

EASTERN CHURCHES NEWS - LETTER

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

*The General Committee does not hold itself responsible for every
expression of opinion in the News-Letter*

No. 9.

SEPTEMBER 1957

CONTENTS:

1. The Annual Festival.
2. "Out of Egypt I have called my Son."
3. News.
4. Book Review.

The Anglican and Eastern Churches Association

THE ANNUAL FESTIVAL

A Pontifical Celebration of the Divine Liturgy

in

The Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Holy Wisdom

Moscow Road, Queensway, Bayswater, W.2

at 11-30 a.m.

on Saturday, 19th October, 1957

in the presence of

THE LORD BISHOP OF LONDON

The Liturgy will be followed by refreshments and the Annual General Meeting of the Association in the Crypt of the Cathedral.

THE ANNUAL FESTIVAL

The Annual Festival this year will be held in the Cathedral of the Divine Wisdom, Moscow Road, London, on Saturday, October 19th. It will, according to custom, take the form of a celebration of the Divine Liturgy on this occasion by our Vice-President, the Right Reverend Bishop of Apameia, assisted by Orthodox clergy, and in the presence of the Lord Bishop of London, who after the resignation of Bishop Wand will be with us for the first time as Anglican President. We greatly regret that the Metropolitan of Thyateira, our Orthodox President, will still be absent on his visitations of his wide-spread Exarchate.

After refreshments in the Crypt of the Cathedral, the Annual Meeting of the Association will take place

Members of the Association, who have already had experience of the hospitality of the Greek Cathedral in London on a number of occasions, will we hope make a special effort to be present. It is a special privilege to worship with our Orthodox brethren in this centre of Orthodoxy in Great Britain, and one that we are deeply grateful for to the Provost and cathedral clergy.

“OUT OF EGYPT I HAVE CALLED MY SON”

*Hosea XI. i.
Matt. II. xvi.*

In those early centuries following the age of the Apostles, the whole Church shared a common tradition, which was the teaching of the Apostles themselves. This tradition centred round the Apostolic sees, which afterwards became the great focuses of Christian teaching and government, and have their influence to this day in the ancient Patriarchates of the Christian Church, both East and West. In that tradition there has been preserved for us much that vividly illustrates the life and thought of those early days, rightly looked back to with reverence and devotion by later times. In the writings of the great Apologists for the Faith, Origen, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, St. Clement of Alexandria, and many other lesser names, there is a considerable body of information still available to us. These people wrote with two main aims in mind: interpretation and explanation of the Christian Faith and practice as against pagans, heretics and Jews; but much more important for us today, instructions given to catechumens before the entrance into the Church by the rites of initiation, Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist. These were homilies or courses of instruction before the Great Feasts.

It may be wondered what particular relevance this has to us. One of the most widely-spread movements of the last fifty years in particular is the renewed interest in this primary and original Christian teaching, along with the study of the mind and expression of the Fathers of the Church. It is because it belongs to the whole Church before its disastrous schisms and separations, because it is as much the mind of Justin Martyr as of St. Clement of Alexandria, of St. Cyril of Jerusalem as of St. Augustine and St. Ambrose and St. Hilary, that it concerns all who long to see the healing of the deep wounds of Christendom. This is likely, although slowly and with much patience, to come about more fundamentally through the regaining of a common mind among Christians as to the meaning of their religion. This applies especially to the interpretation of the Canon of Scripture, and in particular to that of the Old Testament.

There can be no doubt of the truth that the mind of the early Christian, especially as long as adult conversions to the Church continued, was filled with the splendour and life-giving power of his solemn initiation into the Church. It is to be noted that not many generations after the time of the Apostles themselves, this entrance was not merely Baptism

as such, but, as is still the rule in the Orthodox Church, the gathering together into a whole of the series of acts, literally following one another, of immersion in the water of baptism, the anointing with the chrism, and the participation in the blessed Eucharist with the worship of the faithful, and reception of the Body and Blood of the Lord in Communion. The entrance from the darkness of the unredeemed life into the light of the kingdom, the passing by repentance and faith into the kingdom of love and fellowship of the brethren, was of necessity an unforgettable experience, and one that transformed not merely life in this world, but that of the world to come. An almost invariable vehicle of the teaching given before initiation was an exposition of the redemptive work of our Lord and the sharing of the new life in Him through the fulfilment of the great types of the Old Testament in the New Covenant, the New Israel, the true people of God, gathered out of every nation and race.

It is the general pattern of these Old Testament types that is so striking: their significance for the right interpretation of the Old Testament, and for an explanation of the course of life of the Christian, the working out of the mysteries of Our Lord's own life in the life of the Church and of the individual. Those of us who are older have rather grim recollection of the teaching of Holy Scripture at Church and in school in our young days: that learning by heart of lists of the kings of Judah and Israel, the obscurity and unsuitability through lack of bearing on our own conditions of life of so much of the Old Testament; the vague sense in which we were made to understand that the Prophets and Psalms foretold the coming of the redeemer of mankind. Not so the apostolic teaching and the guidance given by the great teachers of the early formative ages of the fulfilment of the Old Covenant in the New.

In this undoubtedly the most influential interpreter was Origen, who in spite of teaching that had to be condemned later by the Church, was ceaseless in his output of scriptural commentary, who himself wrote a complete commentary on the whole Bible (most of which is now lost, and only available to any extent in a Latin translation), and who above all laid down the fruitful lines of interpretation that have been valid ever since.

The great stream of tradition interprets the history of the people of Israel in Christian and sacramental terms. Even in the times before the call of Abraham, in the biblical accounts of the Creation, the fall of man, of the covenant with Noah after the Flood, redemption in Christ is foretold, and the character of the Second Adam made clear. Because of

the prominence of the initiation rites already referred to, the story of the bondage in Egypt, the deliverance from Pharaoh, the passage of the Red Sea, the guidance of the pillar of cloud and fire, the formation by Moses of Israel in the Wilderness, the heroic figure of Joshua (another form of the name Jesus), and his victory over the heathen and the passing over Jordan into the promised land, is all interpreted in terms of these rites, as indeed they had been already interpreted by St. Paul. The same applies to those types of our Lord in the Judges of Israel, and in the ideal king, David, and the splendour of his son Solomon; while the tragedy of the captivity in Babylon and the return of the faithful remnant has its completion in the life of the Church and of the Christian. It is in the light of this that St. Matthew's great word "Out of Egypt I have called my Son" has its magistral meaning for us.

It is a striking truth that the Old Testament is never complete in itself. Even the Jews realised that, in their hope for a Messiah. Undoubtedly they also see even today a partial fulfillment of earlier types in their national tragedies, in the Babylonian captivity, even in their present return to the Holy Land, in their persistent looking for the restitution of all things in the still expected coming of their Messiah. But the Christian faith provides a majestic completion of all in our Lord. Abraham was not permitted to consummate the sacrifice of his only son, only in obedience and will, but the Father whose love sent His only begotten into the world completed what Abraham could not do. David, in the loss of Absalom, his greatly beloved, could not die in his stead, but the whole Blessed Trinity in unity was finally and completely involved in the sacrifice of the Lamb of God for the sins of the world. The creation of the First Adam contained in itself the fulfilment of the destiny of redeemed mankind in our Lord, the Second Adam, the first-fruits of a new and perfect crowning and exaltation of Man.

A closely related emphasis of the same great tradition is the ultimate perfection of Man. Man is redeemed by our Lord Jesus Christ, yet his redemption is but the first stage in his progress to the ultimate partaking in the divine nature. Human beings are in Christ loosed from their sins that they may share the righteousness of Christ, and being justified are as St. Paul teaches also sanctified, and those who are sanctified are also glorified. The deification of man, whereby through adoption he is born of God, involves a co-heirship with Christ. It is the wonderful message of mankind called out of the slavery to this world into sonship, restored to the paradise of God by, through, and in Him who has beaten down the cherubim's flaming sword that had till His victory

guarded the entrance to the Garden. Once again, by membership in the Body of Christ, man is born again of the Spirit, and in his new nature is as our Lord was, virgin-born, that he may one day be crowned in Him with glory and worship. It will be seen how far this is from the preaching of Christianity as "doing and being good," or as a mere system of moral behaviour, and how immeasurably above any solely humanistic interpretation of our Lord's divine-human personality and work. The destiny of every human being who is truly a member of the Kingdom surpasses any conception of the human mind, and finds its end in God alone, in the perfection of the relationship of Fatherhood and Sonship in Christ, in the partaking of the divine nature.

NEWS

THE HOLY LAND:

Much of importance to the Christian Church has been taking place in the Holy Land recently. Following on the enthronisation of the new Patriarch Benediktos in March of this year, to which reference was made in the last Newsletter, two appointments of great interest to us have been made. The first is the raising of the Anglican bishopric in Jerusalem to metropolitan rank by the designation of the Right Revd. A. C. MacInnes, Bishop of Bedford, since 1953, with the title of Archbishop in Jerusalem. He will establish an episcopal synod of all bishops who are to come under his jurisdiction: the bishops in Egypt and Libya, the assistant bishop in the Sudan, and the Bishop in Persia. Further, by the direction of the Archbishop of Canterbury, he will, before summoning his synod, create a new bishopric of Jordan, Syria, and Libya. The Archbishop will have his seat in the Collegiate Church of St. George in Jerusalem, and it is also hoped that there will be a new pro-cathedral of the bishopric of Jordan, Syria and Libya.

The new Archbishop in Jerusalem will hence forward be independent of the Archbishop of Canterbury except in matters of faith and order. The "committee of bishops" of his jurisdiction will be closely linked, and will have the aim, as well as that of caring for Anglicans in the Middle East, of strengthening friendship with the ancient Churches in the countries concerned. We ask for the prayers of the Association in this constructive move, and beg to offer our respects to the new Archbishop.

The long vacancy of the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem since the death of the Patriarch Cyril II in 1949,

has been filled by the appointment of Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan, hitherto in episcopal charge of the Armenian Church in America. The new Patriarch is well known to many of us and has many friends here in England, since the days that he was in charge of the Armenian Church of St. Sarkis in London. Those who have visited Jerusalem will have the happiest remembrances of the Armenian Cathedral of St. James, in its beauty and spotless cleanliness, whose precious relic is the head of the Apostle. The Patriarch's relations with us are likely to be close and well-informed.

GREECE:

The funeral of His Beatitude Dorotheos Archbishop of All Greece took place in Athens on August 3rd, while the election to the primacy followed quickly on August 7th, when the Metropolitan of Patras, Bishop Theoklitos, was chosen by the 59 Bishops of the Greek Orthodox Church meeting in Athens. The new Archbishop was born in the Peloponnes in 1890, and studied at the School of Divinity of Athens University. In 1923 he was appointed Secretary of the Holy Synod.

It seems fitting under the heading of news from Greece to underline the fact, frequently emphasised by the Greek Press, that tourists from this country are welcomed in Greece, and have been and will be treated with courtesy and that friendliness towards us that has been always the experience of those who visit that beautiful and unique country. The cloud that has arisen over the unhappy Cyprus issue is not allowed to affect the deep tradition of hospitality that belongs to the Greek people. Those contemplating a holiday in Greece are assured of kindly and friendly treatment.

THE OECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE:

The unhappy fact, made clear from both the press and dependable private sources, is that the position of Greeks living in Turkey, and of course primarily in Istanbul, is becoming more and more difficult. Those who are able to, have gone away, but not all can do that. Holy Week and Easter, with the Phanar guarded by mounted police, and the general tension brought about by police activity, meant that much fewer than usual ventured out for the services of that holy season and Easter. We must offer our prayers for His All-Holiness the Oecumenical Patriarch and his flock, and ask for divine protection and aid for these Christians who have suffered and are still suffering so acutely.

AT HOME:

The Very Reverend Archimandrite Anthony Bloom, in

charge of the Russian parish in London of Our Lady and All Saints, Ennismore Gardens, and a member for a good many years of the Committee of the Association, has been designated Bishop in this country by the Holy Synod of the Moscow Patriarchate. The date of his consecration is not yet fixed, but it is expected to take place this autumn. We desire very sincerely to offer to the bishop-designate our respectful felicitations on his coming dignity, and also our prayers in the many responsibilities that will be his in his apostolic work and office. Many of us know and appreciate the spiritual influence of Father Anthony, and his contribution to Anglican-Orthodox relations. His imminent consecration is a token of the desire of the Russian Patriarchal Church for close and friendly relations with the Anglican Communion. We ask God's blessing on all that is to be done in His Name and to His Glory.

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 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 all correspondence, subscriptions, etc., should be addressed to the Reverend H. R. Stringer, St. Stephen's Vicarage, 25, Talbot Road, London, W.2.

REVIEW

THE HOLY FIRE. The story of the early centuries of the Christian Church in the Near East. ROBERT PAYNE. Harpers & Brothers, New York. \$5.00.

The publishers sent the editor of the News-Letter a copy of this book published this year in America, with a request for a review. It is a very readable book, written in a popularising way, but none the worse for that, since it introduces

to a very much wider circle of readers a subject that is certainly for them off the beaten path. It is significant that such a book should be written today, and have a large circulation. Among its many excellencies are a chronology of the Fathers right up to the Fall of Constantinople, putting in perspective the history of Eastern Christianity; an inclusion of the later Fathers of the Holy Orthodox Church, such as St. Simeon the New Theologian (XI century), St. Gregory Palamas (XIV century) and a full treatment of the teaching of Nicholas Cabasilas (contemporary with St. Gregory Palamas), and the ex-Emperor John VI Cantacuzene (d. 1383); copious extracts from the sub-Apostolic age onwards; and finally, a lively commentary on the people and times in the long review of the centuries.

There is a certain lack of references, which at times robs the quotations of verification, and a number of illustrations, mainly from ikonography, in which it is a refreshing experience to see what St. Gregory Palamas, John Cantacuzene and others, must have looked like. There is a mistake in giving an ikon of the uncle of Nicholas Canasilas, Archbishop of Thessalonika, in place of the nephew, who was a layman. There is also a very full bibliography, with an understandable emphasis on American works concerned with Patristics.

Robert Payne is a novelist, and he approaches his subject (as he has already done in a volume on the Western Fathers) from an imaginative and romantic standpoint. That in itself is no harm, rather a great help, so long of course as he does not make the Eastern Fathers themselves romantics. Their lives and influence and work is something much more than that, and a certain temptation to overwrite, accentuate certain aspects of their life and place in Christendom is a great temptation to a novelist. Robert Payne has written novels about Moghul India, Imperial China, and has translated a work of Kierkegaard. An expert on Indian history would find it necessary to be critical of his Indian novels, and probably a Chinese expert on his novels of China. His last book on Our Lord's life is open to very grave criticism, and shares with all such attempts, the danger of filling in what we do not know, and are presumably not called upon to know. But this book under review is a very valuable one, and calling for study by such of us who care about the wonderful testimony to the Christian Faith that Eastern Christianity gives to the world. It is to be hoped that there will be an English issue in this country, in which maybe the many Americanisms will be somewhat toned down. It is rightly to be welcomed with gratitude.

A.O.