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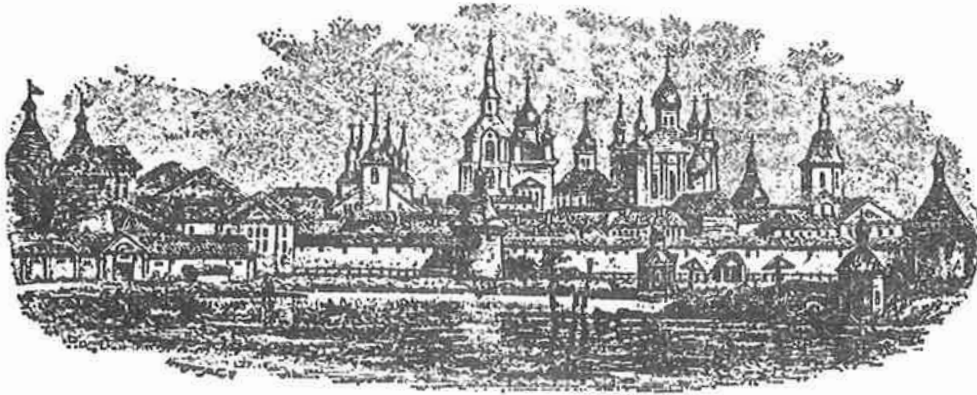
THE SOLOVKY PATERIKON	
translated from the Russian by Fr Seraphim Johnson.....	1
LIVES OF SAINTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE:	
<i>New Martyrs Stomatios, John and Nicholas</i>	5
<i>Hieromartyr Clement of Rome</i>	7
<i>Hieromartyr Irenae of Lyons</i>	9
BOOK REVIEW: <i>THE FRACTURE IN ANCIENT RUSSIAN THEOLOGY</i>	11
THE THEODORA FABLE, A Discussion of the "Life of Basil 'The New'".....	14
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.....	18
THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH ON THE SOUL AFTER DEATH.....	26
SOCIETY LECTURE: The Soul, The Body and Death (Continued).....	27
THE SILVER PRINCE, by A. Tolstoy	
<i>translated from the Russian by Prince N.S. Galitzine</i>	SUPPLEMENT.

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OUR HOLY RIGHTEOUS FATHER
SAVVATY THE WONDERWORKER
FOUNDER OF SOLOVKY

25 SEPTEMBER



At first, Saint Savvaty carried out his ascetic struggles in the Monastery of St Kyrill of the White Lake. Passing his life in fasting, vigils and prayer, he served as an instructive example for all the monks. His obedience to the abbot and brethren, and his diligent fulfilment of the monastic obediences made him loved and respected by all who knew him. Since, however, the humble monk could not bear human glory, he conceived the idea of leaving the monastery for an isolated place. Rumours reached him of the remote and isolated Monastery of the Transfiguration of the Lord on Valaam Island in Lake Nevo (now Ladoga) where the monks obtained everything they needed for life by the labours of their own hands and were distinguished by the especial strictness of their asceticism. St Savvaty asked the abbot and brothers to release him to go where his heart's desire was drawing him, and when he had received their blessing, he moved to the Valaam Monastery. But his humble soul did not find peace here either. He soon surpassed all the monks in ascetic struggles and, again, fame and the amazement of his co-strugglers were the lot of this virtuous monk.

Savvaty began looking for an even more isolated place. His soul, filled with love for the desert, rejoiced when he learned that in the distant north, in the sea, there was the uninhabited Solovky Island, located a considerable distance from the mainland. The abbot and brothers loved the Saint and did not want to be deprived of his companionship,

so they ardently begged him not to leave them. After Savvaty had remained with them a little longer, he was unable to rid himself of his soul's secret inclination, so he prayed to God, left the monastery in the night, and set out for Solovky Island.

When he had reached the shore of the sea, the Saint obtained detailed information about his destination from the local inhabitants. They told him that the island was far from the shore, and the way to it over the rough sea was very dangerous; its circumference was about sixty-five miles, and it had lakes with fish, fresh water, mountains and forests, but it was uninhabited because of the difficulty of communicating with the mainland; fishermen infrequently visited it and left again when they had finished their work. Such stories fired Savvaty's soul all the more. The Saint saw that there — on Solovky Island — he would attain his desired silence and solitude. When they understood the monk's intentions, the inhabitants of the coast described for him the difficulties of life on a deserted island: "What will you eat and wear there? How will you live so far away from people?" But the elder placed all his hope in the Lord. Soon Divine Providence even showed him his future companion on Solovky Island. Coming to the Vyga River, Savvaty found the monk Herman, who was living near a chapel, and who confirmed everything the elder had heard from the inhabitants of the area. Then they both agreed to sail to the island and for that purpose they prepared a boat, food supplies and the tools essential for life in a deserted place. The trip was quiet: the Lord evidently blessed the monks' intention. With what joy did they see the uninhabited island, with what excitement did they land on the shore! About half a mile from the shore they found a spot near a lake, which seemed suitable to them for a habitation. Here they raised up a cross, built a cell and settled. Obtaining a meagre subsistence by the labours of their own hands, they remained in constant prayer, glorifying God.

To comfort the monks living in the wilderness the Lord indicated the future destiny of Solovky Island with a special sign. The inhabitants of the coastal region became jealous of the Saints and considered themselves to be the rightful owners of the whole coastal region and the islands of the White Sea. It was agreed that one fisherman with his wife and whole household would sail to the island and settle near the monks' cell. Sts Savvaty and Herman did not disturb the order of their life. One Sunday, early in the morning, after finishing his prayer rule in his cell, St Savvaty left the cell with the censer to cense the cross they had erected after they arrived on the island, and he heard a loud wailing, as if from someone being beaten. In surprise, thinking that it was his imagination, the Saint went back to his cell and told his companion about the cry he had heard. St Herman went outside and also heard moans and cries; when he reached the spot from which they were com-

SAINT SAVVATY

ing, he found a weeping woman, who told him the following story: "When I went to my husband at the lake, two shining youths met me; they seized me and beat me with clubs, saying, 'Leave this place. You cannot live here, because by God's will it is destined to be a habitation for monks'. After that the youths disappeared."

Herman returned to the cell and told Savvaty everything he had heard from the woman, and they both glorified God. Meanwhile the fisherman, terrified by the vision, took his wife and his things and went back to the village where he had lived before. From that time on no lay people dared settle on the island.

For several years the Saints' life in solitude continued on the deserted island. St Savvaty's soul found here the peace and silence toward which it had so firmly and continuously been drawn. When St Herman went to the river Onega to obtain necessary supplies, St Savvaty remained completely alone on the island, before the face of the all-seeing God, Who saw his patience, prayerful labours and spiritual feats. Comforted by visits of holy angels, the Saint practised unceasing contemplation of God, and he daily grew more and more "ripe" for eternity.

When he sensed the approach of his death, St Savvaty wished to communicate of the Holy Mysteries, and for this purpose he got into a small boat and sailed to the mainland. After two long days of sailing he reached land and went to a chapel on the river Vyga where at that time there lived Abbot Nathanael who had come to visit the Orthodox Christians of the region. Through God's mercy the abbot, on the way to give Communion to a sick person, met the Solovky desert-dweller on the way to the Vyga, and this meeting gave great joy to both of them: Savvaty was comforted by finding what he was seeking, while Nathanael gazed with joy on the grey hairs and face wasted with fasting of the Saint of whom he had heard so much. "I beg you, father," said St Savvaty, "take away the sins which I confess to you by the power given you by God and make me worthy of communicating the Holy Mysteries — I have long wanted to bring joy to my soul with that Divine food. Feed me with it now. Christ our God showed you to me to cleanse me from the sins committed throughout my whole life in word, deed or thought." Nathanael answered, "May God forgive you, brother." Then, having kept silent for a few minutes, with wonder and tears he said, "Oh, if only I had your sins, O Saint!"

Savvaty continued, "The end of my life is drawing near; please make me worthy at once of the Divine Communion." The abbot suggested that the Saint go to the chapel and wait there until morning, after he returned from the sick man. "Father," said Savvaty, "do not put it off until tomorrow. We do not even know if we will remain alive today, and as for what will be beyond that, how can we know?" Nathanael carried out the Saint's desire and gave him Communion; then after a brotherly kiss he asked him to await his return in the chapel. The Saint prayed

long and fervently, thanking God for Holy Communion and for all His mercies; then he went into the cell and began preparing for his departure from this life.

At that time a merchant named John, from Novgorod, was sailing with his merchandise, and landed on the shore near the chapel. He found St Savvaty in the cell; the Saint had a conversation with him and instructed him in love for the poor, charity, and other good deeds. John offered the elder some of his possessions for his necessities, but the Saint would not accept anything and said to him, "My son, stay here until morning; you will see God's mercy and set out happily on your way." John did not want to wait until the next day and prepared to leave. But suddenly a storm arose, which stirred up strong waves in the river and the sea; although it was against his will, the merchant spent the night. The next day the wind died down and John went to the cell to receive a farewell blessing from St Savvaty. He knocked on the door, repeating a prayer, several times, but received no answer. Then, when he entered the cell, he saw the Saint in his monastic garb, with the censer standing near him. John said, "Forgive me, servant of God, for walking in on you. Please give me your blessing so that I might continue safely on my way." But there was no answer. Thinking that the Saint was sleeping, John went up to him and touched him with his hand: only then did he realize that his holy soul had already ascended to the Heavenly Father. Meanwhile Abbot Nathanael had returned from the sick man; when he saw that the Saint had reposed, he tearfully kissed his honourable body. Both of them, Nathanael and John, recalled with wonder how the one had offered him the Holy Mysteries on the road, as indicated by God's Providence, and how the other, by the same Providence of God, was permitted to hear St Savvaty's last instructions before his repose. His repose occurred on 27 September, 1435. Abbot Nathanael and the merchant John, celebrated the Saint's funeral according to the typikon of the Church and buried his honourable body. The relics of St Savvaty were transferred to the Solovky Monastery during the tenure of the abbot St Zosima, and placed in the earth behind the sanctuary of the Dormition Cathedral, where they remained until 1566. In that year, on 8 August, they along with the relics of St Zosima, were transferred to the side chapel built in honour of these wonderworkers. At the Moscow council held in 1547 under Metropolitan Makary, it was decreed that the memory of St Savvaty be celebrated on 27 September. Before the revolution his holy relics rested in a beautiful reliquary in the church of Sts Zosima and Savvaty.

3 FEBRUARY

THE HOLY NEW-MARTYRS
STOMATIOS, JOHN AND NICHOLAS

These holy martyrs witnessed for our Saviour in the year 1822. The holy martyrs Stomatios and John were brothers. They lived in Greece at the time when the Turks, who had conquered the land, were killing many Christians.

When these two brothers were teenagers, their father reposed and they began their own business. The two of them sold olive oil and other merchandise, and they often travelled by boat from city to city along the coast. Once, the two brothers were sailing on business and their boat was caught in a storm. The boat was wrecked near the shore of the province called Anatolia. The two brothers and the boat's captain, an old man named Nicholas, came ashore to find material to repair the boat with. They found there a man whom they thought was a Christian and asked for his help. This man took money from them and promised to buy what they needed secretly. They did not want the Turks to find out that they were in this place.

The man turned out not to be a Christian and he went to the local Turkish ruler and betrayed the Saints. Soon, Turkish soldiers arrived and arrested Stomatios, John and Nicholas. Stomatios and John were young men: Stomatios was eighteen and John was twenty-one, so the Turks thought that they could force them to renounce Christ and join the false Moslem religion of the Turks. The two brothers were thrown into prison. Nicholas was an old man and the Turks did not think they could frighten him, so the local governor told him, "If you join our Moslem religion, we will let you live, and even reward you. But if you keep following Christ, we will cut off your head!"

St Nicholas only crossed himself and loudly said, "I am a Christian and I will die a Christian. I will not renounce my faith!" With that, he was taken to the place of execution and his head was cut off.

The next day, the two holy brothers were taken to the palace to the ruler. The ruler called for two torturers and told them, "I will give you a large reward if you can make these two Christians turn away from Christ and join our religion."

The two torturers went to the prison. First, they began to promise Sts Stomatios and John all kinds of things — gold, food, beautiful clothing, a fine house, rich wives — if only they would turn away from Christ and His Holy Orthodox Church. But the two brothers answered, "Every truly good thing comes from God. We are Christians and we shall die as Christians."

After this, the two torturers began to threaten and beat the two Saints, but nothing would make them turn away from Christ. The torturers went to the ruler and said, "We have tried everything else, but nothing works, so give us permission to torture these two Christians with terrible tortures."

The ruler replied, "That will not work either. The Christians are very stubborn. Give them one more chance to become Moslems. If they refuse, then tomorrow, you will cut off their heads." Sts Stomatios and John were told this: "If you do not turn away from Christ and become Moslems, your heads will be cut off tomorrow." The two gave glory to God and began to pray.

There was a woman who worked in the prison and one of her duties was to feed the prisoners. This woman was secretly a Christian. The two Saints asked her to go to the bishop and ask him to send them the Holy Communion. The woman did this. Now, the Moslems would not allow any priests to come into the prison, so the bishop sent the Holy Communion with the woman. She brought the Holy Communion to the two Saints early the next morning. With joy and tears, God's Saints received the Holy Communion. Soon afterward, the soldiers came and took them out to the place of execution. Along the way, the soldiers waved their swords at the two brothers and kept saying, "Turn away from Christ and become Moslems or we will cut you to pieces!" The two brothers only cried out, "We are Christians and we shall die as Christians!" and they glorified God.

When they arrived at the place of execution, the soldiers cut off their heads and their holy souls were taken by the angels to repose in paradise, where they pray for us all.

And may they especially pray for us, for the world around us is also trying to make us turn away from Christ and His Holy Orthodox Church and join its false religion. The world promises us all kinds of things in order to lead us away from our Saviour Jesus Christ, and sometimes, the world even threatens us. But, by the prayers of these holy martyrs, may we be given the strength to truly say, "We are Orthodox Christians and we shall die as Orthodox Christians! Glory to God for all things!"

25 NOVEMBER

HIEROMARTYR CLEMENT
BISHOP OF ROME

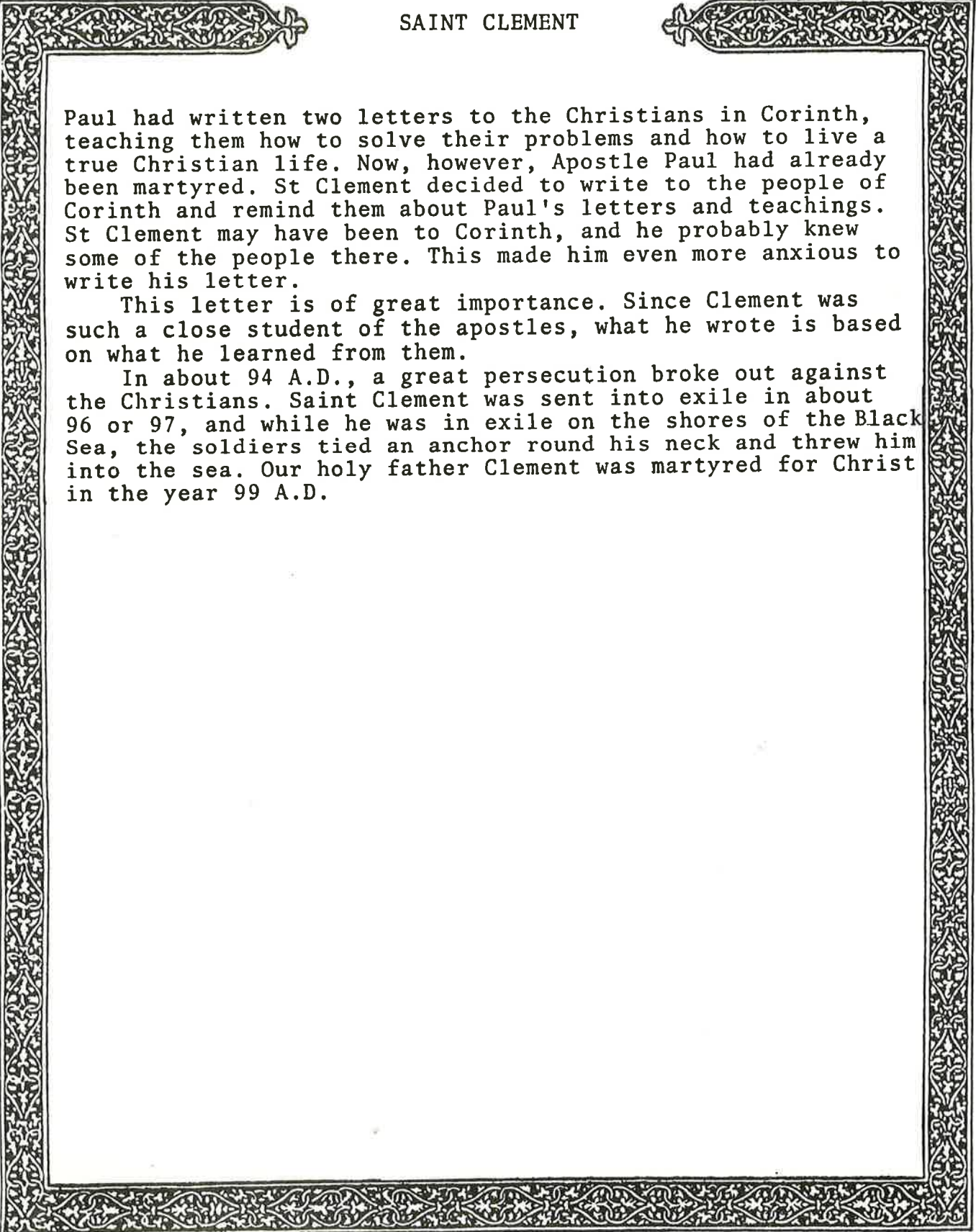
[Christianity came to Rome very soon after our Saviour's ascension to heaven. We do not know when the first Christians arrived in Rome, and perhaps some of the first Christians in Israel moved there. Apostle Peter came to Rome, with St Mark the Evangelist in about 60 A.D. It was here that St Mark wrote his Gospel, because the Roman Christians asked him to write down for them some of Peter's teachings about Christ. Apostle Paul arrived in Rome in 61 A.D. He ordained Linus as first Bishop of Rome in 62 A.D. The church in Rome grew quickly, but there were soon terrible persecutions of the Christians by the emperor Nero. Paul was the leader of the Church, but when he was beheaded in about 69 A.D., Peter was still alive. When Bishop Linus reposed, Peter consecrated St Clement as second Bishop of Rome, in about 78. St Peter was crucified in Rome at about this time.]

In St Clement's time, Rome was the capital of a very large empire, and it was the largest and most important city in the whole area of Europe, the Near East and North Africa. The size of this empire is shown in the map in the Life of St Clement.]

Clement is one of those great men whom we call "apostolic fathers", because they were students of the apostles themselves. Our holy father Clement was a friend and helper of Apostle Paul. He lived in Phillipi and may have travelled with Apostle Paul.

St Clement came to Rome when Apostles Peter and Paul were there. St Paul had arrived with the evangelist, St Luke, and the evangelist St Mark had come there with Peter. Clement learned from all these holy men who had known and followed Christ personally. The year after he arrived, in 62, Paul consecrated a man named Linus as first Bishop of Rome, and when he reposed in the year 78, St Peter chose Clement and consecrated him as second Bishop of Rome.

We do not know very much about the life of Saint Clement. He learned about Christ and His Holy Church directly from the apostles and evangelists and because of this, St Clement's own teachings are very important to us. In about the year 94, some trouble broke out in the church at Corinth, Greece. There had been trouble in Corinth before, and Apostle



SAINT CLEMENT

Paul had written two letters to the Christians in Corinth, teaching them how to solve their problems and how to live a true Christian life. Now, however, Apostle Paul had already been martyred. St Clement decided to write to the people of Corinth and remind them about Paul's letters and teachings. St Clement may have been to Corinth, and he probably knew some of the people there. This made him even more anxious to write his letter.

This letter is of great importance. Since Clement was such a close student of the apostles, what he wrote is based on what he learned from them.

In about 94 A.D., a great persecution broke out against the Christians. Saint Clement was sent into exile in about 96 or 97, and while he was in exile on the shores of the Black Sea, the soldiers tied an anchor round his neck and threw him into the sea. Our holy father Clement was martyred for Christ in the year 99 A.D.

23 AUGUST

HIEROMARTYR IRENAE
BISHOP OF LYONS

[In ancient times, a small village was built on a hill where the two rivers, Rhone and Saone, join together in southern France. The people who built this village were called Segusians. In October of the year 43 B.C., the Romans built a colony on this site and called it Lugdunum. We know it as Lyons. At the time when our holy father Irenae came to Lyons, it was the largest city in the country. There were five main highways going from it to all parts of France (which, in those days, was called "Gaul"), and the great river near which the city was built, was an important trade route. When Apostle Paul was in Rome, his student Crescens went to Gaul to preach and St Trophim, another of St Paul's disciples, was made a bishop in Gaul in about 65 A.D. Later, in the year of his martyrdom, about 69 A.D., Apostle Paul called St Dennis the Aeropagite from Athens and sent him to Gaul as "archbishop". St Dennis consecrated bishops and presbyters, and returned to Athens in 96 A.D.]

The first bishop of Lyons was Pothinos, a Greek who was consecrated sometime between 100 and 110. When he was martyred in the year 177, our holy father Irenae was elected bishop of the city.]

Our holy father Irenae was born in that part of Greece called Cappadocia, in about the year 125 A.D. He was raised in a place where there were many people who had known the apostles personally, and learned from them.

Saint Irenae was a very intelligent young man, and so he was sent to a special school and received a high education. Later, he moved to Smyrna, where he became a student of St Polykarp. You remember that Saint Polykarp had been a student of Apostle John, and he was even ordained bishop by this holy apostle.

After a few years, Saint Polykarp ordained Irenae as a presbyter. After some time the Christians living in southern France, many of whom were Greeks, wrote to Bishop Polykarp, asking that a special missionary presbyter be sent to care for them, and to teach the pagans about Christ and His Holy Church. The bishop sent his favourite student, Saint Irenae.

St Irenae went to the city of Lyons and put himself in obedience to the local bishop, a Greek named Pothinos. The Saint quickly learned the local language, and he often wrote

SAINT IRENAE

and preached in it. This language was called "Gallic". Irenae was very much loved and honoured by everyone. He was so respected that, in 177, he was sent by his bishop to Rome, to help correct the bishop of Rome, who was making an error. This happened by God's own plan, because while St Irenae was at Rome, Bishop Pothinos and many of the faithful in Lyons were martyred. God preserved Irenae to be the new leader of the church in France.

In 178, Saint Irenae was chosen bishop of Lyons. He immediately began to work for his spiritual flock. The Saint had a deep love for everyone, and he was always ready to help those who had sorrows or needs. He was gentle and kind and his warm, loving smile gave great comfort to everyone. Children especially loved this good shepherd.

St Irenae send missionaries all over the country to teach the people about Christ and His Church. At the same time, he wrote many books to help the people learn more about the Holy Orthodox Faith of Christ. At that time, there were many false teachers called Gnostics. These people belonged to an old pagan religion called "Gnosticism", and they were trying to confuse people about the Christian faith. They even called themselves Christians and made up all kinds of false teachings about our Saviour Jesus Christ. Our holy father Irenae wrote many books against these false teachers, showing the people the true faith. Because of these books, which are very important to us today, Saint Irenae is called a "father of the Church". He was one of the last Greek fathers in the West.

Our holy and God-bearing father Irenae was martyred for Christ in the year 203 A.D.

The books which our holy father Irenae wrote are "Proof of the Apostolic Preachings" and five volumes called "Against Heresies". He wrote other works also, but they have all disappeared.

THE FRACTURE IN ANCIENT RUSSIAN THEOLOGY, by Hieromonk Taras Kurgansky, available in Russian from Monastery Press, 8011 Champagne Ave., Montreal, P.Q., Canada, H3N-2K4.

This superb study of the break in Russian theology which occurred during the time of the "Westernizers" and especially after the time of Peter the First, has just been republished in Russian by Archbishop Vitaly of Montreal and All Canada. In this work, highly endorsed by the great 20th century Church father, Metropolitan Antony of Kiev, Hieromonk Taras traces the origin and growth of Latin Scholastic theology as it began to dominate and inundate Russian theology from the 16th century to the present. He shows how Latin legalism and superstitions began to corrupt patristic thought and replace the truly Orthodox understandings in Russian religious thought and writings. This work is in itself a part of the on-going struggle to free our theology from its "Uniat captivity". In our own time, the Most Reverend Vitaly, Archbishop of Canada is the leading force in this patristic reestablishment of true Orthodox Russian theology. This present book is only one in a series of works and articles which Archbishop Vitaly has published in his noble and difficult struggle to carry on the work of the late Blessed Metropolitan Antony (Khrapovitsky).

The Saints Kyril and Methody Society have been privileged to translate this work into English, and we will be presenting excerpts from it from time to time in this journal.

Rev Lev Haler-Puhalo.

THE FRACTURE IN ANCIENT RUSSIAN THEOLOGY

FOREWORD

This work is from the pen of the late Hieromonk Taras (Kurgansky). It was the dissertation presented for his candidate's degree in 1899-1900 when he was completing the course in the Kazan Ecclesiastical Academy. He was twenty-five years old at the time and this work was first published in the 1903 edition of MISSIONARY REVIEW, under the title, "Great-Russian and Ukrainian Theology in the 16th and 17th Centuries". Hieromonk Taras was brilliantly gifted and had an immense erudition which was displayed even in his childhood, which he spent in an Old Ritualist family in Moscow.

After he completed secondary school in Moscow, he entered the Ecclesiastical Academy and then, having served for half a year as the confessor at the hard-labour prison in Zerentu, beyond Nerchinsk, he became an instructor of religion. From the first year of his teaching, he became renowned as a preacher and lecturer.

He reposed in Moscow on 30 August, 1904. At that time, he was inspector at the Zaikonospas Ecclesiastical School, and in the twenty-ninth year of his life. In addition to this candidate's dissertation, he printed several sermons and then a series of critical articles in the Moscow Theological Journal, FAITH AND CHURCH, on the works of Miliukov, OUTLINE OF RUSSIAN CULTURE. These articles were the subject of his public lectures in Zhitomir and they attracted a large number of listeners.

We will not dwell now upon his beautiful, highly erudite dissertation, but will only point out that in all this twenty-four year old author's simply astounding learnedness in Divine Scripture, the holy fathers and theological science, he did not have time to become acquainted with and turn his attention upon one very valuable source in the history of dogmatic theology, about which it is necessary to say a few words here. I have in mind the book by Hieromonk Kirill Trankvilion, THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS, which was first published by the Pochaev Monastery in 1617, and subsequently re-published several times by the author himself, who had, alas, gone over to the Uniat faith. His later followers re-published it in a distorted edition which had been given a clearly Latin orientation.

Hieromonk Taras identified only Archpriest Lavrenty Zizany, author of the LARGER CATECHISM, and Metropolitan Peter Mohila, author of the LESSER CATECHISM, or the so-called ORTHODOX CONFESSION, as the first representatives of South-Russian theology. He correctly acknowledged them to be the instigators of the Latin influence on our school theology, which has continued to be present in it to our own time, and he identifies this influence as "Little-Russian" [i.e., Ukrainian]. After the repose of our author, or not long before it, I was able to become familiar with Kirill Trankvilion's book, in the Pochaev Lavra, in its original version, and I consider it a duty to certify that it is completely alien to Latin influences, and that it would not be entirely correct to place it in the category of "Little-Russian" [in the sense of Hieromonk Taras' terms of reference].

1. THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS by Hieromonk Kirill, as also with other old Russian theological works, was free from the scholastic division of Christian theology into the departments of faith, hope and love.

2. It is completely free of the juridical explanation of salvation by

our Lord Jesus Christ, which was introduced amongst us by Lavrenty Zizany ("Иже Вся Зизанія", i.e., "tares on the church floor"; in the words of a certain elderly Russian theologian).

3. REFLECTIONS [in its original version] did not present a mechanical teaching about the mysteries and does not set them at seven in number. In a word, it is incomparably closer to ancient patristic theology than to mediaeval Latin and contemporary school theology.

In the cited REFLECTIONS..., the author sufficiently expounds in detail on the Orthodox teaching about God, the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation, and then moves on, following the examples of the most ancient fathers and the apostolic writers, to the exposition of the understanding of the two kingdoms — God's and the devil's — and of their mutual struggle, as do the books of the New Testament, and in particular, the works of Apostle John, who begins with the teaching about God and His Son, and ends with the Apocalypse, i.e., the prophecy about the struggle of Christ's kingdom with the devil's kingdom, in which mode the fourth Gospel is expounded.

Perhaps Trankvilion's ill-fated apostasy into the Roman Unia was the reason for subsequent South-Russian theologians not making use of his REFLECTIONS..., and why it, together with its author, was buried in oblivion.

Most Reverend Antony (Khrapovitsky).

THE THEODORA FABLE
(a discussion of the Life of Basil "the New")

In response to a number of letters to the editor, we had promised to give an assessment of the document called "The Life of St Basil the New", which in fact, constitutes the real foundation of the toll-house myth which has so unfortunately become implanted in the thought of one or another of the local churches.

In our discussion and assessment of the biography of this Basil, called (erroneously) "the New", we will confine ourselves to the details of the now famous vision of Theodora's toll-houses, which the author of the work, Gregory of Thrace, claims to have had. The details of the author's other hallucinations are so unedifying, and often so blasphemous, that it would be of no profit even to cite them.

ONE

THE TEXT

The life of Basil (called "the New") was composed by his disciple, Gregory of Thrace, in the middle of the tenth century. The complete text is found in Greek manuscripts of various centuries which have now been scattered throughout the libraries of the world. In the 17th century, the Greek manuscript of this life of Basil was included in the Latin *Acta Sanctorum*, March, Vol. 3. However, the editors thought it unwise to include Gregory's visions, even though the one about Theodora's toll-houses is very consistent with and supports their doctrines of purgatory and merits. They would likely have realized that there was some sort of madness in these highly complex phantasies. For similar reasons, the Latins made no mention of this biography at the Council of Florence, though they must have known about it.

The Greek collections of the Lives of Saints do not include the life of this Basil, and he is not recognized by the Greek Orthodox Church as a Saint. It has been observed that the dubious nature of Gregory's interminable visions, and certain strange actions and words recorded of Basil, cast considerable doubt upon the mental condition of Gregory and the sanctity of Basil.

In the 15th century, the complete text of Gregory's Life of Basil "the New" appeared in Russia. It was translated into Slavonic and has been preserved in Metropolitan Makary's menaion. This rendition was taken as the basis for the Russian version of the "life", and also for St Dmitry of Rostov's Slavonic version, which was republished in Russian.

It is notable that the Russian compilers evidently were sufficiently distressed by the details of this biography, especially the narrations about the visions, that they took it upon themselves to edit and re-write the "life", omitting whole sections, completely altering others, in an effort to make it less suspicious. As a result, among the Russians this Basil is known as "St Basil the New", and the altered and, at times, re-written, version of the Theodora fable is considered valid. The vision relating to the end of the world is so unrestrained that the Russians omitted it altogether from later versions of the "life". Let us note only a few of the alterations to the Theodora phantasy which the Russian editors made.

In the original text, Gregory strives to assure us that he was in ecstasy and saw the details of his experience in true reality, noetically. The Russian version changes this to say that it was a "dream vision". The Russian version wisely omits the entire story of how Gregory finally got to see Theodora after her death. The details of the toll-houses are greatly abbreviated in the Russian version, which also edits out most of Theodora's sins. Where the original text says that Theodora had not a single sin of pride (or of vainglory, and several others), the Russian version is re-written to say that "we gave a very small quantity of that which saint Basil had given, and I was freed," that is, she had only small sins, but nothing serious. Further, although the Greek is very explicit that she never confessed her sins of fornication, the Russian editor has re-written this to say, "because she never sincerely and completely repented before her spiritual father concerning her previous sins and hid much from him." One can easily understand why the Russian editor felt compelled to dilute this, although, it is difficult to justify some one so boldly and arbitrarily taking it upon himself to re-write what he believes to be the life of a Saint. It would have been better just to omit the section, which is what the Russian version has done with Gregory's entire vision of heaven and the Saints, and of sinners in Hell, in all likelihood realizing how gravely these contradicted the teaching of the fathers. In the original, Gregory claims to have been led before his elder Basil, who was sitting at a table in the other world, though he (Basil) was still alive. The Russian version discontinues the vision before this point and re-writes the "life" changing this into a separate vision in which Basil is allowed to die before he is seen in the next world. At this point, the Russian editors bring the biography to an end. This is, however, only a third of the way through the original life, but perhaps the next two-thirds of the biography was either too difficult for the Russians to tolerate, or presented such a formidable re-write task that the effort was considered to be futile. If the unaltered text of this toll-house vision and the others had been available to Russian readers, it is highly doubtful that they would have taken it seriously, and the "Life of Basil the New" would be held in the same ill repute in Russia as it is in the Greek church.

The entire text, including these prior omissions, did finally appear in Russian in the 1890's. The omissions were published by the Royal Academy of Sciences of St Petersburg in the journal, "Sbornik Otdeleniia Russkago Iazyka i Slovesnosti," volume numbers 46 and 53. The Greek manuscript, Nr 249 of the Synodal collection, was employed for this.

There are a great many visions and purported revelations preserved in Greek manuscripts, but the Church has been very careful about recognizing them as valid and free of demonic delusion (plani; prelest). The fact that they have been handed down in manuscript tradition certainly does not ensure their soundness, any more than does the acceptance of them in highly altered and abbreviated form by one or another local church. Indeed, we surmise that the incorporation of this "Life of Basil the New" into the Russian menaia was accidental. The Greek manuscript was likely titled "Saint Basil the New", perhaps by its author, Gregory of Thrace. When the Russians received it, and noted that there was in fact a Saint Basil the New in the Greek calendar, they may have thought that the two were the same person. Such a plausible mistake notwithstanding, the Russians were sufficiently disturbed by this "life" to have re-written, altered, restructured, edited and abbreviated it. Even this was evidently not enough, for the Russian edition of the Lives of the Saints, not satisfied with the above precautions, finds it necessary to add to the disturbing toll-house

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vision an apology and attempted explanation which seeks to mitigate the details and render them less odious and more nearly acceptable. This apology (which essentially warns the reader not too take the details too seriously) fails and only makes the confusion worse.

TWO

THE DRAMATIS PERSONAE

GREGORY OF THRACE:

The author of this "Life of St Basil the New" is also its actual protagonist. He presents the details of Basil's life only as Basil relates to him and his own wondrous experiences, and the "life" is little more than a vehicle for Gregory to describe his own visions and divine revelations, one of which, his apocalypse, occupies 204 folio pages (408 book pages), another of which, the toll-house vision, occupies 47 folio pages (94 book pages). Almost the entire manuscript is devoted by Gregory to himself, and he would have had to be very holy indeed to have been given such vast revelations, which rival or even exceed those of St John the Theologian and St Symeon the New Theologian. As a matter of fact, he claims to have related revelations and visions which St John Chrysostom and St Isaak the Syrian explicitly say are impossible.¹

Gregory was a land owner of small means who lived in Constantinople and made periodic trips to his estate to collect the revenues from the harvests. While in the capital, he developed an interest in matters spiritual and had a father confessor named Epiphanios. After the repose of Fr Epiphanios, Gregory heard of the elder Basil and sought him out. Under Basil's direction, Gregory lives a sort of free ascetical life, evidently shunning monasticism and keeping his worldly life quite intact. He has many temptations and falls, but he is rescued from his temptations by supernatural deeds of Basil, who also has the power to grant him visions (of which he has many). Basil often appears to Gregory in dreams and visions, often over the most puerile matters.

We know no more of the details of Gregory's life than he tells us in his "Life of Basil the New", but it seems he never became a monk, and we do not know how or when he ended his life.

We must make it clear (since there has been some confusion over the matter) that this Gregory of Thrace is not Saint Gregory of Decapolis, or the Gregory the Cave-dweller who lived near the Black Sea. And this Gregory of Thrace is not a Saint of the Orthodox Church.

BASIL:

Here again, we must correct a mistaken identity. Although this "life" has come to be called, in Russian, the "Life of Saint Basil the New", the Basil in this life is most certainly not the Saint Basil the New of the Orthodox Church.² Saint Basil the New was a monk of the St Elias Monastery on Mt Olympos, the brother of St Paul of Mt Latros. The Basil we are dealing with here appears to

THE THEODORA FABLE

to have been a self-styled ascetic, who was not a monk and had no connection with any monastery. According to Gregory's narration Basil was roaming about the mountains of eastern Asia Minor (near the borders of the empire, it would seem) "wearing rustic garb and wild in appearance". He was once sighted by two magistrates who were travelling on official business. They suspected Basil of being a spy, and so they captured him and took him forcibly to Constantinople. There, he was handed over to a Moslem for interrogation (a certain Samonas, a man of patrician rank, who, strangely enough, was a Moslem, and more strangely still seems to have been assigned as an imperial torturer). This Samonas cruelly tortures Basil, but when he cannot thus force him to admit to being a spy, he has him thrown to wild beasts in the theatre (obviously tossing people to wild beasts as a public spectacle did not end with St Constantine's reign). The beasts did not touch him. When Samonas saw this, he ordered that Basil be bound and cast into the sea. For some reason, this had to be done at night. Basil was thrown into the sea, but two passing porpoises tossed him back ashore, whereupon his bonds drop off. He returns to the city and finds a man named John who is suffering from a high fever. Basil heals this John who, in gratitude, takes him to his house and gives him a room. Slowly, Basil's reputation and fame grew. Many people came to him, and finally, an illustrious man called Constantine "the former barbarian", invited Basil to dwell in his mansion. The elder Basil remained in the mansion until his death. Constantine assigned an elderly slave, Theodora, to serve Basil. Basil lived in Constantinople for about thirty years, and died in 944.

THEODORA:

This Theodora is not a Saint. Some people have mistakenly identified her with St Theodora of Thessaloniki, or have just started calling her "Saint Theodora" for no apparent reason. She is the heroine of Gregory's famous toll-house vision. From her supposed after-death conversation with Gregory, we learn that she was born into slavery. She was joined by her master to a man, without a church wedding, and she bore him several children. She led an extremely wild life in her youth, despite her marriage. In her old age, she became pious and was assigned to serve Basil and attend to his visitors. Having served Basil for some years, she reposed.

(CONTINUED: A Patristic Assessment of the Toll-House Phantasy).

QUESTION:

You mentioned sometime ago that the tollhouse myth came from Persian religions and you indicated this again in your last issue. I would like to see a more detailed discussion of this sometime. I read once that Dante's poem about purgatory was Gnostic and that the idea of purgatory came from Gnostic sources. Is this correct? How much of Western theology is Gnostic?

H.P.B., Toronto, Canada.

REPLY:

We do not have the time or space to present a detailed history of the development of the toll-house/purgatory myths, but perhaps a very brief outline will give you some ideas of where you can look to do your own research. It is true that Dante's Inferno is a truly Gnostic document in the strict sense. You will find this true in many such works, and a wide stream of Gnostic thought flows through all Western theology (especially in such theologians as Bonaventure). In a very true sense, Protestantism is a purely Gnostic movement, founded on Gnostic ideals and incorporating much of the ancient Gnostic principles and ideals. Protestant spirituality (really, spiritualism) is completely Gnostic. That is why it is so utterly absurd when some people claim that a certain form of ecumenism is acceptable for the sake of uniting against atheism with Protestantism and Latinism, that is, for the sake of a form of political expediency, we ought to unite with Satan against the Devil, or with Antichrist against the Anti-God.

The very beginnings of Western theology are imbued with Gnosticism. Study, for example, the foundations of St John Cassian's Orthodox monasticism in the West, and compare it with the foundations of Cassiodorus' scholastic monasticism which actually became the universal ideal of all Western monasticism and theology. The schism of the West from the Church actually began in the 400's, and with the exception of perhaps several specific writers, no Western theology can be trusted.

As to the toll-house (gate) theology, this is indeed a form of the classic "Perils of the Soul" myth common to Gnosticism. Anyone who has read the Egyptian Book of the Dead, Book of Gates, etc, is familiar with the "Perils of the Soul" fables and the pagan belief that at death the soul passes before the inquisitors of the underworld (i.e., demons or demigods). To be saved, the soul must either know the correct answer or have a psychopomp (soul-guide) who does know the magical responses (see the Theodora Fable of Gregory of Thrace, for example). With the later blending of Persian and Egyptian mythologies, the departed soul was believed to have to undergo inquisitions from dozens of demons and/or minor gods. Chaldean influences, in the astrology cults, transferred these inquisitions to the aerial spheres. There were variously seven and nine of these aerial spheres (often with a final one into the higher aethers or whatever term was popular

at a given time and place). Each sphere had a gate at which the gate keeper held an inquisition of the ascending soul. Either the soul or its psychopomp had to make answer for the soul in order for it to pass this toll-gate and rise to the next sphere. In Gnosticism, the aerial toll-gates of the astral spheres were generally accepted, and thus the toll-gate myth began to develop in Gnostic literature, such as the apocryphal gospels and "Acts". In Gnostic teaching, we notice that the ritual passwords, responses and incantations are considered to be magical, because the warning is often repeated that "it is important that not one word of the ___ be omitted". This, of course, indicates that the words themselves possessed magical powers. The magical processes by which the soul can ascend remains very much that of the Egyptian psychostasia myths. The Enneads of Heliopolis and Memphis eventually adopted the Chaldean astrological idea of placing the "Perilous Inquisitions" on the planetary spheres, in the aerial realm. Gnostic sects claimed to be able to teach their initiates the secrets of these aerial gates, and how to get through them, either by attracting the proper psychopomp or reciting the effective magical words. In Gnostic literature one also finds the story that a demon follows one about and takes notes of all his sins. This demon then informs the toll-gate keepers about each soul's sins as it attempts to ascend. For example, in the famous Gnostic literature, THE PISTIS SOPHIA, we read:

"The accusing spirit bears witness to every sin which the soul has committed not only does it bear witness concerning the sins of the souls, but it seals every sin that it may be stamped on the soul so that the rulers of the punishments of sinners may know that it is the soul of a sinner, and may be informed of the number of sins which it hath committed...so that they may chastize it according to the number of sins which it has committed..."

In this same text we read, about a person's death:

"Then cometh the Receivers of Wrath to lead that soul out of the body. And for three days, they travel around with it...The soul then is led down into chaos [the invisible place beneath the earth's surface]...The soul then rises higher, still haunted by the counterfeit spirit until it encounters the rulers of the way..."

If you wish to read more on the subject (though I really do not think it would be edifying, and you would do better to read the Scripture and the fathers of the Church) get a copy of the Egyptian Book of the Dead from your library (don't buy one - send the money to the orphanage in Chile instead) and whatever collections of the Gnostic literature and Western theological texts you can find. You will find the toll-gate myth present, too, in many occult works which are not, after all, atheistic. But, again, it would be better to read the Scripture and the fathers and find out true teachings, rather than confusing your mind with these false things. It is unedifying enough when it is done out of necessity, but would be much more unedifying when done only out of curiosity.

QUESTION:

The words of St John Chrysostom which you quoted in the January issue of Orthodoxy Canada, struck me because we have some accounts of people returning from the dead and giving very specific accounts of the hereafter. Yet, I see that Chrysostom says that this is impossible, and St Isaac Syrus said, in something you quoted last year, that such things would be delusions and the root of heresies. There is an incident recorded in the Chronicle of Venerable Bede (whom I had always considered orthodox), a copy of which I enclose, regarding just such an incident. Could you be so kind as to comment on this?

D.W., United Kingdom

REPLY:

The photocopy sent is of pages 289-295 of Bede's *A HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH AND PEOPLE* (Penguin Books, Middlesex, England, U.K.) The main article is titled "A Man in the Province of the Northumbrians Returns from the Dead and Tells of the Many Dreadful and Many Desireable Things That he Saw." From the title itself, we are warned to be on our guard about what follows, for our holy and God-bearing father John Chrysostom has forewarned us that, "God...has not permitted any man who has departed this life and returned, to express those things yonder...God does not permit that any man should ever come from thence and speak to the living about the things yonder..." (HOMILY 4, ON LAZARUS AND THE RICH MAN). Moreover, our holy father Isaak of Nineveh says of all such "revelations" that they are "Shadows of a mind inebriated by conceit and deranged by the working of demons" (LETTER TO SYMEON OF CAESARIA).

Thus we see from the beginning that this incident recorded here as a story that Bede had heard from somewhere else, can be given no credence at all, but is rather to be shunned as an obvious demonic phantasy (unless perchance it is a mere fable — one of those famous "pious frauds" which did so much to ruin the faith of Western Christians).

Bearing this in mind, let us look at the dream, vision, "out of body experience", whatever one choses to call it. This vision is, of course, a testimony of the doctrine of purgatory. We need not reprint the entire text of this phantasy here, since it is readily enough available, but let us note that after all the fantastic sights supposedly seen by this man (his name is given as Drycthelm), his sometime guide (who occasionally abandoned him and left him alone and without a guide) explains the meaning of his vision of the flaming pit. It is none other than the Latin Purgatory:

"When we returned to the happy dwellings of the souls robed in white, he [the psychopomp] asked me: 'Do you know what all these things are that you have seen?' 'No,' I replied. Then he said: 'The valley that you saw, with its horrible burning flames and icy cold is the place where souls are tried and punished who have delayed to confess and amend their wicked ways, and who at last had recourse to penitence at the hour of death, and so de-

part this life. Because they confessed and were penitent, although only at death, they will all be admitted into the Kingdom of Heaven on the Day of Judgment. But many are helped by the prayers, alms and fasting of the living, and especially the offering of Masses, and are therefore set free before the day of judgment'..."

Such, you see, are the sort of utter delusions (*plani; prelest*) which come from belief in "out of body experiences", and from accepting, contrary to the warnings of the great fathers of the Church, tales told by those who claim to have returned from death. Because of this, it seems worthwhile to carefully examine any such stories. The full texts of the cited warnings of St John Chrysostom and St Isaak of Nineveh appear (respectively) in Vol. 6, Nr 12 (pp. 42-43) and Vol. 7, Nr 1 (pp. 33-34) of this journal.

3

QUESTION:

We recently came across two Greek theological words in another Orthodox publication and I cannot find one of them in any Greek theological dictionaries, encyclopaedias or patristic concordances. Can you give me an explanation of these? The two words, names of heresies, are *hypnopsychites* and *thnetopsychites*. We found *thnetopsychites*, but can find no mention of *hypnopsychites* in any Orthodox source. We even tried secular and Roman Catholic sources and have asked several clergymen, and we can find no mention of this word anywhere. What, exactly, does it mean?

REPLY:

Perhaps you should write to the editor of the other publication and ask where the term was derived. Indeed the word *hypnopsychites* does not occur in any Orthodox theological sources. To our knowledge, there has never been any such "heresy", no review or debate or criticism or condemnation of any such "heresy" in the whole history of the Church. The editor of the cited publication would, therefore, be doing us all a very great service in revealing the patristic, conciliar, Scriptural or canonic source of his word.

So far as I know, the term ὑπνωψυχῖται (*hypnopsychites*) was actually coined early in this century by the Anglo-Catholic divine Dr Frank Gavin of the Thomas Aquinas House in Nashotah, Wisconsin, for his article "The Sleep of the Soul in the Early Syriac Church" (*JOURNAL OF AMERICAN ORIENTAL STUDIES*, April, 1920, pp.103-120). In it, Dr Gavin gives a series of novel and unusual ideas and interpretations, including some amazingly inaccurate translations and interpretations of works by Sts Ephraim and Aphraat the Persian (not surprising considering some of his readings of St Justin Martyr in another work). From his amazingly inaccurate interpretations he, quite naturally, draws some startlingly inaccurate conclusions.

For example, Gavin has St Aphraat saying, "The body is buried soulish, and rises spiritual" (p.104) and from this he concludes that the Saint is

teaching that the soul is buried in the grave with the body, in a comatose condition. This is the meaning of Gavin's word "hypnopsychites". What Saint Aphraat actually says is, "The body is buried in animal wise, and rises again in spiritual wise. The spirit [soul] goes back to Christ according to [on account of] its nature for the Apostle says again: 'When we shall depart from the body we shall be with our Lord'."

Quite a difference, you see. The Saint says that the "animal part of man", the body is buried, but will rise again a spiritual body, that is, one perfected and restored to purity by God. But the soul, he says, is with Christ. Gavin has a very serious and grave misquote of St Aphraat, and upon it, he bases some very strange conclusions that follow. He correctly points out St Ephraim the Syrian's firm and complete (and correct) teaching of the sleep of the soul. Gavin also shows that this is precisely what the Divine Scripture teaches as well, although occasionally, he has some imaginative interpretations of Paul's words.

On page 114 in Gavin's article, the terms hypnopsychites and thnetopsy-chitis appear. He seems to have coined the first word in order to illustrate a point he wishes to make, though one cannot be certain that he did not borrow it from some other commentator. In any case, St Aphraat follows closely Apostle Paul's teaching of the soul's sleep, and Paul's term for the resurrection is, of course, ἐγερσεν, to "wake from sleep", as St Ephraim beautifully phrases it, "How like is death to sleep and the Resurrection to the morning!" Here, you see, the soul awakes from its pannikhida when it is re-united with the body.

Dr Gavin does correctly conclude that, in Syria, there did exist three basic concepts of the state of the soul after death. They were, as he says, the Nestorian which was heavily influenced by Aritotelianism, a certain trichotomistic teaching and, "Conspicuously so in the case of Aphraat, a thorough-going allegiance to the Pauline teaching."

Now, to answer your original question again, the term hypnopsychitis has no particular meaning at all to Orthodox Christians. It is a coined phrase, not of Orthodox origin and with no theological significance to the Orthodox Church.

For the benefit of other readers, however, we ought to mention briefly the meaning of the other term you mentioned, thnetopsychites.

The followers of this idead were the Helkesaites mentioned in Eusebius' HISTORY. They flourished in Arabia in the time of Origen, and taught that the soul dies with the body and is brought back to life with it at the time of the resurrection. Some of them thought that the soul simply perished. Origen was called upon to refute this teaching and in so doing, he created an equal opposite heresy of dualism, the idea of an independent existence and function of the soul. Origen's heresy taught that when the soul departs the body it exalts in the discovery that it can function sensually even better than when it was in the body; it can see, hear and have adventures. Thus, the soul itself was the actual person. It could undergo judgment, be purged and acquire remission of sins or have its "condition" altered without reference to the body. The quite natural outcome of this heresy of dualism was that Origen left no place for the need or desirability of the resurrection of the body, and so he finally denied it. He created a not entirely new theory of a certain "spiritual body," a "material substratum," which bore the recognizable shape of the body. This rose, but not the actual

body. One will recognize this teaching in Gregory of Thrace's teaching of an "astral body" in the famous Theodora/toll-house tale in his "Life of Basil the New".

We cannot even say that the "truth is somewhere between these two extremes", for the truth bears no relationship whatever to any heresy, certainly not to these two.

Again, the word hynopsychites is a coined word with no known Orthodox theological significance, and perhaps it would be best for you to write to the editor of the other journal you mention and ask for the source of the word as it is being used there.

4

QUESTION:

In one of your articles on the soul after death, you used the term "hesychasm of the soul" in place of "sleep of the soul". Is that a theological expression or just a conceptualization for discussion's sake?

Fr I.

REPLY:

It was really neither. We were aware of the difficulty which some of our readers, non-Orthodox people or recent converts from the Roman Catholic church might have in grasping the term "sleep of the soul", since their concepts would have been formed by Scholasticism. We, therefore, put forth the term "hesychia of the soul" as a rhetorical device to try to lead them to a re-thinking or contemplation of the alien concepts they would be applying to the Orthodox use of "sleep".

Actually, "hesychia" is not a good expression in this case. The term "sleep" is, as you know, the Scriptural, liturgical and patristic term, the one the Holy Spirit spoke through the prophets, the one the Saviour Himself uses and the one the Apostle inevitably used. Sleep is the standard Orthodox term in this case. Indeed, I have never seen another. The only exception might have been when St John Chrysostom was reacting very strongly to a new Jewish (that is, not the Hebrew, Old Testament idea) teaching about the soul after death. This new Jewish concept tended to be Aristotelian. Here, an idea of "sleep of the soul" which was tantamount to "death of the soul" was put forth. However, St John Chrysostom does not disdain the term "death is nothing else but protracted sleep" even in this case, even though two opposing conceptions of the word sleep are being used (though some theologians think that St John overcompensated in categorizing "sleep" in this case). Indeed, the name chosen for the "Service for Those Who Have Fallen Asleep" is "pannikhida," which means, literally, "the whole night," or "all night". It is notable that when the Protestants began refuting the Origenist and Gnostic teachings of the Latins on the soul after death, the Latins accused those who denied Purgatory of "psycho-pannikhiism" or "soul-slumber". Actually, "pannikhi" seemed to be an appropriate theological term for the teaching of "soul sleep" and it would be interesting to investigate whether or not this term had ever been used to describe the Orthodox teaching of soul sleep. There

must be some reason why this term was chosen to designate the Orthodox service for "Those Who Have Fallen Asleep". Of course, the Protestants managed to create various false teachings in their refutations of the Latin teaching. But that cannot make the term "sleep" wrong in referring to the soul after death. It seems likely, however, that some of these Latin apologies on the subject were translated into Russian, as was so often the case from Petrine times on, and did much to corrupt Russian theology on the subject. I suspect much of the objection to our present use of the term is merely a replay of this counter-reformation Scholastic Latin apology for Purgatory. Certainly it can only be extremist scholasticism which could cause someone to cast disparagement upon a term and teaching so universally put forth in Divine Scripture and in the works of the fathers. The body dies, the soul does not, it falls asleep, which is why "uspenia" (Dormition) is used to describe the taking of the soul of the Theotokos and why we universally say that a person has "reposed" or "fallen asleep in the Lord".

The problem facing the fathers in this instance was how to express in some term comprehensible to the human mind a concept so alien to the ordinary laws of nature and human thought. Namely, that with death the "person" had ceased to exist, yet a part of the person is alive (by Grace) and somehow cognizant of something which is beyond all human comprehension.

From an Orthodox point of view, the Scriptural term "sleep" and also the logical term "dream" are quite satisfactory metaphors because the Orthodox faithful have the conceptual framework within which the meaning of these expressions can be properly apprehended.

The "person" has (temporarily) ceased. He has ceased to function in any sensual or psychophysical manner, and indeed, he does not "function" at all relative to anything the human mind can conceive. Now, here is where the term "hesychasm" and some of its concepts can help to give a person a proper frame of thought to understand the terms "sleep" and "dream" as, for example, St Aphraat uses them. The "intelligent faculty" the soul, the "image of God" in man continued to be alive because God wills it so. It "perceives" that it is in an "intermediate state", etc., and whatever else it perceives in the realm of Grace. It "perceives" but not as the "person", not in any sensual or psychophysical manner. It "perceives" things which cannot even be expressed or guessed at by our fallen human minds. And this is a true miracle, an event which, because God wills it so, takes place contrary to what we conceive as the Laws of Nature. To put it simply, Scripturally, the person is asleep and he sees "as if in a dream". Why "as if in a dream"? Because he obviously does not see "as if in the body", for he is not in the body, he is in the realm of Grace. He slumbers, but he somehow perceives. Thus, this is an excellent and valid expression. Christ thought so, for He used it more than once. Apostle Paul agreed, for he used it, and the word he used for resurrection is the Greek for "waken from sleep". Chrysostom approved of it and used it, as did every father we have read so far. The divine services of the Church seem to use this term to the exclusion of all others.

The Latin scholastic mind, formed by pagan Hellenic concepts and holding the Origenistic idea of the independence of the soul, that it is the "person" and can operate, function, see, hear and have "experiences" apart from or in separation from the body, as if the body were only a "shell" or prison

of the flesh, would never be able properly to understand the meaning of "sleep" or "dream" as the fathers used them (indeed, some of them would especially criticize St Aphraat, because he seems especially opposed to purgatorial teachings of whatever variety). For, they used these expressions within a framework of concept and thought totally alien to that of Latin scholasticism and the philosophical Christianity of the West. For them, the expression "sleep" and "slumber" must connote an annihilation, or at least a comatose state, and for them, it must be a "heresy" because it negates any of the various purgatorial teachings. Such an interpretation follows naturally in a Platonic-Origenistic mind. Christ and the Apostle, on the other hand, found "sleep" a very apt term. So did all the fathers of the Church.

THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH ON THE SOUL AFTER DEATH

ST JUSTIN MARTYR "THE PHILOSOPHER"

"Now, that the soul lives, no-one would deny. But if it lives, it lives not as being life, but as the partaker of life; but that which partakes of anything is different from that of which it partakes. Now the soul partakes of life, since God wills it to live. Thus, then, it will not even partake if God does not will it to live. For to live is not its attribute, as it is God's; but as a man does not live always and the soul is not forever conjoined with the body [i.e., before the resurrection], whenever this harmony must be broken up, the soul leaves the body and the person [lit. the man] exists no longer"[until the resurrection and restoration of this harmony].
(DIALOGUE WITH TRYPHON, Ch.6).

"But in what instance can the flesh possibly sin by itself, if it have not the soul going before it and inciting it? For as in the case of a yoke of oxen, if one or other is loosed from the yoke, neither of them can plough alone; so neither can soul or body alone effect anything, if they be unyoked from their communion...For where He promises to save man, there He gives the promise to the flesh. For what is man but the rational animal composed of body and soul? Is the soul by itself man? No; but the soul of man. Would the body be called man? No, but it is called the body of man. If, then, neither of these is by itself man, but that which is made up of the two together is called man, and God has called man to life and resurrection, He has called not a part, but the whole, which is the soul and the body."
(ON THE RESURRECTION, Ch. 8).

"The souls of the pious remain in a better place, while those of the unjust and wicked are in a worse, waiting for the time of judgment."
(DIALOGUE WITH TRYPHON, Ch. 5, "That the Soul is Not in its own Nature Immortal").

ST PHOTIOS THE GREAT

"The name 'man', according to the most truthful and natural expression, [applies to] neither the soul without [its] body, nor to the body without [its] soul, but to that composition of soul and body made into a unique form of beauty. But Origen says that the soul alone is the man, as did Plato."
(BIBLIOTHEKE, Nr. 234, On St Methodios).

ST AMBROSE OF MILAN

"Christ...judges by His knowledge of hearts and not by interrogation of the deeds, to reward virtue and condemn impiety."
(HOMILY ON LUKE, 10:49).

FIVE: THE JUDGMENT OF THE PERSON

"The name 'man', according to the most truthful and natural expression, [applies to] neither the soul without [its] body, nor to the body without [its] soul, but to that composition of soul and body made into a unique form of beauty. But Origen says that the soul alone is the man, as did Plato." (Saint Photios the Great).⁸⁰

As we have already seen, there is no such thing as a "judgment of the soul." Such an expression is merely figurative. As an actual concept it could appear logical only in a Gnostic, Origenistic or Manichean context, but not in a faith which acknowledges the real resurrection of the body. The idea of a judgment of the soul alone is sheer Latin Platonism, for:

"...the soul cannot enjoy anything or possess or do anything, or suffer anything, except it be together with the body, being the same as it was in the beginning..." (St Titus of Bostra)⁸¹

"And, this is the course and ground of justice, that since the actions of body and soul are common to both (for what the soul has conceived, the body has carried out),...for it would seem almost inconsistent that...the mind [VOÛS, soul] guilty of a fault shared by another should be subjected to penalty, and the flesh, the author of the evil, should enjoy rest: and that that alone should suffer which had not sinned alone, or should attain to glory not having fought alone, with the help of Grace." (St Ambrose of Milan)⁸²

"For, it is just that in the very same condition in which they [the body and the soul] toiled or were afflicted, being proved in every way by suffering, they should receive the reward of their suffering." (St Irenae of Lyons)⁸³

"But in what instance can the flesh possibly sin by itself, if it have not the soul going before it and inciting it? For as in the case of a yoke of oxen, if one or other is loosed from the yoke, neither of them can plough alone; so neither can soul or body alone effect anything if they be unyoked from their communion." (St Justin Martyr the Philosopher)⁸⁴

It is, therefore, not the soul which must face judgment after a person's death, but the entire person and the person is composed of body and soul together, as a single psychophysical being, such as man was created, is until death and shall be again after the resurrection.

"This state is lost in death" but "through hope it receives again [in the resurrection] the state of being a person." (St Titus of Bostra)⁸⁵

"When the living body is dissolved by death and we should look upon its dust or its bones, or wish to say something about the soul, we say that these things are 'of' a man, but we do not say that they are the man." (St Titus of Bostra)⁸⁶

"For, what is man but the rational animal composed of body and soul? Is the soul by itself man? No; but [only] the soul of a man. Would the body be called man? No, but it is called [only] the body of a man. If, then, neither of these is by itself man, but that which is made up of the two together is called man, and God has called man to life and resurrection, He has called not a part, but the whole, which is the soul and the body." (St Justin Martyr the Philosopher)⁸⁷

If, however, as the fathers teach, the *soul* cannot be judged alone, as if it constituted the person, then what is meant by the "particular judgment"?

Putting aside the Platonic, Mithraic, Manichean, Gnostic, Origenistic and Osirian absurdities of the Latin West, the "particular judgment" (if, indeed, one can even use such a term) consists in absolutely nothing more than the fact that at death, God assigns the soul to the state appropriate to itself. That is all. There is no complex system of juridical procedure, with prosecuting attorneys (demons), defence counsels (angels, Saints with excess merits, etc), mitigants or extenuants (Masses for the dead, prayers of the faithful, deeds of mercy done on behalf of the dead — all of which have a completely different meaning as we shall see in the next chapter), or redeemers who offer ransoms or bribes in order to deliver the soul from the decisions of an imaginary *petit tribunal*. The demons do not, cannot, remove the soul of anyone from the body and they do not, and cannot, seize it and take it away to this or that place. We will discuss these latter subjects in a subsequent chapter, titled "Allegories and Fables About the Soul". Before proceeding on our subject, though, let us observe that the demons are *not judges*, but *beings subject to judgment*. Even if they do witness the condemnation of any soul, it is a matter of terror to them in that it testifies to their own destiny, since gehenna, according to Christ's own words, is prepared, not for mankind, but for the demons⁸⁸ — and not as a *playground* for the demons, where they will spend eternity merrily fulfilling their passions, torturing fallen humans, as Western art and certain popular fables would have us believe.

We have seen repeatedly now that the soul alone, without the body, is not judged, neither does it receive the reward of its labours, and the demons most assuredly do not participate in its judgment, nor could the soul, as being apart from the body, be subjected to purgatory or the fantastic, imaginary aerial toll-houses, at which, according to some, demons judge the soul; notwithstanding that we have the testimony of some of our greatest fathers that *the demons cannot even see the soul*.⁸⁹

If we must inquire further as to what is meant by the expression "particular judgment", then we must, once more, set aside allegories and fables, even those given or contrived to teach compunction. This term, "particular judgment", has legalistic overtones and an overly anthropomorphic connotation which has led more esoterically inclined philosophers into many and gross errors. Reading the works of St Dennis the Areopagite, we find a *Scriptural* and *Orthodox* answer. For, what we mean by the judgment at the departure of the soul is this: that God's all-knowledge (omniscience) alone knows the state of a person's soul and alone knows the proper state for it to abide in until that Day of the Lord — until it, re-united with the body, shall be self-judged in the Light of God's Love and Glory. Since God is love, He is good, and since good, He wills good for every creat-

THE JUDGMENT OF THE PERSON

ed being. Thus Divine justice is understood according to the laws of love and goodness, not according to the legal systems of fallen humanity, not according to the pagan ideals of vengeance, or the mediaeval satisfaction theory of the feudal deul, since, "As a grain of sand cannot counterbalance a great quantity of gold, so God's use of just judgment cannot counterbalance the likeness of His mercifulness. As a handful of sand thrown into a great sea, so are the sins of all flesh with respect to the likeness of the providence and mercy of God. And just as a strongly flowing spring is not obstructed by a handful of dust, so the mercy of the Creator is not stemmed by the vices of His creatures" (St Isaak of Nineveh)⁹⁰

With God, what is proper and good is just. As St Dennis the Areopagite says:

*"The Divine Justice in this respect is really true justice because it distributes to all, the things proper to themselves, according to the fitness of each existing thing, and preserves the nature of each in its own order and fitness...the nature of each in its own order and capacity."*⁹¹

"But," someone will say, "surely there is some sense of condemnation at this 'particular judgment', since the saved thereafter repose in light and the lost repose in some sort of darkness. What then is the nature of this first condemnation and of this 'darkness'?"

Saint Basil the Great makes an answer to just such a question, saying:

"In like manner they which have grieved the Holy Spirit by the wickedness of their ways, or have not worked for Him Who was given [to them], shall be deprived of what they have received, their grace being transferred to others; or, according to one of the evangelists, they shall even be wholly cut asunder, the cutting asunder meaning complete separation from the Spirit... This cutting asunder, as I have observed, is the separation forever of the soul from the Spirit. For now, although the Spirit does not suffer admixture with the unworthy, He nevertheless does seem in a manner to be present with them that have once been sealed, awaiting the salvation which comes from their conversion; but then He will be wholly cut off from the soul that has defiled His Grace. For this reason 'In hades there is none that makes confession, nor in death any that remembers God' because the succour of the Spirit is no longer present. How then is it possible to conceive that the judgment be accomplished without the Holy Spirit, wherein the Word points out that He is Himself the prize of the righteous, when instead of the earnest, is given that which is perfect, and the first condemnation of sinners, when they are deprived of that which they seem to have?" [Lk.14: 18-19].⁹²

Thus, what else is the first condemnation (the "particular judgment") of sinners, except that at death they are cut off from the Holy Spirit and that "from him who does not have, even that which he seems to have will be taken away" (Lk.8:18). So therefore, if you wish to form some idea of the particular judgment, it is this, that the sinner is deprived of the calling and striving of the Holy Spirit, and if you desire to have some notion of the nature of that "hades", that darkness into which the sinful

soul goes to its rest, consider that without the Holy Spirit there is no spiritual light, and the sinful soul, as being cut off from the Spirit, abides thus in complete spiritual darkness, as St Basil the Great says again:

*"But there can be no beholding without the Spirit! For just as at night, if you withdraw the light from the house, the eyes fall blind and their faculties become inactive and the worth objects cannot be discerned..."*⁹³

Is there more than this to the particular judgment and to that state of darkness or "hades" in which the sinful soul awaits the resurrection? It would seem not. And what is this "particular judgment" and state of "light" in which the soul of the righteous is placed? Is it not this, that *"To him who has, more will be given"*? That is, to him who has struggled in the Spirit, who has in this life acquired the Holy Spirit, the abundance which he already has shall become a superabundance, and he shall repose in the spiritual light which is the Holy Spirit, which from the beginning filled paradise?⁹⁴ As our holy and God-bearing father Anastasios of Sinai says:

*"As for the souls which have acquired the Holy Spirit and have become as it were one body and one organism with Him, it seems to me that through His illumination they rejoice even after death, and they noetically glorify God the Word and intercede for others, as we learn from the Scriptures."*⁹⁵

What more than this could we say in figurative terms, in the form of a parable? That as pertains to us, the particular judgment is this: during our life time, we are repeatedly exhorted to prepare, to "robe ourselves" for the Master's eternal wedding feast. If, at the moment of death, God's messengers come for our soul and, seeing it properly attired (in the Holy Spirit), they proclaim to it God's invitation to that marriage feast, then is the soul rejoiced beyond measure and it shall slumber in hopefilled expectation, radiant with the light of the indwelling Holy Spirit, magnified within it, dreaming of what the Master is about to bestow upon the person in the resurrection.⁹⁶ If, however, the soul is taken forth by God's angels, but receives no such invitation from these terrible powers, then it shall slumber in darkness, since even that which it seemed to have — the invitation to the eternal feast and the company of the Holy Spirit — shall be taken from it. Thus, the souls of the righteous slumber at the very door of the wedding hall (already within paradise), joyously anticipating the hour of the feast, while the others slumber in the chill darkness outside, on the porch, dreading the hour of that feast. And this is something like what St Mark of Ephesus indicates also, saying:

"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...awakening all the virgins as if 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."⁹⁷

Some of the virgins waited in a "place of light", which is signified by the fact that they had oil for their lamps — meaning that they had acquired the Holy Spirit during their lifetime. Or, as some would say, the oil signifies their virtues and good deeds, which means the same thing, since "virtues and good deeds" are not ends, but means of struggle by which one acquires the Holy Spirit.⁹⁸ While the others dwelt in darkness, which is what is meant by the saying that they had no oil for their lamps, meaning that they were not robed in the Holy Spirit, or if one will say that it signifies that they had no virtues or good deeds, this means the same thing, since it means that they had not struggled during their lifetime to acquire the Holy Spirit. For, good deeds are nothing at all in themselves, but have value only as part of our struggle to acquire the Holy Spirit.

What about the idea that demons lead away the souls of the wicked to some sort of torture chamber at death? The demons receive no such favours or rewards from God. They cannot, do not lead the soul away anywhere. This notion is simply the application of a pagan idea to a mistranslation or misunderstanding of some patristic texts, or else the result of some demonic vision. St John Chrysostom, in his HOMILY 2, ON LAZARUS AND THE RICH MAN, says:

"...a soul which departs from the body does not fall under the tyranny of the devil...For if while the soul dwells in the body the devil cannot bring violence upon it, it is obvious that when it departs he likewise cannot... 'And it came to pass,' He says, 'that the beggar died and was carried away by the angels'. Not only the souls of the righteous but also the souls of those who have lived in wickedness are carried away thither... 'Thou fool, this night shall they require thy soul of thee.' See how there He says 'carried away by angels,' here 'they shall require'? The one they [the angels] led forth as in bonds, the other they escorted as a champion."⁹⁹

Here, you see, the Saint makes it clear that the demons do not take the souls of the wicked, and they have no power or tyranny over any departed soul, as he says again:

"Nor is it possible for a soul, once torn away from its body to wander here anymore. For 'the souls of the righteous are in the hands of God' (Ws. 3:1)...And the souls too of sinners are straightway led away hence..."¹⁰⁰

This fact, that the demons do not take any soul and have absolutely no power or tyranny over any departed soul is the actual subject of these two discourses, the very point he has set out to make. Some allegorical expressions used occasionally to teach compunction notwithstanding, God and Satan are not cohorts who divide up mankind between themselves according to marks or brands. This fact is clear also from the parable of the wheat and the darnel (tares). For, our Saviour is speaking to His servants when he says:

"Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of the harvest, I will say to the reapers, first, gather the darnel (tares), and bind them in bundles with the intent of [lit. with a view toward] burning them: but gather the wheat into my granary" (Mt. 13:24-30).

Here, you see, the reapers of both the one and the other are the same. He does not say, "I will send the evil ones who sowed the darnel to gather it, but My servants to gather the wheat." He commands one and the same reapers to gather both.¹⁰¹ Even in the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, according to St John Chrysostom, it is the angels of God who led the souls of both away. It seems, however, that when God's angels are described as terrible, awful or stern powers, etc, some believe thereby that demons are spoken of. St Andrew of Crete, for example, describes the Angels of God who come for the soul thus:

*"Radiant angels, bearers of [royal] scepters, awful to behold, come from above...whose figure is the likeness of light, breathing fire, robed in fire, these hasten to surround him who is lying and abruptly extract the deposit [the soul]..."*¹⁰²

Again, we are asked, "What, then, is the nature of the judgment, and who is it that testifies against us?"

According to St Cyril of Jerusalem:

*"For it is said that 'the ungodly shall not rise up in judgment' (Ps.1:5). This shows that they shall rise, not in judgment, but in condemnation; for God does not need a long scrutiny, but close on the resurrection of the ungodly follows their punishment."*¹⁰³

St Aphrahat likewise testifies:

"The righteous who kept the commandment shall go and shall not come nigh unto judgment in the day that they shall rise; as David says, 'And bring not Thy servant into judgment' [Ps.142:2]; nor will their Lord terrify them in that day."

*"Remember that the Apostle also said, 'We shall judge angels' (2Cor.6:3). And Ezekiel said concerning righteous men [23:21], that they shall judge Samaria and Jerusalem (Ahola and Aholibah). Since then, the righteous are to judge the wicked, He has made it clear concerning them that they shall not come unto judgment."*¹⁰⁴

St Cyril again says:

*"Let us dread, then, brethren, lest God condemn us; Who needs not examination or proofs to condemn...Out of thine own conscience shalt thou be judged, thy 'thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men' (Rm.2:15-16). The terrible countenance of the Judge will force thee to speak the truth; or rather, even though thou speak not, it will convict thee. For thou shalt rise clothed with the righteous deeds...How then does the shepherd make the separation [of the sheep from the kid-goats]? Does He examine out of a book which is a sheep and which a kid-goat? Or does He distinguish by their evident marks? Does not the wool show the sheep, and the hairy and rough skin the goat?...By thy vesture shalt thou be known as a sheep."*¹⁰⁵

Saint Basil the Great, in his homilies on Psalms, says that the judge's countenance is the divine illumination which sheds light into our guilty hearts.¹⁰⁶ At the judgment our accusers will be our own sins, which will rise up before us in our memories.¹⁰⁷

Similarly, St Gregory the Theologian writes that the true meaning of judgment is that which presses upon a person's conscience. At the judgment, our accusers (he says) will be our own

past thoughts and deeds: we will be arraigned by our own consciences and led away self-convicted and self-condemned.¹⁰⁸ St Ambrose of Milan understands that the judgment takes place in the sinner's own conscience and as a result of God's knowledge of the heart (Ep.2:9f; 73:3), "*by His knowledge of the hearts and not by the interrogation of deeds...*"¹⁰⁹ The early Christian philosopher Augustine of Hippo, in one of his rare agreements with Orthodox understandings, also asserts that the "books which will be opened" means the conscience of each individual, whose sins will come flooding in on his recollection.¹¹⁰ St Abba Dorotheos and others explain in just such a context the Saviour's parable, "*When you go with your accuser (or, adversary) to the magistrate, make diligent to be reconciled and be delivered from him in the way lest he drag you to the judge, and the judge turn you over to the officer, and the officer cast you into prison (Lk.12:58).*"

St Dorotheos and many other fathers explain, "the adversary (accuser)" is a person's conscience with which he must be reconciled in this life, ¹¹¹ "in the way", since he can do nothing to effect this once he leaves this life. If a person does not repent and so become "reconciled", then he will prove to be his own accuser (adversary) before the judge (the conscience being an integral part of us and not a slanderer but a true witness). "In the way" is this life, and being "brought before the magistrate" is death. Here, the magistrate (the Judge) simply hands one's soul over to His angel (the "officer") who places it in the state appropriate to itself — in this case, some sort of darkness, the "prison". Again, there is no room for any kind of purgatories, the God-demeaning "toll-gates" or aerial judgments, haggling and bartering over individual sins, weighings, ponderings, etc, but only the omniscient and good decree (called only metaphorically a "judgment") of the all-good and righteous and all-merciful Judge.

St Gregory of Nyssa expresses these same thought, too, saying:

"...the 'gulf' [in the Lazarus parable], which is not made by the parting of the earth, but by those decisions in this life which result in a separation into opposite characters. The man who has once chosen pleasure in this life, and has not cured his inconsiderateness by repentance, places the land of the good beyond his own reach; for he has dug against himself the yawning impassable abyss... that nothing can break through. This is the reason, I think, that the name 'Abraham's bosom' is given to that good situation of the soul in which the Scripture makes the athlete of endurance repose. For it is related of this patriarch first...that he exchanged the enjoyment of the present for the hope of the future; he was stripped of all the surroundings in which his life at first was passed, and resided among foreigners, and thus purchased by present annoyance future blessedness. As then figuratively we call a particular circuit of the ocean a 'bosom', so does the Scripture seem to me to express the idea of those measureless blessings above by the word 'bosom', mean-

ing a place into which all virtuous voyagers of this life are, when they have put in from hence, brought to anchor in the waveless harbour of that bay of blessings. Meanwhile the denial of these blessings which they witness becomes in the others a flame which burns the soul and causes the craving for the refreshment of one drop out of that ocean of blessings wherein the saints are affluent; which nevertheless they do not get...Surely the 'hell' we have just been speaking of cannot reasonably be thought a place so named; rather we are told by Scripture about a certain unseen and immaterial condition [or, situation] in which the soul resides." 112

Moreover, St Ephraim the Syrian says of the judgment and gehenna:

"The vision of the eye is also permitted there [at the resurrection and judgment] to come and go, giving pain or joy to either side — the good regard their own lot as all the better when they see the wicked, and they rejoice all the more in it [their own lot], while the wicked see themselves the more condemned, and their pain increased...the Gehenna of the wicked consists in what they see, and it is their very separation that burns them, and their mind acts as the flame. The hidden judge which is seated in the discerning mind [i.e., the conscience] has spoken, and has become for them there the righteous judge, who beats them without mercy with torments of contrition...it is this which separates them out, sending each one to the appropriate place; perhaps it is this which grasps the good with its just right hand, sending them to that right hand of mercy; and it again which takes the wicked in its upright left hand, casting them into the place called 'the left'...it is this [the conscience] which silently accuses and quietly pronounces sentence upon them... this inner intelligence has been made the judge and the law, for it is the embodiment of the shadow of the law, and it is the shadow of the Lord of the law." 113

Many more patristic explanations can be cited in this regard, and these are from the clear theological statements of the fathers, not from the allegorical expositions intended to frighten a sinner into compunction, or the recitation of "dreams" and "visions", often made up as moral fables for the spiritual instruction of people too spiritually imperceptive to grasp the real, theological explanation of the matters. Very Reverend Michael Pomozansky, the professor of dogmatic theology at Holy Trinity Seminary, with his usual lofty spiritual thought and theological precision, even encourages such an understanding of the Theodora/toll-house tale. He says: "Let us take this earthly side of the symbolism into the spiritual understanding. Theodora is the soul of man; the angels — its virtues; the demons — its sins. Both are in the soul of a man and perhaps after death are found, as it were, on the scales of a balance." 114 If Father Michael means what he seems to, that the "toll-houses" can only be understood as our conscience, the "balance"; our sins as our only accusers and our virtues (or, acquired Grace) our defence before our conscience — our judge (see Rm.2:15-16), then he is a very profound theologian indeed.

THE JUDGMENT OF THE PERSON

We will conclude, therefore, that the particular judgment consists in nothing else than the assignment of the soul to the state proper to itself, by the mercy and goodness of Christ our God, and that the only participants in this are God, the soul itself, and (somehow) the angels of God who fulfil His will. The Last Judgment consists in the resurrection of the body and its re-union of the soul, at which the person awakens in his own place or "state", and then beholds the radiance of the countenance of Christ. Beholding the radiance of the glory and love of God, no-one will be able to hide from it, and the conscience of each person, like an open book, will judge them. The faithful, recounting thus the deeds and sins from which they were delivered by repentance and faith, according to the love and mercy of God, will understand at once and for the first time, how great a salvation they have availed themselves of and how great is the love of God that He accepted them and blotted out such sins and crimes. The wicked will understand then, how great a salvation they rejected, how great a love and mercy they scorned in life, and for them, this radiant love and glory of God, from which they can no longer hide, becomes as a river of fire, pouring out from the glory, or throne, of Christ, and it sweeps them away, their conscience receiving it as coals of fire, while the righteous receive one and the same "fire" as complete spiritual illumination and understanding and are filled with unspeakable joy and exaltation by it, for this fire shall be to them the rays of the Sun of Righteousness which shall heal them of all they lack, and they shall go forth and grow in perfection and knowledge unto all eternity, for:

"Behold the day cometh that shall burn like as an oven, and the... wicked shall be as stubble, and the day comes that shall burn them up, says the Lord of Hosts...but unto you that fear My name, the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His rays, and you shall go forth and grow up..." (Mal.4:1-2).

Let us emphasize once more — this is an important point, and we must free ourselves from the heathenish Western ideas of hell — that "hell" (gehenna) is not an instrument of punishment created by God. That fire which is spoken of at the Last Judgment represents the *love of God*, and we are taught that it is the radiance of God's love which both warms and radiates and gives joy to the faithful, and burns and torments the wicked. Those persons which in this life preferred "darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil," will, in the next life, after the resurrection, find no such darkness, but will not be able to hide from that light which they hated in this life. There, bathed in the everlasting light of God's love, which they rejected but cannot now escape, their conscience, which is like a never-dying work, will torment them, and the passions they loved and heaped upon themselves in this life will be as serpents round about them. In other words,

they will abide forever in the state they chose for themselves while still in this life. As the renowned Greek theologian Dr Alexander Kalomiros observes, this is a theme which "needs to be preached with great insistence [for, from it] not only the West but we Orthodox have departed in great numbers, causing men to fall to atheism because they are revolted against a falsified angry God full of vengeance against His creatures... We must urgently understand that God is responsible only for everlasting life and bliss, and that hell [gehenna] is nothing else but the rejection of this everlasting life and bliss, the everlasting revolt against the everlasting love of God. We must urgently remember and preach that it is not a creation of God but a creation [i.e., product] of our revolted liberty, that God did not create any punishing instrument that is called hell, that God never takes vengeance on His revolted creatures, that His justice has nothing to do with the legalistic 'justice' of human society which punishes the wicked in order to defend itself... That our everlasting spiritual death is not inflicted on us by God, but is a spiritual suicide, everlasting because our decision to be friends or enemies of God is a completely free and everlasting decision of the free spiritual beings created by God, a decision which is respected by God eternally and absolutely."¹¹⁵

Our holy and God-bearing father, Isaak of Nineveh has said this already:

"I also maintain that those who are punished in Gehenna are scourged by the scourge of love. Nay, what is so bitter and vehement as the torment of love? I mean that those who have become conscious that they have sinned against love suffer greater torment thereby than by any fearsome punishment which can be conceived. For the sorrow caused in the heart by sin against love is more piercing than any torment. It would be improper for a man to think that sinners in Gehenna are deprived of the love of God. Love is the offspring of knowledge of the truth which, as is commonly confessed, is given to all. The power of love works in two ways: it torments sinners, even as happens here when a friend suffers from a friend; but it becomes a source of joy for those who have observed its duties. According to my understanding this is the torment of Gehenna: bitter regret. But love inebriates the souls of the sons of Heaven by its delectability.

"Someone was asked, 'When shall a man know when he has received the remission of his sins?' He answered, 'When in his soul he shall be conscious that he has completely hated them with his whole heart, and when he shall govern himself in his external actions in a manner opposed to his former way of life. Such a man, as having already hated his sin, is confident that he has received remission of his sins by reason of the [good] witness of his conscience which he has acquired, after the saying of the Apostle, 'A conscience uncondemned is a witness of itself' "[cf Rm. 2:15]...¹¹⁶

And our holy father Basil the Great likewise says:

"I believe that the fire prepared in punishment of the devils and his angels is divided by the voice of the Lord. Thus, since there are two capacities in fire, one of burning and the other of illuminating, the fierce and scourging property of the fire may await those who deserve to burn, while its illuminating and radiant [warmth] may be reserved for the enjoyment of those who are rejoicing."¹¹⁷



THE SILVER PRINCE

by COUNT A.K. TOLSTOY

translated by
PRINCE N.S. GALITZINE





SEVEN

THE FANTASTIC PALACE



THE ROAD from Moscow to the Holy Trinity Monastery, and from the Monastery to the village of Alexandrova, presented a most lively picture. Imperial messengers were constantly galloping along it; crowds of pilgrims of all kinds were travelling on foot; detachments of oprichniki hurried back and forth; falconers were setting out to various other villages in search of live pigeons; merchants and their goods trailed slowly along, some of the men sitting on their loads, others riding beside long trains of carts. Groups of minstrels passed by, with flutes, bagpipes, and balalaikas. They were dressed in colourful clothes, leading bears on leashes, singing songs, and begging from the richer travellers.

"Be generous to us, Sirs!" they cried in a medley of voices. "The Lord has given you both patrimony and all kinds of possessions, but to us He has shown that we must live upon your generosity, so Sirs, don't neglect us, poor people that we are!"

"Fathers of ours, little fathers!" wailed others, sitting by the roadside. "God bless you with good health! May the Lord deliver you safely to Saint Sergey's — Holy Trinity."

To these words, others added various quaint sayings, so that occasionally a traveller would throw them a large coin for a merry word.

Often there were fights between the minstrels and the tattered crowds of beggars, who hurried to the imperial village from towns and monasteries, to live upon the bounty of the Tsar.

Blind dulcimer players and story-tellers, with their instruments slung on their backs, also passed along the road, holding on to one another. All this teeming mass sang, swore, and made a tumultuous noise. Horses, people, bears — neighed, shouted and roared.

The road cut through dense forest, and, despite the presence of so many people, it sometimes happened that armed robbers fell upon the merchants, and stripped them completely.

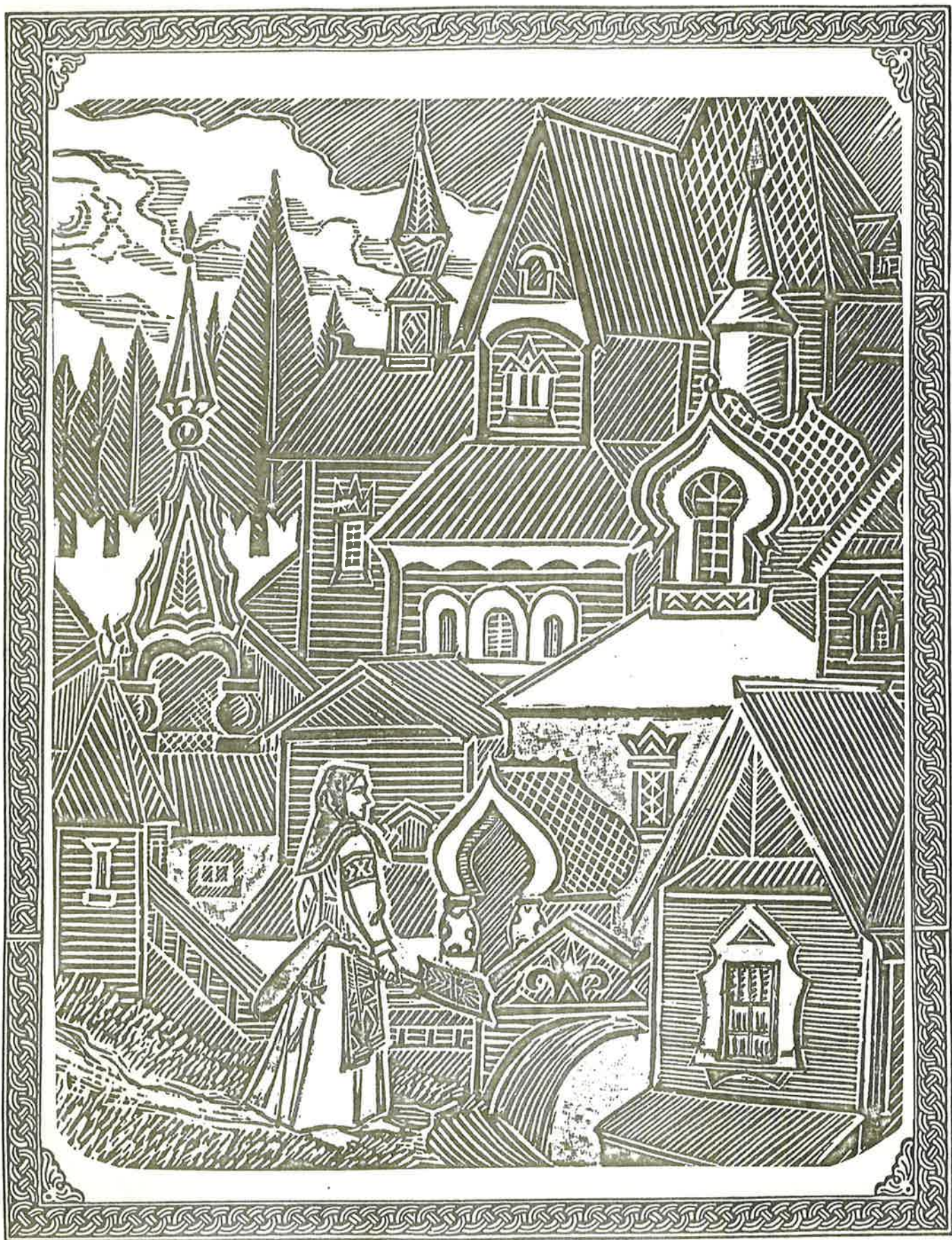
The robberies around Moscow had increased in frequency, particularly since the oprichniki had expelled whole villages of farmers and whole settlements of townsfolk. With their living, their very daily bread, taken from them, these people joined the bands of outlaws and ensconced themselves behind tangles of hewn timber within the forest; their numbers became dangerous beyond a joke. If the oprichniki caught any outlaws, they hanged them without mercy, but on the other hand, the outlaws never remained in debt when an oprichnik fell into their hands. Besides, it was not only the outlaws who robbed the highways. The minstrels and beggars often saved the outlaws the trouble, if, towards evening, they found a poorly guarded merchant's cart. In fact, it was the merchants who suffered most. They were robbed by everyone: the outlaws, the minstrels, the beggars, and the drunken oprichniki. But they consoled themselves with the proverb that profit and loss were but the two sides of the same coin, and continued to travel to the imperial village, saying, "God is good, maybe we'll get there." And somehow, when it came to reckoning up, the merchants always seemed to have made a profit.

Serebryany made his confession and received Communion in the Holy Trinity Monastery. His retainers did likewise. When Nikita Romanovich left, the Archimandrite blessed him like one who was going to certain death.

At a barrier, some three miles from the village, there was a military guard, and each and every traveller was asked who he was, and what made it necessary for him to go further. The people ironically called the village "Sloboda," which in former times meant "freedom." Serebryany and his retainers also had to submit to a full and detailed questioning about the purpose of their visit. Then the captain of the guard disarmed them, and four oprichniki mounted their horses to accompany the travellers. Soon, in the distance, there appeared the coloured cupolas and marvellous golden roofs of the imperial palace. This is what an historian has said about the palace, as it was seen by foreigners contemporary with Ivan:

"In this terrifying and yet enchanting dwelling, Ivan devoted most of his time to church services, so as to calm his soul with constant and unceasing activity. He even wanted to transform the palace into a monastery, and his favourites into monks. He chose some three hundred of the vilest men from the oprichniki, calling them 'the brothers', himself 'the abbot,' Prince Afanasy Vyazomsky 'the cellarer', and Malyuta Skouratov 'the sacristan'; he gave them cowls and black cassocks, under which they wore their rich, gold-embroidered coats with sable trimming; he concocted a set of monastery rules, and himself served as the example in their observance."

This is how Ivan's monastic life was described: "At four o'clock in



the morning, he used to go to the belfry, with the two tsarevichi and Malyuta Skouratov, to ring for matins; the 'brothers' hurried to the church; whoever did not appear was punished with eight days in prison. The service continued until six or seven o'clock. The Tsar sang, read, and prayed so zealously, that bruises always remained on his forehead — the signs of violent prostrations to the ground. At eight o'clock, they all foregathered again to attend the communion service, and at ten they all sat down in the refectory for a meal — all that is, except Ivan, who remained standing, reading aloud precepts for the saving of the soul.

"Meanwhile, the 'brothers' ate and drank their fill; every day seemed to be a feast day; neither wine nor mead was spared; the remainder of the food was taken out into the courtyard, for distribution to the poor. The 'abbot' — that is the Tsar — dined later, talked to his favourites about the Holy Faith, dozed, or rode off to the dungeons, to have some miserable wretch questioned and tormented. Spectacles of this kind seemed to amuse him; he returned with a look of hearty satisfaction, and joked and talked more gaily than usual. At eight in the evening, there was vespers; at ten, Ivan retired to his bedroom, where three blind men told tales; he listened to them and dozed off, but not for long: at midnight he got up, and began his day with prayers. Sometimes he was brought reports of state affairs while in church; sometimes his cruellest orders were given during matins or the Communion service. He interrupted the routine of this life with what were called grand tours; he visited monasteries, both large and small, inspected fortifications on the frontiers, and hunted wild animals in the forests and the fields; he was particularly fond of baiting bears; meanwhile, everywhere and at all times, he occupied himself with government affairs, for the boyars who were not oprichniki dared not make any decisions without his approval, although apparently they had full powers."

Having ridden into the village, Serebryany saw that the palace, or "monastery" of the Tsar, was separated from the other buildings by a moat and rampart. It is difficult to describe the magnificence and diversity of this dwelling. Not one window resembled another, nor were two pillars alike in colouring and decoration. Many cupolas topped the building. They seemed to jostle and overcrowd each other, as if trying to squeeze their bulbous shapes into view. Gold, silver, and coloured tiles, like brilliant scales, covered the palace from top to bottom. When the sun shone upon it, one could not be sure from afar whether it really was a palace, or a gigantic bush of flowers, or a great flock of fire-birds that had flown together and opened out their flaming feathers in the rays of the sun.

Not far from the palace stood a printing-house with its own letter foundry, and a dwelling for the type-setters, with special apartments for the foreign masters whom Ivan had summoned from Germany and England. Further away stretched out in endless rows the quarters of the palace servants, in which lived the stewards, assistant stewards, victuallers, cooks, bakers, grooms, huntsmen, falconers, and all the various retainers

of the court.

The churches of the village shone with unstinted wealth. The fine temple of the Holy Mother of God was painted outside with brilliant murals, and on every brick there sparkled a cross, so that the church appeared as if it were covered with a golden net.

This enchanting sight dispersed the gloomy thoughts which had not left Serebryany during his whole journey from Moscow. But soon, an unpleasant sight reminded the Prince of his own predicament, for he and his guides rode past a group of gallows, standing one beside the other. There were also scaffolds, with blocks and axes at the ready. Both the gallows and scaffolds were painted black, and were well and truly built, obviously not for just a day, nor for a year, but for a very long time!

However fearless a man may be, he can never be unmoved by the thought that death is near at hand, not glorious death amid the clash of swords or the roar of cannon, but a dark and shameful death, dealt by a despicable executioner. Riding by the place of executions, Serebryany seemed unable to suppress his inner agitation, for it was involuntarily reflected in his sensitive face; the guides looked at the Prince and smiled.

"Those are our swings, Prince," said one of them, pointing to the gallows. "You seem to have taken a liking to them! You cannot tear your eyes away!"

Miheyich, who was bringing up the rear, said nothing, but only whistled and shook his head.

Upon arriving at the rampart surrounding the palace, the Prince and his companions dismounted, and tied their horses up to posts, which had some rings attached for that purpose then they entered a vast courtyard, filled with beggars, who were singing psalms and exhibiting their disgusting sores. The palace steward, who was standing on the porch, was distributing food and alms to the beggars in the name of Tsar Ivan. From time to time, some of the oprichniki crossed the courtyard; others were sitting on benches, and playing chess or knucklebones. Still others, gathered in a circle, were throwing a heavy spike towards a ring, and laughing loudly when the loser had to pull it from deep in the ground several times in a row. The dress of the oprichniki presented a striking contrast to the tatters of the beggars, for the imperial guards shone with gold. Each wore a cap of velvet or brocade, studded with pearls or precious stones, and they all appeared to be like living ornaments of this fairy palace, thus completing the whole picture.

One of the oprichniki particularly attracted Serebryany's attention. He was a young man of about twenty, extraordinarily handsome, but with an unpleasantly insolent expression on his face. He was dressed more richly than the rest, wore long hair, contrary to the usual custom, had no beard at all, and showed a sort of feminine nonchalance in his manner. The way his companions behaved towards him was also rather strange. They spoke with him as with an equal, and did not pay him any particular respect; but when he approached any group, that group parted, and those sitting on

the benches stood up, and offered him their places. It seemed as if the others were cautious or even afraid of him. Seeing Serebryany and Miheyich, he looked them over with a haughty stare, called the guides, and apparently asked them the names of the new arrivals. Then he looked askance at Serebryany, smiled, and whispered something to his companions. They too smiled, and then went off in different directions. He himself mounted the steps of the porch, and, leaning on the balustrade, continued to look derisively at Nikita Romanovich. Suddenly there was a commotion among the beggars. A dense crowd rushed straight towards the Prince, and almost knocked him off his feet. The beggars were running from the palace, shouting, with terror written on their faces. The Prince was surprised, but soon he understood the reason for everyone's fear. A huge bear ran leaping after the beggars. In an instant, the courtyard emptied, and the Prince remained by himself, face to face with the bear. The thought of running away had never entered his head. More than once Serebryany had tackled bears single-handed. That sort of hunting amused him. He stood his ground, and made a movement as if to draw his sword, precisely at the moment when the bear lurched towards him, with ears pinned back and grabbing paws. But Serebryany's sword was missing; he had forgotten that he had been obliged to give it up to the oprichniki before entering the village. The young man watching from the porch burst out laughing.

"That's the way, that's it!" he jeered. "Look for your sword!"

One blow from the bear's paw knocked Serebryany to the ground. Another would have crushed his skull. But, to the Prince's surprise, he did not feel the second blow; instead, he felt a warm jet of blood spurt over him.

"Come, get up, Boyarin!" someone said, stretching out a hand.

The Prince stood up, and saw an oprichnik of about seventeen, whom he had not noticed before, and who was now holding a bloody sword. The dying bear, with head split open, was lying on its back at his feet, waving its paws.

The oprichnik did not seem to be proud of his achievement. His nice face showed the imprint of a deep sadness. Not waiting for thanks, he wanted to get away, only making sure that the Prince had not been badly injured.

"Kind stranger!" said Serebryany to him. "Tell me your name and surname, so that I shall know for whom to pray!"

"You wouldn't want to know my surname, Boyarin!" replied the oprichnik. "God be with it, but I don't like it!"

Such a strange answer amazed Serebryany, but before he could say anything more, his rescuer had left him.

"Well, little father, Nikita Romanich! Did I ever get a fright!" said Miheyich, wiping the bear's blood off the Prince with the edge of his coat. "I was shouting at the bear for all I was worth, so that he would leave you, and throw himself on me instead, when that fine young man, God

give him good health, slashed open the beast's skull. And all that was started by that beardless one, with his oily eyes who is standing and looking from the porch — confound him for the devil that he is! Where have we come to?" added Miheyich in a whisper. "Have you ever seen anything like it? Bears let loose from their chains, right in the courtyard of an imperial palace!"

Miheyich's remark was quite to the point, but the village had its own peculiarities, and nothing happened in an ordinary way. The Tsar loved to watch animals fighting. Several bears were always kept and fed in iron cages, in case bear baiting was desired. From time to time, either Ivan or his oprichniki let the beasts out of the cages to attack the people, and amused themselves with the resulting terror. Anyone maimed by a bear was rewarded by the Tsar with money. If he were mauled to death, the money was given to his relations, and his name was written down for memorial prayers in the monasteries, together with the names of all the other victims of the Tsar's amusement or wrath.

Soon two footmen came out of the palace, and told Serebryany that the Tsar had seen him from a window, and desired to know who and what he was. They took the Prince's name to the Tsar, and then returned to announce that the Tsar enquired after his health, and commanded him to attend dinner that very day.

This graciousness did not exactly please Serebryany. Evidently Ivan did not yet know of his quarrel with the oprichniki in the village of Medvedevka, or perhaps, as often happened, the Tsar was temporarily concealing his wrath under a mask of graciousness, so that sudden punishment might appear all the more dreadful to the guilty person, if meted out during a gay and festive time. Whatever was to happen, Serebryany mentally prepared himself for anything and said a silent prayer.

This particular day was a special one in the village of Alexandrova. The Tsar had announced in advance that he would eat with all the 'brothers', since he was preparing to go on a pilgrimage to Suzdal, and had ordered four hundred oprichniki to attend the dinner, besides the three hundred who were always in his company, so that in all there would be present seven hundred people.

