

The Anglican & Eastern Churches Association

25 Talbot Road
London W.2

REMINDER OF SUBSCRIPTION

You are respectfully reminded that according
to our records your last payment was made on

..... 1954

We should be most grateful if you would kindly
endeavour to bring your subscription up to date
to the best of your ability.

You will appreciate that the work of the
Association depends to a great extent on the
regular financial support of all our members.

H.R. Stringer
General Secretary

EASTERN CHURCHES NEWS - LETTER

*A quarterly publication of the
Anglican and Eastern Churches Association*

No. 3

JULY 1955

THE ANNUAL FESTIVAL 1955

The Annual Festival of the Association has been arranged for October 29. We have chosen a Saturday in the hope that many members who are working during the week will be able to be present. At the invitation of the Archpriest Miloye Nikolic, this year's Festival will take place at the Serbian Church of St. Savva in London. The Divine Liturgy will be celebrated at half past eleven and, according to our custom, will be followed by a buffet lunch and the Annual General Meeting. The speakers will include Professor H. A. Hodges of Reading University. Notices will be sent to all members of the Association in due course.

The present General Secretary of the Association is leaving London in September and the agenda of the Annual General Meeting will include the election of a new Secretary. During the intervening period the Chairman of the Committee, the Reverend Austin Oakley, will deal with all routine business. Readers of the *News-Letter* are asked to note that, as from August 10 and until further notice, all enquiries, correspondence and subscriptions should be addressed to Mr. Oakley, at St. John's Vicarage, 63 Ladbroke Grove, London, W.11.

Priest-members of the Association are particularly reminded of our custom of offering the Holy Eucharist for the reunion of Christendom on, or about the time of, the Annual Festival. Many of our members find October 26, the feast of St. Demetrius of Thessalonica, a convenient day for this memorial of the aims of our Association. It is suggested that a collection be made on this day for the work of the Association.

RELATIONS WITH THE CHURCH IN RUSSIA

During the past three months a British delegation has visited Moscow and Leningrad and a Russian delegation has paid a return visit to this country. The British party travelled under the auspices of Christian Action, the Russians came to Britain at the invitation of the British Council of Churches. The Vicar of Wealdstone, who led the British delegation, contributes some impressions of the liturgical life of the Russian Church to this issue of the *News-Letter*. The Russian delegation was made up of four Orthodox, two Baptists and two Lutherans. The Orthodox party was led by the Metropolitan Pitirim of Minsk and Byelorussia, and included two members of the staff of the Moscow Theological Academy and Professor Ouspensky of the Leningrad Academy. A crowded programme has included receptions arranged by the British Council of Churches and the Nikaeen Club, visits to Edinburgh, Glasgow, Oxford, Cambridge and Eton, as well as the Open Golf Championship at St. Andrews and the Methodist Conference at Manchester, and theological conversations at Lambeth which are to be resumed in Moscow next year. This renewal of relations with our fellow Christians in Russia is of the greatest importance and we must pray that it may continue and bear fruit.

A SUNDAY IN LENINGRAD

Many of the readers of this *News-Letter* will know far more of the Orthodox Church than the writer. But, as he has been pressed for an article following a visit to the Soviet Union, the best that he can do is to share the experience of a Sunday morning in that most beautiful city, Leningrad.

We are going to the cathedral of the Metropolitan. On this occasion, the word *cathedral* would seem to be correctly used, but I found Soviet citizens use the word cathedral of any large church, of which there are many magnificent examples in Leningrad, inspiring and refreshing to the writer, because so utterly different in architecture from any building in this country. Crowds are making their way to this cathedral of the Metropolitan, which has two floors. We were taken up a narrow staircase to the upper floor, which we found already filled. It is not only the outside of the building which is so different, the interior walls and ceiling

are a blaze of colour, covered with scenes from the Bible, portraits of the Saints. There are no pulpit, no organ and no pews. A high and solid screen cuts off the sanctuary from the congregation. The Bishop's chair, or throne, is immediately behind the altar, which is in the shape of a solid cube, suggesting a chopping block. This reminds me of the thesis of Dom Gregory Dix, who, in "The Shape of the Liturgy" states that early Christian worship, far from taking place in conditions of squalor, for the most part took place in the courtyard of mansions built in Roman style, where the conservative householders still kept outside what we might call the front door, a solid table which represented the chopping-block of their cottage-dwelling ancestors.

Because I was present on a Sunday *after Easter* the "Royal Gates" were open for the greater part of the service. Perhaps you have been to a circus, where several actors are performing at the same time? Without being irreverent, a celebration of the Orthodox Liturgy seemed to be not unlike, for the ministers stood on three sides of the cubic altar, and several actions seemed to be going on at once. But after attending the Liturgy on a few occasions a pattern emerges from the seeming complexity. It seemed, as it were, a drama in three acts; the service began with a ceremonial dressing of the Metropolitan. His Holiness, dressed in black, was led to his throne. A cleric approached bearing his superb Archiepiscopal vestments of cloth of gold. The robing included the combing of the Metropolitan's hair and beard. There was the Prothesis, or Preparation of the Gifts—representing the childhood and the eighteen silent years of the earthly life of Jesus. The second Act is the Synaxis, the Great Entrance, the Assembly of the Gifts, representing the teaching and healing ministry of the Christ. The final Act is the Anaphora, the Consecration, Offering and Distribution of the Gifts, depicting the Institution of the Eucharist, the Passion, the Resurrection and the Gift of the Holy Spirit. The whole seemed to be a piece of ancient ritual, familiar to the congregation, who knew exactly when to start singing their responses. Amid all this ancient tradition, it seemed to be almost humorous that at one point a sub-deacon would appear with a brightly polished electric kettle for warm water to be poured into the chalice—which is followed by the words "Blessed is the fervour of Thy Holy Things, always, now and for ever, world without end."

It may be true that the Orthodox Church is not so efficiently administered as the Church of the West, but their

worship seemed to be to be characterised by three outstanding features. Here was no duet between priest and congregation, but a corporate act, complex yet performed with a certain ease and absence of anxiety that "everything should be just right."

When the Gates were closed after the Liturgy, clergy and laity made one long file and, after genuflection, kissed the Metropolitan's hand. I particularly asked if the laity, who looked like well-dressed business men, belonged to any organisation like the C.E.M.S. I received the definite answer, "No, they are just prominent laymen of the congregation."

The third feature I find very difficult to convey in words, but the whole is characterised by a cosmic and mystic note which, except for the *Sursum Corda*, I find lacking in our own Liturgy.

There was still a surprise for me, we were led downstairs and I thought everything was over, but we were taken to the ground floor where, amid a tremendous noise, three hundred infants were being baptised. The picture of the Soviet Union in my mind before my visit was such that I found it difficult to credit the statement that the majority of people in it are still baptised. Rows of wooden trestle tables at the side had been erected where the naked infants were being vigorously dried and tightly wrapped in their baby clothes. No wonder they cried! I was told that this duty was performed by Godparents, since the mother does not go to the church until forty days after the birth, that is her purification.

It was difficult to count the exact number on account of the usual crowds, but there were some coffins, five I believe, at another end of the church awaiting the Service for the Dead.

One would have to know a great deal more to tell of the actual condition of the Orthodox Church, but, at any rate, the experience of that Sunday morning showed that it existed and that there was a warm devotion amongst its members.

H. ELAND STEWART

AN ARMENIAN VISITOR

Archbishop Yeghishe Derderian, Locum Tenens of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem visited England from June 15 to July 7. While here he attended the Nikaeen Club annual dinner at Lambeth Palace. He officiated in the

Divine Liturgy at the Armenian Church when the Bishop of Bedford represented the Archbishop of Canterbury. He was formally received and welcomed at Canterbury Cathedral, St. Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey, and attended the annual festival of the Jerusalem and the East Mission. He lunched privately with the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Archbishop Derderian was with the Armenian congregation in Manchester from June 25 to 28. He was also the guest of honour at receptions given by the British Council of Churches, the Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius and the Nikaeen Club. His Grace attended a debate at the House of Commons. During the Armenian Archbishop's visit Father Bessak Toumayan, the Armenian priest in London, was promoted to be a Great Vardapet.

SUMMER CONFERENCE OF THE FELLOWSHIP OF ST. ALBAN AND ST. SERGIUS

The subject for the principal theological papers at the Fellowship's summer conference will be *Holy Communion*. This theme, which is clearly central for all ecumenical conversations, has at present a more immediate relevance in view of the various 'reunion schemes' now under discussion. The choice of subject was also prompted by the recent revival of appeals for 'limited' inter-communion as a means towards healing schism. The purpose of the conference will not, of course, be to advocate 'schemes' for reunion, but rather to attempt a sober reconsideration of the doctrinal principles which govern the faith and practice concerning the Holy Eucharist in the Church. The Bishop of Durham, Father Henry Brandreth, O.G.S., and the Reverend Humphrey Green will be among the Anglican speakers, and the Orthodox speakers will include the Archimandrite Alexis van der Mensbrugghe and Father Peter L'Huillier.

The Conference will be held at St. Helen's School, Abingdon, under the general title *The Communion of Saints*, from July 30 to August 15, 1955. The papers on *Holy Communion* will be given on August 2-5. Other speakers taking part in the Conference will be Father Lionel Thornton, C.R., Professor H. A. Hodges, the Archimandrite Lev Gillet, and Father Basil Krivosheine.

BOOKS NEW AND FORTHCOMING

A Mediterranean Window by H. J. Buxton

Bishop Harold Buxton, Bishop of Gibraltar from 1933 until 1947 and always a firm friend and supporter of the Association, has written an all too short account of his experiences and stirring adventures during his episcopate. We have already had the privilege of printing three chapters of his book in the *Christian East*. We commend it very warmly to our readers, not only for its interest to all who care for the work of liaison with the Orthodox Church but also for its intrinsic value. *A Mediterranean Window* is published by Messrs. Biddle, High Street, Guildford, at 7/6. All profits from the sale of the book will go to the work of the Diocese of Gibraltar.

Anglicanism and Orthodoxy by H. A. Hodges

This slender volume, which was reviewed in the last issue of the *News-Letter*, is of an importance out of all proportion to its size. We should like it to be made compulsory reading for all Anglican theological students. It is published by the S.C.M. Press and costs 3/-.

Christian Hellas: the Present State of the Greek Church by Peter Hammond

We give advance notice of the publication of this important book on the Church of Greece by the General Secretary of the Association. The author travelled widely in Greece from 1948 until 1950, and his book is the first attempt to present a comprehensive picture of the life of the Greek Church at the present day. This is a book which should make a widespread appeal to all who are interested in the Orthodox Church and we commend it to our readers. It is to be published by the Rockcliff Press and will probably cost 21/-.

INTER-CHURCH TRAVEL

We have received a pamphlet issued by the Youth Travel Club with special reference to inter-church travel. This organisation is run on a non-profit-making basis with the

object of facilitating friendly relations between the peoples of various countries. The Inter-Church Travel branch (Hon. Secretary: the Reverend A. E. Payton, 47-49 Lime Street, Liverpool 1) is working in co-operation with Inter-Church Aid. Should any of our readers be interested, and ask for arrangements to be made for visits to Orthodox countries, we feel certain that they will meet with advice and help. 1954 was the first year of operations on any scale and was apparently a most successful one, visits being arranged to countries which included Holland, Germany, Norway, France and Switzerland.

LOCAL BRANCHES

We are asked to correct a mistake which appeared in the list of Orthodox clergy in the April issue of the *News-Letter*. The Reverend A. Kryt, of 14 Southey Place, Bradford, is a priest of the Byelorussian Autocephalic Orthodox Church in Great Britain.

THE CHRISTIAN EAST

Although we have been compelled to suspend publication of this quarterly review for the present, back numbers are still available and may be obtained from the Reverend Austin Oakley, 63 Ladbroke Grove, W.11. A very few complete sets of the new series 1950-54 may still be had at a price of £2. The two volumes contain many articles, translations and reviews of permanent interest and importance.

Readers of this *News-Letter* are asked to note that, Association publications apart, we have at present no facilities for selling or lending literature about the Orthodox Church, though we are always happy to furnish information and suggestions. Books published by the Fellowship of SS Alban and Sergius may be obtained from the Secretary, St. Basil's House, 52 Ladbroke Grove, London, W.11, who will provide a list of such publications on request.

THE ANGLICAN AND EASTERN ORTHODOX
CHURCHES ASSOCIATION, which was founded in 1864,
exists to unite members of the Anglican and Eastern Orthodox
Churches for the following objects:

To promote mutual knowledge, sympathy and
intercourse.

To encourage the study of Eastern Christendom.

To pray and work for the restoration of the visible
unity of the Church.

The Presidents of the Association are the Lord Bishop
of London and the Metropolitan Athenagoras of Thyateira.

The normal annual subscription is 10/-. but none will be
excluded from membership solely on account of inability to
pay this amount, while it is hoped that those who can afford
to pay more will do so. All members are entitled to receive
the *Eastern Churches News-Letter*, which is published
quarterly.

**Please note that as from August 10, and until further
notice, all correspondence, subscriptions, etc., should be
addressed to the Reverend Austin Oakley, 63 Ladbrooke
Grove, London, W.11.**