

THE MYSTERY OF REDEMPTION

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CONTENTS

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION	3
1. THE "JURIDICAL THEORY"	8
2. THE MEANING OF "JUSTIFICATION"	19
3. THE SACRIFICE FOR SIN	26
4. THE PRAYER IN THE GARDEN.....	37
5. GETHSEMANE OR GOLGOTHA?.....	50
6. THE THEORY OF "MORAL MONISM"	57
7. ORIGINAL SIN	64
CONCLUSION: LOVE AND JUSTICE.....	76

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

Of mercy and judgement shall I sing unto Thee, O Lord.
Psalm 100.1.

He wiped out our debt by paying for us a most admirable and precious ransom. We are all made free through the blood of the Son, which pleads for us to the Father.
St. John of Damascus, *First Word on the Divine Images*, 21.

The mystery of our redemption by Christ through the shedding of His Blood on the Cross is the very heart of the Orthodox Christian Gospel. With the dogma of the Holy Trinity it is the most important of all the Christian dogmas. Therefore any attempt to explain or reinterpret it by a senior hierarch of the Orthodox Church is an event of great importance requiring the closest attention.

Such an attempt was made in 1917 by Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Kiev, first first-hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad, in a work entitled *The Dogma of Redemption*¹, and also in a later work entitled *An Attempt at An Orthodox Christian Catechism*. These two works have been a subject of controversy in the Orthodox Church ever since. The controversy consists in the fact that in them Metropolitan Anthony attacked the Orthodox Christian teaching on redemption as expounded by Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow (+1867) and enshrined in his *Longer Catechism*, labelling it "scholastic", and presented his own theory, entitled "Moral Monism", as a radical alternative.

The purpose of this little book is to defend Metropolitan Philaret's teaching as being indeed the traditional teaching of the Orthodox Church by a careful examination and refutation of Metropolitan Anthony's thesis...

Metropolitan Anthony had outlined his ideas already well before the revolution, and he was seen, together with his pupil, Archimandrite Sergius (Stragorodsky), the future Soviet patriarch, as a representative of a new stream of thinking in the Russian Church called "the new theology". As such, both men were criticised by Bishop Victor (Ostrovidov), the future hieromartyr Archbishop of Vyatka in an article written in 1912.² After the revolution, further critics appeared both at home and abroad. Thus according to Hieromartyr Paul Borotinsky, the Petrograd Hieromartyrs Bishop Demetrius of Gdov and Fr. Theodore Andreyev were also critical of it.³ In 1925 Archbishop Eleutherius of Lithuania wrote eight long letters to Metropolitan Anthony, subjecting his theory to detailed criticism.⁴

¹ It was originally published in Russian in *Bogoslovsky Vestnik* 8-9 (1917), pp. 155-167, 285-315, and in book form in the same year in Sergiev-Posad.

² See appendix.

³ M.B. Danilushkin (ed.), *A History of the Russian Church from the Restoration of the Patriarchate to the Present Day*, vol. I, St. Petersburg, 1997, pp. 989-990.

⁴ Archbishop (later Metropolitan) Eleutherius, *On Redemption*, Paris, 1937.

In 1926 Metropolitan Anthony put forward his *Attempt at an Orthodox Christian Catechism*, which expressed the same theology as in the *Dogma* in a more concise form, as a substitute for Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow's *Catechism* in schools. The Synod of the Russian Church Abroad, meeting in Serbia, was at first inclined to accept his proposal. They did not call Metropolitan Philaret's *Catechism* heretical, but simply said that Metropolitan Anthony's was "shorter and more convenient for assimilation". And Metropolitan Anthony himself did not ask for Metropolitan Philaret's *Catechism* to be removed from use in favour of his own, writing only (in a report to the Synod dated April 9/22, 1926): "In my foreword to *An Attempt at an Orthodox Christian Catechism* I wrote: 'In publishing my work as material, I in no way wished that it should completely *overshadow* the *Catechism* of [Metropolitan] Philaret in schools, but I have nothing against the idea that this or that teacher of the Law of God should sometimes, in his interpretation of the dogmas and commandments, use my thoughts and references to Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition, thereby filling in the gaps in the textbook catechism with regard to various religious questions, of which very many have arisen in the time since the death of the author'"⁵

However, strong opposition to Metropolitan Anthony's proposal was voiced from within the Synod by Archbishop Theophan (Bystrov) of Poltava, former rector of the St. Petersburg Theological Academy, and Bishop Seraphim (Sobolev) of Lubny, who clearly regarded his views on redemption as a direct attack on Metropolitan Philaret and a departure from strict Orthodoxy. Now it cannot be denied that Metropolitan Anthony considered Metropolitan Philaret's *Catechism* to be "scholastic" and heretical, being identical with the Roman Catholic teaching on redemption of Anselm and Aquinas. Thus in his letters to the Russian Athonite theologian, Hieromonk Theophan (later Hieroschemamonk Theodosius of Karoulia, Mount Athos⁶), a firm opponent of Metropolitan Anthony's thesis, he expressed fundamental disagreement "with the juridical theory of Anselm and Aquinas, which was completely accepted by P[eter] Moghila and Metropolitan Philaret"⁷. And again he wrote: "We must not quickly return to Peter Moghila, Philaret and Macarius: they will remain subjects for historians"⁸. And again: "Apparently you together with your namesake [Archbishop Theophan of Poltava] have fallen into spiritual deception"⁹.

So it is clear that, for Metropolitan Anthony, as for his opponents, this was a fundamental matter of doctrine. Either Metropolitan Philaret's *Catechism* was heretical and Metropolitan Anthony's was Orthodox, or Metropolitan Anthony's was heretical and Metropolitan Philaret's was Orthodox. And whoever was wrong was "in spiritual deception".

⁵ *Protocols of the Hierarchical Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad*, 9/22 April, 1926.

⁶ See "Elder Theodosius the Athonite of Karoulia", *The Orthodox Word*, November-December, 2005, pp. 261-287.

⁷ *The Letters of His Beatitude Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky)*, Jordanville, 1998, № 83, p. 235.

⁸ *Letters*, № 91, p. 244. A convincing defence of the theology of Metropolitan Macarius (Bulgakov) against the charge of scholasticism can be found in Protopresbyter Michael Pomazansky, "Mitropolit Makarij (Bulgakov)", *Pravoslavnij Put'*, 1996, pp. 52-82.

⁹ *Letters*, № 31, p. 169.

Criticism of Metropolitan Anthony's work was not confined to the Russian Church. Thus immediately after the publication of *The Dogma of Redemption* in Serbia in 1926¹⁰, Protopriest Milosh Parenta wrote in the Serbian Church's official organ: "The tragedy of Metropolitan Anthony is amazing! A pillar of the faith in soul, a great Orthodox in his heart, a strict fulfiller and preserver of Church discipline to the smallest details. But when he approaches a scientific-theological examination and explanation of the dogmas, then he either insufficiently comprehends them, or he cannot avoid the temptation of, and enthusiasm for, modernism. The explanation of the dogma of redemption offered by the author in this work openly destroys the teaching on this truth faithfully preserved by the Orthodox Church, and with it the Christian Religion itself, because the truth of the redemption together with the truth of Christ's incarnation is its base and essence. However, it is necessary to recognize that it is very difficult to analyse this work of the author, because in it there are often no definite and clear concepts, although there are many extended speeches which hide the concepts or say nothing, and because in part there are no logical connections in it, nor any strictly scientific exposition, nor systematic unity."¹¹ The Serbian tradition of criticism of the *Dogma* has been continued by the present leader of the True Orthodox Church of Serbia, Bishop Akakije, who has published a biography of Metropolitan Anthony's chief critic, Archbishop Theophan...

In the Russian emigration it was not only Archbishop Theophan, Bishop Seraphim and Elder Theodosius who were opposed to Metropolitan Anthony's teaching. Other critics abroad included Metropolitan Platon of America and Archbishop Anastasy of Kishinev¹². A recent history of the Russian emigration in Yugoslavia concluded that Metropolitan Anthony was "an extreme conservative in politics, a bold innovator in theology"¹³.

However, an open conflict was recognized by both sides as potentially disastrous for the Russian Church Abroad. The consequences of "victory" in the debate for either side would have been unthinkable; it might have meant condemning as a heretic either the most famous Russian hierarch of the 19th century, Metropolitan Philaret, or, in many people's opinion, the greatest Russian hierarch of the 20th century, Metropolitan Anthony, and would quite simply have torn the Russian Church Abroad apart at a time when it was fighting for its life against communism, sergianism and sophianism. So it is not surprising that both sides exhibited signs of trying to "cool" the conflict. On the one hand, Metropolitan Anthony's *Catechism* did not replace that of Metropolitan Philaret, and the Russian Synod under Metropolitan Anastasy refused to review the question again. And on the other, Metropolitan Anthony's chief opponent, Archbishop Theophan, departed to live a hermit's life in France, where he died...¹⁴

¹⁰ All quotations from the *Dogma* in this work are from the English translation by Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Boston, published by Monastery Press, Canada in 1972.

¹¹ Parenta, *Herald of the Serbian Orthodox Patriarchate*, 1926, N II (1/14 June), pp. 168-174 (10-34).

¹² Archbishop Eleutherius, *On Redemption*, p. 170.

¹³ Alexis Arseniev, *The Russian Emigration in Sremsky Karlovtsy*, Novy Sad, 2008, p. 46 (in Russian).

¹⁴ Bishop Stefan of Trenton, New Jersey (personal communication) reports hearing Archbishop Averky (Taushev) of Jordanville saying that Metropolitan Anthony's theory had been rejected by the

However, in 1972, with the support of Bishop Gregory (Grabbe) and the Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Boston, but against the will of three bishops and the renowned American hieromonk Seraphim Rose, Archbishop Vitaly (Ustinov) of Montreal published *The Dogma of Redemption* in English.¹⁵ And this year (2013) A.M. Khitrov has re-published the work in Moscow in Russian together with the lengthy 1976 article in support of it by N. Kusakov entitled “The Juridical Heresy and the Orthodox Faith”. In this article Kusakov goes so far as to call the teaching of Metropolitan Philaret “heretical” – more specifically, guilty of “the juridical heresy, or juridism” – although Philaret’s *Catechism* remains the official Catechism of the whole of the Russian Church to this day.

Again in the 1990s the hierarchs of the “Holy Orthodox Church of North America” (HOCNA), within whose jurisdiction is the Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Boston, renewed the attack on Metropolitan Philaret.¹⁶ While refraining from directly calling any of the major players in this controversy a heretic, they extended the label “scholastic” to all those who espouse “the juridical theory” of redemption, including even such renowned hierarchs as Saints Ignaty Brianchaninov and Theophan the Recluse. Thus for the sake of defending the complete correctness of Metropolitan Anthony’s *Dogma of Redemption*, they are prepared to condemn the three most famous and revered hierarchs of the Russian Church in the 19th century as heretics! Where will it stop? How many more “juridical heretics” will be found among the ranks of the Orthodox saints? As will be shown here, a consistent witch-hunt will go much further than the HOCNA hierarchs may realise, to include most of the greatest Fathers of the Orthodox Church!

So what is the alternative? Continue to bury the question again as it was buried in the course of several decades by the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR)? Or thrash it out once and for all? In our opinion, it is no longer possible to bury this conflict, for it has extended beyond the boundaries of ROCOR and is debated in Russia and in other countries. Moreover, it is not in the nature of the Orthodox Church, which is “the pillar and ground of the truth” (I Timothy 3.15), to leave fundamental questions of dogma unresolved when conflict has arisen over them. One may hope that the issue will simply “fade away”; but time and again, after a brief quiescence it re-emerges with renewed vigour.

Russian Church Abroad. However, the present write has seen no documented evidence to support this claim.

¹⁵ The three bishops were Archbishop Andrew of Rockland, Archbishop Athanasius of Brazil and Bishop Nektary of Seattle. In a letter dated July 12/25, 1979, Fr. Seraphim wrote: “Vlad. Vitaly has just printed Boston’s translation of Metr. Anthony’s *Dogma of Redemption* – this is the ‘dogma’ accused of heresy by most of our bishops, and which at best is inexcusably loose and expressionistic. Jordanville is not going to sell the book, and Vlad. Nektary will very likely forbid Fr. Nektas to advertise it in his diocese...” (*Letters from Father Seraphim*, Richfield Springs, NY: Nikodemos Orthodox Publication Society, 2001, p. 206).

¹⁶ <http://deltard.org/hocna/defense.htm>.

On the other hand, while the issue of truth cannot be deferred forever, it is reasonable to hope that in the end those who are in the wrong will not be labelled heretics and condemned as such. Some views of St. Justin the Martyr, St. Gregory of Nyssa, Blessed Augustine of Hippo and others were not accepted by “the consensus of the Fathers”; but the Church has accepted their persons - without accepting their errors. (This is particularly significant in the case of St. Augustine, who was declared a saint by the Fifth Ecumenical Council and approved by St. Photius the Great, but is accused by many of being the originator of “the juridical heresy”.) We may hope that the same distinction will be made between the person and the errors of Metropolitan Anthony, whose great services to the Church in other fields are disputed by nobody.

For, on the one hand, he did not publicly insist on their acceptance.¹⁷ And on the other, as one of his fairest critics, Fr. Seraphim Rose, writes, “it is a question not of heresy (in his most sympathetic critics and we won’t be examining others), but rather of imperfection, of theology not thought through and consistent. He is not known as a careful theologian, rather as a great *pastor* whose theology was one of fits and starts. The question of ‘heresy’ arises when his critics try to make him strictly accountable for every expression and when they place him above all the Holy Fathers of the Church, for in several points the teaching of Metropolitan Anthony clearly contradicts the Fathers. His theology is at times closer to *expressionism*. Almost all but a few of his absolute devotees admit that *Dogma of Redemption* especially is very loose.”¹⁸

This little book represents an attempt to “rehabilitate” Metropolitan Philaret’s teaching, as being the traditional teaching of the Church on redemption, - “the great justification”, as the Church’s liturgical books call it.¹⁹ This can only be done by explaining the errors of Metropolitan Anthony in some detail. It involves no attempt to “categorize” Metropolitan Anthony, which in any case can only be done by the official authorities of the Church. Thus whatever is said in criticism of him here in no way detracts from his general accepted merits as a pastor, founder of the Russian Church Abroad and defender of the Orthodox Faith against sergianism. But criticism cannot be avoided; for, whatever the dangers of criticising such a revered figure, the danger of allowing his mistaken opinions to spread and be exalted to the status of Orthodox dogma are still greater...

¹⁷ However, in a handwritten note dated February 16/29, 1932, Archbishop Theophan wrote that “under the influence of objections made [against it] Metropolitan Anthony was about to take back his *Catechism*, which had been introduced for school use instead of the *Catechism* of Metropolitan Philaret. But, as was soon revealed, he did this insincerely and with exceptional insistence continued to spread his incorrect teaching *On the Redemption* and many other incorrect teachings included in his *Catechism*.” (Archive of the present writer).

¹⁸ Rose, in Fr. Michael Pomazansky, *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*, Platina: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1994, Appendix IV: On the New Interpretation of the Dogma of Redemption, p. 403.

¹⁹ *Menaion*, Service to SS. Constantine and Helena, May 21, Mattins canon, ikos.

1. THE "JURIDICAL THEORY"

In essence the wrath of God is one of the manifestations of the love of God, but of the love of God in its relation to the moral evil in the heart of rational creatures in general, and in the heart of man in particular.

Archbishop Theophan of Poltava, On Redemption.

Right from the beginning of his work Metropolitan Anthony's ambitious claims to originality in his teaching on redemption put us on our guard. Thus he writes: "No one has as yet given a direct and at least somewhat clear answer to the question, why Christ's incarnation, sufferings and resurrection are saving for us, unless we take into consideration the small leading article published in the *Ecclesiastical Herald* of 1890 [no. 13] and the little article in the *Theological Herald* of 1894 composed by the author of the present work. But let not the reader not think that we force our solution to this inquiry upon him as something irrefutable. Supposing it were entirely incorrect, we nevertheless maintain that it is still the only direct and positive answer to the above-mentioned dogmatic query yet formulated."²⁰

The question arises: why should it be given to Metropolitan Anthony, nearly 1850 years after the Death and Resurrection of Christ, to expound *for the first time* "the only direct and positive answer" to the question of the meaning of redemption? Why were the Holy Fathers silent (if they were indeed silent)? Metropolitan Anthony's answer to this is that "the contemporaries of the Fathers so clearly understood the Saviour's redeeming grace that it was unnecessary to elucidate upon it. In the same way, in our days there is no need to explain to rural Christians what humility, compunction, and repentance are, yet the intellectual class is in great need of an explanation of these virtues since they have alienated themselves from them. Thus, educated Christians who from medieval times have been caught in the mire of juridical religious concepts, have lost that direct consciousness or spiritual awareness of their unity with Christ Who suffers with us in our struggle for salvation, a unity which the early Christians kept so fervently in their hearts that it never occurred to the interpreters of the sacred dogmas and the commentators on the words of the New Testament to explain what everyone perceived so clearly".²¹

This is unconvincing. The problem of semi-believing intellectuals did not appear for the first time towards the end of the second millennium of Christian history. Nor did the Holy Fathers fail to explain the significance of Christ's death and

²⁰ *The Dogma of Redemption*, pp. 1-2. The article from the *Ecclesiastical Herald*, entitled "Thoughts on the Saving Power of Christ's Sufferings", has recently been republished in *Vera i Zhizn'* (no. 1, 2008, Chernigov). Writing to Archbishop Eleutherius, Metropolitan Anthony says that his first thoughts "on the Saving Power of Christ's Sufferings" were published in *Ecclesiastical Herald* in 1888, and that it was praised by Professor Bolotov and Bishop Sylvester. Archbishop Eleutherius then points out that only a year before, in the Kazan cathedral, he had given a sermon on redemption that was completely traditional (*On Redemption*, p. 70). This allows us to date the beginning of Metropolitan Anthony's "conversion" from the traditional to the innovatory doctrine of redemption to sometime between the spring of 1887 and 1888.

²¹ *The Dogma of Redemption*, p. 10.

resurrection. Such explanations involved the development and exploration of those images and metaphors to be found in the New Testament, of which the juridical metaphor is undoubtedly the chief. This metaphor was evidently not to Metropolitan Anthony's liking, for "the juridical theory" forms the chief target of his attack; but there is no evidence that the Apostles had some more "positive" explanation which they were hiding from the general Christian public and which was revealed to the Church only some 1850 years later. After all, the Church has no esoteric teaching like that of the Gnostics. The whole truth was revealed to, and handed down by, the Apostles, and the task of subsequent generations is to explicate and explore that heritage, not speculate about hidden teachings.

What, then, is the so-called "juridical theory"? If we reply: "An understanding of the redemption of mankind expressed in legal or juridical terms or metaphors", this hardly implies heresy, for many passages of Holy Scripture, as is well-known to both sides in this debate, use juridical terms when speaking about our redemption. If we add to this definition the words: "combined with terms of a passionately negative or pagan connotation, such as 'wrath', 'curse', 'sacrifice', 'propitiation'," then we are no nearer to the definition of a heresy, for these phrases, too, are to be found in abundance in Holy Scripture. Since the critics of the juridical theory often describe it as "scholastic", we might expect that the Catholic scholastic theory of redemption as found in the works of Anselm and Aquinas, is meant. Certainly this is part of the meaning. And yet the metropolitan offers no serious analysis of this theory, and no quotations from Catholic sources.

The real targets of Metropolitan Anthony and his supporters are the works of certain *Orthodox* writers who supposedly embrace the scholastic theory, especially Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow. Metropolitan Anthony adds the names of Peter Moghila, metropolitan of Kiev in the seventeenth century, and Macarius Bulgakov, metropolitan of Moscow and author of a standard textbook of Orthodox dogmatics in the nineteenth century. The HOCNA bishops add Saints Ignaty Brianchaninov and Bishop Theophan the Recluse to the list (Metropolitan Anthony, however, is very careful to *exclude* Bishop Theophan²²), while labelling as "scholastic" all of Metropolitan Anthony's twentieth-century critics, especially Fr. Seraphim Rose.

The strange thing, however, is that Metropolitan Anthony does not quote *at all* from Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, with the exception of a short excerpt from his *Catechism* on original sin and another, even smaller one from a sermon of his on Great Friday. And the HOCNA bishops do not correct this glaring deficiency. Instead we are provided with a summary - more precisely, a caricature - of the scholastic theory in the following words: "The Supreme Being, God, was offended by Adam's disobedience and man's disbelief in the Divine injunction regarding the

²² Thus he writes: "We must not quickly return to Peter Moghila, Philaret and Macarius: they will remain subjects for historians. It is quite another matter with his Grace Bishop Theophan of Vyshna: he pointed to the centre of Christian life and r(eligious) thought as being in the domain of morality, and he mainly worked out the concepts of repentance and the struggle with the passions. I venerate those" (*Letters*, № 91, p. 244.).

tree of knowledge. This was an extreme offense, and was punished by the curse not merely laid upon the transgressors, but also upon their entire posterity. Nevertheless, Adam's sufferings and the agonizing death which befell Adam's descendants were not sufficient to expunge that dreadful affront. The shedding of a servant's blood could not effect this; only the Blood of a Being equal in rank with the outraged Divinity, that is, the Son of God, Who of His own good will took the penalty upon Himself in man's stead. By this means the Son of God obtained mankind's forgiveness from the wrathful Creator Who received satisfaction in the shedding of the Blood and the death of His Son. Thus, the Lord has manifested both His mercy and His equity! With good reason do the skeptics affirm that if such an interpretation corresponds to Revelation, the conclusion would be the contrary: the Lord would have manifested here both mercilessness and injustice."²³

Since neither Metropolitan Anthony nor the HOCNA bishops provide us with the opportunity of comparing this summary with the actual writings of the so-called Orthodox scholastics, we shall attempt to supply this deficiency for them. Here is a passage from Metropolitan Philaret's *Catechism* on redemption: "204. Q. In what sense is Jesus Christ said to have been crucified for us? A. In the sense that by His death on the Cross He delivered us from sin, the curse and death. 205. Q. What do the Holy Scriptures say about it? A. The Holy Scriptures say the following about it. About deliverance from sin: 'In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace' (Ephesians 1.7). About deliverance from the curse: 'Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us' (Galatians 3.13). About deliverance from death: 'Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself took part of the same; that through death He might destroy the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage' (Hebrews 2.14-15) 206. Q. How does the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross deliver us from sin, the curse and death? A. The death of Jesus Christ on the Cross delivers us from sin, the curse and death. And so that we may more easily understand this mystery, the word of God enlightens us about it, as far as we can accommodate it, through the comparison of Jesus Christ with Adam. Adam naturally (by nature) is the head of the whole of humanity, which is one with him through natural descent from him. Jesus Christ, in Whom Divinity is united with Humanity, by grace became the new, all-powerful Head of the people whom He unites with Himself by means of faith. Therefore just as through Adam we fell under the power of sin, the curse and death, so we are delivered from sin, the curse and death through Jesus Christ. His voluntary sufferings and death on the Cross for us, being of infinite value and worth, as being the death of Him Who is without sin and the God-Man, completely satisfy the justice of God, Who condemned us for sin to death, and immeasurable merit, which has acquired for Him the right, without offending justice, to give us sinners forgiveness of sins and grace for the victory over sin and death..."²⁴

²³ *The Dogma of Redemption*, pp. 5-6.

²⁴ Metropolitan Philaret, *Extended Christian Catechism of the Orthodox Catholic Eastern Church*, 1823.

It will be noted that Metropolitan Philaret, as is usual with him, stays very close to the words of Holy Scripture, so that it is very difficult to find fault with his exposition without finding fault at the same time with the scriptural words that he quotes. It will also be noted that his explanation has none of the emotionality of the scholastic theory as expounded by Metropolitan Anthony, none of its bloodthirstiness. True, there are the "juridical" words "curse", "satisfaction", "merit"; but these are used in a calm, measured way which hardly invites the mockery assailed at the scholastic theory.

Metropolitan Anthony argues that the terms "merit" and "satisfaction" do not occur in the writings of the Holy Fathers.²⁵ But this is not true. Consider, for example, the words of St. Hilary of Poitiers: "On account of the *merit* of humility (ob humilitatis meritum) he recovers the form of God in the lowliness which He assumed."²⁶ And if this is considered unconvincing since St. Hilary was a Western Father (albeit an early one, and one strongly influenced by Eastern thought), let us consider the quintessentially Eastern Orthodox St. Athanasius the Great: "Being over all, the Word of God naturally by offering His own temple and corporeal instrument for the life of all *satisfied* the debt by His death".²⁷

Let us now turn to the first major confessor against the Roman Catholic heresies, St. Photius the Great: "Let us comprehend the depths of the Master's clemency. He gave death as a punishment, but through His own death He transformed it into a gate to immortality. It was a resolution of anger and displeasure, but it announces the consummate goodness of the Judge..."²⁸ There is no question about it: this is juridical language...

And now let us to turn to a saint whom no Orthodox Christian would dare to accuse of scholasticism, since he was one of the earliest and greatest *opponents* precisely of scholasticism, St. Gregory Palamas: "Man was led into his captivity when he experienced God's wrath, this wrath being the good God's just abandonment of man. God had to be reconciled with the human race, for otherwise mankind could not be set free from the servitude.

"A sacrifice was needed to reconcile the Father on high with us and to sanctify us, since we had been soiled by fellowship with the evil one. There had to be a sacrifice which both cleansed and was clean, and a purified, sinless priest.... God overturned the devil through suffering and His Flesh which He offered as a sacrifice to God the Father, as a pure and altogether holy victim - how great is His gift! - and reconciled God to the human race...

²⁵ *The Dogma of Redemption*, page 2.

²⁶ St. Hilary, *On Psalm 53.5*.

²⁷ St. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation of the Word*, 9.1. I am indebted for this and the previous quotation to David Elliott.

²⁸ St. Photius, Letter 3, to Eusebia, nun and monastic superior, on the death of her sister.

“Since He gave His Blood, which was sinless and therefore guiltless, as a ransom for us who were liable to punishment because of our sins, He redeemed us from our guilt. He forgave us our sins, tore up the record of them on the Cross and delivered us from the devil’s tyranny. The devil was caught by the bait. It was as if he opened his mouth and hastened to pour out for himself our ransom, the Master’s Blood, which was not only guiltless but full of divine power. Then instead of being enriched by it he was strongly bound and made an example in the Cross of Christ. So we were rescued from his slavery and transformed into the kingdom of the Son of God. Before we had been vessels of wrath, but we were made vessels of mercy by Him Who bound the one who was strong compared to us, and seized his goods.”²⁹

It is striking how many “scholastic” words, such as “wrath”, “sacrifice”, “victim”, “reconciliation”, and “ransom” the great anti-scholastic St. Gregory uses here...

Let us turn to Bishop Theophan the Recluse: "We have fallen through the sin of our first parents and we have been plunged into inescapable destruction. Our salvation can only come by deliverance from this destruction. Our destruction comes from two different evils: from the wrath of God in the face of our disobedience and from the loss of His grace and from submission to the law, on the one hand; and on the other, from the alteration of our nature by sin, from the loss of true life, and from submission to death. That is why there were required for our salvation: first, that God should take pity on us, deliver us from the curse of the law and restore to us His grace; and then that He make us live again, we who were dead through sin, and give us a new life.

"Both the one and the other are necessary: both that we should be delivered from the curse, and that our nature should be renewed. If God does not show Himself full of pity for us, we cannot receive any pardon from Him, and if we receive no pardon, we are not worthy of His grace; and if we are not worthy of His grace, we cannot receive the new life. And even if we had received pardon and remission in some fashion, we would remain in our corrupted state, unrenewed, and we would derive no profit from it; for without renewal of our nature, we would remain in a permanent state of sin and we would constantly commit sins, sins which would bring down upon us again our condemnation and disgrace - and so everything would be maintained in the same state of corruption.

"Both the one and the other have been accomplished by the expiatory sacrifice of Christ. By His Death on the Cross He offered a propitiatory sacrifice for the human race. He lifted the curse of sin and reconciled us to God. And by His pure life, by which in a perfect manner He accomplished the will of God in all its fullness, He has revealed and given to us, in His Person, an unfailing source of righteousness and sanctification for the whole human race."³⁰

²⁹ St. Gregory Palamas, *Homily 16, 21, 24, 31*; in Christopher Veniamin (ed.), *The Homilies of Saint Gregory Palamas*, South Canaan, PA: Saint Tikhon’s Seminary Press, 2002, pp. 193, 195, 201.

³⁰ Bishop Theophan the Recluse, *A Sketch of the Christian Moral Teaching*, Moscow, 1891, pp. 9-26; quoted in Archbishop Theophan, *On Redemption*, pp. 24-25.

And let us now compare this exposition with the words of the HOCNA bishops: "The proponents of the heretical, scholastic theories of atonement insist that God's honor or majesty or justice had to be 'satisfied' or 'appeased' before God's love and compassion could be shown to mankind. God could not forgive mankind until His wrath had been propitiated. These beliefs attribute a division, opposition, and contradiction within the simplicity of the Divinity. Furthermore, they, like the pagan Greek philosophers, subject the superessential and almighty God to a necessity of His nature" (p. 3).

So the HOCNA bishops appear to have three main reasons for rejecting the so-called juridical theory: (1) a vaguely expressed emotional distaste for the emotional connotations of certain words such as "satisfied" and "appeased", (2) the supposed division it creates in the simplicity of the Divinity, and (3) its attribution to God of a certain pagan concept of necessity.

(1), though an emotional rather than a strictly intellectual accusation, actually represents, in our opinion, the real motivation for the opposition to the so-called juridical theory, and will consequently be discussed at some length below. (2) refers (although it is not clearly stated in this passage) to the supposed contradiction between love and wrath as attributes of God, and will also be discussed at length. (3) is simply a misunderstanding, in our view, and will therefore be briefly discussed now before going on to the more serious accusations.

Bishop Theophan does use the word "necessary", but it is obvious that no pagan Greek kind of necessity is implied. The thought is simply that in order to be saved we *had* to be *both* cleansed from sin *and* renewed in nature. And it had to be in that order. Indeed it makes no sense to think that human nature can be renewed and deified before it has been cleansed from sin. Thus we read: "Now this He said about the Spirit, which those who believed on Him were to receive; for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7.39). In other words, Jesus had to be glorified, i.e. crucified and die on Golgotha, thereby cleansing mankind from sin, before the Spirit could descend and renew our nature at Pentecost. It goes without saying that the word "had" here - and in other passages, such as "Christ had to suffer" (Acts 17.3) - in no way implies any kind of pagan "fate" or "necessity". All the acts of God are free. But they are also not arbitrary. That is, they are in a certain order, according to a certain plan, a perfect order and a perfect plan that cannot be improved upon and in that sense *have* to be realized insofar as God is perfect. For, as Fr. Georges Florovsky writes: "He not only prophesied the coming Passion and death, but plainly stated that He must, that is He had to, suffer and be killed. He plainly said 'must', not simply 'was about to'. 'And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, and the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again' (Mark 8.31; also Matthew 16.21; Luke 9.22; 24.26)."³¹

³¹ Florovsky, "Redemption", in *Creation and Redemption*, Belmont, Mass.: Nordland Publishing Company, 1976, pp. 99-100.

Turning now to the other charges against the juridical theory, we may readily admit that the juridical language of justice, sacrifice and propitiation as applied to the mystery of redemption is metaphorical. But this is only to be expected, and is in no way a fault of that language. For *all* language is *necessarily* metaphorical. As C.S. Lewis writes: "It is a serious mistake to think that metaphor is an optional thing which poets and orators may put into their work as a decoration and plain speakers can do without. The truth is that if we are going to talk at all about things which are not perceived by the senses, we are forced to use language metaphorically. Books on psychology or economics or politics are as continuously metaphorical as books of poetry or devotion. There is no other way of talking, as every philologist is aware... All speech about supersensibles is, and must be, metaphorical in the highest degree."³²

Even if we admit that the juridical metaphor is limited in its capturing of the mystery, it by no means follows that we will come closer to capturing that mystery by rejecting the metaphor. The Holy Scriptures did not reject the metaphor, nor did the Holy Fathers; nor did they apologize for using it. What they did do was supplement the juridical metaphor with others.³³ Thus the juridical metaphor was supplemented by, for example, the metaphor of the strong man (God) despoiling the goods of the brigand (the devil) (Matthew 12.29), which St. Irenaeus develops³⁴, and by the metaphor of the devil like a fish being caught on the hook of Christ's Divinity and the worm of His Humanity, which is developed by St. Gregory of Nyssa among others.³⁵ Each metaphor illumines a part of the truth; one metaphor complements another, correcting its possibly misleading emphases.³⁶ And yet the juridical metaphor remains the *central* metaphor, the *standard* way given to us by God of understanding the mystery.

³² Lewis, *Miracles*, London: Fount, 1998, p. 71.

³³ Archbishop Basil (Krivoshein) of Brussels writes that the juridical metaphor is "one-sided" and "incomplete", but nevertheless "expresses a doctrine contained in the Revelation" ("Christ's Redemptive Work on the Cross and in the Resurrection", *Sobornost*, summer, 1973, series 6, no. 7, pp. 447-448).

³⁴ But this metaphor still uses the language of justice: "The Word bound [Satan] securely as one banished from Himself, and He seized his spoils, in other words, the people who were held by him, whom he used *unjustly* for his own purposes. And verily he who *unjustly* led men captive is *justly* made a captive" (St. Irenaeus, *Refutation*, 5, XXI, 3).

³⁵ Cf. St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Catechetical Oration*, 24; St. Maximus the Confessor, *Questions to Thalassius*, 64; Paul M. Blowers, "The Passion of Jesus Christ in Maximus the Confessor", *Studia Patristica*, 2001, vol. 37, pp. 370-371.

³⁶ For, as Vladimir Lossky writes: "The immensity of this work of Christ, a work incomprehensible to the angels, as St. Paul tells us, cannot be enclosed in a single explanation nor in a single metaphor. The very idea of redemption assumes a plainly legal aspect: it is the atonement of the slave, the debt paid for those who remained in prison because they could not discharge it. Legal also is the theme of the mediator who reunited man to God through the cross. But these two Pauline images, stressed again by the Fathers, must not be allowed to harden, for this would be to build an indefensible relationship of rights between God and humanity. Rather must we relocate them among the almost infinite number of other images, each like a facet of an event ineffable in itself" ("Christological Dogma", in *Orthodox Theology*, Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1989, p. 111).

As such, the juridical metaphor must be accepted by us *with reverence*, as the *best* way of understanding the mystery, as God's *Divine Revelation* concerning this mystery.

For, as Fr. Georges Florovsky writes: "Revelation is the voice of God speaking to man. And man hears this voice, listens to it, accepts the Word of God and understands it. It is precisely for this purpose that God speaks; that man should hear him. By Revelation in the proper sense, we understand precisely this word of God as it is heard. Holy Scripture is the written record of the Revelation which has been heard. And however one may interpret the inspired character of Scripture, it must be acknowledged that Scripture preserves for us and presents to us the voice of God in the language of man... God speaks to man in the language of man. This constitutes the authentic anthropomorphism of Revelation. This anthropomorphism however is not merely an accommodation. Human language in no way reduces the absolute character of Revelation nor limits the power of God's Word. The Word of God can be expressed precisely and adequately in the language of man. For man is created in the image of God. It is precisely for this reason that man is capable of perceiving God, of receiving God's Word and of preserving it. The Word of God is not diminished while it resounds in human language. On the contrary, the human word is transformed and, as it were, transfigured because of the fact that it pleased God to speak in human language. Man is able to hear God, to grasp, receive and preserve the word of God..."

"When divine truth is expressed in human language, the words themselves are transformed. And the fact that the truths of the faith are veiled in logical images and concepts testifies to the transformation of word and thought - words become sanctified through this usage. The words of dogmatic definitions are not 'simple words', they are not 'accidental' words which one can be replaced by other words. They are eternal truths incapable of being replaced."³⁷

At the heart of the controversy surrounding the juridical "theory", and closely related to the point just made about its metaphorical nature, lies the question of the emotional connotations of its language - and of the emotional reaction to those connotations on the part of some of its critics. Metropolitan Anthony chooses to see in the language of the juridical model - even in the very sober form in which is presented by Metropolitan Philaret - the expression of fallen human emotions "unworthy" of God and the great mystery of God's salvation of mankind. Words such as "curse", "vengeance", "wrath", "ransom" all have the wrong connotations for him, even disgust him; he would like to replace them by more "positive" words such as "love" and "compassion". What he apparently fails to realize is that *all* words used to explain the mystery, *including* "love" and "compassion", are more or less tainted by their association with fallen human emotions and have to be purified in our understanding when applied to God.

³⁷ Florovsky, "Revelation, Philosophy and Theology", in *Creation and Redemption*, Belmont, Mass.: Nordland Publishing Company, 1976, p. 21, 22, 33.

But such purification cannot be accomplished simply through *abstraction*, by replacing the vivid words of Scripture with the dry categories of secular philosophy. The Word of God is above all philosophy. And to attempt to “improve on” the words and concepts given to us by the Holy Spirit in Holy Scripture can only lead to a sinful distortion of the mystery itself. If the Holy Scriptures, adapting to our infirmity, use this language, then all the more should we not expect that we can find any better words to explain the mystery than those provided by the Holy Spirit Himself.

The best we can do, therefore, is to accept with gratitude the metaphors and explanations given to us in the Holy Scriptures, understanding, on the one hand, that there is no better explanation of the mystery in question in human language (for if there were, God would have provided it), and on the other hand that this explanation needs to be purified in our minds of all elements suggestive of fallen human passion. Instead of rejecting or belittling the terms given us in Holy Scripture, we must accept them with reverence, probe as deeply as possible into their meaning, while purging them of all fallen connotations. Thus when considering the curse that God placed on mankind at the fall, we must exclude from our minds all images of bloodthirsty men cursing their enemies out of frenzied hatred and a desire for vengeance. At the same time, the concept of the curse must not become so abstract that the sense of awe and fear and *horror* that it elicits is lost. The curse was not imposed on mankind by God out of hatred of mankind, but out of a pure and dispassionate love of justice – and this justice, far from being a “cold”, “abstract” idea is a living and powerful energy of God Himself. Similarly, God did not demand the Sacrifice of the Son out of a lust for blood, out of the fallen passion of vengefulness, but in order to restore justice and peace between Himself and His creatures, than which there can be nothing more desirable and necessary. God neither loves nor hates as human beings do; both the love and the wrath of God are not to be understood in a human way. For, as St. John of Damascus says: “God, being good, is the cause of all good, subject neither to envy nor to any passion”.³⁸ And, as St. Gregory the Theologian says, by virtue of our limitations and imperfection as human beings we introduce “something human even into such lofty moral definitions of the Divine essence as righteousness and love”.³⁹

Archbishop Theophan of Poltava assembled a number of patristic quotations, of which the following are a selection, in order to demonstrate this vitally important point:

- (i) St. Gregory of Nyssa: “That it is impious to consider that the nature of God is subject to any passion of pleasure or mercy or wrath will be denied by none of those who are even a little attentive to the knowledge of the truth of existence. But although it is said that God rejoices in His servants and is stirred up with wrath against the fallen people, and then that He ‘will show mercy on whom He will show mercy’ (Exodus 33.19), nevertheless I

³⁸ St. John of Damascus, *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, book I, chapter 1.

³⁹ St. Gregory the Theologian, *Sermon* 28.

think that in the case of each of these utterances the commonly accepted interpretation loudly teaches us that by means of our properties the Providence of God adapts itself to our infirmity, so that those inclined to sin may through fear of punishment restrain themselves from evil, and that those formerly carried away by sin may not despair of returning through repentance when they contemplate His mercy".⁴⁰

- (ii) St. Gregory of Nyssa: "Theological science cannot avoid using this language, even about Divine things. We must always have this fact in mind both when we read the Holy Scriptures and when studying the works of the Holy Fathers. And so as to avoid possible misunderstandings and mistakes in the one or the other sphere, it is necessary for us in such cases to transpose the words and names relating to God which are taken from the existence here below to mean that which is higher, loftier".⁴¹
- (iii) St. John Chrysostom: "The same expressions are used about God and about man; but the former should be understood in one way, and the latter in another. We should not accept in the same sense that which is spoken about us and about God, even if the manner of speaking is the same; but we must ascribe to God a certain special privilege which is proper to God; otherwise much stupidity will be the result".⁴²
- (iv) St. John of Damascus: "Many of the things relating to God ... cannot be put into fitting terms, but on things above us we cannot do else than express ourselves according to our limited capacity; as, for instance, when we speak of God we use the terms *sleep* and *wrath*, ... and suchlike expressions... It is not within our capacity, therefore, to say anything about God or even to think of Him, beyond the things which have been divinely revealed to us, whether by word or by manifestation, by the divine oracles at once of the Old Testament and of the New."⁴³
- (v) St. John Chrysostom: "When you hear the words 'wrath' and 'anger' in relation to God, do not understand anything human by them: this is a word of condescension. The Divinity is foreign to everything of the sort; but it is said like this in order to bring the matter closer to the understanding of people of the cruder sort. In the same way we, when we speak with barbarians, use their language; or when we speak with an infant, we lisp like him, even if we ourselves are wise men, in condescension to his youth. And what is it to be wondered at if we act in this way both in words and in deeds, biting our hands and giving the appearance of wrath, in order to correct the child? In exactly the same way God used similar expressions in order to act of people of the cruder sort. When He spoke He cared not for His dignity, but about the profit of those who listened to Him. In another place He indicated that wrath was not proper to God when He said: 'Is it I Whom they provoke? Is it not themselves?' (Jeremiah 7.19) Would you really want Him, when speaking

⁴⁰ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius*, book II.

⁴¹ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius*, book II.

⁴² St. John Chrysostom, *Homily 26 on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*.

⁴³ St. John of Damascus, *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, book I, chapter 2.

with the Jews, to say that He was not angry with them and did not hate them, since hatred is a passion? Or that He does not look on the works of men, since sight is a property of bodies? Or that He does not hear, since hearing belongs to the flesh? But from this they would have extracted another dishonourable doctrine, as if everything takes place without the Providence of God. In avoiding such expressions about God, many would then have been completely ignorant of the fact that God exists; and if they had been ignorant of that, then everything would have perished. But when the teaching about God was introduced in such a way, the correction of it followed swiftly. He who is convinced that God exists, although he has an unfitting conception of God and puts something sensual into it, nevertheless with time he becomes convinced that there is nothing of the sort in God. But he who is convinced that God does not have providential oversight, that He does not care about that which exists, that He does not exist, what benefit will he gain from passionless expressions?"⁴⁴

- (vi) St. Gregory the Theologian: "He punishes, and we have made out of this: He is angry, because with us punishment follows anger".⁴⁵
- (vii) St. John of Damascus: "By wrath and anger are understood His hatred and disgust in relation to sin, since we also hate that which does not accord with our thought and are angry with it".⁴⁶

Thus "if one understands the properties of the wrath of God in the sense in which the just-mentioned Fathers and Teachers of the Church understand it, then it is evident that it involves nothing contrary to the Christian understanding of God as the God of love. But in essence the wrath of God, with such an understanding, *is one of the manifestations of the love of God*, but of the love of God in its relation to the moral evil in the heart of rational creatures in general, and in the heart of man in particular...

"The objection to the Church's teaching that the death of Christ the Saviour on the Cross is a Sacrifice on the grounds that it supposedly presupposes an understanding of God that is unworthy of His true greatness insofar as it speaks of God as being angry for an insult to His dignity, is based on an incorrect understanding of the so-called moral attributes of God, and in particular the Righteousness of God. The true reason for the Sacrifice on Golgotha for the sins of the human race is the love of God for the human race."⁴⁷

So God's love and wrath are two sides of the same coin; the one cannot exist without the other. For as the love of God is limitless, so is His wrath against injustice, that is, against that which denies love and seeks to destroy the beloved.

⁴⁴ St. John Chrysostom, *Works*, Russian edition, vol. V, p. 49. Cf. vol. V, pp. 80-81.

⁴⁵ St. Gregory the Theologian, *Word 31, Works*, Russian edition, vol. III, p. 100.

⁴⁶ St. John of Damascus, *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, book I, ch. 11.

⁴⁷ Archbishop Theophan, *On Redemption*, pp. 48, 51.

2. THE MEANING OF "JUSTIFICATION"

All these things were done with justice, without which God does not act.
St. Gregory Palamas, Homily 16.

He offered Himself as a redemptive sacrifice to the justice of God for sinful mankind.
St. Ignaty Brianchaninov, Word on Salvation and Christian Perfection.⁴⁸

Metropolitan Anthony makes a particular point of rejecting the traditional, juridical understanding of the word "justification" (оправдание in Russian, δικαιοσύνη in Greek), which, he claims, "does not have such a specific meaning. Rather, it means righteousness, that is, blamelessness, dispassion and virtue. This is the translation of the Greek δικαιοσύνη which has the same meaning as αγιωσύνη, αρετή, etc."⁴⁹ As we have seen above, according to Bishop Theophan the Recluse, there are *two* aspects to our redemption: freedom from sin, or justification, and renewal of life, or holiness. By reducing justification to holiness, Metropolitan Anthony appears to reduce the first aspect of our redemption to the second.

But this means, according to Archbishop Seraphim of Lubny, a member of the ROCOR Synod in the 1920s and 30s, "that Metropolitan Anthony has an incorrect understanding of salvation. The latter he reduces to personal holiness alone. While justification, which is the same as our deliverance from the punitive sentence laid by the Divine justice on Adam for his sin, is so excluded by Metropolitan Anthony from the concept of salvation that he identifies this justification of ours accomplished by the Lord on the Cross with personal holiness, for the concepts of justification and righteousness, in his opinion, are equivalent".

"But we could not attain personal holiness if the Lord had not communicated to us the inner, regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit in the sacraments of baptism and chrismation. And this grace is given to us exclusively by virtue of the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross and is its fruit (John 16.7). Consequently, our salvation is composed, first, from our justification from original sin by the blood of the Saviour on the Cross, and secondly, from the regenerating grace that is communicated to us, which destroys all personal sins and makes us possessors of holiness – it goes without saying, with the most active participation of our free will"⁵⁰

In support of his thesis, Metropolitan Anthony points out that "even [in] the Russian text of the Bible, which bears the traces of Protestant influence... the word 'justification' is placed only seven times in St. Paul's mouth whereas 'righteousness' is employed sixty-one times"⁵¹

⁴⁸ St. Ignaty, *Complete Collection of Works* (Complete Works), Moscow, 2001, volume II, p. 308.

⁴⁹ *The Dogma of Redemption*, p. 13.

⁵⁰ Archbishop Seraphim, *The Holy Hierarch Seraphim Sobolev*, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood Press, 1992, pp. 46-47 (in Russian).

⁵¹ *The Dogma of Redemption*, p. 13.

However, as Archbishop Seraphim writes, “our Church had never recognized the quantitative principle in the understanding of Sacred Scripture. The holy Fathers of the Church from the beginning never saw such a criterion in their grace-filled interpretation of the Divine Revelation. And if we pay attention to the holy Fathers, we shall see that their understanding of ‘Paul’s righteousness’ overthrows Metr. Anthony’s view of this righteousness as meaning only holiness.

“We shall not cite the patristic interpretation of all the 61 utterances of the Apostle Paul that include the word ‘righteousness’, which would constitute a whole book. For Orthodox believers it is important to know what they must understand by this ‘righteousness’ in the light of the patristic mind. To this end we shall cite the interpretation of Bishop Theophan the Recluse of several of the utterances of the Apostle Paul in which the word ‘righteousness’ figures, since this interpretation, being based on the teaching of the holy Fathers of the Church, is patristic.

“Having in mind the words of Romans 3.25: ‘Whom God has set forth as a propitiation [ἰλαστήριον] through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness [for the remission of past sins]’, Bishop Theophan the Recluse gives it this interpretation: ‘By faith everyone draws on himself the propitiatory blood of Christ. The blood of Christ by its power has already cleansed the sins of the whole world’ but everyone becomes personally cleansed by it when by faith receives on himself sprinkling or bedewing by the blood of Christ. This is accomplished mystically in the water font of baptism and afterwards in the tears font of repentance...

“‘God saw that people ... could not... start on the right path; which is why He decided to pour His righteousness into them, as fresh blood is admitted into a corrupted organism – and declare it [His righteousness] in them in this way. And in order that this might be accomplished, He gave His Only-begotten Son as a propitiation for all believers – not only so that for His sake their sins might be forgiven, but in order that the believers might become pure and holy within through receiving the grace of the Holy Spirit by faith’.⁵²

“In his explanation of [Romans] 9.30: ‘What shall we say? That the Gentiles who followed not after righteousness have attained to righteousness, the righteousness which is of faith’, Bishop Theophan writes: ‘By righteousness we must understand here all the spiritual good things in Christ Jesus: the remission of sins, the reception of grace, the good direction of the heart through it and all the virtues, by all of which righteousness was restored, the righteousness that was imprinted in human nature at its creation and trampled on thereafter’.⁵³

“Dwelling on the words of the Apostle Paul: ‘The Kingdom of God is [not eating and drinking, but] righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit’ (Romans

⁵² Bishop Theophan the Recluse, *Interpretation of Chapters 1-8 of the Epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Romans*, pp. 231, 234.

⁵³ Bishop Theophan the Recluse, *Interpretation of Chapters 9-16 of the Epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Romans*, p. 82.

14.17), Bishop Theophan explains the word 'righteousness' thus: "'Righteousness' is not justification only and the remission of sins, but inner righteousness... holiness'.⁵⁴

"In his explanation of Romans 5:18: 'Therefore as by the transgression of one man condemnation came upon all men, so by the righteous act [δικαιωματος] of One man [the free gift] came upon all men to justification [δικαιωσιν] of life', Bishop Theophan writes: 'as by the transgression of one man condemnation - that is, condemnation to death - came upon all me, so by the justification of One man justification to life came upon all men. Blessed Theodoretus writes: "Looking at Adam, says the Apostle, do not doubt in what I have said (that is, that God saves all in the one Lord Jesus Christ). For if it is true, as it is indeed true, that when Adam transgressed the commandment, the whole race received on itself the sentence of death, then it is clear that the righteousness of the Saviour provides life for all men."' 'The apostle,' explains Bishop Theophan, 'said: "justification of life came upon", which leads us to understand that the saving forces of grace had already entered into humanity, had been received by it and had begun their restorative work... Do not doubt that this grace has already entered, and hasten only to make use of it, so as to destroy the destructive consequences of the first sin'.⁵⁵

"In his interpretation of I Corinthians 1:30, we find the following words in Bishop Theophan: 'The Lord Jesus Christ is our "righteousness" because in His name we are given the remission of sins and grace that strengthens us to every good work'.⁵⁶

"As we see, Bishop Theophan understands by the righteousness about which the Apostle Paul teaches in the cited places in his epistles our propitiation or justification from original sin based on the Saviour's sacrifice on the Cross, and then from all our personal sins and our attainment of holiness through the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit."⁵⁷

Bishop Theophan's broad understanding of the word "righteousness" [pravda] is confirmed by Protopresbyter Michael Pomazansky: "In the words of the Saviour, 'It behoves us to fulfill all righteousness' we must evidently understand an all-sided righteousness, the sum of virtues or the sum of the commandments of God. And the expression of our old dogmatists: 'to satisfy the righteousness of God', or, as Metropolitan Macarius more often puts it, 'to satisfy "the eternal Righteousness"', must not be understood in the sense of 'satisfy God', but as 're-establish the righteousness that has been violated on earth, the laws of virtue, which have been prescribed for man and mankind by God'. The broad sense of the word 'righteousness', which includes the element of justice [pravosudie, spravedlivost'], is

⁵⁴ Bishop Theophan the Recluse, *Interpretation of Chapters 9-16 of the Epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Romans*, p. 325.

⁵⁵ Bishop Theophan the Recluse, *Interpretation of Chapters 1-8 of the Epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Romans*, p. 323.

⁵⁶ Bishop Theophan the Recluse, *Interpretation of the First Epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Corinthians*, Moscow, 1893, p. 86.

⁵⁷ *The Holy Hierarch Seraphim Sobolev*, pp. 48-50.

contained in the prayer of the Prophet Daniel: 'To Thee, O Lord, is righteousness, but to us - shameful faces' (Daniel 9.7-8); and in the prophecy on seventy weeks: 'and the eternal righteousness will be brought in' (9.24); finally, in the words of the Apostle Paul that God 'wants to judge the universe in righteousness' (*εν δικαιοσυνη, Acts* 17.31)."⁵⁸

Bishop Theophan's interpretation of three other disputed passages from St. Paul are cited by Archbishop Seraphim: "'Being justified freely by His grace through the deliverance that is in Christ Jesus' (Romans 3.24)... 'Through the deliverance [*δια της απολυτρωσεως*], that is, through the redemption. Redemption is the only means of justification! Someone is redeemed when people pay money for him and he is delivered from the bonds of slavery. Through the fall of the first parents the human race fell into slavery to sin and the devil, who had possession of man by dint of his guiltiness, which drew upon him and upon him that had power over him the curse of God. For his salvation the curse had to be removed, which would give a righteous basis for clearing him of guilt, and then new strength had to be poured into him to destroy the power of sin, and through this overthrow the power of the devil. All this was accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-Begotten Son of God and God, Who took upon Himself human nature, died in it upon the Cross, was resurrected, ascended into the heavens, sat at the right hand of the Father, and sent the Holy Spirit on the holy Apostles and through them to the whole of humanity. All this taken together constitutes the economy of our salvation, or the redemption of the human race. Those who approach it with faith receive the remission of sins, and then the grace of the Spirit through the sacraments, and are not only guiltless, but also righteous...By redemption is sometimes signified not the whole economy of salvation, but only that action by which the Lord through His death on the Cross delivered us from the condemnation that lay upon us and the curse of God that weighed upon us. As ransom for us - for our unpaid debts - He gave His own blood. It cries out more than the blood of Abel, but it calls down not punishment from on high, but complete justification for every believer.'⁵⁹

"From the cited interpretation of Bishop Theophan it is clearly evident that by the justification [*оправдание*] of which the Apostle Paul speaks we must not understand only the righteousness [*праведность*] acquired by us through the grace of the Holy Spirit. This justification includes in itself the removal from mankind of the guilt for original sin and its consequence, the curse of God, by means of the justice of God through the death of Christ on the Cross...'

"This interpretation of the Slavonic word 'правда' (in the Russian translation, 'оправдание') according to Bishop Theophan's interpretation is witnessed to by two other texts among those indicated by Metr. Anthony: 'For if the ministry of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in

⁵⁸ Pomazansky, "Mitropolit Makarij (Bulgakov)", *op. cit.*, p. 80.

⁵⁹ Bishop Theophan the Recluse, *Interpretation of Chapters 1-8 of the Epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Romans*, pp. 226-228.

glory' (II Corinthians 3.9) [and] 'For if righteousness come by the law, then Christ died in vain' (Galatians 2.21).

"Having in mind the first text, Bishop Theophan says: 'The Old Testament institution was the ministry of condemnation because it only reproached sin and condemned the sinner... it did not lead him further... The testament of grace, by contrast, although it is also revealed by the universal condemnation of those who are called to it, nevertheless says: 'Repent and be baptized every one of you for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the Holy Spirit' (Acts 2.38). That is, in it the remission of sins is given from the first step... and new life that is powerful to keep one walking without deviating in the commandments of God is communicated - a right spirit is renewed in the reins, a spirit that communicates to him who receives it inner probity or righteousness [праведность]. That is why it is the ministry of righteousness [правда] - δικαιοσύνης ... not in name, but in essence'.⁶⁰

"As we see, in the given apostolic words, too, we must understand by justification not only righteousness or holiness, but also the remission of sins, of course, in the sense of deliverance both from original sin, and also from all our personal sins by the grace of the Holy Spirit for the sake of the death of Christ on the Cross.

"The same thought is expressed in Bishop Theophan's interpretation of the word 'righteousness' [правда] (in the Russian translation 'оправдание') in the last apostolic text. Lingering on this text, Bishop Theophan says: 'If righteousness' - δικαιοσύνη, a God-pleasing, saving life - 'come by the law, then Christ died in vain'. If the law provided both forgiveness of sins and inner probity and sanctification, then there would be no reason for Christ to die. He died in order to provide us with these two essential good things - the forgiveness of sins and sanctifying grace. Nobody except He could provide us with these, and without them there would be no salvation for us... The Lord Saviour died for us and nailed our sins to the Cross. Then, after His ascension into heaven, He sent down the Holy Spirit from the Father. That is why believers are given in Him both the forgiveness of sins and sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit. Without these two things there would be no salvation for us. Consequently Christ, in providing us with them, did not die in vain... Consequently righteousness is not through the law.'⁶¹...

"Thus from all the apostolic utterances that we have examined in which the Apostle Paul speaks about righteousness, it is clear that by this righteousness we must understand not only holiness, but also our justification from original sin and all our personal sins."⁶²

⁶⁰ Bishop Theophan the Recluse, *Interpretation of the Second Epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Corinthians*, p. 106.

⁶¹ Bishop Theophan the Recluse, *Interpretation of the Epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Galatians*, Moscow, 1893, pp. 204-205.

⁶² *The Holy Hierarch Seraphim Sobolev*, pp. 51-53.

The other passages whose correct interpretation is disputed by Metropolitan Anthony are discussed in a similar way by Archbishop Seraphim, relying, as always, on the interpretation of Bishop Theophan. We shall leave the interested reader to look these up on his own. Instead, we shall end this section by citing two patristic passages from two of the greatest Fathers of the Church, which demonstrate how central the language of justice and justification is to their understanding of the mystery of redemption.

First, St. John Chrysostom: “‘Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us’ (Galatians 3.13). In reality, the people were subject to another curse, which says, ‘Cursed is every man who continueth not in all the words of the law to do them’ (Deuteronomy 27.26). To this curse, I say, people were subject, for none had continued in, or was a keep of, the whole law; but Christ exchanged this curse for the other, ‘Cursed by God is everyone who is hanged on a tree’ (Deuteronomy 21.23). And then both he who hanged on a tree, and he who transgresses the law, is cursed, and as it was necessary for him who is about to relieve from a curse himself to be loosed from it, but to receive another instead of it, therefore Christ took upon Him such another, and thereby loosed us from the curse. *It was like an innocent man’s undertaking to die for another condemned to death, and so rescuing him from punishment.* For Christ took upon Him not the curse of transgression, but the other curse, in order to remove that of others. For ‘He practised no iniquity, nor was craft in His mouth’ (Isaiah 53.9; I Peter 2.22). And as by dying He rescued from death those who were dying, so by taking upon Himself the curse, He delivered them from it.”⁶³

And secondly, St. Gregory Palamas: “The pre-eternal, uncircumscribed and almighty Word and omnipotent Son of God could clearly have saved man from mortality and servitude to the devil without Himself becoming man. He upholds all things by the word of His power and everything is subject to His divine authority. According to Job, He can do everything and nothing is impossible for Him. The strength of a created being cannot withstand the power of the Creator, and nothing is more powerful than the Almighty. But the incarnation of the Word of God was the method of deliverance most in keeping with our nature and weakness, and most appropriate for Him Who carried it out, *for this method had justice on its side, and God does not act without justice.* As the Psalmist and Prophet says, ‘God is righteous and loveth righteousness’ (Psalms 11.7), ‘and there is no unrighteousness in Him’ (Psalms 92.15). Man was justly abandoned by God in the beginning as he had first abandoned God. He had voluntarily approached the originator of evil, obeyed him when he treacherously advised the opposite of what God had commanded, and was justly given over to him. In this way, through the evil one’s envy and the good Lord’s just consent, death came into the world. Because of the devil’s overwhelming evil, death became twofold, for he brought about not just physical but also eternal death.

⁶³ St. John Chrysostom, *P.G.* 61:700, cols. 652, 653.

“As we had been justly handed over to the devil’s service and subjection to death, it was clearly necessary that the human race’s return to freedom and life should be accomplished by God *in a just way*. Not only had man been surrendered to the envious devil by divine righteousness, but the devil had rejected righteousness and become wrongly enamoured of authority, arbitrary power and, above all, tyranny. He took up arms against justice and used his might against mankind. It pleased God that the devil be overcome first by the justice against which he continuously fought, then afterwards by power, through the Resurrection and the future Judgement. *Justice before power is the best order of events*, and that force should come after justice is the work of a truly divine and good Lord, not of a tyrant....

“A sacrifice was needed to reconcile the Father on High with us and to sanctify us, since we had been soiled by fellowship with the evil one. There had to be a sacrifice which both cleansed and was clean, and a purified, sinless priest... It was clearly necessary for Christ to descend to Hades, but *all these things were done with justice, without which God does not act.*”⁶⁴

“Justice before power”, the Cross before the Resurrection. And “all things done with justice, without which God does not act.” Clearly, justice is no secondary aspect of the Divine economy, but the very heart, the very essence of our salvation.

⁶⁴ St. Gregory Palamas, *Homily 16*, 1,2,21; in Christopher, *op. cit.*, pp. 179-180, 194.

3. THE SACRIFICE FOR SIN

O my Saviour, the living and unslain Sacrifice, when as God Thou of Thine own will hadst offered up Thyself unto the Father...
Pentecostarion, Sunday of Pascha, Mattins, Canon, Canticle 6, troparion.

Another bone of contention between Metropolitan Anthony and his critics is the concept of sacrifice.

The Holy Scriptures say that “the Son of Man came... to give His life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20.28), “as a ransom for all” (I Timothy 2.6), “as a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people” (Hebrews 2.17).

The Holy Fathers use such language no less frequently. Thus St. Cyprian of Carthage writes: “If Jesus Christ our Lord and God, is Himself the Chief Priest of God the Father, and has first offered Himself as a sacrifice to the Father, and has commanded this to be done in commemoration of Himself, certainly that priest truly discharges the office of Christ who imitates that which Christ did; and he then offers a true and full sacrifice in the Church to God the Father”.⁶⁵ Again, Blessed Theophylact writes: “Since the Lord offered Himself up for us in sacrifice to the Father, having propitiated Him by His death as High Priest and then, after the destruction of sin and cessation of enmity, sent unto us the Spirit, He says: ‘I will beseech the Father and will give you a Comforter, that is, I will propitiate the Father for you and reconcile Him with you, who were at enmity with Him because of sin, and He, having been propitiated by My death for you and been reconciled with you, will send you the Spirit.’”⁶⁶

But the language of “ransom”, “propitiation” and “sacrifice” is rejected by Metropolitan Anthony.

Archbishop Theophan writes: “[Metropolitan Anthony] gives a metaphorical, purely moral meaning to the Sacrifice on Golgotha, interpreting it in the sense of his own world-view, which he calls the world-view of moral monism.⁶⁷ But he decisively rejects the usual understanding of the Sacrifice on Golgotha, as a sacrifice in the proper meaning of the word, offered out of love for us by our Saviour to the justice of God, for the sin of the whole human race. He recognizes it to be the invention of the juridical mind of the Catholic and Protestant theologians. It goes without saying that with this understanding of the redemptive feat of the Saviour the author had to establish a point of view with regard to the Old Testament sacrifices, the teaching on which has up to now been a major foundation for the teaching on the Saviour’s Sacrifice on Golgotha. And that is what we see in fact. The author rejects the generally accepted view of the sacrifices as the killing of an

⁶⁵ St. Cyprian of Carthage, *Epistle* 62, 14.

⁶⁶ Blessed Theophylact, *Explanation of the Gospel of John*, 14.16.

⁶⁷ *The Dogma of Redemption*, p. 52.

innocent being in exchange for a sinful person or people that is subject to execution. 'In the eyes of the people of the Old Testament', in the words of the author, 'a sacrifice meant only a *contribution*⁶⁸, just as Christians now offer [candles, *kutiya* and eggs] in church... But nowhere [in the Old Testament] will one encounter the idea that the animal being sacrificed was thought of as taking upon itself the punishment due to man.'⁶⁹

"Our author points to St. Gregory the Theologian as being one of the Fathers of the Church who was a decisive opponent of the teaching on sacrifice, in the general sense of the word. In the given case he has in mind the following, truly remarkable (but not to the advantage of the author) words of the great Theologian on the Sacrifice on Golgotha:

"We were detained in bondage by the evil one, sold under sin, and receiving pleasure in exchange for wickedness. Now, since a ransom belongs only to him who holds in bondage, I ask to whom this was offered, and for what cause? If to the evil one, fie upon the outrage! If the robber receives ransom, not only from God, but a ransom which consists of God Himself, and has such an illustrious payment for his tyranny, a payment for whose sake it would have been right for him to have left us alone altogether. But if to the Father, I ask first, how? For it was not by Him that we were being oppressed; and next, on what principle did the Blood of His Only-begotten Son delight the Father, Who would not receive even Isaac, when he was being offered up by his father, but changed his sacrifice, putting a ram in the place of his human victim?"⁷⁰⁷¹

However, St. Gregory, unlike Metropolitan Anthony, does not reject the juridical model, but rather embraced its essence. If the metropolitan had started quoting the saint a little earlier, then he would have read that the blood shed for us is "the precious and famous Blood of our God and High-priest and *Sacrifice*". And if he had continued the quotation just one sentence more, he would have read that "the Father accepts the sacrifice, but neither asked for it, nor felt any need of it, but on account of the oeconomy".

"Evidently," writes Archbishop Theophan, "the author understood that this quotation in its fullness witnesses against his assertion and therefore in the 1926 edition of *The Dogma of Redemption* he does not give a reference to St. Gregory the Theologian"⁷²

The archbishop continues: "From the cited words of St. Gregory it is evident that he by no means rejects the teaching that the death of Christ the Saviour on Golgotha

⁶⁸ Or, offering. The kinship of the Russian word for sacrifice (жертва) and for contribution (пожертвование) should be noted. – note of the translators (Holy Transfiguration Monastery).

⁶⁹ *The Dogma of Redemption*, pp. 42-43.

⁷⁰ St. Gregory, *Homily 45 on Pascha*, 22, quoted by Protopresbyter George Grabbe in his foreword to *The Dogma of Redemption*, pp. vi-vii.

⁷¹ Archbishop Theophan, *On the Redemption*, pp. 9-11.

⁷² Archbishop Theophan, *On the Redemption*, p. 11.

was a sacrifice; he only rejects the theory created in order to explain it that this sacrifice was to be seen as offered by Christ the Saviour as a ransom for the sinful race of men *to the devil*⁷³. As is well known, such a theory did exist and was developed by Origen and in part by St. Gregory of Nyssa. St. Gregory the Theologian with complete justification recognizes this theory to be without foundation, as did St. John of Damascus later (*Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, book III, ch. 27). He thought it just and well-founded to consider the sacrifice as offered to God the Father, but not in the sense that the Father 'demanded or needed' it, but according to the economy of salvation, that is, because, in the plan of Divine Providence, it was necessary for the salvation of the human race.⁷⁴ Besides, although it is said that the Father receives the Sacrifice, while the Son offers it, the thought behind it is that the Son offers it as High Priest, that is, according to His human nature, while the Father receives it indivisibly with the Son and the Holy Spirit, as the Triune God, according to the oneness and indivisibility of the Divine Essence."⁷⁵

Still further proof of St. Gregory's real views is provided by his writing that "Christ Himself offers Himself to God [the Father], so that He Himself might snatch us from him who possessed us, and so that the Anointed One should be received instead of the one who had fallen, because the Anointer cannot be caught".⁷⁶ And again: "He is called 'Redemption' because He set us free from the bonds of sin and gives Himself in exchange for us as a ransom sufficient to cleanse the world."⁷⁷

Returning now to the question of the Old Testament sacrifices, Metropolitan Anthony rejects their prefigurative significance. However, as Archbishop Theophan writes, "in the words of St. Gregory the Theologian, these sacrifices were, on the one hand, concessions to Israel's childishness, and were designed to draw him away from pagan sacrifices; but on the other hand, in these victims the Old Testament law prefigured the future Sacrifice on Golgotha⁷⁸. In particular, the Old Testament paschal Lamb had this mystically prefigurative significance⁷⁹.

"Everything that took place in the time of the worship of God in the Old Testament,' says John Chrysostom, 'in the final analysis refers to the Saviour, whether it is prophecy or the priesthood, or the royal dignity, or the temple, or the altar of sacrifice, or the veil of the temple, or the ark, or the place of purification, or the manna, or the rod, or anything else - everything relates to Him.

⁷³ My italics - V.M.

⁷⁴ Metropolitan Anthony wrote opposite this: "True, but this contradicts [Metropolitan] Philaret" (HOCNA bishops resolution, p. 13). But does it? No proof is offered that Metropolitan Philaret would have rejected Archbishop Theophan's formulation.

⁷⁵ Archbishop Theophan, *On the Redemption*.

⁷⁶ St. Gregory the Theologian, *Works*, Russian edition, vol. V, p. 42. Cf. *Homily 20* (PG 35.1068d).

⁷⁷ St. Gregory the Theologian, *Sermon 30*, 20.

⁷⁸ St. Gregory the Theologian, *Works*, Russian edition, vol. I, pp. 179-180, Moscow, 1889 and vol. I, St. Petersburg edition, p. 669.

⁷⁹ St. Gregory the Theologian, *Works*, Russian edition, vol. IV, pp. 132-142, Moscow, 1889 and vol. I, St. Petersburg edition, p. 675-680.

“God from ancient times allowed the sons of Israel to carry out a sacrificial service to Him not because He took pleasure in sacrifices, but because he wanted to draw the Jews away from pagan vanities.... Making a concession to the will of the Jews, He, as One wise and great, by this very permission to offer sacrifices prepared an image of future things, so that the victim, though in itself useless, should nevertheless be useful as such an image. Pay attention, because this is a deep thought. The sacrifices were not pleasing to God, as having been carried out not in accordance with His will, but only in accordance with His condescension. He gave to the sacrifices an image corresponding to the future oeconomy of Christ, so that if in themselves they were not worthy to be accepted, they at least became welcome by virtue of the image they expressed. By all these sacrifices He expresses the image of Christ and foreshadows future events...’⁸⁰’⁸¹

After quoting from St. Athanasius the Great and St. Cyril of Alexandria to similar effect, Archbishop Theophan continues: “But if the Holy Fathers and Teachers of the Church look at the Old Testament sacrifices in this way, then still more significance must they give to the redemptive death of Christ the Saviour for the human race on Golgotha. And this is indeed what we see. They all recognize the death of Christ the Saviour on Golgotha to be a sacrifice offered by Him as propitiation for the human race, and that, moreover, in the most literal, not at all metaphorical meaning of this word. And from this point of view the death of Christ the Saviour on Golgotha is for them ‘the great mystery’ of the redemption of the human race from sin, the curse and death and ‘the great mystery’ of the reconciliation of sinful humanity with God.

“St. Gregory the Theologian, in expounding his view on the Old Testament sacrifices as being prefigurations of the great New Testament Sacrifice, notes: ‘But in order that you should understand the depth of the wisdom and the wealth of the unsearchable judgements of God, God did not leave even the [Old Testament] sacrifices completely unsanctified, unperfected and limited only to the shedding of blood, but to the sacrifices under the law is united the great and in relation to the Primary Essence, so to speak, untempered Sacrifice – the purification not of a small part of the universe, and not for a short time, but of the whole world for eternity’.

“By this great Sacrifice he understands the Saviour Jesus Christ Himself, Who shed His blood for the salvation of the human race on Golgotha, which is why he often calls Him ‘God, High Priest and Victim’. ‘He gave Himself for us for redemption, for a purifying sacrifice for the universe’.⁸²

“‘For us He became man and took on the form of a servant, he was led to death for our iniquities’.⁸³

⁸⁰ St. John Chrysostom, *Works*, Russian edition, vol. III, pp. 898-900.

⁸¹ Archbishop Theophan, *On the Redemption*, pp. 25-27.

⁸² St. Gregory the Theologian, *Word 30*, *Works*, Russian edition, vol. III, p. 82 or vol. I (St. Petersburg), p. 442.

⁸³ St. Gregory the Theologian, *Word 19*, *Works*, Russian edition, vol. II, p. 129 or vol. I (St. Petersburg), p. 296.

“‘He is God, High Priest and Victim’.⁸⁴

“‘He was Victim, but also High Priest; Priest, but also God; He offered as a gift to God [His own] blood, but [by It] He cleansed the whole world; He was raised onto the Cross, but to the Cross was nailed the sin of all mankind’.⁸⁵

“‘He redeems the world by His own blood’.⁸⁶

“‘St. Athanasius of Alexandria says about the Sacrifice of the Saviour on Golgotha: ‘He, being the true Son of the Father, later became man for us so as to give Himself for us as a sacrifice to the Father and redeem us through His sacrifice and offering (Ephesians 5.2). He was the same Who in ancient times led the people out of Egypt, and later redeemed all of us, or rather, the whole human race, from death, and raised us from hell. He is the same Who from the age was offered as a sacrifice, as a Lamb, and in the Lamb was represented prefiguratively. And finally He offered Himself as a sacrifice for us. “For even Christ our Pascha is sacrificed for us” (I Corinthians 5.7).’⁸⁷

“‘By His death was accomplished the salvation of all, and the whole of creation was redeemed. He is the common Life of all, and He gave His body to death as a sheep for a redemptive sacrifice for the salvation of all, though the Jews do not believe this.’⁸⁸

“‘St. Gregory of Nyssa reasons in a similar way.

“‘Jesus, as Zachariah says, is the Great High Priest (Zachariah 3.1), Who offered His Lamb, that is, His flesh, in sacrifice for the sins of the world, and for the sake of the children who partake of flesh and blood Himself partook of blood (Hebrews 11.14). This Jesus became High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, not in respect of what He was before, being the Word and God and in the form of God and equal to God, but in respect of that fact that He spent Himself in the form of a servant and offered an offering and sacrifice for us’.⁸⁹

“‘He is our Pascha (I Corinthians 5.6) and High Priest (Hebrews 12.11). For in truth Christ the Pascha was consumed for us; but the priest who offers to God the

⁸⁴ St. Gregory the Theologian, *Word 3, Works*, Russian edition, vol. I, pp. 58-59 or vol. I (St. Petersburg), p. 58; *Word 20*, vol. II, p. 235 or vol. I (St. Petersburg), p. 299; *Verses on himself*, vol. IV, p. 247 or vol. II (St. Petersburg), p. 66.

⁸⁵ St. Gregory the Theologian, *Verses on himself*, vol. IV, p. 245 or vol. II (St. Petersburg), p. 22.

⁸⁶ St. Gregory the Theologian, *Word 29, Works*, Russian edition, vol. III, p. 61 or vol. I (St. Petersburg), p. 427.

⁸⁷ St. Athanasius the Great, *Tenth Paschal Epistle*, 10; *Works*, Russian edition, vol. III, p. 464.

⁸⁸ St. Athanasius the Great, *On the Incarnation of God the Word*, 37; *Works*, Russian edition (St. Sergius Lavra, 1902), vol. I, p. 238.

⁸⁹ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius*, book VI, 2; *Works*, Russian edition, vol. VI, pp. 43-44.

Sacrifice is none other than the Same Christ. For in Himself, as the [Apostle] says, "He hath given Himself for us as an offering and sacrifice to God" (Ephesians 5.2).⁹⁰

"By means of priestly acts He in an ineffable manner unseen by men offers an offering and sacrifice for us, being at the same time the Priest and the Lamb that takes away the sins of the world'.⁹¹

"We find much material on the given question in the same spirit in the works of St. John Chrysostom.

"The oeconomy that was to be accomplished in the New Testament,' says this Holy Father in his interpretation on the Gospel of John, 'was foreshadowed beforehand in prefigurative images; while Christ by His Coming accomplished it. What then does the type say? "Take ye a lamb for an house, and kill it, and do as He commanded and ordained' (Exodus 12). But Christ did not do that; He did not command this, but Himself became as a Lamb, offering Himself to the Father as a sacrifice and offering'.⁹²

"When John the Forerunner saw Christ, he said to his disciples: "Behold the Lamb of God" (John 1.35). By this he showed them all the gift which He came to give, and the manner of purification. For "the Lamb" declares both these things. And John did not say, "Who shall take", or "Who hath taken", but "Who taketh away the sins of the world", because Christ always does this. In fact, he took them away not only then when He suffered, but from that time even to the present He takes away sins, not as if He were always being crucified (for He at one time offered sacrifice for sins), but since by that one sacrifice He is continually purging them.⁹³

"This blood was ever typified of old in the altars and sacrifices determined by the law. It is the price of the world, by it Christ redeemed the Church, by it He adorned the whole of her.⁹⁴ 'This blood in types cleansed sins. But if it had such power in the types, if death so shuddered at the shadow, tell me how would it not have dreaded the very reality?'⁹⁵

"David after the words: "Sacrifice and offering hast Thou not desired", added: "but a body hast Thou perfected for me" (Psalms 39.9), understanding by this the body of the Master, a sacrifice for the whole universe, which cleansed our souls, absolved our sins, destroyed death, opened the heavens, showed us many great hopes and ordered all the rest'.⁹⁶

⁹⁰ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *To Olympius the Monk on Perfection; Works*, Russian edition, vol. VII, p. 237.

⁹¹ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Word on Holy Pascha; Works*, Russian edition, vol. VIII, p. 38.

⁹² St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on John*, 13, 3; *Works*, Russian edition, vol. VIII, p. 95.

⁹³ St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on John*, 18, 2; *Works*, Russian edition, vol. VIII, p. 119-120.

⁹⁴ St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on John*, 46, 4; *Works*, Russian edition, vol. VIII, p. 306.

⁹⁵ St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on John*, 46, 3; *Works*, Russian edition, vol. VIII, p. 305.

⁹⁶ St. John Chrysostom, *Against the Jews; Works*, Russian edition, vol. I, p. 722.

“St. John Chrysostom’s reasoning on the mystery of the Sacrifice on Golgotha is particularly remarkable in his discourse, *On the Cross and the Thief*, which he delivered, as is evident from the discourse itself, on Great Friday in Holy Week. ‘Today our Lord Jesus Christ is on the Cross, and we celebrate, so that you should know that the Cross is a feast and a spiritual triumph. Formerly the Cross was the name of a punishment, but now it has become an honourable work; before it was a symbol of condemnation, but now it has become the sign of salvation... It has enlightened those sitting in darkness, it has reconciled us, who were in enmity with God... Thanks to the Cross we do not tremble before the tyrant, because we are near the King. That is why we celebrate in commemorating the Cross.... In fact, one and the same was both victim and priest: the victim was the flesh, and the priest was the spirit. One and the same offers and was offered in the flesh. Listen to how Paul explained both the one and the other. “For every high priest,” he says, “chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins... Hence it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer” (Hebrews 5.1, 8.3). So He Himself offers Himself. And in another place he says that “Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation” (Hebrews 9.28)....’⁹⁷

“St. Cyril of Alexandria reasons as follows with regard to the words of John the Forerunner on the Saviour: “Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world” (John 1.29). It was necessary to reveal Who was the One Who came to us and why He descends from heaven to us. And so “Behold”, he says, “the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world”, to Whom the Prophet Isaiah pointed in the words: “As a sheep for the slaughter is he led and as a lamb before the shearers is he silent” (Isaiah 53.7) and Who was prefigured in the law of Moses. But then He saved only in part, without extending His mercy on all, for it was a figure and a shadow. But now He Who once was depicted by means of enigmas, the True Lamb, the Spotless Victim, is led to the slaughter for all, so as to expel the sin of the world and cast down the destroyer of the universe, so that by His death for all He might abolish death and lift the curse that was on us, so that, finally, the punishment that was expressed in the words: “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Genesis 3.19) might cease and the second Adam might appear - not from the earth, but from the heaven (I Corinthians 15.47) - and become for human nature the beginning of a great good, the destruction of the corruption wrought [by sin], the author of eternal life, the founder of the transformation [of man] according to God, the beginning of piety and righteousness, the way to the Heavenly Kingdom. One Lamb died for all, saving for God and the Father a whole host of men, One for all so that all might be subjected to God, One for all so as to acquire all, “that those who live might live no longer for themselves but from Him Who for their sake died and was raised” (II Corinthians 5.15). Insofar as we were in many sins and therefore subject to death and corruption, the Father gave the son to deliver us (I Timothy 2.6), One for all, since all are in Him and He is above all. One died for all so that all

⁹⁷ St. John Chrysostom, *Works*, Russian edition, vol. II, pp. 437-438. Cf. vol. II, pp. 446-449.

should live in Him.⁹⁸ St. Cyril's general view of the death of Christ the Saviour on Golgotha is such that on Golgotha Emmanuel 'offered Himself as a sacrifice to the Father not for Himself, according to the irreproachable teaching, but for us who were under the yoke and guilt of sin'.⁹⁹ 'He offered Himself as a holy sacrifice to God and the Father, having bought by His own blood the salvation of all'.¹⁰⁰ 'For our sakes he was subjected to death, and we were redeemed from our former sins by reason of the slaughter which He suffered for us'.¹⁰¹ 'In Him we have been justified, freed from a great accusation and condemnation, our lawlessness has been taken from us: for such was the aim of the oeconomy towards us of Him Who because of us, for our sakes and in our place was subject to death'.¹⁰²

"St. Basil the Great in his epistle to Bishop Optimus writes: 'The Lord had to taste death for each, and having become a propitiatory sacrifice for the world, justify all by His blood'.¹⁰³ He develops his thought on the death on the Cross of Christ the Saviour in more detail as a redeeming sacrifice for the sins of the human race in his interpretation of Psalm 48, at the words: "There be some that trust in their strength, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches. A brother cannot redeem; shall a man redeem? He shall not give to God a ransom [εξιλασμα] for himself, nor the price of the redemption of his own soul" (Psalm 48.7-9): 'This sentence is directed by the prophet to two types of persons: to the earthborn and to the rich.... You, he says, who trust in your own strength.... And you, he says, who trust in the uncertainty of riches, listen.... You have need of ransoms that you may be transferred to the freedom of which you were deprived when conquered by the power of the devil, who, taking you under his control, does not free you from his tyranny until, persuaded by some worthwhile ransom, he wishes to exchange you. And the ransom must not be of the same kind as the things which are held in his control, but must differ greatly, if he would willingly free the captives from slavery. Therefore a brother is not able to ransom you. For no man can persuade the devil to remove from his power him who has once been subject to him, not he, at any rate, who is incapable of giving God a propitiatory offering even for his own sins.... But one thing was found worth as much as all men together. This was given for the price of ransom for our souls, the holy and highly honoured blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which He poured out for all of us; therefore we were bought at a great price (I Corinthians 6.20).... No one is sufficient to redeem himself, unless He comes who turns away "the captivity of the people" (Exodus 13.8), not with ransoms nor with gifts, as it is written in Isaiah (52.3), but with His own blood... He Who "shall not give to God His own ransom", but that of the whole world. He does not need a ransom, but He Himself is the propitiation. "For it was fitting that we should have

⁹⁸ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Interpretation of the Gospel of John; Works of the Holy Fathers*, Sergiev Posad, 1901, vol. 64, pp. 175-176.

⁹⁹ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *On worship and service in spirit and in truth*, part I.

¹⁰⁰ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Interpretation of the Gospel of John; Works of the Holy Fathers*, Sergiev Posad, 1901, vol. 66, pp. 175-176.

¹⁰¹ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *On worship and service in spirit and in truth*, part II.

¹⁰² St. Cyril of Alexandria, *On worship and service in spirit and in truth*, part II.

¹⁰³ St. Basil the Great, *Letter to Bishop Optimus; Works*, Russian edition, Sergiev Posad, 1892, vol. VII, p. 224.

such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, set apart from sinners, and become higher than the heavens. He does not need to offer sacrifices daily (as the other priests did), first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people" (Hebrews 7.26-27).¹⁰⁴

"The Scriptures do not reject all sacrifices in general," writes St. Basil the Great in his interpretation on the book of the Prophet Isaiah, "but the Jewish sacrifices. For he says: "What to Me is the multitude of your sacrifices?" (Isaiah 1.11). He does not approve of the many, but demands the one sacrifice. Every person offers himself as a sacrifice to God, presenting himself as "a living sacrifice, pleasing to God", through "rational service" he has offered to God the sacrifice of praise (Romans 12.1). But insofar as the many sacrifices under the law have been rejected as useless, the one sacrifice offered in the last times is accepted. For the Lamb of God took upon Himself the sin of the world, "gave Himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Ephesians 5.2)... There are no longer the "continual" sacrifices (Exodus 29.42), there are no sacrifices on the day of atonement, no ashes of the heifer cleansing "the defiled persons" (Hebrews 9.13). For there is one sacrifice of Christ and the mortification of the saints in Christ; one sprinkling - "the washing of regeneration" (Titus 3.5); one propitiation for sin - the Blood poured out for the salvation of the world."¹⁰⁵

"Finally, St. John of Damascus says the following about the mystery of the sacrifice on Golgotha: "Every action and performance of miracles by Christ are most great and divine and marvelous: but the most marvelous of all is His precious Cross. For no other thing has subdued death, expiated the sin of the first parent [προπατορος αμαρτια], despoiled Hades, bestowed the resurrection, granted the power to us of condemning the present and even death itself, prepared the return to our former blessedness, opened the gates of Paradise, given our nature a seat at the right hand of God, and made us children and heirs of God, save the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ".¹⁰⁶ Therefore, according to the words of the holy father, 'we must bow down to the very Wood on which Christ offered Himself as a sacrifice for us, since it is sanctified through contact with the body and blood'.¹⁰⁷

"This is what the Holy Fathers and Teachers of the Church teach about the mystery of the sacrifice of the Saviour on Golgotha for the sins of the human race. But that is not all. This teaching was even formally confirmed by a whole local council of the Church of Constantinople in 1156. This council was convened because of different understandings of the well-known words in the liturgical prayer, where it is said of Christ the Saviour: 'Thou art He that offereth and is offered, that accepteth and is distributed'.¹⁰⁸ The initial reasons for this difference, according to

¹⁰⁴ St. Basil the Great, *Homily 19 on Psalm 48*, 3, 4; *Works*, Russian edition, Sergiev Posad, 1892, vol. I, pp. 194-195.

¹⁰⁵ St. Basil the Great, *Works*, Russian edition, Sergiev Posad, 1892, vol. I, pp. 241-242.

¹⁰⁶ St. John of Damascus, *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, book IV, ch. 11.

¹⁰⁷ St. John of Damascus, *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, book IV, ch. 11.

¹⁰⁸ Prayer recited secretly by the priest during the Cherubic hymn.

the account of a contemporary historian, Kinnamas, was the following circumstance. A certain Deacon Basil during Divine service in the Church of St. John the Theologian declared while giving a sermon on the daily Gospel reading that 'the one Son of God Himself became a sacrifice and accepted the sacrifice together with the Father'. Two deacons of the Great Church who were present at this found in the words of Basil an incorrect thought, as if two hypostases were thereby admitted in Jesus Christ, of which one was offered in sacrifice and the other accepted the sacrifice. Together with the others who thought like them they spread the idea that the Saviour's sacrifice for us was offered only to God the Father. In order to obtain a more exact explanation and definition of the Orthodox teaching, the conciliar sessions took place, at the will of the Emperor Manuel Comnenus, on January 26 and May 12, 1156. The first conciliar session took place in the hall attached to the Great Church as a result of the inquiry of the just-appointed Metropolitan Constantine of Russia, who was hastening to leave: was it truly necessary to understand the words of the prayer as he understood them, that the sacrifice was offered and is offered to the whole of the Holy Trinity? The council, under the presidency of the Patriarch of Constantinople Constantine Kliarenos, confirmed the teaching expressed of old by the Fathers and Teachers of the Church, whose works were read at the council, that both at the beginning, during the Master's sufferings, the life-creating flesh and blood of Christ was offered, not to the Father only, but also to the whole of the Holy Trinity, and now, during the daily performed rites of the Eucharist, the bloodless sacrifice is offered to the Trihypostatic Trinity", and laid an anathema on the defenders of the error, whoever they might be, if they still adhered to their heresy and did not repent. "¹⁰⁹

"From this historical note it is evident that the council of 1156 considered it indisputable that the death of Christ the Saviour on Golgotha is a propitiatory sacrifice for the human race. It was occupied only with the question to which this sacrifice was offered and decided it in the sense that the sacrifice was offered by Christ the Saviour to the All-Holy Trinity. Moreover, Christ the Saviour Himself was at the same time both the sacrifice and High Priest offering the sacrifice in

¹⁰⁹ Archbishop Theophan, *On the Redemption*, pp. 29-32. In 1157 another council was convened at Blachernae in Constantinople which condemned the teachings of the Deacons Basilakes and Soterichus. The condemnation was incorporated into the *Synodikon of Orthodoxy* as follows:

AGAINST THE ERRORS OF BASILAKES, SOTERICUS AND OTHERS

To those who say that at the season of the world-saving Passion of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ, when He offered the sacrifice of His precious body and blood for our salvation and fulfilled in His human nature the ministry of High Priest for us (since He is at the same time God and Sacrificer and Victim, according to St. Gregory the Theologian¹⁰⁹), He did offer the sacrifice to God the Father, yet He, the Only-begotten, in company with the Holy Spirit, did not accept the sacrifice as God together with the Father; to those who by such teachings estrange from the divine equality of honour and dignity both God the Word and the Comforter Spirit, Who is of one essence and of one glory with Him: *Anathema* (3)

To those who do not accept that the sacrifice offered daily by those who have received from Christ the priestly service of the divine Mysteries is in fact offered to the Holy Trinity, and who thereby contradict the sacred and divine Fathers, Basil and Chrysostom, with whom the other God-bearing Fathers also agree in both their words and their writings: *Anathema* (3)
(*The True Vine*, issues 27 and 28, Spring, 2000, pp. 53-55)

accordance with His human nature, and God receiving the sacrifice, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit. According to the resolution of the council, the eucharistic sacrifice is the same sacrifice, by its link with the sacrifice on Golgotha. Those who thought otherwise were subjected by the council to anathema.”¹¹⁰

As St. Gregory of Nyssa writes: “He offered Himself for us, Victim and Sacrifice, and Priest as well, and ‘Lamb of God Who taketh away the sins of the world’. When did He do this? When He made His own Body food and His own Blood drink for His disciples, for this much is clear to anyone, that a sheep cannot be eaten by a man unless its being eaten be preceded by its being slaughtered. This giving of His own Body to His disciples for eating clearly indicates that the sacrifice of the Lamb has now been completed.”¹¹¹

Again, St. John Chrysostom writes: “Why does He say: ‘This cup is the New Testament’? Because there was also a cup of the Old Testament: the libations and blood of brute creatures. For after sacrificing, they used to receive the blood in a chalice and bowl and so pour it out. Since that time, instead of the blood of beasts, He brought in His own Blood. Lest any should be troubled on hearing this, He reminds them of the ancient sacrifice...”¹¹²

The HOCNA bishops write: “In Archbishop Nikon’s *Life and Works of Metropolitan Anthony* (vol. 5, pp. 171-172), Bishop Gabriel quotes Archbishop Theophan of Poltava’s objections to *The Dogma of Redemption*. Archbishop Theophan writes: ‘The death of Christ the Saviour on the Cross on Golgotha, according to the teaching of the Holy Fathers, undoubtedly is a redemptive and propitiating sacrifice for the sins of the race of man.’ Opposite this passage, in the margin, Metropolitan Anthony has written: ‘I accept and do not deny’.” (p. 13)

But if Metropolitan Anthony accepts and does not deny this clear statement of the “juridical theory”, including such a purely juridical phrase as “propitiating sacrifice”, why does he still consider Metropolitan Philaret a scholastic? In what way was Archbishop Theophan’s statement Orthodox while Metropolitan Philaret’s in his *Catechism* (which we have quoted above) was heretical? Nowhere to our knowledge are we given answers to these questions, neither in Metropolitan Anthony’s works, nor in those of his supporters...

“Let our lives, then,” chants the Holy Church, “be worthy of the loving Father Who has offered sacrifice, and of the glorious Victim Who is the Saviour of our souls”.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Archbishop Theophan, *On the Redemption*.

¹¹¹ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Sermon One on the Resurrection of Christ*, Jaeger, vol. 9, p. 287; in William A. Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1979, volume 2, p. 59.

¹¹² St. John Chrysostom, *Homily 27 on I Corinthians*, 5.

¹¹³ *Triodion*, Sunday of the Prodigal son, Vespers, “Lord, I have cried”, verse.

4. THE PRAYER IN THE GARDEN

The natural and innocent passions [include] the shrinking from death, the fear, the agony with the bloody sweat, the succour at the hands of angels because of the weakness of the nature, and other such like passions which belong by nature to every man.
St. John of Damascus, Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, III, 24.

Let us now turn to Metropolitan Anthony's interpretation of the prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane in the context of his theory of moral monism. Since this is the most famous part of the metropolitan's thesis we shall quote him at some length:-

"The word of instruction is good, still better is a good example, but what shall we call a power incomparably superior to either of these? This, which we have delayed to define, is compassionate love, this power is suffering for another's sake which sets a beginning to his regeneration. It is a mystery, yet not so far removed from us; we can see it working before our very eyes, sometimes even through us, though we do not always understand it. As a power of regeneration we find it constantly mentioned not only in stories of the lives of the Saints and the *vitae* of virtuous shepherds of the Church, but also in the tales of secular literature which are at times wonderfully profound and accurate. Both recognize in compassionate love an active, revolutionary and often irresistible power; yet the former do not explain wherein lies its connection with Christ as our Redeemer, and the latter do not even understand it...

"Such strength of compassionate love is the grace-filled fruit of a godly life and of nature (e.g., the love of a Christian mother). This is within the reach of the laity who live in God, but their sphere of action is limited to near relatives, or to students (of a pious teacher), or to companions in work or companions by circumstance... However, when all men in question, the earnest of this gift is imparted by the mystery of Holy Orders. Our Scholastic theology has overlooked this fact, which is very clearly expressed by Saint John Chrysostom,... who says, 'Spiritual love is not born of anything earthly; it comes from above, from Heaven, and is imparted in the mystery of Holy Orders; but the assimilation and retention of the gift depends on the aspirations of the spirit of man'...

"The compassionate love of a mother, a friend, a spiritual shepherd, or an apostle is operative only if it attracts Christ, the true Shepherd. When it acts within the limits of mere human relations, it can call forth a kindly attitude and repentive [penitent] sentiments, but it cannot work radical regeneration. The latter is so hard for our corrupt nature that not unjustly did Nicodemus, talking with Christ, compare it to an adult person entering again into his mother's womb and being born for a second time. To this our Lord replied that what is impossible in the life of the flesh is possible in the life of grace, where the Holy Spirit, Who descends from Heaven, operates. In order to grant us this life, Christ had to be crucified and raised, as the serpent was raised by Moses in the wilderness, that all who believe in Him should not perish, but have eternal life (John 3.13-15). So what those who possess grace can

do to some extent only and for some people only, our Heavenly Redeemer can do fully and for all. Throughout the course of His earthly life, filled with the most profound compassion for sinful humanity, He often exclaimed, 'O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer with you?' (Matthew 17.17). He was oppressed with the greatest sorrows on the night when the greatest crime in the history of mankind was committed, when the ministers of God, with the help of Christ's disciple, some because of envy, some because of avarice, decided to put the Son of God to death.

"And a second time the same oppressing sorrow possessed His pure soul on the Cross, when the cruel masses, far from being moved to pity by His terrible physical sufferings, maliciously ridiculed the Sufferer; and as to His moral suffering, they were unable even to surmise it. One must suppose that during that night in Gethsemane, the thought and feeling of the God-Man embraced fallen humanity numbering many, many millions, and He wept with loving sorrow over each individual separately, as only the omniscient heart of God could do. *In this did our redemption consist.* This is why God, the God-Man, and only He, could be our Redeemer. Not an angel, nor a man. And not at all because the satisfaction of Divine wrath demanded the most costly sacrifice. Ever since the night in Gethsemane and that day on Golgotha, every believer, even he who is just beginning to believe, recognizes his inner bond with Christ and turns to Him in his prayers as to the inexhaustible source of moral regenerating force. Very few are able to explain why they so simply acquired faith in the possibility of deriving new moral energy and sanctification from calling on Christ, but no believer doubts it, nor even do heretics.

"Having mourned with His loving soul over our imperfection and corrupt wills, the Lord has added to our nature the well-spring of new vital power, accessible to all who have wished or ever shall wish for it, beginning with the wise thief...

"... I have always been dissatisfied when someone to whom I have explained redeeming grace retorts from a Scholastic, theological viewpoint in this manner, 'You have spoken only of the subjective, the moral aspect of the dogma, leaving out the objective and metaphysical (that is to say, the juridical).' To all this I answer, 'No, a purely objective law of our spiritual nature is revealed in the transmission of the compassionate, supremely loving energy of the Redeemer to the spiritual nature of the man who believes and calls for this help, a law which is revealed in our dogmas, but of which our dogmatic science has taken no notice.'"¹¹⁴

At this point, however, the metropolitan chose to delay the elucidation of his theory in order to "refute the current understanding that our Lord's prayer in Gethsemane was inspired by fear of the approaching physical suffering and death. This would be entirely unworthy of the Lord, whose servants in later days (as well as in earlier times, as for instance, the Maccabees) gladly met torture and rejoiced when their flesh was torn and longed to die for Christ as it were the greatest felicity. Moreover, the Saviour knew well that His spirit was to leave His body for less than

¹¹⁴ *The Dogma of Redemption*, pp. 18-19, 24, 27-29.

two days, and for this reason alone the death of the body could not hold any terror for Him... When our Lord said, 'Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me,' He referred not to the approaching crucifixion and death but to the overwhelming state of profound sorrow which He felt for the human race He loved so dearly".¹¹⁵

However, the idea that Christ did not suffer in fear of death is contradicted by the ancient Holy Fathers, who argued that Christ allowed His human nature to experience the fear of death that is natural to it and in no way sinful, in order to demonstrate the reality of that nature.¹¹⁶ This latter interpretation became particularly firmly established after the Sixth Ecumenical Council had finally elucidated the doctrine of the two wills of Christ, the *locus classicus* for which is precisely the prayer in the Garden. Thus St. Maximus the Confessor, whose teaching was confirmed at the Sixth Council, writes: "Since the God of all Himself became man without change, then [it follows] that the same Person not only willed in a manner appropriate to His Godhead, but also willed as man in a manner appropriate to His humanity. For the things that exist came to be out of nothing, and have therefore a power that draws them to hold fast to being, and not to non-being; and the natural characteristic of this power is an inclination to that which maintains them in being, and a drawing back from things destructive. Thus the super-essential Word, existing essentially in a human manner, also had in His humanity this self-preserving power that clings to existence. And He [in fact] showed both [aspects of this power], willing the inclination and the drawing back through His human energy. He displayed the inclination to cling to existence in His use of natural and innocent things, to such an extent that unbelievers thought He was not God; and He displayed the drawing back at the time of the Passion when He voluntarily balked at death."¹¹⁷ The important word here is "voluntarily". Although it was natural, and not sinful, for Christ to fear death, since He was truly man, He did not *have* to; He could have overcome that fear through the power of the grace that was natural to Him as being truly God, which grace also overcame the fear of death in the holy martyrs. But He chose not to overcome the fear that is in accordance with nature (and which is to be clearly distinguished from that irrational dread which is contrary to nature¹¹⁸), in order to demonstrate the reality of that nature.

¹¹⁵ *The Dogma of Redemption*, p. 30.

¹¹⁶ Archbishop Theophan lists: St. Athanasius the Great (*On the Incarnation of the Word and against the Arians*, 21; *Third Word against the Arians*, 57), St. Gregory of Nyssa (*Antirrheticus, or Refutation of the Opinions of Apollinarius*, 32), St. John Chrysostom (*Against the Anomeans*, Word 7), St. Cyril of Alexandria (*Interpretation of the Gospel according to John*, 12.26-27; *Interpretation of the Book of the Prophet Isaiah*), St. Ephraim the Syrian (*Interpretation of the Four Gospels*) and St. John of Damascus (*Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, III, 18). Fr. Seraphim Rose adds to this list St. Symeon the New Theologian (*Homily 39*, 5). We can further add to this list Blessed Theophylact of Bulgaria, who writes: commenting on the verse: "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of?" (*Matthew 20.22*): "the cup means martyrdom and one's own death" (*Commentary on Matthew*, House Springs, Mo.: Chrysostom Press, 1992, p. 171).

¹¹⁷ St. Maximus the Confessor, PG 91:297B-300A. Translated in Joseph Farrell, *Free Choice in St. Maximus the Confessor*, South Canaan: St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, 1989, pp. 167-168.

¹¹⁸ St. Maximus the Confessor, PG 91:297CD; St. John of Damascus, *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, III, 23.

However, in case anyone should think that there was a conflict between His human will and His Divine will, Christ immediately demonstrated the complete obedience of His human will to the Divine will by the words: “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt”, which sentence, as St. Maximus explains, “excludes all opposition, and demonstrates the union of the [human] will of the Saviour with the Divine will of the Father, since the whole Word has united Himself essentially to the entirety of [human] nature, and has deified it in its entirety by uniting Himself essentially to it”.¹¹⁹

St. John of Damascus sums up the patristic consensus on this point: “He had by nature, both as God and as man, the power of will. But His human will was obedient and subordinate to His Divine will, not being guided by its own inclination, but willing those things which the Divine will willed. For it was with the permission of the Divine will that He suffered by nature what was proper to Him. For when He prayed that He might escape the death, it was with His Divine will naturally willing and permitting it that He did so pray and agonize and fear, and again when His Divine will willed that His human will should choose the death, the passion became voluntary to Him. For it was not as God only, but also as man, that He voluntarily surrendered Himself to the death. And thus He bestowed on us also courage in the face of death. So, indeed, He said before His saving passion, ‘Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me’ (Matthew 26.39; Luke 22.22), manifestly as though He were to drink the cup as man and not as God. It was as man, then, that He wished the cup to pass from Him: but these are the words of natural timidity. ‘Nevertheless,’ He said, ‘not My will’, that is to say, not in so far as I am of a different essence from Thee, ‘but Thy will be done’, that is to say, My will and Thy will, in so far as I am of the same essence as Thou. Now these are the words of a brave heart. For the Spirit of the Lord, since He truly became man in His good pleasure, on first testing its natural weakness was sensible of the natural fellow-suffering involved in its separation from the body, but being strengthened by the Divine will it again grew bold in the face of death. For since He was Himself wholly God although also man, and wholly man although also God, He Himself as man subjected in Himself and by Himself His human nature to God and the Father, and became obedient to the Father, thus making Himself the most excellent type and example for us”.¹²⁰

Still more clearly, Theophylact of Bulgaria writes: “To confirm that He was truly man, He permitted His human nature to do what is natural to it. Christ, as man, desires life and prays for the cup [that is, death] to pass, for man has a keen desire for life. By doing these things, the Lord confutes those heretics who say that He became man in appearance only. If they found a way to utter such nonsense even though the Lord showed here such clear signs of His human nature, what would they not have dared to invent if He had not done these things? To want the cup removed is human. By saying without hesitation, ‘Nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done’, the Lord shows that we too must have the same disposition and the

¹¹⁹ St. Maximus the Confessor, *Theological and Polemical Works* 6, PG:68C. In Farrell, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

¹²⁰ St. John of Damascus, *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, III, 18.

same degree of equanimity, yielding in all things to the will of God. The Lord also teaches here that when our human nature pulls us in a different direction, we ought not to yield to that temptation. 'Not My human will be done, but Thine, yet Thy will is not separate from My Divine will'. Because the one Christ has two natures, He also had two natural wills, or volitions, one Divine and the other human. His human nature wanted to live, for that is its nature. But then, yielding to the Divine will common to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – namely, that all men be saved – His human nature accepted death. Thus His two wills willed one and the same thing: Christ's salvific death. The praying in Gethsemane was from His human nature which was permitted to suffer the human passion of love of life... His human nature was permitted to suffer these things, and consequently did suffer them, to prove that the Lord was truly human, and not a man in appearance only. And, in a more mystical sense, the Lord voluntarily suffered these things in order to heal human nature of its cowardice. He did this by using it all up Himself, and then making cowardice obedient to the Divine will. It could be said that the sweat which came out from the Lord's Body and fell from Him indicates that our cowardice flows out of us and is gone as our nature is made strong and brave in Christ. Had He not desired to heal the fear and cowardice of mankind, the Lord would not have sweated as He did, so profusely and beyond even what the most craven coward would do. 'There appeared an angel unto Him', strengthening Him, and this too was for our encouragement, that we might learn the power of prayer to strengthen us, and having learned this, use it as our defense in dangers and sufferings. Thus is fulfilled the prophecy of Moses, 'And let all the sons of God be strengthened in Him' [Deuteronomy 32.43]".¹²¹

It is not only the ancient Holy Fathers who affirm that Christ had a natural and innocent fear of death. We also find it in a disciple of Metropolitan Anthony, St. John Maximovich (+1966), who, as Fr. Seraphim Rose pointed out, tactfully corrected the metropolitan's mistake without mentioning him by name: "It was necessary that the sinless Saviour should take upon Himself all human sin, so that He, Who had no sins of His own, should feel the weight of the sin of all humanity and sorrow over it in such a way as was possible only for complete holiness, which clearly feels even the slightest deviation from the commandments and Will of God. It was necessary that He, in Whom Divinity and humanity were hypostatically united, should in His holy, sinless humanity experience the full horror of the distancing of man from his Creator, of the split between sinful humanity and the source of holiness and light – God. The depth of the fall of mankind must have stood before His eyes at that moment; for man, who in paradise did not want to obey God and who listened to the devil's slander against Him, would now rise up against his Divine Saviour, slander Him, and, having declared Him unworthy to live upon the earth, would hang Him on a tree between heaven and earth, thereby subjecting Him to the curse of the God-given law (Deuteronomy 21.22-23). It was necessary that the sinless Righteous One, rejected by the sinful world for which and at the hands of which He was suffering should forgive mankind this evil deed and turn to the Heavenly Father with a prayer

¹²¹ Blessed Theophylact, *Explanation of the Gospel according to Luke*, House Springs, Mo.: Chrysostom Press, 1997, pp. 293-294.

that His Divine righteousness should forgive mankind, blinded by the devil, this rejection of its Creator and Saviour...

“However, this sacrifice would not be saving if He would experience only His personal sufferings – He had to be tormented by the wounds of sin from which mankind was suffering. The heart of the God-Man was filled with inexpressible sorrow. All the sins of men, beginning from the transgression of Adam and ending with those which would be done at the moment of the sounding of the last trumpet – all the great and small sins of all men stood before His mental gaze. They were always revealed to God – ‘all things are manifest before Him’ – but now their whole weight and iniquity was experienced also by His human nature. His holy, sinless soul was filled with horror. He suffered as the sinners themselves do not suffer, whose coarse hearts do not feel how the sin of man defiles and how it separates him from the Creator...

“However, the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. The spirit of Jesus now burns (Romans 12.11), wishing only one thing – the fulfillment of the Will of God. But by its nature human nature abhors sufferings and death (St. John of Damascus, *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, book 3, chapters 18, 20, 23, 24; Blessed Theodoret; St. John of the Ladder, *The Ladder*, word 6, “On the remembrance of death”). The Son of God willingly accepted this weak nature. He gives Himself up to death for the salvation of the world. And He conquers, although He feels the approaching fear of death and abhorrence of suffering.... Now these sufferings will be especially terrible, terrible not so much in themselves, as from the fact that the soul of the God-Man was shaken to the depths...

“He offered up prayers and supplications to Him Who was able to save Him from death (Hebrews 5.7), but He did not pray for deliverance from death. It is as if the Lord Jesus Christ spoke as follows to His Father: ‘... Deliver Me from the necessity of experiencing the consequences of the crime of Adam. However, this request is dictated to Me by the frailty of My human nature; but let it be as is pleasing to Thee, let not the will of frail human nature be fulfilled, but Our common, pre-eternal Council. My Father! If according to Thy wise economy it is necessary that I offer this sacrifice, I do not reject It. But I ask only one thing: may Thy will be done. May Thy will be done always and in all things. As in heaven with Me, Thine Only-Begotten Son, and Thee there is one will, so may My human will here on earth not wish anything contrary to Our common will for one moment. May that which was decided by us before the creation of the world be fulfilled, may the salvation of the human race be accomplished. May the sons of men be redeemed from slavery to the devil, may they be redeemed at the high price of the sufferings and self-sacrifice of the God-Man. And may all the weight of men’s sins, which I have accepted on Myself, and all My mental and physical sufferings, not be able to make My human will waver in its thirst that Thy holy will be done. May I do Thy will with joy. Thy will be done...

“‘The Lord prayed about the cup of His voluntary saving passion as if it was involuntary’ (Sunday service of the fifth tone, canon, eighth irmos), showing by this the two wills of the two natures, and beseeching God the Father that His human will would not waver in its obedience to the Divine will (*Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, book 3, 24). An angel appeared to Him from the heavens and strengthened His human nature (Luke 22.43), while Jesus Who was accomplishing the exploit of His self-sacrifice prayed still more earnestly, being covered in a bloody sweat.”¹²²

We see here that St. John does *not* agree with Metropolitan Anthony’s assertion that Christ was not fearful of death; he considers such fear in no way “unworthy” of the Saviour. For, as Archbishop Theophan writes: “The manifestation of this infirmity of the human nature of the Saviour represents nothing unworthy of His Most Holy Person, since it took place in accordance with the free permission of His Divine will and had its economical significance. The economical significance of this feat of the Saviour consists in the fact that He witnessed thereby that the Saviour took upon Himself, not illusory, but real human nature with all its sinless infirmities and conquered one of the most important of these infirmities [the fear of death] in His Person”.¹²³

However, although the Lord did indeed suffer the fear of death in Gethsemane, this was only a small part of His total sufferings. And at this point Metropolitan Anthony is undoubtedly right to emphasize His sufferings for the sins of the whole of mankind, which He contemplated and sorrowed over to the extent of the shedding of His sweat and blood mingled together. “I am perfectly convinced that the bitter sufferings of Christ in Gethsemane came from contemplation of the sinful life and the wicked inclinations of all the generations of men, beginning with His enemies and betrayers of that time.”¹²⁴

This insight was accepted and shared by several saints of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century Church of Russia, beginning with the supposedly “scholastic” Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow. However, it is important to point out that while expressing this same insight, they often used juridical language, evidently seeing no contradiction between the one and the other. In order to illustrate this vital point, we shall quote several of them at some length:

(i) Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow. “Perhaps the mortal sorrow of Jesus is considered by some of us to be unworthy of the Passionless One. Let them know that this sorrow is not the action of human lack of patience, but of Divine *justice*. Could the Lamb, ‘slain from foundation of the world’ (Revelation 13.8) run away from His altar? He ‘Whom the Father sanctified’ and ‘sent into the world’ (John 10.36)? He Who from the ages took upon Himself the service of reconciling men with God, could He waver in the work of this service with the single thought of suffering? If

¹²² “What did Christ Pray about in the Garden of Gethsemane?”, *Living Orthodoxy*, N 87, vol. XV, no. 3, May-June, 1993, pp. 5, 6, 7, 8.

¹²³ Archbishop Theophan, *On the Redemption*, p. 23.

¹²⁴ *The Dogma of Redemption*, p. 30.

He could have lack of patience, then it could only impatience to accomplish our salvation and bring us blessedness. 'I have a baptism to be baptised with,' He says, 'and how am I straightened until it be accomplished!' (Luke 12.50). And so, if He sorrows, He sorrows not with His own, but with our sorrow; if we see Him 'stricken, smitten of God and afflicted', then 'He bears our sins, and is in pain for our sakes' (Isaiah 53.4); the cup which His Father gives Him is the cup of all our iniquities, and all the punishments prepared for us, which would have drowned the whole world if He alone had not accepted it, held it and consumed it. It was mixed, in the first place, with the disobedience of Adam, then with the corruption of 'the first world' (Genesis 6.12 and II Peter 2.5), with the pride and impiety of Babylon, with the cruelty and impenitence of Egypt, with the treacheries of Jerusalem, 'which killed the prophets and stoned those sent to it' (Matthew 23.37), with the malice of the synagogue, with the superstitions of the pagans, with the unruliness of the wise men and, finally (insofar as the Redeemer also took upon Himself the future sins of the world), the scandals in Christianity itself: the divisions in the one flock of the One Shepherd, the bold musings of the false teachers, the weakening of faith and love in the Kingdom of faith and love, the regeneration of atheism in the depths of piety itself. Let us add to that everything that we find in ourselves and around us that is worthy of revulsion and the wrath of God, and also everything that we try to hide from our conscience under the cunning name of 'weaknesses' - the light-mindedness and lawless delights of youth, the incorrigibility of old age, the forgetting of Providence in happiness, the murmurs [against It] in misfortunes, vainglory in doing good, avarice in the love of labour, slowness in correction, multiple falls after arising, the carelessness and idleness that are proper to the dominion of luxury, the self-will of the age, arrogant with the dream of enlightenment: all these floods of iniquity were poured together from Jesus into the one cup of sorrow and suffering; the whole of hell strove against this heavenly soul; and is surprising that he was sorrowful even unto death?"¹²⁵

(ii) Holy New Hieromartyr John Vostorgov. "When contemplating the Gethsemane struggle there are two main themes to keep in mind. First, Jesus Christ is not only perfect God, but perfect and complete man, as the Church has always clearly confessed. He is a man pure in body and sinless in spirit, 'in all things like us save sin'. The second point is that Jesus Christ is the Redeemer of mankind Who bore our sins and the punishment for them - our afflictions (Isaiah 53.4; see whole chapter). Therefore, the soul of Jesus was not only oppressed by the knowledge of His impending, agonizing death, but by an incomparably greater burden - that of being the Redeemer. This weight so overwhelmed Him that He sweated blood and was brought to a state of complete exhaustion.

"As a man, the Saviour could not be completely indifferent towards death; if the thought of death is terrifying and unnatural for a sinner, how much more so for the sinless Jesus, the most perfect man. 'God did not create death' and man was created 'for incorruption' (Wisdom 2.23). Death appeared as a result of sin, as a punishment,

¹²⁵ Metropolitan Philaret, "Sermon on Great Friday, 1813", in *The Works of Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow and Kolomna*, Moscow, 1994, pp. 100-101.

and passed upon all men (cf. Romans 5.12-15). The early Gospel commentator, Saint John Chrysostom, as well as Saint Theophylact of Ochrid (who draws heavily on the works of Saint John) remark: 'Death did not enter into mankind by nature, therefore human nature is afraid of it and flees from it'. A more recent commentator, the well-known theologian Bishop Michael, clarifies this idea with respect to the person of Jesus Christ. 'Death,' he writes, 'is the result of sin, hence the sinless nature of the God-man should not have been subject to it. For [His nature] death was an unnatural phenomenon, so it stands to reason that the pure nature of Christ is troubled by death, and is sorrowed and anguished in the face of it.'...

"It would be a grave mistake to explain the sufferings of the Saviour in Gethsemane solely in terms of His anticipation of Golgotha, that is, from the perspective of Jesus Christ only as a man, and forgetting about Him as Redeemer. This view is not only unworthy of Jesus but is a misleading and inadequate explanation: He Who experienced such fear at only the anticipation of death, yet the same One Who possessed such divine tranquility and maintained it throughout His suffering – during the trial, in the midst of mockery, and on the cross, here even refusing to drink the gall that might numb His pain... But there are experiences even more trying than death; such was the cup the Saviour drank from in the garden of Gethsemane. In order to fully comprehend this we must recall the point raised earlier together with the recognition of the humanity of Jesus Christ, namely, that Jesus Christ is our Redeemer.

"The Sinless One had to bear all the wrath of God for sinners, all the punishments which the sinful nature of mankind merited. All of the chastisements and heavenly wrath which the world should have endured for its sins were taken on by the Redeemer of mankind alone. Seven hundred years before the birth of Christ the Prophet Isaiah spoke of this redeeming ministry: 'the chastisement of our peace was upon Him' (Isaiah 53.5). The punishment which would return to us the peace with God which we had lost was borne by Him. This peace was broken by the sin of Adam, the first-created man, and magnified and repeated over and over again by the individual sins of each man born on earth. The righteousness of God demanded punishment for the sins, and the Redeemer, the Son of God, took that punishment on Himself (Archbishop Innocent of Kherson, *The Final Days in the Life of Christ*). Punishment for sins manifests itself in two ways: internally, in the conscience of the sinner, and externally through physical afflictions. Inner torments, such as those experienced by Christ in Gethsemane, are more agonizing and torturous. The accumulated sins of every age, of every man, placed an inexplicably great burden on the conscience of Jesus. He had to bear the pangs of conscience as if He Himself were guilty of each sin. In the words of the Apostle, 'For He hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him' (II Corinthians 5.21). All atheism and unbelief, all pride and wickedness, all malice and ingratitude, lies, deceptions, sensuality, and every sort of offensive self-love, every vile and ignominious characteristic of sin past, present, and future, from the fall of Adam until the last moment of the earth's existence – and all of this pressed on the sinless soul of the God-man. Without a doubt, He envisioned the assault on virtue,

the persecution of His followers, the rivers of blood of the martyrs, the mocking of believers, the enmity against the Church; He beheld the entire abyss of wickedness, passions, and vices which until the end of time would pervert and distort the divinely given and redeemed human soul, which would 'crucify... the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame' (Hebrews 6.6). All of this amassed evil, all the sins of mankind were poured into the bitter, dreaded cup which the Son of God was called upon to drink. This is something far beyond our comprehension. 'It was something more deadly than death' (Farrar). 'It would not be an exaggeration to say that it was the culmination of all the sufferings and deaths of all mankind. This inner anguish must have been as fierce as the torments of hell, for if even the most base of men are exhausted by the burden of their tortured conscience (e.g., Cain and Judas), tormented only by the thought of their own sinful life, how excruciating it must have been for the most pure soul of the God-man to endure the weight of all the sins of the world, and in such a condition, to ascend the cross and bring redemption through His blood' (Archbishop Innocent, *The Final Days in the Life of Christ*).

"But sin is difficult not only because of the gnawing conscience: sin gave birth to the curse, to being banished from God, toward Whom, nevertheless, mankind has always strived and will strive. The Gethsemane Passion-bearer experienced this exile, this abandonment by the Father. For His sinless soul, which was accustomed to continuous union with God, which tasted and knew the sweetness, beauty and completeness of this union, this separation was, of course, inexpressibly difficult. It was the hell with which God threatens the impious, the hell which we simply cannot begin to imagine, the deprivation of life with God. It was this separation which produced the soul-shattering lament of the Sufferer on the cross: 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' (Matthew 27.46). Thus, 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, He being made a curse for us...' (Galatians 3.13)."¹²⁶

(iii) St. John of Kronstadt. He 'began to be in sorrow and was deeply horrified' (Matthew 26.37). O our sins, our sins! You have led the Saviour of the world Himself - in His human nature - to righteous horror and the sorrow of death! How you have weighed down on Him, Who was not guilty of a single sin! And there was something to be horrified about; and there was something to be sorrowful unto death about! The awesome, exact righteousness of the heavenly Father placed upon the Son the sins of the whole world - the sins of people of all ages and peoples - including my sins and your sins, people of the past, the present and the future, until the end of the world! O how terrible was this burden, insupportable for any mortal, insupportable even for all the Angels, if they had wanted to take this burden upon themselves! For this burden was infinitely heavy, like the boundless righteousness [Pravda] of God, boundlessly mocked, and like the boundless mercy of God, which decided to have mercy on the sinful race of men through a terrible, infinitely dear ransom

¹²⁶ Hieromartyr John, Sermon of 1901, "The Agony of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane", *Orthodox Life*, vol. 47, no. 2, March-April, 1997, pp. 8-9, 10, 11-12; translated from *The Collected Works of Archpriest John Vostorgov*, St. Petersburg, 1995, vol. II, pp. 26-44.

“Do not be surprised, therefore, that the God-man should be horrified at the infinitely great burden, as a man who had taken upon Himself our infirmities and borne our illnesses. On Him there weighed the measureless seas of the sins of men, all their righteous recompense, all the torment that befitted it in accordance with the righteousness [pravda] of God, torment that is temporary and eternal; for all those who believe in Him and sincerely repent shall receive, for the sake of His sufferings and death, freedom from temporary and eternal torments...”¹²⁷

(iv) Archbishop Averky of Jordanville. “Who among us sinful people can dare to affirm that he really knows everything that took place in the pure and holy soul of the God-Man at that minute when the decisive hour of His betrayal to death on the Cross for the sake of mankind drew near? But attempts were made in the past, and continue to be made now, to explain the reasons for these moral torments of the Lord, which He experienced in the garden of Gethsemane in those hours before His death. The most natural suggestion is that His human nature was in sorrow and fear. ‘Death entered into the human race unnaturally,’ says Blessed Theophylact: ‘therefore human nature fears it and runs from it’. Death is the consequence of sin (Romans 5.12,15), and so the sinless nature of the God-Man should not have submitted to death: death for it was an unnatural phenomenon: which is why the sinless nature of Christ is indignant at death, and sorrows and pines at its sight. These moral sufferings of Christ prove the presence of the two natures in Him: the Divine and the human, which the heretical Monophysites deny, as well as the Monothelites who deny the two wills.

“Besides, these moral sufferings undoubtedly also took place because the Lord took upon Himself all the sins of the whole world and went to death for them: *that which the whole world was bound to suffer for its sins was now concentrated, so to speak, on Him alone.*”¹²⁸

(v) St. Philaret of New York (+1985). “Contemplating all of this by His omniscience, as Almighty God, for Whom what we call the past, the present and the future are all equally open, He received it into His most holy soul, wishing to redeem us from sin. He received each of us, with all our sins, infirmities, sufferings and injustice. Each of us the Lord received into His soul; He suffered and was in pain again for each one of us, for which reason He is ‘the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world’. His boundless love received man into Himself, into His soul, as it were appropriating his sins as His own. This was not some kind of formal verbal definition, it was not something external, but was precisely the reception by Him upon Himself of our sinful nature, our sins. That is why He fell when He was going to Golgotha, He fell under His Cross, exhausted, because on this Cross He was bearing precisely the sins of the whole world, so as to nail them and annihilate them on the Cross.

¹²⁷ St. John of Kronstadt, Sermon on Great Friday, April 4, 1906.

¹²⁸ Archbishop Averky, *Guide to the Study of the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament*, Jordanville: Holy Trinity Monastery, volume 1, 1974, pp. 290-291.

“And after this exploit of His pastoral love, when the Lord so wept for each of us, for our falls into sin, for our unfaithfulness, after this He ascended the Cross. There He offered Himself in Sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, as ‘the Lamb immaculately slain’.

“But very often we come to hear the question: ‘Why such a terrible Sacrifice? Well, alright, the human race has fallen under the power of the devil. But God is Almighty! It would cost nothing for His omnipotence simply to free people from this diabolical power, and throw the devil out.’ The Holy Fathers indicate to us that the Lord is supremely just. It is this justice of His that He extends over the whole of His creation, without excluding even his enemy, the devil. You see, the point is that, as the Holy Fathers say, man had freely abandoned God, passing over to the authority of the devil, by accepting the temptation in Paradise. If the enemy had taken control of man forcibly, it would have been a different. We know from the Gospel how quickly the Lord dealt with the evil spirits when they forcibly and unlawfully took control of a man. He said: ‘Be quiet and come out of him!’ That is what the Lord said – and he was gone! Man freely submitted to satan, and the Holy Fathers say: at the Terrible Judgement, if the Lord had simply, through the power of His omnipotence, taken man away from satan, the devil would have said to Him: ‘You are not just! They are mine and not yours, they voluntarily went over to me.’

“And so He accomplishes His exploit of love: He comes to earth, gives people a wonderful teaching, and gives them the example of His wonderful life, the equal of which there never was and never can be forever! Like the sun He shines before men with the Light of His teaching and His life! He worked wonders, He did good, and never pushed away from Himself a single repentant sinner. For through repentance man passed freely from the power of the devil under His loving defence. And then, so as to accomplish this with regard to all men, He accomplishes this exploit and is crucified on the Cross, taking upon Himself the sins of the whole of humanity. Now humanity, freed from sin, has the complete possibility of passing from the devil to God His Creator. And now satan can say nothing to Him at the Terrible Judgement, He cannot accuse Him of injustice, for He took the freewill of man and without violence led him to follow Him...”¹²⁹

“We must remember, when we bow down to the Holy Shroud [plachanitsa] and reverently kiss it, embracing the Wounds of the Saviour, that into these wounds was poured the wrath of the Justice of God for all the sinfulness of men that the Lord took upon Himself and suffered for again in Himself...”¹³⁰

We see here that the so-called juridical theory not only does not contradict the vision of Christ’s co-suffering love, but gives to it an extra, immeasurably profound dimension. Thus it goes without saying that Christ suffered out of compassionate

¹²⁹ St. Philaret, “On the sufferings of the Lord for the human race”, *Sermons and Teachings of his Eminence Metropolitan Philaret, First Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad*, volume 2.

¹³⁰ St. Philaret, “Word on Great Friday”, in Metropolitan Anthony, *The Dogma of Redemption*, Moscow, 2002, pp. 171-172.

love for man. But His suffering did not consist merely in feeling compassion for man in his sinful state: he actually *took on* his sins, made them His own, together with the righteous wrath of God poured out upon the guilty one. He “became sin” in St. Paul’s striking phrase, together with the punishment for those sins - the curse and “all the punishments which the sinful nature of mankind merited” - in order to restore peace with God the Father. And, as we shall now see, the final taking on and blotting out of the curse, “the bond which stood against us with its legal demands”, was accomplished, not through the suffering in Gethsemane, but through the Death on Golgotha, by “nailing it to the Cross” (Colossians 2.15).

5. GETHSEMANE OR GOLGOTHA?

*Thou hast redeemed us from the curse of the law by Thy precious Blood: nailed to the Cross
and pierced by the spear, Thou hast poured forth immortality upon mankind.*
Triodion, Great Friday, Mattins, Sessional hymn.

Metropolitan Anthony calls the night in Gethsemane “the night of redemption”.¹³¹ According to his critics, this shifts the focus of salvation from Golgotha to Gethsemane, which is foreign to the mind of the Church as expressed in her liturgical services. Moreover, to assert, as does Metropolitan Anthony of the Lord’s suffering in Gethsemane, that “*in this did our redemption consist*” would appear to some to imply that it did *not* consist in the suffering and death of Christ on Golgotha.

We shall examine in a moment whether or not this is an exaggerated conclusion to draw from Metropolitan Anthony’s words. However, that some of his disciples drew precisely this conclusion can be seen in the following words of N. Kusakov in the collection of articles compiled recently by A.M. Khitrov: “The evil accomplished on Golgotha was not a condition of Salvation. The Lord did not have to be crucified for our salvation! In spite of the opinion of our scholastically-minded theologians, the Crucifixion was not an indispensable event among all the events of the Divine economy of our Redemption. It was inescapably necessary, but not an obligatory and predetermined Event in the chain of events whose course revealed in itself the redemptive love of God – love that trampled upon death by death and granted us eternal life. *The teaching that the salvation of the human race was accomplished by the redemptive Sacrifice offered on Golgotha is not the teaching of the Church, but an idea engendered by Latin scholastics under the influence of the juridical heresy* (my italics – V.M.). The mistake into which our school theology fell temporarily must not be recognized to be the generally accepted teaching of the Church.”¹³²

Clearly the matter is serious when the central dogma of our faith can be denied in such a way by a follower of Metropolitan Anthony. So what did Metropolitan Anthony actually mean? Did he really give cause for such a radical denial?

In defense of Metropolitan Anthony, Bishop Gregory Grabbe writes that “his words, ‘In this did our redemption consist’ referred not only to Gethsemane, but to Golgotha also” because he wrote: “*And a second time also* [Grabbe’s emphasis] the same oppressing sorrow possessed His pure soul on the Cross”.¹³³ This is true, and is sufficient to refute the extreme suggestion that Metropolitan Anthony somehow “rejected the Cross of Christ” or denied its saving significance *altogether*. We believe, therefore, that talk about a “stavroclastic” heresy is exaggerated in this context.

¹³¹ Archbishop Nikon, *The Life and Works of Metropolitan Anthony*, New York, 1960, volume IV, p. 45.

¹³² Kusakov, *op. cit.*, pp. 91-92.

¹³³ Grabbe, Introduction to *The Dogma of Redemption*, pp. ix, viii.

However, Bishop Gregory's words are *not* sufficient to deflect the charge that the metropolitan placed undue emphasis on Gethsemane and thereby distorted the significance of Golgotha. Moreover, as we shall see, the metropolitan's explanation of the unique significance of Golgotha – that is, the significance of Golgotha that was *not* shared by Gethsemane – is inadequate.

Metropolitan Anthony writes: "We do not doubt for a moment that men could not have been saved unless the Lord suffered and arose from the dead". Again, these words are sufficient to absolve the metropolitan of the accusation of "stavroclasm" that can more justly be cast at his follower, Kusakov. However, he goes on, "the bond between His suffering and our salvation is a quite different one [from the juridical teaching]".¹³⁴

But the objection may be put forward at this point: if this bond uniting His suffering and our salvation was compassionate love, which manifested itself supremely in Gethsemane, and if it was in that love "that our redemption consists", what need was there for Him to die? For did He not love mankind with a supremely compassionate love long before Gethsemane? Did He not love man from all eternity?

The metropolitan's answer to this question is: "Christ's bodily suffering and death were primarily necessary so that *believers would value His spiritual suffering* as incomparably greater than His bodily tortures".¹³⁵ Again he writes: "The Lord's crucifixion and death are not without meaning for our salvation, for, by bringing men to compunction, they reveal at least some portion of the redemptive sacrifice, and, by leading them to love for Christ, they prove saving for them and for all of us".¹³⁶ And in his *Catechism* he writes that the purpose of Christ's death consisted in "making death itself unfrightening" (p. 50).

Fr. George Florovsky calls this explanation "rather naïve". We would prefer the word "superficial". For Metropolitan Anthony appears to be saying that Golgotha was simply a repetition of Gethsemane with the addition of bodily suffering, which bodily suffering, though far less valuable than his spiritual sufferings, had a certain didactic value in heightening the awareness of the far more important spiritual suffering (although for the Catholics, it would seem, the bodily suffering distracted attention *away from* the spiritual suffering). But if that is the case, then Golgotha added nothing essential, by which we mean *dogmatically* or *ontologically* or *soteriologically* essential. Indeed, if our redemption consists, as the metropolitan explicitly asserts, in Christ's compassionate suffering for the whole of sinful mankind in Gethsemane, it was not necessary for Him to *die*, but only to *suffer*.

And yet it was only when He voluntarily gave up His soul in death that He declared: "It is finished", *Consummatum est* - that is, My redemption of the race of men is consummated. As St. John of Damascus writes: "[The Cross] is the crown of

¹³⁴ *The Dogma of Redemption*, p. 6.

¹³⁵ *The Dogma of Redemption*, p. 51.

¹³⁶ *The Dogma of Redemption*, p. 52.

the Incarnation of the Word of God.”¹³⁷ “Every act and miraculous energy of Christ is very great and divine and marvelous, but the most amazing of all is His precious Cross. For death was not abolished by any other means; the sin of our forefathers was not forgiven; Hades was not emptied and robbed; the resurrection was not given to us; the power to despise the present and even death itself has not been given to us; our return to the ancient blessedness was not accomplished; the gates of Paradise have not been opened; human nature was not given the place of honor at the right hand of God; we did not become children and inheritors of God, except by the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ alone. All these have been achieved by the death of the Lord on the Cross.”¹³⁸

It is important to stress the voluntary nature of Christ’s death on the Cross. Sinful men cannot avoid death since it is the wages of sin. But for Christ, Who had no sin, it was by no means inevitable. He could have chosen to suffer but not to die, and to come off the Cross, presenting His body completely healed from wounds and invulnerable to death, as some of the holy martyrs emerged fully healthy after their tortures. This would have involved no lessening of the significance of His suffering in Gethsemane and Golgotha. But it would have meant that His redemptive work was incomplete.

For Christ came to save men not only from sin, but also from *death*, not only from the perversion of their wills, but also from the division of their nature, the sundering of soul from body in death. And in order to do that He had to take on *both* their sin *and* their death. For, in accordance with the patristic dictum, that which is not assumed is not saved. So Christ allowed His human soul to be separated from His body. But since His Divinity was still united to both His soul and His body, death could not hold them, and they were reunited in the resurrection. Thus did He trample down death, as the Paschal troparion chants, – the death of men, which is the wages of sin and which is involuntary, was trampled down by His own Death, which took place *in spite of* His sinlessness and was voluntary.

Another Paschal troparion declares, “In the grave bodily, but in hades with Thy soul as God; in Paradise with the thief, and on the throne with the Father and the Spirit wast Thou Who fillest all things, O Christ the Inexpressible”. It was this continuing union of God the Life with death which destroyed death. For the unnatural union of life with death, the perfect expression of holiness with the penalty decreed for sin, could not be sustained; in fact, it could not continue even for one moment. And so at the very moment of Christ’s Death, our death was destroyed, hades was burst asunder “and many bodies of the saints arose” (Matthew 27.53). At that moment truly, *and not a moment before*, could He say: “It is finished” ...

Moreover, as St. Paul points out, the sealing of the New Testament was impossible without the death of the testator: “He is the Mediator of the New Testament, so that by means of the death which took place for redemption from the

¹³⁷ St. John of Damascus, *On the Holy Sabbath*, 2; P.G. 96:604A.

¹³⁸ St. John of Damascus, *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, IV, 11; P.G. 94:1128-1129.

transgressions under the first Testament, they who have been called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, it is necessary for the death of the one who made a disposition for himself to be brought forward. For a testament is confirmed over those who are dead, since it never hath strength when the one who maketh the disposition liveth. Wherefore neither hath the first been inaugurated without blood" (Hebrews 9.15-18).

Bishop Theophan the Recluse comments on this passage: "Evidently the death of Jesus Christ disturbed many of the weaker ones: if He was dead, they said, how is He the eternal Intercessor for people and how can He deliver that which He promises? St. Paul in removing this doubt shows that it is precisely by dint of the fact that He died that His Testament is firm: for people do not talk about a testament (will) in the case of those who are alive (St. Chrysostom)." ¹³⁹

In answer to this the defenders of Metropolitan Anthony point out that we are redeemed not only by the death of Christ, but by the whole of His life on earth. This is true, but does not annul the other truth that the death of Christ was absolutely essential for our salvation as its climax and crown. As St. Gregory the Theologian puts it: "We needed an Incarnate God, *God put to death*, that we might live" ¹⁴⁰

For if Christ had not tasted death in the flesh He would not have plumbed the very depths of sinful man's condition, He would not have destroyed "the last enemy" of mankind, which is death (I Corinthians 15.26). For without the death of Christ there would have been no Sacrifice for sin, no descent into hades, and no resurrection from the dead. "And if Christ is not risen, your faith is in vain; ye are still in your sins" (I Corinthians 15.17).

As Fr. Georges Florovsky writes: "Suffering is not yet the whole Cross. The Cross is more than merely suffering Good. The sacrifice of Christ is not yet exhausted by His obedience and endurance, forbearance, compassion, all-forgivingness. The one redeeming work of Christ cannot be separated into parts. Our Lord's earthly life is one organic whole, and His redeeming action cannot be exclusively connected with any one particular moment in that life. However, the climax of this life was its death. And the Lord plainly bore witness to the hour of death: "For this cause came I unto this hour" (John 12.27)... Redemption was accomplished on the Cross, 'by the blood of His Cross' (Colossians 1.20; cf. Acts 20.28, Romans 5.9, Ephesians 1.7, Colossians 1.14, Hebrews 9.22, I John 1.7, Revelation 1.5-6, 5.9). Not by the suffering of the Cross only, but precisely by the death on the Cross. And the ultimate victory is wrought, not by sufferings or endurance, but by death and resurrection..." ¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ Bishop Theophan, *Interpretation of the Epistles of the Holy Apostle Paul*, St. Petersburg, 1912, Moscow, 2002, p. 588.

¹⁴⁰ St. Gregory the Theologian, *Homily 45, on Holy Pascha*, 28.

¹⁴¹ Florovsky, "Redemption", *Creation and Redemption*, Belmont, Mass.: Nordland Publishing Company, 1976, pp. 99, 104. The last sentence here is not an accurate translation of the Russian. It should rather read: "This was the destruction of death. And one can understand this only from the meaning of death".

And Fr. Georges adds in another place: "Usually these two facts are not sufficiently distinguished: the sufferings and the death. This hinders one from drawing the right conclusions. In particular this can be seen in the theological reasonings of his Eminence Metropolitan Anthony... He opposes Gethsemane to Golgotha precisely because he with reason considers the 'spiritual sufferings' to be more valuable than the 'bodily sufferings'. But death needs to be explained, and not only the sufferings of death..."¹⁴²

As Hieromonk Augustine (Lim) has pointed out, the Nicene Creed says of the Lord that He "was crucified, suffered and was buried", *not* "suffered, was crucified and was buried". This order of words shows that the critical, so to speak, suffering of Christ was the suffering *after* His Crucifixion, the suffering precisely of His *death* on Golgotha. If, on the other hand, Gethsemane had been the place of our redemption, we would have expected the reverse order: "suffered, crucified and was buried".¹⁴³

And if it be objected that death came rather as a *relief* from His sufferings, so that the real exploit consisted in His sufferings *before* death, we should remind ourselves what death meant for Him Who *is* Life: something inconceivable to the human mind. For us death, though unnatural in essence, has nevertheless become in a certain sense natural – in the same sense that sin has become natural or "second nature" to us since the fall. But "God did not create death", and if it seemed "folly to the Greeks" for the Creator to become His creature, it must have seemed worse than folly to them for Life to undergo death. Moreover, both life and death in our fallen, human condition were an immeasurable torment for the Sinless One, infinitely more painful than the life and death of sinners; for every aspect of that life and death, together with every suffering in it, was undertaken *voluntarily*.

As Vladimir Lossky writes, interpreting the thought of St. Maximus the Confessor, "By assimilating the historic reality in which the Incarnation had to take place He introduced into His Divine Person all sin-scarred, fallen human nature. That is why the earthly life of Christ was a continual humiliation. His human will unceasingly renounced what naturally belonged to it, and accepted what was contrary to incorruptible and deified humanity: hunger, thirst, weariness, grief, sufferings, and finally, death on the cross. Thus, one could say that the Person of Christ, before the end of His redemptive work, before the Resurrection, possessed in His Humanity as it were two different poles - the incorruptibility and impassibility proper to a perfect and deified nature, as well as the corruptibility and passibility voluntarily assumed, under which conditions His kenotic Person submitted and continued to submit His sin-free Humanity."¹⁴⁴

This horrific and unrelenting struggle, which had reached one climax in Gethsemane, reached a still higher one at Golgotha. For if it was utterly unnatural

¹⁴² Florovsky, "On the death of the Cross", *Dogma and History*, Moscow, 1998, p. 189, footnote (in Russian). This footnote is not in the English Nordland translation.

¹⁴³ Lim, Sermon, September 14/27, 2002.

¹⁴⁴ Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, London: James Clarke, 1957, p. 148.

and a continual torment for Sinless Life to live the life of sinners - in St. Paul's striking and paradoxical words, "God hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin" (II Corinthians 5.21), - experiencing all the horror of sin in His sinless soul, in which, in the words of St. Philaret of New York, "every sin burned with the unbearable fire of hell",¹⁴⁵ it was still more unnatural and tormenting for Him to die the *death* of sinners. This death meant the voluntary rending apart of His own most perfect creation, His human nature, separating the soul and the body which, unlike the souls and bodies of sinners, had lived in perfect harmony together. It meant a schism in the life of God Himself, a schism so metaphysically and ontologically unthinkable that even the sun hid its rays and the rocks were burst asunder. It meant a schism, so to speak, of God from God, eliciting the cry: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27.46).

As *God*, of course, He was not, and never could be, separated from His Father, as was triumphantly demonstrated at the Resurrection. But *as Man*, He allowed Himself to feel the full *accursedness* of men in their separation from God - an *accursedness* unspeakably the greater for Him Who said: "I and the Father are one" (John 10.30).¹⁴⁶ As St. Basil the Great says, He "redeemed us from being accursed by becoming Himself a curse and suffering the most dishonourable death in order to lead us again to the glorious life."¹⁴⁷ Thus the atonement (at-one-ment) of man *by* God and *with* God was accomplished by the disjunction, if it were possible, of God *from* God - not *as* God, but *as* Man.

Moreover, as the Head of the Body of Israel which at this very moment fell away from God, He felt *her* *accursedness*, too. St. Augustine has developed this point in a very illuminating way in his commentary on the Psalm from which the Lord was quoting: "The full and perfect Christ... is Head and Body. When Christ speaks, sometimes He speaks in the Person of the Head alone, our Saviour Himself, born of the Virgin Mary, at other times in the person of His Body, which is the holy Church spread throughout the world... Now if Christ is in very truth without sin and without transgression, we begin to doubt whether these words of the Psalm ['There is no peace for my bones because of My sins'] can be His. Yet it would be very unfortunate and contradictory if the Psalm just quoted did not refer to Christ, when we find His passion set forth there as clearly as it is related in the Gospel. For there we find: 'They parted My garments amongst them, and upon My vesture they cast lots.' Why did our Lord Himself as He hung on the cross recite with His own lips the first verse of this very Psalm, saying: 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' What did He mean us to understand, but that this Psalm refers to Him in its entirety, since He Himself uttered the opening words? Where, again, it goes on to speak of 'the words of My sins', the voice is undoubtedly that of Christ. How 'sins', I

¹⁴⁵ St. Philaret, Great Friday sermon, 1973; quoted in *The Dogma of Redemption*, pp. 57-58.

¹⁴⁶ One Soviet metropolitan is reported to have said that Christ on the Cross, in uttering the cry: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?", actually *became an atheist*. This is, of course, nonsense. But it is not nonsense - rather, it is the precise truth - to say that on the Cross Christ took upon Himself the horror of the atheist's condition, the *accursedness* of being without God ("a" - without, "theos" - God).

¹⁴⁷ St. Basil the Great, *Long Rules*, Question 2.4; P.G. 31:916A.

ask, unless sins of His Body which is the Church? For here the Body is speaking as well as the Head. How do they speak as one Person? Because 'they shall be', He says, 'two in one flesh'... So we must listen as to one Person speaking, but the Head as Head and the Body as Body. We are not separating two Persons but drawing a distinction in dignity: the Head saves, the Body is saved. The Head must show mercy, the Body bewail its misery. The office of the Head is the purgation of sins, that of the Body the confession of them; yet there is but one voice, and no written instructions to inform us when the Body speaks and when the Head. We can tell the difference when we listen; but He speaks as one individual... You may never exclude the Head when you hear the Body speaking, nor the Body when you hear the Head; for now they are not two but one flesh."¹⁴⁸

Let us return to the point that Christ's sufferings in Gethsemane were caused, in part, by His (perfectly natural and innocent) fear of death. This is evident also from His use of the word "cup", which, as we have seen, means "death". Now the cup of death is also the cup of the Eucharist; that is, the cup of Golgotha is the cup of the Mystical Supper; for both cups contain blood, the blood of the Sacrifice already accomplished in death.¹⁴⁹

This shows, on the one hand, that the redeeming Sacrifice had already been mystically accomplished even *before* the prayer in the Garden, in the Upper Room. For as St. Gregory of Nyssa writes, "By offering His Body as food, He clearly showed that the Sacrificial Offering of the Lamb had already been accomplished. For the Sacrificial Body would not have been suitable for food if it were still animated".¹⁵⁰ But on the other hand it shows that our redemption consists precisely in Christ's *Death*, and that if there had been no Death there would have been no Sacrifice and no Redemption. So to concentrate on the sufferings in Gethsemane while ignoring the mystery that was accomplished both before and after them, in the Upper Room and on Golgotha, is to ignore the very essence of our redemption...

¹⁴⁸ St. Augustine, *Discourse on Psalm 37*, 6, 7; New York: Newman Press, 1961.

¹⁴⁹ This doctrine was also confirmed at the Council of Blachernae, Constantinople in 1157 and included in the Synodicon of Orthodoxy as follows: "To those who hear the Saviour when He said in regard to the priestly service of the divine Mysteries delivered by Him, 'This do in remembrance of Me', but who do not understand the word 'remembrance' correctly, and who dare to say that the daily sacrifice offered by the sacred ministers of the divine Mysteries exactly as our Saviour, the Master of all, delivered to us, re-enacts only symbolically and figuratively the sacrifice of His own body and blood which our Saviour had offered on the Cross for the ransom and redemption of our common human nature; for this reason, since they introduce the doctrine that this sacrifice is different from the one originally consummated by the Saviour and that it recalls only symbolically and figuratively, they bring to naught the Mystery of the awesome and divine priestly service whereby we receive the earnest of the future life; therefore, to those who deny what is staunchly proclaimed by our divine Father, John Chrysostom, who says in many commentaries on the sayings of the great Paul that the sacrifice is identical, that both are one and the same: *Anathema (3)*" (*The True Vine*, issues 27 and 28, Spring, 2000, p. 55)

¹⁵⁰ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *First Sermon on the Resurrection*; quoted in *Georges Florovsky, op. cit.*, p. 335.

6. THE THEORY OF "MORAL MONISM"

For us the monarchy is formed by equality of nature, harmony of will, and identity of activity, and the concurrence with the One of the Beings which derive from the One, a unity impossible among created beings.

St. Gregory the Theologian, Sermon 29, 2.

Let us recall the metropolitan's words: "a purely objective law of our spiritual nature is revealed in the transmission of the compassionate, supremely loving energy of the Redeemer to the spiritual nature of the man who believes and calls for this help, a law which is revealed in our dogmas, but of which our dogmatic science has taken no notice."

The problem is: if dogmatic science has taken no notice of this law, which was supposedly revealed explicitly for the first time by Metropolitan Anthony, it is hardly surprising that the metropolitan can find few, if any, patristic statements to support it. It is not that the Fathers deny the great power and significance of Christ's compassionate love for the salvation of mankind. On the contrary: the greatness of that love, and its overwhelming significance for our salvation is not disputed by anyone. But the *motivation for the work* of Christ, love, must not be confused with *the work itself*, the restoration of justice in the relations between God and man, the justification of mankind, nor with the fruit of that justification in the individual believer, which consists in his renewal and deification by ascetic endeavour and the communion of the Holy Spirit.

How, according to Metropolitan Anthony, is the "compassionate, supremely loving energy of the Redeemer" transmitted to the believer? His answer turns on the distinction, familiar from Trinitarian theology, between the concepts of "nature" and "person". Just as in the Holy Trinity there is one Divine nature but three Divine Persons, so in our created race there is one human nature but many human persons. Or rather: originally, before the entrance of sin, there was a single human nature, but since the fall sin has divided this nature into many pieces, as it were, each piece being the jealously guarded possession of a single egotistical individual. However, the original unity of human nature still exists in each person, and it is this original unity which Christ restored on the Cross (or rather, in Metropolitan Anthony's thought: in Gethsemane).

"By nature," he writes, "especially the human nature, we are accustomed to mean only the abstraction and the summing up of properties present in every man separately and therefore composing one general abstract idea, and nothing else. But Divine revelation and the dogmas of our Church teach differently concerning the nature... the nature is not an abstraction of the common attributes of different objects of persons made by our minds, but a certain real, essence, real will and force, acting in separate persons...."¹⁵¹

¹⁵¹ *The Dogma of Redemption*, pp. 33-34.

There is a certain confusion of concepts here; for, as Archbishop Theophan of Poltava writes, “in patristic literature power and will are only properties of human nature, they do not constitute the nature itself (St. John of Damascus, *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, book II, chapters 22 and 23)”.¹⁵²

However, let us continue with Metropolitan Anthony’s exposition: “In spite of all our human separateness,... we cannot fail to notice within ourselves the manifestations of the collective universal human will; a will which is not of me, but in me, which I can only partially renounce, with much labor and struggle. This will is given to me from without, and yet at the same time it is mine. This is pre-eminently the common human nature. First, we must place here our *conscience*, which was given to us, and which almost no man can completely resist; also our direct involvement and compassion with our neighbor, parental affections and much else. Among these attributes are also evil desires, likewise seemingly imposed on us from without: self-love, revengefulness, lust and so on. These are the manifestations of our fallen nature, against which we can and must struggle. And so the nature of all men is the same: it is the impersonal but powerful will which every human person is obliged to take into account, whichever way the personal free will may be turned: toward good or toward evil. It is to this also that we must ascribe the law of existence whereby only through the union of a father and mother can a man be born into the world... If you cannot imagine that you hold your soul in common with others, then read in the book of Acts, ‘One was the heart and the soul of the multitude of them that believed’ (4.32). And another record taken from life is given by Saint Basil the Great. Describing the unanimity and victory over self-love of the monks of his day, Saint Basil continues, ‘These men restore the primal goodness in eclipsing the sin of our forefather Adam; for there would be no divisions, no strife, no war among men, *if sin had not made cleavages in the nature...* they gather the (one) human nature, *which had been torn and cloven into thousands of pieces*, once more to itself and to God. And this is the chief in the Saviour’s incarnate oeconomy: *to gather human nature to itself and to Himself and, having abolished this evil cleavage, to restore the original unity*’.¹⁵³

At this point the question arises: can such diverse phenomena as conscience, the fallen passions, the natural (innocent) passions, and the grace-created unity of the early Christians and of the true monastic communities be united under a single heading or concept of human nature? And this leads to the further question: would such an understanding of human nature be patristic? However, before attempting to answer these questions, let us follow the metropolitan’s argument to the end:

“The Lord also teaches of a new Being, in Whom He will be, and in whom He is already united to the faithful, like a tree which remains the same plant in all of its branches (John 15.1-9). And so the unity of the human nature, undone by the sin of Adam and his descendants, is to be gradually restored through Christ and His

¹⁵² Archbishop Theophan, *On the Unity of Nature*, p. 11.

¹⁵³ *The Dogma of Redemption*, pp. 34-35, 36.

redeeming love with such power, that in the future life this oneness will be expressed more strongly than it can now be by the multitude of human persons, and Christ, united with us all into one Being, shall be called the New Man, or the One Church, being (in particular) its Head.

“It appears to me that we have, according to our power, cleared the way to a more perfect understanding of the mystery of redemption, of its essential, its objective side. The salvation which Christ brought to humanity consists not only of the conscious assimilation of Christ’s principle truths and of His love, but also of the fact that by means of His compassionate love Christ demolishes the partition which sin sets up between men, restores the original oneness of nature, so that the man who has subjected himself to this action of Christ finds new dispositions, new feelings and longings, not only in his thoughts, but also in his very character, these being created not by himself, but coming from Christ who has united Himself to him. It then remains for the free will either to call all these to life or wickedly to reject them. The influence of the compassionate love a mother, a friend, a spiritual shepherd, consists (though to a much lesser degree) in this same penetration into the very nature (φύσις), the very soul of a man.... The direct entrance of Christ’s nature, of His good volitions into our nature is called grace, which is invisibly poured into us in the various inner states and outer incidents of our life, and especially in the Holy Mysteries... The subjective feeling of compassionate love becomes an objective power which restores the oneness of human nature that had been destroyed by sin, and which is transmitted from one human soul to others”.¹⁵⁴

The confusion of concepts here is startling. Thus the metropolitan writes: “The salvation which Christ brought to humanity consists not only of the conscious assimilation of Christ’s principle truths and of His love, but also of the fact that by means of His compassionate love Christ demolishes the partition which sin sets up between men.” But what is the difference between “the conscious assimilation of Christ’s love”, on the one hand, and “His compassionate love” whereby He destroys the partition set up by sin? What is the distinction between the two loves?

Again, we have already noted the very wide range of phenomena that the metropolitan includes under the heading of human nature: conscience, fallen and natural passions, the unity of the Church... Here he broadens the concept still further, but in an altogether inadmissible direction, defining it as *grace*: “The direct entrance of Christ’s nature, of His good volitions into our nature is called grace”. But grace is not *human* at all: according to the teaching of the Orthodox Church, it is the uncreated energies of *God*, the “actions”, so to speak, of the *Divine* nature. It is indeed grace – that is, the *Divine* energies of Christ – that unites and reunites men. But not only is grace *not* human nature – neither Christ’s nor anyone else’s. It also does not “reunite human nature” in the sense that the metropolitan would have it, for the simple reason that human nature, as opposed to human persons and wills, has never been divided. As persons we have been divided by sin, but we remain one in our common human nature.

¹⁵⁴ *The Dogma of Redemption*, pp. 37-38.

It is important to be precise about that in which men are divided by sin and are reunited by grace. They cannot be divided, according to St. Maximus the Confessor, *by nature*. They are divided in their *moral capabilities* – goodness and wisdom – which are not nature itself, but *movements* or *modalities* of nature: “Evil is perceived not in the nature of creatures, but in their sinful and irrational movement”.¹⁵⁵ Again, St. Maximus writes: “[The devil] separated our will from God and us from each other. Diverting [man] from the straight path, [he] divided the image of his nature, splitting it up into a multitude of opinions and ideas”.¹⁵⁶ Thus it is our *wills*, meaning our free choices, that are divided; it is not the nature of man that is divided, but the “image” of his nature, his “opinions and ideas”.

This point is well made by St. Maximus the Confessor in his *Dispute with Pyrrhus*:-

“*Pyrrhus*. Virtues, then, are natural things? *Maximus*. Yes, natural things. *Pyrrhus*. If they are natural things, why [then] do they not exist in all men equally, since all men have an identical nature? *Maximus*. But they *do* exist equally in all men because of the identical nature. *Pyrrhus*. Then why is there such a great inequality [of virtues] in us? *Maximus*. Because we do not all practise what is natural to us to an equal degree; indeed, if we did practise to an equal degree [those virtues] natural to us, as we were created to do, then one could be able to perceive one virtue in us all just as there is one nature [in us all], and that one virtue would not admit of a ‘more’ or a ‘less’.”¹⁵⁷

Only in one sense can we talk about human nature – as opposed to human wills – being in a real sense divided. And that is in the sense of *death*. Death is the division of human nature – first the division of the spirit, God’s grace, from the soul and the body, and then the division of the soul from the body. If human nature is understood as being unitary (and not as a composite of two natures, spiritual and material), then the division of the soul from the body at death does indeed constitute a division of human nature. (But our death was destroyed, as we have seen, not by the sufferings of Christ in Gethsemane, but by His Death on the Cross...)

How, then, are we to understand the quotations cited by Metropolitan Anthony, which appear to assert that our human nature was divided – really, and not metaphorically? It will be sufficient to reconsider the quotation from St. Basil in order to see that a division of *persons* and not of *nature* was in question here. The monks who practise the coenobitic life do not *literally* reunite their cloven human natures: rather, they reestablish unanimity, unity of will, through the subjection of all their individual free wills to the will of the abbot.

¹⁵⁵ St. Maximus the Confessor, *Fourth Century on Love*, 14. As Fr. George Florovsky writes: “sin does not belong to human nature, but is a parasitic and abnormal growth. This point was vigorously stressed by St. Gregory of Nyssa and particularly by St. Maximus the Confessor in connection with their teaching of the will as the seat of sin” (“Redemption”, *Creation and Redemption*, p. 98).

¹⁵⁶ St. Maximus the Confessor, *Epistle on Love*, 6.

¹⁵⁷ St. Maximus the Confessor, PG 91:309B-312A, quoted in Farrell, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

“Of this we will become convinced,” writes Archbishop Theophan, “if we reproduce the passage in question in a fuller form. ‘That communion of life we call the most perfect,’ says St. Basil here, ‘means the ascetics living according to the coenobitic rule that excludes private property and drives out contrariness of dispositions, by which all disturbances, quarrels and arguments are destroyed at the root, having everything in common, both souls and dispositions and bodily powers, and what is necessary for the nourishment of the body and for its service, in which there is a common God, a common purchase of piety, a common salvation, common ascetic exploits, common labours, common crowns, in which many constitute one and each person is not one but one among many. What is equal to this life? What is more perfect than this closeness and this unity? What is more pleasant than this merging of manners and souls? People who have come from various tribes and countries have brought themselves into such complete identity that in many bodies we see one soul, and many bodies are *the instruments of one will*. It was God’s will that we should be like that at the beginning; it was with this aim that He created us. These men restore the primal goodness in eclipsing the sin of our forefather Adam; for there would be no divisions, no strife, no war among men, if sin had not made cleavages in the nature... As far as they are able, they once again gather the human nature, which had been torn and cloven into thousands of pieces, into unity *both with themselves and with God*. For this is the main thing in the Saviour’s economy in the flesh – to bring human nature into unity with itself and with the Saviour and, having destroyed the evil cutting up [into parts], restore the original unity; just as the best doctor by healing medicines binds up the body that was torn into many parts’.

“To every unprejudiced reader it is clear that in this passage the subject is the moral, or, more exactly, the grace-filled moral unity of the members of the ascetic coenobium with themselves and with God through the medium of one will, which in the present case is the will of the superior, who incarnates in himself the will of God. ‘Every good order and agreement among many,’ says St. Basil in his sermon *On the Judgement of God*, ‘is successfully maintained as long as all are obedient to *one* leader. And all discord and disharmony and multiplicity of authorities are the consequence of lack of authority’. Apart from anything else, we are forbidden from understanding the restoration of the original unity of human nature in the metaphysical sense in which Metropolitan Anthony thinks of it, by the fact that we are here talking about the restoration of the original unity of human nature not only with itself but also with God. But not only not St. Basil the Great, but also not one of the Fathers of the Church ever permitted and could not permit any thought of an original unity of human nature with the nature of God, in the sense of a metaphysical, essential unity. Such a unity is possible only in the pantheistic world-view.”¹⁵⁸

In any case, writes Archbishop Theophan, “Only in relation to the absolute Divine [nature] is the concept of nature used by the Fathers of the Church in an absolute sense, insofar as the Divine nature is absolutely one both in concept and in reality.

¹⁵⁸ Archbishop Theophan, *On the Unity of Nature*, pp. 16-18.

But in relation to the units of created nature, and in particular to people, the concept of one nature is understood in the sense of complete unity only abstractly, insofar as every concept of genus or species is one, but in application to reality it indicates only the oneness of the nature of all the units of the given genus."¹⁵⁹

And he quotes St. John of Damascus: "One must know that it is one thing to perceive in deed, and another in mind and thought. In all created beings the difference between persons is seen in deed. For in (very) deed we see that Peter is different from Paul. But communality and connection and oneness are seen in mind and thought. For in mind we notice that Peter and Paul are of one and the same nature and have one common nature. For each of them is a living, rational, mortal being; and each is flesh enlivened by a soul which is both rational and endowed with discrimination. And so this common nature can be perceived in the mind, for the hypostases are not in each other, but each is a separate individual, that is, taken separately by itself, there is very much distinguishing it from the others. For they are distinct and different in time, in mind and in strength, in external appearance (that is, in form), and in condition, temperament, dignity, manner of life and every distinguishing characteristic. Most of all they differ in that they do not exist in each other, but separately. Hence it comes that we can speak of two, three or many men. And this may be perceived throughout the whole of creation.

"But in the case of the holy and superessential and incomprehensible Trinity, far above everything, it is quite the reverse. For there the community and unity are perceived in deed, because of the co-eternity [of the Persons] and the identity of their essence and activity and will, and because of the agreement of their cognitive faculty, and identity of power and strength and grace. I did not say: similarity, but: identity, and also of the unity of the origin of their movement. For one is the essence, and one the grace, and one the strength, and one the desire and one the activity and one the power – one and the same, not three similar to each other, but one and the same movement of the three Persons. For each of them is no less one with Itself as with each other, because the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one in all respects except the unbegottenness [of the Father], the begottenness [of the Son] and the procession [of the Holy Spirit]. But it is by thought that the difference is perceived. For we know one God; but in thought we recognize the difference – only in the attributes of fatherhood and sonship and procession, both in relation to cause,

¹⁵⁹ Archbishop Theophan, *On the Unity of Nature*, p. 11. In what sense, it may then be asked, did Christ take on human nature? Did He take on human nature understood as an abstract unity, or as the human species comprising all individual human hypostases? Neither the one nor the other, according to St. John of Damascus. For, as Professor Georgios Mantzaridis explains the Holy Father's thought: "'nature' can be understood firstly to denote an abstraction, in which case it has no intrinsic reality; secondly, to denote a species, in which case it comprises all the individual hypostases of that species; and thirdly, it can be viewed as a particular, in which case it is linked with the nature of the species but does not comprise all its individual hypostases. The Logos of God made flesh did not take on human nature in the first two senses, because in the first case there would be no incarnation but only delusion, and in the second case there would be incarnation in all human individual hypostases. Therefore, what the Logos of God took on in His incarnation was the 'first-fruits of our substance', individual nature, which did not previously exist as individual in itself, but came into existence in His hypostasis" (*The Deification of Man*, Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984, pp. 29-30).

and to effect, and to the fulfillment, that is, form of existence, of the Hypostasis. For in relation to the indescribable Divinity we cannot speak of separation in space, as we can about ourselves, because the Hypostases are in each other, not so as to be confused, but so as to be closely united, according to the word of the Lord Who said: 'I am in the Father, and the Father in Me' (John 14.11). Nor can we speak of a difference of will or reason or activity or strength or anything else, which may produce a real and complete separation in us".¹⁶⁰

Our conclusion, then, is that human nature is one, even in the fall, although only relatively, not in the absolute sense appropriate only to the Divine nature possessed by the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity.¹⁶¹ Sin is not a part of nature, but is a movement of the will of the individual person in a direction contrary to nature. Therefore it is our *wills* that have to be reunited by redirecting them in a direction in accordance with our nature, which redirection will bring them into unity with each other and with the will of God. This redirection is accomplished by our wills working in synergy with the grace of God, which is communicated to us in the sacraments of the Church, especially the Body and Blood of Christ.

Metropolitan Anthony's theory is acceptable only if we interpret his term "nature" to mean the deified Body and Blood of Christ communicated to us in the Eucharist, and only if we interpret "the restoration of the unity of human nature" to mean the re-establishment of the unity of the *wills* of men both with each other and with the will of God. In the Eucharist the compassionate love of Christ is indeed transmitted to us through His deified human nature; and if our wills respond to this sacred gift (which is by no means "irresistible", and never violates the free will of any of its recipients), then we will experience the truth of the words: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (II Corinthians 5.17). But once again: this gift is the fruit, not of Gethsemane, but of Golgotha, not (or rather: not primarily) of the purely spiritual sufferings of Christ in the Garden, but of the Sacrifice of His soul *and* body on the altar of the Cross...

¹⁶⁰ St. John of Damascus, *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, book I, chapter 8.

¹⁶¹ We can make the same distinction with regard to Divine and human *energies*. St. Gregory Palamas writes: "The energy of the three Divine Hypostases is one not in the sense that it is similar, as with us, but truly one" (*Chapter 140*, P.G. 150:1220A; quoted in Archbishop Basil Krivoshein, "The Ascetical and Theological Teaching of St. Gregory Palamas", in *Bogoslovskie Trudy*, Nizhni Novgorod, 1996, p. 152).

7. ORIGINAL SIN

In Adam we became co-inheritors of the curse, not as if we disobeyed that divine commandment with him but because he became mortal and transmitted sin through his seed.
St. Anastasius of Sinai.

An integral part of Metropolitan Anthony's critique of the so-called "juridical theory" is his onslaught on the doctrine of original sin. The HOCNA bishops summarize his critique as follows:

"1) The Scholastic dogma of our inherited guilt of 'Original Sin' is false. We are *not* morally responsible for Adam's sin, we do not bear any guilt for his sin, (nor, in reverse, is he responsible for all our own subsequent sins).

"2) From Adam we *do* inherit mortality and a proclivity towards sinning. By his sin, Adam was exiled from Paradise to this corruptible world. We are his children born in exile.

"3) God is not unjust in allowing us to receive this fallen nature as descendants of Adam, because He foreknew that each of us would sin, and that even if we ourselves had been in Adam's stead in Paradise, we nevertheless would have transgressed in like manner as he. Thus, our fallen nature is neither a burden unfairly placed upon us by God, nor is it an excuse for our personal sins. Man is free and morally responsible.

"Many of Metropolitan Anthony's critics, including Archbishop Theophan of Poltava, seem to have utterly failed to comprehend the great gulf that separates the patristic Orthodox doctrine concerning the Ancestral Sin of Adam from the heretical Augustinian doctrine of Original Sin." (p. 18).

Unfortunately, it is not Archbishop Theophan, but the HOCNA bishops who have "utterly failed to comprehend" the essence of this matter...

Metropolitan Anthony objected to the Russian Church's traditional teaching on original sin as expounded in the *Catechism* of Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, which he regarded as scholastic in origin: "'As from a polluted spring,' we read in our textbook, 'there flows corrupted water,' etc. But, if you will, a spring and water are one thing, whereas living, morally responsible human beings are something else. It is not by our own will that we are descendants of Adam, so why should we bear the guilt for his disobedience? Indeed, we must struggle greatly in order to appropriate Christ's redemption: can it be that the condemnation of each man because of Adam befell men despite each one's own guilt? After all, the Apostle says here 'that the gift was poured out more richly than the condemnation' (cf. Romans 5.15), but with the juridical interpretation the result is rather the opposite".¹⁶²

¹⁶² *The Dogma of Redemption*, p. 47.

Here we may agree with Metropolitan Anthony that Adam, and Adam alone, was *personally* responsible for his transgression. However, while we do not inherit *personal* responsibility for Adam's sin, we do inherit Adam himself! For, as St. Basil the Great writes, what we inherit from Adam "is not the personal sin of Adam, but the original human being himself", who "exists in us by necessity".¹⁶³ It follows, as St. Athanasius the Great writes, that "when Adam transgressed, his sin reached unto all men..."¹⁶⁴ And this, as St. Cyril of Alexandria writes, "not because they sinned along with Adam, because they did not then exist, but because they had the same nature as Adam, which fell under the law of sin".

Much of the argument between Metropolitan Anthony and Archbishop Theophan revolved around the correct translation and interpretation of the words: "By one man sin entered into the world, and so death entered all men by sin, *because* - or, according to another translation: *in whom* - all have sinned' (Romans 5.12). The dispute turns over whether the Greek phrase εφ' ω should be translated as "because", or as "in whom". Metropolitan Anthony favours the first translation. But this is contrary both to the translation of St. Jerome in the Latin Vulgate and to that of Saints Cyril and Methodius in the Slavonic Bible, who have в нѣм, "in him". St. Theophan the Recluse favoured the translation of Saints Cyril and Methodius, as did Archbishop Theophan (the new Recluse), who wrote: "His Eminence Metropolitan Anthony in his *Catechism* gives a new interpretation of the cited words of the Apostle Paul, and, in accordance with this interpretation, puts forward a new teaching on original sin, which essentially almost completely overthrows the Orthodox teaching on original sin."¹⁶⁵

Metropolitan Anthony argues that the translation of SS. Cyril and Methodius is wrong, in spite of the fact that they were highly educated (and holy) Greeks translating from their native tongue. "Let us consider the original Greek text," he writes: "the words 'in that' translate the Greek εφ' ω, which means: 'because', 'since' (Latin tamen, quod)... Therefore, the correct translation of these words of the Apostle Paul is: 'and so death passed upon all men, because all have sinned' (and not just Adam alone)".¹⁶⁶

If we follow this translation of Metropolitan Anthony, then, as he writes, "Adam was not so much the cause of our sinfulness as he was the first to sin, and even if we were not his sons, we still would sin just the same. Thus one should think that we are all sinners, even though our will be well directed, not because we are descendants of Adam, but because the All-knowing God gives us life in the human condition (and not as angels, for example), and He foresaw that the will of each of us

¹⁶³ St. Basil, quoted in Demetrios Tzami, *I Protologia tou M. Vasileiou*, Thessaloniki, 1970, p. 135 (in Greek).

¹⁶⁴ St. Athanasius, *Four Discourses against the Arians*, I, 12.

¹⁶⁵ Archbishop Theophan, *The Patristic Teaching on Original Sin*, in *Russkoe Pravoslavie*, № 3 (20), 2000, p. 20.

¹⁶⁶ *The Dogma of Redemption*, p. 47.

would be like that of Adam and Eve. This will is not evil by nature, but disobedient and prideful, and consequently it needs a school to correct it, and this is what our earthly life in the body is, for it constantly humbles our stubbornness. In this matter this school attains success in almost all its pupils who are permitted to complete their whole course, that is, live a long life; but some of God's chosen ones attain this wisdom at an early age, namely those whom Providence leads to the Heavenly Teacher or to His 'co-workers'".¹⁶⁷ As he put it in another place: "God knew that each of us would sin in the same way as Adam, and for that reason we are his descendants... Knowing beforehand that every man would display Adam's self-will, the Lord allows us to inherit Adam's weak, ill, mortal nature endowed with sinful tendencies, in the struggle with which, and still more in submitting to which, we become conscious of our nothingness and humble ourselves."¹⁶⁸

However, while this appears to dispel one paradox and apparent injustice – that we should be guilty for a sin we did not commit – it by no means dispels other, no less difficult ones. For is it not unjust that we should inherit a nature inclined to sin and doomed to death before we have done anything worthy of death? Metropolitan Anthony's explanation is that God, foreseeing that we would sin like Adam, gave us a corrupt and mortal nature in anticipation of that. But this implies that whereas in the case of Adam death is clearly the wages of sin and the just punishment for the crime he committed, in our case the punishment *precedes* the crime, and therefore cannot be perceived as the wages of sin. Is this not just as unjust? Nor is it convincing to argue, as does the metropolitan, that we are encumbered with a sinful and mortal nature, not as a punishment for sin, but in order to humble us, that is, in order to prevent worse sin in the future. For first: if we needed to be humbled, we clearly were already in sin – the sin of pride. And secondly: how can sin be reduced by endowing us with a nature inclined to sin?!

But God *did* provide us with a sinless nature to begin with, and it is we, not God, who have caused its corruption. Metropolitan Anthony, however, is forced by the logic of his argument, which denies that our sinfulness was caused by Adam's original sin, to attribute it to God Himself. As he writes: "Let us now ask: Who was responsible for fashioning human nature so that a good desire and repentance are, nevertheless, powerless to renew a man in actuality and so that he falls helplessly under the burden of his passions if he does not have grace assisting him? God the Creator, of course."¹⁶⁹ This is perilously close to the assertion that God is the author of evil – or, at any rate, of the evil of human nature since Adam, which is clearly contrary to the Orthodox teaching that God created everything good in the beginning. So the idea that God created sinful natures, natures subject to death, is contrary to Orthodox teaching.

¹⁶⁷ *The Dogma of Redemption*, pp. 47-48.

¹⁶⁸ Metropolitan Anthony, *Attempt at an Orthodox Christian Catechism*, Third Article, Victoria, Australia, 1990, p. 45.

¹⁶⁹ *The Dogma of Redemption*, p. 40. Cf. similar statements in his *Catechism*, p. 54, "On the Fourth Article".

Metropolitan Anthony's teaching on original sin, based on his translation of εφ'ω in Romans 5.12 as "because", is not supported by the Holy Fathers, but only by certain well-known heretics. Thus Origen says: "The apostle stated most categorically that the death of sin has passed to all men because all have sinned... Therefore even if you say that Abel was righteous, still he cannot be excused, for all have sinned, including him." The emphasis here, as with Metropolitan Anthony, is on the fact that all men *individually* have sinned, so that it is their personal sins that cause their death, not the sin they inherit from Adam. Again, Pelagius writes: "As long as people sin as Adam sinned they died... Or perhaps we should understand that death passed on to all who lived in a human and not in a heavenly manner."¹⁷⁰ Again, there is no mention made of any sinful *inheritance* from Adam...

The Holy Fathers, contrary to the heretics just quoted, stress the causal link between the sin of Adam and our death. Thus St. Athanasius the Great writes: "When Adam had transgressed, his sin reached unto all men".¹⁷¹ Again, St. Cyril of Alexandria writes: "[All men] have been condemned to death by the transgression of Adam. For the whole of human nature has suffered this *in him*, who was the beginning of the human race."¹⁷² Again, St. Symeon the Theologian writes: "When our Master descended from on high He by His own death destroyed the death that awaited us. The condemnation that was the consequence of our forefather's transgression he completely annihilated."¹⁷³ Clearest of all is St. Gregory Palamas, who writes: "Before Christ we all shared the same ancestral curse and condemnation poured out on all of us from our single Forefather, as if it had sprung from the root of the human race and was the common lot of our nature. Each person's individual action attracted either reproof or praise from God, but no one could do anything about the shared curse and condemnation, or the evil inheritance that had been passed down to him and through him would pass to his descendants."¹⁷⁴

But let us return to a closer examination of the meaning of εφ'ω in Romans 5.12. If we open Joseph Thayer's authoritative *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, and look at the various usages of the preposition επι with the dative case, we find *both* usages in the New Testament. Thus εφ'ω is sometimes equivalent to επι τουτω, οτι, meaning "on the ground of this, because", and is used in this sense in II Corinthians 5.4 and Philippians 3.12. On the other hand, in other places - for example, Mark 2.4, Mark 13.2, Matthew 9.16, Luke 5.36, Mark 2.21, Matthew 14, 8, 11, Mark 6.25, Mark 6.55, Mark 6.39, John 11.38, Acts 8.16 and Revelation 19.14 - επι with the dative case is equivalent to the Latin *in* with the ablative case, indicating the place where or in which something takes place or is situated. This place can also be a

¹⁷⁰ Origen and Pelagius in their *Commentaries on Romans*, in Gerald Bray (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: VI. Romans*, Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1998, pp. 136, 137.

¹⁷¹ St. Athanasius the Great, *Four Discourses against the Arians*, I, 51.

¹⁷² St. Cyril of Alexandria, *On Romans* 5.15, P.G. 74:785C; quoted in Nikolaos Vassiliadis, *The Mystery of Death*, Athens: "Sotir", 1993, p. 85.

¹⁷³ St. Symeon, *The Discourses*, V: On Penitence, 9.

¹⁷⁴ St. Gregory Palamas, *Homily 5: On the Meeting of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ*, in Christopher Veniamin, *The Homilies of Saint Gregory Palamas*, South Canaan, PA: St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, 2002, vol. I, p. 52.

person, as in the famous passage: “Thou art Peter, and on this rock (ἐπι ταύτη τη πέτρα) I will build My Church” (Matthew 16.18; cf. Ephesians 2.20).¹⁷⁵

The conclusion to be drawn is that from a purely grammatical point of view the two translations are equally possible and equally correct. Therefore the decision as to which of them actually represents the meaning of the Apostle Paul cannot be determined on purely grammatical or linguistic grounds, but must be made on grounds of (1) coherence with the context of the passage, and (2) conformity with the general dogmatic teaching of the Apostle. And at this point the weight of evidence comes very strongly down on the side of the traditionalist interpretation.

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1. The Context of the Passage. In his polemic with Metropolitan Anthony, Archbishop Eleutherius of Lithuania writes: “The two halves into which we can divide the content of this verse [Romans 5.12] through the conjunctions ‘as’ (ὡσπερ) and ‘so also’ (καὶ οὕτως) represent, not a parallelism, and not a comparison, but a correspondence, according to which the first is the base, the common thesis, while the second is the conclusion from it. This logical connection is indicated by the conjunction ‘also’... With the universalism characteristic of the Apostle, and the highly generalizing flight of his thought, St. Paul in the first half speaks about the sin of the forefathers as being the cause of death in the world generally, and not in humanity alone. For the whole of creation is subject to corruption and death, not willingly but ‘by reason of Him Who hath subjected the same’ (Romans 8.12-22), because of the sin of Adam... From this general proposition the holy Apostle draws the conclusion concerning people that for the very same cause, that is, because of the sin of one man, they also die.”¹⁷⁶

In order to clarify this point, St. Paul goes on, in the following verses (5.13-14, cf. 7.8-9), to point out that before the Law of Moses the personal sins of men were not imputed to them, they were not counted as having committed them.¹⁷⁷ *And yet they died.* But death is “the wages of sin” (Romans 6.23). So of what sin was their death the wages? There can only be one answer: Adam’s. Thus those who died before the Law of Moses died in spite of the fact that no personal transgressions were imputed to them, so that their death was “the wages of sin”, not of their personal transgressions, but of the sin of Adam. For before the Law only Adam was condemned to die because of his personal transgression.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem writes: “Paul’s meaning is that, although Moses was a righteous and admirable man, the death sentence promulgated upon Adam reached him as well, and also those who came after, even though neither he nor they copied

¹⁷⁵ Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Edinburgh, 1901, pp. 232, 233.

¹⁷⁶ Archbishop Eleutherius, *On Redemption*, p. 47. This polemic took place in 1925, and consisted of a book-length correspondence between the two hierarchs.

¹⁷⁷ As St. Augustine writes: “He says not that there was no sin but only that it was not counted. Once the law was given, sin was not taken away, but it began to be counted” (*On Romans*, 27-28).

the sin of Adam in disobediently eating of the tree".¹⁷⁸ Again, Blessed Augustine writes: "He says not that there was no sin but only that it was not counted. Once the law was given, sin was not taken away, but it began to be counted".¹⁷⁹ Thus before Moses the personal sins of men were not imputed to them, and they were not counted as having committed them. *And yet they died*. But death is "the wages of sin" (Romans 6.23). So of what sin was their death the wages? There can only be one answer: *Adam's*.

In order to understand this point, it will be useful to introduce the distinction between *personal sin* and *the law of sin*, between sin as the *act* of a human *person*, and sin as the *state* or *condition* or *law* of human *nature*.

This distinction is made by St. Paul in Romans, as Archbishop Theophan of Poltava points out: "The holy apostle clearly distinguishes in his teaching on original sin between two points: παραπτώμα or transgression, and αμαρτία or sin. By the first he understood the personal transgression by our forefathers of the will of God that they should not eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, by the second – the law of sinful disorder that entered human nature as the consequence of this transgression. ["I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at work with the law of my mind and making me captive to *the law of sin* which dwells in my members" (Romans 7.22-23).] When he is talking about the inheritance of the original sin, he has in mind not παραπτώμα or transgression, for which only they are responsible, but αμαρτία, that is, the law of sinful disorder which afflicted human nature as a consequence of the fall into sin of our forefathers. And ἠμαρτον - sinned in 5.12 must therefore be understood not in the active voice, in the sense: they committed sin, but in the middle-passive voice, in the sense: αμαρτωλοι in 5.19, that is, became sinners or turned out to be sinners, since human nature fell in Adam."¹⁸⁰

Those who died before the Law – including the pre-Flood Patriarchs, the victims of the Flood, Abraham, the Sodomites etc. – died, *not* because they were accounted guilty of any personal transgression (παραπτώμα), whether Adam's or their own, "for sin is not imputed where there is no law" (Romans 5.13), but because of the law of sin (αμαρτία) which they inherited from Adam. Of course, in the case of the Sodomites, for example, there was grave sin among them, and their deaths were not unrelated to that sin. But this *personal* element did not directly cause their deaths, but only, as St. Theophan the Recluse points out, *hastened* it¹⁸¹: the primary cause of their deaths was not their personal transgressions (παραπτώματα) but the law of sin (αμαρτία) living in them as in every other descendant of Adam. Later, after the Law, personal sin and guilt *is* imputed to men because of their transgression of the Law, and as a result they incur the curse of death not only on Adam's account but also on

¹⁷⁸ St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures* 15.31.

¹⁷⁹ Blessed Augustine, *On Romans*, 27-28.

¹⁸⁰ Archbishop Theophan, *The Patristic Teaching on Original Sin*, p. 22.

¹⁸¹ Bishop Theophan, *Interpretation of the Epistles of the Holy Apostle Paul*, St. Petersburg, 1912, Moscow, 2002, p. 345.

their own. So those living after Moses die for a double reason: their personal transgressions and the law of sin they inherit from Adam.

Some modernists accept this distinction in principle, but then distort it by defining sin as exclusively personal transgression, while redefining what we have called "the law of sin" as "the consequences of sin". In other words, for the modernists sin can only be personal and individual, the result of a free and conscious act of a single man. Any other form of "sin" is in fact not sin properly speaking, but the consequences of sin - consequences which are harmful and tragic, but not sinful in themselves.

Now this kind of thinking is very congenial to the western, individualist and rationalist mind. But it does not correspond to the mind-set of the Bible. According to the Holy Scriptures and the Holy Fathers, there is a sin that is strictly personal, which cannot be attributed to any other person than the one who freely and consciously committed it. And there is a sin that is "collective" as it were, which, although caused by a personal sin (that of Adam), spreads from the individual person to the collective human nature, and from there to every human being who inherits that nature quite independently of their free and conscious acts. These two forms of sin should be distinguished for clarity's sake, but they are both sin; both defile man and alienate him from God. Indeed, among the "consequences of sin", as the modernists admit, are sinful inclinations, such as lust, anger, pride, etc. But how can such "sinful inclinations" not be sin in a real sense? They *are* sin, but in the sense of "the law of sin" that attaches to our common nature rather than the "transgression" which attaches to our individual persons.

We find essentially the same distinction in St. Maximus the Confessor: "There then arose sin, the first and worthy of reproach, that is, the falling away of the will from good to evil. Through the first there arose the second - the change in nature from incorruption to corruption, which cannot elicit reproach. For two sins arise in [our] forefather as a consequence of the transgression of the Divine commandment: one worthy of reproach, and the second having as its cause the first and unable to elicit reproach".¹⁸²

Thus the original sin of Adam, in the sense of his personal transgression, *the* original sin which no other person shares or is guilty of, has engendered sinful, corrupt, diseased, mortal human nature, the law of sin, which we all share because we have all inherited it, but of which we are not guilty since we cannot be held personally responsible for it. And if this seems to imply *two* original sins, - *the* original sin committed by Adam alone, and *our* original sin, which we inherit from him, - this is in fact not far from the thinking of the Holy Fathers.

We have inherited the "second" original sin, the law of sin, in the most basic way: through the sexual propagation of the species. For "in sins," says David, - that is, in a

¹⁸² St. Maximus the Confessor, *Quaestiones ad Thalassium*, 42.

nature corrupted by original sin, - “did my mother conceive me” (Psalm 50.5).¹⁸³ It follows that even newborn babies, even unborn embryos, are sinners in this sense. For “even from the womb, sinners are estranged” (Psalm 57.3). And as Job says: “Who shall be pure from uncleanness? Not even one, even if his life should be but one day upon the earth” (Job 14.4).

In support of these scriptural passages, St. Gregory of Nyssa writes: “Evil was mixed with our nature from the beginning... through those who by their disobedience introduced the disease. Just as in the natural propagation of the species each animal engenders its like, so man is born from man, a being subject to passions from a being subject to passions, a sinner from a sinner. Thus sin takes its rise in us as we are born; it grows with us and keeps us company till life’s term”.¹⁸⁴ Again, St. Anastasius of Sinai writes: “In Adam we became co-inheritors of the curse, not as if we disobeyed that divine commandment with him but because he became mortal and transmitted sin through his seed. We became mortals from a mortal...”.¹⁸⁵ Again, St. Gennadius Scholarius, Patriarch of Constantinople, writes: “Everyone in the following of Adam has died, because they have all inherited their nature from him. But some have died because they themselves have sinned, while others have died only because of Adam’s condemnation – for example, children”.¹⁸⁶

Christ was born from a virgin who had been cleansed beforehand from all sin by the Holy Spirit precisely in order to break the cycle of sin begetting sin. As St. Gregory Palamas writes: “If the conception of God had been from seed, He would not have been a new man, nor the Author of new life which will never grow old. If He were from the old stock and had inherited its sin, He would not have been able to bear within Himself the fullness of the incorruptible Godhead or to make His Flesh an inexhaustible Source of sanctification, able to wash away even the defilement of our First Parents by its abundant power, and sufficient to sanctify all who came after them.”¹⁸⁷

The fact that original sin taints even children is the reason for the practice of infant baptism. And this practice in turn confirms the traditional doctrine of original sin. Thus the Council of Carthage in 252 under St. Cyprian decreed “not to forbid the baptism of an infant who, scarcely born, has sinned in nothing apart from that which proceeds from the flesh of Adam. He has received the contagion of the ancient death through his very birth, and he comes, therefore, the more easily to the reception of the remission of sins in that it is not his own but the sins of another that are remitted”.

¹⁸³ David here, as St. John Chrysostom points out, “does not condemn marriage, as some have thoughtlessly supposed” (*On Psalm 50*, M.P.G. 55:583).

¹⁸⁴ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Beatitudes*, 6, PG. 44, 1273.

¹⁸⁵ St. Anastasius, quoted in J. Romanides, *The Ancestral Sin*, Ridgewood, N.J.: Zephyr Publishing, 2002, p. 34, note 64.

¹⁸⁶ St. Gennadius, in K. Staab (ed.) *Pauline Commentary from the Greek Church: Collected and Edited Catena*, Munster in Westfalen, 1933, 15:362.

¹⁸⁷ St. Gregory Palamas, *Homily 14*, 5; Veniamin, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

Still more relevant here is Canon 110 of the Council of Carthage in 419, which was confirmed by the Sixth and Seventh Ecumenical Councils: "He who denies the need for young children and those just born from their mother's womb to be baptized, or who says that although they are baptized for the remission of sins they inherit nothing from the forefathers' sin that would necessitate the bath of regeneration [from which it would follow that the form of baptism for the remission of sins would be used on them not in a true, but in a false sense], let him be anathema. For the word of the apostle: 'By one man sin came into the world and death entered all men by sin, for in him all have sinned' (Romans 5.12), must be understood in no other way than it has always been understood by the Catholic Church, which has been poured out and spread everywhere. For in accordance with this rule of faith children, too, who are themselves not yet able to commit any sin, are truly baptized for the remission of sins, that through regeneration they may be cleansed of everything that they have acquired from the old birth' (cf. Canons 114, 115 and 116)."

"It follows," writes Archbishop Theophan, "that it is Metropolitan Philaret who has correctly expounded the teaching of the Orthodox Church on original sin, and not Metropolitan Anthony. The attempt of the latter to give a new interpretation to the text of Romans 5.12 violates the ban laid in its time by the Council of Carthage, a ban on similar attempts with the laying of an anathema on the violators of the ban. But since the canons of the Council of Carthage were confirmed by the [Sixth] Ecumenical Council in Trullo, then for the violation of the indicated decree Metropolitan Anthony's *Catechism* falls under the anathema not only of the local Council of Carthage, but also of the [Sixth] Ecumenical Council in Trullo".¹⁸⁸

Thus Metropolitan Anthony's teaching on original sin, which links our sinful and corrupt state, not with Adam's past sin, but with our own future ones, encounters several powerful objections. First, the idea that the punishment should precede the crime and that we should receive corruption and death *before* we have sinned is contrary both to natural justice and to the doctrine of the goodness of the original creation. Secondly, although, in the case of children who die young, the punishment precedes a *non-existent* crime in that they have *not* sinned personally, Church tradition still commands the baptism of children precisely "for the remission of sins" - which, since they are innocent of personal sin, can only mean the sin of Adam. But thirdly, and most importantly, the Apostle Paul specifically excludes the idea that our death is the wages of our personal sins, as opposed to the original sin of Adam. Thus he writes: "Until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not reckoned where there is no law. But death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam's transgression... Apart from the law sin lies dead. I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died" (Romans 5.13,14, 7.8-9). For "sin is lawlessness" (I John 3.4), transgression of the law, so there can be no sin where there is no law. In other words, death reigned from Adam to Moses in spite of the fact that the men of that time did *not* sin as Adam did, and that personal sin was *not* imputed to them.

¹⁸⁸ Archbishop Theophan, *The Patristic Teaching on Original Sin*, p. 23.

2. Other Passages in St. Paul's Epistles. Now the question arises: are there any other passages in St. Paul's works which would indicate that he accepted the traditional interpretation of εφ'ω in Romans 5.12 as meaning "in him" (i.e., in Adam)? And the answer is: yes. For in I Corinthians 15.22 we read: "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive."

If we all die in Adam, then this is because we all sin in Adam. It is impossible to argue: yes, we all die in Adam, but we do not sin in him; for the sin is the cause of our dying; it is the "sting" of death. Therefore the traditionalist translation of Romans 5.12 is supported by I Corinthians 15.22.

Other passages in St. Paul confirm the traditionalist interpretation by emphasizing the exact correspondence between Adam and Christ, between Adam who made all his descendants by carnal birth sinners and Christ Who makes all His descendants by spiritual birth righteous: "As through one man's transgression [judgement came] on all men to condemnation, so through one man's act of righteousness [acquittal came] to all men for justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous. Law came in to increase the transgression; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 5.18-21).

Just as personally we do not have the life and holiness of Christ and do not do His works, and yet receive His life and holiness through receiving His Body and Blood - that is, by His being *in* us, so we did not commit the personal transgression of Adam, and are not responsible for that sin, and yet receive his sinfulness through his being *in* us through physical procreation - as the traditionalists affirm but the modernists deny.

St. John Chrysostom writes: "Adam is a type of Christ in that just as those who descended from him inherited death, even though they had not eaten of the fruit of the tree. So also those who are descended from Christ inherit His righteousness, even though they did not produce it themselves... What Paul is saying here seems to be something like this. If sin, and the sin of a single man moreover, had such a big effect, how it is that grace, and that the grace of God - not of the Father only but also of the Son - would not have an even greater effect? That one man should be punished on account of another does not seem reasonable, but that one man should be saved on account of another is both more suitable and more reasonable. So if it is true that the former happened, much more should the latter have happened as well."¹⁸⁹ Again, St. Ephraim the Syrian writes: "Just as Adam sowed sinful impurity into pure bodies and the yeast of evil was laid into the whole of our mass [nature], so

¹⁸⁹ St. John Chrysostom, *Homily 10 on Romans*.

our Lord sowed righteousness into the body of sin and His yeast was mixed into the whole of our mass [nature]”.¹⁹⁰ Again, St. Ambrose of Milan writes: “In Adam I fell, in Adam I was cast out of paradise, in Adam I died. How shall God call me back, except He find me in Adam? For just as in Adam I am guilty of sin and owe a debt to death, so in Christ I am justified.”¹⁹¹ Again, St. Gregory Palamas writes: “Just as through one man, Adam, liability to death passed down by heredity to those born afterwards, so the grace of eternal and heavenly life passed down from the one divine and human Word to all those born again of Him”.¹⁹²

Thus just as Adam sinned, and so brought sin and death on all his descendants, even though they had not committed the original sin, so Christ brought remission of sins and eternal life to all His descendants (the children of the Church), even though they have not rejected sin as He has. If the original curse and punishment was “unjust”, the freedom from the curse and redemption is also “unjust”. But the one “injustice” wipes out the other “injustice” and creates the Righteousness of God. It is therefore vain to seek, as does Metropolitan Anthony, a rational justification of our inheritance of original sin. It is unjust – from a human point of view. And the fact that we later sin of our own free will does not make the original inheritance just. However, this “injustice” is wiped out by the equal injustice of Christ’s blotting out *all* our sins – both original sin, and our personal sins – by his unjust death on the Cross. As Archbishop Seraphim of Lubny writes: “If we bear in mind that by the sufferings of One all are saved, we shall see no injustice in the fact that by the fault of one others are punished.”¹⁹³

It is not only the parallel between the old Adam and the new Adam that is relevant here, but also the parallel between the old Eve and the new Eve, the Virgin Mary. Let us consider the metropolitan’s words: “Knowing beforehand that every man would display Adam’s self-will, the Lord allows us to inherit Adam’s weak, ill, mortal nature endowed with sinful tendencies...” However, there is one human being of whom we know that she would *not* have displayed Adam’s self-will, and who is glorified above all human beings precisely because she *rejected* Eve’s temptation, *reversing* her disobedience: the Mother of God. *And yet the Mother of God was born in original sin.* This is the teaching of the Orthodox Church, which rejects the Catholic doctrine that the Virgin was conceived immaculately in order to preserve her from original sin, and teaches rather, in the words of St. Gregory the Theologian, that “the Son of God was conceived of the Virgin, who had been purified beforehand [obviously, from sin] in soul and body by the Holy Spirit.”¹⁹⁴

St. John Maximovich writes: “The teaching that the Mother of God was preserved from original sin, as likewise the teaching that She was preserved by God’s grace from personal sins, *makes God unmerciful and unjust*; because if God could preserve

¹⁹⁰ Quoted by Archbishop Theophan, *op. cit.*

¹⁹¹ St. Ambrose of Milan, *On the death of his brother Satyrus.*

¹⁹² St. Gregory Palamas, *Homily 16, 17*; Veniamin, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

¹⁹³ *The Holy Hierarch Seraphim Sobolev*, p. 72.

¹⁹⁴ St. Gregory the Theologian, *Homily 44*, On Pascha.

Mary from sin and purify Her before Her birth, then why does He not purify other men before their birth, but rather leaves them in sin? It follows likewise that God saves men apart from their will, predetermining certain ones before their birth to salvation.

“This teaching, which seemingly has the aim of exalting the Mother of God, in reality completely *denies all her virtues*. After all, if Mary, even in the womb of Her mother, when She could not even desire anything either good or evil, was preserved by God’s grace from every impurity, and then by that grace was preserved from sin even after Her birth, then in what does Her merit consist? If She could have been placed in the state of being unable to sin, and did not sin, then for what did God glorify Her? If She, without any effort, and without having any kind of impulses to sin, remained pure, then why is She crowned more than everyone else? There is no victory without an adversary...”¹⁹⁵

Logically, Metropolitan Anthony’s theory leads to the Catholic doctrine of the immaculate conception of the Virgin. For if God gives us our sinful nature because He knows that we will sin as Adam sinned, He should have refrained from this in the case of the Virgin, knowing that she would *not* sin as Eve sinned. So the fact that she *did* inherit a sinful nature shows that this was not in prevision that she herself would sin, but because of the original sin of Adam...

¹⁹⁵ St. John Maximovich, *The Orthodox Veneration of the Mary the Birthgiver of God*, Platina: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1996, p. 59.

CONCLUSION: LOVE AND JUSTICE

*In the midst of two thieves, Thy Cross was found to be a balance of justice.
Triodion, Ninth Hour, Glory..., Troparion.*

Can you offer up enough sins that, by them, you can tilt the balance of justice against the precious blood which I shed on the Cross for this man? Behold My murder and death, which I endured for the forgiveness of his sins.

The Lord Jesus Christ to Satan, *Evergetinos*, Book I, Hypothesis I, E.

In his essay, *The Moral Aspect of the Dogma of the Church*, Metropolitan Anthony writes: 'When an author offers his readers a (more or less) new explanation of Christian dogmas; then, if he believes in an Orthodox manner, he reckons least of all to introduce any kind of new truth into the consciousness of the Church. On the contrary, he is convinced that the fullness of the truth is a permanent attribute of the Church's own consciousness; and if, for example, before the fourth century, the concepts of nature and persons had not been elucidated, or if before the Seventh Ecumenical Council no dogma of the honouring of icons was defined, this does not in any way mean that the early Church did not know the correct teaching about the Trinity or vacillated between the venerating of icons and iconoclasm. In these cases it was not the content of the faith which received a supplement in Christian consciousness, but rather the enrichment of human thought consisted in that certain human concepts or everyday occurrences were explained from the point of view of true Christianity. Even before the fourth century, the Church knew from the Gospel and Tradition that the Father and the Son are one, that we are saved by faith in the Holy Trinity. But how to relate these truths to the human, philosophical concepts of person and nature, - in other words, what place these concepts receive in God's being - this was taught to people by the Fathers of the First Council and those who followed them.

"In exactly the same way, if any contemporary person... starts discussing the truths of the faith (in new terminology), but without any contradiction of Church Tradition, remaining in agreement with Orthodox theology, then he does not reveal new mysteries of the faith. He only elucidates, from the point of view of eternal truth, new questions of contemporary human thought." (p. 97).

All this is true, and more modest than the metropolitan's claims in *The Dogma of Redemption*. Even here, however, he claims that his work is a new elucidation of old truths on a par with the achievements of the Fathers of the First or Seventh Ecumenical Councils. But what new terminology or insights has he given us?

What is new in "moral monism" is its monism - that is, its reduction of the whole work of redemption to one principle only, love, instead of two, love and justice. But this novelty is false: the restoration of justice between God and man is not some incidental offshoot of the redemptive act, but the act itself; it *is* redemption. For

Christ shed His blood, as He said, precisely “for the remission of sins”, that is, for the restoration of justice between God and man, for the justification of mankind.

Also new in the theory is its moralism – that is, its reduction of the whole mystery of our redemption to what Metropolitan Anthony calls “the law of psychological interaction”¹⁹⁶, the submission of the will of the believer to Christ’s compassionate love as “an active, revolutionary and often irresistible power”.¹⁹⁷ But this novelty, too, is false: it confuses the work of redemption in itself with the assimilation of redemption by the individual believer, with his response to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. It confuses the *justification* wrought by Christ on the Cross, which is an objective fact independent of the believer’s response to it, with the *holiness* wrought by the Holy Spirit in the soul of the believer who does in fact respond to it.

The concepts of holiness and justification, love and justice are logically distinct, and to speak of the perfection of Christ’s love does not in itself explain how justice is perfected. It is the so-called “juridical theory”, rooted in the Holy Scriptures and developed by the Holy Fathers, but denied by Metropolitan Anthony, that tells us *how* justice and justification are achieved, and *in what* that justice consists – without in any way diminishing the significance of Divine love. Metropolitan Anthony, however, seeks in every way to play down the significance of redemption viewed as the restoration of *justice* between God and man. He writes: “The act of redemption – the exploit of compassionate love which pours Christ’s holy will into the souls of believers – could not, as an act of love, violate the other laws of life, that is, justice. And yet it has not infrequently been considered from this secondary, non-essential, and incidental viewpoint, a viewpoint which the sons of Roman legal culture, as well as the Jews, considered extremely important. Such a view of the secondary aspect of the event in no way obscures its real meaning as an act of compassionate love”.¹⁹⁸ It is this attitude towards Divine justice as “secondary, non-essential and incidental” which constitutes, in our view, the fundamental error of Metropolitan Anthony’s work and the root cause of all its other errors.

In conclusion, then, let us attempt to present the relationship between love and justice in redemption in a more balanced manner.

Christ’s redemptive work can be described as *perfect love in pursuit of perfect justice*. The beginning of all things and of all God’s works is without question *love*. God created the world out of love, and redeemed it out of love. As the Apostle of love writes in his Gospel: “God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3.16). But with the appearance of sin, which is injustice, God, Who is called *justice* as well as love¹⁹⁹, directed all things to the abolition of injustice and the justification of man.

¹⁹⁶ *The Dogma of Redemption*, p. 20.

¹⁹⁷ *The Dogma of Redemption*, p. 19.

¹⁹⁸ *The Dogma of Redemption*, p. 41.

¹⁹⁹ St. John of the Ladder, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, 24.23. Cf. St. Ambrose of Milan: “Justice was above the world when the devil offered all the kingdoms of the world and all its glory.”

That is why the same apostle of love (who is at the same time the son of thunder) combines the concepts of the love of God and the expiation of His justice in one sentence with no sense of incongruity as follows: "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the *expiation* [or propitiation or atonement] (ἰλασμοῦν) of our sins" (I John 4.10).

The attitude of the Divine love to sin and injustice is called in the Holy Scriptures *the wrath of God*. This term does not denote a sinful passion of anger (for God is completely pure and passionless) but the utterly inexorable determination of God to destroy that which is evil and unjust, that is, which is opposed to love. As Archbishop Theophan puts it: "The wrath of God is one of the manifestations of the love of God, but of the love of God in its relationship to the moral evil in the heart of rational creatures in general, and of man in particular."

However, since man was mired in sin, not only his personal sins but also "the law of sin", or original sin, that had penetrated his very nature, he was unable to justify himself. That is why even the best men of the Old Testament were barred entry into heaven and went to hades after their death (Genesis 37.35). For "[sinful] flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of heaven" (I Corinthians 15.50). Justice could be restored and man justified only through the perfect Sacrifice for sin offered by Christ on the Cross. But in order to understand what is meant by this we need to look a little more closely at the nature of justice itself.

One of the earliest and clearest examples of moral justice is the lex talionis: "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth". Justice here consists in balance, equality, *compensation* - evil committed in one direction is compensated for by an equal evil committed in the other direction. But since the second evil is committed with the intention of restoring justice, it is no longer evil, but good. "For it was necessary," writes Nicholas Kabasilas, "that sin should be abolished by some penalty and that we by suffering a proportionate punishment should be freed from the offences we have committed against God."²⁰⁰

Now it will be objected that this law has been superseded in the New Testament by a new law forbidding us to seek compensation for wrong done to us: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain..." (Matthew 5.38-41).

However, whatever the old law may lack in comparison with the new, it cannot be called *unjust*: on the contrary, it is the very paradigm of justice. Moreover, it was promulgated by God Himself, and therefore was right for the people of God at that particular stage in their development as a nation. Nor has it proved possible to

²⁰⁰ Kabasilas, *The Life of Christ* I, P.G. 150:516B; quoted in Panayiotis Nellas, *Deification in Christ*, Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1987, p. 62.

dispense with the old law in the conduct of government since Christ. Where would a government or society be if there were no laws of a compensatory character? Even if the saints managed to conduct their personal lives by at all times returning good for evil, they never advocated abandoning the principle of retributory punishment for crime in public life, although they did try to temper justice with other considerations, such as the rehabilitation of the offender.

For, as St. John of Damascus writes, "a judge justly punishes one who is guilty of wrongdoing; and if he does not punish him he is himself a wrongdoer. In punishing him the judge is not the cause either of the wrongdoing or of the vengeance taken against the wrongdoer, the cause being the wrongdoer's freely chosen actions. Thus too God, Who saw what was going to happen as if it had already happened, judged it as if it had taken place; and if it was evil, that was the cause of its being punished. It was God Who created man, so of course He created him in goodness; but man did evil of his own free choice, and is himself the cause of the vengeance that overtakes him."²⁰¹

Thus justice has an absolute value in and of itself; and if the New Testament has brought other values to the fore, these have in no way superseded justice. Moreover, if the new law is superior to the old, this is not because the old law is unjust, but because the new fuses justice with love and therefore increases the sum total of good. In any case, according to the new law, too, evil must be balanced by an equal and opposite good. The difference is that according to the new law the counterbalancing good need not be offered by the offender, but can be offered by his victim in his place. Thus if the victim suffers the offence but *forgives* the offender, the debt of justice is paid; the act of love, which is forgiveness, blots out the original sin – so long as the offender accepts the gift with gratitude and repentance. Nor is this unjust, if the creditor agrees to pay the debt. For it is not important who pays the debt, so long as the debt is paid – and the debtor shows his gratitude through repentance.

We see, then, that when evil has been done there are two ways in which justice may be satisfied and evil blotted out: by the suffering of the offender, and by the suffering of the victim or redeemer in the offender's place. Only in God's law, as opposed to the laws of human government, the suffering of the offender is ineffective if it is not mixed with the particular joy-bringing sorrow of *compunction*; while the suffering of the victim is ineffective if it is not mixed with the sorrowless joy of *forgiveness*. Indeed, according to God's law, a victim who does not forgive his offender is himself offending and adding to the total of injustice in the world. Why? First, because "we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" (Romans 3.23), so that all the suffering we receive is, if we would only recognize it, the just repayment of our sins. And secondly, because all sin is, in the first place, sin against God, not man; for as David says: "Against Thee only have I sinned and done this evil before Thee, that Thou mightest be justified in Thy words, and prevail when Thou art judged" (Psalms 50.4). Therefore if we are to be justified before the Just Judge, we

²⁰¹ St. John of Damascus, *Dialogue against the Manichaeans*, 37.

must at all times recognize that we are offenders, not victims, remembering that "if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" (I Corinthians 11.31).

Returning now to Christ's redemptive suffering, we find the new law put into practice to a heightened and supremely paradoxical degree. For, on the one hand, since Christ alone of all men was without sin, He alone had no need to suffer, He alone suffered unjustly. But on the other hand, for the very same reason He alone could suffer *for* all men, He alone could be the perfect Victim, by Him alone could justice be perfectly satisfied. All other sacrifices for sin are tainted since they are offered from a sinful nature. Only a *sinless* human nature could offer a true sacrifice for sin.

Moreover, Christ suffered all the reality of sin as far as His sinless nature would allow, even to the suffering of death, the tearing apart of His most beautiful creation. And this meant, as we have seen, that His suffering was immeasurably greater than ours in proportion as sin is immeasurably distant from the holiness of God. Thus did He accept to suffer the whole wrath of God against sin in place of sinful mankind, becoming "the Lamb of God Who taketh away the sins of the world" (John 1.29). For "surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that made us whole, and by His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53.4-5).

So the Cross is perfect justice - but justice of a supremely paradoxical kind. In St. Maximus' words, it is "the judgement of judgement"²⁰². Sin, that is, injustice, is completely blotted out - but by the unjust death and Sacrifice of the Only Sinless and Just One. Christ came "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Romans 8.3) and died the death of a sinner, uttering the words expressive of sinners' horror at their abandonment by God. The innocent Head died that the guilty Body should live. He, the Just One, Who committed no sin, took upon Himself the sins of the whole world. When we could not pay the price, He paid it for us; when we were dead in sin, He died to give us life. "For Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust" (I Peter 3.18). And the self-sacrificial love of this sacrifice was so great in the eyes of Divine justice that it blotted out the sins of the whole world - of all men, that is, who respond to this free gift with gratitude and repentance.

The Church has expressed this paradox with great eloquence: "Come, all ye peoples, and let us venerate the blessed Wood, through which the eternal justice has been brought to pass. For he who by a tree deceived our forefather Adam, is by the Cross himself deceived; and he who by tyranny gained possession of the creature endowed by God with royal dignity, is overthrown in headlong fall. By the Blood of God the poison of the serpent is washed away; and the curse of a just condemnation is loosed by the unjust punishment inflicted on the Just. For it was fitting that wood should be healed by wood, and that through the Passion of One Who knew not passion should be remitted all the sufferings of him who was condemned because of

²⁰² St. Maximus the Confessor, *Questions to Thalassius*, PG 90:408D.

wood. But glory to Thee, O Christ our King, for Thy dread dispensation towards us, whereby Thou hast saved us all, for Thou art good and lovest mankind."²⁰³

So there is no conflict between justice and love. To say that God should be loving but not just is like saying that the sun should give light but not heat: it is simply not in His nature. It is not in His nature, and it is not in the nature of any created being, for the simple reason that justice *is* the order of created beings, it is the state of being as it was originally created.

For, as St. Dionysius the Areopagite writes: "God is named Justice because He satisfies the needs of all things, dispensing due proportion, beauty and order, and defines the bounds of all orders and places each thing under its appropriate laws and orders according to that rule which is most truly just, and because he is the Cause of the independent activity of each. For the Divine Justice orders and assigns limits to all things and keeps all things distinct from and unmixed with one another and gives to all beings that which belongs to each according to the dignity of each. And, to speak truly, all who censure the Divine Justice unknowingly confess themselves to be manifestly unjust. For they say that immortality should be in mortal creatures and perfection in the imperfect and self-motivation in the unmotivated and sameness in the changeable and perfect power in the weak, and that the temporal should be eternal, things which naturally move immutable, temporal pleasures eternal, and to sum up, they assign the properties of one thing to another. They should know, however, that the Divine justice is essentially true Justice in that it gives to all things that which befits the particular dignity of each and preserves the nature of each in its own proper order and power."²⁰⁴

When people say that God is loving but not just, or that His justice demonstrates a lack of love, they do not know what they are saying. For His love is aimed precisely towards the restoration of justice, the restoration of "the nature of each in its own proper order and power", in which alone lies its blessedness. And if the restoration of justice involves suffering, this is not the fault of God, but of His creatures, who freely go against their nature as God created it and thereby create injustice, which can only be abolished through suffering.

"If we hold the view," says Archbishop Seraphim (Soloviev), "that God is only love, and do not bear in mind that He is also the righteous Judge, then we can come to the opinion that from God there proceeds only all-forgiveness, and so there will come a time when all sinners together with the demons will be forgiven, the eternal torments will come to an end and there will be only one eternal blessedness for all rational beings. But this opinion contradicts Divine Revelation – its witness that God will reward each man in accordance with his works, as well as the direct teaching of the Saviour on His terrible judgement and on the future unending life with eternal blessedness for the righteous and eternal torments for sinful people and demons.

²⁰³ *Menaion*, September 14, Great Vespers of the Exaltation of the Cross, "Lord, I have cried", "Glory... Both now..."

²⁰⁴ St. Dionysius the Areopagite, *On the Divine Names*, VIII.

“That Divine justice is at work in our salvation is witnessed by the church chant: ‘Thou hast redeemed us from the curse of the law by Thine honourable blood’... The very concept of redemption contains within itself a juridical element, for it signifies buying up or satisfaction. But this satisfaction could not be demanded by Divine love, which gives everything for free. It was demanded by Divine justice. If only love were at work in our salvation, then the sacrifice of Christ on the cross would not have been necessary. Then the very word ‘redemption’ would not have been in the Holy Scriptures. But besides the welcoming words of the Apostle Paul, where he speaks about redemption (Galatians 3.13), we also have the witness of the Apostle Peter, who also gives us this concept of redemption with a juridical meaning in the words: ‘You have not been redeemed by corruptible silver or gold..., but by the precious blood... of Christ’ (I Peter 1.18-19).”²⁰⁵

Modern man rejects the role of Divine justice in our salvation because he cannot understand that justice, he finds it unjust. But God is justified in His words and prevails when He is judged by those who accuse Him of injustice. As He says through the Prophet Ezekiel: “Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not My ways equal? Are not your ways unequal? Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways” (Ezekiel 18.29-30.). Again, the Prophet Malachi says: “Ye have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied Him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgement?” (Malachi 2.17). But God is not unequal in His ways, and He is always the God of judgement.

Nor is justice a kind of cold, abstract principle imposed upon Him from without, as it were. As Vladimir Lossky writes: “We should not depict God either as a constitutional monarch subject to a justice that goes beyond Him, or as a tyrant whose whim would create a law without order or objectivity. Justice is not an abstract reality superior to God but an expression of His nature. Just as He freely creates yet manifests Himself in the order and beauty of creation, so He manifests Himself in His justice: Christ Who is Himself justice, affirms in His fullness God’s justice... *God’s justice is that man should no longer be separated from God.* It is the restoration of humanity in Christ, the true Adam.”²⁰⁶

Love and justice may be seen as the positive and negative poles respectively of God’s Providence in relation to the created universe. Love is the natural, that is, just relationship between God and man. Sin has destroyed love and created injustice. Divine Providence therefore acts to destroy injustice and restore love. We would not

²⁰⁵ Archbishop Seraphim, “V Velikuiu Subbotu. O sovместnom dejstvii bozhestvennogo pravosudia i bozhestvennoj ljubvi v dele nashego iskuplenia” (For Great Saturday. On the joint action of Divine justice and Divine love in the work of our redemption), in *Ob istinnom monarkhicheskom mirosozertsanii* (On the True Monarchical World-View), St. Petersburg, 1994, p. 199.

²⁰⁶ Lossky, “Christological Dogma”, *op. cit.*, pp. 114-115. My italics (V.M.).

need to speak of justice if sin had not destroyed it. But with the entrance of sin, justice is the first necessity – love demands it.

However, since love never demands of others what it cannot give itself, the justice of God is transmuted into *mercy*. Mercy is that form of justice in which the punishment of sin is removed from the shoulders of the offender and placed on the shoulders of another, who thereby becomes a propitiatory *sacrifice*. Thus the Cross is both love and justice, both mercy and sacrifice. It is the perfect manifestation of love, and the perfect satisfaction of justice. It is “the mercy of peace”, in the words of the Divine Liturgy, the mercy that restores peace between God and man.

This intertwining of the themes of love and justice in the Cross of Christ is developed with incomparable grace by Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow: “Draw closer and examine the threatening face of God’s justice, and you will exactly discern in it the meek gaze of God’s love. Man by his sin has fenced off from himself the everlasting source of God’s love: and this love is armed with righteousness and judgement – for what? – to destroy this stronghold of division. But since the insignificant essence of the sinner would be irreparably crushed under the blows of purifying Justice, the inaccessible Lover of souls sends His consubstantial Love, that is, His Only-begotten Son, so that He Who ‘upholds all things by the word of His power’ (Hebrews 1.3), might also bear the heaviness of our sins, and the heaviness of the justice advancing towards us, in the flesh of ours that He took upon Himself: and, having Alone extinguished the arrows of wrath, sharpened against the whole of humanity, might reveal in his wounds on the Cross the unblocked springs of mercy and love which was to the whole land that had once been cursed - blessings, life and beatitude. Thus did God love the world.

“But if the Heavenly Father out of love for the world gives up His Only-begotten Son; then equally the Son out of love for man gives Himself up; and as love crucifies, so is love crucified.²⁰⁷ For although ‘the Son can do nothing of Himself’, neither can he do anything in spite of Himself. He ‘does not seek His own will’ (John 5.19 and 31), but for that reason is the eternal heir and possessor of the will of His Father. ‘He abides in His love’, but in it He Himself receives into His love all that is loved by the Father, as he says: ‘As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you’ (John 15.9). And in this way the love of the Heavenly Father is extended to the world through the Son: the love of the Only-begotten Son of God at the same time ascends to the Heavenly Father and descends to the world. Here let him who has eyes see the most profound foundation and primordial inner constitution of the Cross, out of the love of the Son of God for His All-holy Father and love for sinful humanity, the two loves intersecting with, and holding on to, each other, apparently dividing up what was

²⁰⁷ In the mystery of the Cross, says Metropolitan Philaret, is expressed “the crucifying love of the Father, the crucified love of the Son, the love of the Holy Spirit triumphant in the power of the Cross. For God so loved the world”. Metropolitan Anthony’s comment on these words is dismissive: “this is a most unpersuasive sophism, a mere juggling of words. What sort of love is it that crucifies? Who needs it?” (*The Dogma of Redemption*, p. 6). And yet it is precisely the crucifying love of the Father of which the Lord says: “God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life...” (John 3.16).

one, but in fact uniting the divided into one. Love for God is zealous for God – love for man is merciful to man. Love for God demands that the law of God’s righteousness should be observed – love for man does not abandon the transgressor of the law to perish in his unrighteousness. Love for God strives to strike the enemy of God – love for man makes the Divinity man, so as by means of love for God mankind might be deified, and while love for God ‘lifts the Son of man from the earth’ (John 12.32 and 34), love for man opens the embraces of the Son of God for the earthborn, these opposing strivings of love intersect, dissolve into each other, balance each other and make of themselves that wonderful heart of the Cross, on which forgiving ‘mercy’ and judging ‘truth meet together’, God’s ‘righteousness’ and man’s ‘peace kiss each other’, through which heavenly ‘truth is sprung up out of the earth, and righteousness’ no longer with a threatening eye ‘hath looked down from heaven. Yea, for the Lord will give goodness, and our land shall yield her fruit’ (Psalms 84.11-13).”²⁰⁸

St. Macarius “Nevsky”, metropolitan of Moscow (+1926), summed up the matter: “The justice of God demands the punishment of the sinner, but the love of God demands clemency. According to the justice of God, the sinner, as having nothing by which he could satisfy this eternal justice, must be subject to eternal torments. But love demands mercy. The Wisdom of God found a means to satisfy both justice and love. This means is the Redemptive Sacrifice of the Son of God. Christ paid by His blood for the debts of all sinners. They are forgiven, but after baptism people have again offended both the justice and the love of God. Consequently, they have again become heirs of hell. Then love wishes again to have mercy, and does not subject the sinner to eternal punishment, but punishes him temporarily, calling on him to repent through this punishment. If the sinner repents, the Lord forgives him, having established for this the Sacrament of Repentance, while Christ receives him into communion with Himself through the Sacrament of Communion.”²⁰⁹

Only at the Last, Most Terrible Judgement will love and justice not be united in mercy for all. And yet the Last Judgement is a mystery proclaimed by the Word of God and grounded in the deepest reality of things. It both proceeds from the nature of God Himself, from His love and His justice, and is an innate demand of our human nature created in the image of God. It is the essential foundation for the practice of virtue and the abhorrence of vice, and the ultimate goal to which the whole of created nature strives, willingly or unwillingly, as to its natural fulfillment. Without the Last Judgement all particular judgements would have a partial and unsatisfactory character, and the reproaches of all unbelievers against faith would be justified; for the demand for justice – perfect justice – is an innate characteristic of the human soul. And if the Last Judgement is different from all preceding ones in that in

²⁰⁸ Metropolitan Philaret, “Sermon on Holy Friday (1816)”, *The Works of Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow and Kolomna*, Moscow, 1994, pp. 107-108 (in Russian); translated in *Orthodox Life*, March-April, 1992, pp. 2-10.

²⁰⁹ Tatyana Groyan, *Tsariu Nebesnomu i Zemnomu Vernij. Mitropolit Makarij Altajskij (Parovitsky – “Nevsky”), 1835-1926* (Faithful to the Heavenly and Earthly King. Metropolitan Macarius of the Altai (Pavitsky – “Nevsky”). 1835-1926), Moscow, 1996, p. 305.

it love seems to be separated from justice, love being bestowed exclusively on the righteous and justice on the sinners, this is because mankind will have divided itself into two, one part having responded to love with love, to justice with justice, while the other, having rejected both the love and the justice of God, will merit to experience His justice alone...

Metropolitan Anthony's error consisted in the fact that he balked at the justice of God, and sought to disengage it, as it were, from His love, assigning to love the primary role in the work of redemption while dismissing justice as a "secondary, incidental aspect" of it.

First, he balked at the justice of original sin. He considered it unjust that mankind should suffer as a result of the sin of Adam. So he proposed a "rational" solution: that men suffer from their inherited sinful nature, not because of Adam's sin, but because of their own sins - or, more precisely, because they would have sinned in the same way as Adam if put in the same situation.

But this contradicts the clear witness of Holy Scripture and the Holy Fathers, the tradition of the Church in baptizing children "for the remission of sins", the fact that all men before the law died although no sin was imputed to them, and the fact that the Mother of God, though she *reversed* the sin of Eve by successfully resisting personal sin in all its forms, was nevertheless born in original sin. Moreover, it destroys the perfect symmetry between the old Adam and the new Adam: if we do not inherit original sin from the old Adam through carnal birth, then neither do we acquire redemption from the new Adam through spiritual rebirth.

Secondly, he balked at the justice of the Cross. He considered it unjust that by the death of Christ on the Cross, as by a propitiatory sacrifice, the sins of all men should be blotted out. So he proposed a "rational" solution: that the sins of all men are blotted out, not by any propitiatory sacrifice, not by the death of Christ on Golgotha, but by the overflowing of the "revolutionary, almost irresistible" force of His co-suffering love in the Garden of Gethsemane into the hearts of believers.

But this contradicts the clear witness of Holy Scripture and the Holy Fathers, the tradition of the Church in communicating believers in the Body and Blood of Christ as in a Sacrificial offering for sin which is "for the remission of sins", and the fact that the sufferings of Christ alone, without His death, could not save us, in that death could be destroyed only by the Death of Christ and the New Testament could be signed only in the Blood, presupposing the Death, of the Testator. Moreover, it confuses the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit in our redemption: the work of Christ in *justifying* us is logically and chronologically prior to the work of the Holy Spirit in *sanctifying* us.

In many ways, Metropolitan Anthony's error is a typically modern one. Modern man is all in favour of *love*; but he wishes to disengage it from *truth*, on the one hand, and *justice*, on the other. He misinterprets Blessed Augustine's saying: "Love and do

what you will"; he thinks that "love covers a multitude of sins", that is, that it can co-exist with all manner of falsehood (which is ecumenism) and all manner of sin (which is secularism, hedonism, modernism of all kinds), and that in the last analysis falsehood and sin simply do not matter: as the pop song puts it, *all you need is love*. But it is not true that all we need is love. We also need truth and justice. These three principles are one in God, but at the same time they are three. God is love, but He is also truth and justice, and His love is incompatible with all untruth and injustice. For, as St. John of the Ladder writes: "God is called love, *and also justice*."²¹⁰

Christ, Who is love incarnate, came into the world "to witness to the truth" (John 18.37) and "to destroy the works of the devil" (I John 3.8). He came into the world, therefore, to reestablish truth and justice. *He is perfect love in pursuit of perfect truth and perfect justice*. And if His truth defies all rationalist reasoning, and His justice all purely human standards of equity, this only goes to show that His thoughts are not our thoughts and His ways not our ways, and that we must work out our salvation in fear and trembling. "For our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12.29)...

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Pentecost.*

²¹⁰ St. John of the Ladder, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, 24.23.

