Kiev in the seventeenth century, and Macarius Bulgakov, author of a standard textbook of Orthodox dogmatics in the nineteenth century. The HOCNA bishops, as we have seen, add Bishop Ignaty Brianchaninov and Bishop Theophan the Recluse to the list (Metropolitan Anthony, however, is very careful to *exclude* Bishop Theophan<sup>13</sup>), while labelling as “scholastic” all Metropolitan Anthony’s twentieth-century critics, especially Fr. Seraphim Rose.

The strange thing, however, is that Metropolitan Anthony does not quote *at all* from Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, with the exception of a short excerpt from his *Catechism* on original sin and another, even smaller one from a sermon of his on Great Friday. And the HOCNA bishops do not correct this glaring deficiency. Instead we are provided with a summary – more precisely, a caricature - of the scholastic theory in the following words: “The Supreme Being, God, was offended by Adam’s disobedience and man’s disbelief in the Divine injunction regarding the tree of knowledge. This was an extreme offense, and was punished by the curse not merely laid upon the transgressors, but also upon their entire posterity. Nevertheless, Adam’s sufferings and the agonizing death which befell Adam’s descendants were not sufficient to expunge that dreadful affront. The shedding of a servant’s blood could not effect this; only the Blood of a Being equal in rank with the outraged Divinity, that is, the Son of God, Who of His own good will took the penalty upon Himself in man’s stead. By this means the Son of God obtained mankind’s forgiveness from the wrathful Creator Who received satisfaction in the shedding of the Blood and the death of His Son. Thus, the Lord has manifested both His mercy and His equity! With good reason do the skeptics affirm that if such an interpretation corresponds to Revelation, the conclusion would be the contrary: the Lord would have manifested here both mercilessness and injustice”.<sup>14</sup>

Since neither Metropolitan Anthony nor the HOCNA bishops provide us with the opportunity of comparing this summary with the actual writings of the so-called Orthodox scholastics, we shall attempt to supply this deficiency for them. Here is a passage from Metropolitan Philaret’s *Catechism* on redemption: “204. Q. In what sense is Jesus Christ said to have been crucified for us? A. In the sense that by His death on the Cross He delivered us from sin, the curse and death. 205. Q. What do the Holy Scriptures say about it? A. The Holy Scriptures say the following about it. About deliverance from sin: ‘In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace’ (Ephesians 1.7). About deliverance from the curse: ‘Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us’ (Galatians 3.13). About deliverance from death: ‘Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself took part of the same; that through death He might destroy the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage’ (Hebrews 2.14-15) 206. Q. How does the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross deliver us from sin, the curse and death? A. The death of Jesus Christ on the Cross delivers us from sin, the curse and death. And so that we may more easily understand this mystery, the word of God enlightens us about it, as far as we can accommodate it, through the comparison of Jesus Christ with Adam. Adam naturally (by nature) is the head of the whole of humanity, which is one with him through natural descent from him. Jesus Christ, in Whom Divinity is united with Humanity, by grace became the new, all-powerful Head of the people whom He unites with Himself by means of faith. Therefore just as through Adam we fell under the power of sin, the curse and death, so we are delivered from sin, the curse and death through Jesus Christ. His voluntary sufferings and death on the Cross for us, being of infinite value and worth, as being the death of Him Who is without sin and the God-Man, is complete satisfaction of the justice of God, Who condemned us for sin to death, and immeasurable merit,

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<sup>13</sup> Thus he writes: “We must not quickly return to Peter Moghila, Philaret and Macarius: they will remain subjects for historians. It is quite another matter with his Grace Bishop Theophan of Vyshna: he pointed to the centre of Christian life and r(eligious) thought as being in the domain of morality, and he mainly worked out the concepts of repentance and the struggle with the passions. I venerate those” (*Letters*, op. cit., N° 91, p. 244.).

<sup>14</sup> *The Dogma of Redemption*, pp. 5-6.

which has acquired for Him the right, without offending justice, to give us sinners forgiveness of sins and grace for the victory over sin and death...<sup>15</sup>

It will be noted that Metropolitan Philaret, as is usual with him, stays very close to the words of Holy Scripture, so that it is very difficult to find fault with his exposition without finding fault at the same time with the scriptural words that he quotes. It will also be noted that his explanation has none of the emotionality of the scholastic theory as expounded by Metropolitan Anthony, none of its bloodthirstiness. True, there are the “juridical” words “curse”, “satisfaction”, “merit”; but these are used in a calm, measured way which hardly invites the mockery assailed at the scholastic theory.

Let us now turn to one of the most famous of the Holy Fathers, whom no Orthodox theologian would dare to accuse of scholasticism, since he was one of the earliest and greatest opponents of scholasticism, St. Gregory Palamas. It is striking how many “scholastic” words, such as “wrath”, “sacrifice”, “victim”, “reconciliation”, and “ransom” he uses: “Man was led into his captivity when he experienced God’s wrath, this wrath being the good God’s just abandonment of man. God had to be reconciled with the human race, for otherwise mankind could not be set free from the servitude.

“A sacrifice was needed to reconcile the Father on high with us and to sanctify us, since we had been soiled by fellowship with the evil one. There had to be a sacrifice which both cleansed and was clean, and a purified, sinless priest.... God overturned the devil through suffering and His Flesh which He offered as a sacrifice to God the Father, as a pure and altogether holy victim – how great is His gift! – and reconciled God to the human race...

“Since He gave His Blood, which was sinless and therefore guiltless, as a ransom for us who were liable to punishment because of our sins, He redeemed us from our guilt. He forgave us our sins, tore up the record of them on the Cross and delivered us from the devil’s tyranny. The devil was caught by the bait. It was as if he opened his mouth and hastened to pour out for himself our ransom, the Master’s Blood, which was not only guiltless but full of divine power. Then instead of being enriched by it he was strongly bound and made an example in the Cross of Christ. So we were rescued from his slavery and transformed into the kingdom of the Son of God. Before we had been vessels of wrath, but we were made vessels of mercy by Him Who bound the one who was strong compared to us, and seized his goods.”<sup>16</sup>

Finally, let us now turn to Bishop Theophan the Recluse: "We have fallen through the sin of our first parents and we have been plunged into inescapable destruction. Our salvation can only come by deliverance from this destruction. Our destruction comes from two different evils: from the wrath of God in the face of our disobedience and from the loss of His grace and from submission to the law, on the one hand; and on the other, from the alteration of our nature by sin, from the loss of true life, and from submission to death. That is why there were required for our salvation: first, that God should take pity on us, deliver us from the curse of the law and restore to us His grace; and then that He make us live again, we who were dead through sin, and give us a new life.

"Both the one and the other are necessary: both that we should be delivered from the curse, and that our nature should be renewed. If God does not show Himself full of pity for us, we cannot receive any pardon from Him, and if we receive no pardon, we are not worthy of His grace; and if we are not worthy of His grace, we cannot receive the new life. And even if we had received pardon and remission in some fashion, we would remain in our corrupted state, unrenewed, and we would derive no profit from it; for without renewal of our nature, we would remain in a permanent state of sin and we would constantly commit sins,

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<sup>15</sup> Metropolitan Philaret, *Extended Christian Catechism of the Orthodox Catholic Eastern Church*, 1823.

<sup>16</sup> St. Gregory Palamas, *Homily 16*, 21, 24, 31; in Christopher Veniamin (ed.), *The Homilies of Saint Gregory Palamas*, South Canaan, PA: Saint Tikhon’s Seminary Press, 2002, pp. 193, 195, 201.

sins which would bring down upon us again our condemnation and disgrace - and so everything would be maintained in the same state of corruption.

"Both the one and the other have been accomplished by the expiatory sacrifice of Christ. By His Death on the Cross He offered a propitiatory sacrifice for the human race. He lifted the curse of sin and reconciled us to God. And by His pure life, by which in a perfect manner He accomplished the will of God in all its fullness, He has revealed and given to us, in His Person, an unfailing source of righteousness and sanctification for the whole human race."<sup>17</sup>

And let us now compare this exposition with the words of the HOCNA bishops: "The proponents of the heretical, Scholastic theories of atonement insist that God's honor or majesty or justice had to be 'satisfied' or 'appeased' before God's love and compassion could be shown to mankind. God could not forgive mankind until His wrath had been propitiated. These beliefs attribute a division, opposition, and contradiction within the simplicity of the Divinity. Furthermore, they, like the pagan Greek philosophers, subject the superessential and almighty God to a necessity of His nature" (p. 3).

So there would appear to be three reasons for the rejection of the juridical theory by the HOCNA bishops: (1) a vaguely expressed emotional distaste for the emotional connotations of certain words such as "satisfied" and "appeased", (2) the supposed division it creates in the simplicity of the Divinity, and (3) its attribution to God of a certain pagan concept of necessity.

(1), though an emotional rather than a strictly intellectual accusation, actually represents, in our opinion, the real motivation for the opposition to the so-called juridical theory, and will consequently be discussed at some length below. (2) presumably refers (although it is not clearly stated in this passage) to the supposed contradiction between love and "wrath" as attributes of God, and will also be discussed at length. (3) is simply a misunderstanding, in our view, and will therefore be briefly discussed now before going on to the more serious accusations.

Bishop Theophan does use the word "necessary", but it is obvious that no pagan Greek kind of necessity is implied. The thought is simply that in order to be saved we had to be *both* cleansed from sin *and* renewed in nature. And it had to be in that order. Indeed it makes no sense to think that human nature can be renewed and deified before it has been cleansed from sin. Thus we read: "Now this He said about the Spirit, which those who believed on Him were to receive; for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7.39). In other words, Jesus had to be glorified, i.e. crucified and die on Golgotha, thereby cleansing mankind from sin, before the Spirit could descend and renew our nature at Pentecost. It goes without saying that the word "had" here in no way implies any kind of pagan "fate" or "necessity". All the acts of God are free. But they are also not arbitrary. That is, they are in a certain order, according to a certain plan, a perfect order and a perfect plan that cannot be improved upon and in that sense *have* to be realised. In exactly the same way, on the personal level, we have to confess our sins and receive absolution before receiving the Body and Blood of Christ.

Turning now to the other charges against the juridical theory, it is necessary to understand, first of all, that all attempts to describe the mystery of our redemption in human terms are *necessarily metaphorical*. As such, they cannot be taken to their logical conclusion without absurdity. Therefore when reading them we must always bear in mind their metaphorical character, and offset the absurdity that results from

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<sup>17</sup> Bishop Theophan the Recluse, *A Sketch of the Christian Moral Teaching*, Moscow, 1891, pp. 9-26; quoted in Archbishop Theophan, *On Redemption*, pp. 24-25.

concentrating too closely on one metaphor alone by considering other metaphors as well.<sup>18</sup> Thus the juridical metaphor needs to be supplemented with, for example, the metaphor of the strong man (God) despoiling the goods of the brigand (the devil) (Matthew 12.29) or the patristic metaphor of the devil like a fish being caught on the hook of Christ's Divinity and the worm of His Humanity.<sup>19</sup> And such a mixing of metaphors is displayed, as we have seen, by St. Gregory Palamas. Each metaphor illumines a part of the truth; one metaphor complements another, correcting its misleading emphases.

For, as Vladimir Lossky writes: "The immensity of this work of Christ, a work incomprehensible to the angels, as St. Paul tells us, cannot be enclosed in a single explanation nor in a single metaphor. The very idea of redemption assumes a plainly legal aspect: it is the atonement of the slave, the debt paid for those who remained in prison because they could not discharge it. Legal also is the theme of the mediator who reunited man to God through the cross. But these two Pauline images, stressed again by the Fathers, must not be allowed to harden, for this would be to build an indefensible relationship of rights between God and humanity. Rather must we relocate them among the almost infinite number of other images, each like a facet of an event ineffable in itself"<sup>20</sup>.

At the heart of the controversy surrounding the juridical model of redemption, and closely related to the point just made about its metaphorical nature, lies the question of the emotional connotations of the language used in it – and of the emotional reaction to those connotations on the part of some of its critics. Metropolitan Anthony chooses to see in the language of the juridical model – even in the very sober form in which is presented by Metropolitan Philaret – the expression of fallen human emotions "unworthy" of God and the great mystery of God's salvation of mankind. Words such as "curse", "vengeance", "wrath", "ransom" all have the wrong connotations for him, even disgust him; he would like to replace them by more "positive" words such as "love" and "compassion". What he apparently fails to realize is that *all* words used to explain the mystery, *including* "love" and "compassion", are more or less tainted by their association with fallen human emotions and have to be purified in our understanding when applied to God.

But such purification cannot be accomplished through abstraction simply, by replacing the vivid words of Scripture with the dry categories of secular philosophy. The Word of God is above all philosophy. And to attempt to "improve on" the words and concepts given to us by the Holy Spirit in Holy Scripture can only lead to a sinful distortion of the mystery itself. If the Holy Scriptures, adapting to our infirmity, use this language, then all the more should we not expect that we can find any better words to explain the mystery than those provided by the Holy Spirit Himself.

The best we can do, therefore, is to accept with gratitude the metaphors and explanations given to us in the Holy Scriptures, understanding, on the one hand, that there is no better explanation of the mystery in question in human language (for if there were, God would have provided it), and on the other hand that this explanation needs to be purified in our minds of all elements suggestive of fallen human passion.

Instead of rejecting or belittling the terms given us in Holy Scripture, we must accept them with reverence, probe as deeply as possible into their meaning, while purging them of all fallen connotations. Thus when considering the curse that God placed on mankind at the fall, we must exclude from our minds all images of bloodthirsty men cursing their enemies out of frenzied hatred and a desire for vengeance. At the same time, the concept of the curse must not become so abstract that the sense of awe and fear and *horror*

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<sup>18</sup> Archbishop Basil (Krivoshein) of Brussels writes that the juridical metaphor is "one-sided" and "incomplete", but nevertheless "expresses a doctrine contained in the Revelation" ("Christ's Redemptive Work on the Cross and in the Resurrection", *Sobornost*, summer, 1973, series 6, no. 7, pp. 447-448).

<sup>19</sup> Cf. St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Catechetical Oration*, 24; St. Maximus the Confessor, *Questions to Thalassius*, 64. Cf. Paul M. Blowers, "The Passion of Jesus Christ in Maximus the Confessor", *Studia Patristica*, 2001, vol. 37, pp. 370-371.

<sup>20</sup> Vladimir Lossky, "Christological Dogma", in *Orthodox Theology*, Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1989, p. 111.

that it elicits is lost. The curse was not imposed on mankind by God out of hatred of mankind, but out of a pure and dispassionate love of justice – and this justice, far from being a “cold”, “abstract” idea is a living and powerful energy of God Himself. Similarly, God did not demand the Sacrifice of the Son out of a lust for blood, out of the fallen passion of vengefulness, but in order to restore justice and peace between Himself and His creatures, than which there can be nothing more desirable and necessary.

God neither loves nor hates as human beings do; both the love and the wrath of God are not to be understood in a human way. For, as St. John of Damascus says: “God, being good, is the cause of all good, subject neither to envy nor to any passion”.<sup>21</sup> And, as St. Gregory the Theologian says, by virtue of our limitations and imperfection as human beings we introduce “something human even into such lofty moral definitions of the Divine essence as righteousness and love”.<sup>22</sup>

Archbishop Theophan of Poltava assembled a number of patristic quotations, of which the following are a selection, in order to demonstrate this vitally important point:

St. John of Damascus: “By wrath and anger are understood His hatred and disgust in relation to sin, since we also hate that which does not accord with our thought and are angry with it”.<sup>23</sup>

Thus, as Archbishop Theophan writes, “if one understands the properties of the wrath of God in the sense in which the just-mentioned Fathers and Teachers of the Church understand it, then it is evident that it involves nothing contrary to the Christian understanding of God as the God of love. But in essence the wrath of God, with such an understanding, *is one of the manifestations of the love of God*, but of the love of God in its relation to the moral evil in the heart of rational creatures in general, and in the heart of man in particular.”<sup>24</sup>

So God’s love and wrath are two sides of the same coin; the one cannot exist without the other. For as the love of God is limitless, so is His wrath against injustice, that is, against that which denies love and seeks to destroy the beloved.

Archbishop Theophan concludes: “The objection to the Church’s teaching that the death of Christ the Saviour on the Cross is a Sacrifice on the grounds that it supposedly presupposes an understanding of God that is unworthy of His true greatness insofar as it speaks of God as being angry for an insult to His dignity, is based on an incorrect understanding of the so-called moral attributes of God, and in particular the Righteousness of God. The true reason for the Sacrifice on Golgotha for the sins of the human race is the love of God for the human race.”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> St. John of Damascus, *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, book I, chapter 1.

<sup>22</sup> St. Gregory the Theologian, *Sermon 28*.

<sup>23</sup> St. John of Damascus, *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, book I, ch. 11.

<sup>24</sup> Archbishop Theophan, *On Redemption*, p. 48.

<sup>25</sup> Archbishop Theophan, *On Redemption*, p. 51.

## **2. THE MEANING OF “JUSTIFICATION”**

*All these things were done with justice, without which God does not act.*  
St. Gregory Palamas, Homily 16.

Metropolitan Anthony makes a particular point of rejecting the traditional, juridical understanding of the word “justification” (оправдание in Russian, δικαιοσύνη in Greek), which, he claims, “does not have such a specific meaning. Rather, it means righteousness, that is, blamelessness, dispassion and virtue. This is the translation of the Greek δικαιοσύνη which has the same meaning as αγιωσύνη, αρετή, etc.”<sup>26</sup>

More recently, in his famous article, “The River of Fire”, the Greek Old Calendarist and associate of the HOCNA bishops Alexander Kalomiros also attempts to give a different meaning to the word “justification”. He writes that the Greek word δικαιοσύνη, is a translation of the Hebrew tzedaka, which means "the Divine energy that accomplishes the salvation of man". "This term," he writes, "is parallel and almost synonymous with the words hesed (pity, compassion, love) and emeth (faithfulness, truth). This is a quite different conception of justice..."

But is it? Even if we accept the conjectural Hebrew word rather than the word chosen by the Holy Spirit in the Greek Septuagint, the version of the Old Testament Scriptures which is blessed for use in the services of the Orthodox Church, there is surely no contradiction here with the usual meaning of the word "justice". "The Divine energy that accomplishes the salvation of man" pursues this end through the restoration of a state of sinlessness and justice in man's relationship to God. Sin upset the balance in this relationship, creating injustice. Justice is restored through the destruction of sin: on the part of God, by His perfect Sacrifice and propitiation for the sins of all men, and on the part of man by tears of repentance and good works carried out for the love of God and neighbour.

As we have seen above, according to Bishop Theophan the Recluse, there are two aspects to our redemption: freedom from sin, or justification, and renewal of life, or holiness. By reducing justification to holiness, Metropolitan Anthony appears to reduce the first aspect of our redemption to the second.

But this means, according to Archbishop Seraphim of Lubny, a member of the ROCOR Synod in the 1920s and 30s, “that Metr. Anthony has an incorrect understanding of salvation. The latter he reduces to personal holiness alone. While justification, which is the same as our deliverance from the punitive sentence laid by the Divine justice on Adam for his sin, is so excluded by Metr. Anthony from the concept of salvation that he identifies this justification of ours accomplished by the Lord on the Cross with personal holiness, for the concepts of justification and righteousness, in his opinion, are equivalent”.

“But we could not attain personal holiness if the Lord had not communicated to us the inner, regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit in the sacraments of baptism and chrismation. And this grace is given to us exclusively by virtue of the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross and is its fruit (John 16.7). Consequently, our salvation is composed, first, from our justification from original sin by the blood of the Saviour on the Cross, and secondly, from the regenerating grace that is

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<sup>26</sup> *The Dogma of Redemption*, p. 13.

communicated to us, which destroys all personal sins and makes us possessors of holiness – it goes without saying, with the most active participation of our free will”<sup>27</sup>

In support of his thesis, Metropolitan Anthony points out that “even [in] the Russian text of the Bible, which bears the traces of Protestant influence... the word ‘justification’ is placed only seven times in St. Paul’s mouth whereas ‘righteousness’ is employed sixty-one times”<sup>28</sup>

However, as Archbishop Seraphim writes, “our Church had never recognized the quantitative principle in the understanding of Sacred Scripture. The holy Fathers of the Church from the beginning never saw such a criterion in their grace-filled interpretation of the Divine Revelation. And if we pay attention to the holy Fathers, we shall see that their understanding of ‘Paul’s righteousness’ overthrows Metr. Anthony’s view of this righteousness as meaning only holiness.

“We shall not cite the patristic interpretation of all the 61 utterances of the Apostle Paul that include the word ‘righteousness’, which would constitute a whole book. For Orthodox believers it is important to know what they must understand by this ‘righteousness’ in the light of the patristic mind. To this end we shall cite the interpretation of Bishop Theophan the Recluse of several of the utterances of the Apostle Paul in which the word ‘righteousness’ figures, since this interpretation, being based on the teaching of the holy Fathers of the Church, is patristic.

“Having in mind the words of Romans 3.25: ‘Whom God has set forth as a propitiation [ἰλαστήριον] through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness [for the remission of past sins]’, Bishop Theophan the Recluse gives it this interpretation: ‘By faith everyone draws on himself the propitiatory blood of Christ. The blood of Christ by its power has already cleansed the sins of the whole world’ but everyone becomes personally cleansed by it when by faith receives on himself sprinkling or bedewing by the blood of Christ. This is accomplished mystically in the water font of baptism and afterwards in the tears font of repentance...

“God saw that people ... could not... start on the right path; which is why He decided to pour His righteousness into them, as fresh blood is admitted into a corrupted organism – and declare it [His righteousness] in them in this way. And in order that this might be accomplished, He gave His Only-begotten Son as a propitiation for all believers – not only so that for His sake their sins might be forgiven, but in order that the believers might become pure and holy within through receiving the grace of the Holy Spirit by faith’.<sup>29</sup>

“In his explanation of [Romans] 9.30: ‘What shall we say? That the Gentiles who followed not after righteousness have attained to righteousness, the righteousness which is of faith’, Bishop Theophan writes: ‘By righteousness we must understand here all the spiritual good things in Christ Jesus: the remission of sins, the reception of grace, the good direction of the heart through it and all the virtues, by all of which righteousness was restored, the righteousness that was imprinted in human nature at its creation and trampled on thereafter’.<sup>30</sup>

“Dwelling on the words of the Apostle Paul: ‘The Kingdom of God is [not eating and drinking, but] righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit’ (Romans 14.17), Bishop Theophan

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<sup>27</sup> Archbishop Seraphim, *The Holy Hierarch Seraphim Sobolev*, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood Press, 1992, pp. 46-47 (in Russian).

<sup>28</sup> *The Dogma of Redemption*, p. 13.

<sup>29</sup> Bishop Theophan the Recluse, *Interpretation of Chapters 1-8 of the Epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Romans*, pp. 231, 234.

<sup>30</sup> Bishop Theophan the Recluse, *Interpretation of Chapters 9-16 of the Epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Romans*, p. 82.

explains the word ‘righteousness’ thus: “‘Righteousness’ is not justification only and the remission of sins, but inner righteousness... holiness’.<sup>31</sup>

“In his explanation of Romans 5.18: ‘Therefore as by the transgression of one man condemnation came upon all men, so by the righteous act [δικαιωματος] of One man [the free gift] came upon all men to justification [δικαιωσιν] of life’, Bishop Theophan writes: ‘as by the transgression of one man condemnation – that is, condemnation to death – came upon all me, so by the justification of One man justification to life came upon all men. Blessed Theodoret writes: “Looking at Adam, says the Apostle, do not doubt in what I have said (that is, that God saves all in the one Lord Jesus Christ). For if it is true, as it is indeed true, that when Adam transgressed the commandment, the whole race received on itself the sentence of death, then it is clear that the righteousness of the Saviour provides life for all men.”’ ‘The apostle,’ explains Bishop Theophan, ‘said: “justification of life came upon”, which leads us to understand that the saving forces of grace had already entered into humanity, had been received by it and had begun their restorative work... Do not doubt that this grace has already entered, and hasten only to make use of it, so as to destroy the destructive consequences of the first sin’.<sup>32</sup>

“In his interpretation of I Corinthians 1.30, we find the following words in Bishop Theophan: ‘The Lord Jesus Christ is our “righteousness” because in His name we are given the remission of sins and grace that strengthens us to every good work’.<sup>33</sup>

“As we see, Bishop Theophan by the righteousness about which the Apostle Paul teaches in the cited places in his epistles understands our propitiation or justification from original sin based on the Saviour’s sacrifice on the Cross, and then from all our personal sins and our attainment of holiness through the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>34</sup>

Bishop Theophan’s interpretation of three other disputed passages from St. Paul are cited by Archbishop Seraphim: “‘Being justified freely by His grace through the deliverance that is in Christ Jesus’ (Romans 3.24)... ‘Through the deliverance [δια της απολυτρωσεως], that is, through the redemption. Redemption is the only means of justification! Someone is redeemed when people pay money for him and he is delivered from the bonds of slavery. Through the fall of the first parents the human race fell into slavery to sin and the devil, who had possession of man by dint of his guiltiness, which drew upon him and upon him that had power over him the curse of God. For his salvation the curse had to be removed, which would give a righteous basis for clearing him of guilt, and then new strength had to be poured into him to destroy the power of sin, and through this overthrow the power of the devil. All this was accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-Begotten Son of God and God, Who took upon Himself human nature, died in it upon the Cross, was resurrected, ascended into the heavens, sat at the right hand of the Father, and sent the Holy Spirit on the holy Apostles and through them to the whole of humanity. All this taken together constitutes the economy of our salvation, or the redemption of the human race. Those who approach it with faith receive the remission of sins, and then the grace of the Spirit through the sacraments, and are not only guiltless, but also righteous...By redemption is sometimes signified not the whole economy of salvation, but only that action by which the Lord through His death on the Cross delivered us from the condemnation that lay upon us and the curse of God that weighed upon us. As ransom for us – for our unpaid debts – He gave His own blood. It

<sup>31</sup> Bishop Theophan the Recluse, *Interpretation of Chapters 9-16 of the Epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Romans*, p. 325.

<sup>32</sup> Bishop Theophan the Recluse, *Interpretation of Chapters 1-8 of the Epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Romans*, p. 323.

<sup>33</sup> Bishop Theophan the Recluse, *Interpretation of the First Epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Corinthians*, Moscow, 1893, p. 86.

<sup>34</sup> *The Holy Hierarch Seraphim Sobolev*, pp. 48-50.

cries out more than the blood of Abel, but it calls down not punishment from on high, but complete justification for every believer.’<sup>35</sup>

“From the cited interpretation of Bishop Theophan it is clearly evident that by the justification [оправдание] of which the Apostle Paul speaks we must not understand only the righteousness [праведность] acquired by us through the grace of the Holy Spirit. This justification includes in itself the removal from mankind of the guilt for original sin and its consequence, the curse of God, by means of the justice of God through the death of Christ on the Cross...’

“This interpretation of the Slavonic word ‘правда’ (in the Russian translation, ‘оправдание’) according to Bishop Theophan’s interpretation is witnessed to by two other texts among those indicated by Metr. Anthony: ‘For if the ministry of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory’ (II Corinthians 3.9) [and] ‘For if righteousness come by the law, then Christ died in vain’ (Galatians 2.21).

“Having in mind the first text, Bishop Theophan says: ‘The Old Testament institution was the ministry of condemnation because it only reproached sin and condemned the sinner... it did not lead him further... The testament of grace, by contrast, although it is also revealed by the universal condemnation of those who are called to it, nevertheless says: ‘Repent and be baptized every one of you for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the Holy Spirit’ (Acts 2.38). That is, in it the remission of sins is given from the first step... and new life that is powerful to keep one walking without deviating in the commandments of God is communicated – a right spirit is renewed in the reins, a spirit that communicates to him who receives it inner probity or righteousness [праведность]. That is why it is the ministry of righteousness [правда] - δικαιοσύνης ... not in name, but in essence’.<sup>36</sup>

“As we see, in the given apostolic words, too, we must understand by justification not only righteousness or holiness, but also the remission of sins, of course, in the sense of deliverance both from original sin, and also from all our personal sins by the grace of the Holy Spirit for the sake of the death of Christ on the Cross.

“The same thought is expressed in Bishop Theophan’s interpretation of the word ‘righteousness’ [правда] (in the Russian translation ‘оправдание’) in the last apostolic text. Linger on this text, Bishop Theophan says: ‘If righteousness’ - δικαιοσύνη, a God-pleasing, saving life – ‘come by the law, then Christ died in vain’. If the law provided both forgiveness of sins and inner probity and sanctification, then there would be no reason for Christ to die. He died in order to provide us with these two essential good things – the forgiveness of sins and sanctifying grace. Nobody except He could provide us with these, and without them there would be no salvation for us... The Lord Saviour died for us and nailed our sins to the Cross. Then, after His ascension into heaven, He sent down the Holy Spirit from the Father. That is why believers are given in Him both the forgiveness of sins and sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit. Without these two things there would be no salvation for us. Consequently Christ, in providing us with them, did not die in vain... Consequently righteousness is not through the law.’<sup>37</sup>...

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<sup>35</sup> Bishop Theophan the Recluse, *Interpretation of Chapters 1-8 of the Epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Romans*, pp. 226-228.

<sup>36</sup> Bishop Theophan the Recluse, *Interpretation of the Second Epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Corinthians*, p. 106.

<sup>37</sup> Bishop Theophan the Recluse, *Interpretation of the Epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Galatians*, Moscow, 1893, pp. 204-205.

“Thus from all the apostolic utterances that we have examined in which the Apostle Paul speaks about righteousness, it is clear that by this righteousness we must understand not only holiness, but also our justification from original sin and all our personal sins.”<sup>38</sup>

The other passages whose correct interpretation is disputed by Metropolitan Anthony are discussed in a similar way by Archbishop Seraphim, relying, as always, on the interpretation of Bishop Theophan. We shall leave the interested reader to look these up on his own. Instead, we shall end this section by citing two patristic passages from two of the greatest Fathers of the Church, which demonstrate how central the language of justice and justification is to their understanding of the mystery of redemption.

First, St. John Chrysostom: “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us’ (Galatians 3.13). In reality, the people were subject to another curse, which says, ‘Cursed is every man who continueth not in all the words of the law to do them’ (Deuteronomy 27.26). To this curse, I say, people were subject, for none had continued in, or was a keep of, the whole law; but Christ exchanged this curse for the other, ‘Cursed by God is everyone who is hanged on a tree’ (Deuteronomy 21.23). And then both he who hanged on a tree, and he who transgresses the law, is cursed, and as it was necessary for him who is about to relieve from a curse himself to be loosed from it, but to receive another instead of it, therefore Christ took upon Him such another, and thereby loosed us from the curse. *It was like an innocent man’s undertaking to die for another condemned to death, and so rescuing him from punishment.* For Christ took upon Him not the curse of transgression, but the other curse, in order to remove that of others. For, ‘He practiced no iniquity, nor was craft in His mouth’ (Isaiah 53.9; I Peter 2.22). And as by dying He rescued from death those who were dying, so by taking upon Himself the curse, He delivered them from it.”<sup>39</sup>

And secondly, St. Gregory Palamas: “The pre-eternal, uncircumscribed and almighty Word and omnipotent Son of God could clearly have saved man from mortality and servitude to the devil without Himself becoming man. He upholds all things by the word of His power and everything is subject to His divine authority. According to Job, He can do everything and nothing is impossible for Him. The strength of a created being cannot withstand the power of the Creator, and nothing is more powerful than the Almighty. But the incarnation of the Word of God was the method of deliverance most in keeping with our nature and weakness, and most appropriate for Him Who carried it out, *for this method had justice on its side, and God does not act without justice.* As the Psalmist and Prophet says, ‘God is righteous and loveth righteousness’ (Psalms 11.7), ‘and there is no unrighteousness in Him’ (Psalms 92.15). Man was justly abandoned by God in the beginning as he had first abandoned God. He had voluntarily approached the originator of evil, obeyed him when he treacherously advised the opposite of what God had commanded, and was justly given over to him. In this way, through the evil one’s envy and the good Lord’s just consent, death came into the world. Because of the devil’s overwhelming evil, death became twofold, for he brought about not just physical but also eternal death.

“As we had been justly handed over to the devil’s service and subjection to death, it was clearly necessary that the human race’s return to freedom and life should be accomplished by God *in a just way.* Not only had man been surrendered to the envious devil by divine righteousness, but the devil had rejected righteousness and become wrongly enamoured of authority, arbitrary power and, above all, tyranny. He took up arms against justice and used his might against mankind. It pleased God that the devil be overcome first by the justice against which he continuously fought,

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<sup>38</sup> *The Holy Hierarch Seraphim Sobolev*, pp. 51-53.

<sup>39</sup> St. John Chrysostom, *P.G.* 61:700, cols. 652, 653.

then afterwards by power, through the Resurrection and the future Judgement. *Justice before power is the best order of events*, and that force should come after justice is the work of a truly divine and good Lord, not of a tyrant....

“A sacrifice was needed to reconcile the Father on High with us and to sanctify us, since we had been soiled by fellowship with the evil one. There had to be a sacrifice which both cleansed and was clean, and a purified, sinless priest... It was clearly necessary for Christ to descend to Hades, but *all these things were done with justice, without which God does not act.*”<sup>40</sup>

“Justice before power”, the Cross before the Resurrection. And “all things done with justice, without which God does not act.” Clearly, justice is no secondary aspect of the Divine economy, but the very heart, the very essence of our salvation.

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<sup>40</sup> St. Gregory Palamas, *Homily 16*, 1,2,21; in Christopher, *op. cit.*, pp. 179-180, 194.

### **3. THE SACRIFICE FOR SIN**

*O my Saviour, the living and unslain Sacrifice, when as God Thou of Thine own will hadst offered up Thyself unto the Father...*

Pentecostarion, Sunday of Pascha, Mattins, Canon, Canticle 6, troparion.

Another bone of contention between Metropolitan Anthony and his critics is the concept of sacrifice.

The Holy Scriptures say that “the Son of Man came... to give His life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20.28), “as a ransom for all” (I Timothy 2.6), “as a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people” (Hebrews 2.17).

The Holy Fathers use such language no less frequently. Thus St. Cyprian of Carthage writes: “If Jesus Christ our Lord and God, is Himself the Chief Priest of God the Father, and has first offered Himself as a sacrifice to the Father, and has commanded this to be done in commemoration of Himself, certainly that priest truly discharges the office of Christ who imitates that which Christ did; and he then offers a true and full sacrifice in the Church to God the Father”.<sup>41</sup> Again, Blessed Theophylact writes: “Since the Lord offered Himself up for us in sacrifice to the Father, having propitiated Him by His death as High Priest and then, after the destruction of sin and cessation of enmity, sent unto us the Spirit, He says: ‘I will beseech the Father and will give you a Comforter, that is, I will propitiate the Father for you and reconcile Him with you, who were at enmity with Him because of sin, and He, having been propitiated by My death for you and been reconciled with you, will send you the Spirit.’”<sup>42</sup> But the language of “ransom”, “propitiation” and “sacrifice” is rejected by Metropolitan Anthony.

Archbishop Theophan writes: “[Metropolitan Anthony] gives a metaphorical, purely moral meaning to the Sacrifice on Golgotha, interpreting it in the sense of his own world-view, which he calls the world-view of moral monism.<sup>43</sup> But he decisively rejects the usual understanding of the Sacrifice on Golgotha, as a sacrifice in the proper meaning of the word, offered out of love for us by our Saviour to the justice of God, for the sin of the whole human race. He recognizes it to be the invention of the juridical mind of the Catholic and Protestant theologians. It goes without saying that with this understanding of the redemptive feat of the Saviour the author had to establish a point of view with regard to the Old Testament sacrifices, the teaching on which has up to now been a major foundation for the teaching on the Saviour’s Sacrifice on Golgotha. And that is what we see in fact. The author rejects the generally accepted view of the sacrifices as the killing of an innocent being in exchange for a sinful person or people that is subject to execution. ‘In the eyes of the people of the Old Testament’, in the words of the author, ‘a sacrifice meant only a *contribution*’<sup>44</sup>, just as Christians now offer [candles, kutiya and eggs] in church... But nowhere [in the Old Testament] will one encounter the idea that the animal being sacrificed was thought of as taking upon itself the punishment due to man.’<sup>45</sup>

“Our author points to St. Gregory the Theologian as being one of the Fathers of the Church who was a decisive opponent of the teaching on sacrifice, in the general sense of the word. In the

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<sup>41</sup> St. Cyprian of Carthage, *Epistle* 62, 14.

<sup>42</sup> Blessed Theophylact, *Explanation of the Gospel of John*, 14.16.

<sup>43</sup> *The Dogma of Redemption*, p. 52.

<sup>44</sup> Or, offering. The kinship of the Russian word for sacrifice (жертва) and for contribution (пожертвование) should be noted. – note of the translators (HOCNA).

<sup>45</sup> *The Dogma of Redemption*, pp. 42-43.

given case he has in mind the following, truly remarkable (but not to the advantage of the author) words of the great Theologian on the Sacrifice on Golgotha:

“We were detained in bondage by the evil one, sold under sin, and receiving pleasure in exchange for wickedness. Now, since a ransom belongs only to him who holds in bondage, I ask to whom this was offered, and for what cause? If to the evil one, fie upon the outrage! If the robber receives ransom, not only from God, but a ransom which consists of God Himself, and has such an illustrious payment for his tyranny, a payment for whose sake it would have been right for him to have left us alone altogether. But if to the Father, I ask first, how? For it was not by Him that we were being oppressed; and next, on what principle did the Blood of His Only-begotten Son delight the Father, Who would not receive even Isaac, when he was being offered up by his father, but changed his sacrifice, putting a ram in the place of his human victim?”<sup>46,47</sup>

However, St. Gregory, unlike Metropolitan Anthony, does not reject the juridical model, but rather embraced its essence. If the metropolitan had started quoting the saint a little earlier, then he would have read that the blood shed for us is “the precious and famous Blood of our God and High-priest and *Sacrifice*”. And if he had continued the quotation just one sentence more, he would have read that “the Father accepts the sacrifice, but neither asked for it, nor felt any need of it, but on account of the oeconomy?”

“Evidently,” writes Archbishop Theophan, “the author understood that this quotation in its fullness witnesses against his assertion and therefore in the 1926 edition of *The Dogma of Redemption* he does not give a reference to St. Gregory the Theologian”<sup>48</sup>

The archbishop continues: “From the cited words of St. Gregory it is evident that he by no means rejects the teaching that the death of Christ the Saviour on Golgotha was a sacrifice; he only rejects the theory created in order to explain it that this sacrifice was to be seen as offered by Christ the Saviour as a ransom for the sinful race of men *to the devil*<sup>49</sup>. As is well known, such a theory did exist and was developed by Origen and in part by St. Gregory of Nyssa. St. Gregory the Theologian with complete justification recognizes this theory to be without foundation, as did St. John of Damascus later (*Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, book III, ch. 27). He thought it just and well-founded to consider the sacrifice as offered to God the Father, but not in the sense that the Father ‘demanded or needed’ it, but according to the economy of salvation, that is, because, in the plan of Divine Providence, it was necessary for the salvation of the human race.<sup>50</sup> Besides, although it is said that the Father receives the Sacrifice, while the Son offers it, the thought behind it is that the Son offers it as High Priest, that is, according to His human nature, while the Father receives it indivisibly with the Son and the Holy Spirit, as the Triune God, according to the oneness and indivisibility of the Divine Essence.”<sup>51</sup>

Still further proof of St. Gregory’s real views is provided by his writing that “Christ Himself offers Himself to God [the Father], so that He Himself might snatch us from him who possessed

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<sup>46</sup> St. Gregory, *Homily 45 on Pascha*, 22, quoted by Protopresbyter George Grabbe in his foreword to *The Dogma of Redemption*, pp. vi-vii.

<sup>47</sup> Archbishop Theophan, *On the Redemption*, pp. 9-11.

<sup>48</sup> Archbishop Theophan, *On the Redemption*, p. 11.

<sup>49</sup> My italics – V.M.

<sup>50</sup> Metropolitan Anthony wrote opposite this: “True, but this contradicts [Metropolitan] Philaret” (HOCNA bishops resolution, p. 13). But does it? No proof is offered that Metropolitan Philaret would have rejected Archbishop Theophan’s formulation.

<sup>51</sup> Archbishop Theophan, *On the Redemption*.

us, and so that the Anointed One should be received instead of the one who had fallen, because the Anointer cannot be caught”.<sup>52</sup>

Returning now to the question of the Old Testament sacrifices, Metropolitan Anthony rejects their prefigurative significance. However, as Archbishop Theophan writes, “in the words of St. Gregory the Theologian, these sacrifices were, on the one hand, concessions to Israel’s childishness, and were designed to draw him away from pagan sacrifices; but on the other hand, in these victims the Old Testament law prefigured the future Sacrifice on Golgotha<sup>53</sup>. In particular, the Old Testament paschal Lamb had this mystically prefigurative significance<sup>54</sup>.

“‘Everything that took place in the time of the worship of God in the Old Testament,’ says John Chrysostom, ‘in the final analysis refers to the Saviour, whether it is prophecy or the priesthood, or the royal dignity, or the temple, or the altar of sacrifice, or the veil of the temple, or the ark, or the place of purification, or the manna, or the rod, or anything else – everything relates to Him.

“‘God from ancient times allowed the sons of Israel to carry out a sacrificial service to Him not because He took pleasure in sacrifices, but because he wanted to draw the Jews away from pagan vanities.... Making a concession to the will of the Jews, He, as One wise and great, by this very permission to offer sacrifices prepared an image of future things, so that the victim, though in itself useless, should nevertheless be useful as such an image. Pay attention, because this is a deep thought. The sacrifices were not pleasing to God, as having been carried out not in accordance with His will, but only in accordance with His condescension. He gave to the sacrifices an image corresponding to the future oeconomy of Christ, so that if in themselves they were not worthy to be accepted, they at least became welcome by virtue of the image they expressed. By all these sacrifices He expresses the image of Christ and foreshadows future events...’<sup>55,56</sup>

After quoting from St. Athanasius the Great and St. Cyril of Alexandria to similar effect, Archbishop Theophan continues: “But if the Holy Fathers and Teachers of the Church look at the Old Testament sacrifices in this way, then still more significance must they give to the redemptive death of Christ the Saviour for the human race on Golgotha. And this is indeed what we see. They all recognize the death of Christ the Saviour on Golgotha to be a sacrifice offered by Him as propitiation for the human race, and that, moreover, in the most literal, not at all metaphorical meaning of this word. And from this point of view the death of Christ the Saviour on Golgotha is for them ‘the great mystery’ of the redemption of the human race from sin, the curse and death and ‘the great mystery’ of the reconciliation of sinful humanity with God.

“St. Gregory the Theologian, in expounding his view on the Old Testament sacrifices as being prefigurations of the great New Testament Sacrifice, notes: ‘But in order that you should understand the depth of the wisdom and the wealth of the unsearchable judgements of God, God did not leave even the [Old Testament] sacrifices completely unsanctified, unperfected and limited only to the shedding of blood, but to the sacrifices under the law is united the great and in relation to the Primary Essence, so to speak, untempered Sacrifice – the purification not of a small part of the universe, and not for a short time, but of the whole world for eternity’.

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<sup>52</sup> St. Gregory the Theologian, *Works*, Russian edition, vol. V, p. 42. Cf. *Homily 20* (PG 35.1068d).

<sup>53</sup> St. Gregory the Theologian, *Works*, Russian edition, vol. I, pp. 179-180, Moscow, 1889 and vol. I, St. Petersburg edition, p. 669.

<sup>54</sup> St. Gregory the Theologian, *Works*, Russian edition, vol. IV, pp. 132-142, Moscow, 1889 and vol. I, St. Petersburg edition, p. 675-680.

<sup>55</sup> St. John Chrysostom, *Works*, Russian edition, vol. III, pp. 898-900.

<sup>56</sup> Archbishop Theophan, *On the Redemption*, pp. 25-27.

“By this great Sacrifice he understands the Saviour Jesus Christ Himself, Who shed His blood for the salvation of the human race on Golgotha, which is why he often calls Him ‘God, High Priest and Victim’. ‘He gave Himself for us for redemption, for a purifying sacrifice for the universe’.<sup>57</sup>

“For us He became man and took on the form of a servant, he was led to death for our iniquities’.<sup>58</sup>

“‘He is God, High Priest and Victim’.<sup>59</sup>

“‘He was Victim, but also High Priest; Priest, but also God; He offered as a gift to God [His own] blood, but [by It] He cleansed the whole world; He was raised onto the Cross, but to the Cross was nailed the sin of all mankind’.<sup>60</sup>

“‘He redeems the world by His own blood’.<sup>61</sup>

“St. Athanasius of Alexandria says about the Sacrifice of the Saviour on Golgotha: ‘He, being the true Son of the Father, later became man for us so as to give Himself for us as a sacrifice to the Father and redeem us through His sacrifice and offering (Ephesians 5.2). He was the same Who in ancient times led the people out of Egypt, and later redeemed all of us, or rather, the whole human race, from death, and raised us from hell. He is the same Who from the age was offered as a sacrifice, as a Lamb, and in the Lamb was represented prefiguratively. And finally He offered Himself as a sacrifice for us. “For even Christ our Pascha is sacrificed for us” (I Corinthians 5.7).’<sup>62</sup>

“‘By His death was accomplished the salvation of all, and the whole of creation was redeemed. He is the common Life of all, and He gave His body to death as a sheep for a redemptive sacrifice for the salvation of all, though the Jews do not believe this.’<sup>63</sup>

“St. Gregory of Nyssa reasons in a similar way.

“‘Jesus, as Zachariah says, is the Great High Priest (Zachariah 3.1), Who offered His Lamb, that is, His flesh, in sacrifice for the sins of the world, and for the sake of the children who partake of flesh and blood Himself partook of blood (Hebrews 11.14). This Jesus became High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, not in respect of what He was before, being the Word and God and in the form of God and equal to God, but in respect of that fact that He spent Himself in the form of a servant and offered an offering and sacrifice for us’.<sup>64</sup>

“‘He is our Pascha (I Corinthians 5.6) and High Priest (Hebrews 12.11). For in truth Christ the Pascha was consumed for us; but the priest who offers to God the Sacrifice is none other than the

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<sup>57</sup> St. Gregory the Theologian, *Word 30, Works*, Russian edition, vol. III, p. 82 or vol. I (St. Petersburg), p. 442.

<sup>58</sup> St. Gregory the Theologian, *Word 19, Works*, Russian edition, vol. II, p. 129 or vol. I (St. Petersburg), p. 296.

<sup>59</sup> St. Gregory the Theologian, *Word 3, Works*, Russian edition, vol. I, pp. 58-59 or vol. I (St. Petersburg), p. 58; *Word 20*, vol. II, p. 235 or vol. I (St. Petersburg), p. 299; *Verses on himself*, vol. IV, p. 247 or vol. II (St. Petersburg), p. 66.

<sup>60</sup> St. Gregory the Theologian, *Verses on himself*, vol. IV, p. 245 or vol. II (St. Petersburg), p. 22.

<sup>61</sup> St. Gregory the Theologian, *Word 29, Works*, Russian edition, vol. III, p. 61 or vol. I (St. Petersburg), p. 427.

<sup>62</sup> St. Athanasius the Great, *Tenth Paschal Epistle*, 10; *Works*, Russian edition, vol. III, p. 464.

<sup>63</sup> St. Athanasius the Great, *On the Incarnation of God the Word*, 37; *Works*, Russian edition (St. Sergius Lavra, 1902), vol. I, p. 238.

<sup>64</sup> St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius*, book VI, 2; *Works*, Russian edition, vol. VI, pp. 43-44.

Same Christ. For in Himself, as the [Apostle] says, “He hath given Himself for us as an offering and sacrifice to God” (Ephesians 5.2).<sup>65</sup>

“By means of priestly acts He in an ineffable manner unseen by men offers an offering and sacrifice for us, being at the same time the Priest and the Lamb that takes away the sins of the world’.<sup>66</sup>

“We find much material on the given question in the same spirit in the works of St. John Chrysostom.

“‘The oeconomy that was to be accomplished in the New Testament,’ says this Holy Father in his interpretation on the Gospel of John, ‘was foreshadowed beforehand in prefigurative images; while Christ by His Coming accomplished it. What then does the type say? “Take ye a lamb for an house, and kill it, and do as He commanded and ordained’ (Exodus 12). But Christ did not do that; He did not command this, but Himself became as a Lamb, offering Himself to the Father as a sacrifice and offering’.<sup>67</sup>

“‘When John the Forerunner saw Christ, he said to his disciples: “Behold the Lamb of God” (John 1.35). By this he showed them all the gift which He came to give, and the manner of purification. For “the Lamb” declares both these things. And John did not say, “Who shall take”, or “Who hath taken”, but “Who taketh away the sins of the world”, because Christ always does this. In fact, he took them away not only then when He suffered, but from that time even to the present He takes away sins, not as if He were always being crucified (for He at one time offered sacrifice for sins), but since by that one sacrifice He is continually purging them.’<sup>68</sup>

“‘This blood was ever typified of old in the altars and sacrifices determined by the law. It is the price of the world, by it Christ redeemed the Church, by it He adorned the whole of her.’<sup>69</sup> ‘This blood in types cleansed sins. But if it had such power in the types, if death so shuddered at the shadow, tell me how would it not have dreaded the very reality?’<sup>70</sup>

“‘David after the words: “Sacrifice and offering hast Thou not desired”, added: “but a body hast Thou perfected for me” (Psalms 39.9), understanding by this the body of the Master, a sacrifice for the whole universe, which cleansed our souls, absolved our sins, destroyed death, opened the heavens, showed us many great hopes and ordered all the rest’.<sup>71</sup>

“St. John Chrysostom’s reasoning on the mystery of the Sacrifice on Golgotha is particularly remarkable in his discourse, *On the Cross and the Thief*, which he delivered, as is evident from the discourse itself, on Great Friday in Holy Week. ‘Today our Lord Jesus Christ is on the Cross, and we celebrate, so that you should know that the Cross is a feast and a spiritual triumph. Formerly the Cross was the name of a punishment, but now it has become an honourable work; before it was a symbol of condemnation, but now it has become the sign of salvation... It has enlightened those sitting in darkness, it has reconciled us, who were in enmity with God... Thanks to the Cross we do not tremble before the tyrant, because we are near the King. That is why we celebrate in commemorating the Cross.... In fact, one and the same was both victim and priest: the victim was

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<sup>65</sup> St. Gregory of Nyssa, *To Olympius the Monk on Perfection*; Works, Russian edition, vol. VII, p. 237.

<sup>66</sup> St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Word on Holy Pascha*; Works, Russian edition, vol. VIII, p. 38.

<sup>67</sup> St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on John*, 13, 3; Works, Russian edition, vol. VIII, p. 95.

<sup>68</sup> St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on John*, 18, 2; Works, Russian edition, vol. VIII, p. 119-120.

<sup>69</sup> St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on John*, 46, 4; Works, Russian edition, vol. VIII, p. 306.

<sup>70</sup> St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on John*, 46, 3; Works, Russian edition, vol. VIII, p. 305.

<sup>71</sup> St. John Chrysostom, *Against the Jews*; Works, Russian edition, vol. I, p. 722.

the flesh, and the priest was the spirit. One and the same offers and was offered in the flesh. Listen to how Paul explained both the one and the other. “For every high priest,” he says, “chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins... Hence it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer” (Hebrews 5.1, 8.3). So He Himself offers Himself. And in another place he says that “Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation” (Hebrews 9.28)....<sup>72</sup>

”St. Cyril of Alexandria reasons as follows with regard to the words of John the Forerunner on the Saviour: “Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world” (John 1.29). It was necessary to reveal Who was the One Who came to us and why He descends from heaven to us. And so “Behold”, he says, “the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world”, to Whom the Prophet Isaiah pointed in the words: “As a sheep for the slaughter is he led and as a lamb before the shearers is he silent” (Isaiah 53.7) and Who was prefigured in the law of Moses. But then He saved only in part, without extending His mercy on all, for it was a figure and a shadow. But now He Who once was depicted by means of enigmas, the True Lamb, the Spotless Victim, is led to the slaughter for all, so as to expel the sin of the world and cast down the destroyer of the universe, so that by His death for all He might abolish death and lift the curse that was on us, so that, finally, the punishment that was expressed in the words: “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Genesis 3.19) might cease and the second Adam might appear – not from the earth, but from the heaven (I Corinthians 15.47) – and become for human nature the beginning of a great good, the destruction of the corruption wrought [by sin], the author of eternal life, the founder of the transformation [of man] according to God, the beginning of piety and righteousness, the way to the Heavenly Kingdom. One Lamb died for all, saving for God and the Father a whole host of men, One for all so that all might be subjected to God, One for all so as to acquire all, “that those who live might live no longer for themselves but from Him Who for their sake died and was raised” (II Corinthians 5.15). Insofar as we were in many sins and therefore subject to death and corruption, the Father gave the son to deliver us (I Timothy 2.6), One for all, since all are in Him and He is above all. One died for all so that all should live in Him.<sup>73</sup> St. Cyril’s general view of the death of Christ the Saviour on Golgotha is such that on Golgotha Emmanuel ‘offered Himself as a sacrifice to the Father not for Himself, according to the irreproachable teaching, but for us who were under the yoke and guilt of sin’.<sup>74</sup> ‘He offered Himself as a holy sacrifice to God and the Father, having bought by His own blood the salvation of all’.<sup>75</sup> ‘For our sakes he was subjected to death, and we were redeemed from our former sins by reason of the slaughter which He suffered for us’.<sup>76</sup> ‘In Him we have been justified, freed from a great accusation and condemnation, our lawlessness has been taken from us: for such was the aim of the oeconomy towards us of Him Who because of us, for our sakes and in our place was subject to death’.<sup>77</sup>

“St. Basil the Great in his epistle to Bishop Optimus writes: ‘The Lord had to taste death for each, and having become a propitiatory sacrifice for the world, justify all by His blood’.<sup>78</sup> He develops his thought on the death on the Cross of Christ the Saviour in more detail as a redeeming sacrifice for the sins of the human race in his interpretation of Psalm 48, at the words: “There be some that trust in their strength, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches. A brother

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<sup>72</sup> St. John Chrysostom, *Works*, Russian edition, vol. II, pp. 437-438. Cf. vol. II, pp. 446-449.

<sup>73</sup> St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Interpretation of the Gospel of John; Works of the Holy Fathers*, Sergiev Posad, 1901, vol. 64, pp. 175-176 (in Russian).

<sup>74</sup> St. Cyril of Alexandria, *On worship and service in spirit and in truth*, part I.

<sup>75</sup> St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Interpretation of the Gospel of John; Works of the Holy Fathers*, Sergiev Posad, 1901, vol. 66, pp. 175-176 (in Russian)..

<sup>76</sup> St. Cyril of Alexandria, *On worship and service in spirit and in truth*, part II.

<sup>77</sup> St. Cyril of Alexandria, *On worship and service in spirit and in truth*, part II.

<sup>78</sup> St. Basil the Great, *Letter to Bishop Optimus; Works*, Russian edition, Sergiev Posad, 1892, vol. VII, p. 224.

cannot redeem; shall a man redeem? He shall not give to God a ransom [εξιλασμα] for himself, nor the price of the redemption of his own soul” (Psalm 48.7-9): ‘This sentence is directed by the prophet to two types of persons: to the earthborn and to the rich.... You, he says, who trust in your own strength.... And you, he says, who trust in the uncertainty of riches, listen.... You have need of ransoms that you may be transferred to the freedom of which you were deprived when conquered by the power of the devil, who, taking you under his control, does not free you from his tyranny until, persuaded by some worthwhile ransom, he wishes to exchange you. And the ransom must not be of the same kind as the things which are held in his control, but must differ greatly, if he would willingly free the captives from slavery. Therefore a brother is not able to ransom you. For no man can persuade the devil to remove from his power him who has once been subject to him, not he, at any rate, who is incapable of giving God a propitiatory offering even for his own sins.... But one thing was found worth as much as all men together. This was given for the price of ransom for our souls, the holy and highly honoured blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which He poured out for all of us; therefore we were bought at a great price (I Corinthians 6.20).... No one is sufficient to redeem himself, unless He comes who turns away “the captivity of the people” (Exodus 13.8), not with ransoms nor with gifts, as it is written in Isaiah (52.3), but with His own blood... He Who “shall not give to God His own ransom”, but that of the whole world. He does not need a ransom, but He Himself is the propitiation. “For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, set apart from sinners, and become higher than the heavens. He does not need to offer sacrifices daily (as the other priests did), first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people” (Hebrews 7.26-27).’<sup>79</sup>

“‘The Scriptures do not reject all sacrifices in general,’ writes St. Basil the Great in his interpretation on the book of the Prophet Isaiah, ‘but the Jewish sacrifices. For he says: “What to Me is the multitude of your sacrifices?” (Isaiah 1.11). He does not approve of the many, but demands the one sacrifice. Every person offers himself as a sacrifice to God, presenting himself as “a living sacrifice, pleasing to God”, through “rational service” he has offered to God the sacrifice of praise (Romans 12.1). But insofar as the many sacrifices under the law have been rejected as useless, the one sacrifice offered in the last times is accepted. For the Lamb of God took upon Himself the sin of the world, “gave Himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God” (Ephesians 5.2)... There are no longer the “continual” sacrifices (Exodus 29.42), there are no sacrifices on the day of atonement, no ashes of the heifer cleansing “the defiled persons” (Hebrews 9.13). For there is one sacrifice of Christ and the mortification of the saints in Christ; one sprinkling – “the washing of regeneration” (Titus 3.5); one propitiation for sin – the Blood poured out for the salvation of the world.’<sup>80</sup>

“Finally, St. John of Damascus says the following about the mystery of the sacrifice on Golgotha: “Every action and performance of miracles by Christ are most great and divine and marvelous: but the most marvelous of all is His precious Cross. For no other thing has subdued death, expiated the sin of the first parent [προπατορος αμαρτια], despoiled Hades, bestowed the resurrection, granted the power to us of condemning the present and even death itself, prepared the return to our former blessedness, opened the gates of Paradise, given our nature a seat at the right hand of God, and made us children and heirs of God, save the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ’.<sup>81</sup> Therefore, according to the words of the holy father, ‘we must bow down to the very Wood on which Christ offered Himself as a sacrifice for us, since it is sanctified through contact with the body and blood’.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>79</sup> St. Basil the Great, *Homily 19 on Psalm 48*, 3, 4; *Works*, Russian edition, Sergiev Posad, 1892, vol. I, pp. 194-195.

<sup>80</sup> St. Basil the Great, *Works*, Russian edition, Sergiev Posad, 1892, vol. I, pp. 241-242.

<sup>81</sup> St. John of Damascus, *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, book IV, ch. 11.

<sup>82</sup> St. John of Damascus, *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, book IV, ch. 11.

“This is what the Holy Fathers and Teachers of the Church teach about the mystery of the sacrifice of the Saviour on Golgotha for the sins of the human race. But that is not all. This teaching was even formally confirmed by a whole local council of the Church of Constantinople in 1156. This council was convened because of different understandings of the well-known words in the liturgical prayer, where it is said of Christ the Saviour: ‘Thou art He that offereth and is offered, that accepteth and is distributed’.<sup>83</sup> The initial reasons for this difference, according to the account of a contemporary historian, Kinnamas, was the following circumstance. A certain Deacon Basil during Divine service in the Church of St. John the Theologian declared while giving a sermon on the daily Gospel reading that ‘the one Son of God Himself became a sacrifice and accepted the sacrifice together with the Father’. Two deacons of the Great Church who were present at this found in the words of Basil an incorrect thought, as if two hypostases were thereby admitted in Jesus Christ, of which one was offered in sacrifice and the other accepted the sacrifice. Together with the others who thought like them they spread the idea that the Saviour’s sacrifice for us was offered only to God the Father. In order to obtain a more exact explanation and definition of the Orthodox teaching, the conciliar sessions took place, at the will of the Emperor Manuel Comnenus, on January 26 and May 12, 1156. The first conciliar session took place in the hall attached to the Great Church as a result of the inquiry of the just-appointed Metropolitan Constantine of Russia, who was hastening to leave: was it truly necessary to understand the words of the prayer as he understood them, that the sacrifice was offered and is offered to the whole of the Holy Trinity? The council, under the presidency of the Patriarch of Constantinople Constantine Kliarenos, confirmed the teaching expressed of old by the Fathers and Teachers of the Church, whose works were read at the council, that both at the beginning, during the Master’s sufferings, the life-creating flesh and blood of Christ was offered, not to the Father only, but also to the whole of the Holy Trinity, and now, during the daily performed rites of the Eucharist, the bloodless sacrifice is offered to the Trihypostatic Trinity”, and laid an anathema on the defenders of the error, whoever they might be, if they still adhered to their heresy and did not repent.”<sup>8485</sup>

“From this historical note it is evident that the council of 1156 considered it indisputable that the death of Christ the Saviour on Golgotha is a propitiatory sacrifice for the human race. It was occupied only with the question to which this sacrifice was offered and decided it in the sense that the sacrifice was offered by Christ the Saviour to the All-Holy Trinity. Moreover, Christ the Saviour Himself was at the same time both the sacrifice and High Priest offering the sacrifice in accordance with His human nature, and God receiving the sacrifice, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit. According to the resolution of the council, the eucharistic sacrifice is the same

<sup>83</sup> Prayer recited secretly by the priest during the Cherubic hymn.

<sup>84</sup> Archbishop Theophan, *On the Redemption*, pp. 29-32.

<sup>85</sup> In 1157 another council was convened at Blachernae in Constantinople which condemned the teachings of the Deacons Basilakes and Soterichus. The condemnation was incorporated into the *Synodikon of Orthodoxy* as follows:

AGAINST THE ERRORS OF BASILAKES, SOTERICHIUS AND OTHERS

To those who say that at the season of the world-saving Passion of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ, when He offered the sacrifice of His precious body and blood for our salvation and fulfilled in His human nature the ministry of High Priest for us (since He is at the same time God and Sacrificer and Victim, according to St. Gregory the Theologian), He did offer the sacrifice to God the Father, yet He, the Only-begotten, in company with the Holy Spirit, did not accept the sacrifice as God together with the Father; to those who by such teachings estrange from the divine equality of honour and dignity both God the Word and the Comforter Spirit, Who is of one essence and of one glory with Him: *Anathema* (3)

To those who do not accept that the sacrifice offered daily by those who have received from Christ the priestly service of the divine Mysteries is in fact offered to the Holy Trinity, and who thereby contradict the sacred and divine Fathers, Basil and Chrysostom, with whom the other God-bearing Fathers also agree in both their words and their writings: *Anathema* (3)

(*The True Vine*, issues 27 and 28, Spring, 2000, pp. 53-55)

sacrifice, by its link with the sacrifice on Golgotha. Those who thought otherwise were subjected by the council to anathema.”<sup>86</sup>

As St. Gregory of Nyssa writes: “He offered Himself for us, Victim and Sacrifice, and Priest as well, and ‘Lamb of God Who taketh away the sins of the world’. When did He do this? When He made His own Body food and His own Blood drink for His disciples, for this much is clear to anyone, that a sheep cannot be eaten by a man unless its being eaten be preceded by its being slaughtered. This giving of His own Body to His disciples for eating clearly indicates that the sacrifice of the Lamb has now been completed.”<sup>87</sup>

The HOCNA bishops write: “In Archbishop Nikon’s *Life and Works of Metropolitan Anthony* (vol. 5, pp. 171-172), Bishop Gabriel quotes Archbishop Theophan of Poltava’s objections to *The Dogma of Redemption*. Archbishop Theophan writes: ‘The death of Christ the Saviour on the Cross on Golgotha, according to the teaching of the Holy Fathers, undoubtedly is a redemptive and propitiating sacrifice for the sins of the race of man.’ Opposite this passage, in the margin, Metropolitan Anthony has written: ‘I accept and do not deny’.” (p. 13)

But if Metropolitan Anthony accepts and does not deny this clear statement of the “juridical theory”, including such a purely juridical phrase as “propitiating sacrifice”, why does he still consider Metropolitan Philaret a scholastic? In what way was Archbishop Theophan’s statement Orthodox while Metropolitan Philaret’s in his *Catechism* (which we have quoted above) was heretical? Nowhere to our knowledge are we given answers to these questions, neither in Metropolitan Anthony’s works, nor in those of his supporters...

“Let our lives, then,” chants the Holy Church, “be worthy of the loving Father Who has offered sacrifice, and of the glorious Victim Who is the Saviour of our souls”.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Archbishop Theophan, *On the Redemption*.

<sup>87</sup> St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Sermon One on the Resurrection of Christ*, Jaeger, vol. 9, p. 287. In William A. Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1979, volume 2, p. 59.

<sup>88</sup> *Triodion*, Sunday of the Prodigal son, Vespers, “Lord, I have cried”, verse.

#### **4. THE PRAYER IN THE GARDEN**

*The natural and innocent passions [include] the shrinking from death, the fear, the agony with the bloody sweat, the succour at the hands of angels because of the weakness of the nature, and other such like passions which belong by nature to every man.*

St. John of Damascus, Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, III, 24.

The HOCNA bishops write next to nothing about the topics discussed in the previous sections – that is, the language of the “juridical theory”, especially the concepts of the wrath of God, justification and sacrifice for sin. They take it as read that this language is somehow illegitimate and “scholastic”, although, as we have shown, it is in fact perfectly patristic and scriptural and in no way incompatible with right doctrine if properly understood. And so, rejecting the “negative” juridical theory, they turn to what Metropolitan Anthony calls his “positive” theory, “moral monism”, and in particular to his interpretation of the prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane in the context of that theory.

Since this is the most famous part of the metropolitan’s theory, we shall quote him at some length: “The word of instruction is good, still better is a good example, but what shall we call a power incomparably superior to either of these? This, which we have delayed to define, is compassionate love, this power is suffering for another’s sake which sets a beginning to his regeneration. It is a mystery, yet not so far removed from us; we can see it working before our very eyes, sometimes even through us, though we do not always understand it. As a power of regeneration we find it constantly mentioned not only in stories of the lives of the Saints and the *vitae* of virtuous shepherds of the Church, but also in the tales of secular literature which are at times wonderfully profound and accurate. Both recognize in compassionate love an active, revolutionary and often irresistible power; yet the former do not explain wherein lies its connection with Christ as our Redeemer, and the latter do not even understand it...

“Such strength of compassionate love is the grace-filled fruit of a godly life and of nature (e.g., the love of a Christian mother). This is within the reach of the laity who live in God, but their sphere of action is limited to near relatives, or to students (of a pious teacher), or to companions in work or companions by circumstance... However, when all men in question, the earnest of this gift is imparted by the mystery of Holy Orders. Our Scholastic theology has overlooked this fact, which is very clearly expressed by Saint John Chrysostom,... who says, ‘Spiritual love is not born of anything earthly; it comes from above, from Heaven, and is imparted in the mystery of Holy Orders; but the assimilation and retention of the gift depends on the aspirations of the spirit of man’...

“The compassionate love of a mother, a friend, a spiritual shepherd, or an apostle is operative only if it attracts Christ, the true Shepherd. When it acts within the limits of mere human relations, it can call forth a kindly attitude and repentive [penitent] sentiments, but it cannot work radical regeneration. The latter is so hard for our corrupt nature that not unjustly did Nicodemus, talking with Christ, compare it to an adult person entering again into his mother’s womb and being born for a second time. To this our Lord replied that what is impossible in the life of the flesh is possible in the life of grace, where the Holy Spirit, Who descends from Heaven, operates. In order to grant us this life, Christ had to be crucified and raised, as the serpent was raised by Moses in the wilderness, that all who believe in Him should not perish, but have eternal life (John 3.13-15). So what those who possess grace can do to some extent only and for some people only, our Heavenly Redeemer can do fully and for all. Throughout the course of His earthly life, filled with the most profound compassion for sinful humanity, He often exclaimed, ‘O faithless and perverse

generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer with you?’ (Matthew 17.17). He was oppressed with the greatest sorrows on the night when the greatest crime in the history of mankind was committed, when the ministers of God, with the help of Christ’s disciple, some because of envy, some because of avarice, decided to put the Son of God to death.

“And a second time the same oppressing sorrow possessed His pure soul on the Cross, when the cruel masses, far from being moved to pity by His terrible physical sufferings, maliciously ridiculed the Sufferer; and as to His moral suffering, they were unable even to surmise it. One must suppose that during that night in Gethsemane, the thought and feeling of the God-Man embraced fallen humanity numbering many, many millions, and He wept with loving sorrow over each individual separately, as only the omniscient heart of God could do. *In this did our redemption consist*. This is why God, the God-Man, and only He, could be our Redeemer. Not an angel, nor a man. And not at all because the satisfaction of Divine wrath demanded the most costly sacrifice. Ever since the night in Gethsemane and that day on Golgotha, every believer, even he who is just beginning to believe, recognizes his inner bond with Christ and turns to Him in his prayers as to the inexhaustible source of moral regenerating force. Very few are able to explain why they so simply acquired faith in the possibility of deriving new moral energy and sanctification from calling on Christ, but no believer doubts it, nor even do heretics.

“Having mourned with His loving soul over our imperfection and our corrupt wills, the Lord has added to our nature the well-spring of new vital power, accessible to all who have wished or ever shall wish for it, beginning with the wise thief...

“... I have always been dissatisfied when someone to whom I have explained redeeming grace retorts from a Scholastic, theological viewpoint in this manner, ‘You have spoken only of the subjective, the moral aspect of the dogma, leaving out the objective and metaphysical (that is to say, the juridical).’ To all this I answer, ‘No, a purely objective law of our spiritual nature is revealed in the transmission of the compassionate, supremely loving energy of the Redeemer to the spiritual nature of the man who believes and calls for this help, a law which is revealed in our dogmas, but of which our dogmatic science has taken no notice.’”<sup>89</sup>

At this point, however, the metropolitan chooses to delay the elucidation of his positive theory in order to “refute the current understanding that our Lord’s prayer in Gethsemane was inspired by fear of the approaching physical suffering and death. This would be entirely unworthy of the Lord, whose servants in later days (as well as in earlier times, as for instance, the Maccabees) gladly met torture and rejoiced when their flesh was torn and longed to die for Christ as it were the greatest felicity. Moreover, the Saviour knew well that His spirit was to leave His body for less than two days, and for this reason alone the death of the body could not hold any terror for Him.

“I am perfectly convinced that the bitter sufferings of Christ in Gethsemane came from contemplation of the sinful life and the wicked inclinations of all the generations of men, beginning with His enemies and betrayers of that time, and that when our Lord said, ‘Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me,’ He referred not to the approaching crucifixion and death but to the overwhelming state of profound sorrow which He felt for the human race He loved so dearly”.<sup>90</sup>

Now there is some patristic evidence for this view (it is quoted by the HOCNA bishops). But there is still more evidence for the view, contested by Metropolitan Anthony, that Christ allowed

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<sup>89</sup> *The Dogma of Redemption*, pp. 18-19, 24, 27-29.

<sup>90</sup> *The Dogma of Redemption*, p. 30.

His human nature to experience the fear of death that is natural to it and in no way sinful, in order to demonstrate the reality of that nature.<sup>91</sup> Moreover, this latter interpretation became particularly firmly established after the Sixth Ecumenical Council had finally elucidated the doctrine of the two wills of Christ, the locus classicus for which is precisely the prayer in the Garden.

Thus the great champion of the two-wills doctrine, St. Maximus the Confessor, whose teaching was confirmed at the Sixth Council, writes in his *Dispute with Pyrrhus*: “Since the God of all Himself became man without [undergoing any] change, then [it follows] that the same Person not only willed in a manner appropriate to His Godhead, but also willed as man in a manner appropriate to His humanity. For the things that exist came to be out of nothing, and have therefore a power that draws them to hold fast to being, and not to non-being; and the natural characteristic of this power is an inclination to that which maintains them in being, and a drawing back from things destructive [to them]. Thus the super-essential Word, existing essentially in a human manner, also had in His humanity this self-preserving power that clings to existence. And He [in fact] showed both [aspects of this power], willing the inclination and the drawing back through His human energy. He displayed the inclination to cling to existence in His use of natural and innocent things, to such an extent that unbelievers thought He was not God; and He displayed the drawing back at the time of the Passion when He voluntarily balked at death.”<sup>92</sup>

The important word here is “voluntarily”. Although it was natural, and not sinful, for Christ to fear death, since He was truly man, He did not *have* to; He could have overcome that fear through the power of the grace that was natural to Him as being truly God, which grace also overcame the fear of death in the holy martyrs. But He chose not to overcome the fear that is in accordance with nature (and which is to be clearly distinguished from that irrational dread which is contrary to nature<sup>93</sup>), in order to demonstrate the reality of that nature.

However, in case anyone should think that there was a conflict between His human will and His Divine will, Christ immediately demonstrated the complete obedience of His human will to the Divine will by the words: “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt”, which sentence, as St. Maximus explains, “excludes all opposition, and demonstrates the union of the [human] will of the Saviour with the Divine will of the Father, since the whole Word has united Himself essentially to the entirety of [human] nature, and has deified it in its entirety by uniting Himself essentially to it”.<sup>94</sup>

St. John of Damascus sums up the patristic consensus on this point: “He had by nature, both as God and as man, the power of will. But His human will was obedient and subordinate to His Divine will, not being guided by its own inclination, but willing those things which the Divine will willed. For it was with the permission of the Divine will that He suffered by nature what was proper to Him. For when He prayed that He might escape the death, it was with His Divine will naturally willing and permitting it that He did so pray and agonize and fear, and again when His Divine will willed that His human will should choose the death, the passion became voluntary to

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<sup>91</sup> Archbishop Theophan lists: St. Athanasius the Great (*On the Incarnation of the Word and against the Arians*, 21; *Third Word against the Arians*, 57), St. Gregory of Nyssa (*Antirrheticus, or Refutation of the Opinions of Apollinarius*, 32), St. John Chrysostom (*Against the Anomeans*, Word 7), St. Cyril of Alexandria (*Interpretation of the Gospel according to John*, 12.26-27; *Interpretation of the Book of the Prophet Isaiah*), St. Ephraim the Syrian (*Interpretation of the Four Gospels*) and St. John of Damascus (*Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, III, 18). Fr. Seraphim Rose adds to this list St. Symeon the New Theologian (*Homily 39*, 5).

<sup>92</sup> St. Maximus the Confessor, PG 91:297B-300A. Translated in Joseph Farrell, *Free Choice in St. Maximus the Confessor*, South Canaan: St. Tikhon’s Seminary Press, 1989, pp. 167-168.

<sup>93</sup> St. Maximus the Confessor, PG 91:297CD; St. John of Damascus, *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, III, 23.

<sup>94</sup> St. Maximus the Confessor, *Theological and Polemical Works 6*, PG:68C. In Farrell, op. cit., p. 172.

Him. For it was not as God only, but also as man, that He voluntarily surrendered Himself to the death. And thus He bestowed on us also courage in the face of death. So, indeed, He said before His saving passion, ‘Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me’ (Matthew 26.39; Luke 22.22), manifestly as though He were to drink the cup as man and not as God. It was as man, then, that He wished the cup to pass from Him: but these are the words of natural timidity. ‘Nevertheless,’ He said, ‘not My will’, that is to say, not in so far as I am of a different essence from Thee, ‘but Thy will be done’, that is to say, My will and Thy will, in so far as I am of the same essence as Thou. Now these are the words of a brave heart. For the Spirit of the Lord, since He truly became man in His good pleasure, on first testing its natural weakness was sensible of the natural fellow-suffering involved in its separation from the body, but being strengthened by the Divine will it again grew bold in the face of death. For since He was Himself wholly God although also man, and wholly man although also God, He Himself as man subjected in Himself and by Himself His human nature to God and the Father, and became obedient to the Father, thus making Himself the most excellent type and example for us”.<sup>95</sup>

Still more clearly, Theophylact of Bulgaria writes: “To confirm that He was truly man, He permitted His human nature to do what is natural to it. Christ, as man, desires life and prays for the cup [that is, death<sup>96</sup>] to pass, for man has a keen desire for life. By doing these things, the Lord confutes those heretics who say that He became man in appearance only. If they found a way to utter such nonsense even though the Lord showed here such clear signs of His human nature, what would they not have dared to invent if He had not done these things? To want the cup removed is human. By saying without hesitation, ‘Nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done’, the Lord shows that we too must have the same disposition and the same degree of equanimity, yielding in all things to the will of God. The Lord also teaches here that when our human nature pulls us in a different direction, we ought not to yield to that temptation. ‘Not My human will be done, but Thine, yet Thy will is not separate from My Divine will’. Because the one Christ has two natures, He also had two natural wills, or volitions, one Divine and the other human. His human nature wanted to live, for that is its nature. But then, yielding to the Divine will common to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – namely, that all men be saved – His human nature accepted death. Thus His two wills willed one and the same thing: Christ’s salvific death. The praying in Gethsemane was from His human nature which was permitted to suffer the human passion of love of life... His human nature was permitted to suffer these things, and consequently did suffer them, to prove that the Lord was truly human, and not a man in appearance only. And, in a more mystical sense, the Lord voluntarily suffered these things in order to heal human nature of its cowardice. He did this by using it all up Himself, and then making cowardice obedient to the Divine will. It could be said that the sweat which came out from the Lord’s Body and fell from Him indicates that our cowardice flows out of us and is gone as our nature is made strong and brave in Christ. Had He not desired to heal the fear and cowardice of mankind, the Lord would not have sweated as He did, so profusely and beyond even what the most craven coward would do. ‘There appeared an angel unto Him’, strengthening Him, and this too was for our encouragement, that we might learn the power of prayer to strengthen us, and having learned this, use it as our defense in dangers and sufferings. Thus is fulfilled the prophecy of Moses, ‘And let all the sons of God be strengthened in Him’ [Deuteronomy 32.43]”.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> St. John of Damascus, *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, III, 18.

<sup>96</sup> For, as the same author writes, commenting on the verse: “Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of?” (Matthew 20.22), “the cup means martyrdom and one’s own death” (*Commentary on Matthew*, House Springs, Mo.: Chrysostom Press, 1992, p. 171).

<sup>97</sup> Blessed Theophylact, *Explanation of the Gospel according to Luke*, House Springs, Mo.: Chrysostom Press, 1997, pp. 293-294.

Returning now to Metropolitan Anthony's thesis, we may agree that the positive idea here – that the Lord suffered so terribly in contemplation of all the sins of all generations of mankind – is illuminating and, if not developed in ancient patristic thought, is nevertheless not contrary to it. However, the negative idea – that He did not suffer in fear of death – is explicitly contradicted by several of the Holy Fathers, as we have seen.

Moreover, contrary to the assertion of the HOCNA bishops, this negative idea is contradicted also by some modern Fathers of the Russian Church who knew and respected Metropolitan Anthony, but who in a tactful manner (as Fr. Seraphim Rose noted) corrected his mistake while preserving his genuine insight.

Thus Archbishop Averky of Syracuse and Holy Trinity Monastery writes: “Who among us sinful people can dare to affirm that he really knows everything that took place in the pure and holy soul of the God-Man at that minute when the decisive hour of His betrayal to death on the Cross for the sake of mankind drew near? But attempts were made in the past, and continue to be made now, to explain the reasons for these moral torments of the Lord, which He experienced in the garden of Gethsemane in those hours before His death. The most natural suggestion is that His human nature was in sorrow and fear. ‘Death entered into the human race unnaturally,’ says Blessed Theophylact: ‘therefore human nature fears it and runs from it’. Death is the consequence of sin (Romans 5.12,15), and so the sinless nature of the God-Man should not have submitted to death: death for it was an unnatural phenomenon: which is why the sinless nature of Christ is indignant at death, and sorrows and pines at its sight. These moral sufferings of Christ prove the presence of the two natures in Him: the Divine and the human, which the heretical Monophysites deny, as well as the Monothelites who deny the two wills.

“Besides, these moral sufferings undoubtedly also took place because the Lord took upon Himself all the sins of the whole world and went to death for them: *that which the whole world was bound to suffer for its sins was now concentrated, so to speak, on Him alone.*”<sup>98</sup>

Again, St. John Maximovich writes: “It was necessary that the sinless Saviour should take upon Himself all human sin, so that He, Who had no sins of His own, should feel the weight of the sin of all humanity and sorrow over it in such a way as was possible only for complete holiness, which clearly feels even the slightest deviation from the commandments and Will of God. It was necessary that He, in Whom Divinity and humanity were hypostatically united, should in His holy, sinless humanity experience the full horror of the distancing of man from his Creator, of the split between sinful humanity and the source of holiness and light – God. The depth of the fall of mankind must have stood before His eyes at that moment; for man, who in paradise did not want to obey God and who listened to the devil's slander against Him, would now rise up against his Divine Saviour, slander Him, and, having declared Him unworthy to live upon the earth, would hang Him on a tree between heaven and earth, thereby subjecting Him to the curse of the God-given law (Deuteronomy 21.22-23). It was necessary that the sinless Righteous One, rejected by the sinful world for which and at the hands of which He was suffering should forgive mankind this evil deed and turn to the Heavenly Father with a prayer that His Divine righteousness should forgive mankind, blinded by the devil, this rejection of its Creator and Saviour...

“However, this sacrifice would not be saving if He would experience only His personal sufferings – He had to be tormented by the wounds of sin from which mankind was suffering. The heart of the God-Man was filled with inexpressible sorrow. All the sins of men, beginning from

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<sup>98</sup> Archbishop Averky, *Guide to the Study of the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament*, Jordanville: Holy Trinity Monastery, volume 1, 1974, pp. 290-291 (in Russian)

the transgression of Adam and ending with those which would be done at the moment of the sounding of the last trumpet – all the great and small sins of all men stood before His mental gaze. They were always revealed to God – ‘all things are manifest before Him’ – but now their whole weight and iniquity was experienced also by His human nature. His holy, sinless soul was filled with horror. He suffered as the sinners themselves do not suffer, whose coarse hearts do not feel how the sin of man defiles and how it separates him from the Creator...

“However, the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. The spirit of Jesus now burns (Romans 12.11), wishing only one thing – the fulfillment of the Will of God. But by its nature human nature abhors sufferings and death (St. John of Damascus, *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, book 3, chapters 18, 20, 23, 24; Blessed Theodoret; St. John of the Ladder, *The Ladder*, word 6, “On the remembrance of death”). The Son of God willingly accepted this weak nature. He gives Himself up to death for the salvation of the world. And He conquers, although He feels the approaching fear of death and abhorrence of suffering... Now these sufferings will be especially terrible, terrible not so much in themselves, as from the fact that the soul of the God-Man was shaken to the depths...

“He offered up prayers and supplications to Him Who was able to save Him from death (Hebrews 5.7), but He did not pray for deliverance from death. It is as if the Lord Jesus Christ spoke as follows to His Father: ‘... Deliver Me from the necessity of experiencing the consequences of the crime of Adam. However, this request is dictated to Me by the frailty of My human nature; but let it be as is pleasing to Thee, let not the will of frail human nature be fulfilled, but Our common, pre-eternal Council. My Father! If according to Thy wise economy it is necessary that I offer this sacrifice, I do not reject It. But I ask only one thing: may Thy will be done. May Thy will be done always and in all things. As in heaven with Me, Thine Only-Begotten Son, and Thee there is one will, so may My human will here on earth not wish anything contrary to Our common will for one moment. May that which was decided by us before the creation of the world be fulfilled, may the salvation of the human race be accomplished. May the sons of men be redeemed from slavery to the devil, may they be redeemed at the high price of the sufferings and self-sacrifice of the God-Man. And may all the weight of men’s sins, which I have accepted on Myself, and all My mental and physical sufferings, not be able to make My human will waver in its thirst that Thy holy will be done. May I do Thy will with joy. Thy will be done...

“The Lord prayed about the cup of His voluntary saving passion as if it was involuntary’ (Sunday service of the fifth tone, canon, eighth irmos), showing by this the two wills of the two natures, and beseeching God the Father that His human will would not waver in its obedience to the Divine will (*Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, book 3, 24). An angel appeared to Him from the heavens and strengthened His human nature (Luke 22.43), while Jesus Who was accomplishing the exploit of His self-sacrifice prayed still more earnestly, being covered in a bloody sweat. And for His reverence”<sup>99</sup>

We see here that while St. John accepts Metropolitan Anthony’s thought that Christ suffered for the sins of the whole world in Gethsemane, he nevertheless, contrary to the HOCNA bishops’ assertion, does *not* agree that He was not fearful at the prospect of death, considering it in no way “unworthy” of the Saviour. For, as Archbishop Theophan writes: “The manifestation of this infirmity of the human nature of the Saviour represents nothing unworthy of His Most Holy Person, since it took place in accordance with the free permission of His Divine will and had its economical significance. The economical significance of this feat of the Saviour consists in the

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<sup>99</sup> “What did Christ Pray about in the Garden of Gethsemane?”, *Living Orthodoxy*, N 87, vol. XV, no. 3, May-June, 1993, pp. 5, 6, 7, 8.

fact that He witnessed thereby that the Saviour took upon Himself, not illusory, but real human nature with all its sinless infirmities and conquered one of the most important of these infirmities [the fear of death] in His Person”.<sup>100</sup>

Perhaps the best summary of the significance of the Prayer in the Garden comes from Holy New Hieromartyr John Vostorgov (+1918), who in a sermon in 1901 said: “When contemplating the Gethsemane struggle there are two main themes to keep in mind. First, Jesus Christ is not only perfect God, but perfect and complete man, as the Church has always clearly confessed. He is a man pure in body and sinless in spirit, ‘in all things like us save sin’. The second point is that Jesus Christ is the Redeemer of mankind Who bore our sins and the punishment for them – our afflictions (Isaiah 53.4; see whole chapter). Therefore, the soul of Jesus was not only oppressed by the knowledge of His impending, agonizing death, but by an incomparably greater burden – that of being the Redeemer. This weight so overwhelmed Him that He sweated blood and was brought to a state of complete exhaustion.

“As a man, the Saviour could not be completely indifferent towards death; if the thought of death is terrifying and unnatural for a sinner, how much more so for the sinless Jesus, the most perfect man. ‘God did not create death’ and man was created ‘for incorruption’ (Wisdom 2.23). Death appeared as a result of sin, as a punishment, and passed upon all men (cf. Romans 5.12-15). The early Gospel commentator, Saint John Chrysostom, as well as Saint Theophylact of Ochrid (who draws heavily on the works of Saint John) remark: ‘Death did not enter into mankind by nature, therefore human nature is afraid of it and flees from it’. A more recent commentator, the well-known theologian Bishop Michael, clarifies this idea with respect to the person of Jesus Christ. ‘Death,’ he writes, ‘is the result of sin, hence the sinless nature of the God-man should not have been subject to it. For [His nature] death was an unnatural phenomenon, so it stands to reason that the pure nature of Christ is troubled by death, and is sorrowed and anguished in the face of it.’...

“It would be a grave mistake to explain the sufferings of the Saviour in Gethsemane solely in terms of His anticipation of Golgotha, that is, from the perspective of Jesus Christ only as a man, and forgetting about Him as Redeemer. This view is not only unworthy of Jesus but is a misleading and inadequate explanation: He Who experienced such fear at only the anticipation of death, yet the same One Who possessed such divine tranquility and maintained it throughout His suffering – during the trial, in the midst of mockery, and on the cross, here even refusing to drink the gall that might numb His pain... But there are experiences even more trying than death; such was the cup the Saviour drank from in the garden of Gethsemane. In order to fully comprehend this we must recall the point raised earlier together with the recognition of the humanity of Jesus Christ, namely, that Jesus Christ is our Redeemer.

“The Sinless One had to bear all the wrath of God for sinners, all the punishments which the sinful nature of mankind merited. All of the chastisements and heavenly wrath which the world should have endured for its sins were taken on by the Redeemer of mankind alone. Seven hundred years before the birth of Christ the Prophet Isaiah spoke of this redeeming ministry: ‘the chastisement of our peace was upon Him’ (Isaiah 53.5). The punishment which would return to us the peace with God which we had lost was borne by Him. This peace was broken by the sin of Adam, the first-created man, and magnified and repeated over and over again by the individual sins of each man born on earth. The righteousness of God demanded punishment for the sins, and the Redeemer, the Son of God, took that punishment on Himself (Archbishop Innocent of Kherson, *The Final Days in the Life of Christ*). Punishment for sins manifests itself in two ways:

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<sup>100</sup> Archbishop Theophan, *On the Redemption*, p. 23.

internally, in the conscience of the sinner, and externally through physical afflictions. Inner torments, such as those experienced by Christ in Gethsemane, are more agonizing and torturous. The accumulated sins of every age, of every man, placed an inexplicably great burden on the conscience of Jesus. He had to bear the pangs of conscience as if He Himself were guilty of each sin. In the words of the Apostle, ‘For He hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him’ (II Corinthians 5.21). All atheism and unbelief, all pride and wickedness, all malice and ingratitude, lies, deceptions, sensuality, and every sort of offensive self-love, every vile and ignominious characteristic of sin past, present, and future, from the fall of Adam until the last moment of the earth’s existence – and all of this pressed on the sinless soul of the God-man. Without a doubt, He envisioned the assault on virtue, the persecution of His followers, the rivers of blood of the martyrs, the mocking of believers, the enmity against the Church; He beheld the entire abyss of wickedness, passions, and vices which until the end of time would pervert and distort the divinely given and redeemed human soul, which would ‘crucify... the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame’ (Hebrews 6.6). All of this amassed evil, all the sins of mankind were poured into the bitter, dreaded cup which the Son of God was called upon to drink. This is something far beyond our comprehension. ‘It was something more deadly than death’ (Farrar). ‘It would not be an exaggeration to say that it was the culmination of all the sufferings and deaths of all mankind. This inner anguish must have been as fierce as the torments of hell, for if even the most base of men are exhausted by the burden of their tortured conscience (e.g., Cain and Judas), torment only the thought of their own sinful life, how excruciating it must have been for the most pure soul of the God-man to endure the weight of all the sins of the world, and in such a condition, to ascend the cross and bring redemption through His blood’ (Archbishop Innocent, *The Final Days in the Life of Christ*).

“But sin is difficult not only because of the gnawing conscience: sin gave birth to the curse, to being banished from God, toward Whom, nevertheless, mankind has always strived and will strive. The Gethsemane Passion-bearer experienced this exile, this abandonment by the Father. For His sinless soul, which was accustomed to continuous union with God, which tasted and knew the sweetness, beauty and completeness of this union, this separation was, of course, inexpressibly difficult. It was the hell with which God threatens the impious, the hell which we simply cannot begin to imagine, the deprivation of life with God. It was this separation which produced the soul-shattering lament of the Sufferer on the cross: ‘My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?’ (Matthew 27.46). Thus, ‘Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, He being made a curse for us...’ (Galatians 3.13).”<sup>101</sup>

Hieromartyr John, like St. John of Shanghai, disagrees with Metropolitan Anthony that Christ was not fearful at the prospect of death, while agreeing with him that there was more to his suffering than that. To show that He was truly and completely man, He suffered the fear of death which is natural to fallen mankind. But to accomplish the redemption of mankind, He also suffered for the sins of all men, suffering not as man only, but as *Redeemer*.

However – and this is the most important point – Hieromartyr John describes the suffering of Christ for the sins of all men *completely in the terms of the juridical theory*. Thus it goes without saying that Christ suffered out of compassionate love for man. But His suffering consisted also and primarily in His *taking on the curse* and “all the punishments which the sinful nature of mankind merited” in order to restore peace with God the Father.

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<sup>101</sup> Hieromartyr John, “The Agony of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane”, *Orthodox Life*, vol. 47, no. 2, March-April, 1997, pp. 8-9, 10, 11-12; translated from *The Collected Works of Archpriest John Vostorgov*, St. Petersburg, 1995, vol. II, pp. 26-44 (in Russian).

And, as we shall now see, the taking on and blotting out of the curse, “the bond which stood against us with its legal demands”, was accomplished, not through the suffering in Gethsemane, but through the Death on Golgotha, by “nailing it to the *Cross*” (Colossians 2.15).

## 5. GETHSEMANE OR GOLGOTHA?

*Thou hast redeemed us from the curse of the law by Thy precious Blood: nailed to the Cross and pierced by the spear, Thou hast poured forth immortality upon mankind.*  
Triodion, Great Friday, Mattins, Sessional hymn.

Metropolitan Anthony calls the night in Gethsemane “the night of redemption”.<sup>102</sup> According to his critics, this shifts the focus of salvation from Golgotha to Gethsemane, which is foreign to the mind of the Church as expressed in her liturgical services. Moreover, to assert, as does Metropolitan Anthony of the Lord’s suffering in Gethsemane, that “*in this did our redemption consist*” would appear to some to imply that it did *not* consist in the suffering and death of Christ on Golgotha.

In defence of Metropolitan Anthony, Bishop Gregory Grabbe writes that “his words, ‘In this did our redemption consist’ referred not only to Gethsemane, but to Golgotha also” because he wrote: “*And a second time also* [Grabbe’s emphasis] the same oppressing sorrow possessed His pure soul on the Cross”.<sup>103</sup> This is true, and is sufficient to refute the extreme suggestion that Metropolitan Anthony somehow “rejected the Cross of Christ” or denied its saving significance *altogether*. We believe, therefore, that talk about a “stavroclastic” heresy is exaggerated in this context.

However, Bishop Gregory’s words are *not* sufficient to deflect the charge that the metropolitan placed undue emphasis on Gethsemane and thereby distorted the significance of Golgotha. Moreover, as we shall see, the metropolitan’s explanation of the unique significance of Golgotha – that is, the significance of Golgotha that was *not* shared by Gethsemane – is inadequate.

The HOCNA bishops quote Metropolitan Anthony: “We do not doubt for a moment that men could not have been saved unless the Lord suffered and arose from the dead, yet the bond between His suffering and our salvation is quite a different one [from the juridical teaching]”.<sup>104</sup> However, if this “other” bond was compassionate love, which manifested itself, as the metropolitan contends, supremely in Gethsemane, and if it was in that love “that our redemption consists”, what need was there for Him to die?

The metropolitan’s answer to this question is: “Christ’s bodily suffering and death were primarily necessary so that *believers would value His spiritual suffering* as incomparably greater than His bodily tortures”.<sup>105</sup> Again he writes: “The Lord’s crucifixion and death are not without meaning for our salvation, for, by bringing men to compunction, they reveal at least some portion of the redemptive sacrifice, and, by leading them to love for Christ, they prove saving for them and for all of us”.<sup>106</sup>

In other words, Golgotha was a repetition of Gethsemane with the addition of bodily suffering, which bodily suffering, though far less valuable than his spiritual sufferings, had a certain didactic value in heightening the awareness of the far more important spiritual suffering (although for the Catholics, it would seem, the bodily suffering distracted attention *away from* the spiritual

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<sup>102</sup> Archbishop Nikon, *Life and Works of Metropolitan Anthony*, 1960, volume IV, p. 45 (in Russian).

<sup>103</sup> Grabbe, Introduction to *The Dogma of Redemption*, pp. ix, viii.

<sup>104</sup> *The Dogma of Redemption*, p. 6.

<sup>105</sup> *The Dogma of Redemption*, p. 51.

<sup>106</sup> *The Dogma of Redemption*, p. 52. And in his *Catechism* he writes that the purpose of Christ’s death consisted in “making death itself unfrighting” (p. 50). Fr. George Florovsky calls this explanation “rather naïve”.

suffering). But then Golgotha added nothing essential, by which we mean *dogmatically* or *ontologically* or *soteriologically* essential. Indeed, if our redemption consists, as the metropolitan explicitly asserts, in Christ's compassionate suffering for the whole of sinful mankind in Gethsemane, it was not necessary for Him to *die*, but only to *suffer*.

And yet it was only when He voluntarily gave up His soul in death that He declared: "It is finished", *Consummatum est*, that is, My redemptive work for the salvation of men is completed, consummated. As St. John of Damascus writes: "[The Cross] is the crown of the Incarnation of the Word of God."<sup>107</sup> "Every act and miraculous energy of Christ is very great and divine and marvelous, but the most amazing of all is His precious Cross. For death was not abolished by any other means; the sin of our forefathers was not forgiven; Hades was not emptied and robbed; the resurrection was not given to us; the power to despise the present and even death itself has not been given to us; our return to the ancient blessedness was not accomplished; the gates of Paradise have not been opened; human nature was not given the place of honor at the right hand of God; we did not become children and inheritors of God, except by the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ alone. All these have been achieved by the death of the Lord on the Cross."<sup>108</sup>

It is important to stress the voluntary nature of Christ's death on the Cross. Sinful men cannot avoid death since it is the wages of sin. But for Christ, Who had no sin, it was by no means inevitable. He could have chosen to suffer but not to die, and to come off the Cross, presenting His body completely healed from wounds and invulnerable to death, as some of the holy martyrs emerged fully healthy after their tortures. This would have involved no lessening of the significance of His suffering in Gethsemane and Golgotha. But it would have meant that His redemptive work was incomplete.

For Christ came to save men not only from sin, but also from death, not only from the perversion of their wills, but also from the division of their nature, the sundering of soul from body in death. And in order to do that He had to take on *both* their sin *and* their death. For, in accordance with the patristic dictum, that which is not assumed is not saved. So Christ allowed His human soul to be separated from His body. But since His Divinity was still united to both His soul and His body, death could not hold them, and they were reunited in the resurrection. Thus did He trample down death, as the Paschal troparion chants, – the death of men, which is the wages of sin and which is involuntary by His own Death, which took place *in spite of* His sinlessness and was voluntary.

Another Paschal troparion declares, "In the grave bodily, but in hades with Thy soul as God; in Paradise with the thief, and on the throne with the Father and the Spirit wast Thou Who fillest all things, O Christ the Inexpressible". It was this continuing union of God the Life with death which destroyed death. For the unnatural union of life with death, the perfect expression of holiness with the penalty decreed for sin, could not be sustained; in fact, it could not continue even for one moment. And so at the very moment of Christ's Death, our death was destroyed, hades was burst asunder "and many bodies of the saints arose" (Matthew 27.53). At that moment truly, *and not a moment before*, could He say: "It is finished"...

Moreover, as St. Paul points out, the sealing of the New Testament was impossible without the death of the testator: "He is the Mediator of the New Testament, so that by means of the death which took place for redemption from the transgressions under the first Testament, they who have been called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, it is

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<sup>107</sup> St. John of Damascus, *On the Holy Sabbath*, 2; P.G. 96:604A; in Vassiliadis, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

<sup>108</sup> St. John of Damascus, *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, IV, 11; P.G. 94:1128-1129; in Vassiliadis, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

necessary for the death of the one who made a disposition for himself to be brought forward. For a testament is confirmed over those who are dead, since it never hath strength when the one who maketh the disposition liveth. Wherefore neither hath the first been inaugurated without blood” (Hebrews 9.15-18).

Bishop Theophan the Recluse comments on this passage: “Evidently the death of Jesus Christ disturbed many of the weaker ones: if He was dead, they said, how is He the eternal Intercessor for people and how can He deliver that which He promises? St. Paul in removing this doubt shows that it is precisely by dint of the fact that He died that His Testament is firm: for people do not talk about a testament (will) in the case of those who are alive (St. Chrysostom).”<sup>109</sup>

In answer to this the defenders of Metropolitan Anthony point out that we are redeemed not only by the death of Christ, but by the whole of His life on earth. This is true, but does not annul the other truth that the death of Christ was absolutely essential for our salvation as its climax and crown. As St. Gregory the Theologian puts it: “We needed an Incarnate God, *God put to death*, that we might live”.<sup>110</sup>

For if Christ had not tasted death in the flesh He would not have plumbed the very depths of sinful man’s condition, He would not have destroyed “the last enemy” of mankind, which is death (I Corinthians 15.26). For without the death of Christ there would have been no Sacrifice for sin, no descent into hades, and no resurrection from the dead. “And if Christ is not risen, your faith is in vain; ye are still in your sins” (I Corinthians 15.17).

As Fr. George Florovsky writes: “Suffering is not yet the whole Cross. The Cross is more than merely suffering Good. The sacrifice of Christ is not yet exhausted by His obedience and endurance, forbearance, compassion, all-forgiveness. The one redeeming work of Christ cannot be separated into parts. Our Lord’s earthly life is one organic whole, and His redeeming action cannot be exclusively connected with any one particular moment in that life. However, the climax of this life was its death. And the Lord plainly bore witness to the hour of death: “For this cause came I unto this hour” (John 12.27)... Redemption was accomplished on the Cross, ‘by the blood of His Cross’ (Colossians 1.20; cf. Acts 20.28, Romans 5.9, Ephesians 1.7, Colossians 1.14, Hebrews 9.22, I John 1.7, Revelation 1.5-6, 5.9). Not by the suffering of the Cross only, but precisely by the death on the Cross. And the ultimate victory is wrought, not by sufferings or endurance, but by death and resurrection...”<sup>111</sup>

And Fr. George adds: “ Usually these two facts are not sufficiently distinguished: the sufferings and the death. This hinders one from drawing the right conclusions. In particular this can be seen in the theological reasonings of his Eminence Metropolitan Anthony... He opposes Gethsemane to Golgotha precisely because he with reason considers the ‘spiritual sufferings’ to be more valuable than the ‘bodily sufferings’. But death needs to be explained, and not only the sufferings of death...”<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Bishop Theophan, *Interpretation of the Epistles of the Holy Apostle Paul*, St. Petersburg, 1912, Moscow, 2002, p. 588 (in Russian).

<sup>110</sup> St. Gregory the Theologian, *Homily 45, on Holy Pascha*, 28.

<sup>111</sup> Florovsky, “Redemption”, *Creation and Redemption*, Belmont, Mass.: Nordland Publishing Company, 1976, pp. 99, 104. The last sentence here is not an accurate translation of the Russian. It should rather read: “This was the destruction of death. And one can understand this only from the meaning of death”.

<sup>112</sup> Florovsky, “On the death of the Cross”, *Dogma and History*, Moscow, 1998, p. 189, footnote (in Russian). This footnote is not in the English Nordland translation.

As Hieromonk Augustine (Lim) has pointed out, the Nicene Creed says of the Lord that He “was crucified, suffered and was buried”, *not* “suffered, was crucified and was buried”. This order of words shows that the critical, so to speak, suffering of Christ was the suffering *after* His Crucifixion, the suffering precisely of His *death* on Golgotha. If, on the other hand, Gethsemane had been the place of our redemption, we would have expected the reverse order: “suffered, crucified and was buried”.<sup>113</sup>

And if it be objected that death came rather as a *relief* from His sufferings, so that the real exploit consisted in His sufferings *before* death, we should remind ourselves what death meant for Him Who *is* Life: something inconceivable to the human mind. For us death, though unnatural in essence, has nevertheless become in a certain sense natural – in the same sense that sin has become natural or “second nature” to us since the fall. But “God did not create death”, and if it seemed “folly to the Greeks” for the Creator to become His creature, it must have seemed worse than folly to them for Life to undergo death. Moreover, both life and death in our fallen, human condition were an immeasurable torment for the Sinless One, infinitely more painful than the life and death of sinners; for every aspect of that life and death, together with every suffering in it, was undertaken *voluntarily*.

As Vladimir Lossky writes, interpreting the thought of St. Maximus the Confessor, “by assimilating the historic reality in which the Incarnation had to take place He introduced into His Divine Person all sin-scarred, fallen human nature. That is why the earthly life of Christ was a continual humiliation. His human will unceasingly renounced what naturally belonged to it, and accepted what was contrary to incorruptible and deified humanity: hunger, thirst, weariness, grief, sufferings, and finally, death on the cross. Thus, one could say that the Person of Christ, before the end of His redemptive work, before the Resurrection, possessed in His Humanity as it were two different poles - the incorruptibility and impassibility proper to a perfect and deified nature, as well as the corruptibility and passibility voluntarily assumed, under which conditions His kenotic Person submitted and continued to submit His sin-free Humanity.”<sup>114</sup>

This horrific and unrelenting struggle, which had reached one climax in Gethsemane, reached a still higher one at Golgotha. For if it was utterly unnatural and a continual torment for Sinless Life to live the life of sinners (in St. Paul's striking and paradoxical words, “God hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin” (II Corinthians 5.21)), experiencing all the horror of sin in His sinless soul, in which, in the words of Metropolitan Philaret of New York, “every sin burned with the unbearable fire of hell”,<sup>115</sup> it was still more unnatural and tormenting for Him to die the *death* of sinners. This death meant the voluntary rending apart of His own most perfect creation, His human nature, separating the soul and the body which, unlike the souls and bodies of sinners, had lived in perfect harmony together. It meant a schism in the life of God Himself, a schism so metaphysically and ontologically unthinkable that even the sun hid its rays and the rocks were burst asunder. It meant a schism, so to speak, of God from God, eliciting the cry: “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” (Matthew 27.46).

*As God*, of course, He was not, and never could be, separated from His Father, as was triumphantly demonstrated at the Resurrection. But *as Man*, He allowed Himself to feel the full *accursedness* of men in their separation from God - an accursedness unspeakably the greater for

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<sup>113</sup> Lim, Sermon, September 14/27, 2002.

<sup>114</sup> Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, London: James Clarke, 1957, p. 148.

<sup>115</sup> Metropolitan Philaret of New York, Great Friday sermon, 1973; in *The Dogma of Redemption*, *op. cit.*, pp. 57-58.

Him Who said: "I and the Father are one" (John 10.30).<sup>116</sup> As St. Basil the Great says, He "redeemed us from being accursed by becoming Himself a curse and suffering the most dishonourable death in order to lead us again to the glorious life."<sup>117</sup> Thus the atonement (at-one-ment) of man *by* God and *with* God was accomplished by the disjunction, if it were possible, of God *from* God – not *as* God, but as Man.

Moreover, as the Head of the Body of Israel which at this very moment fell away from God, He felt *her* accursedness, too. St. Augustine has developed this point in a very illuminating way in his commentary on the Psalm from which the Lord was quoting: "The full and perfect Christ... is Head and Body. When Christ speaks, sometimes He speaks in the Person of the Head alone, our Saviour Himself, born of the Virgin Mary, at other times in the person of His Body, which is the holy Church spread throughout the world... Now if Christ is in very truth without sin and without transgression, we begin to doubt whether these words of the Psalm ['There is no peace for my bones because of My sins'] can be His. Yet it would be very unfortunate and contradictory if the Psalm just quoted did not refer to Christ, when we find His passion set forth there as clearly as it is related in the Gospel. For there we find: 'They parted My garments amongst them, and upon My vesture they cast lots.' Why did our Lord Himself as He hung on the cross recite with His own lips the first verse of this very Psalm, saying: 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' What did He mean us to understand, but that this Psalm refers to Him in its entirety, since He Himself uttered the opening words? Where, again, it goes on to speak of 'the words of My sins', the voice is undoubtedly that of Christ. How 'sins', I ask, unless sins of His Body which is the Church? For here the Body is speaking as well as the Head. How do they speak as one Person? Because 'they shall be', He says, 'two in one flesh'... So we must listen as to one Person speaking, but the Head as Head and the Body as Body. We are not separating two Persons but drawing a distinction in dignity: the Head saves, the Body is saved. The Head must show mercy, the Body bewail its misery. The office of the Head is the purgation of sins, that of the Body the confession of them; yet there is but one voice, and no written instructions to inform us when the Body speaks and when the Head. We can tell the difference when we listen; but He speaks as one individual... You may never exclude the Head when you hear the Body speaking, nor the Body when you hear the Head; for now they are not two but one flesh."<sup>118</sup>

Let us return to the point that Christ's sufferings in Gethsemane were caused, in part, by His (perfectly natural and innocent) fear of death. This is evident also from His use of the word "cup", which, as we have seen, means "death". Now the cup of death is also the cup of the Eucharist; that is, the cup of Golgotha is the cup of the Mystical Supper; for both cups contain blood, the blood of the Sacrifice already accomplished in death.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> One Soviet metropolitan is reported to have said that Christ on the Cross, in uttering the cry: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?", actually *became an atheist*. This is, of course, nonsense. But it is not nonsense – rather, it is the precise truth – to say that on the Cross Christ took upon Himself the horror of the atheist's condition, the accursedness of being without God ("a" – without, "theos" – God).

<sup>117</sup> St. Basil the Great, *Long Rules*, Question 2.4; P.G. 31:916A; in Vassiliadis, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

<sup>118</sup> St. Augustine, *Discourse on Psalm 37*, 6, 7; New York: Newman Press, 1961.

<sup>119</sup> This doctrine was also confirmed at the Council of Blachernae, Constantinople in 1157 and included in the Synodicon of Orthodoxy as follows: "To those who hear the Saviour when He said in regard to the priestly service of the divine Mysteries delivered by Him, 'This do in remembrance of Me', but who do not understand the word 'remembrance' correctly, and who dare to say that the daily sacrifice offered by the sacred ministers of the divine Mysteries exactly as our Saviour, the Master of all, delivered to us, re-enacts only symbolically and figuratively the sacrifice of His own body and blood which our Saviour had offered on the Cross for the ransom and redemption of our common human nature; for this reason, since they introduce the doctrine that this sacrifice is different from the one originally consummated by the Saviour and that it recalls only symbolically and figuratively, they bring to naught the Mystery of the awesome and divine priestly service whereby we receive the earnest of the future life; therefore, to those who deny what is staunchly proclaimed by our divine Father, John Chrysostom, who says in many commentaries on the sayings of the great Paul that the sacrifice is identical, that both are one and the same: *Anathema (3)*"

This shows, on the one hand, that the redeeming Sacrifice had already been mystically accomplished even *before* the prayer in the Garden, in the Upper Room. For as St. Gregory of Nyssa writes, “By offering His Body as food, He clearly showed that the Sacrificial Offering of the Lamb had already been accomplished. For the Sacrificial Body would not have been suitable for food if it were still animated”.<sup>120</sup> But on the other hand it shows that our redemption consists precisely in Christ’s *Death*, and that if there had been no Death there would have been no Sacrifice and no Redemption. So to concentrate on the sufferings in Gethsemane while ignoring the mystery that was accomplished both before and after them, in the Upper Room and on Golgotha, is to ignore the very Dogma of Redemption...

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(*The True Vine*, issues 27 and 28, Spring, 2000, p. 55)

<sup>120</sup> St. Gregory of Nyssa, *First Sermon on the Resurrection*; quoted in *Georges Florovsky*, op. cit., p. 335.

## **6. THE THEORY OF “MORAL MONISM”**

*For us the monarchy is formed by equality of nature, harmony of will, and identity of activity, and the concurrence with the One of the Beings which derive from the One, a unity impossible among created beings.*

St. Gregory the Theologian, Sermon 29, 2.

Let us recall the metropolitan's words: “a purely objective law of our spiritual nature is revealed in the transmission of the compassionate, supremely loving energy of the Redeemer to the spiritual nature of the man who believes and calls for this help, a law which is revealed in our dogmas, but of which our dogmatic science has taken no notice.”

The problem is: if dogmatic science has taken no notice of this law, which was supposedly revealed explicitly for the first time by Metropolitan Anthony, it is hardly surprising that the metropolitan can find few, if any, patristic statements to support it. It is not that the Fathers deny the great power and significance of Christ's compassionate love for the salvation of mankind. On the contrary: the greatness of that love, and its overwhelming significance for our salvation is not disputed by anyone. But the motivation for the saving work of Christ, love, must not be confused with the work itself, the restoration of justice in the relations between God and man, the justification of mankind, nor with the fruit of that justification in the individual believer, which consists in his renewal and deification by ascetic endeavour and the communion of the Holy Spirit.

How, according to Metropolitan Anthony, is the “compassionate, supremely loving energy of the Redeemer” transmitted to the believer? His answer turns on the distinction, familiar from Trinitarian theology, between the concepts of “nature” and “person”. Just as in the Holy Trinity there is one Divine nature but three Divine Persons, so in our created race there is one human nature but many human persons. Or rather: originally, before the entrance of sin, there was a single human nature, but since the fall sin has divided this nature into many pieces, as it were, each piece being the jealously guarded possession of a single egotistical individual. However, the original unity of human nature still exists in each person, and it is this original unity which Christ restored on the Cross (or rather, in Metropolitan Anthony's thought: in Gethsemane).

“By nature,” he writes, “especially the human nature, we are accustomed to mean only the abstraction and the summing up of properties present in every man separately and therefore composing one general abstract idea, and nothing else. But Divine revelation and the dogmas of our Church teach differently concerning the nature... the nature is not an abstraction of the common attributes of different objects of persons made by our minds, but a certain real, essence, real will and force, acting in separate persons...”<sup>121</sup>

There is a certain confusion of concepts here; for, as Archbishop Theophan of Poltava writes, “in patristic literature power and will are only properties of human nature, they do not constitute the nature itself (St. John of Damascus, *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, book II, chapters 22 and 23)”<sup>122</sup>.

However, let us continue with Metropolitan Anthony's exposition: “In spite of all our human separateness,... we cannot fail to notice within ourselves the manifestations of the collective universal human will; a will which is not of me, but in me, which I can only partially renounce,

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<sup>121</sup> *The Dogma of Redemption*, pp. 33-34.

<sup>122</sup> Archbishop Theophan, *On the unity of nature*, p. 11.

with much labor and struggle. This will is given to me from without, and yet at the same time it is mine. This is pre-eminently the common human nature. First, we must place here our *conscience*, which was given to us, and which almost no man can completely resist; also our direct involvement and compassion with our neighbor, parental affections and much else. Among these attributes are also evil desires, likewise seemingly imposed on us from without: self-love, revengefulness, lust and so on. These are the manifestations of our fallen nature, against which we can and must struggle. And so the nature of all men is the same: it is the impersonal but powerful will which every human person is obliged to take into account, whichever way the personal free will may be turned: toward good or toward evil. It is to this also that we must ascribe the law of existence whereby only through the union of a father and mother can a man be born into the world... If you cannot imagine that you hold your soul in common with others, then read in the book of Acts, ‘One was the heart and the soul of the multitude of them that believed’ (4.32). And another record taken from life is given by Saint Basil the Great. Describing the unanimity and victory over self-love of the monks of his day, Saint Basil continues, ‘These men restore the primal goodness in eclipsing the sin of our forefather Adam; for there would be no divisions, no strife, no war among men, *if sin had not made cleavages in the nature...* they gather the (one) human nature, *which had been torn and cloven into thousands of pieces*, once more to itself and to God. And this is the chief in the Saviour’s incarnate oeconomy: *to gather human nature to itself and to Himself and, having abolished this evil cleavage, to restore the original unity*”<sup>123</sup>.

At this point the question arises: can such diverse phenomena as conscience, the fallen passions, the natural (innocent) passions, and the grace-created unity of the early Christians and of the true monastic communities be united under a single heading or concept of human nature? And this leads to the further question: would such an understanding of human nature be patristic? However, before attempting to answer these questions, let us follow the metropolitan’s argument to the end:

“The Lord also teaches of a new Being, in whom He will be, and in whom He is already united to the faithful, like a tree which remains the same plant in all of its branches (John 15.1-9). And so the unity of the human nature, undone by the sin of Adam and his descendants, is to be gradually restored through Christ and His redeeming love with such power, that in the future life this oneness will be expressed more strongly than it can now be by the multitude of human persons, and Christ, united with us all into one Being, shall be called the New Man, or the One Church, being (in particular) its Head.

“It appears to me that we have, according to our power, cleared the way to a more perfect understanding of the mystery of redemption, of its essential, its objective side. The salvation which Christ brought to humanity consists not only of the conscious assimilation of Christ’s principle truths and of His love, but also of the fact that by means of His compassionate love Christ demolishes the partition which sin sets up between men, restores the original oneness of nature, so that the man who has subjected himself to this action of Christ finds new dispositions, new feelings and longings, not only in his thoughts, but also in his very character, these being created not by himself, but coming from Christ who has united Himself to him. It then remains for the free will either to call all these to life or wickedly to reject them. The influence of the compassionate love a mother, a friend, a spiritual shepherd, consists (though to a much lesser degree) in this same penetration into the very nature (φύσις), the very soul of a man.... The direct entrance of Christ’s nature, of His good volitions into our nature is called grace, which is invisibly poured into us in the various inner states and outer incidents of our life, and especially in the Holy Mysteries... The subjective feeling of compassionate love becomes an objective power which

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<sup>123</sup> *The Dogma of Redemption*, pp. 34-35, 36.

restores the oneness of human nature that had been destroyed by sin, and which is transmitted from one human soul to others”.<sup>124</sup>

The confusion of concepts here is startling. Thus the metropolitan writes: “The salvation which Christ brought to humanity consists not only of the conscious assimilation of Christ’s principle truths and of His love, but also of the fact that by means of His compassionate love Christ demolishes the partition which sin sets up between men.” But what is the difference between “the conscious assimilation of Christ’s love”, on the one hand, and “His compassionate love” whereby He destroys the partition set up by sin? What is the distinction between the two loves?

Again, we have already noted the very wide range of phenomena that the metropolitan includes under the heading of human nature: conscience, fallen and natural passions, the unity of the Church... Here he broadens the concept still further, but in an altogether inadmissible direction, defining it as *grace*: “The direct entrance of Christ’s nature, of His good volitions into our nature is called grace”. But grace is not *human* at all: according to the teaching of the Orthodox Church, it is the uncreated energies of *God*, the “actions”, so to speak, of the *Divine* nature.

It is indeed grace – that is, the *Divine* energies of Christ – that unites and reunites men. But not only is grace *not* human nature – neither Christ’s nor anyone else’s. It also does not “reunite human nature” in the sense that the metropolitan would have it, for the simple reason that human nature, as opposed to human persons and wills, has never been divided. As persons we have been divided by sin, but we remain one in our common human nature.

It is important to be precise about that in which men are divided by sin and are reunited by grace. They cannot be divided, according to St. Maximus the Confessor, *by nature*. They are divided in their *moral capabilities* – goodness and wisdom - which are not nature itself, but *movements* or *modalities* of nature: “Evil is perceived not in the nature of creatures, but in their sinful and irrational movement”.<sup>125</sup> Again, St. Maximus writes: “[The devil] separated our will from God and us from each other. Diverting [man] from the straight path, [he] divided the image of his nature, splitting it up into a multitude of opinions and ideas”.<sup>126</sup> Thus it is our *wills*, meaning our free choices, that are divided; it is not the nature of man that is divided, but the “image” of his nature, his “opinions and ideas”.

This point is well made by St. Maximus the Confessor in his *Dispute with Pyrrhus*:-

“*Pyrrhus*. Virtues, then, are natural things? *Maximus*. Yes, natural things. *Pyrrhus*. If they are natural things, why [then] do they not exist in all men equally, since all men have an identical nature? *Maximus*. But they *do* exist equally in all men because of the identical nature. *Pyrrhus*. Then why is there such a great inequality [of virtues] in us? *Maximus*. Because we do not all practise what is natural to us to an equal degree; indeed, if we did practise to an equal degree [those virtues] natural to us, as we were created to do, then one could be able to perceive one virtue in us all just as there is one nature [in us all], and that one virtue would not admit of a ‘more’ or a ‘less’.”<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> *The Dogma of Redemption*, pp. 37-38.

<sup>125</sup> St. Maximus the Confessor, *Fourth Century on Love*, 14. As Fr. George Florovsky writes: “sin does not belong to human nature, but is a parasitic and abnormal growth. This point was vigorously stressed by St. Gregory of Nyssa and particularly by St. Maximus the Confessor in connection with their teaching of the will as the seat of sin” (“Redemption”, *Creation and Redemption*, *op. cit.*, p. 98).

<sup>126</sup> St. Maximus the Confessor, *Epistle on Love*, 6.

<sup>127</sup> St. Maximus the Confessor, PG 91:309B-312A, quoted in Farrell, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

Only in one sense can we talk about human nature – as opposed to human persons or wills – being in a real sense divided. And that is in the sense of *death*. Death is the division of human nature – first the division of the spirit, God’s grace, from the soul and the body, and then the division of the soul from the body. If human nature is understood as being unitary (and not as a composite of two natures, spiritual and material), then the division of the soul from the body at death does indeed constitute a division of human nature. (But our death was destroyed, as we have seen, not by the sufferings of Christ in Gethsemane, but by His Death on the Cross...)

How, then, are we to understand the quotations cited by Metropolitan Anthony, which appear to assert that our human nature was divided – really, and not metaphorically? It will be sufficient to reconsider the quotation from St. Basil in order to see that a division of *persons* and not of *nature* was in question here. The monks who practise the coenobitic life do not *literally* reunite their cloven human natures: rather, they reestablish unanimity, unity of will, through the subjection of all their individual free wills to the will of the abbot.

“Of this we will become convinced,” writes Archbishop Theophan, “if we reproduce the passage in question in a fuller form. ‘That communion of life we call the most perfect,’ says St. Basil here, ‘means the ascetics living according to the coenobitic rule that excludes private property and drives out contrariness of dispositions, by which all disturbances, quarrels and arguments are destroyed at the root, having everything in common, both souls and dispositions and bodily powers, and what is necessary for the nourishment of the body and for its service, in which there is a common God, a common purchase of piety, a common salvation, common ascetic exploits, common labours, common crowns, in which many constitute one and each person is not one but one among many. What is equal to this life? What is more perfect than this closeness and this unity? What is more pleasant than this merging of manners and souls? People who have come from various tribes and countries have brought themselves into such complete identity that in many bodies we see one soul, and many bodies are *the instruments of one will*. It was God’s will that we should be like that at the beginning; it was with this aim that He created us. These men restore the primal goodness in eclipsing the sin of our forefather Adam; for there would be no divisions, no strife, no war among men, if sin had not made cleavages in the nature... As far as they are able, they once again gather the human nature, which had been torn and cloven into thousands of pieces, into unity *both with themselves and with God*. For this is the main thing in the Saviour’s economy in the flesh – to bring human nature into unity with itself and with the Saviour and, having destroyed the evil cutting up [into parts], restore the original unity; just as the best doctor by healing medicines binds up the body that was torn into many parts’.

“To every unprejudiced reader it is clear that in this passage the subject is the moral, or, more exactly, the grace-filled moral unity of the members of the ascetic coenobium with themselves and with God through the medium of one will, which in the present case is the will of the superior, who incarnates in himself the will of God. ‘Every good order and agreement among many,’ says St. Basil in his sermon *On the Judgement of God*, ‘is successfully maintained as long as all are obedient to *one* leader. And all discord and disharmony and multiplicity of authorities is the consequence of lack of authority’. Apart from anything else, we are forbidden from understanding the restoration of the original unity of human nature in the metaphysical sense in which Metropolitan Anthony thinks of it, by the fact that we are here talking about the restoration of the original unity of human nature not only with itself but also with God. But not only not St. Basil the Great, but also not one of the Fathers of the Church ever permitted and could not permit any thought of an original unity of human nature with the nature of God, in the sense of a metaphysical, essential unity. Such a unity is possible only in the pantheistic world-view.”<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Archbishop Theophan, *On the Unity of Nature*, pp. 16-18.

In any case, writes Archbishop Theophan, “Only in relation to the absolute Divine [nature] is the concept of nature used by the Fathers of the Church in an absolute sense, insofar as the Divine nature is absolutely one both in concept and in reality. But in relation to the units of created nature, and in particular to people, the concept of one nature is understood in the sense of complete unity only abstractly, insofar as every concept of genus or species is one, but in application to reality it indicates only the oneness of the nature of all the units of the given genus.”<sup>129</sup>

And he quotes St. John of Damascus: “One must know that it is one thing to perceive in deed, and another in mind and thought. In all created beings the difference between persons is seen in deed. For in (very) deed we see that Peter is different from Paul. But communality and connection and oneness are seen in mind and thought. For in mind we notice that Peter and Paul are of one and the same nature and have one common nature. For each of them is a living, rational, mortal being; and each is flesh enlivened by a soul which is both rational and endowed with discrimination. And so this common nature can be perceived in the mind, for the hypostases are not in each other, but each is a separate individual, that is, taken separately by itself, there is very much distinguishing it from the others. For they are distinct and different in time, in mind and in strength, in external appearance (that is, in form), and in condition, temperament, dignity, manner of life and every distinguishing characteristic. Most of all they differ in that they do not exist in each other, but separately. Hence it comes that we can speak of two, three or many men. And this may be perceived throughout the whole of creation.

“But in the case of the holy and superessential and incomprehensible Trinity, far above everything, it is quite the reverse. For there the community and unity are perceived in deed, because of the co-eternity [of the Persons] and the identity of their essence and activity and will, and because of the agreement of their cognitive faculty, and identity of power and strength and grace. I did not say: similarity, but: identity, and also of the unity of the origin of their movement. For one is the essence, and one the grace, and one the strength, and one the desire and one the activity and one the power – one and the same, not three similar to each other, but one and the same movement of the three Persons. For each of them is no less one with Itself as with each other, because the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one in all respects except the unbegottenness [of the Father], the begottenness [of the Son] and the procession [of the Holy Spirit]. But it is by thought that the difference is perceived. For we know one God; but in thought we recognize the difference – only in the attributes of fatherhood and sonship and procession, both in relation to cause, and to effect, and to the fulfillment, that is, form of existence, of the Hypostasis. For in relation to the indescribable Divinity we cannot speak of separation in space, as we can about ourselves, because the Hypostases are in each other, not so as to be confused, but so as to be closely united, according to the word of the Lord Who said: ‘I am in the Father, and the

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<sup>129</sup> Archbishop Theophan, *On the Unity of Nature*, p. 11. In what sense, it may then be asked, did Christ take on human nature? Did He take on human nature understood as an abstract unity, or as the human species comprising all individual human hypostases? Neither the one nor the other, according to St. John of Damascus. For, as Professor Georgios Mantzaridis explains the Holy Father’s thought: “‘nature’ can be understood firstly to denote an abstraction, in which case it has no intrinsic reality; secondly, to denote a species, in which case it comprises all the individual hypostases of that species; and thirdly, it can be viewed as a particular, in which case it is linked with the nature of the species but does not comprise all its individual hypostases. The Logos of God made flesh did not take on human nature in the first two senses, because in the first case there would be no incarnation but only delusion, and in the second case there would be incarnation in all human individual hypostases. Therefore, what the Logos of God took on in His incarnation was the ‘first-fruits of our substance’, individual nature, which did not previously exist as individual in itself, but came into existence in His hypostasis” (*The Deification of Man*, Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1984, pp. 29-30).

Father in Me' (John 14.11). Nor can we speak of a difference of will or reason or activity or strength or anything else, which may produce a real and complete separation in us".<sup>130</sup>

Our conclusion, then, is that human nature is one, even in the fall, although only relatively, not in the absolute sense appropriate only to the Divine nature possessed by the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity.<sup>131</sup> Sin is not a part of nature, but is a movement of the will of the individual person in a direction contrary to nature. Therefore it is our *wills* that have to be reunited by redirecting them in a direction in accordance with our nature, which redirection will bring them into unity with each other and with the will of God. This redirection is accomplished by our wills working in synergy with the grace of God, which is communicated to us in the sacraments of the Church, especially the Body and Blood of Christ.

Metropolitan Anthony's theory is acceptable only if we interpret his term "nature" to mean the deified Body and Blood of Christ communicated to us in the Eucharist, and only if we interpret "the restoration of the unity of human nature" to mean the re-establishment of the unity of the *wills* of men both with each other and with the will of God. In the Eucharist the compassionate love of Christ is indeed transmitted to us through His deified human nature; and if our wills respond to this sacred gift (which is by no means "irresistible", and never violates the free will of any of its recipients), then we will experience the truth of the words: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (II Corinthians 5.17). But once again: this gift is the fruit, not of Gethsemane, but of Golgotha, not (or rather: not primarily) of the purely spiritual sufferings of Christ in the Garden, but of the Sacrifice of His soul *and* body on the altar of the Cross...

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<sup>130</sup> St. John of Damascus, *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, book I, chapter 8.

<sup>131</sup> We can make the same distinction with regard to Divine and human *energies*. St. Gregory Palamas writes: "The energy of the three Divine Hypostases is one not in the sense that it is similar, as with us, but truly one" (*Chapter 140*, P.G. 150:1220A; quoted in Archbishop Basil Krivoshein, "The Ascetical and Theological Teaching of St. Gregory Palamas", in *Bogoslovskie Trudy*, Nizhni Novgorod, 1996, p. 152 (in Russian)).

## 7. ORIGINAL SIN

*What mystery is this concerning us? How have we been delivered to corruption? How have we been yoked to death? All this, so it is written, is by the command of God. Triodion, Saturday of Souls, Vespers, "Lord, I have cried...", Glory...*

An integral part of Metropolitan Anthony's critique of the so-called "juridical theory" is his onslaught on the doctrine of original sin. The HOCNA bishops summarise his critique as follows:

"1) The Scholastic dogma of our inherited guilt of 'Original Sin' is false. We are *not* morally responsible for Adam's sin, we do not bear any guilt for his sin, (nor, in reverse, is he responsible for all our own subsequent sins).

"2) From Adam we *do* inherit mortality and a proclivity towards sinning. By his sin, Adam was exiled from Paradise to this corruptible world. We are his children born in exile.

"3) God is not unjust in allowing us to receive this fallen nature as descendants of Adam, because He foreknew that each of us would sin, and that even if we ourselves had been in Adam's stead in Paradise, we nevertheless would have transgressed in like manner as he. Thus, our fallen nature is neither a burden unfairly placed upon us by God, nor is it an excuse for our personal sins. Man is free and morally responsible.

"Many of Metropolitan Anthony's critics, including Archbishop Theophan of Poltava, seem to have utterly failed to comprehend the great gulf that separates the patristic Orthodox doctrine concerning the Ancestral Sin of Adam from the heretical Augustinian doctrine of Original Sin." (p. 18).

Unfortunately, it is not Archbishop Theophan, but the HOCNA bishops who have "utterly failed to comprehend" the essence of this matter, as we shall now try to demonstrate.

Much of the argument has revolved around the correct translation and interpretation of the words: "By one man sin entered into the world, and so death entered all men by sin, *because* – or, according to another translation: *for in him* - all have sinned" (Romans 5.12).

Archbishop Theophan writes: "His Eminence Metropolitan Anthony in his *Catechism* gives a new interpretation of the cited words of the Apostle Paul, and, in accordance with this interpretation, puts forward a new teaching on original sin, which essentially almost completely overthrows the Orthodox teaching on original sin."<sup>132</sup>

In the opinion of Metropolitan Anthony, these words from the Apostle Paul are translated incorrectly in the Slavonic translation: "Let us consider the original Greek text: the words 'in that' translate the Greek 'εφ' ω', which means: 'because', 'since' (Latin *tamen, quod*)... Therefore, the correct translation of these words of the Apostle Paul is: 'and so death passed upon all men, because all have sinned' (and not just Adam alone)".<sup>133</sup>

Now we may agree with Metropolitan Anthony that the strictly correct translation of Romans 5.12 is: "death passed upon all men, *because* all have sinned" rather than: "death passed upon all men, for *in him* [i.e. in Adam] all have sinned". Nevertheless, the fact that not only all the

<sup>132</sup> Archbishop Theophan, *The Patristic Teaching on Original Sin*, in *Russkoe Pravoslavie*, № 3 (20), 2000, p. 20 (in Russian).

<sup>133</sup> *The Dogma of Redemption*, p. 47.

Orthodox Latin translations and Latin fathers read “in him”, but also the famous Greek translators of the Bible into Slavonic, Saints Cyril and Methodius, should make us pause before accusing these very distinguished Fathers of error. Indeed, Bishop Theophan the Recluse, for reasons which will become clear later, considered that the translation “in him”, though freer and less literally accurate, in fact conveyed the *underlying* meaning *more* accurately.

If we follow the correct translation, according to Metropolitan Anthony, “Adam was not so much the cause of our sinfulness as he was the first to sin, and even if we were not his sons, we still would sin just the same. Thus one should think that we are all sinners, even though our will be well directed, not because we are descendants of Adam, but because the All-knowing God gives us life in the human condition (and not as angels, for example), and He foresaw that the will of each of us would be like that of Adam and Eve. This will is not evil by nature, but disobedient and prideful, and consequently it needs a school to correct it, and this is what our earthly life in the body is, for it constantly humbles our stubbornness. In this matter this school attains success in almost all its pupils who are permitted to complete their whole course, that is, live a long life; but some of God’s chosen ones attain this wisdom at an early age, namely those whom Providence leads to the Heavenly Teacher or to His ‘co-workers’”.<sup>134</sup>

As he put it in another place: “God knew that each of us would sin in the same way as Adam, and for that reason we are his descendants... Knowing beforehand that every man would display Adam’s self-will, the Lord allows us to inherit Adam’s weak, ill, mortal nature endowed with sinful tendencies, in the struggle with which, and still more in submitting to which, we become conscious of our nothingness and humble ourselves.”<sup>135</sup>

Metropolitan Anthony objects to the Russian Church’s traditional teaching on original sin as expounded in, for example, the *Catechism* of Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, which he regards as Latin and scholastic in origin: “‘As from a polluted spring,’ we read in our textbook, ‘there flows corrupted water,’ etc. But, if you will, a spring and water are one thing, whereas living, morally responsible human beings are something else. It is not by our own will that we are descendants of Adam, so why should we bear the guilt for his disobedience? Indeed, we must struggle greatly in order to appropriate Christ’s redemption: can it be that the condemnation of each man because of Adam befell men despite each one’s own guilt? After all, the Apostle says here ‘that the gift was poured out more richly than the condemnation’ (cf. Romans 5.15), but with the juridical interpretation the result is rather the opposite”.<sup>136</sup>

Here again we may agree with Metropolitan Anthony that Adam, and Adam alone, was *personally* responsible for his transgression. However, while we do not inherit *personal* responsibility for Adam’s sin, we do inherit Adam himself! For, as St. Basil the Great writes, what we inherit from Adam “is not the personal sin of Adam, but the original human being himself”, who “exists in us by necessity”.<sup>137</sup>

Again, St. Cyril of Alexandria says: “What has Adam’s guilt to do with us? Why are we held responsible for his sin when we were not even born when he committed it? Did not God say: ‘The parents will not die for the children, nor the children for the parents, but the soul which has sinned, it shall die’ (Deuteronomy 24.16). How then shall we defend this doctrine? The soul, I say, which has sinned, it shall die. We have become sinners because of Adam’s disobedience in the following

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<sup>134</sup> *The Dogma of Redemption*, pp. 47-48.

<sup>135</sup> *Attempt at a Christian Catechism*, Third Article, Victoria, Australia, 1990, p. 45.

<sup>136</sup> *The Dogma of Redemption*, p. 47.

<sup>137</sup> Quoted in Demetrios Tzami, *I Protologia tou M. Vasileiou*, Thessaloniki, 1970, p. 135 (in Greek).

manner... After he fell into sin and surrendered to corruption, impure lusts invaded the nature of his flesh, and at the same time the evil law of our members was born. For our nature contracted the disease of sin because of the disobedience of one man, that is, Adam, and thus many became sinners. This was not because they sinned along with Adam, because they did not then exist, but because they had the same nature as Adam, which fell under the law of sin. Thus, just as human nature acquired the weakness of corruption in Adam because of disobedience, and evil desires invaded it, so the same nature was later set free by Christ, Who was obedient to God the Father and did not commit sin.”<sup>138</sup>

Again, St. John Chrysostom writes: “Through the wrong-doing of one man many became sinners’. There is nothing improbable about the proposition that when Adam sinned and became mortal, those who were descended from him should become mortal also. But how should it follow that from his disobedience anyone else should become a sinner? *For unless a man becomes a sinner on his own responsibility, he will not be found to merit punishment.* Then what does ‘sinner’ mean here? I think it means liable to punishment, that is, condemned to death”.<sup>139</sup>

However, while this appears to dispel one paradox and apparent injustice – that we should be guilty for a sin we did not commit – it by no means dispels other, no less difficult ones. For is it not unjust that we should inherit a nature inclined to sin and doomed to death before we have done anything worthy of death? Metropolitan Anthony’s explanation is that God, foreseeing that we would sin like Adam, gave us a corrupt and mortal nature in anticipation of that. But this implies that whereas in the case of Adam death is clearly the wages of sin and the just punishment for the crime he committed, in our case the punishment *precedes* the crime, and therefore cannot be perceived as the wages of sin. Is this not just as unjust? Nor is it convincing to argue, as does the metropolitan, that we are encumbered with a sinful and mortal nature, not as a punishment for sin, but in order to humble us, that is, in order to prevent worse sin in the future. For first: if we needed to be humbled, we clearly were already in sin – the sin of pride. And secondly: how can sin be reduced by endowing us with a nature inclined to sin?! Why not provide us with a sinless nature to begin with?

But God *did* provide us with a sinless nature to begin with, and it is we, not God, who have caused its corruption. Metropolitan Anthony, however, is forced by the logic of his argument, which denies that our sinfulness was caused by Adam’s original sin, to attribute to God Himself the corruption of our nature. As he writes: “Let us now ask: Who was responsible for fashioning human nature so that a good desire and repentance are, nevertheless, powerless to renew a man in actuality and so that he falls helplessly under the burden of his passions if he does not have grace assisting him? God the Creator, of course.”<sup>140</sup> This is perilously close to the assertion that God is the author of evil – or, at any rate, of the evil of human nature since Adam, which is clearly contrary to the Orthodox teaching that God created everything good in the beginning, and that there is nothing that He has created that is not good. Even those things, such as the differentiation of the sexes, which, in the opinion of a small minority of the Holy Fathers, were created in prevision of the fall, are nevertheless good in themselves. God did not create death: death is the consequence of the sin of man, which in turn is the consequence of the envy of the devil. So the idea that God created sinful natures, natures subject to death, is contrary to Orthodox teaching. The only possible reason why human beings should come into the world already tainted by corruption is that their corrupt nature is the product of sin. And if not of their own personal sin, then the sin of an ancestor. That is, the forefather’s or the ancestral or the original sin...

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<sup>138</sup> St. Cyril of Alexandria, *On Romans*, 5.18, P.G. 74: 788-789.

<sup>139</sup> St. John Chrysostom, *Homily 10 on Romans*.

<sup>140</sup> *The Dogma of Redemption*, p. 40. Cf. similar statements in his *Catechism*, p. 54, “On the Fourth Article”.

Thus St. Cyril of Alexandria writes: “[All men] have been condemned to death by the transgression of Adam. For the whole of human nature has suffered this in him, who was the beginning of the human race.”<sup>141</sup> Again, St. Symeon the Theologian writes: “When our Master descended from on high He by His own death destroyed the death that awaited us. *The condemnation that was the consequence of our forefather’s transgression* he completely annihilated.”<sup>142</sup> Again, St. Gregory Palamas confirms that the ancestral sin was Adam’s and nobody else’s: “Before Christ we all shared the same ancestral curse and condemnation poured out on all of us from our single Forefather, as if it had sprung from the root of the human race and was the common lot of our nature. Each person’s individual action attracted either reproof or praise from God, but no one could do anything about the shared curse and condemnation, or the evil inheritance that had been passed down to him and through him would pass to his descendants.”<sup>143</sup>

Some clarification can be introduced here by distinguishing two senses of the English word “sin”: sin as the *act* of a human *person*, and sin as the *state* or *condition* or *law* of human *nature*. This distinction is in fact made by St. Paul in the passage in question, as Archbishop Theophan points out: “The holy apostle clearly distinguishes in his teaching on original sin between two points: παραπτώμα or transgression, and αμαρτία or sin. By the first he understood the personal transgression by our forefathers of the will of God that they should not eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, by the second – the law of sinful disorder that entered human nature as the consequence of this transgression. [“I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at work with the law of my mind and making me captive to *the law of sin* which dwells in my members” (Romans 7.22-23).] When he is talking about the inheritance of the original sin, he has in mind not παραπτώμα or transgression, for which only they are responsible, but αμαρτία, that is, the law of sinful disorder which afflicted human nature as a consequence of the fall into sin of our forefathers. And ημαρτον - sinned in 5.12 must therefore be understood not in the active voice, in the sense: they committed sin, but in the middle-passive voice, in the sense: αμαρτωλοι in 5.19, that is, became sinners or turned out to be sinners, since human nature fell in Adam.”<sup>144</sup>

Thus the original sin of Adam, in the sense of his personal transgression, *the* original sin which no other person shares, has engendered in consequence sinful, corrupt, diseased, mortal human nature, the law of sin, which we all share because we have all inherited it, but for which we cannot be held personally responsible. And if this seems to introduce of two original sins, this is in fact not far from the thinking of the Holy Fathers. Thus St. Maximus the Confessor: “There then arose sin, the first and worthy of reproach, that is, the falling away of the will from good to evil. Through the first there arose the second – the change in nature from incorruption to corruption, which cannot elicit reproach. For two sins arise in [our] forefather as a consequence of the transgression of the Divine commandment: one worthy of reproach, and the second having as its cause the first and unable to elicit reproach”.<sup>145</sup>

We have inherited the “second” original sin, the law of sin, in the most basic way: through the sexual propagation of the species. For “in sins,” says David, - that is, in a nature corrupted by

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<sup>141</sup> St. Cyril of Alexandria, *On Romans* 5.15, P.G. 74:785C; quoted in Nikolaos Vassiliadis, *The Mystery of Death*, Athens: “Sotir”, 1993, p. 85.

<sup>142</sup> St. Symeon, *The Discourses*, V: On Penitence, 9.

<sup>143</sup> St. Gregory Palamas, *Homily 5: On the Meeting of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ*, in Christopher Veniamin, *The Homilies of Saint Gregory Palamas*, South Canaan, PA: St. Tikhon’s Seminary Press, 2002, vol. I, p. 52.

<sup>144</sup> Archbishop Theophan, *The Patristic Teaching on Original Sin*, op. cit., p. 22.

<sup>145</sup> St. Maximus the Confessor, *Quaestiones ad Thalassium*, 42.

original sin, - “did my mother conceive me” (Psalm 50.5).<sup>146</sup> It follows that even newborn babies, even unborn embryos, are sinners in this sense. For “even from the womb, sinners are estranged” (Psalm 57.3). And as Job says: “Who shall be pure from uncleanness? Not even one, even if his life should be but one day upon the earth” (Job 14.4). Again, St. Gregory of Nyssa writes: “Evil was mixed with our nature from the beginning... through those who by their disobedience introduced the disease. Just as in the natural propagation of the species each animal engenders its like, so man is born from man, a being subject to passions from a being subject to passions, a sinner from a sinner. Thus sin takes its rise in us as we are born; it grows with us and keep us company till life’s term”.<sup>147</sup> Again, St. Gennadius Scholarius, Patriarch of Constantinople, writes: “Everyone in the following of Adam has died, because they have all inherited their nature from him. But some have died because they themselves have sinned, while others have died only because of Adam’s condemnation – for example, children”.<sup>148</sup>

Christ was born from a virgin who had been cleansed beforehand from all sin by the Holy Spirit precisely in order to break the cycle of sin begetting sin. As St. Gregory Palamas writes: “If the conception of God had been from seed, He would not have been a new man, nor the Author of new life which will never grow old. If He were from the old stock and had inherited its sin, He would not have been able to bear within Himself the fullness of the incorruptible Godhead or to make His Flesh an inexhaustible Source of sanctification, able to wash away even the defilement of our First Parents by its abundant power, and sufficient to sanctify all who came after them.”<sup>149</sup>

The fact that original sin in this sense taints even children is the reason for the practice of infant baptism. And this practice in turn confirms the traditional doctrine of original sin. Thus the Council of Carthage in 252 under St. Cyprian decreed “not to forbid the baptism of an infant who, scarcely born, has sinned in nothing apart from that which proceeds from the flesh of Adam. He has received the contagion of the ancient death through his very birth, and he comes, therefore, the more easily to the reception of the remission of sins in that it is not his own but the sins of another that are remitted”.

Still more relevant here is Canon 110 of the Council of Carthage in 419, which was confirmed by the Sixth and Seventh Ecumenical Councils: “He who denies the need for young children and those just born from their mother’s womb to be baptized, or who says that although they are baptized for the remission of sins they inherit nothing from the forefathers’ sin that would necessitate the bath of regeneration [from which it would follow that the form of baptism for the remission of sins would be used on them not in a true, but in a false sense], let him be anathema. For the word of the apostle: ‘By one man sin came into the world and death entered all men by sin, for in him all have sinned’ (Romans 5.12), must be understood in no other way than it has always been understood by the Catholic Church, which has been poured out and spread everywhere. For in accordance with this rule of faith children, too, who are themselves not yet able to commit any sin, are truly baptized for the remission of sins, that through regeneration they may be cleansed of everything that they have acquired from the old birth’ (cf. Canons 114, 115 and 116).”

“It follows,” writes Archbishop Theophan, “that it is Metropolitan Philaret who has correctly expounded the teaching of the Orthodox Church on original sin, and not Metropolitan Anthony.

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<sup>146</sup> David here, as St. John Chrysostom points out, “does not condemn marriage, as some have thoughtlessly supposed” (*On Psalm* 50, *M.P.G.* 55:583).

<sup>147</sup> St. Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Beatitudes*, 6, *PG.* 44, 1273.

<sup>148</sup> St. Gennadius, in K. Staab (ed.) *Pauline Commentary from the Greek Church: Collected and Edited Catena*, Munster in Westfalen, 1933, 15:362.

<sup>149</sup> St. Gregory Palamas, *Homily 14*, 5; Veniamin, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

The attempt of the latter to give a new interpretation to the text of Romans 5.12 violates the ban laid in its time by the Council of Carthage, a ban on similar attempts with the laying of an anathema on the violators of the ban. But since the canons of the Council of Carthage were confirmed by the [Sixth] Ecumenical Council in Trullo, then for the violation of the indicated decree Metropolitan Anthony's *Catechism* falls under the anathema not only of the local Council of Carthage, but also of the [Sixth] Ecumenical Council in Trullo".<sup>150</sup>

Thus Metropolitan Anthony's teaching on original sin, which links our sinful and corrupt state, not with Adam's past sin, but with our own future ones, encounters several powerful objections. First, it is contrary both to natural justice and to the doctrine of the goodness of the original creation that the punishment should precede the crime and that we should receive corruption and death *before* we have sinned. Secondly, although, in the case of children who die young, the punishment precedes a *non-existent* crime in that they have *not* sinned personally, Church tradition still commands the baptism of children precisely "for the remission of sins". But thirdly, and most importantly, the Apostle Paul specifically excludes the idea that our death is the wages of our personal sins, as opposed to the original sin of Adam.

Thus he writes: "Until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not reckoned where there is no law. But death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam's transgression... Apart from the law sin lies dead. I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died" (Romans 5.13,14, 7.8-9). For "sin is lawlessness" (I John 3.4), transgression of the law, so there can be no sin where there is no law. In other words, death reigned from Adam to Moses in spite of the fact that the men of that time did *not* sin as Adam did, and that personal sin was *not* imputed to them.

Let us turn to the Fathers for further understanding of this passage. St. Cyril of Jerusalem writes: "Paul's meaning is that, although Moses was a righteous and admirable man, the death sentence promulgated upon Adam reached him as well, and also those who came after, even though neither he nor they copied the sin of Adam in disobediently eating of the tree".<sup>151</sup> Again, the unknown fourth-century Roman Father commonly referred to as Ambrosiaster writes: "How is it then that sin was not imputed, when there was no law? Was it all right to sin, if the law was absent? There had always been a natural law, and it was not unknown, but at that time it was thought to be the only law, and it did not make men guilty before God. For it was not then known that God would judge the human race, and for that reason sin was not imputed, almost as if it did not exist in God's sight and that God did not care about it. But when the law was given through Moses, it became clear that God did care about human affairs and that in the future wrongdoers would not escape without punishment, as they had done up to them."<sup>152</sup> Again, Blessed Augustine writes: "He says not that there was no sin but only that it was not counted. Once the law was given, sin was not taken away, but it began to be counted".<sup>153</sup>

Thus before Moses the personal sins of men were not imputed to them, and they were not counted as having committed them. *And yet they died*. But death is "the wages of sin" (Romans 6.23). So of what sin was their death the wages? There can only be one answer: *Adam's*.

St. Paul goes on to give a still more powerful reason for this interpretation: *the exact correspondence between Adam and Christ, between Adam who made all his descendants by carnal*

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<sup>150</sup> Archbishop Theophan, *The Patristic Teaching on Original Sin*; op. cit., p. 23.

<sup>151</sup> St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures* 15.31.

<sup>152</sup> Ambrosiaster, *Commentary on Paul's Epistles*, CSEL 81:165, 167, 169.

<sup>153</sup> Blessed Augustine, *On Romans*, 27-28.

*birth sinners and Christ Who makes all His descendants by spiritual birth righteous*: “As through one man’s transgression [judgement came] on all men to condemnation, so through one man’s act of righteousness [acquittal came] to all men for justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man’s obedience many will be made righteous. Law came in to increase the transgression; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 5.18-21).

St. John Chrysostom writes: “Adam is a type of Christ in that just as those who descended from him inherited death, even though they had not eaten of the fruit of the tree. So also those who are descended from Christ inherit His righteousness, even though they did not produce it themselves... What Paul is saying here seems to be something like this. If sin, and the sin of a single man moreover, had such a big effect, how it is that grace, and that the grace of God – not of the Father only but also of the Son – would not have an even greater effect? That one man should be punished on account of another does not seem reasonable, but that one man should be saved on account of another is both more suitable and more reasonable. So if it is true that the former happened, much more should the latter have happened as well.”<sup>154</sup> Again, St. Ephraim the Syrian writes: “Just as Adam sowed sinful impurity into pure bodies and the yeast of evil was laid into the whole of our mass [nature], so our Lord sowed righteousness into the body of sin and His yeast was mixed into the whole of our mass [nature]”.<sup>155</sup> Again, St. Ambrose of Milan writes: “In Adam I fell, in Adam I was cast out of paradise, in Adam I died. How shall God call me back, except He find me in Adam? For just as in Adam I am guilty of sin and owe a debt to death, so in Christ I am justified.”<sup>156</sup> Again, St. Gregory Palamas writes: “Just as through one man, Adam, liability to death passed down by heredity to those born afterwards, so the grace of eternal and heavenly life passed down from the one divine and human Word to all those born again of Him”.<sup>157</sup>

Thus just as Adam sinned, and so brought sin and death on all his descendants, even though they had not committed the original sin, so Christ brought remission of sins and eternal life to all His descendants (the children of the Church), even though they have not rejected sin as He has. If the original curse and punishment was “unjust”, the freedom from the curse and redemption is also “unjust”. But the one “injustice” wipes out the other “injustice” and creates the Righteousness of God. It is therefore vain to seek, as does Metropolitan Anthony, a rational justification of our inheritance of original sin. It *is* unjust – from a human point of view. And the fact that we later sin of our own free will does not make the original inheritance just. However, this “injustice” is wiped out by the equal injustice of Christ’s blotting out *all* our sins – both original sin, and our personal sins – by his unjust death on the Cross. As Archbishop Seraphim of Lubny writes: “If we bear in mind that by the sufferings of One all are saved, we shall see no injustice in the fact that by the fault of one others are punished.”<sup>158</sup>

It is not only the parallel between the old Adam and the new Adam that serves to overthrow Metropolitan Anthony’s concept of original sin: the parallel between the old Eve and the new Eve, the Virgin Mary, does so no less effectively. Let us consider the metropolitan’s words: “Knowing beforehand that every man would display Adam’s self-will, the Lord allows us to inherit Adam’s weak, ill, mortal nature endowed with sinful tendencies...” However, there is one human being of whom we know that she would *not* have displayed Adam’s self will, and who is glorified above all

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<sup>154</sup> St. John Chrysostom, *Homily 10 on Romans*.

<sup>155</sup> Quoted by Archbishop Theophan, op. cit.

<sup>156</sup> St. Ambrose of Milan, *On the death of his brother Satyrus*.

<sup>157</sup> St. Gregory Palamas, *Homily 16*, 17; Veniamin, op. cit., p. 190.

<sup>158</sup> Archbishop Seraphim (Sobolev), op. cit., p. 72.

human beings precisely because she *rejected* Eve's temptation, putting right her sin: the Mother of God. *And yet the Mother of God was born in original sin.* This is the teaching of the Orthodox Church, which rejects the Catholic doctrine that the Virgin was conceived immaculately in order to preserve her from original sin.

St. John Maximovich writes: "The teaching that the Mother of God was preserved from original sin, as likewise the teaching that She was preserved by God's grace from personal sins, *makes God unmerciful and unjust*; because if God could preserve Mary from sin and purify Her before Her birth, then why does He not purify other men before their birth, but rather leaves them in sin? It follows likewise that God saves men apart from their will, predetermining certain ones before their birth to salvation.

"This teaching, which seemingly has the aim of exalting the Mother of God, in reality completely *denies all her virtues*. After all, if Mary, even in the womb of Her mother, when She could not even desire anything either good or evil, was preserved by God's grace from every impurity, and then by that grace was preserved from sin even after Her birth, then in what does Her merit consist? If She could have been placed in the state of being unable to sin, and did not sin, then for what did God glorify Her? If She, without any effort, and without having any kind of impulses to sin, remained pure, then why is She crowned more than everyone else? There is no victory without an adversary..."<sup>159</sup>

Logically, Metropolitan Anthony's theory leads to the Catholic doctrine of the immaculate conception of the Virgin. For since God knew that she would not sin as did Adam or Eve, there was no reason to give her a sinful nature. The fact that she *did* inherit a sinful nature shows that it was not her own sin which caused her sinful nature (by anticipation, as it were), but the original sin of Adam...

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<sup>159</sup> St. John Maximovich, *The Orthodox Veneration of the Mary the Birthgiver of God*, Platina: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1996, p. 59.

## CONCLUSION: LOVE AND JUSTICE

*In the midst of two thieves, Thy Cross was found to be a balance of justice.*  
Triodion, Ninth Hour, Glory..., Troparion.

“As if anticipating his own critics,” write the HOCNA bishops, “[Metropolitan Anthony] wrote these prophetic words in his introduction to his essay, *The Moral Aspect of the Dogma of the Church*: ‘When an author offers his readers a (more or less) new explanation of Christian dogmas; then, if he believes in an Orthodox manner, he reckons least of all to introduce any kind of new truth into the consciousness of the Church. On the contrary, he is convinced that the fullness of the truth is a permanent attribute of the Church’s own consciousness; and if, for example, before the fourth century, the concepts of nature and persons had not been elucidated, or if before the Seventh Ecumenical Council no dogma of the honouring of icons was defined, this does not in any way mean that the early Church did not know the correct teaching about the Trinity or vacillated between the venerating of icons and iconoclasm. In these cases it was not the content of the faith which received a supplement in Christian consciousness, but rather the enrichment of human thought consisted in that certain human concepts or everyday occurrences were explained from the point of view of true Christianity. Even before the fourth century, the Church knew from the Gospel and Tradition that the Father and the Son are one, that we are saved by faith in the Holy Trinity. But how to relate these truths to the human, philosophical concepts of person and nature, - in other words, what place these concepts receive in God’s being – this was taught to people by the Fathers of the First Council and those who followed them.

“In exactly the same way, if any contemporary person... starts discussing the truths of the faith (in new terminology), but without any contradiction of Church Tradition, remaining in agreement with Orthodox theology, then he does not reveal new mysteries of the faith. He only elucidates, from the point of view of eternal truth, new questions of contemporary human thought.” (p. 97).

All this is true, and thankfully more modest than the metropolitan’s claims in *The Dogma of Redemption*. Even here, however, he claims that his work is a new elucidation of old truths on a par with the achievements of the Fathers of the First or Seventh Ecumenical Councils. But what new terminology or insights has he given us?

What is new in “moral monism” is its monism – that is, its reduction of the whole work of redemption to one principle only, love, instead of two, love and justice. But this novelty is false: the restoration of justice between God and man, that is, the blotting out of sin, is not a “secondary”, “incidental” aspect of redemption, *but redemption itself* – at least that part of it which was accomplished by Christ on the Cross and which the Scriptures call “justification”. For Christ shed His blood, as He said, precisely “for the remission of sins”, that is, for the restoration of justice between God and man, for the justification of mankind. Also new in the theory is its moralism – that is, its reduction of the whole mystery of our redemption to what Metropolitan Anthony calls “the law of psychological interaction”<sup>160</sup>, the submission of the will of the believer to Christ’s compassionate love as “an active, revolutionary and often irresistible power”.<sup>161</sup> But this novelty, too, is false: it confuses the work of redemption in itself with the assimilation of redemption by the individual believer, with his response to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. It confuses the *justification* wrought by Christ on the Cross, which is an objective fact independent

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<sup>160</sup> *The Dogma of Redemption*, p. 20.

<sup>161</sup> *The Dogma of Redemption*, p. 19.

of the believer's response to it, with the *holiness* wrought by the Holy Spirit in the soul of the believer who does in fact respond to it.

The concepts of holiness and justification, love and justice are logically distinct, and to speak of the perfection of Christ's love does not in itself explain how justice is perfected. It is the so-called "juridical theory", rooted in the Holy Scriptures and developed by the Holy Fathers, but denied by Metropolitan Anthony, that tells us *how* justice and justification are achieved, and *in what* that justice consists – without in any way diminishing the significance of the Divine love. Metropolitan Anthony, however, seeks in every way to play down the significance of redemption viewed as the restoration of *justice* between God and man. He writes: "The act of redemption – the exploit of compassionate love which pours Christ's holy will into the souls of believers – could not, as an act of love, violate the other laws of life, that is, justice. And yet it has not infrequently been considered from this secondary, non-essential, and incidental viewpoint, a viewpoint which the sons of Roman legal culture, as well as the Jews, considered extremely important. Such a view of the secondary aspect of the event in no way obscures its real meaning as an act of compassionate love".<sup>162</sup> It is this attitude towards Divine justice as "secondary, non-essential and incidental" which constitutes, in our view, the fundamental error of Metropolitan Anthony's work and the root cause of all its other errors.

In conclusion, then, let us attempt to present the relationship between love and justice in redemption in a more balanced manner.

Christ's redemptive work can be described as *perfect love in pursuit of perfect justice*. The beginning of all things and of all God's works is without question *love*. God created the world out of love, and redeemed it out of love. As the Apostle of love writes in his Gospel: "God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3.16). But with the appearance of sin, which is injustice, God, Who is called *justice* as well as love<sup>163</sup>, directed all things to the abolition of injustice and the justification of man. That is why the same apostle of love (who is at the same time the son of thunder) combines the concepts of the love of God and the expiation of His justice in one sentence with no sense of incongruity as follows: "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the *expiation* [or propitiation or atonement] (ἰλασμοῦ) of our sins" (I John 4.10).

The attitude of the Divine love to sin and injustice is called in the Holy Scriptures *the wrath of God*. This term does not denote a sinful passion of anger (for God is completely pure and passionless) but the utterly inexorable determination of God to destroy that which is evil and unjust, that is, which is opposed to love. As Archbishop Theophan puts it: "The wrath of God is one of the manifestations of the love of God, but of the love of God in its relationship to the moral evil in the heart of rational creatures in general, and of man in particular."

However, since man was mired in sin, not only his personal sins but also "the law of sin", or original sin, that had penetrated his very nature, he was unable to justify himself. That is why even the best men of the Old Testament were barred entry into heaven and went to hades after their death (Genesis 37.35). For "[sinful] flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of heaven" (I Corinthians 15.50).

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<sup>162</sup> *The Dogma of Redemption*, p. 41.

<sup>163</sup> St. John of the Ladder, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, 24.23.

So how was justice to be restored and man justified? Through the perfect Sacrifice for sin offered by Christ on the Cross. However, in order to understand what is meant by this we need to look a little more closely at the nature of justice itself.

One of the earliest and clearest examples of moral justice is the *lex talionis*: "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth". Justice here consists in balance, equality, *compensation* - evil committed in one direction is compensated for by an equal evil committed in the other direction. But since the second evil is committed with the intention of restoring justice, it is no longer evil, but good.

Now it will be objected that this law has been superseded in the New Testament by a new law forbidding us to seek compensation for wrong done to us: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain..." (Matthew 5.38-41).

However, whatever the old law may lack in comparison with the new, it cannot be called *unjust*: on the contrary, it is the very paradigm of justice. Moreover, it was promulgated by God Himself, and therefore was right for the people of God at that particular stage in their development as a nation. Nor has it proved possible to dispense with the old law in the conduct of government since Christ. Where would a government or society be if there were no laws of a compensatory character? Even if the saints managed to conduct their personal lives by at all time returning good for evil, they never advocated abandoning the principle of retributory punishment for crime in public life, although they did try to temper justice with other considerations, such as the rehabilitation of the offender. Thus in the *Life* of one of the greatest of Christian hierarchs, St. Dunstan of Canterbury (+988), we read: "Once three false coiners were caught and sentenced to have their hands cut off. On that day, which was the feast of Pentecost, the Saint was going to celebrate the Divine Liturgy; but he waited, asking whether the sentence had been carried out. The reply came that the sentence had been deferred to another day out of respect for the feast. 'I shall on no account go to the altar today,' he said, 'until they have suffered the appointed penalty; for I am concerned in this matter.' For the criminals were in his power. As he spoke, tears gushed down his cheeks, showing his love for the condemned men. But when they had been punished he washed his face and went up to the altar, saying: 'Now I am confident that the Almighty will accept the Sacrifice from my hands.'"<sup>164</sup>

Thus justice has an absolute value in and of itself; and if the New Testament has brought other values to the fore, these have in no way superseded justice. Moreover, if the new law is superior to the old, this is not because the old law is unjust, but because the new fuses justice with love and therefore increases the sum total of good. In any case, according to the new law, too, evil must be balanced by an equal and opposite good. The difference is that according to the new law the counter-balancing good need not be offered by the offender, but can be offered by his victim in his place. Thus if the victim suffers the offence but *forgives* the offender, the debt of justice is paid; the act of love, which is forgiveness, blots out the original sin – so long as the offender accepts the gift with gratitude and repentance. Nor is this unjust, if the creditor agrees to pay the debt. For it is not important who pays the debt, so long as the debt is paid – and the debtor shows his gratitude through repentance.

We see, then, that when evil has been done there are two ways in which justice may be satisfied and evil blotted out: by the suffering of the offender, and by the suffering of the victim or

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<sup>164</sup> V. Moss, *The Saints of Anglo-Saxon England*, Seattle: St. Nectarios Press, vol. II, 1993, p. 30.

redeemer in the offender's place. Only in God's law, as opposed to the laws of human government, the suffering of the offender is ineffective if it is not mixed with the particular joy-bringing sorrow of *compunction*; while the suffering of the victim is ineffective if it is not mixed with the sorrowless joy of *forgiveness*. Indeed, according to God's law, a victim who does not forgive his offender is himself offending and adding to the total of injustice in the world. Why? First, because "we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" (Romans 3.23), so that all the suffering we receive is, if we would only recognize it, the just repayment of our sins. And secondly, because all sin is, in the first place, sin against God, not man; for as David says: "Against Thee only have I sinned and done this evil before Thee, that Thou mightest be justified in Thy words, and prevail when Thou art judged" (Psalms 50.4). Therefore if we are to be justified before the Just Judge, we must at all times recognize that we are offenders, not victims, remembering that "if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" (I Corinthians 11.31).

Returning now to Christ's redemptive suffering, we find the new law put into practice to a heightened and supremely paradoxical degree. For, on the one hand, since Christ alone of all men was without sin, He alone had no need to suffer, He alone suffered unjustly. But on the other hand, for the very same reason He alone could suffer *for* all men, He alone could be the perfect Victim, by Him alone could justice be perfectly satisfied. All other sacrifices for sin are tainted since they are offered from a sinful nature. Only a *sinless* human nature could offer a true sacrifice for sin. Moreover, Christ suffered all the reality of sin as far as His sinless nature would allow, even to the suffering of death, the tearing apart of His most beautiful creation. And this meant, as we have seen, that His suffering was immeasurably greater than ours in proportion as sin is immeasurably distant from the holiness of God. Thus did He accept to suffer the whole wrath of God against sin in place of sinful mankind, becoming "the Lamb of God Who taketh away the sins of the world" (John 1.29). For "surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that made us whole, and by His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53.4-5).

So the Cross is perfect justice, "the balance-beam of justice" - but justice of a supremely paradoxical kind. In St. Maximus' words, it is "the judgement of judgement"<sup>165</sup>. Sin, that is, injustice, is completely blotted out - but by the unjust death and Sacrifice of the Only Sinless and Just One. Christ came "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Romans 8.3) and died the death of a sinner, uttering the words expressive of sinners' horror at their abandonment by God. The innocent Head died that the guilty Body should live. He, the Just One, Who committed no sin, took upon Himself the sins of the whole world. When we could not pay the price, He paid it for us; when we were dead in sin, He died to give us life. "For Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust" (I Peter 3.18). And the self-sacrificial love of this sacrifice was so great in the eyes of Divine justice that it blotted out the sins of the whole world - of all men, that is, who respond to this free gift with gratitude and repentance.

The Church has expressed this paradox with great eloquence: "Come, all ye peoples, and let us venerate the blessed Wood, through which the eternal justice has been brought to pass. For he who by a tree deceived our forefather Adam, is by the Cross himself deceived; and he who by tyranny gained possession of the creature endowed by God with royal dignity, is overthrown in headlong fall. By the Blood of God the poison of the serpent is washed away; and the curse of a just condemnation is loosed by the unjust punishment inflicted on the Just. For it was fitting that wood should be healed by wood, and that through the Passion of One Who knew not passion should be remitted all the sufferings of him who was condemned because of wood. But glory to Thee, O

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<sup>165</sup> St. Maximus the Confessor, *Questions to Thalassius*, PG 90:408D.

Christ our King, for Thy dread dispensation towards us, whereby Thou hast saved us all, for Thou art good and lovest mankind."<sup>166</sup>

So there is no conflict between justice and love. To say that God should be loving but not just is like saying that the sun should give light but not heat: it is simply not in His nature. It is not in His nature, and it is not in the nature of any created being. For the simple reason that justice *is* the order of created beings, it is the state of being as it was originally created. For, as St. Dionysius the Areopagite writes: “God is named Justice because He satisfies the needs of all things, dispensing due proportion, beauty and order, and defines the bounds of all orders and places each thing under its appropriate laws and orders according to that rule which is most truly just, and because he is the Cause of the independent activity of each. For the Divine Justice orders and assigns limits to all things and keeps all things distinct from and unmixed with one another and give to all beings that which belongs to each according to the dignity of each. And, to speak truly, all who censure the Divine Justice unknowingly confess themselves to be manifestly unjust. For they say that immortality should be in mortal creatures and perfection in the imperfect and self-motivation in the alter-motivated and sameness in the changeable and perfect power in the weak, and that the temporal should be eternal, things which naturally move immutable, temporal pleasures eternal, and to sum up, they assign the properties of one thing to another. They should know, however, that the Divine justice is essentially true Justice in that it gives to all things that which befits the particular dignity of each and preserves the nature of each in its own proper order and power.”<sup>167</sup>

When people say that God is loving but not just, or, that His justice demonstrates a lack of love, they do not know what they are saying. For His love is aimed precisely towards the restoration of justice, the restoration of “the nature of each in its own proper order and power”, in which alone lies its blessedness. And if the restoration of justice involves suffering, this is not the fault of God, but of His creatures, who freely go against their nature as God created it and thereby create injustice.

God is justified in His words and prevails when He is judged by those evil men who accuse Him of injustice. As He says through the Prophet Ezekiel: “Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not My ways equal? Are not your ways unequal? Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways” (Ezekiel 18.29-30.). Again, the Prophet Malachi says: “Ye have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied Him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgement?” (Malachi 2.17). But God is not unequal in His ways, and He is always the God of judgement.

For, as St. John of Damascus writes, “a judge justly punishes one who is guilty of wrongdoing; and if he does not punish him he is himself a wrongdoer. In punishing him the judge is not the cause either of the wrongdoing or of the vengeance taken against the wrongdoer, the cause being the wrongdoer’s freely chosen actions. Thus too God, Who saw what was going to happen as if it had already happened, judged it as if it had taken place; and if it was evil, that was the cause of its being punished. It was God Who created man, so of course He created him in goodness; but man did evil of his own free choice, and is himself the cause of the vengeance that overtakes him.”<sup>168</sup>

Nor is justice a kind of cold, abstract principle imposed upon Him from without, as it were. As Vladimir Lossky writes: “We should not depict God either as a constitutional monarch subject to a

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<sup>166</sup> *Menaion*, September 14, Great Vespers of the Exaltation of the Cross, “Lord, I have cried”, “Glory... Both now...”

<sup>167</sup> St. Dionysius the Areopagite, *On the Divine Names*, VIII.

<sup>168</sup> St. John of Damascus, *Dialogue against the Manichaeans*, 37.

justice that goes beyond Him, or as a tyrant whose whim would create a law without order or objectivity. Justice is not an abstract reality superior to God but an expression of His nature. Just as He freely creates yet manifests Himself in the order and beauty of creation, so He manifests Himself in His justice: Christ Who is Himself justice, affirms in His fullness God's justice... *God's justice is that man should no longer be separated from God.* It is the restoration of humanity in Christ, the true Adam."<sup>169</sup>

Love and justice may be seen as the positive and negative poles respectively of God's Providence in relation to the created universe. Love is the natural, that is, just relationship between God and man. Sin has destroyed love and created injustice. Divine Providence therefore acts to destroy injustice and restore love. We would not need to speak of justice if sin had not destroyed it. But with the entrance of sin, justice is the first necessity – love demands it.

However, since love never demands of others what it cannot give itself, the justice of God is transmuted into *mercy*. Mercy is that form of justice in which the punishment of sin is removed from the shoulders of the offender and placed on the shoulders of another, who thereby becomes a propitiatory *sacrifice*. Thus the Cross is both love and justice, both mercy and sacrifice. It is the perfect manifestation of love, and the perfect satisfaction of justice. It is "the mercy of peace", in the words of the Divine Liturgy, the mercy that restores peace between God and man.

This intertwining of the themes of love and justice in the Cross of Christ is developed with incomparable grace by Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow: "Draw closer and examine the threatening face of God's justice, and you will exactly discern in it the meek gaze of God's love. Man by his sin has fenced off from himself the everlasting source of God's love: and this love is armed with righteousness and judgement – for what? – to destroy this stronghold of division. But since the insignificant essence of the sinner would be irreparably crushed under the blows of purifying Justice, the inaccessible Lover of souls sends His consubstantial Love, that is, His Only-begotten Son, so that He Who 'upholds all things by the word of His power' (Hebrews 1.3), might also bear the heaviness of our sins, and the heaviness of the justice advancing towards us, in the flesh of ours that He took upon Himself: and, having Alone extinguished the arrows of wrath, sharpened against the whole of humanity, might reveal in his wounds on the Cross the unblocked springs of mercy and love which was to the whole land that had once been cursed - blessings, life and beatitude. Thus did God love the world.

"But if the Heavenly Father out of love for the world gives up His Only-begotten Son; then equally the Son out of love for man gives Himself up; and as love crucifies, so is love crucified.<sup>170</sup> For although 'the Son can do nothing of Himself', neither can he do anything in spite of Himself. He 'does not seek His own will' (John 5.19 and 31), but for that reason is the eternal heir and possessor of the will of His Father. 'He abides in His love', but in it He Himself receives into His love all that is loved by the Father, as he says: 'As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you' (John 15.9). And in this way the love of the Heavenly Father is extended to the world through the Son: the love of the Only-begotten Son of God at the same time ascends to the Heavenly Father and descends to the world. Here let him who has eyes see the most profound foundation and primordial inner constitution of the Cross, out of the love of the Son of God for His All-holy Father and love for sinful humanity, the two loves intersecting with, and holding on to, each other,

<sup>169</sup>

Lossky, "Christological Dogma", *op. cit.*, pp. 114-115. My italics (V.M.).

<sup>170</sup> In the mystery of the Cross, says Metropolitan Philaret, is expressed "the crucifying love of the Father, the crucified love of the Son, the love of the Holy Spirit triumphant in the power of the Cross. For God so loved the world". Metropolitan Anthony's comment on these words is dismissive: "this is a most unpersuasive sophism, a mere juggling of words. What sort of love is it that crucifies? Who needs it?" (*The Dogma of Redemption*, p. 6).

apparently dividing up what was one, but in fact uniting the divided into one. Love for God is zealous for God – love for man is merciful to man. Love for God demands that the law of God’s righteousness should be observed – love for man does not abandon the transgressor of the law to perish in his unrighteousness. Love for God strives to strike the enemy of God – love for man makes the Divinity man, so as by means of love for God mankind might be deified, and while love for God ‘lifts the Son of man from the earth’ (John 12.32 and 34), love for man opens the embraces of the Son of God for the earthborn, these opposing strivings of love intersect, dissolve into each other, balance each other and make of themselves that wonderful heart of the Cross, on which forgiving ‘mercy’ and judging ‘truth meet together’, God’s ‘righteousness’ and man’s ‘peace kiss each other’, through which heavenly ‘truth is sprung up out of the earth, and righteousness’ no longer with a threatening eye ‘hath looked down from heaven. Yea, for the Lord will give goodness, and our land shall yield her fruit’ (Psalms 84.11-13).”<sup>171</sup>

Only at the Last, Most Terrible Judgement will love and justice not be united in mercy for all. And yet the Last Judgement is a mystery proclaimed by the Word of God and grounded in the deepest reality of things. It both proceeds from the nature of God Himself, from His love and His justice, and is an innate demand of our human nature created in the image of God. It is the essential foundation for the practice of virtue and the abhorrence of vice, and the ultimate goal to which the whole of created nature strives, willingly or unwillingly, as to its natural fulfillment. Without the Last Judgement all particular judgements would have a partial and unsatisfactory character, and the reproaches of Job against God, and of all unbelievers against faith, would be justified. And if the Last Judgement is different from all preceding ones in that in it love seems to be separated from justice, love being bestowed exclusively on the righteous and justice on the sinners, this is because mankind will have divided itself into two, one part having responded to love with love, to justice with justice, while the other, having rejected both the love and the justice of God, will merit to experience His justice alone...

Metropolitan Anthony’s error consisted in the fact that he balked at the justice of God, and sought, in a rationalist and pietistic manner, to disengage it, as it were, from His love, assigning to love the primary role in the work of redemption while dismissing justice as a “secondary, incidental aspect” of it.

First, he balked at the justice of original sin. He considered it unjust that mankind should suffer as a result of the sin of Adam. So he proposed a “rational” solution: that men suffer from their inherited sinful nature, not because of Adam’s sin, but because of their own sins – or, more precisely, because they would have sinned in the same way as Adam if put in the same situation. But this contradicts the clear witness of Holy Scripture and the Holy Fathers, the tradition of the Church in baptizing children “for the remission of sins”, the fact that all men before the law died although no sin was imputed to them, and the fact that the Mother of God, though she *reversed* the sin of Eve by successfully resisting personal sin in all its forms, was nevertheless born in original sin. Moreover, it destroys the perfect symmetry between the old Adam and the new Adam: if we do not inherit original sin from the old Adam through carnal birth, then neither do we acquire redemption from the new Adam through spiritual birth.

Secondly, he balked at the justice of the Cross. He considered it unjust that by the death of Christ on the Cross, as by a propitiatory sacrifice, the sins of all men should be blotted out. So he proposed a “rational” solution: that the sins of all men are blotted out, not by any propitiatory

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<sup>171</sup>

Metropolitan Philaret, “Sermon on Holy Friday (1816)”, *The Works of Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow and Kolomna*, Moscow, 1994, pp. 107-108 (in Russian).

sacrifice, not by the death of Christ on Golgotha, but by the overflowing of the “revolutionary, almost irresistible” force of His co-suffering love in the Garden of Gethsemane into the hearts of believers. But this contradicts the clear witness of Holy Scripture and the Holy Fathers, the tradition of the Church in communicating believers in the Body and Blood of Christ as in a Sacrificial offering for sin which is “for the remission of sins”, and the fact that the sufferings of Christ alone, without His death, could not save us, in that death could be destroyed only by the Death of Christ and the New Testament could be signed only in the Blood, presupposing the Death, of the Testator. Moreover, it confuses the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit in our redemption: the work of Christ in *justifying* us is logically and chronologically prior to the work of the Holy Spirit in *sanctifying* us.

In many ways, Metropolitan Anthony’s error is a typically modern one. Modern man is all in favour of *love*; but he wishes to disengage it from *truth*, on the one hand, and *justice*, on the other. He misinterprets Blessed Augustine’s saying: “Love and do what you will”; he thinks that “love covers a multitude of sins”, that is, that it can co-exist with all manner of falsehood (which is ecumenism) and all manner of sin (which is secularism, hedonism, modernism of all kinds), and that in the last analysis falsehood and sin simply do not matter: as the pop song puts it, *all you need is love*.

But it is not true that all we need is love. We also need truth and justice. These three principles are one in God, but at the same time they are three. God is love, but He is also truth and justice, and His love is incompatible with all untruth and injustice. For, as St. John of the Ladder writes: “God is called love, *and also justice*.”<sup>172</sup>

Christ, Who is love incarnate, came into the world “to witness to the truth” (John 18.37) and “to destroy the works of the devil” (I John 3.8). He came into the world, therefore, to reestablish truth and justice. *He is perfect love in pursuit of perfect truth and perfect justice*.

And if His truth defies all rationalist reason, and His justice all human standards of equity, this only goes to show that His thoughts are not our thoughts and His ways not our ways, and that we must work out our salvation in fear and trembling; “for our God is a consuming fire” (Hebrews 12.29)...

*Pascha, 2004.*

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<sup>172</sup>

St. John of the Ladder, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, 24.23.

## **APPENDIX 1: LIFE OF ARCHBISHOP THEOPHANES OF POLTAVA**

### **Early Years**

The future Archbishop Theophanes was born in the village of Podmoshie, Novgorod province on December 31, 1874 (1873, according to another source). His father was the village priest, Fr. Demetrius Bystrov, and his mother was called Maria. He was baptized with the name Basil, since the feast day of St. Basil the Great (January 1) was the nearest to his birthday.

When he was seven years old, Basil had an extraordinary prophetic dream. He saw himself as if he were standing in hierarchical vestments and wearing a golden mitre in the high place during the Divine Liturgy. And his father went up to him and censed him. It should be pointed out that the child had never yet witnessed a hierarchical service. In the morning Basil told his mother the dream. His father, who was sitting in the next room, heard him and said:

“Look a new Joseph has appeared!”

But the prophecy in the dream was fulfilled exactly. Many years later, when Archbishop Theophanes was going to be consecrated to the episcopate, the Holy Synod his father to take part in the service. And during the service he censed his son in the sanctuary in front of the holy altar...

As a child, his parents told him, Basil did not know any prayers by heart, but he would fall on his knees in front of the icons and burble out, weeping:

“Lord, You are so great and I am so small!”

He was quiet and concentrated, and did not take part in childish games. But at the same time he was radiant and joyful. He tasted of the fruits of prayer, and kept a strict watch on his inner life. He loved the severe landscape of the north of Russia, which spoke to him of God the Creator. And he breathed in the pious, humble spirit of the peasants around him.

Basil went to the parish school, where his extraordinary intellectual talents were first revealed. He was able to read a page once and repeat it almost word for word, and jumped class three times. Then he went to theological seminary, which he finished three years before those who had begun with him.

Having finished his secondary studies at the theological seminary, the young Basil had to pass an examination to enter the Theological Academy in St. Petersburg.

“I was then scarcely seventeen. I was much younger than all the other candidates, and I looked like a schoolboy... I was not afraid of the entry examination because I had a good knowledge of the seminary programme. And then there came the time of the written examination in philosophy marked by the famous Professor Korinsky. I was afraid of this exam because it was outside the seminary programme and because it was the only written exam, all the others were oral. I prayed fervently to St. Justin the Philosopher and the holy teachers of the Church Saints Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom to enlighten my mind and give me their thought.

“The day of the exam arrived; it was due to take place at four o’clock. We sat down, Professor Korinsky entered, greeted us and then wrote on the board the proposed subject:

“The importance of personal experience in elaborating one’s world-view.’

“What joy and gratitude to the Lord I felt on reading this compositional subject! It was clear and familiar to me. Thanks to the prayers of the saints, the Lord sent me rapid, light thought and I finished my work astonishingly quickly, in half an hour. I had written only one page... I got up and asked permission to give in my work. The professor was clearly very surprised! He looked at his watch and said, not without hesitation:

“Oh well, give it to me.’

“He had seen that I was the youngest and probably thought that I had not understood the subject. I noted his hesitation and handed him my paper. He asked me to wait for a moment and began to read. During the reading, he raised his eyes towards me from time to time, then said:

“Thank you, thank you... You can go.’

“My fervent prayer to the philosopher saints had been heard,’ continued the archbishop. ‘It was they, not I, who had written by my hand... Thanks be to Thee, O Lord! For Thou are the Giver of all good things! In this way the exam which was supposed to be the most difficult became for me the easiest of all. I had the distinct impression that Professor Korfinsky was satisfied with my work. Finally, I got the top pass into the St. Petersburg Academy. But as the Apostle writes: ‘Not I, but the grace of God which is with me’ (I Corinthians 15.10).”

Many years later, when Basil was now Bishop Theophanes and the Rector of the Academy, he had to pacify the warring factions among the professors during the revolutionary years 1905-06. After one of these debates, without himself taking part, Professor Korinfsky came up to the Rector, who had just calmed the tempest, and said, smiling sweetly:

“Yes... I well remember your essay!”

### *At the Theological Academy*

Archbishop Theophanes had fond memories of several of the professors of the Academy when he was there, including V.V. Bolotov, A.P. Lopukhin and N.N. Glubokovsky. Professor Lopukhin even bequeathed him his very large theological library (which he later gave to the Academy). With their help and support, he passed all four years of his study as the first student.

Having finished his theological education at the age of 21, he was given a professorial scholarship to continue to study at the Academy.

In 1896, Basil Dmitrievich was appointed lecturer at the St. Petersburg Academy in the faculty of Biblical history. In 1898 he received the monastic tonsure with the name Theophanes in honour of St. Theophanes the Confessor, Bishop of Sigriane, and in respectful memory of Bishop Theophanes the Recluse. In the same year he was ordained to the diaconate and the priesthood.

In 1901, he was raised to the rank of archimandrite with the duties of inspector of the Academy in the Academy’s house church by Metropolitan Anthony (Vadkovsky) of St. Petersburg.

The Academy's ustav said that the inspector had to have a master's degree and so was obliged to write a composition to obtain the degree. But Archimandrite Theophanes did not hand in a composition, although he had written it. The reason was that he as a monk had given vows of poverty and humility, and could not seek or desire academic glory. It contradicted the monastic vows. And so the work lay in his desk for several years until another professor in his absence took it and gave it to the Academic Council. The subject of the composition was: "The Tetragram, or the Old Testament Name of God (Jehovah or Yahweh)". This work became his master's dissertation at the faculty of the Biblical history of the Old Testament. It was published in 1905 and was very highly esteemed by critics both inside and outside Russia. It was called "the famous Tetragram"! However, when the book appeared in the shops, Archbishop Theophanes himself went round all the bookshops in a cab, and bought and burned all the copies of the work! In this way he fought against the love of glory in himself.

In this case, as in others, he sought the advice of the elders, especially Hieroschemamonks Alexis of Valaam, and Barnabas and Isidore of Gethsemane skete.

Fr. Theophanes would often take the steamer to Valaam. Once he left the monastery church and went into the woods to practise the Jesus prayer. He soon noticed a large silent mass of people with Fr. Alexis, upon whom the abbot had given the obedience to teach the people outside the church. On seeing him, Fr. Theophanes went in a different direction, thinking that he would not meet the crowd again. But it turned out that the elder led the pilgrims in the same direction. Then he decided to let the procession pass him while he went off in the opposite direction. He stopped in a thicket from where he could observe the pilgrims. In front strode the elder a large distance from the people, while behind him came the pilgrims, most of them women. The hieroschemamonk had his head bowed to the ground, and was praying. Suddenly the thought occurred to Fr. Theophanes: "Ach, in vain does Hieroschemamonk Alexis surround himself with these women – and all of them are young. There could be reprimands..."

"But I hadn't manage to think this before the elder raised his head and, turning in my direction, loudly said, almost shouting:

"They followed Christ, too!"

These words were so unexpected and short that none of the people could understand their meaning and to whom they referred. Although the whole crowd heard these words and looked in the direction of Fr. Theophanes, they could not see him because of the thicket. But the elder again lowered his head and immersed himself in prayer...

"Truly, Elder Alexis was a great saint and wonderful clairvoyant," witnessed Vladyka Theophanes. "He was as beautiful as an angel of God. It was sometimes difficult to look at him, he was as it were in flames, especially when standing at the altar in prayer. At the time he was completely transfigured, his face became different in an indescribable way, extremely concentrated and severe. He was truly all in fire."

But if the elder felt that those present in the altar were involuntarily observing him and his prayer, he tried to hide his condition by a kind of foolery. He usually went up to the wall and, pretending that he was an absent-minded worshipper, in his shadow on the wall he corrected and combed the hair on his head.

Once Fr. Theophanes set off for Valaam, troubled by the following thought: the ascetic rules of the Holy Fathers said that a monk should pay as little attention to his external appearance as possible. But the Church had blessed him to be an academic monk and live and be saved in the world. But, living in the world, it was impossible to forget his flesh and not care for his appearance...

He went to Fr. Alexis' cell convinced that he would get the solution to his problem. And his faith was rewarded. The elder, as always, received Fr. Theophanes very joyfully. He sat him down and asked him to wait for a moment. Then he took a mirror, put it on the table at which Fr. Theophanes was sitting, and began carefully to comb his hair. After this he cleared everything from the table and, turning to Fr. Theophanes, said:

“Well, now we can talk.”

And so, without any words, the elder had resolved Fr. Theophanes's problem...

Another holy man to whom Fr. Theophanes was close was the great wonderworking priest Fr. John of Kronstadt.

Once Fr. Theophanes was preparing to celebrate the Divine Liturgy the next day in one of the capital's churches whose altar feastday it was. But suddenly he was given urgent work that could not be postponed: he had to prepare a written report for the metropolitan. “From the evening and the whole night I wrote the urgent report, and so I was not able to rest. When I had finished my work it was already morning, I had to go to the church. And there, together with the other clergy, Fr. John was serving with me. The Liturgy was coming to an end and the servers were communing in the altar. At a suitable moment, when the communion hymn was being sung, Fr. John came up to me and congratulated me on receiving the Holy Mysteries. And then he looked at me with particular attention and, shaking his head, said:

“Oh, how difficult it is to write the whole night and then, having had no rest at all, to go straight to the church and celebrate the Divine Liturgy... May the Lord help and strengthen you!”

You can imagine how joyful it was for me to hear such words from such a person. I suddenly felt that all my tiredness had suddenly disappeared at his words... Yes, great was the righteous one Fr. John of Kronstadt!”

After pausing for a little, Vladyka continued: “But how many people there were, blind and deaf ones, who did not accept Fr. John and treated him very crudely. And there were such people even among the priests. Thus for example Fr. John once came to the altar feast in one of the churches of St. Petersburg. But the superior of the church, on seeing him, began to shout at him:

“Who invited you here? Why did you appear? I didn't invite you. Oh, you're such a 'saint'. We know saints of your kind!”

Fr. John was embarrassed and said:

“Calm down, batyushka, I'm leaving now...”

But he shouted at him:

“‘Oh what a ‘wonderworker’ you are. Get out of here! I didn’t invite you....’

Fr. John meekly and humbly asked forgiveness and left the church...

Another time there was a service in the St. Andrew cathedral in Kronstadt, where Fr. John was superior. One of the servers began to get disturbed:

“Why do you give away money to everyone, but to me, who serve you, you have never given anything? What does this mean?”

Batyushka was silent, and apparently prayed in himself. But the other continued to be disturbed and reviled him, not sparing himself in his language.

A reader who happened to be there stood up for batyushka:

“What are you doing? Are you in your right mind? Is this possible? It is shameful and terrible to think of what you are saying to batyushka.”

And then he listed the merits of Fr. John, mentioning, among other things, that he was a superior.

“You know, that’s right, after all, I’m a superior. Is it possible to speak with a superior in such a way? No, no, no... It’s wrong, it’s wrong...”

Vladyka Theophanes noted: “What humility Fr. John had! Neither the gift of clairvoyance, nor the gift of healings, nor of wonderworking – none of this did he attribute to himself. But only that it was wrong to speak to a superior in such a way!”

Fr. John had great influence with the royal family, and the tsar visited him secretly. Rasputin feared this influence. As Archbishop Theophanes witnessed to the Extraordinary Commission: “Rasputin indicated with unusual skill that he had reservations [about Fr. John]... Rasputin... said of Fr. John of Kronstadt... that he was a saint but, like a child, lacked experience and judgement... As a result Fr. John’s influence at court began to wane...”

Fr. John reposed on December 20, 1908. Fr. Theophanes served at his funeral.

### **Admirer of Rasputin**

In 1905, after the publication of his master’s thesis, Fr. Theophanes was raised to the rank of extraordinary professor and confirmed in his post as inspector of the Academy.

Perhaps the greatest mistake of Archbishop Theophanes’s life was his initial trust of the great pseudo-elder Rasputin (which means “debauched” in Russian). According to his own witness before the Extraordinary Commission established by the Provisional Government in 1917, he first met Rasputin, significantly, in the house of Bishop Sergius (Stragorodsky), the future traitor of the Russian Church and first Soviet “patriarch” of Moscow. “Once he [Bishop Sergius] invited us to his lodgings for tea, and introduced for the first time to me and several monks and seminarians a recently arrived man of God, Brother Grigory as we called him then. He amazed us all with his

psychological perspicacity. His face was pale and his eyes unusually piercing – the look of someone who observed the fasts. And he made a strong impression.”

Archbishop Theophanes was especially impressed by Rasputin’s apparent prophetic gift. “At that time Admiral Rozhdestvensky’s squadron had already set sail [to fight the Japanese in the Russo-Japanese War]. We therefore asked Rasputin, ‘Will its engagement with the Japanese be successful?’ Rasputin answered, ‘I feel in my heart that it will be sunk.’ And his prediction subsequently came to pass in the battle of Tsushima Strait.”

Again, “Rasputin correctly told the students of the seminary whom he was seeing for the first time that one would be a writer and that another was ill, and then explained to a third that he was a simple soul whose simplicity was being taken advantage of by his friends... In conversation Rasputin revealed not book learning but a subtle grasp of spiritual experience obtained through personal knowledge. And a perspicacity that verged on second sight.”

Fr. Theophanes invited Rasputin to move in with him, to stay in his apartment. It was through Fr. Theophanes that Rasputin gained entry into the house of Grand Duke Peter Nikolaevich, the Tsar’s cousin, and his wife, the Montenegrin Grand Duchess Militsa Nikolevna, whose confessor Fr. Theophanes had become. (According to another source the Grand Duchess first met in the podvorye of the Mikhailov monastery in Kiev.) “Visiting the home of Militsa Nikolaevna, I let slip that a man of God named Grigory Rasputin had appeared among us. Militsa Nikolaevna became very interested in my communication, and Rasputin received an invitation to present himself to her.” After that, Rasputin was invited to the Grand Duchess’ house on his own...

It was through the Grand Duchess that Fr. Theophanes was introduced to the Tsar: “I was invited to the home of the former emperor for the first time by Grand Duchess Militsa Nikolaevna.” In his diary for November 13/26, the Tsar noted: “I received Theophanes, inspector of the St. Petersburg Theological Academy.”

Soon after, Fr. Theophanes was offered the extremely responsible post of spiritual father of the Royal Family. So he became, as it were, the “conscience of the Tsar” at a critical moment in the nation’s history.

Fr. Theophanes gave the Tsarina and her children books of the Holy Fathers to read. In a note to her daughter, the Tsarina reminded them “to read the book that batyushka brought you before communion”.

In view of Fr. Theophanes’s closeness both to the Royal Family and to Rasputin, it is often asserted that it was he who introduced them to each other, and that his later self-imposed exile in France was in order to expiate this sin.

This is untrue. According to the words of Archbishop Theophanes before the Extraordinary Commission: “How Rasputin came to know the family of the former emperor, I have absolutely no idea. And I definitely state that I took no part in that. My guess is that Rasputin penetrated the royal family by indirect means... Rasputin himself never talked about it, despite the fact that he was a rather garrulous person... I noticed that Rasputin had a strong desire to get into the house of the former emperor, and that he did so against the will of Grand Duchess Militsa Nikolaevna. Rasputin himself acknowledged to me that he was hiding his acquaintance with the royal family from Militsa Nikolaevna.”

The first meeting between the Royal Family and Rasputin, as recorded in the Tsar's diary, took place on November 1, 1905. Archbishop Theophanes testified: "I personally heard from Rasputin that he produced an impression on the former empress at their first meeting. The sovereign, however, fell under his influence only after Rasputin had given him something to ponder." According to the Monk Iliodor, Rasputin told him: "I talked to them for a long time, persuading them to spit on all their fears, and rule."

On hearing that Rasputin had impressed the empress, Grand Duchess Militsa Nikolaevna said to him, as Archbishop Theophanes testified: "'You, Grigory, are an underhand person.' Militsa Nikolaevna told me personally of her dissatisfaction with Rasputin's have penetrated the royal family on his own, and mentioned her warning that if he did, it would be the end of him. My explanation of her warning," said Archbishop Theophanes, "... was that there were many temptations at court and much envy and intrigue, and that Rasputin, as a simple, undemanding wandering pilgrim, would perish spiritually under such circumstances."

It was at about this time that Rasputin left Fr. Theophanes's lodgings and moved in with the woman who was to become one of his most fanatical admirer, Olga Lokhtina. Archbishop Theophanes writes: "He only stayed with me a little while, since I would be off at the Academy for days on end. And it got boring for him... and he moved somewhere else, and then took up residence in Petrograd at the home of the government official Vladimir Lokhtin," who was in charge of the paved roads in Tsarskoe Selo, and so close to the royal family...

Rasputin returned to his family in Pokrovskoe, Siberia, in autumn, 1907, only to find that Bishop Anthony of Tobolsk and the Tobolsk Consistory had opened an investigation to see whether he was spreading the doctrines of the *khlysty* – perhaps, as was suspected, at the instigation of Grand Duchess Militsa Nikolaevna. Olga Lokhtina hurried back to St. Petersburg and managed to get the investigation suspended. Soon afterwards, testifies Fr. Theophanes, "the good relations between the royal family and Militsa, Anastasia Nikolaevna [the sister of Militsa], and Peter and Nikolai Nikolaevich [the husbands of the sisters] became strained. Rasputin himself mentioned it in passing. From a few sentences of his I concluded that he had very likely instilled in the former emperor the idea that they had too much influence on state affairs and were encroaching on the emperor's independence."

The place that the Montenegrin Grand Duchesses had played in the royal family was now taken by the young Anya Vyubova, who was a fanatical admirer of Rasputin. Another of Rasputin's admirers was the royal children's nurse, Maria Vishnyakova. And so Rasputin came closer and closer to the centre of power... His influence on the political decisions of the Tsar has been much exaggerated. But he undoubtedly had a great influence on the Tsarina through his ability, probably through some kind of hypnosis, to relieve the Tsarevich's haemophilia, a tragedy that caused much suffering to the Tsar and Tsarina, and which they carefully hid from the general public...

### **Critic of Rasputin**

On February 1, 1909 Archimandrite Theophanes was appointed Rector of the St. Petersburg Theological Academy. And on Sunday, February 22, the second Sunday of the Great Fast, which is dedicated to the memory of St. Gregory Palamas, he was consecrated Bishop of Yamburg, a vicariate of the St. Petersburg diocese, in the Holy Trinity cathedral of the Alexander Nevsky Lavra. The consecration was performed by Metropolitan Anthony (Vadkovsky) of St. Petersburg together with other members of the Holy Synod and other hierarchs who came to the service – 13 in all.

In answer to the accusation that he had gained his see through the influence of Rasputin, Bishop Theophanes testified: “My candidacy for the bishopric was put forward by the church hierarchs led by Bishop Hermogenes [of Saratov, the future hieromartyr]. I would never have permitted myself to take advantage of Rasputin’s influence... I was known personally to the royal family and had four times or so heard confession from the empress and once from the sovereign... and I was already the Rector of the Petersburg Theological Academy.”

It was a difficult time, with liberal ideas gaining ground even among the professors of the Academy. Bishop Theophanes more than once came into conflict with these liberal professors, and they complained about him to Metropolitan Anthony. After one such complaint, the metropolitan summoned the bishop to himself and said:

“The professors are complaining that you are restricting their freedom of scientific research.”

Instead of a reply, Vladyka Theophanes showed the metropolitan a paragraph from the ustav of the Theological Academies which said: “The Rector of the Academy is responsible for the direction and spirit of the Academy”. Then he explained how certain professors during their lectures to students were permitting themselves to express freethinking ideas contrary to Orthodoxy. And the metropolitan had to agree that the Rector had the right to oppose this.

As Rector of the Academy, Vladyka Theophanes enlivened the religio-moral atmosphere in it and created a whole direction among the students, a kind of school of “Theophanites”, as they were called. He tried to instill in the students a respect for the lofty authority of the Holy Fathers of the Church in everything that pertained to the Church faith and piety. When replying to a question of a theological or moral character he tried to avoid speaking “from himself”, but immediately went to the bookcase and found a precise answer to the question from the Holy Fathers, which allowed his visitor to depart profoundly satisfied. He himself was a walking encyclopaedia of theological knowledge. And yet this was by no means merely book knowledge: because of his ascetic life, he knew the truth of the teachings of the Fathers from his own experience. He would go to all the services, and often spend whole nights in prayer standing in his cell in front of the anoly and the icons. He would even take service books with him on his travels, and read all the daily services.

His very look inspired respect, and soon cases of amazing spiritual perspicacity revealed themselves. Never familiar, always correct and restrained in manner, but at the same time warm and attentive, he was a fierce enemy of all modernism and falsehood. If the conversation took a vulgar turn, he would immediately turn away, however distinguished his interlocutor. This caused him to have many enemies, but people also involuntarily respected him. Once the famous writer V.V. Rozanov spoke at length to him against monasticism. Vladyka Theophanes did not reply with a single word. But his silence was effective, for at the end the writer simply said:

*“But perhaps you are right!”*

Bishop Theophanes began to have doubts about Rasputin. These doubts related to rumours that Rasputin was not the pure man of God he seemed to be. “Rumours began reaching us,” testified Vladyka, “that Rasputin was unrestrained in his treatment of the female sex, that he stroked them with his hand during conversation. All this gave rise to a certain temptation to sin, the more so since in conversation Rasputin would allude to his acquaintance with me and, as it were, hide behind my name.”

At first Vladyka and his monastic confidants sought excuses for him in the fact that “we were monks, whereas he was a married man, and that was the reason why his behaviour has been distinguished by a great lack of restraint and seemed peculiar to us... However, the rumours about Rasputin started to increase, and it was beginning to be said that he went to the bathhouses with women... It is very distressing... to suspect [a man] of a bad thing...”

Rasputin now came to meet Vladyka and “himself mentioned that he had gone to bathhouses with women. We immediately declared to him that, from the point of view of the holy fathers, that was unacceptable, and he promised us to avoid doing it. We decided not to condemn him for debauchery, for we knew that he was a simple peasant, and we had read that in the Olonets and Novgorod provinces men bathed in the bathhouses together with women, which testified not to immorality but to their patriarchal way of life... and to its particular purity, for... nothing was allowed. Moreover, it was clear from the *Lives* of the ancient Byzantine holy fools Saints Simeon and John [of Edessa] that both had gone to bathhouses with women on purpose, and had been abused and reviled for it, although they were nonetheless great saints.”

The example of Saints Simeon and John was to prove very useful for Rasputin, who now, “as his own justification, announced that he too wanted to test himself – to see if he had extinguished passion in himself.” But Theophanes warned him against this, “for it is only the great saints who are able to do it, and he, by acting in this way, was engaging in self-deception and was on a dangerous path.”

To the rumours about bathhouses were now added rumours that Rasputin had been a khlyst sectarian in Siberia, and had taken his co-religionists to bathhouses there. Apparently the Tsar heard these rumours, for he told the Tsarina not to receive Rasputin for a time. For the khlysts, a sect that indulged in orgies in order to stimulate repentance thereafter, were very influential among the intelligentsia, especially the literary intelligentsia, of the time.

It was at that point that the former spiritual father of Rasputin in Siberia, Fr. Makary, was summoned to Tsarskoe Selo, perhaps on the initiative of the Tsarina. On June 23, 1909 the Tsar recorded that Fr. Makary, Rasputin and Bishop Theophanes came to tea. There it was decided that Bishop Theophanes, who was beginning to have doubts about Rasputin, and Fr. Makary, who had a good opinion of him, should go to Rasputin’s house in Pokrovskoe and investigate.

Bishop Theophanes was unwell and did not want to go. But “I took myself in hand and in the second half of June 1909 set off with Rasputin and the monk of the Verkhoturys Monastery Makary, whom Rasputin called and acknowledged to be his ‘elder’”. The trip, far from placating Vladyka’s suspicions, only confirmed them, so that he concluded that Rasputin did not “occupy the highest level of spiritual life”. On the way back from Siberia, as he himself testified, he “stopped at the Sarov monastery and asked God’s help in correctly answering the question of who and what Rasputin was. I returned to Petersburg convinced that Rasputin... was on a false path.”

While in Sarov, Vladyka had asked to stay alone in the cell in which St. Seraphim had reposed. He was there for a long time praying, and when he did not come out, the brother finally decided to enter. They found Vladyka in a deep swoon.

He did not explain what had happened to him there. But he did relate his meeting with Blessed Pasha of Sarov the next year, in 1911. The eldress and fool-for-Christ jumped onto a bench and snatched the portraits of the Tsar and Tsarina that were hanging on the wall, cast them to the ground and trampled on them. Then she ordered her cell-attendant to put them into the attic.

This was clearly a prophecy of the revolution of 1917. And when Vladyka told it to the Tsar, he stood with head bowed and without saying a word. Evidently he had heard similar prophecies...

Blessed Pasha then gave Vladyka a prophecy for himself personally. She hurled a ball of some kind of white matter onto his knees, which, on unwinding, he found to be the shroud of a dead man. "That means death!" he thought. But then she ran up and seized the shroud from his hands, muttering:

"The Mother of God will deliver... Our All-Holy Lady will save!"

This was a prophecy of Vladyka's near-mortal illness in Serbia several years later, when he was saved from death by the Mother of God...

On returning from Siberia and Sarov, Vladyka conferred with Archimandrite Benjamin and together with him summoned Rasputin. "When after that Rasputin came to see us, we, to his surprise, denounced him for his arrogant pride, for holding himself in higher regard than was seemly, and for being in a state of spiritual deception. He was completely taken aback and started crying, and instead of trying to justify himself admitted that he had made mistakes. And he agreed to our demand that he withdraw from the world and place himself under my guidance."

Rasputin then promised "to tell no one about our meeting with him." "Rejoicing in our success, we conducted a prayer service... But, as it turned out, he then went to Tsarkoe Selo and recounted everything there in a light that was favourable to him but not to us."

### **Enemy of Rasputin**

In 1910, for the sake of his health, Vladyka was transferred to the see of Tauris and Simferopol in the Crimea. Far from separating him from the royal family, this enabled him to see more of them during their summer vacation in Livadia. He was able to use the tsar's automobile, so as to go on drives into the mountains, enjoy the wonderful scenery and breathe in the pure air.

He often recalled how he celebrated the Divine Liturgy in the palace. And how the Tsarina and her daughters chanted on the kliros. This chanting was always prayerful and concentrated.

Vladyka used to say: "During this service they chanted and read with such exalted, holy veneration! In all this there was a genuine, lofty, purely monastic spirit. And with what trembling, with what radiant tears they approached the Holy Chalice!"

"The sovereign would always begin every day with prayer in church. Exactly at eight o'clock he would enter the palace church. By that time the serving priest had already finished the proskomedia and read the hours. With the entry of the Tsar the priest intoned: 'Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.' And exactly at nine o'clock the Liturgy ended. Nor were there any abbreviations or omissions. And the priest did not give the impression of being in a hurry. The secret lay in the fact that there were no pauses at all. This enabled the Liturgy to be completed within one hour. For the priest this was an obligatory condition. The sovereign always prayed very ardently. Each petition in the litany, each prayer found a lively response in his soul.

"After the Divine service the working day of the sovereign began."

However, the issue of Rasputin was destined to bring an end to this idyllic phase in the relations between Vladyka Theophanes and the Royal Family.

“After a while,” testifies Vladyka, “rumours reached me that Rasputin had resumed his former way of life and was undertaking something against us... I decided to resort to a final measure – to denounce him openly and to communicate everything to the former emperor. It was not, however, the emperor who received me but his wife in the presence of the maid of honour Vyrubova.

“I spoke for about an hour and demonstrated that Rasputin was in a state of spiritual deception... The former empress grew agitated and objected, citing theological works... I destroyed all her arguments, but she... reiterated them: ‘It is all falsehood and slander’... I concluded the conversation by saying that I could no longer have anything to do with Rasputin... I think Rasputin, as a cunning person, explained to the royal family that my speaking against him was because I envied his closeness to the Family... that I wanted to push him out of the way.

“After my conversation with the empress, Rasputin came to see me as if nothing had happened, having apparently decided that the empress’s displeasure had intimidated me... However, I told him in no uncertain terms, ‘Go away, you are a fraud.’ Rasputin fell on his knees before me and asked my forgiveness... But again I told him, ‘Go away, you have violated a promise given before God.’ Rasputin left, and I did not see him again.”

At this point Vladyka received a “Confession” from a former devotee of Rasputin’s. On reading this, he understood that Rasputin was “a wolf in sheep’s clothing” and “a sectarian of the Khlyst type” who “taught his followers not to reveal his secrets even to their confessors. For if there is allegedly no sin in what these sectarians do, then their confessors need not be made aware of it.”

“Availing myself of that written confession, I wrote the former emperor a second letter... in which I declared that Rasputin not only was in a state of spiritual deception but was also a criminal in the religious and moral sense... In the moral sense because, as it followed from the ‘confession’, Father Grigory had seduced his victims.”

There was no reply to this letter. “I sensed that they did not want to hear me out and understand... It all depressed me so much that I became quite ill – it turned out I had a palsy of the facial nerve.”

In fact, Vladyka’s letter had reached the Tsar, and the scandal surrounding the rape of the children’s nurse, Vishnyakova, whose confessor was Vladyka, could no longer be concealed. Vishnyakova herself testified to the Extraordinary Commission that she had been raped by Rasputin during a visit to Verkhoturys Monastery in Tobolsk province, a journey undertaken at the empress’s suggestion. “Upon our return to Petrograd, I reported everything to the empress, and I also told Bishop Theophanes in a private meeting with him. The empress did not give any heed to my words and said that everything Rasputin does is holy. From that time forth I did not see Rasputin, and in 1913 I was dismissed from my duties as nurse. I was also reprimanded for frequenting the Right Reverend Theophanes.”

Another person in on the secret was the maid of honour Sophia Tyutcheva. As she witnessed to the Commission, she was summoned to the Tsar.

“You have guessed why I summoned you. What is going on in the nursery?”

She told him.

“So you too do not believe in Rasputin’s holiness?”

She replied that she did not.

“But what will you say if I tell you that I have lived all these years only thanks to his prayers?”

Then he “began saying that he did not believe any of the stories, that the impure always sticks to the pure, and that he did not understand what had suddenly happened to Theophanes, who had always been so fond of Rasputin. During this time he pointed to a letter from Theophanes on his desk.”

“You, your majesty, are too pure of heart and do not see what filth surrounds you.’ I said that it filled me with fear that such a person could be near the grand duchesses.

“Am I then the enemy of my own children?’ the sovereign objected.

“He asked me never to mention Rasputin’s name in conversation. In order for that to take place, I asked the sovereign to arrange things so that Rasputin would never appear in the children’s wing.”

But her wish was not granted, and both Vishnyakova and Tyutcheva would not long remain in the tsar’s service...

It was at about this time that the newspapers began to write against Rasputin. And a member of the circle of the Grand Duchess Elizabeth Fyodorovna, Michael Alexandrovich Novoselov, the future bishop and hieromartyr of the Catacomb Church, published a series of articles condemning Rasputin. "Why do the bishops," he wrote, "who are well acquainted with the activities of this blatant deceiver and corrupter, keep silent?... Where is their grace, if through laziness or lack of courage they does not keep watch over the purity of the faith of the Church of God and allow the lascivious khlyst to do the works of darkness under the mask of light?"

The brochure was forbidden and confiscated while it was still at the printer's, and the newspaper *The Voice of Moscow* was heavily fined for publishing excerpts from it.

In November, 1910, Bishop Theophanes went to the Crimea to recover from this illness. But he did not give up, and inundated his friend Bishop Hermogenes with letters. It was his aim to enlist this courageous fighter against freethinking in his fight against Rasputin. But this was difficult because it had been none other than Vladyka Theophanes who had at some time introduced Rasputin to Bishop Hermogenes, speaking of him, as Bishop Hermogen himself said, “in the most laudatory terms.” Indeed, for a time Bishop Hermogenes and Rasputin had become allies in the struggle against freethinking and modernism.

Unfortunately, a far less reliable person then joined himself to Rasputin’s circle – Sergius Trophanov, in monasticism Iliodor, one of Bishop Theophanes’s students at the academy, who later became a Baptist, married and had seven children. Fr. Iliodor built a large church in Tsaritsyn

on the Volga, and began to draw thousands to it with his fiery sermons against the Jews and the intellectuals and the capitalists. He invited Rasputin to join him in Tsaritsyn and become the elder of a convent there. Rasputin agreed.

However, Iliodor's inflammatory sermons were not pleasing to the authorities, and in January, 1911 he was transferred to a monastery in Tula diocese. But he refused to go, locked himself in his church in Tsaritsyn and declared a hunger-strike. Bishop Hermogenes supported him, but the tsar did not, and ordered him to be removed from Tsaritsyn. However, at this point Rasputin, who had taken a great liking to Iliodor, intervened, and as Anya Vyubova testified, "Iliodor remained in Tsaritsyn thanks to Rasputin's personal entreaties". From now on, Olga Lokhtina would bow down to Rasputin as "Lord of hosts" and to Iliodor as "Christ"...

When Rasputin's bad actions began to come to light, Hermogen vacillated for a long time. However, having made up his mind that Vladyka Theophanes was right, and having Iliodor on his side now too, he decided to bring the matter up before the Holy Synod, of which he was a member, at its next session. Before that, however, he determined to denounce Rasputin to his face. This took place on December 16, 1911. According to Iliodor's account, Hermogenes, clothed in hierarchical vestments and holding a cross in his hand, "took hold of the head of the 'elder' with his left hand, and with his right started beating him on the head with the cross and shouting in a terrifying voice, 'Devil! I forbid you in God's name to touch the female sex. Brigand! I forbid you to enter the royal household and to have anything to do with the tsarina! As a mother brings forth the child in the cradle, so the holy Church through its prayers, blessings, and heroic feats has nursed that great and sacred thing of the people, the autocratic rule of the tsars. And now you, scum, are destroying it, you are smashing our holy vessels, the bearers of autocratic power... Fear God, fear His life-giving cross!'"

Then they forced Rasputin to swear that he would leave the palace. According to one version of events, Rasputin swore, but immediately told the empress what had happened. According to another, he refused, after which Vladyka Hermogenes cursed him. In any case, on the same day, December 16, five years later, he was killed...

Then Bishop Hermogenes went to the Holy Synod. First he gave a speech against the khlysty. Then he charged Rasputin with khlyst tendencies. Unfortunately, only a minority of the bishops supported the courageous bishop. The majority followed the over-procurator in expressing dissatisfaction with his interference "in things that were not of his concern".

Vladyka Hermogenes was then ordered to return to his diocese. As the director of the chancery of the over-procurator witnessed, "he did not obey the order and, as I heard, asked by telegram for an audience with the tsar, indicating that he had an important matter to discuss, but was turned down."

The telegram read as follows: "Tsar Father! I have devoted my whole life to the service of the Church and the Throne. I have served zealously, sparing no effort. The sun of my life has long passed midday and my hair has turned white. And now in my declining years, like a criminal, I am being driven out of the capital in disgrace by you, the Sovereign. I am ready to go wherever it may please you, but before I do, grant me an audience, and I will reveal a secret to you."

But the Tsar rejected his plea. On receiving this rejection, Bishop Hermogenes began to weep. And then he suddenly said:

“They will kill the tsar, they will kill the tsar, they will surely kill him.”

### **Bishop of Astrakhan**

The opponents of Rasputin now felt the fury of the Tsar. Bishop Hermogenes and Iliodor were exiled to remote monasteries. And Vladyka Theophanes was transferred to the see of Astrakhan.

Before departing from the Crimea, Vladyka called on Rasputin’s friend, the deputy over-procurator Damansky. He told him: “Rasputin is a vessel of the devil, and the time will come when the Lord will chastise him and those who protect him.”

Later, in October, 1913, Rasputin tried to take his revenge on Vladyka by bribing the widow of a Yalta priest who knew Vladyka, Olga Apollonovna Popova, to say that Vladyka had said that he had had relations with the empress. The righteous widow rejected his money and even spat in his face.

Vladyka’s health, which was in general not good because of his very ascetic way of life since his youth, was made worse by the climate in Astrakhan. He contracted malaria and a lung disease. Grand Duchess Elizabeth pleaded with her sister not to forbid him to receive treatment in the Crimea, but the request was turned down. Later, however, the grand duchess did manage to get Vladyka transferred to the see of Poltava.

In spite of the Tsarina’s hostility to Bishop Theophanes with regard to Rasputin, Vladyka always had the highest opinion of the Tsarina and always defended her against those who would slander her.

Although suffering from ill health and deeply grieving over his break with the royal family and Rasputin’s continuing hold over them, Vladyka Theophanes quickly won the respect and love of his flock in Astrakhan.

Once, on the namesday of the Tsar, Vladyka went out with his clergy to serve a prayer service for the health of his Majesty in the middle of the cathedral. But in front of him, nearer the altar, stood what seemed to be, judging from his clothes, a Muslim. It turned out later that this was the Persian consul dressed in extravagant finery, with orders and a sabre, and a turban on his head. Vladyka, pale, weak and ill, asked the consul through a deacon to step to one side or stand with the other official persons, with the generals behind the bishop’s throne. The consul remained in his place and made no reply to Vladyka’s request. After waiting for several minutes, Vladyka sent the superior of the church to request the consul not to stand between the altar and Vladyka and clergy, but to stand to one side. The consul did not move. Vladyka waited, without beginning the official prayer service. And yet the whole leadership of the province and the city, together with the military in parade uniform, were gathered in the church. On the square in front of the church were soldiers drawn up for parade.

Again they went up to the consul and asked him to go to one side and not to stand between the clergy and the altar, the more so as he was dressed in such demonstrative attire. Instead of replying, the consul pointed at the clock, and then angrily said:

“Convey to your Hierarch that the prayer service should have been started long ago as indicated in the official timetable, a prayer service for the prosperity of his Majesty the Emperor.

For this delay, he - your Hierarch - will answer for his stubbornness. He has delayed the prayer service for a whole half-hour!”

When Bishop Theophanes was informed of the consul’s reply, he asked them to convey to him the message:

“It is not I, but you, who are delaying the prayer service. And until you go to one side, the prayer service will not begin.”

When he heard that, the consul demonstratively left the church casting furious looks and mumbling threats. Immediately Vladyka began the service and the choir intoned the Te Deum.

As was to be expected, the consul made a protest to the Tsar, accusing the “audacious hierarch who had stopped the Te Deum for the health of the Tsar from proceeding normally”, and who, being a “hierarch in disgrace”, had attempted to make a political act out of the incident. But then the opposite of what was expected happened. The Tsar and Tsarina approved of Bishop Theophanes’s act...

Before that good news arrived, however, Vladyka had been comforted in another way, during Vespers in the church: “I had so much pain because of the Persian consul and I felt so ill... One evening, when I was serving in the cathedral, I saw St. Theodore the General in a coat of mail... Lord, what joy! How that comforted me! All my sadness and tiredness vanished in an instant. I understood that the Lord approved of my firmness and that He was sending me his martyr to support me... “

Another comfort came in a letter to him from the paralysed Schema-Nun Eugenia, who had the gift of clairvoyance: “I’m having a dream. Some black, threatening clouds have covered the sky. Suddenly the holy Bishop Joasaph of Belgorod appeared. He read a long manuscript, then tore it up, and at that moment the sun reappeared behind the clouds. Soon it was shining clearly and tenderly... Glory to Thee, O Lord!”

On March 8/21, 1913 Vladyka was transferred from Astrakhan to Poltava. As he was leaving Astrakhan, writes someone who knew him well, “there took place an unusually vivid incident, which in itself witnessed to the loftiness and spirituality of his soul, and his truly pastoral relationship to his flock. Before, the people in Astrakhan had protested decisively against his transfer to Poltava. But he nevertheless had to go, a huge crowd assembled at the station, and several hundred people lay on the rails in front of the train to stop it from going. This continued for several hours until they finally managed to free the railway line. I personally think that this is the most vivid event in the story of his life. The people, the flock felt, understood the loftiness of his soul, the soul of their archpastor, and witnessed this love of theirs and understanding, perhaps in too primitive a way, but truly with all their soul, mind and heart. Nobody ever heard of a similar incident with anybody else!”

### *Archbishop of Poltava*

Church life was at a low level when Vladyka came to his new diocese, and hardly anyone attended the services. And so “I prayed to the Guardian Angels of my flock to make to be born in them a zeal for God, to excite in their souls a thirst for prayer and penitence. That is so important. With penitence, there is no true prayer. Only he who feels himself to be infinitely guilty before God truly prays.”

And his prayers were answered. The church began to fill up. And the people began to pray with fervour; the zeal of the archbishop communicated itself to all the clergy.

Vladyka also paid attention to the chanting in church. He looked for someone who knew church chant since childhood to direct the choir. And he founded a “chanting school” for the chanters. The pupils were entirely looked after by the diocese and lived near the episcopal palace. They had to know the words of the chants by heart and understand their meaning perfectly. The child voices of Poltava were soon recognized to be among the best in Russia.

Vladyka also attended rehearsals and chose the chants. He saw it that the choir became well-known not only through the technical perfection of its chanting, but also through its truly liturgical spirit. The people understood this immediately, and the church services were from then on very well attended.

Instead of the pagan celebrations of the New Year, Vladyka instituted a solemn Te Deum at midnight, during which the choir sang marvelously and the cathedral was full to bursting...

So popular did Vladyka become that when he arrived at the cathedral on feast days he found his path covered with flowers...

In 1913 the Russian Church celebrated the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Romanov dynasty. Patriarch Gregory of Antioch came to the celebrations, and during the solemn service in his honour in the Pochaev Lavra the litanies were pronounced in Greek by Archbishop Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Volhynia, the host, in Latin by Archbishop Theophanes and in other languages by the other priests.

In Poltava a whole series of incidents took place which testified to the loftiness of Vladyka Theophanes, who had visions and revelations from God.

In Poltava there lived an exceptionally pious married couple, who were exceptionally devoted to Vladyka Theophanes. When the husband died, the widow, being in indescribable sorrow, asked Vladyka whether he could tell her what was the fate of her dead spouse in the other life. Vladyka replied that perhaps after a period of time he would be in a condition to give a reply to her question. Vladyka prayed that this should be revealed to him, and after a certain time he consoled the widow, saying that God had had mercy on her husband.

Prince Zhevakhov, who later became Bishop Ioasaph, asked Vladyka about the fate beyond the grave of the Bishop of Belgorod who had been found hanged in the lavatory of the archiepiscopal podvorye. Has his soul perished? Vladyka Theophanes replied that the bishop had not perished, since he had not laid hands on himself, but this had been done by the demons. It turned out that this house was being reconstructed, and there had been a house church in it before. But the atheist-minded builders had blasphemously built a lavatory in the place where there had been the altar. When holy places are defiled or where a murder or suicide is committed, the grace of God leaves, and demons settle there. It is difficult to say whether this bishop was guilty of this blasphemy, but he became the victim of the demons.

Once a married couple came to the archbishop complaining about the behaviour of their beloved son, who, though pious in his childhood, no longer went to church, but returned home late at night in a drunken state. Weeping, they asked him to pray for their son.

The son came home late again one night and began to curse and swear. The next morning he could not get out of bed. He did not eat or speak, was feverish and gradually wasted away. His parents were beginning to lose all hope of a cure when they turned to the archbishop again.

The sick boy was already unconscious, and was groaning and crying. Then he came to himself and said that a monk had come to him in his delirium and had said:

“If you don’t correct yourself, and turn from the path of sin, you will die and perish without fail!”

The sick boy wept and swore that he would correct himself. Gradually he began to eat again, and the illness left him. As soon as he could walk, he went to the cathedral to pray and shed tears of penitence. After the service he approached the server to kiss the cross and was amazed to recognize in the archbishop the monk who had appeared to him in his illness! From then on, the young man visited the archbishop frequently, thanked him for praying for him, asked him to forgive him and reiterated his promise to reform his life.

Another rich couple came to the archbishop, complaining about their son, too. Under the influence of bad companions, he was living a debauched life and paid no heed to their pleas. They sought help from the archbishop, but at the same time continued to indulge their son, giving him money. The archbishop advised them to stop giving him money, to be severe with him. But they replied that in their opinion this was not Christian.

“No,” they said, “we want to raise him with love in a Christian spirit. When he gets bigger he will understand and will appreciate our kindness.”

The archbishop could only keep silent. The boy got bigger and became more and more disobedient. Not content with asking for money, he demanded it and even robbed his parents of it. They turned to the archbishop asking him what to do. He gave them the same advice. They again rejected it. Finally the boy left his parents’ house and gave himself up completely to debauchery. The parents cursed him and when they came back weeping to the archbishop, they recognized their error. But it was already too late.

“Certain parents,” concluded the archbishop while telling this story, “before beginning to educate their children should educate themselves, or rather re-educate themselves in the spirit of Christianity. Then what happened in this family would not happen with them.”

A private correspondent writes: “This is a story related by the wife of Professor L.V.I of Poltava theological seminary on what happened in their family.

“In 1915 her son, an officer, whose bride was in Poltava, returned on leave from the front. This officer’s leave ended in Paschal week. The young people wanted to be crowned before the departure of the bridegroom. L.V. knew Vladyka Theophanes well and he loved the whole of their family. And L.V. came to Vladyka and asked for his blessing on the marriage on one of the days of Paschal week. Vladyka, who was always attentive and read to help anyone who asked, this time fell into sad thought and said that he wanted first to look at the canons, and then he would give his answer.

“A few days later the mother of the bridegroom again came to Vladyka. Vladyka said firmly: ‘I cannot bless the marriage of your children on these Paschal days, since the Church does not allow it and for the young people there will be great unhappiness if they do not obey the Church.’

“The mother was terribly upset and threatened the Archbishop with many unpleasantnesses. She thought that Vladyka, as a strict ascetic, did not understand life and for that reason was not allowing the marriage in completely exceptional circumstances.

“In spite of the Archbishop’s ban, they found a priest who agreed to carry out their marriage. After the marriage, the officer departed, having left his young wife in Poltava. But from this moment all trace of him was lost. In spite of all the inquiries of the mother and young wife, nobody could tell them where he was or what had happened to him.

“In relating this, L.V. wept bitterly. She used to say that the wife was in a terrible condition. There was one man whom she wanted to marry. L.V. herself wanted this, for she was convinced that her son was no longer among the living, but at the same time there were no facts, and the wife, not knowing for certain about the death of her husband, could not marry for a second time. This lack of knowledge tormented both the mother and the young woman. L.V. wept and said: ‘How great Vladyka Archbishop Theophanes was! And we valued him so little, we did not understand and did not obey...’

“The inhabitants of Poltava always remembered how the prayers of Vladyka Theophanes healed the sick, and how by his prayers he turned many from sin.”

There was a well-off family with two maid servants. One of them died, and it was discovered after her death that a large sum of money had disappeared. Suspicion fell upon the surviving maid servant. She wept and implored the Mother of God to show where the money was hidden. The Mother of God answered her prayer: one day, the dead woman appeared to Archbishop Theophanes and showed him the place where the money was buried...

A similar incident had taken place a few years before, when Vladyka was Bishop of Simferopol. A young man whom Vladyka had known died, and then appeared to him and asked him for his holy prayers to help him pass through the “toll-houses”. Vladyka prayed, and the young man appeared to him again, thanking him for his prayers and asking him to celebrate a thanksgiving service.

“But you are dead! It is a pannikhida that we must celebrate for you, and not a Te Deum!”

“They told it me over there, they’ve allowed it for me... The point is that over there we are all alive, there are no dead amongst us!”

Then he explained how he had died and passed into the next life, but the person who passed on this story did not understand Archbishop Theophanes’s words.

Once the administration of the diocese received a letter from one of the parishes complaining that their priest had given himself over to black magic and sorcery. He was naturally red-haired, but one night he had become brown, then violet and now he was green! The priest was summoned. Weeping, he explained:

“My wife reproached me for always being red-haired. ‘You should at least dye your beard!’ And I dyed it black. And then during the night the dye disappeared, and it became violet, and now it is becoming green... Forgive me, for Christ’s sake! There’s no sorcery here, just cowardice!”

“Your fault,” replied the archbishop, “consists in having led these little ones into error. They didn’t understand what was happening and basically they have not acted wrongly. One cannot accuse them of anything. It’s you who should ask their forgiveness and be more prudent in the future. I am not going to impose a penance on you: you are a priest and can impose it on yourself.”

And he added, after telling this story:

“We had to send someone to the parish to explain matters to the parishioners and reassure them.”

On another occasion, as Archbishop Averky tells the story, “one of the priests of the Poltava diocese related that when Vladyka was touring his diocese the priests who had modernist tendencies were afraid to appear before him. If Vladyka saw that a priest’s beard and hair were obviously trimmed short or that there was some other irregularity he would say very gently and tactfully:

“‘And you, Batyushka, would you be so kind as to go and spend a month in such-and-such a monastery?’”

Vladyka’s typical day in Poltava was divided as follows. He would rise from sleep in the second half of the night and carry out his prayer rule. In the morning, when the bell sounded, he would go into the house church, where the hieromonk on duty was performing the morning service and the Divine Liturgy. After the Liturgy Vladyka would drink some coffee and withdraw to his study, where he occupied himself with diocesan affairs, and then went over to the reading of his beloved Holy Fathers. He wrote much. In the afternoon would come lunch. Weather permitting, he would go into the garden for a time and walk around praying the Jesus prayer. Then he would again withdraw to his study. When the bell sounded for Vespers, he would go to the church. After Compline he would receive visitors. After supper there would be free time for conversation with his clergy and work in his study.

His study was furnished in the simplest way possible. In the corner stood an iron bed with planks instead of a mattress, on which Vladyka took a little sleep. There were many icons, Vladyka prayed in front of them for a long time with a candle in his hand in spite of the lighted lampadas. His food was the simplest, and he ate very little. When he was very tired from meeting people, he would withdraw for a few days to the Lubny Holy Transfiguration monastery.

### **The Revolution**

The abdication of the Tsar, whom Archbishop Theophanes greatly loved and admired, was a terrible shock for him as for all the true believers. Soon the Provisional Government set up an Extraordinary Commission to investigate the truth about the relationship between the Tsarina and Rasputin. Vladyka was summoned and testified that he had never had any doubt about the complete purity of these relations. As former confessor of the Tsarina, he declared officially that on her side the relationship was motivated only by her care for the Tsarevich, and the undoubted success that Rasputin had in saving the Tsarevich’s life while the doctors had shown themselves to be completely helpless. As for the other rumours, these were lies and slanders... With regard to

Rasputin himself, Vladyka considered that he was not a hypocrite, but was a simple man who had suffered a terrible spiritual catastrophe and had fallen, a fall that had been willed by those around him and which they had treated as just a joke...

As Archbishop of Poltava, Vladyka was sent as a delegate to the Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church in Moscow in 1917-18. The novice who served him at the time said:

“The archbishop and I left Poltava and arrived in Moscow. Nobody greeted us and we did not know what to do. We went to a monastery, but felt that we were not welcome. They had nothing to eat. They gave only a bowl of soup with some thin cabbage which his Eminence Theophanes was not able to swallow because of the weakness of his stomach. We had to leave. A student gave his room for some days... I wrote an urgent letter to Poltava requesting that someone bring some food, for there they had everything. An archimandrite arrived with food. Finally, he obtained for us some lodgings in the Kremlin, in which some other hierarchs were already living. They were starving: the archbishop had to nourish them. I did not attend the Council sessions, I didn't hear the speeches, I could only observe things from the outside... I remember some attacks against Metropolitan Macarius [of Moscow], a holy man. He left the assembly room, but with a smile...”

During the Council, some modernist clergy, future renovationist heretics, came up to Vladyka and said:

“We respect you and venerate you, Vladyko. We know your principled firmness, your faithfulness to the Church, your wisdom. But you yourself see how fast the waves of time are rolling; they are changing everything, and changing us also... There was a monarchy, there was an autocratic Tsar, and now there is nothing of all that. We must, whether we like it or not, make concessions to the changes. As the great teacher of the Church, St. John Chrysostom said so well, we must sometimes, so as to guide the vessel of the Church up to the harbour, give in to the waves and currents so as to await the favourable moment and bring the ship into the haven... That's how it is now, the Church must yield a little...”

“Yes,” replied the Archbishop, “but yield what?”

“You must be with the majority! Otherwise with whom will you remain? You must yield, the wisdom of the Church demands it. Otherwise you will consign yourself to complete solitude.”

“‘The majority can frighten me,’ said St. Basil the Great, ‘but it can never convince me... ‘ To continue the thought of the holy bishop, let us say that it is not solitude that is frightening, but the renunciation of the truth. And that means that it is necessary to remaining without weakening in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is on Him that the whole of the Church stands as on her foundation. ‘For other foundation can no man lay than that which has been laid, Jesus Christ’ (I Corinthians 3.11). And that is why we must not be, as the Apostle says, like ‘children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive’ (Ephesians 4.14). We must firmly hold on to what we have received from the Fathers of the Church. As is so well said in the kontakion of the Feast of the Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council: ‘The preaching of the Apostles and the doctrines of the Fathers confirmed the one Faith of the Church. And wearing the garment of truth woven from the theology on high...’ This ‘garment’ is the clothing of the Church, the teaching received from the Fathers of the ancient Church, which they themselves received from the preaching of the Apostles. And the holy Apostles received it from the very Source of Truth, our Lord Jesus Christ....

“As for the question with whom we shall remain if we do not rejoin those who are ready to make a revolution in the Church, the reply is perfectly clear: we shall remain without moving with those who for the last two thousand years have formed the body of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church on earth, although this is the Church of the Heavens. We also in a certain sense have entered this Heavenly Church, through the saints and first of all through him who baptised Russia, St. Vladimir, and through all the saints, known and unknown, beginning with Saints Anthony and Theodosius of the Kiev Caves, via Saints Sergius of Radonezh and Seraphim of Sarov, and all the saints and martyrs of our Russian land, which is protected by the Heavenly Queen, she who intercedes for us.”

“And with whom will you, brothers, remain, if with all your numbers you give yourselves up to the will of the waves of contemporary life? They have already swept you into the flabbiness of Kerensky’s regime, and soon they will push you under the yoke of the cruel Lenin, into the claws of the red beast.”

The church modernists silently left him...

Vladyka Theophanes recounted the witticism that went the rounds in the Council: “Archbishop Anthony Khrapovitsky is the most intelligent. Metropolitan Tikhon of Moscow is the gentlest. And Archbishop Anastasy Gribanovsky is the wisest in a special sense...”

During the Council, Archbishop Theophanes was appointed head of a commission entrusted with investigating the heresy of the name-worshippers, a heresy that had broken out among the Russian monks of Mount Athos five years earlier and which had been supported by Vladyka’s old enemy, Rasputin. This was a natural appointment, since Vladyka’s master’s thesis had been on the Name of God.

He prepared a report on the subject, but unfortunately the red terror cut short the proceedings of the Council. The commission (whose deputy president was the heretic Fr. Sergius Bulgakov) did not meet, and it is not now known where this report is. All we have is Vladyka’s succinct but precise formula: “The Divinity rests *in* the Name of God”, which is an implicit rejection of the name-worshippers’ thesis that the Name of God *is* God.

On returning to Poltava, Vladyka Theophanes had to suffer much from the Ukrainian autocephalists who, on seizing power, demanded that he serve a triumphant requiem liturgy for Ivan Mazeppa in Poltava cathedral. Mazeppa was the favourite of Peter the Great who had betrayed him at the battle of Poltava in 1712 and had then been anathematised by the Church. But Vladyka said:

“I cannot do this. I do not have the right to do what you ask me because the Church has anathematised Ivan Mazeppa for his treachery. I am not entitled to lift the anathema, which was hurled by the highest representatives of the Church at that time.”

“But it was the Muscovites who did it!”

“No, you are mistaken. There was no patriarchate at that time. The Church was ruled by the patriarchal locum tenens, Metropolitan Stephen Yavorsky, who was from the Western Ukraine. Besides, Tsar Peter surrounded himself precisely with Ukrainians, who were more educated...”

For his principled refusal, Vladyka was put in prison, and was released only when the government of Petlyura was overthrown and the White Army liberated Poltava. After Vladyka's exile to Serbia, the struggle against the autocephalists and renovationists was continued by his close disciple, the future hieromartyr Bishop Basil of Priluki.

### **In Serbia**

Civil war erupted between the Reds and the Whites, and by the beginning of 1920 it was clear that the Reds, who had already carried unparalleled atrocities against church property and church servers, were going to win. In the same year Archbishop Theophanes became a member of the Higher Church Administration of the South of Russia, formed in accordance with the decree of Patriarch Tikhon and the Holy Synod, ukaz № 362 of November 7/20, 1920. Almost immediately, at the suggestion of the White army commanders, who said that their departure would be merely provisional, the HCA prepared to flee southwards from the invasion of the barbarians.

The first stage of the journey took them to Stavropol, and then to Ekaterinodar in the Northern Caucasus. Coming out of Ekaterinodar cathedral, the president of the HCA, Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Kiev, asked the thousands of worshippers whether they should stay in Russia or leave. The people shouted that they should leave and pray for them in the lands beyond the sea. A Te Deum was celebrated, and the immense crowd prayed and wept. The Cossacks came to bid farewell to their hierarchs.

Then the hierarchs set off with the remnants of the White Army for the Crimea, the last refuge of Free and Orthodox Russia. They settled in the monastery of St. George in Sevastopol. Three months later, they left for Constantinople.

Helen Yurievna Kontzevich writes: “[Vladyka Theophanes] departed from Russia on a steamship along with Metropolitans Anthony (Khrapovitsky) and Platon and Bishop Benjamin (Fedchenko). They discussed the situation of the Church the whole way. Bishop Theophanes's position differed from the united opinion of the other bishops, who stood for the path of church politics, and they parted ways.”

However, these differences did not reveal themselves to be serious at that time, and in 1921 Vladyka, together with the whole Higher Church Administration, moved to Yugoslavia at the invitation of Patriarch Demetrius of Serbia, and took part in November of the same year in the First Russian All-Emigration Council in Sremsky-Karlovtsy.

Nicholas Zernov, a participant in this Council, describes Vladyka Theophanes at this time: “The Archbishop of Poltava Theophanes (Bystrov, 1874-1940) was a learned man and an ascetic, withdrawn from the world. His head bowed, his voice scarcely audible, he sometimes celebrated in the Athonite podvoryes. He seemed completely immersed in prayer and indifferent to the world around him, but there came out from him a power that was his own and which fixed people's attention on this fragile old man.”

The most important decision of this Council was the call for the restoration of the Romanov dynasty to the throne of Russia. In this connection, it is interesting to note the letter which Archbishop Theophanes wrote to Helen Yurievna Kontzevich in 1930 on the subject of the coming Tsar: “You ask me about the near future and about the approaching last times. I do not speak on my own, but am saying that which was revealed to me by the Elders, The coming of the Antichrist draws nigh and is very near. The time separating us from him can be counted a matter

of years, and at the most a matter of some decades. But before the coming of the Antichrist Russia must yet be restored - to be sure, for a short time. And in Russia there must be a Tsar forechosen by the Lord Himself. He will be a man of burning faith, great mind and iron will. This much has been revealed about him. We shall await the fulfilment of what has been revealed. Judging by many signs it is drawing nigh, unless because of our sins the Lord God shall revoke it, and alter what has been promised. According to the witness of the word of God, this also might happen.”

According to Schema-Monk Epiphany (Chernov), one of Vladyka’s cell-attendants in Bulgaria, Vladyka said that the future tsar “will not be a Romanov, but he will be of the Romanovs according to the maternal line.” And to another visitor he wrote: "O Russia, Russia! How terribly she has sinned before the goodness of the Lord. The Lord God deigned to give Russia that which He gave to no other people on earth. And this people has turned out to be so ungrateful. It has left Him, renounced Him, and for that reason the Lord has given it over to be tormented by demons. The demons have entered into the souls of men and the people of Russia has become possessed, literally demon-possessed. And all the terrible things that we hear have been done and are being done in Russia: all the blasphemies, the militant atheism and the fighting against God – all this is taking place because of the demon-possession. But the possession will pass through the ineffable mercy of God, and the people will be healed. The people will turn to repentance, to faith. This will take place when nobody expects it. Orthodoxy will be regenerated in her and will triumph. But that Orthodoxy which was before will no longer exist. The great elders said that Russia would be regenerated, that the people itself would re-establish the Orthodox Monarchy. A powerful Tsar will be placed by God Himself on the Throne. He will be a great reformer and he will have a strong Orthodox faith. He will depose the unfaithful hierarchs of the Church, and will himself be an outstanding personality, with a pure, holy soul. He will have a strong will. He will come from the dynasty of the Romanovs according to the maternal line. He will be a chosen one of God, obedient to Him in all things. He will transfigure Siberia. But this Russia will not continue to exist for long. Soon that will take place which the Apostle John speaks of in the Apocalypse.”

And again he said, as witnessed by Archbishop Averky: “In Russia, the elders said, in accordance with the will of the people, the Monarchy, Autocratic power, will be re-established. The Lord has forechosen the future Tsar. He will be a man of fiery faith, having the mind of a genius and a will of iron. First of all he will introduce order in the Orthodox Church, removing all the untrue, heretical and lukewarm hierarchs. And many, very many - with few exceptions, all - will be deposed, and new, true, unshakeable hierarchs will take their place. He will be of the family of the Romanovs according to the female line [according to Schema-Monk Epiphany he said: “He will *not* be of the family of the Romanovs, but will be related to them through women]. Russia will be a powerful state, but only for 'a short time'... And then the Antichrist will come into the world, with all the horrors of the end as described in the Apocalypse.”

Vladyka Theophanes was appointed abbot of the monastery of Petkovitsa in the diocese of Shabats. However, because of his poor health, the new abbot was not able to spend much time with the brethren, and, as Archbishop Anthony of San Francisco recounts, “the older brethren began to complain, while the younger brethren were on the side of Vladyka. Fr. Ambrose [Kurganov] was especially grieved when he encountered the complaining. He always honoured the holiness of the authority of the abbacy.

“Realizing his weakness to calm the ferment, longing for another form of life,... Archbishop Theophanes decided to leave Petkovitsa.

“Before his departure, on the feast day of the Petkovitsa church, October 1, 1923, he ordained deacon Ambrose to the priesthood during the Divine Liturgy.

“It is said that on that day, St. Paraskeva was seen standing in the sanctuary near the holy table...”

The archbishop was taken away, sick, to another monastery on the Adriatic coast. It was meant to be a place of recuperation, but his health only worsened.

“I could scarcely move, I was so weak; my sick throat deprived me of my last strength, and every day I became weaker. There were so few monks in the monastery that there were no services. There was a Serbian Orthodox monastery not far away. One day, as the bells were ringing for the beginning of Vespers, I decided to go for the last time to pray in a church: I dressed and left, to respond to the call of the bells.

“I dragged myself painfully to the monastery, and on arriving I saw a hieromonk occupied in playing cards in the courtyard of the monastery, his stole hanging on a tree beside the church, which was locked. I went up to the monk and asked him:

“What’s happening, is Vespers already finished?”

“We rang the bells so that the faithful should know that tomorrow is a feast day.’

“But the Vespers service?”

“We don’t have services! We only have the bells!”

The archbishop bowed his head, and returned to his cell, immersed in sad thoughts...

In the following days, his last strength left him. He was suffering terribly in his throat. He could not swallow anything; in any case, he had no appetite. He felt the end approaching...

The feast of the Protection of the Mother of God was drawing near. He addressed a last tearful prayer to the Mother of God and delivered himself into the hands of the Lord:

“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, into Thy hands I commit my spirit!”

The brothers were panic-stricken. The archbishop was lying like a corpse, hardly breathing... He remained in this state for forty-eight hours.

On the third day, he recovered consciousness and felt that an important change had taken place in him. Tears of joy came to the eyes of the sick man, tears of gratitude to God and the Holy Virgin...

Then he remembered the prophetic words of the fool for Christ, Pasha of Sarov:

“The Mother of God will deliver you! The Holy Virgin will save you!”

Just at that moment a parcel arrived from the Soviet Union from an unknown person – at a time when no letters were arriving from the Soviet Union! Inside was a beautiful icon of St. Seraphim

of Sarov. He was convinced that he had been saved through the Mother of God and the prayers of St. Seraphim.

Pascha arrived, and the priest of the Russian church in the town near the monastery was going round the homes of his parishioners to wish them the joy of the feast. But in his heart he was sad, because he had left his family in the Soviet Union and had received no news of them. His sadness combined with the effects of drinking too much in the houses of his parishioners, and suddenly he awoke from his stupor to realize that the money collected in church which he carried with him had disappeared. Terrible thoughts assailed him, he was convinced that nobody would believe that he had not stolen the money, and he determined to kill himself.

Exhausted, he fell asleep. And then in a dream he saw Archbishop Theophanes, who approached him and said:

“Go to the temple of the Lord and you will find what you have lost.”

Dawn was breaking as he rushed to the church. Lighting a candle and making the sign of the cross, he began to search. There was the money, on one of the side benches!

Joyfully he began to chant the Paschal hymn: “Christ is risen from the dead!” He felt that he himself had been truly resurrected from the dead!

Then he rushed to the archbishop and thanked him fervently for saving him from perdition. But the archbishop said that he knew nothing about this, and told him to ascribe the glory to God alone, and said:

“Always remember what God told you: ‘Go to the temple of the Lord and you will find what you have lost.’”

### **In Bulgaria**

In 1925 the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church invited Archbishop Theophanes to live in Sofia, in two rooms on the first floor of the Synodal House overlooking St. Alexander Nevsky Square. The reason for this was that several members of the Bulgarian Synod had been students of Vladyka at the St. Petersburg Theological Academy, including the president of the Synod, Metropolitan Clement. Also instrumental in the invitation was another former student of Vladyka’s, Bishop Seraphim (Sobolev) of Lubny, a vicariate of the Poltava diocese, who was now in charge of the Russian parishes in Bulgaria.

Archbishop Averky writes: “It was touching to see the attention and profound reverence which our brothers the Bulgarians showed Archbishop Theophanes. He frequently served in the majestic Church of St. Alexander Nevsky that was erected in memory of the liberation of Bulgaria from the Turkish yoke. It stood on the enormous square adjacent to the Synodal house and could accommodate 7000 faithful. Occasionally, and especially during Great Lent, he served even in the Synod ‘paraklis’ – the small house church in the Synodal House. Those who participated in his spiritually fulfilling and profoundly prayerful services even today remember them with compunction...

“Indeed, Vladyka Theophanes made a deep impression as a man of genuinely spiritual life on all foreigners who came in contact with him. The enemy, however, takes up arms against such

saintly people and makes a special effort to pour out on them all his diabolical malice with the help of malevolent and depraved individuals who are devoted to his service. Thus in Sofia, due to various unfortunate events in the local Russian Church, Vladyka Theophanes had to suffer much grief simply because he was a strict ascetic and an uncompromising Archpastor. Consequently, he withdrew more and more from the world and its raging passions and began to retire into himself, leading what was already virtually the life of a recluse. For some time, however, he continued to participate in the sessions of the Synod, periodically travelling to Yugoslavia for this purpose...

“Vladyka grieved over all the unnecessary events which took place in the Russian émigré community. Most detrimental were all the arguments and disputes which, as he put it, were not befitting of Orthodox Russians who, because of their sins, had lost their homeland and were sentenced to live in exile, in some cases in extremely difficult material and moral circumstances. He altogether disapproved of the idea of proclaiming a Russian Emperor outside of Russia, or a ‘Patriarch of Russia’ or even a ‘patriarchal *locum tenens*’, notions which were widely circulated by certain individuals. He believed that Russia would soon be resurrected, but only on the condition that the whole nation *repented* of its grave sin of apostasy before God. He considered our life in exile as nothing other than an opportunity for fervent *repentance* and prayer for God’s forgiveness. This is why many of the events that occurred during our life in exile gave him pain and sorrow and forced him to avoid close contact with people. Neither would he engage in any kind of social interaction in which he did not observe the repentance which should be evident in our people, to whom God had given the penance of banishment. Vladyka Theophan never went out of his cell in the Synodal House except to go to church, nor did he receive anyone there except a few individuals who were deeply devoted to him and sought his instructions and spiritual guidance.

“Every summer he moved from Sofia to the coastal city of Varna, where a group of his admirers rented him a modest cottage about five kilometres from town. The cottage was located in a very isolated and relatively uninhabited spot. There Vladyka lived alone with his cell-attendant as in a skete, daily performing the whole cycle of services and readers services in place of the Liturgy. Only on certain Sundays and on major holy days did he ride to church in a carriage. Usually he went to the Russian church of Athanasius of Alexandria, an ancient Greek church that had been put at the disposal of the Russians by the Bulgarian Metropolitan Symeon of Varna and Preslav.

“Here Vladyka worked especially hard on his dogmatic, exegetical and ascetic spiritual writings. Himself a profound and refined expert in Patristics, he compiled a new edition of the *Philokalia*, organized according to a system which he had worked out, which was very practical and handy to use. He also compiled a *Philokalia of Russian Saints*, wrote a very interesting and original interpretation of Revelation, and many other things as well. In addition he conducted extensive correspondence with his spiritual children. His letters contained penetrating spiritual advice and instructions which were always accompanied by citations from the Holy Scriptures and numerous quotations from the Holy Fathers. They were reminiscent of the correspondence of Bishop Theophanes the Recluse, and constitute a precious guide on all matters of morality and spirituality...

“Most astonishing of all were Vladyka’s labours of prayer, to which he devoted himself literally day and night. It was obvious that he never gave up the prayer of ‘the mind in the heart’, following the legacy of the Holy Fathers. He was often so deep in contemplation that it seemed to him that the whole visible world around him had ceased to exist. Prayer without ceasing was indeed vital to his spirit, which dwelt on high...

“When he performed the Liturgy in the church of St. Athanasius in Varna, the congregation of the church, righteous and patriarchal Greeks who lived in the environs, told us: ‘When your Vladyka sits on the high place in the church, it seems as if the Blessed Athanasius himself has come to his church and is performing the services through him. One Greek woman, in whose house Vladyka spent the night, was surprised that when she came in to clean up in the morning the bed appeared to be untouched. Obviously, Vladyka had spent the whole night before the Liturgy in prayer and had not gone to bed.

“It is not surprising that, given Vladyka Theophanes’ strict ascetic life, as happens with many genuine ascetics, he experienced frightening episodes of the sort that the enemy of mankind uses to try to force people who lead an ascetic life to give up their labours. These were the same sort of episodes that we know from the Russian ascetics Saints Sergius of Radonezh and Seraphim of Sarov. Vladyka Theophanes’ frightening episodes were reported by those who served as his cell-attendants, and even by the Right Reverend Seraphim who rode with him in a sleeping-car on the Sofia-Varna express, and who was at that time in charge of the Russian ecclesiastical communities in Bulgaria. Once, when they were riding together in the same compartment, something woke Vladyka Seraphim in the night and he saw in the middle of the compartment a big black cat [according to Archbishop Theophanes, it was more like a tigress with a huge udder] with eyes of burning flames. Then the loud voice of Vladyka Theophanes resounded: ‘In the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, I adjure you: be gone from me, unclean one!’ The cat snorted, spraying fiery sparks in all directions, and disappeared. Since that time, as Vladyka Seraphim stated, he tried to avoid spending the night in the same place as Vladyka Theophanes because he was so shaken by this experience.

“In the cottage in Varna, there were only two rooms and a kitchen. Vladyka lived in the front room which opened onto the veranda; the second room was empty, and beyond it was the kitchen where Vladyka’s cell-attendants stayed. They took this duty upon themselves voluntarily and served all Vladyka’s needs. One of them was an elderly merchant from Moscow, Kh., another was a middle-aged but by no means old Cossack from the Urals, S., and the third was the young student, T. At first they took turns spending the night in the kitchen, but later they began to go home late at night after doing all that Vladyka asked of them. The reason for this was certain mysterious phenomena which frightened them. In the empty room between the kitchen and Vladyka’s cell somebody’s footsteps would suddenly resound, clearly audible, although there was nobody there. Then it seemed as if some unseen person were throwing whole handfuls of sand or dirt in through the windows of the cottage, and there were other unexplained noises of this kind. When this happened, Vladyka’s loud voice, which was usually soft, could be heard very loud and strong, clearly articulating, ‘In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, I adjure you: be gone from me, unclean one!’ Then everything grew quiet and calm.

“According to the cell-attendant S., at midnight the sound of various falling objects could be heard, and this also ceased after Vladyka pronounced in a loud and threatening voice his adjuration, apparently against the demonic forces which menaced him. At first Vladyka used to ask his cell-attendant,

“‘Did you hear what happened in the night?’

“‘I did,’ he would answer.

“‘And were you frightened?’

“No.’

But once that cell-attendant himself experienced an attack of demons. When he was half-asleep he suddenly felt some terrible hairy monster pressing on him and choking him. He awoke and saw somebody squeezing his throat. At first he thought that it was a robber and took it into his head to grab him with his hand, but his arms went numb... Then he began to pray and he saw a grey cloud which twisted up in the shape of a horn and gradually disappeared. Vladyka came in and made the sign of the cross on his forehead, sprinkled the room with holy water, and such occurrences were not repeated.

“After Vladyka had left for Sofia, his cell-attendants came to the cottage to pack up and move out the things he had left behind. The neighbouring Bulgarian villagers surrounded them and asked in astonishment,

“What was going on last night in your Vladyka’s cottage?’

“Nothing could have happened,’ they replied. ‘Vladyka left the day before and nobody was in the cottage.’

“What do you mean?’ the Bulgarians countered, bewildered. ‘All night long the windows of the cottage were brightly lit, and it was evident that many people had gathered and there seemed to be a party and some kind of dancing going on.’

“Some time later, one of his cell-attendants attempted to ask Vladyka in a most cautious and tactful way what all these mysterious phenomena meant. Vladyka smiled somewhat enigmatically and humbly said,

“Well, this is what happens with monks!’

We, however, understood him thus: yes! This is what happens with monks, but not with all of them, only *real* monks such as you!

“Vladyka was extraordinarily fond of his cell attendants. Sometimes when he came to see them in the kitchen he was very gentle, loving and cheerful. He could appreciate a good polite joke and laugh at it. Only once did his cell-attendants have occasion to see Vladyka actually get angry: a certain priest once wanted to exclude an individual who had offended him from Holy Communion. Vladyka told him that he had no right to do so, and that one must forgive personal offences.”

Once, during the Cherubic hymn of the Liturgy that was being celebrated in the small chapel in the cottage, noises and groaning were heard coming from under the roof. One of the cell-attendants asked the blessing of the archbishop to investigate, but he said it would not happen again. And it didn’t. Instead, however, snakes appeared all round the house, which Vladyka attributed to demonic forces. As a result, they had to move into another house a bit further down the coast in place called “Roumi”...

Dr. Abbatti was working as a doctor in Bulgarian Macedonia when a malaria epidemic broke out. And his wife Anna Vassilievna came down with the illness. Now the doctor and his wife had sworn to each other that they would not conceal from each other when one of them was dying. So the doctor, who had to leave to see a patient, turned to his wife and said:

“Annette, you have no more than two hours to live!”

She was already in the throes of convulsions, and she asked her husband to send a telegram to Archbishop Theophanes immediately and ask him to pray for her. He agreed, sent the telegram and left for his work. The telegram read as follows:

“Anna Vassilievna Abatti is dying. Two hours to live. Asking for your holy prayers to save her from death. Doctor Abatti.”

Then he left. The region where he was working was mountainous and the communications poor. On his way back, he received a telegram. Too preoccupied and sad to read it, he stuffed it in his pocket. He was expecting to find his wife dead... But as he entered his house he could not believe his eyes: his wife was sitting, pale and weak, but with no traces of the illness... The telegram he hadn't read was from the archbishop and said:

“I am praying. By God's mercy, the sick one will recover.”

He noted that the time when the telegram was sent and the time when his wife felt the illness depart coincided. But when Anna Vassilievna came to thank the archbishop, he did not let her open her mouth, telling her to tell nobody about the miraculous healing and threatening her that if she did tell something worse would happen to her. And it was only after the archbishop's death in 1940 that she said:

“He was not a simple archbishop. He was a great man, a holy man of God, ignored by men... Listen how, thanks to his holy prayers, I am alive now, although I was in agony.”

And she told the story...

There lived in Varna a Russian by the name of Pelichkin, a former colonel, who had converted from Orthodoxy to the Baptist faith. He knew how to conduct conversations on religious matters, and was able to disturb someone who was not trained in theology. And he decided to display his talents in a debate with Archbishop Theophanes.

When Pelichkin arrived at the house, Vladyka told his cell-attendants to stay close to the room in which the interview was to take place.

“The interview will be short. You will wait in the corridor and will be witnesses, if such are needed.”

Pelichkin was ushered in. He wanted to close the door, but the archbishop opened it again, which disturbed him. Moreover, Vladyka did not offer him a seat and remained standing himself. Then the archbishop began:

“When there are differences of opinion, and so as to avoid interminable disputes, one makes appeal to the judgement of a third party. These arbiters decide which of the two confess the true faith. Not long ago you and I confessed the same faith, the Orthodox faith. The best judges that we could find are the three holy ecumenical bishops, St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory the Theologian and St. John Chrysostom. Their authority is indisputable for us.”

To this Pelichkin objected: “But they are men like you and I! Why should I be obliged to consider them as indisputable authorities?”

The archbishop replied: “If you consider yourself the equal of the holy bishops St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory the Theologian and St. John Chrysostom, we have nothing more to say to each other. I ask you to leave the room!”

Pelichkin had nothing to answer to this. Disconcerted, he left the room. Later Vladyka explained his tactics:

“If I had refused to speak with him, he would have told the world that ‘the archbishop is frightened’. Whereas here, he had nothing to say in reply... In his heart he well understands that to consider oneself the equal of Saints Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom is a great impudence and spiritual delusion.”

In 1928 Vladyka came to Varna for Holy Week and Pascha. During the Liturgy for Holy Thursday an earthquake suddenly hit the city. Tens of chandeliers suspended on chains from the ceiling began to tinkle, the walls seemed to come to life, the bells began to ring.

The people, too, were disturbed and began to flee from the church. The superior of the church asked the archbishop to allow him to go and calm the people.

“Stay here and pray!” he replied.

And he immersed himself in prayer.

Again the superior, thinking that the archbishop had misunderstood him, insisted:

“Allow me to go and say a word to the people!”

“You must not go and say anything... Stay here and pray!”

When the panic-stricken parishioners saw that everyone in the sanctuary was staying and praying, they calmed down.

On Holy Saturday, there was another earthquake during the chanting of the cherubic hymn: “Let all mortal flesh keep silence...” This time many of the faithful, their fears reinforced by what they had read in the press, rushed out into the street. Once again the superior asked:

“Your Eminence, bless me and allow me go and pacify the people!”

“Father Igumen, stay here and pray!”

This time the priest did not insist. And the people who had fled, seeing the calmness of the clergy in the sanctuary, returned to the church.

But there were many victims in the city. People who should have been in church praying... Vladyka saw the earthquake as a call to repentance....

### **Dogmatic Disputes**

The 1920s were a period of extraordinary turmoil in the Russian Church both inside and outside of Russia. Schisms and heresies, excited and exploited by political and extra-ecclesiastical forces, threatened to tear apart the Body of Christ. In this chaos many looked to the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia for guidance, and in particular to its president and vice-president, Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Kiev and Archbishop Theophanes of Poltava, who had respectively been rectors of the Moscow and St. Petersburg Theological Academies. On many issues the two hierarchs agreed. But unfortunately on one or two issues Archbishop Theophanes considered the metropolitan to be in error; and, for all his love and respect for the older hierarch, he considered it his duty to point out these errors.

In 1926 there was published in Sremski Karlovtsy in Serbia the second edition of Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky)'s *Dogma of Redemption*, an attempt to conceptualise the mystery of Christ's redemption of mankind by means of a sharp contrast between redemption understood as an act of supremely compassionate love and redemption understood as the satisfaction of God's justice, the so-called "juridical theory". The juridical theory was rejected by Metropolitan Anthony as "scholastic", and he sharply criticised several Fathers of the Russian Church for teaching it. In particular, he criticised the *Catechism* of Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, which his supporters proposed to replace with his own *Catechism* containing his own "monistic" theory of redemption. According to Metropolitan Anthony, our salvation was not accomplished by a restoration of justice between God and man, but by an outpouring of Christ's compassionate love for man onto the whole of mankind. In accordance with this theory, the central point in the redemption of mankind was located by the metropolitan in the Garden of Gethsemane, rather than on the Cross.

Archbishop Theophanes, supported by his vicar in Russia, Bishop Seraphim (Sobolev) of Lubny, profoundly disagreed with the metropolitan. He considered the so-called "juridical theory" to be Orthodox, and Metropolitan Philaret's *Catechism* in no need of replacing. And he considered Metropolitan Anthony's *Catechism* to contain serious dogmatical errors relating to the dogmas of redemption and original sin.

The issue came to a head in session of the Synod held in Yugoslavia in April, 1926. On the one hand, the Synod expressed its approval of Metropolitan Anthony's *Catechism*. On the other hand, no decision was made to replace Metropolitan Philaret's *Catechism* with that of Metropolitan Anthony.

However, the dispute rumbled on "underground". Thus in letters to Hieroschemamonk Theodosius of Mount Athos, who took the side of Archbishop Theophanes, Metropolitan Anthony expressed the suspicion that Archbishop Theophanes was in "spiritual delusion" and continued to show himself in fundamental disagreement "with the juridical theory of Anselm and Aquinas, completely accepted by P[eter] Moghila and Metropolitan Philaret". And again he wrote: "We must not quickly return to Peter Moghila, Philaret and Macarius: they will remain subjects for historians".

For his part, Archbishop Theophanes was unhappy that Metropolitan Anthony did not abandon his heretical views on redemption, but only refrained from pressing for their official acceptance by the Synod. As he wrote on February 16/29, 1932: "Under the influence of the objections made [against his work], Metropolitan Anthony was about to take back his *Catechism*, which had been introduced by him into use in the schools in place of Metropolitan Philaret's *Catechism*. But, as became clear later, he did this insincerely, and with exceptional persistence continued to spread

his incorrect teaching *On Redemption* and many other incorrect teachings contained in his *Catechism*".

Another dogmatic issue on which Archbishop Theophanes and Bishop Seraphim cooperated fruitfully was the Sophianist heresy of Fr. Sergius Bulgakov. Another theologian who worked on this issue was Hieromonk John Maximovich, the future holy hierarch.

This heresy was based, according to Vladyka in a letter he wrote in 1930, "on the book of Fr. [Paul] Florensky, *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth*. But Florensky borrowed the idea of Sophia from V.S. Soloviev. And V.S. Soloviev borrowed it from the medieval mystics.

"In V.S. Soloviev Sophia is the feminine principle of God, His 'other'. Florensky tries to prove that Sophia, as the feminine principle of God, is a special substance. He tries to find this teaching in St. Athanasius the Great and in Russian iconography. Protopriest Bulgakov accepts on faith the basic conclusions of Florensky, but partly changes the form of this teaching, and partly gives it a new foundation. In Bulgakov this teaching has two variants: a) originally it is a special Hypostasis, although not of one essence with the Holy Trinity (in the book *The Unwaning Light*), b) later it is not a Hypostasis but 'hypostasisness'. In this latter form it is an energy of God coming from the essence of God through the Hypostases of the Divinity into the world and finding for itself its highest 'created union' in the Mother of God. Consequently, according to this variant, Sophia is not a special substance, but the Mother of God.

"According to the Church teaching, which is especially clearly revealed in St. Athanasius the Great, the Sophia-Wisdom of God is the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Here, in the most general terms, is the essence of Protopriest Bulgakov's teaching on Sophia! To expound any philosophical teaching shortly is very difficult, and so it is difficult to expound shortly the teaching of the 'sophianists' on Sophia. This teaching of theirs becomes clear only in connection the whole of their philosophical system. But to expound the latter shortly is also impossible. One can say only: their philosophy is the philosophy of 'panentheism', that is, a moderate form of 'pantheism'. The originator of this 'panentheism' in Russia is V.S. Soloviev."

Bulgakov was only one of a series of heretical teachers who were teaching in the 1920s and 30s in the Theological Institute of St. Sergius in Paris, such as Nicholas Berdyaev, Lev Zander and Nicholas Zernov. By no means all the Paris theologians supported him. Fr. Georges Florovsky, for example, strongly criticized him. However, Metropolitan Eulogius of Paris supported them, and was in turn supported by them, which, combined with the intrigues of the communists, laid the basis for the schism of the "Paris exarchate" from the Russian Church Abroad that took place in 1927. The sticking point was Eulogius's refusal to allow Synodal supervision of the St. Sergius Institute, and his refusal to break links with the masonically inspired and financed YMCA, proved the sticking point on which hopes of a permanent reconciliation foundered.

Archbishop Averky writes: "Archbishop Theophanes was the first to expose and document the anti-Christian nature of certain so-called Christian organizations, some of which were eager to extend their influence to the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, and even to subjugate it to themselves somewhat by rendering financial assistance much needed by our refugees who had no stable sources of their own to draw from in exile. Vladyka Theophanes himself categorically refused to accept the monthly allowance offered to him by these organizations, and did not approve of those who did, for he believed that this caused them to lose their spiritual freedom, and that in one way or another they would consequently be forced to do the will of their sponsors.

Vladyka Theophanes guarded his independence and spiritual freedom, preferring a beggarly existence to a secure situation. This discloses the most characteristic trait of our great pastor, a trait that he shared with the great Fathers of Christian antiquity: any compromise of conscience, no matter how small, was for him altogether inconceivable. In all of his actions and conduct, in his private life as well as in his service to the Church and society, he was utterly constant, never departing in any way from what his convictions dictated. Absolute incorruptibility, uncompromising honesty and straightforwardness, demand for unconditional loyalty to the true Church, to the Word of God, and to Patristic tradition – these were his hallmarks, ideals which guided his life and which he liked to see in other servants of the Church as well.”

In August, 1926, Archbishop Theophanes wrote: “The real causes of the division are deeper than it seems at first glance. Two of them are especially significant. ‘They’ consider the Soviet authorities as ‘ordained by God’, but we consider them antichristian. On the basis of overwhelming documentary evidence, we recognized that the YMCA is a masonic organization. They consider it a Christian organization.”

And he predicted: “Metropolitan Eulogius will not give in. Those around him are pushing him toward schism. We could let him have his way, but we cannot entrust the fate of Orthodoxy to him. He is ensnared in the nets of the [masonic] YMCA. The YMCA in turn is having a demoralizing effect on student groups. In the magazine *The Way* № 5, Professor Berdyaev stated openly that the schism in the church is unavoidable and necessary. Metropolitan Eulogius is the only hierarch who ‘has raised his consciousness to the realization that it is necessary to reform Orthodoxy’, and he is therefore ‘a tool of God’s Providence’ in our days!”

Vladyka took a very strict attitude towards the Paris exarchate. As Helen Kontzevich relates, “in Paris, Archpriest Sergius Chetverikov asked to come and see Archbishop Theophanes, to converse with him on the theme of the Jesus Prayer. But he was presented with the condition that he cease all contact with the YMCA. The Archpriest did not agree to it.”

Archbishop Averky says that Vladyka Theophanes foresaw both the schism of Metropolitan Eulogius of Paris and that of Metropolitan Platon in America; “he warned and admonished, but his warnings were not heeded in time and the subsequent reproach of those who broke away not only had no positive results, but even deepened the division, as Vladyka had also foreseen. Such ecclesiastical schisms and divisions caused Vladyka to sorrow in his heart, to suffer in his soul and to grieve. Although he had at the very beginning identified the root of the problem, he did not always approve of the measures taken to stop the schisms and establish unity in the Church, and he indicated the errors sometimes made in so doing.”

Although Eulogius at times sought, and obtained, reconciliation with Metropolitan Anthony and the other hierarchs, his heretical entourage was stronger, as Vladyka had predicted. First he joined the Moscow Patriarchate under Metropolitan Sergius. But then, when Sergius demanded political loyalty to the Soviet Union, he turned to Constantinople.

However, by 1927-28, both the Moscow and the Constantinople patriarchates had fallen away from the truth of Orthodoxy, and Vladyka Theophanes was prominent in defending that truth against their innovations.

One of the last Hierarchical Councils that Vladyka attended condemned the notorious declaration of Metropolitan Sergius, which recognized the Soviet power as established by God and placed the Russian Church in more or less complete dependence on it. As he wrote on September

1, 1927: “It is impossible to recognize the epistle of Metropolitan Sergius as obligatory for ourselves. The just-completed Council of Bishops rejected this epistle. It was necessary to act in this way on the basis of the teaching of the Holy Fathers on what should be recognized as a canonical power to which Christians must submit. St. Isidore of Pelusium, having pointed to the presence of the God-established order of the submission of some to others everywhere in the life of rational and irrational beings, draws the conclusion:

“Therefore we are right to say that the thing in itself, I mean power, that is, authority and royal power, have been established by God. But if a lawless evildoer seizes this power, we do not affirm that he has been sent by God, but we say that he, like Pharaoh, has been *permitted* to spew out this cunning and thereby inflict extreme punishment on and bring to their senses those for whom cruelty was necessary, just as the King of Babylon brought the Jews to their senses. (*Works*, part II, letter 6).

“Bolshevik power in its essence is an antichristian power and there is no way that it can be recognized as God-established.”

In relation to the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the introduction of the new calendar into that patriarchate and other churches, Vladyka Theophanes was similarly uncompromising. Thus “only an Ecumenical Council”, he wrote, “can introduce a new Church calendar, as the First Ecumenical Council introduced the one which we now use. Any other unauthorized introduction cannot be recognized as canonical.” Unlike Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), who, though opposed to the new calendar innovation, argued in favour of remaining in communion with the new calendarists, and served with the new calendarist patriarch Miron on more than one occasion, Archbishop Theophanes adopted the “zealot” line of the Greek and Romanian Old Calendarists. And he wrote two extended works on the subject. In one of them, written in 1926, he wrote:

“Question. Have the pastors of the Orthodox Church not made special judgements concerning the calendar?”

“Answer. They have, many times – with regard to the introduction of the new Roman calendar – both in private assemblies and in councils.

“A proof of this is the following. First of all, the Ecumenical Patriarch Jeremiah II, who lived at the same time as the Roman calendar reform, immediately, in 1582, together with his Synod condemned the new Roman system of chronology as being not in agreement with the Tradition of the Church. In the next year (1583), with the participation of Patriarchs Sylvester of Alexandria and Sophronius VI of Jerusalem, he convened a Church Council. This Council recognised the Gregorian calendar to be not in agreement with the canons of the Universal Church and with the decree of the First Ecumenical Council on the method of calculating the day of Holy Pascha.

“Through the labours of this Council there appeared: a Conciliar tome, which denounced the wrongness and unacceptability for the Orthodox Church of the Roman calendar, and a canonical conciliar Decree – the Sigillion of November 20, 1583. In this Sigillion all three of the above-mentioned Patriarchs with their Synods called on the Orthodox firmly and unbendingly, even to the shedding of their blood, to hold the Orthodox Menaion and Julian Paschalion, threatening the transgressors of this with anathema, cutting them off from the Church of Christ and the gathering of the faithful...”

“In the course of the following three centuries: the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>, a whole series of Ecumenical Patriarchs decisively expressed themselves against the Gregorian calendar and, evaluating it in the spirit of the conciliar decree of Patriarch Jeremiah II, counselled the Orthodox to avoid it...

“Question. Is the introduction of the new calendar important or of little importance?”

“Answer. Very important, especially in connection with the Paschalion, and it is an extreme disorder and ecclesiastical schism, which draws people away from communion and unity with the whole Church of Christ, deprives them of the grace of the Holy Spirit, shakes the dogma of the unity of the Church, and, like Arius, tears the seamless robe of Christ, that is, everywhere divides the Orthodox, depriving them of oneness of mind; breaks the bond with Ecclesiastical Holy Tradition and makes them fall under conciliar condemnation for despising Tradition...”

“Question. How must the Orthodox relate to the new calendarist schismatics, according to the canons?”

“Answer. They must have no communion in prayer with them, even before their conciliar condemnation...”

“Question. What punishment is fitting, according to the Church canons, for those who pray with the new calendarist schismatics?”

“Answer. The same condemnation with them...”

### **In France: Final Years and Repose**

As early as 1928 Archbishop Theophanes wrote to one of his spiritual children: “I would like to retreat in silence from all things and from henceforth, but I do not yet know whether this is God’s will.” On April 16/29, 1931 he left Bulgaria and moved in with a couple known to him from St. Petersburg, Theodore and Lydia Porokhov, who were living in Clamart, near Paris.

It is not known for certain why Vladyka left Bulgaria for reclusion in France. A desire for deep inner prayer, which is easier in reclusion, was probably one factor. Another, according to his cell-attendant, the future Schema-Monk Epiphanius (Chernov), was the deteriorating state of his relations with his vicar, Bishop Seraphim. A third, according to the same source, was a desire to check out a report that the Tsar was alive and living in France!

Certainly Vladyka was depressed about the state of the Churches, and perhaps felt that he with his uncompromising views could make no further contribution to public Church life. Thus on September 12, 1931 he wrote from Clamart: “You complain about developments in ecclesiastical affairs in your country. I do not know the details of your situation, but I think that the religious and moral state of other Orthodox countries is no better, perhaps even worse. I can at least state with assurance that this is true both of Russia under the yoke and of Russia in the Diaspora. Regarding ecclesiastical matters there, I have an enormous amount of material at my disposal: approximately 700 pages in all. I have at my disposal materials about ecclesiastical affairs here as well which are no less important nor less voluminous. The overall conclusion that can be drawn from these materials is horrifying. Yet there is, of course, amid this general darkness a ‘grace-filled remnant’ which still perpetuates the Orthodox faith both here and there. ‘Our times seem to be apocalyptic. *The salt is losing its savour.* Among the Church’s highest pastors there remains a weak, dim,

contradictory and incorrect understanding of the written word. This is subverting spiritual life in Christian society and destroying Christianity, which consists of *actions, not words*. *It grieves me to see to whom Christ's sheep have been entrusted, to see who it is that oversees their guidance and salvation*. But this is tolerated by God. Let those in Judaea flee to the mountains!' With these words the great Russian hierarchs Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow and Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov characterized the state of ecclesiastical affairs in their own times, sixty years ago. Do we not have even greater reason to repeat these threatening words at the present time?"

One contributing factor to Vladyka's decision almost certainly was his strained relations with Metropolitan Anthony over the Dogma of Redemption and other matters. According to Helen Kontzevich, Metropolitan Anthony wrote to Vladyka after their disagreement over the dogma, and refused him permission to come to any more sessions of the Synod. Whether this is true or not, the relations between the two hierarchs were definitely strained. However, this did not leave to Vladyka formally breaking relations with the Church Abroad, for the newspapers reported that he concelebrated with Archbishop Seraphim (Lukianov) of Paris, and gave sermons.

Vladyka's letters became increasingly apocalyptic in tone. Already in 1931 he predicted a new war in Europe. And "Czechoslovakia will be the first to succumb to this threat!", he added...

On April 31, 1936 he wrote: "Have you noticed what is happening in the world today? The leaders of the world's governments are all doing the same thing: they all speak about world *peace*. The leaders of France and of states friendly to her are also very insistent in speaking about ways to guarantee *security*, as if this were the essential precondition of this 'peace'. One cannot help but recall the words of the Apostle Paul in his epistle to the Thessalonians: 'The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say peace and security, then sudden destruction cometh upon them as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape' (I Thess. 5.3). Everybody who loves the Truth must not only take note of the signs of the times, but also follow these observations to their logical conclusion.

"Regarding the affairs of the Church, in the words of the Saviour, one of the most awesome phenomena of the last days is that at that time 'the *stars* shall fall from heaven' (Matt. 24.29). According to the Saviour's own explanation, these 'stars' are *the Angels of the Churches*, in other words, *the Bishops* (Rev. 1.20). The religious and moral fall of the Bishops is, therefore, one of the most characteristic signs of the last days. The fall of the Bishops is particularly horrifying when they deviate from the doctrines of the faith, or, as the Apostle put it, when they 'would pervert the Gospel of Christ' (Gal. 1.7). The Apostle orders that such people be pronounced '*anathema*'. He said, '*If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that which ye have received, let him be accursed (anathema)*' (Gal. 1.9). And one must not be slow about this, for he continues, '*A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition reject, knowing that he that is such is subverted, being condemned of himself*' (Titus 3.10-11). Moreover, you may be subject to God's judgement if you are indifferent to deviation from the truth: 'So them because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of My mouth' (Rev. 3.6).

"Clouds are gathering on the world's horizon. God's judgement of its peoples and of hypocritical Christians, beginning with heretics and lukewarm hierarchs, is approaching."

Soon after moving to France, Vladyka discovered that he was being followed. He had to stop going to church in the Rue Odessa in Paris, and told one of his people in Bulgaria that life in Clamart was "not peaceful". Later he explained that there had been a night-time descent on the house where he lived. It appears that the Soviets were trying to kidnap Vladyka as they had

kidnapped General Kutepov in 1931 and General Miller in 1937. And although they did not succeed, after his death his papers were all sent to Moscow...

Seeking a safer refuge, in 1936 Vladyka moved with the Porokhovs to Mosne, near Amboise on the Loire. Soon after this Theodore Vassilievich Porokhov was murdered. In 1939 Lydia Nikolaevna Porokhova, in monasticism Maria, also died. Six months later, on September 1, 1939, Vladyka and the Porokhovs' niece, Anastasia Vassilievna, were taken by a former landowner of Poltava, Maria Vassilievna Fedchenko, to a little property which she rented at Limeray, in the same region. Here there were three caves suitable for living in. In the first lived Vladyka. In the second was a church. In the third lived Anastasia Vassilievna. And Maria Vassilievna lived in a house next to the caves. There was also a place for some domestic animals, and for twelve Doberman-pinchers, who were chained up during the day but were released into the park during the night, probably so as to protect Vladyka from his enemies. After his death, they were all sold.

Archbishop Theophanes reposed peacefully at three o'clock in the morning on February 6/19, 1940, the feast of the St. Photius the Great. According to one of those present, there were no more than four people present at the funeral of the great and holy hierarch, who was vested in his hierarchical vestments with the mitre and panagia that the Tsar had presented him with at his consecration. The funeral was celebrated by Hieromonk Barnabas, his confessor, who lived in the same village.

However, according to Helen Yurievna Kontzevitch: "At Archbishop Theophanes's funeral he was deprived of the burial rite due to him as a bishop, and was buried as a simple monk by order of Metropolitan Eulogius. He was buried by Hieromonk Barnabas, who had inquired of Metropolitan Eulogius concerning the rite of burial."

Vladyka was buried in plot N° 432 in the municipal cemetery of Limeray.

On the fortieth day after his repose he appeared to his spiritual son and the future Archbishop of Canada Joasaph, who witnessed: "After the death of my marvelous instructor, I was terribly afflicted... It was very difficult for me and I prayed much for him. And then, on the night of the fortieth day after his repose, I dreamed that I was standing in front of a magnificent church from which were proceeding a multitude of hierarchs after the service. I recognized the great hierarchs: Saints Basil the Great, John Chrysostom, Gregory the Theologian and many others. Suddenly, in the middle of them I saw his Eminence Theophanes! I ran up to him:

"Your Eminence, where are you coming from? "

"Well, as you can see, we have just celebrated the Liturgy together. Come with us."

"I followed him. All this took place in a spacious automobile – or was it a boat? – which began to sail in the air, so to speak. We passed by mountains, forests and valleys of an indescribable beauty. My elder began to show me these dwellings and revealed to me their destiny:

"That one will be saved, but that one over there at the bottom of the valley will perish."

"It was terrible to see! And all around us there were beautiful gardens and a sweet perfume. I contemplated them with delight and without being sated. For a long time we were carried about in

this way in the air, in the middle of this magnificence. Finally I could not restrain myself and asked:

“But where are we?”

“His Eminence Theophanes answered me: ‘And why do you not understand...? In Paradise!’

“From that moment I was reassured, having understood that my dear instructor had been found worthy of eternal blessedness.”

Miracles of healing have been attributed to Archbishop Theophanes since his repose. Thus when he died in 1940 Helen Yurievna Kontzevich had had a terrible toothache; she prayed to him and the pain disappeared instantly. And towards the end of her life she had a vision of him, after which she wrote a troparion to him.

Here is the troparion written by her:

### TROPARION. TONE 3

*Defender of the right belief in Christ's redemption, thou didst endure afflictions and death in exile, O holy father, Hierarch Theophanes, pray to Christ God to save our souls.*

Sources: The *Works* of Archbishop Theophanes in printed and manuscript form; Archbishop Theophanes of Poltava and Pereyaslavl, *Selected Letters*, Liberty, TN: St. John of Kronstadt Press, 1989; V.K., *Russkaia Zarubezhnaia Tserkov' na Steziakh Otstupnichestva (The Russian Church Abroad on the paths of Apostasy)*, St. Petersburg, 1999, pp. 29-30 (in Russian); Monk Anthony (Chernov), *Vie de Monseigneur Théophane, Archevêque de Poltava et de Pereiaslavl (The Life of his Eminence Theophanes, Archbishop of Poltava and Pereyaslavl)*, Lavardac: Monastère Orthodoxe St. Michel, 1988 (in French); Monk Anthony (Chernov), private communication; Sergius and Tamara Fomin, *Rossia pered Vtorym Prishestviem (Russia before the Second Coming)*, Sergiev Posad, 1994; Richard Bettes, Vyacheslav Marchenko, *Dukhovnik Tsarskoj Sem'i (Spiritual Father of the Royal Family)*, Moscow: Valaam Society of America, 1994, pp. 60-61 (in Russian); Archbishop Averky (Taushev), *Vysokopreosviaschennij Feofan, Arkhiepiskop Poltavskij i Pereiaslavskij (His Eminence Theophanes, Archbishop of Poltava and Pereyaslavl)*, Jordanville: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1974 (in Russian); Archbishop Anthony of San Francisco, *The Young Elder: A Biography of Blessed Archimandrite Ambrose of Milkovo*, Jordanville: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1974, p. 39; Abbot Herman, “Helen Yurievna Kontzevitch”, *The Orthodox Word*, vol. 35, № 6 (209), November-December, 1999, pp. 286-290; Edvard Radzinsky, *Rasputin*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2000; Polischuk, E.S. (ed.), *Imiaslavie. Antologia (Name-worshipping. An Anthology)*, Moscow, 2002, p. 518 (in Russian); Gubanov, *Tsar Nikolai II-ij i Novie Mucheniki (Tsar Nicholas II and the New Martyrs)*, St. Petersburg, 2000, p. 770 (in Russian); M.E. Gubonin, *Akty Sviateishago Patriarkha Tikhona (The Acts of His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon)*, Moscow, 1994, p. 995 (in Russian); *Pis'ma Blazhennejshago Mitropolita Antonia (Khrapovitskago), (The Letters of His Beatitude Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky))*, Jordanville: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1988 (in Russian); “Vie de l'Archevêque Théophane de Poltava”, *Orthodoxie*, №, December, 1996, pp. 6-12 (in French); V. Moss, *The Mystery of Redemption*, Cafepress, 2004.

## **APPENDIX 2: ARCHBISHOP THEOPHANES OF POLTAVA ON REDEMPTION**

The doctrine of his Excellency Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky of Kiev) differs in two ways from the official doctrine of the Church:

(a) the centre of gravity of the redemptive act of Christ is displaced from Golgotha to Gethsemane,

(b) the redemptive act itself is conceived not at all as an expiatory sacrifice offered for humanity, but as an act of compassion and love for it...

Is our author right in transferring the centre of gravity of the redemptive act of the Saviour from Golgotha to Gethsemane, and does he understand well, in its essence, the prayer of Gethsemane?

Metropolitan Anthony affirms that the words of Christ "May this cup pass from Me" refer not at all to His imminent crucifixion and death, but to the torments undergone in the Garden of Gethsemane and elicited by the sight of the sin of men, and by compassion. He supports his idea by reference to the words of the apostle Paul in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which say that in the Garden of Gethsemane the Saviour besought with great cries Him Who was able to save from death, His heavenly Father, and that He was heard in His prayer because of His piety (Hebrews 5.7-10). If, continues our author, the Saviour prayed that He should be spared the crucifixion and death, the Apostle would not have written that He had been heard, since He endured the crucifixion and death. And if the Apostle wrote that His prayer had been heard, it was that He was not asking that He should be spared death, but something else: that He should be spared the internal sufferings experienced in the Garden of Gethsemane because of the sins of humanity. But it is impossible to concur with this interpretation. Why does our author limit the Gethsemane prayer to the words "May this cup pass from Me" (Matthew 26.39) and omits the second part of the prayer: "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt" (Matthew 26.39)? And besides, it emerges from the complete text of the prayer that Christ was not positively asking to be spared death, but conditionally, if that was the will of God. And the will of God was that Christ should drink to the dregs the cup of sufferings of Calvary for the sins of men.

He was heard and his prayer granted, but in what was his prayer granted, if He was not spared suffering and death? He was delivered from death according to His humanity: that is how the Fathers and Teachers of the Church have always interpreted this passage!..

[St. Athanasius the Great writes:] "When [the Saviour] says 'Father, if it is possible, may this cup pass from Me' (Matthew 26.39), 'nevertheless not My will but Thine be done' (Luke 22.42), and 'for the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak' (Matthew 26.41), He expresses two wills: the human will, which is proper to the flesh, and the Divine will, which is proper to God; the human will, by the weakness of the flesh, recoils before sufferings, while His Divine will accepts them.

In the same way, when Peter learned that Christ was going to suffer, took fear and said 'Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee', Christ, without reproaching him, said: 'Get thee behind Me, Satan: thou art an offence unto Me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men' (Matthew 16.22-23).

"It is the same thing here. As man, he pushes away suffering, as a man would do, but as God and not being subject to suffering by His Divine nature, He completely accepts suffering and death." (*On the Incarnation of the Word and Against the Arians*)...

[Then Archbishop Theophanes cites another passage from St. Athanasius, followed by citations from St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. John Chrysostom (two passages), St. Cyril of Alexandria (three texts) and St. Ephraim the Syrian.]

[St. John of Damascus writes:] "On the eve of His redemptive passion, He says: 'Father, if it is possible, may this cup pass from Me' (Matthew 26.39), but it is clear that He must drink this cup in His capacity as man, and not as God. That is why, as a man would do, He wishes to be spared this cup. These words are dictated by a natural fear... 'Nevertheless, not My will but Thine be

done' (Luke 22.42): not Mine to the extent that I have a different nature from Thine, that is, Mine and Thine insofar as I am consubstantial with Thee.

"Evidently He had a will both as man and as God; for the rest, His human will submitted to and obeyed His Divine will, without following its own inclinations, but desiring only what His Divine will wanted. When the Divine will permitted it, His human will found itself naturally subject to that which was proper to it. That is why when it pushed away death and His Divine will permitted it, it then really pushed away death, and was in a state of fear and agony. But when His Divine will wanted His human will to choose death, then His sufferings became fully accepted and willed, because He delivered Himself voluntarily to death, not only as God, but also as man." (*Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, III, 18).

After all the above, one sees that for the Fathers the Gethsemane prayer of our Saviour was not the exploit of love and compassion for the sin of the human race, but the expression of the agony of Christ and the fear of the pain suffered on Golgotha.

Metropolitan Anthony finds this interpretation unworthy of the person of Christ... But we can be convinced that this objection of our very reverend author is largely based on a misunderstanding by studying the teaching of the Fathers on what they call the irreproachable and natural passions of human nature. According to the Fathers, Christ the Saviour took upon Himself the natural and irreproachable passions, but he did not take upon Himself sin and the sinful passions.

"We confess," writes St. John of Damascus, "that Christ assumed all the natural and irreproachable passions (sufferings) of man. For He assumed the whole man and all that is proper to man, except sin, for sin is not natural and has not been placed in us by the Creator: it arises only under the influence of the devil, who acts with our consent and does not do us violence. The natural and irreproachable passions (sufferings) are external to our will, - they are those which have been introduced into human life as a consequence of disobedience and condemnation, being hunger, thirst, fatigue, toil, tears, decay, fear, agony which produces sweat, tears of blood and the help of angels who take pity on our weakness, and others besides, which are proper to all men in accordance with their nature." (*Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, III, 20).

With regard to fear, St. John of Damascus writes: "The word fear has a double meaning. There is natural fear, which comes when the soul refuses to be separated from the body, in accordance with the natural sympathy and kinship which the Creator breathed into the soul from its origin and which make the soul have a natural experience of fear, anguish and horror of death. The definition of this fear is as follows: natural fear is the effort made to preserve one's existence out of disgust at death. For if the Creator has brought all things into being out of nothing, it is natural that all things should aspire to be and refuse nothingness..."

"But there is another fear, that which comes from a darkening of the spirit, from lack of faith and ignorance of the hour of one's death - for example, the fear that we experience in the night when we hear an unusual sound. That fear is contrary to nature and to define it we shall say: anti-natural fear is terror in face of the unknown. That fear was not experienced by the Saviour..." (*Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*)...

The teaching of the Fathers of the Church on the Gethsemane prayer, which we have just expounded, can be summarized in the following terms:

1) All the Fathers have seen in Christ's prayer in Gethsemane, by no means the redemptive act itself, which for them took place on Golgotha, but a pre-redemptory struggle and agony.

2) The essence of this pre-redemptory act resides not in the compassionate love of the Saviour suffering for the sins of men, but in the manifestation of the weakness of His human nature, which expresses His fear of His coming Passion on Golgotha.

3) The manifestation of this weakness of His human nature does not represent anything whatever unworthy of His holy Person, since it comes from His free Divine will and has a capital importance in the economy of salvation.

4) This act of our Saviour has a providential significance in that it attests to the fact that the Saviour took upon Himself human nature not at all in an illusory manner but in all its reality, with all its (non-sinful) weaknesses, and that He triumphed in His person over one of the principal weaknesses of men...

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The second peculiarity of Metropolitan Anthony's doctrine on the dogma of Redemption is his interpretation of the redemptive act of Christ not at all as a sacrifice offered for the human race, but as an act of compassionate love towards it.

[Bishop Theophanes the Recluse writes:] "We have fallen through the sin of our first parents and we have been plunged into irremediable corruption. Our salvation can only come by deliverance from this corruption. Our corruption comes from two different evils: from the wrath of God in the face of our disobedience and from the loss of His grace and from submission to the law, on the one hand; and on the other, from the alteration of our nature by sin, from the loss of true life, and from submission to death. That is why there were required for our salvation: first, that God should take pity on us, deliver us from the curse of the law and restore to us His grace, and then that he make us live again, we who were dead through sin, and give us a new life.

Both the one and the other are necessary: both that we should be delivered from the curse, and that our nature should be renewed. If God does not show Himself full of pity for us, we can not receive any pardon from Him, and if we receive no pardon, we are not worthy of His grace; and if we are not worthy of His grace, we cannot receive the new life. And even if we had received pardon and remission in some fashion, we would remain in our corrupted state, unrenewed, and we would derive no profit from it; for without renewal of our nature, we would remain in a permanent state of sin and we would constantly commit sins, sins which bring down upon us again our condemnation and disgrace - and so everything would be maintained in the same state of corruption.

Both the one and the other have been accomplished by the expiatory sacrifice of Christ. By His death on the Cross he offered a sacrifice of pardon for the human race. He lifted the curse of sin and reconciled us to God. And by His pure life, by which in a perfect manner he accomplished the will of God in all its fullness, He has revealed and given to us, in His person, an unfailing source of justice and sanctification for the whole human race."

To this teaching on the Redemption which is retained in our dogmatic works and in the 'Catechism' of Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, Metropolitan Anthony made objections, substituting for it his own doctrine...

[But] according to St. Gregory the Theologian, these [old-testament] sacrifices were, on the one hand, a concession made to the young Israel in view of his young age, so that he should not allow himself to be seduced by the pagan sacrifices, and on the other, the prefiguration of the sacrifice of Christ on Golgotha.. This mystical prefigurative value is borne especially by the paschal lamb.

"All that took place in old-testament times with regard to the worship of God," writes St. John Chrysostom, "leads always to the Saviour - whether these are the prophecies, the priesthood, the kingship, the temple, the altar, the veil of the temple, the ark, the manna, the rod, or anything else - everything is in relation with Him. If the one God authorized the Hebrews to offer a sacrificial worship to Him, this is not at all because He was satisfied with sacrifices, but because He wanted to turn the Hebrews from the pagan superstitions... In His wisdom and omnipotence He yielded to the desire of the Hebrews and in authorizing them to offer sacrifices to Him, He prepared the image of things to come, so that the victim, in itself useless, might show itself to be useful as an image... By all the sacrifices He prepares the image of Christ and the events to come.

"Whether this image is a sheep, it is an image of Christ; or an ox, it is also an image of Christ; or a calf or a heifer, or any other animal offered in sacrifice, a pigeon or a turtle-dove, everything is in relation to the Saviour...

"And so as not to fall into prolixity, I counsel you to reread the commentary on all this in St. Paul, which forbids the consideration of anything outside its relation to Christ, but rather orders you to bind everything to Him."

[There follow quotations from St. Athanasius the Great, St. Cyril of Alexandria, St. Gregory the Theologian, eight quotations; St. Athanasius of Alexandria, eight quotations; St. Gregory of Nyssa, three; St. John Chrysostom, eight; St. Cyril of Alexandria, St. Basil the Great, four; John of Damascus, two quotations.]

The Council [of Constantinople] of 1156 considers it indisputable that the death of Christ on Golgotha was a propitiatory sacrifice for the human race and is only concerned to know to whom the sacrifice was offered. It concludes that the sacrifice was offered by Christ the Saviour to the Holy Trinity. In doing this, Christ was at the same time both the victim and the sacrifice (in accordance with His human nature) and God receiving the Sacrifice, with God the Father and the Holy Spirit (in accordance with His consubstantiality with the Father and the Holy Spirit). The Council also established that the eucharistic sacrifice is this same Sacrifice, that of Golgotha. The Council consigns to anathema those who think otherwise.

Metropolitan Anthony refers to St. Gregory the Theologian, whom he considers an adversary of the teaching of the death of Christ on Golgotha as a sacrifice in the usual sense. But one cannot agree with him on this point. It is sufficient to recover the words of St. Gregory to be convinced: see *On the Holy Pascha, Against Apollinarius*.

To defend his point of view on the redemptive act of Christ considered as an act of love and compassion for the sins of men, Metropolitan Anthony cites the passage of the prayer of Symeon the New Theologian before communion in which he speaks of the mercy, the 'com-passion' by which the faithful and the communicants become co-possessors of the Divine light and nature. The writings of Symeon the New Theologian which have been preserved leave no doubt as to the interpretation he made of the redemptive act of Christ. [*Homilies* I, 1-2, I, 3, II, 3, XXXVIII, 3]

[Then come texts from St. John Chrysostom (two), St. John of Damascus (two), St. Athanasius of Alexandria (five) and St. Cyril of Alexandria (five)].

From all that has been said above concerning the death on the cross of the Saviour Christ, one can draw the following conclusions:

1) The death on the cross of Christ at Golgotha, according to the teaching of the Fathers of the Church, is undoubtedly an expiatory and propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the human race.

2) Although one says readily enough that this sacrifice was offered by the One Son to His Father, one must understand well that the Son offers the sacrifice in His capacity as Sacrificer, in accordance with His human nature, but that this sacrifice is accepted by the Father with the Son and the Holy Spirit, in accordance with the indivisibility of their Divine nature. In other words, the sacrifice is offered to the Holy Trinity, and the Son is at the same time He Who offers and He Who receives.

3) This sacrifice was offered, not because the Father "demanded it or had need of it", to satisfy His wrath or His justice, but by "economy", for the salvation of the human race.

4) The essence of the sacrifice consists in the fact that the Saviour took upon Himself the sins of the whole of humanity and endured, because of them, the punishment which humanity should have undergone because of them.

5) The consequence of this sacrifice of expiation was the reconciliation of humanity with God, which was sealed by the sending of the Holy Spirit upon us, by which we have been made capable of entering into communion with God and thus becoming heirs of eternal life.