

July 1974



SYNAXIS

ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY JOURNAL

A PUBLICATION OF THE STS. KYRIL AND METHODY ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY, BOX 404, CHILLIWACK, B. C., CANADA. \$3 PER YEAR.

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF BLESSED IOASAPH THE ENLIGHTENER OF CANADA.



ST. DAVID OF THESSALONICA

Reposed c. 540

KONTAKION, TONE 1

An ever-blossoming garden, bearing fruits of virtues,* thou didst appear on a garden tree like a sweet-singing bird,* but all the more didst thou take into thy heart paradise, the Lord's tree of life,* and having cultivated it, O divinely-wise one,* by it thou dost nourish us with grace:* ever pray for us, O David all-blessed.

THE SAINT WHO SAT IN A TREE

ST. DAVID OF THESSALONIKA
26 June, Church Calendar,
(9 July, secular calendar)

While he was still a boy, St. David used to hear the lives of the Saints being told. He heard how the Saints loved God and spent their whole life serving Him. David became filled with the desire to imitate these holy Saints. He too wanted to love God and serve Him.

When David became old enough, he left his home and all that he owned, and set out for a monastery. After travelling for a little while, he came to a certain monastery which was named for two holy martyrs, Sts. Theodore and Mercury. Here, he was tonsured and became a monk.

How happy David was. Now his whole life belonged to Christ our Saviour and everything that he did would be for God.

St. David kept reading the Bible and the lives of the Saints. He read about the great faith and humility of the Saints of both the Old and the New Testament times. He read about the special gifts of Grace which our Saviour gives to holy people who struggle against sin. The Saints struggle to make themselves clean and pure inside, in their hearts, so that the Holy Spirit will come and dwell in them.

David longed to imitate the Saints. He wanted to be truly humble and have sincere faith in God. He desired to struggle against his own sins and to acquire God's gifts for himself.

One day, while he was reading the lives of the Saints, David became so filled with love and zeal for Christ that he went to the church and climbed up in an almond tree which stood near it. The Saint built a little platform for himself in the limbs of the tree, and sat down on it to read and pray.

It is hard for us to understand why St. David decided to struggle by sitting in a tree like this, but our Saviour understood, and He blessed the Saint.

For three long years, St. David sat in the tree praying to God. Over and over again, he asked God to grant him the gifts of humility and sincere faith. In the summer, the sun burned the Saint, in spring and autumn, the rains soaked him and in winter, freezing winds shook the tree and chilled the Saint. Snow fell all around and covered the little platform and the Saint.

Most people would have frozen in the winter. But St. David was filled with a special warmth from God — it was the warmth of the Holy Spirit.

After three years had passed, a holy angel appeared to Saint David and said, "David, the Lord has heard your prayers, and is giving you what you have asked for. You prayed that you would be humble and modest and that you would love and worship God with true reverence."

"Come down from the tree now and live in your cell silently." Then the angel told David some other things also, and departed.

St. David came down from the tree and God granted him special gifts of Grace. Many people who were ill became healed through the prayers of the Saint.

Saint David lived the rest of his life in prayer and struggle, and worked many miracles and wonders by God's Grace. When he reposed, a fragrance of some wondrous, heavenly incense surrounded his sacred relics, and the voices of invisible angels were heard chanting over him.

Saint David departed from this earthly life many, many years ago. Now he prays for us in the heavenly Church, before the throne of Christ.

EDITORIAL: The Anathemas as Acts of Love.

If someone were to be driving over a difficult road and, coming to a sharp and dangerous curve overlooking a deep canyon, is moved by concern for fellow travellers to gather material to build a guardrail and post warning signs along the way, we would greatly admire that person for his love and compassion.

If another person was to come along later and remove those guardrails and warning signs, we would think him wicked in the extreme, even though he might claim, "I am doing it out of love for mankind because the railing and signs clutter up the view of people. I want people to feel a greater unity with nature and signs and guardrails are a hindrance to this."

Of course, if a person plunges over the side of the unprotected curve, he will no doubt become more "united with nature".

Heresy is the product of man's self-will being guided by Satan to create a teaching or system of teachings which will hinder the salvation of the faithful. Such false teachings will undermine and obscure the Gospel of our Saviour and lead the faithful to plunge over the curve into the abyss of falsehood and unbelief.

Our holy and God-bearing fathers of the Ecumenical Councils and the canonical local councils have seen the dangerous precipices of heretical teachings and the dangerous curves of flowery words and philosophies which appear on their edges. Dwelling in the truth of the Holy Spirit, the fathers have drawn forth from the Gospel and the Christ-filled life of the Holy Church, guardrails and warning signs and have erected them for the safety of the faithful. These guardrails and warning signs are the Anathemas and they have been proclaimed out of the purest and most Christ-like love. In fact, it has been the Holy Spirit, working through the Councils, which has established the Anathemas.

In recent years, many travellers of the second type have appeared on the road --- those who wish to break down the guardrails and warning signs. The most notable of these wicked men was, of course, Athenagoras of Constantinople.

God-the-Holy-Spirit has given us the Anathemas for the protection of the faithful. What God has established, it is impossible for men to destroy. The ecumenists have claimed that they have lifted the Anathemas. What they claim to have done, therefore, is to have superseded God, to have "twisted God's arm" and forced Him to rescind His truth. The human tongue is inadequate to describe the ineffable pride and arrogance of these people. What they have said and done is precisely a blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, and it is an act of unmitigated hatred.

No person could possibly lift any Anathema which has been laid down by the Holy Church. Athenagoras lied to the faithful and tried to convince them that people had been anathematized and that the Anathemas were separating one people from another. This is not the truth. It is false teachings and lies which have been anathematized and not people, and it is falsehood which separates one people from another, not God's Anathemas. The Anathemas have been laid down firstly, to protect the faithful from falling away from their salvation and, secondly, to warn those who have already fallen away to turn back to the truth.

The ecumenists have invited the faithful to lose their souls and encouraged those already in darkness to draw their blinds.

Beloved of Christ, the Anathemas are great monuments of love and compassion and we beseech all Orthodox Christians to become familiar

compassion and we beseech all Orthodox Christians to become familiar with the Anathemas, to study and come to understand them, and to cherish them as living symbols of the constant and active concern of our Creator and Saviour for His flock.

THE ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN TEACHING
ABOUT ANTICHRIST AND HIS REIGN.
by Saint Hyppolytus of Rome.

1.

THE PROPHECY WHICH JACOB MADE ABOUT EACH OF HIS SONS WHEN HE GAVE THEM HIS BLESSING IS A REVELATION THAT, WHILE CHRIST WAS TO COME FROM THE TRIBE OF JUDAH, ANTICHRIST WILL BE A JEW FROM THE TRIBE OF DAN.

As the Lord Jesus Christ made His sojourn with us in the flesh (which He assumed) from the Holy, Spotless Virgin, and took to Himself the tribe of Judah, and came forth from it, the Scripture declared His royal lineage in the words of Jakob when in his benediction he addressed himself to his son in these terms: "Judah, let your brothers praise you...Judah is a lion's whelp: from the shoot my son, you are gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a young lion and as a lion's whelp; who shall raise him up? A ruler shall not depart from Judah, nor a prince from his loins, until He comes for Whom it is reserved; and He shall be the expectation of the nations..." (GEN.49:8-12) Mark these words of Jacob which were spoken to Judah and which are fulfilled in the Lord. For first He sprang forth as a shoot (from the root of the tribe of Judah) and then flourished in the world. The expression, "he stooped down, he couched as a young lion and as a lion's whelp," refers to the three day sleep of Christ. For Esaias says, "How is faithful Sion become a harlot! it was full of judgment, in which righteousness couched; but now murderers" (ES.1:2). David prophesies to the same effect, "I couched and slept; I awaked: for the Lord will sustain Me;..." (PS.3:5) in which he points to His sleep and rising again.

And Jacob says, "Who shall raise Him up?" This is just what David and Paul both refer to as when Paul says, "...and God the Father Who raised Him from the dead." (GAL.1:1).

To the same effect, moreover, does the Patriarch (Jacob) express himself regarding Antichrist. Wherefore, as he prophesied with respect to Judah, so did he also with respect to his son Dan. For Judah was his fourth son and Dan his seventh. And what then did he say of him? "Dan shall judge his people, as one tribe also in Israel. And let Dan be a serpent in the way, besetting the path, biting the heel of the horse (and the rider shall fall backward)." (GEN.49:16-17). And what serpent was there but the deceiver from the beginning, he who is named in Genesis, he who deceived Eve, and bruised Adam in the heel?

GREAT PREACHERS OF RUSSIA: biographical sketches by Archbishop Averky.

1. Luke Zhidyata, Bishop of Novgorod, who reposed in 1058 or 59, was the first great preacher of the Russian church whose teaching has survived to our own time. His teaching consists of a series of short, general instructions in the faith --- about the necessity of faith in God, in the resurrection of the dead and in eternal life. This teaching is in the form of a final word to his flock before his repose.

RECENTLY, THE STS. KYRIL AND METHODY SOCIETY was blessed with a visit from the leaders of the Juneau Alaska parish, Nikolai-Shoowusen and Aleksandra-Kintoo Kunz.

During their stay, the Kunz' visited the local project of the native peoples --- the Salish nation --- called The Coqualeetza Centre. They were invited to return later this year as guests of the Salish Tribal Council for official meetings. The Kunz' are also leaders of the Tlingit people and would be representing their nation at the meetings.

The Kunz' had stopped in Chilliwack while returning to Alaska from a visit to San Francisco where they revered the relics of St. John of San Francisco and had talks with Archbishop Antony concerning the state of the St. Nicholas parish in Juneau.

The Kunz' greatly edified the Society members by sharing with them some episodes from the spiritual treasury of the Orthodox Tlingit people. The Society wishes to share these treasures with readers of its publications:

FROM THE SPIRITUAL TREASURY OF THE ORTHODOX TLINGITS

1.

The Tlingits are a seafaring people. For centuries, their fishing boats and war canoes have plied the inland passages and inlets of the Pacific Northwest and braved the harsh open waters of the Gulf of Alaska. The war canoes are gone now, thanks to the influence of holy Orthodoxy, but the fishing boats remain and each year a sizeable fleet of Tlingit trawlers, gill-netters and other fishing craft put to sea.

Just as Orthodox Christian seafarers the world over, the Tlingits are especially close to St. Nicholas - Tlutleeturu Nikolai in Tlingit - and the great wonderworker has often helped them in time of need. In fact, the mainland Tlingits were converted to Orthodoxy through an appearance of St. Nicholas (see Orthodox Life, Vol.23, Nr.4, 1973, p. 12).

One incident which the Kunz' related was this:

Once, a few years ago, some Pentecostals from Seattle came up here and began to give talks. They called a big meeting and a lot of Tlingit people went. We went there also just to see what it was all about.

One speaker started shouting that we had to give up all our traditions if we wanted to be saved. He said things like, "Get rid of your old traditions, your ikons, and receive the gift of tongues."

Then one old fisherman, Mr. Johnson from Hoonah, stood up and began to speak.

"Why are you telling the people to give up their traditions? I'll tell you something: Once I took my boat out for halibut. We sailed out into the Gulf of Alaska for a long way, beyond the sight of land. While we were out there, a terrible storm came up. Even though it was daytime, it became dark as night. The sky was black. Our boat began to take on water and pretty soon we could see that we were sinking.

"Then I had an evil thought. I didn't want to see my crew suffer. I decided to shoot them all and then shoot myself. I went to my cabin and took my gun out of the drawer. Then suddenly, I felt something like a hand on my shoulder. It spun me around and as I came to a stop, my eyes were looking straight at the ikon of St. Nicholas on my cabin wall. The ikon looked like it was glowing. I understood! I started praying with my heart! I dropped my gun and ran out to the deck. 'Start praying

to God with your hearts,' I shouted, 'St. Nicholas is rescuing us.' My crew started praying. And then, it was just like someone took a big knife and sliced the clouds. There was a small opening and light came down and surrounded our boat. The water around the boat became calm. The boat started rocking peacefully. I called to my men, 'Start bailing out the water. St. Nicholas has rescued us.' We began to praise God and to thank St. Nicholas.

"If we had given up our traditions as you say to, we would have been sunk."

THE HISTORY OF GOD'S PEOPLE

CHAPTER 3

THE FALL OF MAN

God put Adam in a wonderful garden and told him to take care of it.

Then God said, "It is not good for man to live alone." So God made a wife for Adam so she could help him tend the garden and keep him company.

God told Adam and Eve, "You may eat of all the fruit of the trees in this garden except for one. Do you see that tree over there? If you eat any of the fruit from it, then you will die for sure. It has a kind of fruit on it which is not for you, and I forbid you to eat from it."

But why did God make such a tree? Why did He make a tree that Adam was not supposed to use?

God did not make anything that was bad or useless. But God wants us to love Him of our own free-will. God does not force us to love Him if we do not want to. We show our love for God by obeying Him because we want to. God made the tree so that Adam would have a choice of whether to obey God or not.¹

As long as Adam and Eve obeyed God, he was like a loving father to them. Christ our God would come down to the garden and talk with them every day.

But the devil was already in the world. The devil hates God and he also hates man. The devil did not want to see man being an obedient child of God.²

In order to tempt Adam and Eve into sinning against God, the devil whose name is Satan, entered into a serpent which lived on the earth. This serpent, led by Satan, went to Eve and asked her:

"Did God not tell you that you may eat of the fruit from any tree in the garden?"

Eve answered, "God told us that we may eat fruit from every tree except one. But if we eat of that tree, we will die." But the serpent said: "You will not die if you eat of that fruit. God doesn't want

1. The Holy Spirit has explained to us through our holy and God-bearing fathers that this tree, the knowledge of good and evil, was to be given to man also, in the fulness of time, when he was ready for it. A full discussion of this subject will be found in a series on the book of Genesis, for adults, which will appear in Syntaxis in the near future.

2. In anticipation of a child's question, "Who is the devil and where did he come from?": Satan used to be the chief angel in heaven but he chose to disobey God. In fact, Satan even tried to have a revolution in heaven and so God threw Satan and his followers out of heaven. Now he lives in the world and tries to trick people into being disobedient to God.

you to eat that fruit because if you do, you will become as wise as He is."³

Eve listened to the serpent and when she looked at the tree, she saw that it was very beautiful and that the fruit looked very good. The serpent kept telling her that she would become wise if she ate the fruit. Eve not only ate of the fruit herself, but she even took some to Adam and talked him into eating it.

The devil was very pleased. He laughed at Adam and Eve.

THE NEW PATERIKON

The section, The New Paterikon, consists of a collection of the teachings of contemporary Orthodox Christian elders and spiritual fathers, written in the style of the earlier paterikons. It is designed to bring believers to an awareness of the fact that the Holy Church is always the same, that there is never a time when She is without teachers, wonder-workers and holy and God-bearing fathers.

1.

Elder Ambrose of Milkovo on Judging and Condemning others:*

Once, a youth came to the Milkovo Monastery,¹ but could not make up his mind to stay there. The elder Ambrose directed that the youth be housed with the workmen and share a room with a certain Mika, a Serb.

The novice Antony came to the elder and complained, "But Grisha will only learn to curse from Mika."

Elder Ambrose became indignant: "What? Are you judging Mika? Go away from me, judging is worse than fornication. Go away, go away!"

* Archimandrite Ambrose, an Optina novice, founded the Milkovo Russian Monastery in Serbia in 1926.

1. An ancient monastery in the Branich Eparchy of Serbia, founded in the 15 century by Tsar Stefan Dushan.

THE SPIRITUAL MEADOW by John Moskhas

5.

ABBA POLIKHRONY AND THE THREE MONKS.

Abba Polikhrony, a presbyter of the New Lavra, told us the following:

When I was in the Jordan Lavra called "Bashen", I once noticed that one of the brethren there was negligent about himself and he never fulfilled the Sunday rule. A little while later, I noticed that this brother was giving himself up to struggle with all zeal and with great fervor.

"You are doing well, brother, in caring for your soul," I said to him.

"Abba," he replied, "I shall soon have to die."

And truly, in three days, he demised.

Another time while I was in "Bashen", a brother had reposed there. The economos asked me to help him carry the belongings of the deceased to the storeroom.

As we were carrying them over, I saw that the economos was weeping.

"What is the matter with you, father? Why are you weeping so?" I asked.

He replied, "Today, I am carrying over the belongings of this brother and in two days others will be carrying mine over."

And so it happened. On the next day, the economos reposed as he had said.

3. The first actual sin consisted of disobedience to God, but the first temptation which Satan used upon man is the most important one: "You will become like God". This was Satan's crime in heaven and man's crime on earth: self-deification, trying to become as God by his own power. This sin is the very essence of Humanism and such humanistic religions as freemasonry and ecumenism.

LESSON 2: THE LITANY OF PEACE (Continued).

SCRIPTURE.: LESSON

mercy." (Rm. 15:9).

Let us note that we pray for the salvation of all. This will not be accomplished by deceiving non-Orthodox with falsehoods that they are members of the Church in the fashion of the ecumenists, but rather by witnessing the truth to them.

We are all susceptible to being burned just as we are all susceptible to being consumed with passions. But the sane person will seek to escape from both types of fire and certainly will not feed the flames.