

RATIONALISM VS THE TRUE FAITH IN OUR HEARTS

by
+Photios (W)

(Below: the faith we need)

“Avvakum Burned Alive And He Gloried In It!”

In April 1682, Avvakum achieved his long-desired martyrdom, bound to the stake in the marketplace of Pustozersk. Crossing himself a last time with two fingers, he shouted joyfully to the crowd, ‘There is a terror in the stake until thou art bound to it, but, once there, embrace it and all will be forgotten. Thou wilt **behold Christ** (emphasis supplied) before the heat has laid hold upon thee, and thy soul, released from the dungeon of the body, will fly up to heaven like a happy little bird.’

St. Avvakum, Leader of the Old Believers [quoted from Robert K. Massie, PETER THE GREAT His Life and World, p. 63.

[footnotes will be in the body of the homily]

The West Is Seriously Ill: The West Being New Rome And The Protestants In Particular

The West we live in has been spiritually ill for over a thousand years. New Rome (the heretical Roman Catholics), since its departure (deviation) from True Orthodox Christianity of the Undivided Church, constructed a myriad of heresies, which destroyed the piety and spiritual constancy of Orthodox Old Rome. New Rome has gone down the opportunistic neo-secular rationalistic path, in place of Divine Revelation and more designed for the glory and worldly dominion of the Papacy than for the suffering Christianity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

New Rome’s rejection of Revelation in favour of Rationalism, the font of all heresies, secularly ‘baptised’ it into the lair of the Evil One. If the CEO (chief executive officer) of New Rome (the ‘bishop’ of Rome) is not the antichrist, surely he foreshadows him as one of his forerunners. He has abandoned the ancient piety for whatever outrageous new doctrine the purported vicar of Christ fancies. What blasphemy! The Lord is always with us, so He never needs a ‘substitute’:¹
& 2

[*And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen* (St. Matthew 28: 20).]

[The Lord commanded that we become like Him, saying: *Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your soul.* (Mt 11:29). Arrogance and haughtiness, pomp, self-aggrandizement

and superiority do not belong to the followers of Jesus Christ. The claim of infallibility could only be derived from these defects, for God alone is infallible. He is our only Head and Lord and Master, and needs no vicar to replace Him, for *Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.* (Mat 28:20,) and... His Church has survived the centuries just as He promised, not in the Papacy, not in Protestantism, but in the **original** (emphasis supplied) Church which has changed **nothing** (emphasis supplied) yet preserved **everything** (emphasis supplied). This is Holy Orthodoxy, the Faith founded upon His Truth.

Rafael Masterjohn, from "The Light of Orthodoxy," Vol. 1, No. 2, in ORTHODOX HERITAGE, January-February 2008, "THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH: ORTHODOX VS. PAPAL DOGMA," pp. 1-3, at p. 3.]

New Rome's concept of power and authority over the CEO's 'subjects' is an ecclesiology of subordination unknown in Christ's True Orthodox Church. Christ is the cornerstone of His Church, and it is *conciliarly* governed.³

[See Acts 15 about the Apostolic Council (49 A.D.), and Acts 15:6 to wit "*And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter*"]

New Rome's arrogance has taken it out of the True Church.

Those Who Are Humble Are Naturally Closer to Our Lord: Those Who Seek Salvation Better Learn How To Be! (this means all of us including , of course, me)

Misuse of power is not confined to New Rome. The so-called orthodox hierarchy of those jurisdictions who openly espouse and/or tolerate ecumenism deny The Creed by supporting the branch theory of the heretics. Those who avoid their houses may save their souls. Those who are the most uncomplicated oftentimes are the most God-fearing and loving.

Those perhaps closest to Jesus are the world's 'peasants,' the little people as opposed to society's 'intelligentsia elite'. The Fathers support the "lowliest garbage man," against the hierarchy. No obedience is owed a hierarch who preaches heresy bareheaded in the Church.⁴

["The shepherd is a heretic? Then he is a wolf. Depart from him in leaps and bounds and pray not to be tricked into going near him, no matter how peaceful he may appear." (St. Photios) Also see the First-Second Council, Canon XV.]

False Bishops, Flee Them!

Such a so-called bishop is a pseudo-bishop, a false one. Having the Holy Spirit, the pious peasant trumps their heretical shenanigans everytime.⁵

[The Holy Spirit is the authority in the Church and not the hierarchy. Whoever has the Holy Spirit has the authority even if he be the *lowliest garbage man*. He

can put a thousand hierarchs in their place. No one can question him but he can question everyone. If the hierarchs excommunicate that man, their excommunication descends on their own heads because whosoever cuts off the Holy Spirit cuts himself off from Life. In Orthodoxy, the significance lies in not agreeing with the hierarchs *but in agreeing or disagreeing with the organs of the Holy Spirit, the holy Fathers* (all emphases supplied).

Dr. Alexandre Kalomiros, *THE TOUCHSTONE*, The Authority, pp. 18-19.]

How Does The Evil One Operate?

Now, how did the Evil One destroy the remnants of the True Orthodox Church in the revisionist New Rome? How did this route to spiritual oblivion begin? How did he slander God?⁶

[He used 'theology'. He first introduced a slight alteration in theology which, once it was accepted, he managed to increase more and more to the degree that Christianity became completely unrecognizable. This is what we call 'Western theology'."

Dr. Alexander Kalomiros, *RIVER OF FIRE*, II, 1980]

Whenever anyone or any institution makes just a 'little' alteration in the Dogmas/Tradition of the Holy Church as revealed and interpreted by the Holy Spirit's organs, the 'mind' of the holy Fathers, the tendency is for the unraveling of the True Faith to escalate.⁷

[In this way the fabric of the Tradition begins to unravel, and no one knows where it will stop or if it will stop. And besides, this unraveling is so easy today because it has the approval of the world, of the influential, and of the educated. The educated especially consider it their honour not to agree with the Fathers of the Church, but to agree with a certain great scholarly professor of Protestant theology or with a certain Jesuit professor who is famous in Europe, and so on.

Dr. Alexandre Kalomiros, *AGAINST FALSE UNION*, Chapter One, X. The Unraveling, p. 21.]

So, there is nothing primary vs. secondary in True Orthodox Christianity. One accepts the Faith in entirety, not in bits and pieces.

Revelation

The true Faith is proclaimed in Christ's words and actions, Holy Scripture, oral testimonies and writings by the Fathers of the True Orthodox Church. But these are not separate spiritual vessels as the Protestants like to consider them, e.g., their incorrect view that Scripture is the sole source of the faith. Here is the Fathers' answer from the pen of the great Lay Theologian Alexei Khomiakov:⁸

[The Church in her fullness, as a spiritual organism, is neither a collective nor an abstract entity; she is the Divine Spirit, who knows Himself and is unable not to know. The whole Church wrote the Holy Scriptures and then gave life to them in Tradition. To put it more accurately, Scripture and Tradition, as two manifestations of one and the same Spirit, *are a single manifestation. Scripture is nothing but written Tradition, and Tradition is nothing but living Scripture* (emphasis supplied).

Alexei Khomiakov in his *On the Western Confessions of Faith*]

The Holy Spirit, Faith And Works

The Holy Spirit touches our hearts and changes us inwardly if we accept the Lord. Our lives are transformed, and we express our faith through our actions, good works flowing inexorably from our constant faith.⁹

[*Faith without works is dead* (James 2:26), and the works of faith are: love, peace, long-suffering, mercy, humility, rest from all works (as God Himself rested from His works), bearing of the Cross, and life in the Spirit. Only such faith can be considered true. True faith cannot be without works; one who truly believes will unfailingly have works as well.

Little Russian Philokalia, Vol. I, SAINT SERAPHIM OF SAROV, SPIRITUAL INSTRUCTIONS 4. FAITH, p. 25.]

Brethren, notice that St. Sarov's "works of faith" are listed as categories, not specific items we are to do, like a laundry or shopping list. These categories originate in our hearts, inwardly. If our good works do not emanate from our faith, they are not "works of faith". We do not perform good works to gain points with God as credits toward our salvation. Our works of faith flow naturally from our faith. So, if we have faith, we will have works of faith.

Reason

The True Church utilises reason and logic but does not give them undue weight. They never supersede Revelation. They are complementary and compatible with the Faith. Reason and logic do not contradict the Faith; rather, they support it. They rise to True Faith's Divine philosophy, but they do not *determine* our Faith. As Kireyevsky said

[“one constantly watches over himself, his behaviour, his thoughts ‘constantly striving to raise reason so that it is sympathetic to faith’”.¹⁰ Fr. Alexey Young, *A MAN IS HIS FAITH: Ivan Kireyevsky and Orthodox Christianity*, London 1980, p. 55.]

Orthodoxy does not use reason and logic in an external, over-intellectual way as Europeans and Americans are prone to do. 'Over-thinking' renders us incapable of acting, i.e., doing something about our lives. We are stymied by our procedure and thus never get to the essence, never solve life's *real* problems, never *live* our lives. Lay Theologian Ivan Kireyevsky saw this kind of

‘paralysis clearly – one is always thinking; thus, “the power to actually **act**, to **do** something, atrophies”.¹¹

[A MAN IS HIS FAITH, *ibid.*, p. 33.]

Again, per Kireyevsky, the West:¹²

[think too much about life, and think too much about **thinking**, constantly trying to construct a philosophy of life based upon the shifting sands of fallen human behaviour. This results in a cold, legalistic approach to life, void of creativity and warmth, and becomes, in fact, a *substitute for life* (emphasis supplied).

id., p. 35.]

Reason does not, in and of itself give us knowledge or wisdom. Knowledge of the truth requires we ascend an “inner ladder, one which is hidden in the soul, in order to achieve full knowledge of the truth”. This we achieve with “hard spiritual labour and the help of God”.¹³

[Per Saint Isaac the Syrian, *id.*, p. 47.]

As Orthodox Christians, we respect reason; it is not incompatible with the Faith. We never violate reason, but we know it is insufficient. It is useful to us in discovering error and falsehood, but it does not provide *certainty*. Certainty is not a matter of mere “intellectual harmony;” it “is a deep assurance of the heart.” This depth, our “experience of knowledge” cannot be expressed in words by humans; man’s mind is not an end in itself. It is a means to a goal. Our knowledge goal is wisdom, our *living* experience which integrally includes Jesus Christ, Who is wisdom itself.¹⁴ [*id.*, pp. 47-48.] Christ’s disciples sought true wisdom; after all, “they alone had Wisdom itself as their teacher”.¹⁵ [Per Saint Nil the Ascetic, *id.*, p. 48.]

What Are We Seeking?

A patristic life leading to our salvation. We are not guided by a formula; rather, a completely different way of thinking than non-Orthodox. We must have faith and then begin to transform ourselves, not immediately ‘look around’ for someone else to lecture to and change.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem explained our method of Godliness in this shining way:¹⁶

[For the method of Godliness consists of these two things: pious doctrines and virtuous practice: and neither are the doctrines acceptable to God apart from the good works, nor does God accept the works which are not perfected with pious doctrines. For what would profit is it, to know all the doctrines concerning God, and yet be a vile fornicator? And, again, what profit, to be nobly temperate, and an impious blasphemer?

id. p. 52.]

To find the Truth, we must begin with ourselves inwardly. Saying we believe means nothing without spiritual follow-through. We must demonstrate our inner belief:¹⁷

[One must work on oneself. Over and over we return to this theme, as Kireyevsky did, for philosophy is not abstract reasoning separated from conviction and behaviour. An Orthodox believer views all of his actions, all of his deeds, through a single prism – for he knows that at the Second Coming ‘thou shalt rise clothed with thine own sins, or else with thy righteous deeds’ (Saint Cyril of Jerusalem).

The author’s comment, *id.*, p. 53.]

Rationalism

The West believes that the properly trained mind is capable alone of arriving at the truth. Posture an hypothesis, then follow logic per one’s assumptions and as long as strict logic is not violated, our conclusions must be true. According to Kireyevsky, this is¹⁸

[Rationalism, the belief that reason *alone* (emphasis supplied), unaided by Divine Revelation, is the **only** valid basis for knowledge.

id., p. 47.]

The Church Cannot Be Found in Rationalism¹⁹

[Such is the teaching of the Ecumenical Orthodox Church, and I say boldly that no one will find in it the seeds of rationalism.... Whoever seeks *beyond* (emphasis supplied) hope and faith for any guarantee of the spirit of love is already a rationalist. For him the Church, too, is unthinkable, since he is already, in his whole spirit, plunged in doubt.

Alexei Khomiakov, ON THE WESTERN CONFESSIONS OF FAITH]

Rationalism is the seed from which all heresies sprout.

Wisdom is given to an individual not in his own capacity but as a member of the Church. Individually, he may still err, but the Church cannot. The Church has the “fullness of truth and without any admixture of error”. Man must “not judge the Church, but submit to her, that wisdom be not taken from him”. He needs to accept the Church unconditionally without proofs, or evidence deriving from his reasoning alone within the secular world that he is within:²⁰

[Every one that seeks for proof of the truth of the Church, by that very act either shows his doubt and excludes himself from the Church, or assumes the appearance of one who doubts and at the same time preserves a hope of proving the truth, and arriving at it by his *own* (emphasis supplied) power of reason: but

the powers of reason do *not* (emphasis supplied) attain to the truth of God, and the weakness of man is made manifest by the weakness of his proofs.

Alexei Khomiakov, THE CHURCH IS ONE, V. Scripture and Tradition]

If man believes in Scripture alone or tradition and works only, he is trying to remake the Church, in effect, he rejects the Church by not accepting her truth fully. He is trying to rely on his own powers rather than those of Our Father. From Scripture, Tradition or works separately, one can only derive external incomplete knowledge even though it may contain some truth since it starts from that point but it will be inadequate because it is incomplete. All together are needed to ascertain “that which is inward in them which is the one Spirit of God”.²¹

[*ibid.*]

The Object Of Faith Saves Us

Faith in reason, hope in this world, or love in the flesh cannot of themselves save us. The object of our faith saves us:²²

[It is the **object of faith** which saves. If a man believes in Christ, he is saved in his faith by Christ; if he believes in the Church, he is saved by the Church; if he believes in Christ’s sacraments, he is saved by them; for Christ our God is in the Church and the sacraments. The Church of the Old Testament was saved by faith in a Redeemer **to come**. Abraham was saved by the same Christ as we. He possessed Christ in hope, while we possess Him in joy. Wherefore he who desires baptism is baptised in will; while he who has received baptism possesses it in joy. An identical faith saves both of them. But a man may say, ‘if faith in Baptism saves, what is the use of being actually baptised?’ If he does not receive Baptism, what did he wish for? It is evident that the faith which desires Baptism must be perfected by the reception of Baptism itself, which is its joy.... Those who have deprived children of Baptism and Confirmation and Communion are they who, having inherited the blind wisdom of blind heathendom, have not comprehended the majesty of God’s Sacraments, but have required **reasons and uses for everything and, having subjected the doctrine of the Church to scholastic explications, will not even pray unless they see in the prayer some direct goal or advantage**. But our law is not a law of bondage or of hireling service, labouring for wages, **but a law of the adoption of sons, and of love which is free** (all emphases supplied).

THE CHURCH IS ONE, IX. Faith and Life in Church Unity]

Brethren,

Reach for the higher knowledge which comes with faith. Use reason and logic as tools, but remember they cannot in themselves give us certainty. Reject rationalism and the ecumenist heresy that it breeds. Follow the True Orthodox Christianity of the East. Do not frequent the so-called temples of the ancient patriarchates, most, if not all, being immersed in ecumenism. Find the patristic way by looking inward to your heart. Transform yourselves. Remember that Holy Scripture, Tradition and works are not analysed but accepted as an organic whole. None can be isolated and ‘studied’. Orthodoxy lives! It doesn’t study itself like a scientist analysing one animal within a species.

The Fathers, the ‘mind’ of the Fathers, their collective conciliar agreement, are the organs of the Holy Spirit. Unanimity among the True Fathers is absolute proof of the truth of any spiritual issue. The Fathers are in wondrous harmony over all centuries. Avoid those heretics who have chosen the way of ecumenism in the 20th century and thus denied The Creed (since an ecumenist denies that the Church Is One by accepting some variant of the branch theory that each little denomination or grouping has a part of the truth even though they may not agree with their denomination or others about the Christian Truth).

Follow the Scriptures, Fathers’ interpretations of them, Tradition, and the First Seven Ecumenical Councils’ confirmations of the Fathers’ agreement on any points and the Regional Councils, which are incorporated by reference in the First Seven Ecumenical Councils, plus all writings which follow without deviation all the above. Remember the books of Scripture are really not closed. Scripture continues through the ages:²³

[The collection of Old and New Testament books, which the Church acknowledges as hers is Holy Scripture. Such pre-eminently are the Creeds of the General Councils, and especially the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed. Wherefore, the writing of Holy Scripture has gone on up to our day, and, if God pleases, yet more will be written. But in the Church there has not been, nor ever will be, any contradictions, either in Scripture, or in tradition, or in works; for all three is Christ, one and unchangeable.

THE CHURCH IS ONE, V. Scripture and Tradition]

Strike the word “innovation” from your vocabulary. True Orthodox do not innovate. God’s work cannot be ‘improved’ upon. The Faith is as it has been revealed to us and passed down through the centuries. It has always been good enough for our humble forefathers. Stand and deliver for the Lord!

+In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.