

Eastern Churches NEWS-LETTER

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

No responsibility can be accepted either by the General Committee
or by the Editor for the views expressed by contributors.

No. 41

APRIL, 1966

CONTENTS:

Editorial.

Vatican Council.

Old Catholic Congress.

Ethiopian Journey.

Prayer and Unity.

Alexandria and the Bible.

Price 2/- to non-members

THE ANGLICAN AND EASTERN CHURCHES
ASSOCIATION

founded in 1864

Orthodox Patron:

The Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople
His All Holiness Athenagoras I

Anglican Patron:

His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury

Anglican President:

The Bishop of London

Orthodox President:

Metropolitan Athenagoras of Thyatira

Chairman of Committee:

The Revd. AUSTIN OAKLEY

General Secretary:

The Revd. HAROLD EMBLETON, R.N.,
88 Farlington Avenue, Drayton, Portsmouth

Treasurer:

J. S. ULLMER, Esq.,
32 Chiltley Way, Midhurst Road, Liphook, Hants

Editor of News-Letter:

The Revd. HAROLD EMBLETON, R.N.

EDITORIAL

Once again, as six months ago, the emphasis in this issue is on comment rather than news. In the continuing ecumenical ferment it behoves us all to try to see as much of the whole as we may, whatever our background or special predilections. I have, therefore, brought before you this quarter Orthodox appraisal of both the recent Old Catholic Congress and also of some aspects of the Second Vatican Council. Our old and esteemed friend in Alexandria, Dr. Moschonas, contributes a paper which reminds us of our common heritage (and our involved interdependence, historically) in the Holy Scriptures. One of our members (and a member of the Church of Ireland) has sent us a most interesting and lively description of one of his adventures in Ethiopia, where he is at present working on behalf of the World Council of Churches. And it is with real pleasure that we are able to bring our Orthodox President's sermon preached during this year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity before a wider congregation!

Now, one or two notices, for your diaries. Our Annual Festival this year will be held in Westminster, on **Saturday, 22nd October**. Our Anglican President, the Bishop of London, intends to celebrate the Holy Eucharist in St. Margaret's, Westminster, and our Orthodox President, the Metropolitan of Thyateira and Great Britain, will preach: immediately afterwards we shall go in procession to the Shrine of the Confessor, where the Dean will be awaiting us, to pray together at our national shrine. Further details as to the Annual General Meeting in the afternoon, and the speakers, will be announced in our next number.

By the time that you read this, the course of Sermons in St. Dunstan's-in-the-West will be well under way: I hope that those of you who live in or near the Metropolis will have found them worthwhile. I am most grateful to those representatives of the national Orthodox Churches resident in London for agreeing so readily to contribute to this united exposition of the Christ during these "Great Forty Days".

A recent appointment to the headquarters staff of the World Council of Churches deserves mention: Archpriest Vitaly Borovoy, the representative of the Russian Orthodox Church with W.C.C., is to be an Associate Director of the Secretariat on Faith and Order. He thus becomes the first Russian Orthodox to join the Council's staff.

Another "first" was the sending by the Oecumenical Patriarchate of its secretary of the Holy Synod, Archimandrite

affect the Roman Catholic Church's contacts with the Eastern Orthodox Church in the same way it did the contacts with the Western non-Roman churches. "The Council," he said, "dealt with problems from the Western point of view as it faced the well-known objections of Protestant theology . . . (It) was not prepared to deal in the same way with some of the problems that the Eastern Church poses". Professor Nissiotis expressed the judgement that, as far as relations between the historic Eastern and Western Churches were concerned, certain basic obstacles still exist to mutual understanding. Among them he cited the Council's practice of always referring to "the Oriental Churches" in the plural, making it difficult "for the Orthodox Church to realise that it was she who was being referred to". He cited also the fact that "the great authority over and above the Council was the absent Pope, represented by his empty throne, placed where the Gospel was placed in the ancient councils."

Nevertheless, he called Vatican II "a God-given opportunity for the whole Church" and asserted that "the ecumenical movement after the Council will continue its work with more conviction and courage". "The vision of the One Church acting in the world should remain our goal in response to the vocation to which the Spirit calls us. The Roman Catholic Church is already practically, consciously and officially sharing fully in ecumenical work after the Council".

"All criticism against certain positions must be accompanied by a sincere self-criticism of our own unilateral, conservative or radical positions. The great majority of the bishops in the Vatican Council showed this spirit of self-criticism in their deliberations . . . and in the light of this self-criticism each one of us must proceed to a serious introspective examination".
(E.P.S. GENEVA)

THE XIXth OLD CATHOLIC CONGRESS IN VIENNA (22nd—26th September, 1965)

The *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* for November, 1965, contains an interesting review of the XIXth Old Catholic Congress, (which was held in Vienna from 22nd—26th September, 1965) from the Orthodox viewpoint, by Archbishop Basil of Brussels.

He recalls that these Congresses have been held at intervals of 4—5 years since the First Vatican Council of 1870 as an opportunity for the various groups adhering to the Utrecht Union to meet together. On this occasion delegations from

the Old Catholic Churches of Austria, Germany, Holland, Yugoslavia and France took part; and Observers were present representing the Oecumenical Patriarch (Metropolitan Athenagoras of Thyateira, from London, and Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Vienna), the various Orthodox Churches, the Church of England (the Bishop of Kensington and Canon J. R. Satterthwaite), the Episcopal Church of U.S.A. (the Bishop of Western New York), and, for the first time, the Roman Catholic Church.

The Congress opened with the Old Catholic Mass in German which, because of the size of the congregation, was celebrated in a Lutheran church. Archbishop Basil notes that the changes introduced into the Roman Mass by the Old Catholics have brought it much closer to the Orthodox Liturgy and that the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council have in some ways brought the Romans closer to the Old Catholics.

In the course of the subsequent meetings of the Congress, the President (Archbishop Andrew Rinkel of Utrecht) announced the establishment of a Concordat with the Independent Church of the Philippines, the Reformed Spanish Church and the Lusitanian Church, on the basis of full communion and recognition of mutual Catholicity. Bishops of these Churches who were present brought greetings to the Congress and were warmly applauded. The Bishop of Kensington, in greeting the Congress on behalf of the Archbishop of Canterbury, referred to the project of union between the Church of England and the Methodist Church, which had aroused some misgivings among Old Catholics. The representative of the Oecumenical Patriarch referred to the coming theological discussions with the Old Catholics; and the other foreign visitors also spoke. Although a greeting was brought from Cardinal Bea in Rome, Archbishop Basil notes that there was none from the Roman Catholics of Austria and that there was little or no mention of the Congress in the local press!

The various sessions of the Congress were concerned with such subjects as the "Old Catholic Confession", "the Road to Church Unity", "God and the World", "the Church and the Churches", "Old Catholic Problems", and "the Second Vatican Council and the Old Catholics". In the last-mentioned, Professor Maan noted the existence of High and Low Church tendencies in the Roman Catholic Church, and warmly welcomed the Decree on Ecumenism, which had opened the way for dialogue with other Churches.. He also welcomed the Constitution on the Church, although this was not as far-reaching

as had been hoped. In spite of the projected College of Bishops, the Roman Church would remain a Papal Church.

In the discussion on "The Church and the World", modernist tendencies were reviewed, e.g. the Bishop of Woolwich's book "*Honest to God*": while not abandoning Christianity or the Church of England, the Bishop in fact preached a religion without a personal God or a world to come. Such doctrines were rejected by the Congress. In connection with Unity, it was interesting that the Old Catholics do not identify themselves with the Church, as do the Roman Catholics and the Orthodox, but seek a road to the Church not so much through verbal formularies as through "mystery, love and truth". Disagreement, heresy and schism may exist; but they exist within the Church and the Church remains one family. The Old Catholics may thus serve as a bridge uniting the older Confessions.

In summing up, Archbishop Basil emphasises the importance of the establishment of full communion with the three Churches of the Philippines, Spain and Portugal. He recalls the origin of these Churches: they all originated at the end of the 19th or the beginning of the 20th century in protest against Rome, but they were of very different sizes. The Philippine Church has some 2,000,000 adherents; but the Spanish and Portuguese not more than 2,000 each. There were disturbing elements in this Union: the Spanish and Portuguese Churches derived their Orders from the Church of Ireland and the Episcopal Church of U.S.A. and were in full communion with the Church of England, as were also the Old Catholics. They were at present under very strong Protestant influence, and their dogmas and liturgical life almost ignored the existence of the Mother of God. Furthermore, the Philippine Church was much influenced by Unitarianism (which may have been a reason why Archbishop Rinkel emphasised the central position of the Holy Trinity in the Old Catholic faith). Even some Old Catholics, therefore, had misgivings as to communion with these bodies. But this was only a partial instance of the general problem of establishing full communion with the Anglicans, among whom modernist tendencies were rife, even among the Bishops, and there was no authority capable of repressing them. Furthermore, the approach to the Methodists seemed to indicate some doubt as to their teaching on the Apostolic Succession, the Episcopate and the Eucharistic Mystery. In their coming dialogue with the Old Catholics, the Orthodox (he concludes) should therefore not forget that the Old Catholics are in communion with Churches under Anglican influence.

RICHARD F. AVERY

CHRISTMAS AT LALIBELA

Christmas may already seem long past for most people, but the memory lingers with me because this year it was so different from anything I had experienced before. I say "this year" because in Ethiopia, following the Julian Calendar, the Nativity is celebrated on 7th January, or in local parlance 29th Tahsas, which is the fourth month of the Ethiopian year. Epiphany, or Timket in Ethiopia, is then celebrated on 19th January when ceremonies are held in commemoration of the Baptism of our Lord (as is traditional in all Orthodox Churches).

If the first difference about this Christmas was the date, the next was the weather. Beautiful dry sunny spring days, baked brown earth, and harvest fields, reminding one that no rain had fallen since September, enticed holidaymakers to make it an outdoor Christmas. We foreigners had already

kept 25th December amidst a week of working days, and had enjoyed turkey and plum pudding, parties, carols and all the other things which make up the modern "secularised-Christian's" holiday. I also had spent much time in the little Anglican Church of St. Matthew, assisting the Chaplain on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and St. Stephen's Day which fell on Sunday. There was little significance then in repeating all these WESTERN customs in the early weeks of January; and so with some friends I decided to make an expedition across country in the Landrover to the famous rockhewn churches of Lalibela. If we reached there on time (and we could find no one who had recently made the journey by road and who could advise us on the route), we planned to celebrate the Feast with the Ethiopian Christians there.

On Wednesday morning we set off about 7.30, northwards from Addis Ababa with a full load of foodstuffs, camping gear and jerry cans, along a good tarmac road and through fairly open countryside. For the first miles we met droves of sheep, cattle and donkeys, the latter hidden under mounds of straw or piled high with large earthenware waterpots, all heading for the Christmas market in the city. Soon however the traffic thinned, and the tarmac disappeared. We were following the highland ridge which averages 9,000 feet, and once on our right we had a magnificent view across the lowlands through a narrow steep gap, before we reached the Mussolini tunnels and Debre Sina. Many places in Ethiopia have this Debre in their names, and it signifies a monastery, in this case that of Mount Sinai. Other such places are Debre

Tabor, Debre Libanos, Debre Zeit (=Mount of Olives), etc., most with allusions to the Holy Land, and a perpetual reminder of Ethiopian Christianity.

Having now descended to a warmer altitude we had a picnic lunch with fried chickens, rolls and coca-cola, and continued that evening to the market town of Dessie, which is the provincial capital of Wollo and where we passed a comfortable night in the Touring Hotel. Early next morning, with full tanks, we again headed north past Lake Haiq and through Waldea, along a reasonable gravel road to the village of Cobbo. Three hours had passed already when we turned westwards off the road, not knowing what we had to face nor how long it would take us to reach Lalibela. We had a quick snack and soon, having engaged four-wheel drive, we were crawling up steep rough tracks, backing up on narrow hairpin bends where the gradient was about one in two with loose gravel and stones. Then we were clinging precariously along narrow ledges around the mountainsides, and dipping nose-first through rivers. The road was more suitable for mules; but the Landrover behaved beautifully even in the worst conditions, and we stopped only once to let it cool off in the high altitude. At one point we saw dramatic mountain peaks which were obviously volcanic plugs, and a member of the party said: "I bet the road goes over those". He was right!

In the afternoon we saw against the hillside our first rock-church, or at least its roof visible above the surrounding ground, and immediately decided to leave it for our return journey not knowing how far we had still to go. Then, approaching the village of Lalibela, tucked away among mountain fastnesses and unbelievable scenery, we began to meet more and more people. Our wonder grew as the village unfolded itself before us to show that it was literally crowded with pilgrims. The surrounding hillsides were also white with the multitudes who had come for the Feast, dressed in the traditional shamma. If this had been Bethlehem long ago, one could easily understand that there was no room in the inn... We found the hotel, recently built for tourists who fly in every week to visit the churches, and after a shower we went out to explore in the gathering darkness. I was taken by a deacon of about ten years old to the house of the Abbot of Lalibela and presented to him a letter which I had brought from the Patriarchate in Addis Ababa. He surprised me, sitting in his one-roomed wattle and mud house, by speaking good English; and he told me that he had studied in Jerusalem at St. George's Anglican College. We spoke of people we both knew, and I introduced my friends to him. Then he outlined the pattern of the Christmas cele-

brations which were to begin at 9 p.m. that evening, which was Christmas Eve. Since we had travelled far that day we decided not to stay up all night, as most people there would do, but returned to the hotel having arranged with Abbot Member Afeworq to come to St. Mary's Church at 4. am.

When we arrived at the Churches we descended some rough steps and passed through a dark tunnel to come out suddenly into the sunken courtyard of St. Mary's Church. It was crowded with people all holding candles, and in the midst a group of priests were chanting and performing the ritual dance. Looking upwards to ground level we saw again very many people silhouetted against the velvet sky ablaze with stars, leaning near the edge to watch the ceremonies. We were led through the crowd to the side of the Abbot who stood on some carpeted steps. He greeted us in English and shook hands, and pointing to the lighted candles of the dancing priests, he said: "it looks like the Star of Bethlehem which guides us to the Christ Child". We stood there in the crowd, looking and listening, thrilled by the deep throb of the drums which accompanied the chanting, fascinated by the colourful robes of the priests; and we were in another world. At six o'clock we moved into the small church for the Liturgy and soon it was crowded to the doors. Many more people of course were left outside than inside; but being visitors we were allowed to stand at the front, just below the chancel step. All through the service we kept gazing around the interior of the building which had been hollowed out of a solid cube of rock, and when the clouds of incense cleared we could dimly make out carvings on the pillars and paintings on the walls.

There is nothing else in the world like these 12th or 13th century churches. Petra, or the rock pillars-of the Goreme valley in Cappadocia, are the nearest equivalents; but neither are constructed like King Lalibela's churches in Ethiopia. Beginning from the flat earth, a square trench is cut down into the rock perhaps up to 20 metres deep, leaving a solid cube of rock free-standing in the middle. This is then hollowed out from the inside, leaving a flat roof supported by arches and pillars executed in good proportion and symmetry. Even the windows have tracery designs left in them, in the shape of crosses and swastikas, all carved from the living rock. There are ten churches in the village itself, some square, some rectangular, and at least one cruciform; but in the surrounding area it is said that there are many more.

At the end of the Liturgy many gaily-robed priests and deacons processed up the steps on to the surrounding walls of the courtyard at ground level, and began again their liturgical

dance. By now it was 9 o'clock and the sun was growing warm. Everywhere there were bright-coloured fringed umbrellas, magnificent processional crosses, sistra (metal shakers), drums, and other "ecclesiastical paraphernalia", even including one accordion. A few of the priests carried the tabots on their heads, covered in rich brocaded cloths, and they were focal points in the procession. These tabots are in fact altar stones, though most are made of wood, and on them is carved a picture of the dedication of the particular church. Medhane Alem (=Holy Saviour) will for example have a Crucifixion carved on it, and St. Mary's would have the Virgin and Child. Some people refer to the whole altar as the tabot, which means ark; but I think it is more accurate to make it refer only to the altar slab, which is reminiscent of the tables of stone on which the Ten Commandments were once inscribed. Those actual tables of stone, which once resided in the Ark of the first Temple in Jerusalem, were said to have been given by Solomon to Menelik, his son by the Queen of Sheba; and legend has it that they are in Ethiopia to this day. But to return to the tabot: when a church is to be consecrated, there is much chanting and censing, but the bishop actually blesses the altar-stone upon which the Sacred Elements are then placed and the Liturgy celebrated. This practice surely dates from a time when churches were moveable and tents were used, like the tabernacle in the wilderness. It reminds us also of the "corporal" of the Greek priests, and the "portable altar" of the Roman Catholic priest; and it makes us wonder too what the Anglican Church may have lost by having no particular practice laid down for the celebration of Communion in hospitals or in private houses.

For the rest of Christmas Day and the following one also we explored all the churches and crept along numerous subterranean passages. It is impossible to describe these churches adequately, and often very difficult to photograph them because of the narrowness of the courtyards around them; but we drank in all that our eyes and our cameras could absorb. Having taken leave of the Abbot, after drinking a glass of his talla (a home-made beer that has the taste of burnt paper and the appearance of very muddy water), we set out at dawn on the Sunday morning to face once more 120 kilometres of mountaineering and pioneering in the Landrover, before we would meet the main road. On the homeward journey we got stuck in deep mud at a river-crossing. It took us a good half-hour putting branches and stones around the wheels before we extricated ourselves; and by that time all passengers were covered in mud from head to toe. There was, however, some-

thing very satisfying about that; and we were ready-armed with "incidents" to relate to our friends when we returned to the comparative civilisation of the big city.

R. HUDDLESON

THE EFFICACY OF THE PRAYER FOR THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH

"The Love of Christ constraineth us"

It is commonly believed by the Christians of all time that they make up an integral entity, the *pleroma*, a body which lives and acts, and continues on earth the saving mission of Christ. This living entity which the Christian people compose was called from the beginning and is known by all as the Church of Christ. In the history of this body we may witness how it was threatened with many persecutions and with mistreatment from without and with discords and disturbances from within. We may witness that besides these many-sided attacks and dangers this entity, this body, the Church, has been preserved intact, still exists and acts and continues to influence humanity.

Often people ask what is the nature of the strength which preserves this entity, the Body of the Christians. The answer is given by St. Paul who writes in the second Epistle to the Corinthians: "That the love of Christ constraineth us." The Greek verb *synehei* means upholds, preserves, unifies. The Apostle surely meant that the love of Christ controls the body of the Christian people. Then we understand the significance of the Apostle's statement not only from the interpretation of his words but also from our own Christian experience; that is, from our own nature as being placed in this Body, the Church, which the love of Christ preserves and controls.

When the Apostle says that the love of Christ upholds us he means first that Christ loves His people. The fact that we still exist as Christians, as a Church, as a worshipping community looking with expectancy for our salvation from God, that we are conscious of our sinfulness and seek forgiveness, the fact that we are still preserved in a kind of comprehensive or loose unity after so many schisms, divisions and antagonisms and polemic attitudes to disprove each others conceptions and views, is a great proof that Christ cares for us, that he still loves us and upholds and preserves our Christian community.

The preservation of the Church as a sign of the love of Christ demands our serious attention. The love of Christ must meet our response for we cannot be loved without offering in

return if not the same degree yet some kind of a proof of our love. Yes, it was He who first loved us but it is also within the nature of our rationality to respond to this overwhelming love. We know that our response is weak, that our love is insufficient, yet the result is substantial and rewarding. If we the people who call ourselves Christians respond to Christ's love, each according to his capacity and measure of understanding, but in a positive way, then the result would be indeed great. The Church through which the saving work of Christ is continued, the Church as the herald of peace on earth, as the agent of Christ to spread good will towards men, as a redeeming and regenerating power, would exercise an immense influence upon all humanity. Because of the fact that there is not enough conscientious and sincere response on our part to the love of Christ the mission of the Church is progressing slowly among many difficulties and obstacles which seem to multiply—always strengthened by our indifference.

We must know that indifference always provokes consequences which may motivate enmity and become the foundation of negation. We can see these consequences described in a rather dramatic way by St. John in the Apocalypse, where indifference is equated with irresolution and lukewarmness. He says: "Would thou wert either cold or hot. Because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot I will spew you out of my mouth" (Rev. III vv 15—16). Lukewarmness is often developed into negation which draws the wrath of God. When love is not permitted to present its rays, when love does not burn and move us to positive action, then it means that it is not with us, it means that love does not any more control us, it means that love has "grown cold," that it is frozen. This unhappy condition proves that instead of love, hatred and negation and infidelity reign in us.

But even in such a serious condition God does not abandon His people. "God does not leave Himself without witness" (Acts XXIV, v 17). When more than a century ago the Christian world was torn to pieces with divisional antagonism and hatred, God showed His care. The Holy Spirit inspired a few people to work. Men known for the integrity of their Christian conscience, for the vivacity of their enthusiasm and love for Christ, studied the critical conditions into which the Christian world had fallen. And they took the initiative to work with the purpose to warm up again the frozen love of the Christian people.

England offered many such inspired workers in the field of Christian love. It was in this country that the Faith and

Order movement took its initial form and enunciated the Ecumenical Movement aiming at the unification of the Christian world.

One of the most effective means recognised and utilised from the beginning by the workers of Christian love was prayer. Prayer for Unity, Prayer for the rewarming of Christian hearts with zeal and enthusiasm and love. Millions of Christians all over the world started to pray for the "unity of all" as the Orthodox Church prays daily in every liturgy, in every service. In the last twenty years these prayers for unity have attracted the attention of many more people and the organisation of meetings and services spread all over the Christian world. Today we observe the opening of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

The efficacy of these prayers is something we must recognise with gratitude because in our days we witness with genuine satisfaction great events which reveal the successful efforts of the workers for the rewarming of love, efforts which prove that a dynamic response on our part to the love of Christ takes new momentum in events by which love is proclaimed as the unique foundation and power to sustain and unify the people of God.

It is not necessary to mention such events that have happened in the past for in our days we witness events which speak for themselves. As you remember, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Geoffrey Fisher, paid a visit in 1960 to Pope John XXIII. Since that happy meeting other visitors went to knock at the door of the Vatican from the various parts of the Christian world. The convocation of the Second Vatican Council and the invitation of observers to represent the various Christian Churches and to follow the deliberations of the Council brought to Rome many Christian theologians to approach and discuss theological questions with Roman Catholic leaders. Then the meeting of Pope Paul VI and the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenogaras in Jerusalem gave a new impetus to a *rapprochement* between the Churches of West and East. The prayer offered and the reading of the seventeenth chapter of the Gospel of St. John by the Pope and the Patriarch near the empty tomb of Christ near Calvary after nine centuries of estrangement and antagonism resulted in the exchange of messages of friendship, into the offering of mutual assistance and consolation for the rewarming of the frozen Christian love.

These contacts took later a rather official character because the Pan-Orthodox Conference of Rhodes decided to

initiate a theological dialogue "on equal terms" with Rome, Canterbury and Utrecht. This triple theological encounter takes, day after day, its final shape between Roman Catholics, Orthodox, Old Catholics and Anglicans. In Geneva a committee of theologians representing the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church works patiently and tirelessly to clarify and reaffirm points of agreement in the hope of establishing a method for the advancement of friendship and co-operation among Churches and Christian individuals for a more positive response to the love of Christ which we seem to let again sustain and control the Christian people.

The efficacy of prayer was recently witnessed in a very impressive way when the mutual excommunications of West and East were simultaneously revoked in Rome and Constantinople on the seventh day of last December. In 1054 Cardinal Humbert the plenipotentiary of the then imprisoned Pope Leo IX was sent to Constantinople to discuss the various differences between the two Churches with Patriarch Michael and the Synod of his bishops. But instead of meeting the clergy, the Cardinal decided to meet first the politicians and courtiers and only after the termination of his discussion with them did he meet the leaders of the Eastern Church. Patriarch Michael did not show willingness to receive him and after a meeting was organised the Latin delegates did not show the traditional respect when they met the Patriarch. He thought that the Papal documents presented to him were falsified because he suspected that the seals were violated; for this reason his attitude was rather negative. The result was that the Cardinal and his followers went to the Cathedral of St. Sophia and placed an excommunication against the Patriarch on the altar during the Liturgy.

This unfortunate action, though illegal, had many repercussions. In the first place the Pope had died before the arrival of Cardinal Humbert in Constantinople. The Patriarch did not know that he was excommunicated in the name of a dead Pope and responded with an excommunication against Humbert and those who agreed with him. An investigation of this historical happening in 1054 proves beyond doubt that both excommunications were baseless and unintentionally illegal. Nevertheless these two fatal papers gave the incentive for the official beginning of the Great Schism between the two sections of the Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. Only a few weeks ago, at the initiative of the Pope and of the Patriarch, after lengthy discussions in mixed committees, an exchange of documents revoked simultaneously the excommunications of their predecessors.

This significant and symbolic event was greeted as a happy omen by the Christian leaders all over the world and as a fruit of prayer for the unity of the Christian people. We hope to witness and greet similar actions as results of our prayers in the near future by which we may recognise our response to Christ's love as genuine and sincere and continuous.

According to the official announcement, His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury will visit the Pope of Rome next March. The Archbishop, a leader of the Ecumenical Movement who earnestly believes in the efficacy of prayer for Christian Unity, requested the prayers of the Christian people. We must offer earnestly prayers that the result of this meeting of the two leaders may be blessed with rich love and mutual understanding to the effect that another barrier placed fatefully as an obstacle in the road to Christian Unity may be erased.

It is possible to consider as a kind of fence, as an obstacle to unity, the encyclical *Apostolicae Curae* of Pope Leo XIII by which the validity of the Anglican priesthood was questioned and declared null and void. Since that time the gap between Rome and Canterbury was broadened and love was ignored and the products of a polemic theology were multiplied. The visit however of Archbishop Fisher to Pope John seems to be opened again the door for reconciliation. I am of the idea, which I have expressed on another occasion, that this encyclical *Apostolicae Curae* must be re-examined in the light of the Ecumenical experience of today on the basis of historical documents which are beyond doubt true and valid. The result will be a happy one: The Anglican Orders will again be seen in their historical and canonical setting and the Anglican priests of today will be seen linked with their predecessors in the days of Augustine and Theodore of Tarsus.

I am happy that the Church which I represent in this country, the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, took the initiative to be followed by the Patriarchates of Alexandria, Jerusalem and Bucharest and the Archdiocese of Cyprus to recognise after lengthy research and deliberations the validity of Anglican Orders. The remaining Churches of the Orthodox Communion, still under the influence cast by *Apostolicae Curae*, have not decided yet, and still study the question. I wish and I pray with you that the visit to Rome of His Grace Archbishop Michael Ramsey may influence the re-examination of this theme and may the result be in a parallel to the revocation of the anathemas between East and West.

All that has been witnessed in our days in the field of Christian co-operation, as positive steps of the Church towards

its re-unification, proved the efficacy of prayers for the great cause of unity. It is therefore imperative that we must continue with enthusiasm to pray in order to prepare for the day of the great universal feast, the feast of our oneness, the feast of our approach to the same altar for the glory of Christ and for our salvation.

AMEN

BYZANTINE ALEXANDRIA AND ITS RELATIONS WITH THE BIBLE

Before the advent of the Byzantine the Holy Scriptures were flourishing. The tradition of the Septuagint was still vivid. The continuation of this remained in a sort of tract-distribution when Origen published his Hexapla of the Bible and, standing outside the Serapeum, used to distribute these tracts saying: "accept the Word of God in the name of Christ—not Serapis". When Arius was nearly triumphant, Egypt was still the centre where the pure text of the Bible could be found, and preserved. In Alexandria therefore, a centre of literary scholarship and where the Septuagint tradition still survived, a new miracle of the Bible happened: the writing by Thekla, a noble Egyptian lady, of both Old and New Testaments. This is what we call the Codex Alexandrinus, a priceless jewel of Christian paleography which remained in the Patriarchal Library for nearly 13 centuries. It is recorded in a note in Arabic, alleged to have been dictated by order of Patriarch Athanasios II in the 13th century at the foot of the first folio of Genesis, that the Codex Alexandrinus is an inalienable gift in the Patriarchal Cell and that whosoever removes it thence shall be accursed and cut off. On a fly sheet at the beginning of Volume I there is another note in a hand of the latter part of the 17th century, "donum datum cubiculo Patriarcalis anno 814 Martyrum," to which there is added in pencil "284: 1098," meaning the difference between the Coptic era and the Julian Calendar. Together with Dr. Bentley's note in Latin there is a similar inscription in Arabic, "dhakarou ana hadha al kitabon be khat takla al shahidat," to show that the amanuensis of the Codex was Thekla the Martyr. Tregellius suggested that this refers to the now mutilated upper margin of the 1st folio of the New Testament in the Codex which begins with St. Matthew xxv 6 as an indication of the reading of the Lesson for the Feast of St. Thekla. Indeed, the Greek Church orders on 24th September, Feast of St. Thekla, the reading of the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins (St. Matthew xxv 1—13). The Codex is written on vellum and consists of 773 folios. In 1633 Patrick Young, Librarian to King Charles I, published the 1st

September Epistle with a Latin translation. In 1637 he also published the Book of Job from the Codex at the end of his "Catena Grecorum Patrum in Beatum Job." The Greek Orthodox Library has a copy of this rare edition. Let us also note that the Codex Alexandrinus contains the last twelve verses of St. Mark's Gospel, and this gives a further proof of its precedence over other Codices. This Codex, written with the permission of Athanasios a few years after Arius's defeat, was presented by Cyril Lukaris (the Greek Patriarch of Alexandria and of Constantinople) to King Charles I. In a previous paper I suggested that the Codex was not presented but offered for safe keeping of the Codex in Britain, following an outburst of anti-Christian feeling in Constantinople in 1627, when the Patriarchal printing house was wrecked by the Turks. I still maintain this view although it is outside the main scope of this paper.

The Codex Alexandrinus is now, as you know, in the British Museum. Last but not least we must also remember that during the Byzantine rule a well-recorded event happened in Alexandria. One sees in the Codex Alexandrinus and other Bible manuscripts no divisions or chapters. Euthalius, a Coptic deacon in Alexandria, was the first to divide the Bible into Chapters and into Lessons. By a curious coincidence this happened in 459, when at the Council of Chalcedon and afterwards Christian bishops had started a tug of war which proved disastrous to both Christian charity and Christian unity.

Let us turn again to Byzantine Alexandria, where decadence came to prevail after the sempiternal quarrels between Greeks and Copts. How great a gulf opened in the mentality of the people may be judged by looking at petitions and comparing them with similar documents of an earlier period. Here for example is the beginning of one written about 243 B.C. "To King Ptolemy, greeting. I, Antigonos, am being unjustly treated by Patron, the superintendent of police in the lower toparchy": the man who addressed the complaint is a minor official petitioning the King without servility as man to man. Now compare a petition addressed on the 6th century by a colonist to his landlord. "To my good master, lover of Christ, lover of the poor, the most magnificent Patrician and Duke, all esteem: Apion, one of your miserable slaves . . ."

Hellenism was dying magnificently, but its death was a long and slow process; and the Greek language was rapidly losing ground. Coptic, on the other hand, was increasing and was used for legal and other documents, and even Church

dignitaries were ignorant of Greek. After all two Patriarchs were residing at Alexandria: one of the established State Church, and the Egyptian one tolerated (when not persecuted and compelled to hide in the Nitrian desert). This was the fruit of the petty methods of the petty satraps who ruled in the name of the Emperor. The short Persian conquest came as a sign from above. The case was hopeless. In the last days of the Persian yoke a young Arab merchant from the desert came to Alexandria and admired the beautiful city in silence. Like Hamlet he could say that something rotten existed in the Kingdom of Egypt. This young Arab merchant came back to Alexandria thirty years later as a conqueror. His name is Amr Ebn el As. The Coptic Patriarch, the most holy Benjamin was in exile. The Byzantine Patriarch was the Georgian Cyrus whom many mistook for the equally notorious and mysterious Al Mokawkas. Cyrus came to Egypt by order of the Emperor Heraclius to patch up the quarrel of the division between Copts and Greeks, using a compromise called Monothelitism. Heraclius was a brilliant general but no theologian; whilst Cyrus proved to be no diplomat. After failing in his mission, like a good Caucasian he took to the knout and to a regime of terror. The Copts, who had seen similar days in the time of Diocletian, the Arian controversies and the shameful pogrom of the Byzantine Patriarch Apollinarius (who after being enthroned issued from the church attired as a Byzantine general to put to the sword the non-conformist Copts), ignored this time the Georgian Patriarch and nicknamed him the "Great Dragon." Cyrus was a good administrator and had some notions of strategy like Apollinarius, because as soon as he came he fortified Babylone and Alexandria. Seeing that the Arabs had come to stay, he told Heraclius to pay a tribute. Heraclius heard this with contempt; but when he heard Cyrus suggesting that a Byzantine princess be given to Amr as bride, he deposed Cyrus and exiled him. In the meantime Babylone fell and Egypt was overrun by the Arabs. Alexandria was besieged when the Empress Martina sent back Patriarch Cyrus to treat with Amr. The Patriarch, after much trouble, signed an eleven-months armistice with the Arabs. On 14th September, 641, the Feast of the Exaltation, the Christians paraded in the streets of Alexandria, singing hymns. It was the last ceremony for Cyrus, as he died broken-hearted; and the Arabs entered Alexandria. After visiting Alexander's tomb, Amr sent to the Caliph his historic communique: "I conquered a great City with 400 palaces, 4,000 baths, 4,000 theatres..." We pass in silence the calumny of the burning of the Alexandrine Library. The fact that the Codex Alexandrinus has been saved to this day proves that the Greeks

either removed their books during the armistice by the sea route which remained free to them, or that the Codices and papyri were well hidden and saved. Islam, described by Mommsen as the executor of Hellenism, was itself to borrow from Greek science and Greek logic, first in Egypt and then in Greek-speaking Syria. Alexander's work, cut short by his premature death, misunderstood and set aside by his successors, nevertheless lived after him. As for us, like Paul of Tarsus, we feel proud of this our city of Alexandria, no mean city in the sphere of intellectual progress and intellectual achievement. We must be proud also because, thanks to Alexandria, the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, has survived in the shape of the Septuagint translation and the Codex Alexandrinus.

TH. D. MOSCHONAS

Patriarchal Librarian, Alexandria.

AN EXHIBITION ON CHRISTIAN UNITY: THE ANGLICAN INITIATIVE

An exhibition of printed books and manuscripts will open in Lambeth Palace Library on 18th May, 1966 designed to illustrate the history of the ecumenical activity of the Church of England and other Churches of the Anglican Communion from the 16th century to the present time.

The exhibition is arranged in four sections describing the relations of the Anglican Churches with the Orthodox Churches, the Roman Catholic Church, the Protestant Churches and the Old Catholic Churches.

Most of the exhibits are taken from the rich collections in Lambeth Palace Library. These have been reinforced by loans from the Bodleian Library (an important letter of Gilbert Burnet), the Governing Body of Christ Church, Oxford (William Wake's famous letter to the Patriarch Chrysanthus of Jerusalem), the Trustees of the British Museum and private collections. The Dean and Chapter of York have lent the chalice in which is embedded Cardinal Mercier's ring.

Among other items exhibited are a superb letter from Archbishop Matthew Parker to the Consistory of the Reformed

Church at La Rochelle; the letter to Archbishop Davidson which Cardinal Mercier dictated and signed on his deathbed; the original notes kept by Archbishop Lang as Chairman of the Reunion Committee of the 1920 Lambeth Conference. Archbishop Fisher has contributed his own account of the initiative he took in 1960 in making his ecumenical pilgrimage to the Oecumenical Patriarch and to the Pope.

The exhibition has been arranged by the Rev. H. R. T. Brandreth, O.G.S. It will be open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. from Monday to Friday inclusive until the end of the year. Admission is free and there will be a printed catalogue.

Aims of the Association

The Association exists to unite members of the Anglican and Eastern Orthodox Churches for the following objects:—

- (a) The principal object for which the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association is established is for the advancement of the Christian religion, in particular by means of teaching the members of the Anglican Churches and those of the Eastern Orthodox Churches the doctrines and respective principles and methods of each other in their work for advancement of the Christian religion.
- (b) The Association exists also to unite members of the two Communions in prayer and work in achieving the principal object, with a view to promotion of visible unity between them.

Some Methods of Helping the Work

1. By joining the Association and getting others to join.
2. By arranging for a meeting in the neighbourhood, when a lecture may be given on the Eastern Churches and Reunion, and the objects of the Association explained.
3. By asking the Parochial Authorities to promise a Sunday collection every year either in the service or afterwards at the doors.
4. By uniting in local centres for the study of Eastern Christendom, and for Intercession for Reunion.

Lectures — with or without visual aids — can be arranged by writing to the General Secretary.

Subscription

The normal annual subscription is 10/- (Life-membership £5), but none will be excluded 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 receive the Eastern Churches News-Letter which is published quarterly.