

Standing in truth against the temptations of time. Archimandrite Seraphim (Alexiev)

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Anger is given to us for good, but the devil turns it into evil. **“Be ye angry, and sin not”** (Eph. 4:26; see: Ps. 4:5), St. Paul teaches. It follows that we should be angry when necessary to fulfill our Christian duty, and not be resentful if it is not required. That is, we should not use our abilities for void emotional indignation, for arguments. But we should not cover up heresies with leniency, through which we will violate our duty – i.e. to keep **“the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience”** (1 Tim. 3:9).

Contrary to this obvious state of affairs, modernist trends spread out with the speed of an epidemic. Many minds today are in such confusion and bewilderment that they have succumbed to the devil's deception – they consider loyalty to holy Orthodoxy to be obscurantism and narrowness, and prayerful and sacred communication with heretics, as well as explicit or veiled violation of dogmas and canons – to be a good [sweet] openness to the world.

The enemy of our salvation feverishly processes the consciousness of people, darkens the minds. Under his influence, men already reach the point that the condemnation of neighbors for their moral sins is considered a good deed and jealousy for the good; and lack of criticality and lenience to heretical teachings and actions of non-Orthodox

Christians – is considered the highest [kind of] man-loving, which undermines the concept of Orthodox Truth.

Men also forget the exhortations of the Apostles to protect themselves from heretics (see: Rom. 16:17;.3:10; 1 Tim.4:1; 2 Peter 2:1). Instead of rejecting them, rapprochement with them is now preached. The words of St. Paul the Apostle are also ignored: **“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”** (Gal. 1:8). Instead, today we hear again another new sermon: “Why don't we communicate prayerfully with heterodox and with non-believers? Are we only Orthodox, are we only right?” And so speak not only people ignorant of Orthodoxy, but also some of those who are placed to be teachers of the faith.

And at the same time everything is absolutely clear and simple. The defense of holy Orthodoxy from heresies is not a question of human righteousness, but of Divine justice and truth. God, Who is the Truth itself (see Jer. 10:10), has revealed to us through divine Scripture the saving truths of faith. These are taken not from human minds, but from the divine revelation of the Old and New Testaments. Conveyed through God's chosen men, these truths prepared in the Old Testament era for the salvation of all mankind mired in pagan delusions.

In the New Testament, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the Son of God, revealed to us in fullness the doctrine of God – One in essence and Trinitarian in persons, about the Providence of God over the entire human race, about the redemption performed by the Son of God, about salvation achieved through faith and good works, about the priesthood formed by apostolic succession, about the Sacraments that teach [convey] grace, about the Church based on true faith in Jesus Christ (see: Matt. 16:16-18) and placed as an island of salvation amidst the ocean of delusions, [about/as?] the Noah's Ark until the end of the world, etc.

A person will be saved through this faith in revealed truths, if only one

acts in accordance with them. Through the renunciation of this faith, a person dies (see: Mark 16:16). Therefore, apostasy from Orthodoxy is a fatal misfortune, while standing in the Truth against the temptations of time is the basis of hope that God will have mercy on us.

St. Mark of Ephesus, the great champion of Orthodoxy, who fought against Roman Catholicism († 1444), writes in a letter to the abbot of the Vatopedi Monastery on Mount Athos about our holy Orthodox faith: “With it we hope to stand before God and accept the absolution of [our] transgressions; but without it I do not know what righteousness could set us free from eternal torments.”

He who believes in God-revealed truths honors God. And whoever opposes them presents God as a liar (see: 1 John 5:10). And that's blasphemy! This is detraction against the Holy Spirit, that will not be forgiven in this or in the age to come (see: Matt. 12:32).

In the Old Testament era, the devil invented idolatry and manifested himself through idols in which demons were hidden (see: Ps. 96:5). And in the New Testament age of grace, instead of the Church, this one-of-a-kind God-human institution, the devil created heretical communities that, at his instigation, deny the true Church founded by Christ and claim that they themselves are “Christ's churches.” But as early as St. Cyprian of Carthage (III c.) warned: “The devil lies in order to seduce, < ... > he promises peace so that there no peace could be received; he offers salvation in order to block the way to salvation for him that has sinned; he promises a Church, but acts in such a way that he who believes his words would altogether perish for the Church” (Letter 40, to the people, chap. 4).

And as a result of the efforts of the enemy – today heretical societies that have no sign of a Church are called “churches.” Such as, for example, Unitarians, liberal Christians, Quakers and all sorts of other Western European and American religious communities that do not believe in Christ as God, but claim that they are “churches” and are under the auspices of the World Council of “Churches,” which they are members of. Orthodox Local Churches are also invited to this World

Council of "Churches" in order to sin through prayerful communion with heterodox and infidels. Not only is there no benefit from this communion for the Orthodox faith, but, on the contrary, through it many follow the path of apostasy from the Truth, foretold by St. Paul the Apostle as an ominous sign of the approaching times of the Antichrist (see: 2 Thess. 2:3).

In the past, the devil divided Christians in order to rule having divided. In the same way, today he unites them, trying to sink together with them in the swamp of delusions also the true Church – the Orthodox. He destroyed a multitude of souls in the first centuries of church history through the heresies he invented. And today he destroys and will destroy even more souls till the end of the world through the unification of all into one all-heretical "church".

But the true Church of Christ will abide till the end of the world, according to the immutable promise of the Savior (see: Matt. 16:18), and it will stand in its place, albeit only in the person of a small remnant of the Orthodox Christians faithful to death (see: Rev. 2:10).

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Archimandrite Seraphim (Alexiev) (1912 - 1993)

In the world Stoyan Georgiev Alexiev, was born on February 25, 1912 in the village of Gorno Brodi, in Macedonia, as the youngest son in a large family of poor pious parents. His father, Georgy Alexiev, worked in casting bells, a matter he bequeathed to his two eldest sons, Demetrius and Athanasius. Stoyan was distinguished by a sensitive church consciousness and deep faith. After the family moved to Sofia due to the Balkan Wars, Stoyan entered the Sofia Theological Seminary, which he graduated with honors. In 1934, he was sent to study at the Old Catholic Theological Faculty in Bern (Switzerland), where he received the science degree of Doctor of Theology, defending his thesis on the topic: "The meaning of the commandments of Jesus Christ in the sermon on the mount." After his return to Bulgaria, he was appointed a teacher first at the Plovdiv and then at the Sofia Theological Seminary. Here, on February 3, 1940, he received monasticism and the name Seraphim in honor of St. Serafim of Sarov, whom he deeply revered throughout his life and to whom he later dedicated one of the most favorite books of Bulgarian Orthodox readers: "St. Seraphim of Sarov". The turning point in the life of the young monk was his rapprochement with the Russian Archbishop Seraphim (Sobolev), who was staying in Bulgaria. From him he received a living feeling of the Orthodox faith and a subtle sense for spiritual life, which he himself later taught [conveyed] to his many spiritual children.

At the Annunciation of 1943, the monk Seraphim was ordained a hieromonk. After two years of service as protosingel at the Sliven Metropolis, Father Seraphim was elevated to the rank of Archimandrite in January 1947 and moved to the position of head of the cultural and educational department at the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church in Sofia. At that difficult time for the Church, Archimandrite Seraphim valiantly defended the Orthodox faith in many instances. In his new position, he developed tireless activities: he organized courses on pastoral education for priests, he preached inspiringly, he regularly published his conversations, as well as many articles, pamphlets and extensive works on spiritual-and-moral topics. Archimandrite Seraphim possessed also a rare poetic gift, which he expressed in many rhymes and poems published in church publications, as well as in two collections of poems.

In 1960, Archimandrite Seraphim was appointed a lecturer at the Department of Dogmatic Theology at the Sofia Theological Academy of Clement of Ohrida and was soon confirmed in the rank of associate professor, with habilitational work [thesis] devoted to the criticism of the Roman Catholic dogma about the immaculate conception of the Most Holy Theotokos.

As an assistant professor, he continued to publish theological articles. After decades of teaching at the Theological Academy, Archimandrite Seraphim was forced to leave it in 1969, because of disagreement with the introduction of the new calendar style into church life and in general with the ecumenical bias of the entire church policy of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, which followed its joining the "World Council of Churches" in 1968. Together with a number of other clerics, he declared his rejection of the new calendar and his withdrawal from obedience to the Bulgarian Patriarch Kirill.

Retiring to the Holy Protection Convent in the Knyazhevo quarter of Sofia, Father Seraphim continued his creative activity, writing a number of books of spiritual-and-moral content, most of which have yet to reach the reader. Archimandrite Seraphim devoted a lot of attention and efforts in the last years of his life to an in-depth criticism of ecumenism as heresy. His last work, compiled jointly with Archimandrite Sergius (Yazadzhiev), the book "Orthodoxy and Ecumenism", the fruit of a quarter-century research, was published just three weeks before his death, which followed on January 26, 1993.

Quite many of the works by the Archimandrite are loved in Bulgaria due to their patristic position, depth and accessibility of presentation. His works are widely published by both the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and the Old Style Church (headed by VI. Photius), and in both places many believers venerate him as a great ascetic. His works are also known in translation into other languages, such as Romanian, English. A translation of his major work on ecumenism has been published in Russia.

Works

The extensive spiritual creativity of Archimandrite Seraphim is still awaiting research and comprehension. His first published work was his doctoral dissertation.

- "The Meaning of the Commandments of Jesus Christ in the Sermon on the Mount" (in German), Sofia, 1938.

Among his numerous editions of the 1940s and early 60s, the most important [titles] are:

- "Our Faith" (catechism)
- "[Our Hope](#)" (conversations of the Beatitudes)
- "Our Love" (conversations on the ten God's commandments)
- "Pride and Humility"
 - full text after ed. Sofia, 2001 (ed. 3rd):
<http://pravoslavie.domainbg.com/04/smirenie.html>

- “Enmity and Reconciliation”
 - full text after ed. Sofia, 1994:
<http://pravoslavie.domainbg.com/04/as-pomirenje.htm>
- “The Meaning of Sufferings” (later published by Sofia, 1995)
- “Self-Styled Judges”
- “Sick and Sounding Mysticism”
 - full text after ed. Sofia, 1999:
<http://pravoslavie.domainbg.com/04/as-mystica.htm>
 - see excerpt in Russian: “Sick Mysticism”, *Sobornaya Vest* newspaper, St. Petersburg, 1999, #14:
<http://www.pravpiter.ru/sovs/n014/ta015.htm>
- “The Forgotten Medicine. On the Holy Sacrament of Confession”
 - full text after ed. Sofia, 2001:
<http://pravoslavie.domainbg.com/04/as-lekarstvo.html>
- “St. Seraphim of Sarov”, 1957 (republished many times in Bulgaria)

In 1963-1969 the following theological articles of his were published in the Sofia Yearbook of the Theological Academy:

- “Two Extreme Views of the Western creeds referring the Most Holy Theotokos”
- -“The State of Man prior and after the Fall, according to Orthodox, Roman-Catholic and Protestant Views” (2nd ed. Sofia, 1999)
- “Redemption as a Deed of God's Love and God's Justice [truth]”
- “Franz von Bader – a Roman-Catholic Philosopher and Theologian in Search of Orthodoxy and Its Catholicity”
- “The Bogomil Heresy from the point of view of Orthodox Dogmatic Foundations on presbyter Kozma and on the Orthodox Dogmatic in general”

Of his works after 1969, the following stand out:

- “The Orthodox View on the Old and New Calendar Style”, 1972.
- “Our Prayer”
- “The Prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian in the Light of the Holy Fathers’ Teaching”
- “Life after Life”
- “The Optina Elders”
- (together with Archimandrite Sergius (Yazadzhiev)) “Orthodoxy and Ecumenism”, Sofia, 1992 (Russian translation: “Why an Orthodox Christian Should Not Be an Ecumenist”, St. Petersburg, 1992, 302 p.).

- full text after ed. Sofia, 1998: part 1 - <http://pravoslavie.domainbg.com/04/pravoslavie-ecumenism/index.html>

Collections of poems:

- “Insights”
- “Songs for Life and Death”

In addition, the following works are known:

- “Shepherd as a Prayer Intercessor”
 - full text: http://pravoslavie.domainbg.com/04/as_pastirat.htm
- “The Church-and-misionery deed of Konstantine the Philosopher — St. Cyril”
 - full text after ed. Sofia, 1996: <http://pravoslavie.domainbg.com/04/as-svkyril.html>
- “Spiritual Life of the Orthodox Christian”
 - full text after ed. Sofia, 1994: <http://pravoslavie.domainbg.com/04/as-duhzivot.html>
- “Life of St. Tsar Boris”
 - full text after ed. Sofia, 1992: <http://pravoslavie.domainbg.com/04/svboris.html>
- “Conversations on Life after Life”, Sofia, 2005 (3rd corrected ed.).
- “St. John of Rila and his significance for the Bulgarian people”
- “Are the Lives of Saints Reliable”
- “Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy”
- “The Only allowed Condemnation”
 - full text: part 1 - <http://pravoslavie.domainbg.com/04/as-eretici-1.html>; part 2 - <http://pravoslavie.domainbg.com/04/as-eretici-2.html>

Materials used

- A number of biographies of Archimandrite Seraphim:
 - http://www.pravoslavieto.com/history/20/1912_arhim_Seraphim_...htm (see here for more collected works of Fr. Seraphim)
- “A Short Life of Archimandrite Seraphim Alexiev”, a private site dedicated to Rev. Philothea of Tarnovo
 - http://www.svetafiloteya.hit.bg/Arhimandrit_Serafim.html (reprinted from <http://pravoslavie.domainbg.com>)
- “Sick Mysticism”, *Sobornaya Vest* newspaper, St. Petersburg, 1999, #14:

- www.pravpiter.ru/sovs/n014/ta015.htm
- “Book Heritage of Archimandrite SERAPHIM (Alexiev)”, *Orthodox Library*:
 - <http://pravoslavie.domainbg.com/04/index.html>

SALVIFIC WORDS from the works of Archimandrite
Seraphim Aleksiev