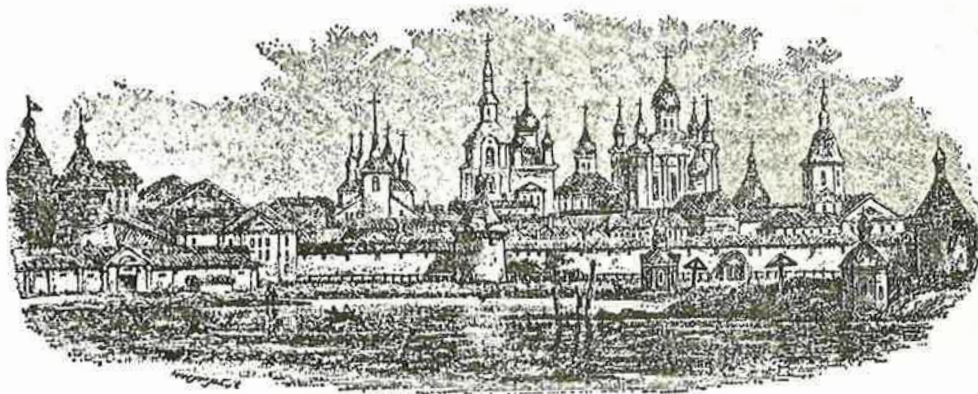


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CLINGIT HERALD

VOLUME 7, Nr 1

THE SOLOVKY PATERIKON





VOLUME 7, NUMBER 1

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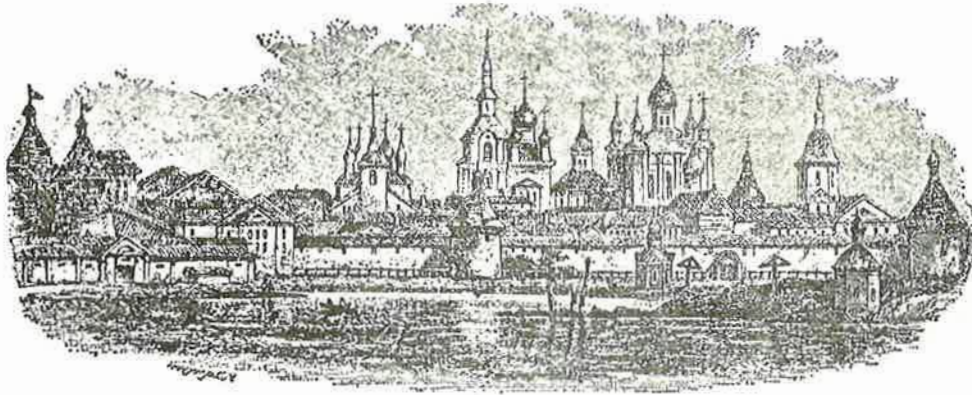
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THE SOLOVKY PATERIKON



THE SOLOVKY PATERIKON

(translated from the Russian by Rev Seraphim Johnson)

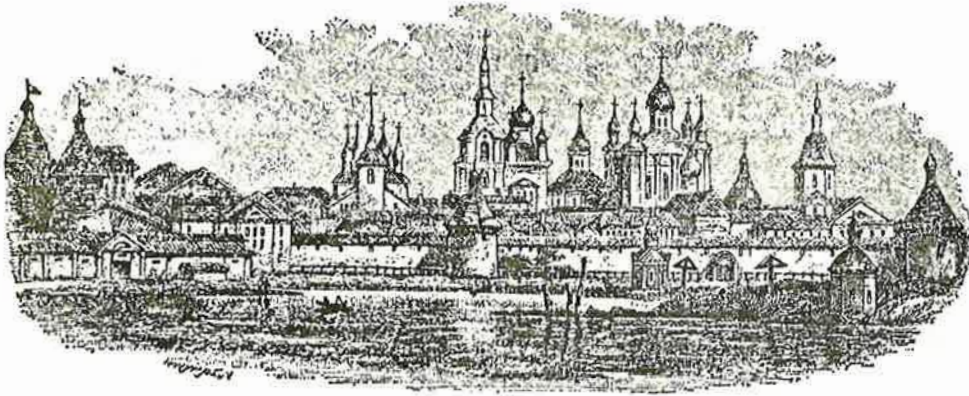
During the past few years, selections from the Kiev-Caves Paterikon have appeared in this journal. The Kiev-Caves Paterikon is now being published in full, and beginning with this issue, the Solovky Paterikon will appear in ORTHODOXY CANADA/THE TLINGIT HERALD.

The Society is presenting these important Russian paterikons as a tribute to the forthcoming 1000th anniversary of the baptism of Rus'. Monasticism has always been a central and radiant feature of the life of Orthodox Russia. Indeed, it might be said that Russian monasticism truly reached the heights of the ancient fathers of Skete and the Thebaid, and became the very heart of the spiritual treasury of Holy Rus'. So rich is this spiritual treasury that it must be shared with English speaking Orthodox Christians, to whom it will surely serve as a guide, and a source of the greatest inspiration.

We also especially dedicate the translations of these Russian Paterikons to the fathers of the Holy Trinity Monastery at Jordanville, New York, who are struggling to maintain the great spiritual tradition of Russian monasticism, in North America.

Through the prayers of all the Saints of Rus', and of our fathers and elders struggling in our midst in our own times, may we find the narrow, but joyous path which leads to the Kingdom of God, and enter into the glory of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ, to Whom be all glory and adoration, together with the Eternal Father and the Holy, Uncreated and Life-giving Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Amen!



INTRODUCTION



The monastic struggle is, by its nature, internal and hidden. Although it is primarily the external events in a monastery which draw the attention of the chroniclers, they are of secondary importance for the history of monasticism, since the chief aim of the ascetic life is the salvation of the soul. It is not the struggle with an external foe, nor successes of material and industrial life, nor activity in the world for earthly goals, which constitutes the task of monks, but it is, rather, struggles with the inner enemies of salvation, carried out in the secret sanctuary of the soul and successes in the moral life and spiritual activity which are the monks' calling. Accomplishments in this arena are, for the most part, known only to the All-seeing God.

In the earliest times of Christianity, when monasticism, then rapidly developing in the deserts of Egypt, astounded the world by its negation of the laws of earthly life, many people collected records of the ascetics and described their way of life. From these descriptions, there were compiled the Paterikons, the Lausiac History, the Spiritual Meadow. Those who visited the anchorites were pious people who sought edification and who recorded the instructive sayings and acts of piety of the ancient fathers.

At the present time, the monastic life has become a familiar phenomenon. Many people do not consider it anything in particular that people renounce family and civil ties and the pleasures of the world to immure themselves within the walls of some monastery; they do not consider it of any special virtue that the monk spends the greater part of

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his day in church services and prayer. Submissive to the strict monastic rule and unswervingly obedient to the abbot, the monk often goes down to his grave unknown to anyone. Visitors to the monasteries speak of their buildings and locations, their own personal impressions, sometimes of the order of services, but the spiritual life of the monks is closed to them. The monks themselves, partly from humility, partly because of their difficult obediences, do not maintain chronicles. They do not transmit to posterity the memory of the ascetic lives of their brothers, and thus the features of the especial valour which appears in the monasteries remain unnoticed. If memoirs of the noteworthy monks were compiled in every monastery and these memoirs were preserved in the monastery archives, then the list of ascetics would be more complete and many people would have their inaccurate concepts of monasticism corrected.

If we follow the life of a Solovky monk from his entrance into the monastery up until his death, we will see that even his ordinary life is an ascetic struggle.

Only a firm and sincere decision totally to serve God for the salvation of one's soul could inspire anyone to seek refuge on the bleak, inhospitable Solovky Island. This island is at least twenty-six miles from the nearest settled areas and is separated from them by the waves of the White Sea, whose ice precludes contact with the shore for eight months of the year. Its sparse vegetation and eight-month long winter with its fog and constant dampness are not especially attractive for living, except for their advantages for isolation and detachment from the world. It would seem, with all this, that just the decision itself to live on such an island would be sufficient proof of one's sincere desire for the monastic life; however, no-one was accepted directly as a novice. Each person who came to the monastery initially lived as an annual pilgrim, of whom there were always no fewer than three hundred, housed outside the monastery in three buildings, or even inside the monastery depending on the needs and convenience of the various workshops. In the course of a year those who were seeking the monastic life worked in their obediences and had enough time to consider if they would be capable of the life of the monastery, to get to know the brotherhood among whom they wished to labour, and to find themselves a spiritual father to whom they could entrust their spiritual life. If one's intention remained unchanged after a year, the monastery elders gave him still more careful observation and admitted him to the ranks of the novices only after several years. No-one who came to the monastery received any preference; they all equally shared the identical food in a hall separate from the monks, had the same clothes, lived in common cells, and at the direction of the work detail leaders, all equally went out to work. Consideration was given only to physical strength, and the weaker were assigned lighter occupations. In the midst of these labours, on the one hand, people who were self-willed or

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frivolous, and thus also unsuited for the monastic life, were soon revealed; while on the other hand, labours not of one's own choosing and not always pleasant instruct the soul in humility, obedience and patience. All ascetics who have profitably passed through the initial arena, recall that time with emotion. The labourer was not soon worthy of receiving his own cell; still more time passed before he was clothed in the cassock. He attained this by extended feats of piety and far from easy labours, and therefore accepted it with joy and rejoicing. Rare was the individual who was tonsured in the mantia sooner than ten years after entering the monastery. The day of the tonsure was a day of spiritual triumph for the one being tonsured and for everyone, for, how could the monks not rejoice at seeing a true servant of God being added to their ranks? How could the one being tonsured not rejoice too at achieving, after many years of effort, the fulfilment of his sincere desires? Even the heart of a casual observer could not help being moved during the touching celebration of the Mystery (Sacrament) of Tonsure in which the future monk, having renounced the world and all its passions, in his moving, compunctionate vows of chastity, poverty and obedience, accepts the yoke of Christ for himself. As a new-born babe receives a god-parent in the Mystery of Baptism to instruct him in the truths of faith and piety, so the new monk in the Mystery of Tonsure was given, before the sanctuary, as a son to a spiritual father who was to instruct him in ascetic life.

The monk's life, quietly and serenely, year by year, follows the way of the Cross which he has chosen up to the final barrier, common to all men. From the day of his tonsure began the obligatory fulfilment of the vows made during the Sacrament of Tonsure, toward which the person who intended to become a monk had been atuning himself from his first day in the monastery. It was especially the vow of obedience to the abbot and the brotherhood which directed all his thoughts, all the spiritual and physical powers of the Solovky monk until the end of his earthly life; thus the majority of the monks there, fulfilling their many obediences, found rest only on the sickbed or in the grave. The monks received ordination or assignment to various monastery responsibilities only according to the rules of obedience, not of their own will. Once they had parted with the world forever, it was a rare event for one of them to go to the mainland, except in those cases when the needs and requirements of the community required someone to go there for a time.

The great schema was received only by the aged, those worn out with toil and sick unto death; but even the schemamonks, although in strict seclusion, occupied themselves, in their fervour, with some sort of work: one, wearing glasses, worked with the needle; another wove new nets or took apart old ones; the weakest cut up old ropes for caulking boats.

From that moment in the morning when, amidst the silence of the night, the sound of the bell rang out in the monastery to call the monks to their morning prayers, the daily life of the Solovky monk was a constant alternation of prayer and work.

Night was majestic in the monastery, enclosed on all sides by heavy walls. There was silence everywhere and deep shadows, among which, like a promised star, there flickered the faint light of the lamp perpetually burning before the ikon of the Theotokos which hung high above and which had been pierced by enemy arrows. But then the night passed: amidst the total silence, an hour before the bells rang for matins, there was heard on the walls and along the corridors the quickly passing sound of the awakening bell, like the sound of the archangel's trumpet which will waken the dead on the world's last day. But movement in the monastery did not yet start when the bell rang, because when the monks arose from bed after their brief rest from the toils of the preceding day, they fulfilled their rule of private prayer and devoted to God the first fruits of their thoughts and feelings in the day just beginning. The morning service usually began at three A.M., while on feasts it was at two or at one A.M. Shortly before the bells rang, monks appeared from all sides, heading primarily for the church of Sts Zosima and Savvaty, since, according to the existing custom, each one considered it his duty to first of all reverence the wonder-working relics of the Saints and ask their blessing and help for the daily portion of his life. The toiling brothers usually stayed to listen to the Midnight Hour and morning prayers in the church dedicated to the two Saints. No-one was exempted from the morning service; therefore, those assigned as wakers prayed before the nearby ikons at the beginning of the Midnight Hour, took a blessing from the celebrant, and then checked to see if everyone was at the service. If they noticed anyone missing, they went to awaken him again, and they reported to the abbot on anyone who did not come to the service after this, along with the reason for his absence. The services in the cathedral (main) church took longer than in the other churches; here all the verses and sedalens were chanted slowly under the direction of the kanonarch, and two or three sermons were read during matins. After the sedalens of the kathismata on ordinary days the explanation of the Gospel of the day was read from the commentary of Blessed Theophilact the Bulgarian; during Great Lent, a sermon of St Ephraim the Syrian was also read, and during Cheese-fare week and Holy Week, there were readings from the Synaxarion; on feasts there were readings from various holy fathers and during the canon, after the sixth ode, readings were made from the Prologue or the Synaxarion when they were appointed. St John of the Ladder was read during the hours in Great Lent. On ordinary days matins lasted about three hours; after matins during Great Lent an Entreaty (*litya*) was offered for the departed brothers and celebrated in the vestibule.

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After matins from three to five early Liturgies were celebrated in the various chapels, one after the other, so that those whose duties precluded attendance at one could participate in another. The late Liturgy was at nine o'clock, and the abbot and all the clergy were present at it. As at matins and vespers, so even more at the Liturgy, there was a zealous and pious commemoration, never omitted, of the departed fathers, brothers and benefactors of the monastery, whose names were written in the synodikon. This commemoration was performed by the hieromonks and the most respected monks. In the cathedral (main) church, this sacred act of love was performed by four of the elders; in the other monastery and skete churches, by one elder. At the end of the Liturgy, a hieromonk blessed the refectory tables with holy water, and similarly blessed all the food in the kitchen and the dough for the bread and prosphora which were to be baked for the next day. After the last Liturgy, which was joined to dinner, the rite of the Panagia was observed every day. Preceded by the kanonarch loudly chanting the 144th Psalm the clergy and worshippers proceeded in order from the cathedral to the refectory, the chanters leading, followed by a hieromonk carrying the large prophora prepared in honour of the Most Holy Theotokos, on a high dish; the abbot with the brotherhood following him completed the solemn procession. Before dinner the whole brotherhood chanted the "Our Father," and then the abbot blessed the food and drink.

The meals of the monks had a certain solemnity which affected the mind and the heart. The refectory was attached to the cathedral church of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos. All its walls and vaults were adorned with representations of the Lord's life, the Beatitudes and the host of the monastic Saints on a mammoth scale; up to 400 monks and novices could sit at its long tables. Profound silence reigned everywhere, broken only by the sonorous voice of the reader expounding the virtues and acts of asceticism of the Saint of the day or proclaiming the compunctionate instructions of St Ephraim the Syrian, encouraging one to abstinence and repentance. At the conclusion of dinner the Panagia was elevated, according to the rule, accompanied by the chanting of hymns. After the meal, the monks again dispersed to work according to their obediences. Wine was never offered the monks in the refectory.

At four in the afternoon two early vespers were served, one after the other. The call to the late vespers was at six, or at five in the winter, after the conclusion of all the obediences, and therefore all the monks and pilgrims who worked during the day took part in the evening service. At compline, according to the custom of kenobetic monasteries, they read the Canons to Sweetest Jesus, the Theotokos and the Guardian Angel, along with the akathist to the Saviour or the Theotokos. Right after compline, supper was served in the refectory, followed by the reading of the Prayers before Sleep and the commemorations of the Living and the Reposed, which were read in the refectory.

All the divine services were performed with the proper compunction and without the least bit of hurrying, so even on ordinary days all the church services took seven to eight hours.

The monastic prayer rule, performed in the church in some monasteries, was performed in the cell in Solovky, by each monk, as on Mt Athos. Here all the annual pilgrims and, in the summer the visitors, took part in the evening prayers along with the monks: it was impossible to place on them the burden which was required for the monks. Besides their prostrations and practice of mental prayer, each monk and novice was obliged to read a certain number of kathismas daily and commemorate his living and reposed brothers and relatives with the "Glory" at the end. Some had the habit of always reading several sections of the Gospel and Epistles and various canons and akathists. The number, quantity and time of exercises in prayer in the cell depended on the ascetic's devotion to God and on the will and direction of his elder.

The kinds of obediences in which, along with spiritual activities, the Solovky monks took part were varied. The exceptional location of the Solovky Monastery on an isolated and barren island, in the midst of a sparsely populated and unproductive coastal area far from trade centres, forced the monks to prepare everything they needed for existence with their own hands. Here they neither sowed nor gathered, but instead of that, necessity had given birth to other more numerous and difficult occupations. Let us list the monastic obediences in order to provide a more accurate concept of the activities and life of the monastery. The first obedience was the position of the abbot. The abbot was the father, head and guide of his large family made up of people who, though not of the same blood and of different callings, character, age, condition and education, had entrusted themselves, for the sake of God and their own salvation, to his fatherly direction and who had set themselves the rule of doing the will of their father, rather than their own will. All aspects of management were in the abbot's hands; everything depended on him; both large and small matters were done at his direction and on his blessing. Everyone turned to him for instruction and guidance in all sorts of monastic activities, and everyone accepted all his words and suggestions with child-like confidence, without curiosity and discussion. For this reason the abbot himself had to have a strong and elevated spirit; he had to possess above all, knowledge of the Sacred Scripture and the writings of the fathers and the monastic rules and constitutions; he had to be experienced in the monastic life and be distinguished by common sense and experience. The lot of serving as abbot was difficult and burdensome. It is not surprising that many who had tasted the sweetness of solitude in the cell and a life under authority gazed with horror on the height of this life and strove by every means to avoid such a heavy and sorrowful cross.

After the obedience of abbot there followed the obediences

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of his assistant, treasurer, dean, sacristan and confessor. For all these offices the abbot, with the advice of the brotherhood, selected (usually) senior hieromonks, more prudent and sober. These monks, together with the abbot, constituted the monastic chapter and held regular conferences on the affairs of the monastery. In these conferences, all the major aspects of managing the monastery were reviewed and decided upon. The assistant was the abbot's chief helper and was responsible for providing for the monastery's good order in all areas of management. The treasurer had under his control and disposal the money and all household items and materials. The dean looked after the brotherhood and pilgrims in the church, refectory and cells. The sacristan was in charge of all church property, saw to the cleaning and proper arrangement of the churches, and saw that all church services were celebrated at the proper time and with compunction. The confessor was obliged to hear the brothers' confessions during the fasts. He was the spiritual physician and director, who instructed his children in the spiritual life; for this reason his cell was open day and night to all who needed guidance and instruction in cases of confusion, spiritual warfare, and the various temptations which are met in the life of every ascetic. In the summer he was given an assistant to hear confessions of pilgrims.

The next obedience was the succession of divine services, which were performed by the hieromonks and hierodeacons in rotations lasting six weeks. All the hieromonks and hierodeacons, except those occupied in the office, in painting, in gilding and the like were released from the general obediences and were obliged without fail to attend all the services in church; in their cells they were to occupy themselves with diligence and zeal in reading the Divine Scripture and other books useful for salvation. Only on certain occasions were the hieromonks and hierodeacons sent by the abbot to fish, to gather hay near the monastery, and to collect berries and mushrooms.

We must further mention the obedience of master chanter, who was always a hieromonk or hierodeacon and who knew perfectly the Church typikon and the fundamental znamenny chant. Each chantry was led by a precentor, or "initiator of the chant". They were followed by the chanters, half of whom were hieromonks and hierodeacons who were able to chant, as well as readers, kanonarchs, sextons and wakers.

In addition to these specifically ecclesiastical obediences, there were many monastic assignments and occupations, such as librarian, scribes, bell-ringers, purchasing agents, the steward and housekeepers, the cellarer, the overseer of movable property, the overseer of the barns, shipmasters and mechanics (certified by examination), painters, printers, masters of gold and silver smithing, gilders, carvers, cutters and polishers of stone, watch-makers, candle-makers, dyers of cloth and canvas, coppersmiths, metal workers, prosphora bakers, bread bakers, binders, lithographers, joiners, carters, sleigh-makers, wheel-

wrights, carpenters, artists, fishermen, blacksmiths, leather workers, rope makers, net weavers, masons, sailors, gardeners, waiters, cooks, trappers, launderers, shepherds, and many more. The Solovky community was able to satisfy most of its requirements with its own hands. Each individual occupation was called an obedience. In every obedience the senior and most experienced monk was made the leader and directed the work and workers assigned to him, being himself under the purview of and responsible to the assistant and the steward. Some obediences were performed by many people, for example, there were as many as seventy tailors and cobblers; as many as sixty sailed on steamships and other boats; in the winter thirty youths were employed in spinning hemp for fishing nets; as many as forty people, especially in the summer, were employed in fishing; sometimes as many as ten furnaces were in operation in the blacksmith's shop. We have not spoken of the hay harvesting at which, near the monastery, the abbot appeared among all the others. The primary aim was to see that no-one was left without a job and especially that no-one did anything according to his own will.

In the manual obediences, there was a pious custom that at the beginning of each task one turn to God in prayer and then, if the task was being performed with other people, each one turned to the senior monk with the words, "Bless, father." When they had received the reply, "May God bless you," they signed themselves with the Cross and set to work. They worked with prayer in their minds, as if before the eyes of God Himself and under His almighty direction and assistance.

Blessed were the monks who, according to the rule of the community, had renounced their own wills and who passed the allotted portion of their lives in uncomplaining obedience, evangelical self-denial, constant toil and continual prayer. They awaited no reward on earth for all their efforts. When a monk reposed, three strokes of the large bell informed the brothers of the falling asleep of one of their co-strugglers and partners in prayer; the remains, wrapped in a monastic mantle, were taken to the church where the Psalter, or the Gospel if the departed were a priest, was read until the funeral. After the funeral, he was given the final kiss and then the departed was carried to the cemetery and placed in the grave with a great ringing of bells, by which the Church's joy that the reposed had completed his course and gone to a place of rest was expressed. When they returned to the church and had performed the last Entreaty (*litya*) over the kolyva, the celebrant and all the monks made twelve bows with the prayer, "Grant rest, O Lord, to the soul of Thy departed servant." This rule was supposed to be performed by every monk for forty days, along with a prayer for the reposed. The name of the departed was entered in all church dip-tychs for perpetual commemoration, and each monk similarly entered it into his commemoration list to be read during his prayer rule in his cell. Over every grave a large wooden cross was rais-

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ed as a sign that the departed had borne his cross from birth to death, was a true follower of the Divine Cross-Bearer, and had passed from earthly life to life eternal in the hope of the victory on the Cross of his Redeemer and Saviour.



The righteous fathers Savvaty, Zosima and Herman shine as the brightest stars of asceticism at Solovky. They were the founders and organizers of their monastery; they were the first to live on the uninhabitable Solovky Island; they poured out the bright light of faith and piety on the whole northern part of Russia. Their ascetic acts are indelibly engraved in the history of the Solovky Monastery and their memory is honoured as holy by the universal Orthodox Church. The example of the ascetic life of the founders of Solovky attracted many followers to them — people who were seeking monastic silence in the distant north in the midst of inhospitable living conditions, which are more conducive to asceticism. Monasticism flourished on Solovky Island; the monastery of Sts Savvaty, Zosima and Herman trained many ascetics worthy of being remembered by posterity. The influence of these remarkable men was extremely fruitful in their own environment, while their life is still capable of giving instruction to everyone.

Besides the ascetics who showed forth their light in the Solovky Monastery, some memorable hierarchs of the Russian Church entered into the monastic life and developed spiritually there: the patriarchs Ioasaph I and Nikon; the metropolitans Isidore of Novgorod, Ilarion of Pskov, Ignaty of Tobolsk, Raphael of Astrakhan, Job of Novgorod; and the archbishops Marcel of Vologda and Varsonophy of Archangel. Patriarch Nikon, who left a permanent mark in the history of the Russian church, was tonsured a monk by St Eleazar, the founder of the Anzersk Skete, which was also the first site of his strict ascetic acts. Here in the course of four years Nikon matured for his future great deeds in governing the church and he learned the patience which would be so essential for him in the vicissitudes of his destiny. Thus, the spiritual influence of the Solovky Monastery was not limited to its immediate neighbourhood, but spread over all of Russia.

10 JANUARY

HOLY RIGHTEOUS
PAUL OF OBNORA

Our holy father Paul was born in Russia in the year 1317. When he was still a youth, he decided to give himself over to Christ and serve Him with his whole life. As soon as he was old enough, St Paul entered the Monastery of the Nativity of Christ on the River Priluk, which is in northern Russia.

Soon, however, Saint Paul heard about the great elder St Serge of Radonezh. He went to St Serge and asked him to be his elder. St Paul became completely obedient to his elder and stayed in his monastery for fifteen years. Here, St Paul studied the Holy Scripture and read the Lives of the Saints and other holy books.

After this, the Saint received his elder's blessing and went away into the far northern wilderness, to the area called Obnora. He looked for a place to live and found a huge linden tree which was partly hollow. This tree became his cell and in it he began to pray to God day and night. Saint Paul received so many gifts of Grace from God that the animals were not afraid of him. Rabbits and foxes would come to the holy elder at the same time, and the Saint fed them and petted them. Even bears came to visit the Saint and they were tame and friendly because they understood that Saint Paul was a very special servant of God, their Creator.

In 1389, Saint Paul founded a monastery in honour of the Most Holy Trinity. This monastery grew and became a great house of God. In times of hunger, many people came to this monastery and the monks fed them and gave them help.

Those who knew St Paul of Obnora say that he was always joyous, he was always chanting and praying to God. This holy father is especially remembered for his great love, and in the scroll on his ikon, we read the words, "If only you knew the power of love."

This holy father fell asleep in the Lord in 1429. Because of his great struggles, many souls were saved from the evil-one, many starving people were fed and the light of Christ's holy gospel was seen in the land. May our holy father Paul of Obnora pray for us that we too may become true servants of God.

20 DECEMBER

HIEROMARTYR IGNATIUS
THE GOD-BEARER

[At the time when the holy apostles were still alive, Antioch was one of the largest and most important cities in the world. It was also one of the most sinful of all cities.]

Apostle Paul came to Antioch with Barnabas and taught many people about Jesus Christ. Some of them were baptized into the Holy Church, and the other people began to call them "Christians". It was here, at Antioch, that the first of the names used to describe the Holy Church appeared — it began to be called "the Christian Church." This took place in the year 42, only nine years after our Saviour Jesus Christ had ascended back into heaven. In about the year 48, the holy apostle Peter became Bishop of Antioch. When St Peter had to leave the city in order to carry out his work as an apostle, he consecrated a man named Evodios as bishop. This new bishop reposed in the Lord in the year 68. After him our holy and God-bearing father Ignatios became Bishop of Antioch.]

When Saint Ignatios was a little boy, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was going through Israel, preaching and healing people. One day, as Jesus Christ was teaching the people, He looked at the little boy, Ignatios and saw his pure, simple faith and pure heart. Jesus Christ called the boy to Himself, took him in His holy arms and said, "Whoever will receive one child such as this in My name, receives Me..." (Mk. 9:36).

After our Saviour had ascended back into heaven, Saint Ignatios became a student of apostle John. St John told him all the things that Jesus Christ had taught his apostles and Saint Ignatios became a great ascetic and struggler. Everywhere he went the people loved him and listened to his words.

St Ignatios lived in Antioch and he helped the Christian people there to become stronger in the faith of Jesus Christ. More than anything, St Ignatios was known for his great love of other people and for his pure, simple faith in Christ.

At first, Apostle Peter was the bishop of Antioch. After he went away to continue his special work, another bishop was elected, and when he reposed, the people all chose Saint Ignatios as bishop. The holy apostle John consecrated him bishop in the year 69 A.D., just thirty-six years after our Saviour Jesus Christ had ascended into heaven.

SAINT IGNATIUS

In those days, many evil people, led by the devil, were causing much trouble for the Christians in Antioch. St Ignatios had to protect the faithful against these people. There was no Bible then, and these evil heretics were trying to teach false things about Christ and His Holy Church. But St Ignatios had heard Christ's teachings from His Own holy lips and also from the holy apostles themselves, and so the people understood that he was a kind of "living Bible," for what he taught was truly Sacred Tradition. Sacred Tradition means "the spoken Bible," and it came before the "written Bible".

Many people were baptized into Christ's Holy Church by Saint Ignatios. He was so filled with God's Holy Spirit and he gave himself to God so completely, that he became known as Saint Ignatios the God-bearer.

In the year 106, there was a great persecution against all the members of Christ's Holy Church. Many of the Christians were arrested, tortured and killed. The governor of Antioch especially hated all Christians and he thought that if he killed St Ignatios, the followers of Christ would lose their faith. For this reason, he arrested the Saint and sent him to Rome to be fed to the lions. As the Roman soldiers took the group of Christian prisoners to Rome, they passed through several towns and cities. In each of these cities,



SAINT IGNATIUS



SAINT IGNATIUS

the Christian people came out to see the holy and beloved Bishop Ignatios the God-bearer. They wanted to receive his blessing, to touch this man who had been held in the arms of Christ as a small boy, and to hear his holy words. Saint Ignatios loved them all. He not only spoke to them, but later, while his group was waiting in Troas for a ship to take them across the sea, he wrote beautiful letters to the Christians of these towns and cities. We still have these wonderful letters and from them, we learn much about the teachings of our Saviour Jesus Christ and His apostles.

The journey to Rome was long and hard, and St Ignatios and the other prisoners were kept in chains. But St Ignatios was very happy and, because of his happiness, the other Christians also became happy. "We are going to be martyred for Christ," he said with joy. "Our Saviour died for us and now, we are blessed to be able to die for His sake." Saint Ignatios understood that a great reward awaits martyrs in heaven, and he also understood that many people would become believers and come into Christ's Holy Church when they saw the deaths of martyrs. All this filled him with great joy.

This rejoicing band of Christians reached Rome and on 19 December, 107, St Ignatios was led to the place called the "amphitheatre," and there he was thrown to hungry lions, and killed by them. Thus, he gave his life for Christ and for His Holy Church.

We know that Saint Ignatios loves us dearly and that he prays constantly for us. He is one of those special great men of God whom we call "fathers of the Church".

23 FEBRUARY

HIEROMARTYR POLYKARP
BISHOP OF SMYRNA

[Smyrna was a very ancient city. People lived there already at the very dawn of history. It was an important seaport, and ships from all over came there. It is the only one of the great ancient seaport cities in this region which still exists today.]

Apostle Paul passed through Smyrna in around 57 A.D., but evidently did not stop and preach there. The people of Smyrna were probably taught our Saviour's faith by apostle John the Theologian shortly after Paul had passed through there. When Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D., many of the Christians of Palestine fled to the region around Smyrna and Ephesus and Apostle John was the bishop of that whole area. He lived in Ephesus. Thus, many of those early Christians of Smyrna and the entire region had seen and heard Christ personally. The children of Polykarp's generation would have been raised with firsthand stories of Christ's life and teachings.]

Our holy and God-bearing father Polykarp was born to a Christian family. All his life, he heard about our Saviour Jesus Christ from people who had known Christ personally and heard His holy words. Like St Ignatios the God-bearer, Saint Polykarp was a student of Apostle John the Theologian. He was born in 69 A.D., the very year that Apostle John made Ignatios bishop of Antioch.

St Polykarp grew up rich in the knowledge of the Sacred Tradition. In his lifetime, the written part of it, what is now called "The Bible" was beginning to appear. Our holy father Polykarp was very much loved by the people of Smyrna, and in about the year 105, when Bishop Vukolos of Smyrna reposed in the Lord, the people wanted St Polykarp as their new bishop. Apostle John consecrated him. It was a very difficult time for the bishop. Not only were the Jews trying to stir up the Romans to murder the Christians, but Satan's own servants, the heretics, were trying to confuse the Christians with false teachings. The main heretic in Smyrna in those days was a man named Marcion.

In about the year 150, a great persecution began against the faithful of the Holy Church. This persecution was led by the Jews, and the Romans joined in. Many Christians were martyred for Christ's sake. Saint Polykarp continued to serve his

SAINT POLYKARP



SAINT POLYKARP

flock, celebrate the Divine Liturgy and preach the Sacred Tradition of Christ. He comforted the people and helped to give them strength to face the persecutions.

In 155, the Romans decided to kill the old bishop himself. The Christians did not want Saint Polikarp to be martyred. They loved him and they felt that they needed him too much, to teach and guide them. Because of this, they begged him to leave the city and go to a farm in the country. But the soldiers hunted for him, and at last they found the aged Saint and arrested him. St Polykarp was full of joy. He wanted to die for Christ if it was God's will for him to do so.

The Saint was taken before the governor of the city, a man named Quadratus. The governor told Saint Polykarp, "Give glory to our emperor and worship our idols. If you do not, then I will feed you to the beasts!"

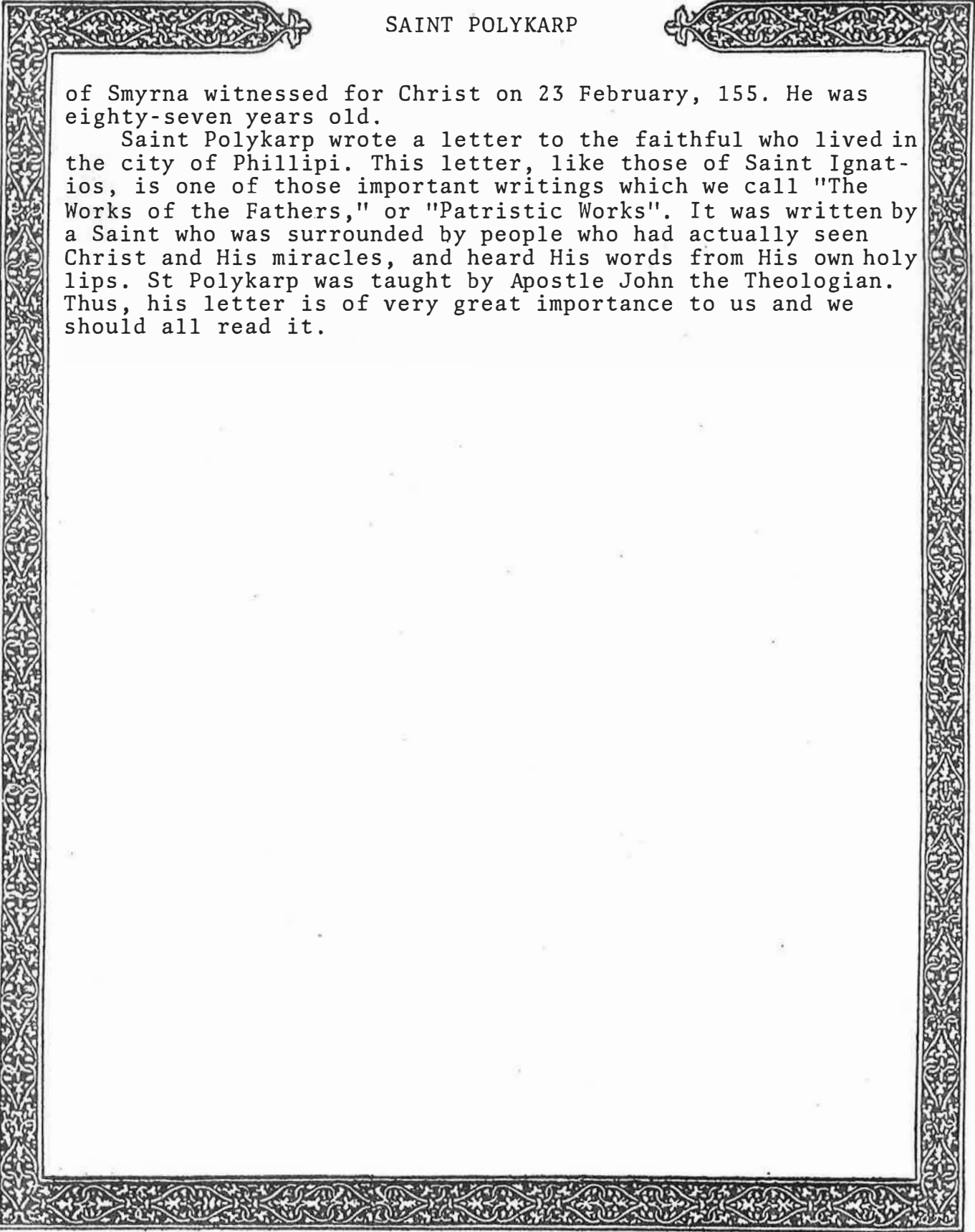
St Polykarp only crossed himself and replied, "Very well, then, bring the beasts out and let them eat me. For, I will never turn away from our true God and Saviour Jesus Christ."

The governor was surprised by this. St Polykarp was so calm and peaceful, so radiant with joy and true faith. "Well then," snapped the governor, "if you have no fear of the wild beasts, we will burn you to death, unless you worship our idols and renounce this Christ of yours!"

"Good, good," replied St Polykarp. "Bring the faggots of wood and a torch. Let me be burned to death like an offering to my Saviour."

The governor was amazed by this. He could see that he was wasting his time trying to get St Polykarp to turn away from Jesus Christ, and so he ordered that the Saint be burned to death. Saint Polykarp went to his death with great joy and hope, for he knew that Christ our God would give him eternal life and greater joy in the heavenly kingdom.

When the evil men started the fire around St Polykarp, a great miracle occurred. The flames rose up in a great sheet all around the Saint, like a wall. The air was filled with a wondrous sweet smell, like some sort of heavenly incense. But though the flames raged, the body of the holy martyr was not touched or burned, and he continued to give great glory to God. When the flames had died down and the Saint was still unharmed, the wicked governor gave a command that St Polykarp be stabbed to death. Two soldiers rushed in and stabbed him with daggers. As his holy blood poured out, the faithful beheld what looked like a dove fly out of his body and ascend toward heaven. The angels of God had taken his holy, blessed soul to paradise. Our holy and God-bearing father Polykarp



SAINT POLYKARP

of Smyrna witnessed for Christ on 23 February, 155. He was eighty-seven years old.

Saint Polykarp wrote a letter to the faithful who lived in the city of Phillipi. This letter, like those of Saint Ignatios, is one of those important writings which we call "The Works of the Fathers," or "Patristic Works". It was written by a Saint who was surrounded by people who had actually seen Christ and His miracles, and heard His words from His own holy lips. St Polykarp was taught by Apostle John the Theologian. Thus, his letter is of very great importance to us and we should all read it.

MELCHIZEDEK
(A Revelation About Jesus Christ)

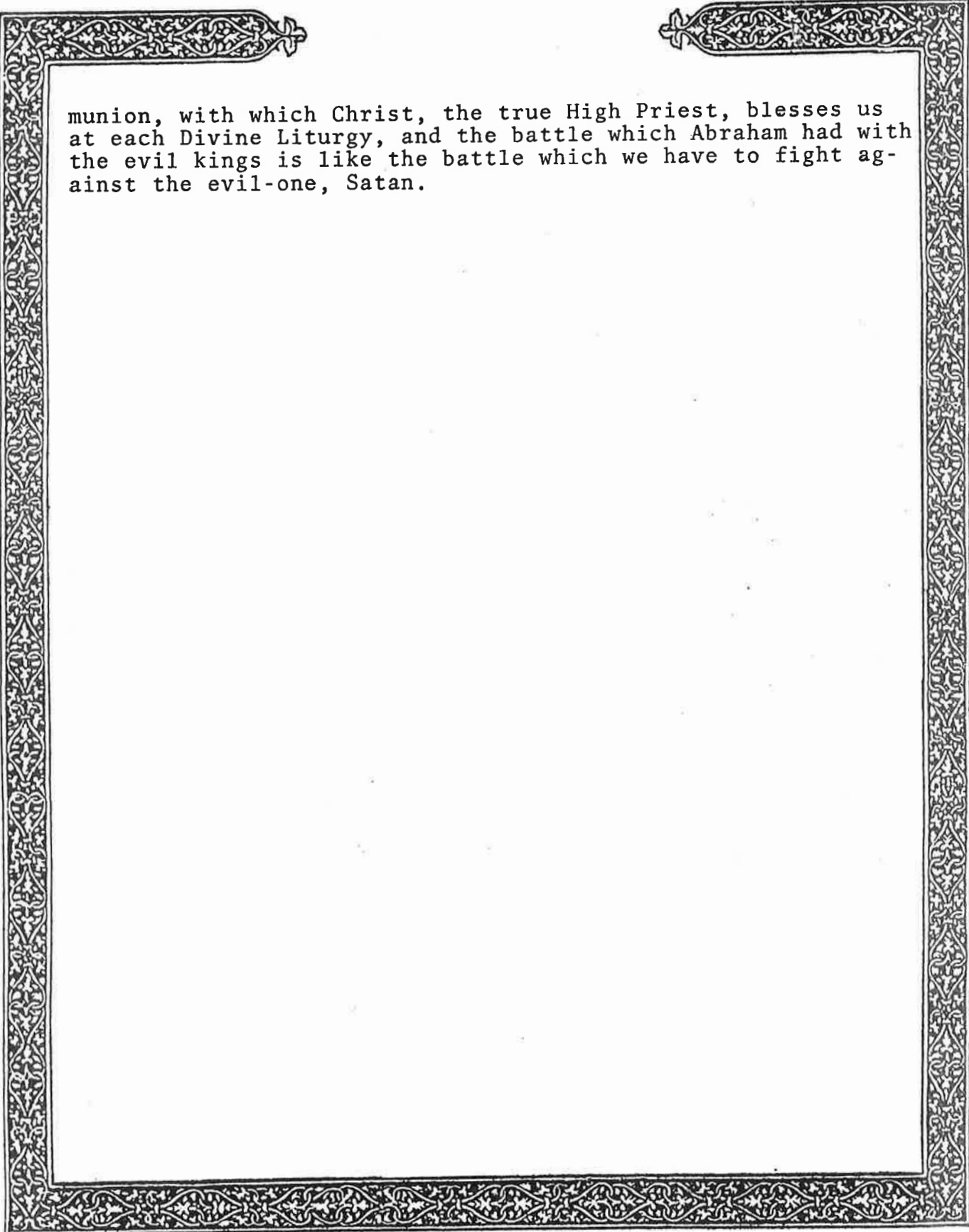
Lot, being selfish, chose the best part of the land for himself, and left the worst part of the land for Abraham. Then Lot took his people and his sheep, and settled on the rich plain near a city called Sodom. Abraham, however, went into the rocky hills to the north. The first thing he did was to build an altar, a place to worship God.

Not long after this, a war broke out between several of the kings in the region. Some of these kings brought armies and attacked the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Lot and his people were trapped right in the middle of this war. The king who won the war took Lot and his people away as captives. When Abraham heard about this, he called his men together, and said, "I know that Lot is selfish, that he took the best land, and left the poor land for us. But God has been merciful and helped us. If God loves us in spite of our sins, then we must also love our brothers even if they do wrong to us. We will go and save Lot and his people."

Abraham and his men set out and, with God's help, they defeated the kings and freed Lot and his people. Now, these kings had also defeated the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, and taken their people prisoners and taken away their treasures and property, even their food. Abraham could have kept all these things for himself. But Abraham did not want an earthly reward or riches. He only wanted to follow God and trust in Him.

After this battle and Abraham's victory, the great high priest of God, Melchizedek, who was called King of Salem, came out carrying bread and wine, and he blessed Abraham with it, saying, "Blessed be Abraham, the servant of the Most High God..."

We do not know anything at all about this high priest Melchizedek, except that his name means "king of righteousness" and his title means, "King of Peace" ("Salem" means "Peace"). He was a king of prophecy about Christ our God, Who would some day come to bless everyone who believes in Him. This was another revelation about how God would some day come down to earth as Jesus Christ, in order to teach us and save us from sin and death. The bread and wine which Melchizedek used to bless Abraham was a prophecy about the Holy Com-



munion, with which Christ, the true High Priest, blesses us at each Divine Liturgy, and the battle which Abraham had with the evil kings is like the battle which we have to fight against the evil-one, Satan.

QUESTION:

I really appreciated your comments in the December issue on the differences (or lack of them) between "purgatory" and "toll-houses". I have heard about these "mytarstva" for years, and the one thing that always bothered me was, what are they there for, what purpose do they serve? I couldn't see any reason for them, and so I wondered why God had created them if they did not serve any purpose. I had asked, and was told we went through the "mytarstva" to get rid of the sins on our soul, since we could not enter heaven with any sins. That bothered me, because I know that we get rid of our sins on our souls by repenting, and we cannot repent after death. So I never saw any purpose for these things...

J.K. (Munich, Germany)

REPLY:

Your point was also well made by Saint Mark of Ephesus in his refutations of Purgatory, in which, it seems to me, he equally refutes the idea of toll-houses (the psychological purgatory). Look, for example, at number five in his TEN ARGUMENTS AGAINST PURGATORY:

"In order to gain bliss, there is required both uprightness of will... and the good deeds deserving reward, which are a result of this [upright] will. However, the action [or, motion] of both the will and of the works must necessarily be confined to this present life...But if [after the departure of the soul from the body]there is no movement at all of the will toward good or evil, then one man will not be more worthy than another. And though the souls be not [thus] cleansed, they would be no less worthy of the divine vision of God, those souls, I mean, which departed with a good volition — which is chiefly and particularly required for blessedness. Now since Purgatory does not make an evil will a good will, but uprightness of will is required for bliss, then Purgatory contributed nothing toward the reception of bliss. But that which has no function exists in vain. And since God did not create a single thing in vain, Purgatory does not exist."

Certainly one must say exactly the same about the aerial toll-houses. For, what purpose is served by, or what is to be gained from these toll-houses and this demonic gauntlet? Is it for God, so that He will have some means of making up His mind about a "temporary" fate for the soul? Absurd. Is it for the soul? If so, what does the soul gain by this, how will it profit? Would this not be an excruciating torment without aim of purpose, since the soul without the body cannot repent, alter its volition or accomplish any act to rectify its state? Could one assert that "the soul is only undergoing its just reward for its sins by undergoing all this?" But if by this it obtains its just reward, then it has nothing more to fear on Judgment Day, and the fathers of the Church were all in error who tell us that the soul without the body cannot be rewarded or punished.

And since the soul has absolutely nothing to gain from such an experience, must we then believe that it is to give God some little satisfaction in seeing the soul in such terror and straits? But that is blasphemy. Is it for the sake of the angels, our friends? Ridiculous. Or for the demons? In such a case, we would be forced to say that God gives more honour to these abject, rebellious and accursed creatures than to all the rest of creation, because just in order to give them a bit of sadistic pleasure, He allows them to sift through all a person's life and drag out every little sin so as to torture the helpless soul. For, what else could the demons gain by such a tribunal but satisfaction of their malice? Is it in order to "educate" the soul, to make it aware of its sins? But, in the first place, what purpose would that serve, how would it profit the soul, since the soul could take no steps to repent or assimilate this "education", and second, the fathers of the Church have already told us that it is the conscience which accuses us, for it knows our sins already — and it is the conscience which is the accuser, because it is an honest accuser and incorruptible witness, whereas the demons are liars whose witness is useless, whose accusations are false, and they themselves, according to the teachings of the fathers, are to be set at nought and trodden underfoot by the faithful.

Thus, it is clear that these toll-houses, like that other form of Purgatory, serve no purpose at all, and thus are utterly useless and vain. But St Mark has already told us, "But that which has no function exists in vain. And since God did not create a single thing in vain Purgatory [and toll-houses] do not exist."

The toll-house myth, though, does not require for itself a purpose, for it is the direct product of the oriental astrology cults which hold that all creation is not in the care of a just and loving God, but is subject to almighty laws of existence, something like Karma, which Necessity demands be observed. And for this, no purpose, no reason, no benefit is required. The toll-house myth is inseparably bound up with such philosophies of fatalism, somehow logical in Babylon, Ekbatana or on the Stoa, but utterly alien to God and His Holy Church.

QUESTION:

We were interested in the discussions about ikons of the Ancient of Days and God the Father, which have appeared in the Herald lately, and especially the article by Dr Kalomiros, in SYNAXIS. He mentioned there the acts of the Moscow Synod of 1666-67. Is it possible to find the pronouncements of this Synod concerning ikons of the Ancient of Days, in English?

R.P. (Anchorage, Ak.)

REPLY:

The great pan-Orthodox synod of Moscow is of special importance, partly because it was the only such great council to be held in Russia, and thus it was a demonstration of the maturity and leadership role of the Russian church. Of particularly great significance is that the concept of "The Third Rome" rests solely upon this council, which approved it. This was probably the most important single council of any type in the history of the Russian local church.

The Tome of the Synodical Acts of the great Moscow council set forth the already well defined Orthodox doctrine that the Ancient of Days is the Son, Jesus Christ, that God the Father cannot, under any circumstances, be portrayed, and that the Lord of Hosts (Savaoth) cannot be portrayed as the Father. Interestingly this council points out that the Lord of Hosts is the Godhead, the Holy Trinity Itself, and not one person of it only. It precludes the representation of the Lord of Hosts at all, in any form. And we notice that we have never personally seen an Orthodox ikon which portrayed only the Lord of Hosts (Savaoth). We have seen ikons which portray the symbols of the Old Testament Theophanies of Jesus Christ, and in these, the throne and Seraphs of the Lord of Hosts are shown, as well as other symbols of the Old Testament Theophanies, but we have never seen (personally) an Orthodox ikon of "The Lord of Hosts" alone.

I do not know if the entire text of the Tome of the great Moscow council is available in English, but we are including here the text of the chapter relating to the holy ikons:

THE TOME
OF CONCILIAR ACTS
Concerning Diverse Affairs and Questions
and Answers Concerning Necessary Ecclesiasti-
cal Subjects

Which Council was held under the authority of the most pious great Sovereign and Tsar and Great Prince Alexei Mikhailovich, the Autocrat of all Great, Little and White Russia, in his regal presence, and was composed of the most holy Orthodox Patriarchs Paisios, Pope of Alexandria and Ecumenical Judge, Makarios of Antioch and the entire East, and Ioasaph of Moscow and all Russia, together with many Greek hierarchs (including the delegates of the Ecumenical Patriarch), and all the Russian Metropolitans, archbishops and bishops, and also the archimandrites, abbots and the entire sacred Sobor being present.

CHAPTER TWO

§43: Concerning ikonographers and Savaoth. We enjoin that there be a skilled artist, a good man [from the clergy], placed over ikonographers as an overseer, that is, as a leader and inspector, so that ignorant persons should not defame the holy ikons of Christ, of the Theotokos and of His servants by employing a bad and improper style of painting. And we command to cease all false and sophistical reasoning, according to which every man has grown accustomed to paint ikons by himself which are without attestation: that is, the ikon of the Lord Savaoth in diverse forms, certain compositions of the fingers of the hand, and other improper and similar things. We therefore ordain that from henceforth the ikon of the Lord Savaoth not in future be painted in absurd and improper aspects, because no-one has at any time seen Savaoth in the flesh. Only because Christ was seen in the flesh is He painted, that is, depicted according to the flesh, not according to His Divinity; one may say likewise concerning the most holy Theotokos and the rest of God's saints. Also the false composition of the fingers of the hand must no longer be depicted, as it has become the custom to do in the ikon of the Saviour Christ, the most holy Theotokos, the Forerunner and the rest of the saints, because this leads ignorant persons into error. But we command that in the ikon of the Saviour Christ and of God's holy hierarchs the hand giving a blessing must be depicted as has been attested to and inscribed now in our conciliar Tome, for this is the true and ancient tradition of the holy Apostles and holy fathers. As regards the martyrs of Christ, however, and the other saints, when they are painted standing and praying to Christ God or to the most holy Theotokos, we enjoin that they be painted only with outstretched hands, because this depicts true supplication. But a composition of the fingers does not depict supplication, but only manifests a confession of faith, even as it is most clearly explained in our Tome, which gives an interpretation of the sign of the cross, that is, about the composition of the fingers of the hand.

§44: It is most absurd and improper to depict in ikons the Lord Savaoth (that is, the Father) with a grey beard and the Only-Begotten Son in His bosom with a dove between them, because no-one has seen the Father according to His Divinity, and the Father has no flesh, nor was the Son born in the flesh from the Father before the ages. And though David the prophet says, "From the womb before the morning star have I begotten Thee" (Ps.109:3), that birth was not fleshly, but unspeakable and incomprehensible. For Christ Himself says in the holy Gospel, "No man hath seen the Father, save the Son" (cf Jn.6:46). And Isaiah the prophet says in his fortieth chapter: "To whom have ye likened the Lord? and with what likeness have ye made a similitude of Him? Has not the artificer of wood made an image, or the goldsmiths having melted gold, gilt it over, and made it a similitude?" (40:18, 19). In like manner the Apostle Paul says in the Acts, chapter 17, section 40, "Foreasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold or silver or stone, graven by art of man's imagination" (17:29). And John the Damascene says: "But furthermore, who can make a similitude of the invisible, incorporeal, uncircumscribed and undepictable God? It is, then, uttermost insanity and impiety to give a form to the Godhead" (Orthodox Faith, 4:16). In like manner St Gregory the Dialogist prohibits this. For this reason we should only form an understanding in the mind of Savaoth, which is the Godhead, and of that birth before the ages of the Only-Begotten Son from the Father, but we should never in any wise depict these in ikons, for this, indeed, is impossible. And the Holy Spirit is not in essence a dove, but in essence He is God, and "No man hath seen God," as John the Theologian and Evangelist bears witness (1:18), and this is so even though at the Jordan at Christ's holy baptism the Holy Spirit appeared in the likeness of a dove. For this reason it is fitting on this occasion only to depict the Holy Spirit in the likeness of a dove. But in any other place those who have intelligence will not depict the Holy Spirit in the likeness of a dove. For on Mount Tabor, He appeared as a cloud, and at another time, in other ways. Furthermore, Savaoth is the name not only of the Father, but of the Holy Trinity. According to Dennis the Areopagite, Savaoth, translated from the Jewish tongue, means "Lord of Hosts". This Lord of Hosts is the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And although Daniel the prophet says that he beheld the Ancient of Days sitting on a throne, this should not be understood to refer to the Father, but to the Son, Who at His second coming will judge every nation at the dreadful Judgment.

§45: Furthermore in some ikons of the holy Annunciation Savaoth is depicted as breathing from His mouth, and that breath goes into the womb of the most holy Theotokos. But who has seen this, or what Holy Scripture bears witness to this, and from whence is this taken? It is obvious that such a practice and other similar ones, come from certain sophisticated, or rather foolish and mindless men. Therefore we ordain that from henceforth this senseless and improper ikonography must stop. But in the Apocalypse of St John, the Son is to be depicted with white hair on account of those venerable visions which were manifested to the saint in his Apocalypse. The Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, is to be understood as the Son, Who is the Alpha because of His birth on high, Omega because of His birth below. Therefore,

Saint Maximos in the tenth chapter of his commentary on the Areopagite says that the Lord is both white-haired and youthful: "The Lord is described sometimes as white-haired, sometimes as youthful, even as it is written, 'Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and unto the ages' (Hb.13:8); for today is younger than yesterday."

If you are interested to read further on the subject of the Ancient of Days, I suggest that you make a careful study of the Vigil Service for the feast of the Meeting of our Lord in the Temple, especially the festal sections of the Matins. Concerning the Lord of Hosts (Savaoth) the question was left open in the Tome as to Whom it was that the holy prophet Isaiah saw in his famous vision of Savaoth. But, of course, the Holy Gospel already had answered this, for we read in the Gospel according to John that it was precisely Jesus Christ, the Only-Begotten Whom the prophet saw (Jn.12:41). We have already cited patristic texts relating to this, to which we add the words of St Cyril of Alexandria: "He Who sits upon the sublime and heavenly throne now lies in a manger." Moreover, we note that in the paromaea for the feast of the Meeting of the Lord, the vision of the Lord of Hosts is read, and the reason for this is made clear by the quote from St Cyril just given. Thus, we understand that the form seen by the prophet in the vision of Savaoth was the Only-begotten Son. And this reveals to us that Christ is One of the Holy Trinity, the One of the Trinity Who would become incarnate, and thus, visible. But the Tome cited above would have us not depict Savaoth, in that the name Savaoth belongs to the Godhead, and not to One Person of It only.

THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH ON THE STATE OF THE SOUL AFTER DEATH

SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM:

"Let us not, therefore, seek to hear from dead men what the Scriptures teach us much more clearly every day. For if God knew that resurrected dead men could be of profit to the living, then He — Who brings to pass all things for our benefit — would not have neglected or let pass [the opportunity to give us] such gain. But besides this, if dead men were to be raised up continuously to proclaim to us all things that are yonder, then in time this also would be set at naught, and moreover, the devil could introduce wicked doctrines with much ease. For he could often show forth apparitions or further, he could contrive that certain men should seem to die and be buried and then he could show them as being risen from the dead, and by means of these men he could persuade the minds of the deluded of whatsoever he wished. If indeed now, when there is no-one who has arisen from the dead, dreams very often appear in the likenesses of the departed and have corrupted and led many astray, then if such a thing actually happened and it became established in the minds of men that many of the departed have returned again, how much more so could the despicable demon weave ten thousand wiles and introduce great delusion into this life. For this very reason God closed the doors and has not permitted any man who has departed this life and returned to express those things yonder, lest the devil, taking this opportunity, should introduce all his own doctrines [or, things]. For when there were prophets, the devil raised up false prophets; when apostles, then false apostles; and when Christ appeared, then false christs; and when sound doctrines were brought in, he introduced corrupt ones, everywhere sowing tares. And so if this thing also were to happen [i.e., the above described], he would attempt to feign the same through his own instruments, not truly raising up dead men, but by certain sorceries and deceptions he would deceive the eyes of the beholders, or else, as I just said, he could contrive that certain should seem to die, and thus he would turn all things upside down and confuse them. But God, foreseeing all this, closed off this plot to him and, sparing us, permitted not that any man should ever come from thence and speak to the living about the things yonder, and hereby He teaches us to hold the Divine Scripture to be more worthy of credence than anything else." (HOMILY 4 ON LAZARUS AND THE RICH MAN).

SAINT MARK OF EPHESUS:

"...But if, as was said, no-one has entered either the Kingdom or Gehenna, how is it that we hear concerning the rich man and Lazarus that the former was in fire and torment and spoke with Abraham? The Lord said everything about Lazarus in the manner of a parable, even as He spoke of the ten virgins and in the rest of the parables. The parable of Lazarus has not come to

pass in actuality, because the sinners in Gehenna shall not see the righteous who are with Abraham in the Kingdom, nor will any of them know his neighbour, being in that darkness.

"Accepting this opinion our Church thus is minded and preaches, and She is most ready and well prepared to defend it. Firstly, the Lord in the Gospel according to Matthew describes beforehand the judgment to come, saying, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit..." — it is evident that they have not yet inherited — "the kingdom prepared for you"; "prepared" He says, not "already given". But to sinners He says, "Depart ye cursed" — evidently they have not yet departed — "into everlasting fire prepared" not for you but "for the devil and his angels." Here again He says "prepared", since [that fire] has not yet received the condemned demons. And how could this be, when the demons even till now and until that very day roam about everywhere in the air and work their deeds in those who obey them? This very thing they cry out to the Lord in another place, as it is recorded in the same Gospel, "Art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?" So it is clear that they do not endure torment yet, since the time has not yet come. If, therefore, the wicked demons, the first to work evil, for whom hell has especially been prepared and stored up, if they have not yet paid the debt of their fitting condemnation and freely wander about wherever they wish, what reasoning could persuade us that souls which amidst sins have departed from hence are straightway given over to fire and to those torments which are prepared for others [i.e., the demons]? Nay, what need is there of the Judgment, or even of the resurrection of the bodies of these [souls], and of the Judge's coming [again] to earth and of that fearsome, universal theatre, if each man has received his due before that day? And how is it that the Lord in the parable of the virgins says that the virgin souls who went forth to meet the Bridegroom "slumbered and slept while the Bridegroom tarried," which means that they died, but that they did not enter the bridal chamber until the Bridegroom came from Heaven, awaking all the virgins as it were from sleep, and the ones He led within along with Himself, while the others He shut out, which thing clearly shall come to pass only on that day? For He says, "Then shall the Kingdom of the heavens be likened to ten virgins." And how is it that, having travelled into a far country and delivered unto His servants His goods, he summons all together upon His return and requires of each one his work, if even before the Master's return each of the servants has laid bare his work and received his recompense?

But also the divine Apostle in his second epistle to Corinthians says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in (lit. through) his body, according to that which he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2Cor.5:10). Do you see that before (the time of) that judgment seat and before [the time when] we shall all appear gathered together, [that is] while we are bereft of bodies, no-one shall receive according to that which he has done through

THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH ON THE STATE OF THE SOUL AFTER DEATH

his body? But also in his second epistle to Timothy he says that on the one hand the time of his departure is "at hand", but the crown of righteousness is "laid up", and therefore is not "at hand", that "which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing" (2Tm.4:6-8). And in the second epistle to the Thessalonians, "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you, and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day" (2Ths.1:6-10). And again in the epistle to the Hebrews where he speaks concerning the saints who have gone before us, "And all these, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (Hb.11:39-40). This we must think concerning all the faithful and righteous who lived until the Master's coming. For just as those who have gone before have not been made perfect without the apostles, so neither are the apostles without the martyrs, nor the martyrs without those who after them have entered and shall enter into the good vineyard of the Church. This is indeed taught most lucidly by the parable where at different times there were different callings for workmen into the vineyard, but the recompense was given to all at the same time, and those who came first received nothing more. The great Evangelist, John the Theologian says the same in Revelations: "And when he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the soul of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held, and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants and also their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled" (Rv.6:9-11). From all these things, therefore, it is evident that neither are the Saints in perfect enjoyment of those good things and of the blessedness to come, nor have sinners already received condemnation and been sent away to torment. And, indeed, since they are incomplete and, as it were, cut in half, being bereft of their bodies which they wait to receive incorruptible after the resurrection, how could they attain to those perfect rewards? Hence the Apostle says, "Christ the first fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming, then cometh the end" (1Cor.15:23, 24), then, he says they shall appear, then they shall be perfected. And the Lord says, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of the heavens" (cf Mt.13:43).

SOCIETY LECTURE: THE SOUL, THE BODY AND DEATH (Continued)

At the beginning of this chapter, we also mentioned the phenomena of medical hallucinations. Obviously, we must also touch upon this subject, as there are a number of books circulating now regarding "out of body experiences" on deathbeds and sickbeds. The reports allege that certain people who have died have later come back to life and given revealing insights into that world yonder, into the state and condition of the soul after death, or who have reported visions of light and of Saints and angels. It is in these stories especially that we come upon the idea of a soul being removed from its body erroneously or too early — an idea which, as we said, attributes to God the qualities of fallen human indecision. The soul departs the body at the moment God calls it forth and, in the words of St John Chrysostom, "Our souls after their departure hence are led away to some place, having no more power of themselves...but awaiting that awesome day."⁷⁰ The soul cannot depart the body except at God's summons, and the human soul is not stronger than God that it can resist Him when He calls it forth. Nor does God "accidentally" summons the soul and then, discovering His accident, return it.

On those extremely rare occasions when God has raised a person from the dead for some direct, specific reason, there had been no talk at all of some sort of "out of body experience", nor, indeed, have such people ever told us anything of what took place (Lazarus, Dorcas, Athanasy of the Kiev Caves, for example).⁷¹

God calls the soul forth in its appointed time, and the soul tears itself away from its body and heeds the call of the All-powerful and Merciful God. As to what happens to the soul then, we have said as much as can be said. The rest is simply a great mystery, for it exceeds the understanding of the human mind. We know very little about the subject, for the Scripture is silent on the matter, the prophets and fathers of the Church are as silent, and those who were actually resurrected were absolutely silent on the matter. This is logical, for they could have known precious little indeed of what did happen to them, if one is to give credence to the Scripture and the New Testament prophets and fathers. Moreover, their state of existence in the repose was beyond the human tongue to speak of, and beyond the human mind to comprehend. Indeed, St Isaak of Nineveh says, as we have already seen, that no vision or revelation about things yonder (beyond death) can be expressed in human words, and every thing that is, is false. When the fathers spoke of it at all, they were forced, like Moses, to use figurative expressions and metaphors, such as Christ Himself used, calling this state "Abraham's Bosom," as if to say only that these souls were the heirs to the promise given to Abraham for his true children.⁷² Nor was St Antony the Great able to obtain an answer to the matter either, for when he pondered it, he was told by God, "Antony, take heed to yourself; for such things are for the judgment of God, and it is not for you to know

them."⁷³ Thus, despite attempts to doctrinalize certain stories and moral fables, which have appeared over the centuries, despite speculations of "science falsely so called,"⁷⁴ which purport to give answers to what the Divine Scriptures and the fathers mutually refused to attempt answers, the matter remains a mystery in the wisdom of God.

As to the medical "out of body experiences" and teachings (such as those asserted by Dr Kübler-Ross, et al)⁷⁵ in general, there are two answers: one given to us by members of the teaching staff in the faculty of medicine at two Canadian universities, and confirmed by inquiries made of practising physicians and surgeons, and another which is completely self evident, at least to the Orthodox Christian.

In the first, we are given this general explanation of certain of the "death hallucinations" which occur most frequently. When a body approaches clinical death, the heart can slow down or even stop for some periods of time (in a catatonic state, one can appear "dead" for considerable lengths of time). The brain is deprived of oxygen and a sense of entering a dark vortex is felt. As the brain spirals into this vortex, the body chills. Then suddenly, there will be a heart beat again, blood rushes to the brain, bearing oxygen. The perfectly natural sensation of the brain is one of a sudden blinding light, a breaking through the vortex into light. The body suddenly feels the warmth of the blood-flow, and experiences a feeling of lightness, warmth and well-being. A deep sense of love is also common, and a person in both the initial state and the later, experiences distorted images of people and events, both past and present. Because of the euphoric condition, things which are actually vaguely seen or remembered are seen in a highly exalted or idealized manner, and this is often attributed to an "out of body experience," just as things seen under the influence of hallucinogens are interpreted as extra-carnal experiences. Dr Richard Blacher of Tufts University School of Medicine notes, too, that:

*"First, it is clear these experiences occur only when there is a gradual cardiac arrest. Such experiences do not occur with Stokes-Adams attacks, during which the patients describe no mental sensations with the sudden stopping of the heart. These episodes were also commonly experienced during induction of anesthesia with open-drop ether. Numerous such accounts of noises, lights, and a sensation of being outside the body and watching the situation are available when such patients are asked about their experience; rarely does anyone volunteer this information...This kind of dramatic experience is never described by patients who have had heart surgery, although not uncommonly these patients have the fantasy that when their heart stopped they are dead..."*⁷⁶

This is, of course, the likely proper perspective to receive all such stories of people who observed themselves from

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"outside the body," floating along over the body as it was moved from one place to the other, and the like. These explanations are quite reasonable and obviously true. One doctor observed, in closing, that these conditions are interpreted in two different ways: the one by those physicians who are practising medicine, and the other way by those who are making big money selling books of occult speculations.

There is, however, another aspect, another dimension of such phenomena which must be explained: for, Satan would certainly never pass up such an excellent opportunity to delude humanity and deprive it of its salvation.

When the evil-one finds a person near death and in a passive condition, susceptible to spiritual delusion (the more so considering the natural phenomena discussed earlier) he knows that the person is not actually dead, and so, given the opportunity by circumstances, he assaults the person's mind with ideas and demonically contrived visions and false experiences — just as the demons have appeared to the Saints as angels and even as Christ Himself, trying to destroy them through pride — in order to sow false teachings and beliefs. About this, our holy father St Gregory of Sinai has warned:

*"And some evil spirits...sway the soul's contemplative faculty by producing certain violent winds and phantasies, and they transform themselves into flying creatures, and sometimes into angels and delude the soul. They form in our memory, images of things known to us, and they produce a form of, and change, every kind of spiritual vision...for there is nothing spiritual of which they do not stealthily produce an exact image by means of phantasies...and assailing one with delusion in place of truth, phantasy in place of divine vision, they establish themselves in him."*⁷⁷

Those who "return" from these demonically contrived experiences, played out upon either medically induced hallucinations, or hallucinations induced by the workings of deluded minds, have stories to tell which instil in mankind either a belief that at death everyone will enter into the same glory, both the good and the evil, the believer and the atheist, the chaste and the lecherous, the pious and the blasphemer (the Kübler-Ross syndrome), or with tales of horror well calculated to cast the soul into despair and unbelief (such as the purgatory and toll-house phantasies). All these supposed "out of body experiences" universally deny and contradict Orthodox Christian teachings on the subject, and none of them in any way confirm or agree with what Divine Revelation has given us on the matter. And this is just what our holy and God-bearing father John Chrysostom warns, saying:

"Let us not, therefore, seek to hear from dead men what the Scriptures teach us much more clearly every day. For if God knew that resurrected dead men could be of profit to the living, then He — Who brings to pass all things for our benefit — would not have neglected or let pass [the opportunity

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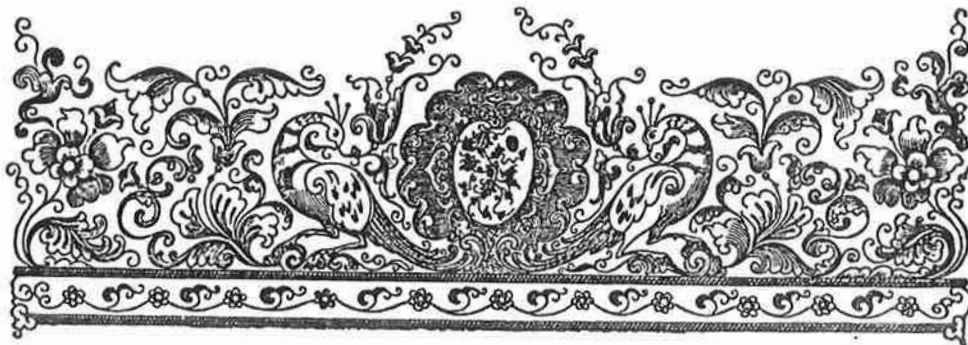
to give us] such gain. But besides this, if dead men were to be raised up continuously to proclaim to us all things that are yonder, then in time this also would be set at naught, and moreover, the devil could introduce wicked doctrines with much ease. For he could often show forth apparitions, or further, he could contrive that certain men should seem to die...and then he could show them as being risen from the dead, and by means of these men he could persuade the minds of the deluded of whatsoever he wished. If indeed, now, when there is no-one who has arisen from the dead, dreams very often appear in the likenesses of the departed and have corrupted and led many astray, then if such a thing actually happened and it became established in the minds of men that many of the departed have returned again, how much more so could the despicable demon weave ten thousand wiles and introduce great delusion into this life. For this very reason God closed the doors and has not permitted any man who has departed this life and returned to express those things yonder, lest the devil, taking this opportunity, should introduce all his own doctrines [or, things]. For when there were prophets, the devil raised up false prophets; when apostles, then false apostles; and when Christ appeared, then false christs; and when sound doctrines were brought in, he introduced corrupt ones, everywhere sowing tares. And so if this thing also were to happen [i.e., what was mentioned above], he would attempt to feign the same through his own instruments, not truly raising up dead men, but by certain deceptions he would deceive the eyes of the beholders, or else, as I just said, he would contrive that certain should seem to die, and thus he would turn all things upside down and confuse them. But God, foreseeing all this...permitted not that any man should ever come from thence and speak to the living about the things yonder, and hereby He teaches us to hold the Divine Scripture to be more worthy of credence than anything else."⁷⁸

In short, all this type of experiences are simply demonic delusions aimed at knocking people off the path of salvation by making them think that living faith in Christ, truth and moral struggle are not at all necessary, as the end of everyone is basically the same beautiful reward regardless of the quality of their lives and their relationship with Christ and His Holy Church, or else to instill some overwhelming horror in people's souls, some false idea of special powers held by the demons, some false and distressing doctrines and teachings.

Of course, all this helps much, together with false miracles, common incidents lightmindedly interpreted as miracles, demonic apparitions, supposedly of the Holy Virgin, and other such manifestations, to prepare the path of Antichrist, whose trademark will be such revelations, false, theatrical miracles and apparitions of all manner. People will believe all this, for they are even now being prepared for it, and will follow after Antichrist because of them.

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As to what precisely, in material terminology, happens to the soul after death, we offer only this observation: this matter is a great mystery which cannot be comprehended by the human mind, and God has not chosen to reveal the matter to us. There are a few things which we do know from the Scripture, prophets and fathers, and these certainly preclude the tales of "out of body experiences" or occult stories about messages or communications being sent back by souls from beyond the grave, or of people returning to the body after a brief bout of death, and giving revealing insights into what lies beyond the grave. These things are simply not possible and are diametrically contrary to Orthodox Christian teachings. Much of what we have been told through the Holy Church about these matters is spoken of in figurative terms which serve more to form an attitude than to elucidate the incomprehensible and ineffable mystery. Since God Himself has not chosen to reveal these details to us, it is self-evident that all speculation on the matter, whether on the nature of "hades," which is a state or condition, not a place, or "hell" or "Abraham's Bosom," or on the paths by which the soul is taken at death (and we use "paths" only metaphorically), or the time it takes to go there, or whether, indeed, time even exists after the repose of the body, or whether the demons could even see the soul (not likely), lead inevitably to distortions, false teachings and concepts, and even to clear, soul destroying heresies. From such speculation and from the doctrinalization of moral fables (pious frauds) and tales, came such heresies as purgatory (in all its forms), limbo, apokatastasis, and a host of others.⁷⁹



SIX

MOSCOW WITHOUT THE TSAR



OROZOV had known the Prince as a child, but they had long ago lost sight of one another. When Serebryany had gone off to Lithuania, Morozov was campaigning somewhere far away; for more than ten years they did not see each other, but Druzhina Andreyevich had changed very little, and was as hale and hearty as before; the Prince would have recognised him anywhere at first glance, for the old Boyarin was the type of person whose individuality makes a deep impression on one's mind. His stature and sturdy build alone were striking. He was taller by a whole head than Serebryany. His chestnut-coloured hair, touched by pronounced streaks of grey, fell in disorder over his high brow, which bore several scars. A large and bushy beard, almost entirely grey, covered the top half of his chest. A piercing glance flashed from beneath his beetling brows, but a welcoming smile played on his lips, a smile through which, nevertheless, there shone quite clearly that quality described in common parlance by the saying: "He knows what's what." There was something of the lion in his stately gait and manners, a special kind of quiet dignity, a combination of deliberation, consciousness of merit, and assurance. Seeing him, everyone would have said that it was good to be in agreement with this man, and at the same time, everyone would have thought that it was bad indeed to quarrel with him. Looking into Morozov's features, it would have been in fact quite easy to suspect that, if he were provoked, his calm countenance could be transformed into a terrifying face. But this impression was soon erased by his welcoming smile and his open and unfeigned cordiality.

"Welcome, Prince, welcome dear guest! How good it is to see you!" said Morozov, guiding Serebryany into a large, square-timbered room, which had in it a tiled stove upon which one could recline, long oaken benches,

valuable weapons hanging on the walls, and a great quantity of gold and silver vessels beautifully arranged upon wide shelves.

"Welcome, welcome, Prince! What a fine guest the Lord has sent to me! You know, Nikitushka, I still remember you when you were young! Okh, what a bold fellow you were, I must say! There were times when the lads used to play at towns in conflict, and woe then to the side that was against you! You would fly into action like a serene falcon, and then your young blood would flow so strongly, that sometimes you would become enraged, like a bear cub—excuse my crude comparison, Nikita Romanovich! And then you would begin to lay about your right and left! It made one merry just to see you! Well, you have turned into a fine man, Prince! I heard about your deeds in the land of Lithuania. You battered those enemies of ours just as once you laid about your playmates!"

And Morozov smiled gaily, his leonine face shining with warm sincerity.

"And do you remember, Nikitushka," he continued, encircling the Prince's shoulders with his arm, "do you remember how you wouldn't tolerate any deception, whatever the game that was being played? Whether you started wrestling with someone, or fighting with your fists, you would sooner have let yourself be thrown to the ground, than trip your opponent, or do anything against the rules. You could endure everything, but cunning you would not allow yourself or anyone else!"

The Prince began to feel awkward in the presence of Morozov.

"Boyarín," he said, "here is a dispatch for you from Prince Pronsky."

"Thank you, Prince. I will read it afterwards. It can wait its time. Now, let me offer you some hospitality! But where is Elyena Dmitryevna? Hey, whoever's there! Tell my wife that we have a dear guest, Prince Nikita Romanovich Serebryany, let her come down to regale him!"

Elyena came in quietly and gracefully, bearing in her hands a tray with goblets containing various wines. She bowed low before Serebryany, as if it were the first time she had seen him. She was as pale as death.

"Prince," said Morozov, "this is the lady of the house, my wife Elyena Dmitryevna! Love her and be gracious to her. I think you are as one of our very own, Nikita Romanovich. Your father and I were just like brothers, so that my wife need be no stranger to you. Bow to the Boyarín, Elyena, and ask him what he would like. Come, eat something, Prince! Do not disdain our bread and salt! Here is some rum, here is Hungarian wine, and here is some raspberry mead, for which the good housewife herself has steeped the fruit."

Morozov bowed low.

The Prince likewise bowed to them both, and drained a goblet of wine.

Elyena did not glance up at Serebryany. Her long eyelashes remained lowered. She trembled, and the goblets on the tray rattled against each other.

"What is the matter with you, Elyena?" Morozov said suddenly. "Are you feeling perhaps ill? Your face has become as white as snow!"

My little roe deer," he added in a whisper, "has Vyazemsky ridden by again? That's what it is! That devil must have ridden past the garden! Don't be distressed. It is not your fault. Don't go into the garden without me. Be comforted, my child — I won't let anyone offend you! Come, please smile and be gay, or else the guest will notice!..... Forgive me, Nikita Romanich, forgive me, I was just fussing and telling my wife that she should order some food to be brought to you more quickly. You haven't dined yet, Prince?"

"Thank you, Boyarin, I have dined."

"Never mind, Nikita Romanich, you will dine once more!.....Go, Elyena, go and busy yourself! And you, Boyarin, do eat something of what God has provided; do not offend an old man in the Tsar's disfavour! That is grief enough for him already!"

Morozov indicated his long hair.

"I see, Boyarin," said the Prince. "I see, but I cannot yet believe my eyes! You in disfavour! For what reason? Forgive my presumptuous question."

Morozov sighed.

"For the reason that I stick to the old customs, maintain the honour of the boyars, and do not bow down to the new people!"

In saying this, his face grew dark, and his eyes assumed a grim expression. He told about his quarrel with Godounov, and complained bitterly about the Tsar's injustice.

There's much in Moscow, Prince, that's not the same as it was before, ever since the time that the Tsar inflicted the oprichniki on Russia!"

"Who are these oprichniki, Boyarin? I have met some of them, but I can't make any sense of it all!"

"It seems we have angered God, Nikita Romanich; he has dimmed the Tsar's radiant eyes. Our fine times came to an end, when the slanderers insinuated treason against Sylvester and Adashev, and he banished them both. Then Ivan Vasilyevich suddenly began to have suspicions about us, his faithful servants! He began to talk of treason, of conspiracies that would not even have entered one's mind! As for the new people, they were overjoyed, and started whispering to him against the boyars, some out of spite, some in expectation of favours, and he began to lend an ear to all of them. Whoever had a grudge would start denouncing his enemy, as if that enemy had spoken words against the Tsar, or raised the Khan or the King against him. And they, accursed ones, would kiss the cross on this in their falsehood, and put their lying hands to writing letters, fearing not God's awful judgement day! Many innocent people have been imprisoned, Nikita Romanich, and tortured after confrontations. Whoever wanted to, began to speak in the sovereign's name, as if he had his support. Before, it used to be that anyone who denounced you would himself have to prove it, but now, they take you and torture you merely on rumours, never heeding the inconsistencies in the slanderers' words! Hard times have come upon us, Nikita Romanich. As long as men remember we've never

known such terror from a Tsar! After the tortures came the executions! But who were executed thus!.....But you, Prince, perhaps you have heard of this?"

"I have heard of it, but only vaguely, Boyarin. News does not travel quickly to Lithuania. But then, why be astonished about it? It is the Tsar's will to punish evil-doers."

"Who denies that, Prince! He is the Tsar in order to chastise and to favour. What is terrible is that it's not the evil-doers who were executed, but all the faithful servants of the Tsar! The chamberlain Adashev (Alexey's brother) with his youthful son; three of the Satins; Ivan Shishkin with his wife and children, and many other guiltless people!"

Indignation showed on Serebryany's face.

"Boyarin, it is not the Tsar who is guilty in this, but his informers!"

"Okh, Prince! It is bitter to give utterance to it, and frightening to think about it. Not only because of the informers' slanders has the Tsar begun to spill innocent blood. Take Basmanov, the sovereign's chief cup-bearer; he pleaded with the Tsar against Prince Obolensky Ovchin over some unbecoming word. What did the Tsar do? At dinner, he plunged a knife into the Prince's heart with his own hand!"

"Boyarin!" cried out Serebryany, springing to his feet, "if anyone else had said that, I would have called him a slanderer! I myself would have laid hands upon him!"

"Nikita Romanich, I am too old to bear false witness. And against whom? Against my own sovereign?"

"Forgive me, Boyarin. But what is one to think of such a change? Has not the Tsar been duped?"

"It must be so, Prince. But sit down and listen further. Another time Ivan Vasilyevich, having drunk too much, began a masquerade with his favourites that is shameful even to think of, Boyarin. Prince Mihailo Repnin was present, and wept from sheer distress. The Tsar began putting a mask on him. 'No!' said Repnin, 'I will never shame my noble ancestry!' - and he stamped the mask under his feet. Some five days after this, he was killed by the Tsar's command in one of God's temples."

"Boyarin, this is the scourge of God!"

"May His holy will be done Prince! But listen further. There was no end to the executions. Not a day passed but blood was spilled, on the scaffolds, in the prisons, in the monasteries. Not a day passed but servants of boyars were seized and taken to the torture-chambers. Many confessed when scorched by fire, and in terror informed against their masters. Those who declared their boyars guiltless, not wanting to give up their souls to hell's abyss, were put to death. Many of them endured in the truth, many received their martyr's crown, Nikita Romanich! At times it looked as if the Tsar had come to his senses. He repented, and wept, and called himself a murderer and an ogre. He sent rich gifts to many monasteries, and ordered memorial services to be held for those he

had killed. Ivan Vasilyevich repented, but not for long. And then what did he invent? Listen, Prince. I awoke one morning, and heard a great commotion. The people had poured into the streets: some were running towards the Kremlin, others from the Kremlin. All were wailing. 'The Tsar is leaving! No one knows where he's going!' A cold chill seized me! I put on some clothes, and mounted a horse; from all sides boyars were hurrying towards the Kremlin, some riding, some on foot, like ordinary people, not even thinking of their noble rank! We reached the Iversky gate, and what did we see? Guardsmen riding out, with the people scattering in front of them. Behind the guardsmen came a sleigh, and in it was the Tsar with the Tsaritsa and the Tsarevich. Behind the Tsar's sleigh there followed a multitude of other sleighs, and in them all the goods and chattels, all the treasury of the imperial household; behind the sleighs came chamberlains and courtiers, and scribes and clerks, and warriors, and people of all ranks—all of them were departing from the Kremlin. We tried to rush to the imperial sleigh, but the guardsmen barred our way, saying that thus the Tsar had ordered it! And so, the train of riders and of sleighs moved on along the frozen river Moscow, and left the outskirts of the town.

"We went back to our homes, and for a long time we waited, wondering if the Tsar would change his mind and return. A whole week passed, and then the Patriarch of the Church received a letter, in which the Tsar informed us that, from the greatness of his gracious heart, not wanting to endure our treacherous affairs, he had left his sovereign throne, and now would go whither the Lord would show him! As this news spread, a wail went up from Moscow: 'The Tsar, our father, has abandoned us! Who will reign over us now!'

"It is no good to hide the truth, for Ivan Vasilyevich was terrible indeed. But God Himself had placed him over us, apparently to cleanse us of our sins, and to scourge us, according to His will. We gathered in the Council, and then and there decided to go to him with bowed heads and plead with him in tears. We found that the Tsar had stopped in the village of Alexandrova, more than eighty miles from here. We prayed to God, and then we rode there. As soon as we espied the village, we stopped, and prayed again. Fear seized us; we were not afraid because the Tsar might have us put to death, but because the Tsar might refuse to see us. But nothing happened. The Tsar allowed us to approach him. You would not believe it Boyarin, but when we came in, we did not recognize Ivan Vasilyevich! His face was not his own; the hair of his head and his beard had all dropped out, or so it seemed. What had become of him? The Tsar he was, and yet he was not the Tsar! He spoke at length to us; he reproached us with unheard of treacheries; he recounted all our faults, of which we had no knowledge, and finally he told us that, owing to the pleading of his prayerful bishops, he would again resume his sovereignty, but only on certain conditions. He favoured us by allowing us to kiss his hand, and then he let us go."

"What sort of conditions did he make?" asked Serebryany.

"I will tell you, Prince. Listen. Some three weeks passed, and Ivan Vasilyevich arrived in Moscow. There was great joy, such joy as does not happen even on a Paschal Sunday. Then he summoned us and the clergy to the Council. And when we had assembled, he announced that he was resuming his sovereignty once again, but only in order to execute the evil-doers, to cast the traitors into disgrace, and to confiscate all their possessions, and that he would not tolerate idle requests for mercy from either the Patriarch or any other powers. 'I establish a corps of guards for my own protection,' he said, 'and I take certain towns and suburbs and certain streets within Moscow for my exclusive realm. These are the conditions upon which I now resume my reign,' he said! From that day, he began to gather around him new people, whose forebears were unknown, and who would kiss the cross to him, swearing to have no dealings with the boyars. And all those lands, and all those houses, and all those riches, which he had seized for his own use, he placed under their charge; as for the former owners of the estates, some twelve thousand of them, he chased them out of the oprichnina like cattle. That is the truth, Nikita Romanich, for I saw it with my own eyes, and yet it is still hard to believe! Now these devilish, blood-thirsty companies with their brooms and hound's heads, ride over holy Russia. They stamp out the truth, and they sweep away not treason, but Russian honour. They gnaw not the enemies of the Tsar, but his faithful servants, and there is no justice or redress against them anywhere!"

"Why did you agree to such conditions?" asked Serebryany.

"How could we not agree, Prince? How could we pit ourselves against the Tsar? Is he not sent from God?"

"Indeed he is sent from God. But did he not himself ask your opinion? Why did you not reply that you did not want the oprichnina?"

"But what if he had gone away again? What then? Should we have left ourselves without a sovereign? What would the people have said?"

Serebryany paused to consider.

"Yes," he said, after a brief silence, "it is unthinkable to be without a sovereign. But now, why do you wait? Why do you not tell him that the whole country is perishing because of the oprichnina? Why do you look on all this and keep silence?"

"I have not kept silent, Prince," replied Morozov with dignity.

"I never hid my thoughts, and it is for this reason that I am now in disfavour. Let the Tsar call me, and I will not remain silent. But he will not call me. Our kind of people are not longer in his confidence. Look with whom he has surrounded himself! What people of ancient ancestry are near him? There are none of ancient ancestry! Instead, they are all base schemers, whose fathers would not have been fit to act as servants to our fathers! Look at them! The Basmanovs — father and son — I do not even know which one is the more odious! Malyuta Skouratov — God knows what he really is, part animal, part butcher, and always bespattered with blood! Vaska Gryaznoy — he is capable of any shameful deed! Boris Godounov — that one would sell his father and his mother, and

throw his children in to boot, merely to climb higher; he'd stick a knife into your throat, and yet salute you. There is only one there of high rank — Prince Afanasy Vyazemsky. He has disgraced himself and us, the accursed one! Need one say more about him!"

Morozov waved his hand. Some other thoughts busied his mind. Serebryany too began to ponder. He mused about the terrible changes in the Tsar, and for a while forgot the relationship into which fate had placed him towards Morozov.

Meanwhile the servants had laid the table. Disregarding all excuses, Druzhina Andreyevich compelled his guest to taste of many dishes: jellies of all kinds, soups, hot foods, and pickled pork. And, when various drinks were placed before them, Morozov poured beakers of Malmsey wine for himself and for the Prince, got up from the table, threw back his grey hair, grown long in his banishment, and raising the cup, he said:

"To the health of our great sovereign, Tsar Ivan Vasilyevich!"

"May God enlighten him, and open his eyes!" replied Serebryany, draining the cup, and both of them crossed themselves.

Elyena did not appear during dinner, nor was she present while the two boyars conversed.

Morozov talked a great deal more about affairs of state, about the incursion of the Crimean Tartars into the lands around Ryazan, questioned Serebryany about the Lithuanian war, and bitterly condemned Kurbsky for his desertion to the enemy King. The Prince replied in detail to all the questions, and finally recounted his fray with the oprichniki in the village of Medvedevka, described his quarrel with them in Moscow, and told of his meeting with the saintly eccentric, but failed, by the way, to mention the latter's dark and mystic words.

Morozov listened to him with great attention.

"That is bad, Prince," he said, rubbing his craggy brow, "that is very bad. There is no need to wonder at the fact that they pillaged that particular village; the village, you see, is mine, and nowadays anyone is free to pillage the estates of a boyarin who is out of favour. That business is notorious; what is transportable they take, what is too heavy to lift they set aflame, and the horned animals they spear to death. That is their way. As for the eccentric — I know him. He is indeed a man of God, a fool in Christ. You are not the first one he has called by name; it seems as if he is able to see through anyone. Even the Tsar is afraid of him. Many a time he has rebuked Ivan Vasilyevich to his face. If only there were more saintly people like him, then perhaps there would not have been any oprichnina! Tell me, Prince," went on Morozov, "when had you thought of going to pay homage to the Tsar?"

"Tomorrow, as soon as it is light, when our gracious sovereign comes out from his bedchamber."

"Come now, Prince! It's almost dark already, and you will have

to ride some eighty miles or more!"

"How so? Is not the Tsar at present in the Kremlin?"

"No, Prince, not in the Kremlin. We have angered God, the Sovereign has abandoned us, and returned to the village of Alexandrova, where he is now living with his cronies — may hell be without top or bottom for them!"

"If that is the case, Boyarin, then please excuse me, for I must hurry. I have not yet been back to my own house. I will have a look around there for a little, and then tomorrow, as soon as it is light, I shall leave for the village."

"Don't go there, Prince!"

"Why, Boyarin?"

"Your head will not remain on your shoulders, Nikita Romanich."

"That is according to God's will, Boyarin; what will be, will be!"

"Listen, Nikita Romanich. You had probably forgotten what I was like, but I remember you even as a child. Your late father lived with me hand-in-hand, and soul-in-soul. He died, and may the heavenly kingdom be for him. There's no one to caution you, no one to give you counsel, and now, by God, your fate is not to be envied! Not to be envied indeed! If you go to the imperial village, you are lost, Prince, you and your head are lost!"

"Well, Boyarin, it seems that it is written in my fate!"

"Stay here, Nikitushka; I will hide you. No one will find you. My servants will not denounce you. In the house, you will be like a son of mine!"

"Boyarin, remember what you yourself have said of Kurbsky. It is dishonourable for a Russian nobleman to hide from his Tsar."

"Nikita Romanich, Kurbsky is a traitor. He fled to join the Tsar's enemy; and who am I? Am I the enemy of the Tsar?"

"Forgive me, Boyarin, forgive my thoughtless words! But there is no avoiding what must be!"

"If only you could stay with me, Nikitushka, then perhaps the Tsar's wrath would cool, and we and the Patriarch might settle your affair, but now you'll fall like pitch into a heap of embers!"

"Our like is in God's hands, Boyarin. It is not fitting to try and lengthen it by cunning any more than it is His will. Thank you for your hospitality," added Serebryany, getting up, "thank you for your friendship (and at these words he felt involuntarily embarrassed), but I shall go. Goodbye Druzhina Andreyich!"

Morozov looked at the Prince with mournful sympathy, but one could see that, in his inner soul, he approved Serebryany's decision, and that he himself would not have done otherwise, if he had been in the same situation.

"God's blessing be with you, Nikita Romanich!" he said, rising from the bench, and embracing the Prince. "May the Lord soften the Tsar's heart! May you come back unharmed from the village, like the youths

out of the fiery furnace, for I will then embrace you, as I am doing now, with all my heart and all my soul!"

There is a saying: see a man on foot off to the gate, and a rider to his mount take. The Prince and the Boyarin parted at the threshold of the entrance hall.

It was already dark. As he rode by the palisade, Serebryany saw someone in a white dress in the garden. His heart beat faster. He stopped his horse. Elyena came towards the palisade.

"Prince", she said in a whisper, "I heard your conversation with Drujhina Andreyich; you are riding to the village..... God save you, Prince — you are riding to your death!"

"Elyena Dmitryevna! It seems it is the Lord's will that I should suffer death from the Tsar. It was not for joy that I returned to my native land. The Lord granted me no happiness and you did not become mine, Elyena Dmitryevna! Let the will of God now be done to me."

"Prince, they will torture you! I am terrified even to think of it!..... Oh my God, is life really so hateful to you?"

"Let it perish!" said Serebryany with a wave of his hand.

"Oh most holy Mother of God! If you don't pity yourself, Nikita Romanich, have pity upon others. Have pity upon me. Remember how you loved me!"

The moon appeared out of a cloud. Elyena's face, her pearl kokoshnik, necklace, diamond ear-rings, and her tearful eyes, all flashed with a wonderful brilliance. Elyena had been weeping, and yet even now she was ready to smile through her tears. A single word from the Prince would have transformed her sadness into boundless joy. She forgot her husband, she forgot all caution. Serebryany read in her eyes such love, such longing, that involuntarily he began to waver. Happiness was lost forever for him. Elyena was another's now, yet she loved him only. Why not remain, and put off his departure to the village? Did not Morozov himself beg him to stay?

So thought the Prince, and enchanting visions arose in his imagination but his sense of honour, momentarily lulled to sleep, suddenly awoke.

"No," he reflected, "may I be shamed for affronting, even by a thought, my father's friend! Only a dishonourable man would pay for hospitality with deceit, only a coward would flee from death!"

"I cannot but go," he said decisively. "I cannot save myself from the Tsar, when better people perish. Farewell, Elyena!"

These words thrust like a knife into Elyena's heart. She sank to the ground in despair.

"Open beneath me, mother earth!" she moaned. "I am not long for this bright world. I shall lay hands upon myself! I shall kill myself with poison! I will not outlive you Nikita Romanich! I love you more than life, more than God's light itself! Beside you, I have never loved anyone else, nor ever will!"

Serebryany's heart was bursting with compassion. He wanted to console Elyena, but she sobbed even more loudly. People might have

heard her, spied on the Prince, and denounced him to the Boyarin. Serebryany realised this, and decided to tear himself away in order to save Elyena.

"Farewell, Elyena!" he said. "Farewell my soul, joy of my days! Dry your tears! God is merciful, perhaps we'll see each other yet!"

Clouds trailed across the moon; the tops of the lime trees were shaken by a wind, and a fragrant rain of blossoms showered on Elyena and the Prince. The old branches swayed, as if desiring to say: for whom are we to bud, for whom are we to blossom? Gone is a fine man, gone is his love!

Casting a last look at Elyena, Serebryany saw a dark figure behind her in the garden. Had he imagined it, or was some servant passing through the garden? Or was it Boyarin Druzhina Andreyevich himself?

