



104. June 5/18, 1972. St. Abba Dorotheus

Categories : [Letters](#)

Date : September 2, 2016

Dear Brother in Christ, Alexey,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ. We pray that Susan has returned safely and that this finds you well and in the grace of our Saviour. I will start right out with our comments on the material for Nikodemos No. 4.

1. Editorial: By now you should have received our “charismatic” issue, where in part 6 we bring up some of the signs of the end of the world, emphasizing the great deception which will then occur. From further reading in Pentecostal “prophecies,” I would say that this deception may be even worse than we imagine, and that there will be “miracles” that will cause most “Christians” to believe that Antichrist actually is coming from the sky, together with the sign of the Cross — in a word, that his imitation of Christ will be almost “perfect.” Therefore, this whole question is one about which we should be extremely careful.

Your editorial on the whole is good, but one thing bothers us about it: the quote from C. S. Lewis. In itself there is nothing wrong with quoting a heterodox writer if it makes a point which such a writer is competent to make. But from the language of this quote it doesn't seem entirely clear whether he's referring to the coming of Christ, or actually to the coming of Antichrist. “Land in force, invade”: this sounds a little like the “Messiah” of Herbert J. Armstrong (Plain Truth) and others, who rules the world with a “rod of iron” from Jerusalem. “The play is over” — this, even as an image, is anathema — Orthodox Fathers such as St. John of Kronstadt have spoken of drama as the opposite and parody of the Liturgy and the whole Christian world-view. All images taken from the stage: “drama,” “role,” “scene,” etc., should be avoided in a church context. “Melting away like a dream” — even if this is not meant literally, it could tempt some to be reminded of the Hindu cosmology. Of course, his point is right — that the end is something absolutely spectacular; but the images are taken from the wrong catalog, so to speak, and it's better to leave him out of it entirely.

Beyond this, while you are on the subject of “watchfulness,” there seems to be one emphasis you are missing. In the middle of the apocalyptic chapter of Matthew (24:32; also Mark 13:28), the Saviour takes a parable from the fig tree and says: “Even so ye also, when ye see all these things, know ye that it is nigh.” In other words, we must “watch” for the signs of the times so we will not be deceived. Therefore it is not precisely true that “The King of Glory may arrive at any moment” — it is only those who have not discerned the signs of the times who will be totally taken by surprise; but watchful Christians will know ahead of time “that it is nigh,” having recognized the signs and seen through the deception of Antichrist, with whose coming the end is but a few years away — the exact day is not known until it comes, but its approach becomes ever more obvious, just in the way



we see the fig tree leafing out.

The rest of the article is good; we only hope these comments haven't thrown a wrench into the whole conception!

2. St. Symeon: fine, and the point of presenting the Fathers should sink more deeply in with each installment.

3. The Righteous Eucharistus and Mary: Superb, and we are very happy to see the beginning of a fruitful collaboration with Mrs. Vagin.

4. The letter from Ron Pryzbylski and your response are an illustration of the point of the "Righteous Eucharistus," and perhaps "say" more than anything you've printed so far. This is where the whole mission of Nikodemos becomes evident. We rejoice to see the seed of genuine Orthodoxy taking root and bearing sprouts, opening up a "dimension" of Orthodox life that has not been too much seen yet in America: lay Orthodoxy that is not "worldly," that searches for deeper roots and feels that it cannot "fit it" with the world; that is not satisfied to be like everyone else only with an "Orthodox point of view" on everything; that looks to the Fathers for answers, not on academic questions or theology, but on how to live. There is a glimpse here of an Orthodoxy not merely "added to" the American way of life and then apologized for and made understandable to non-Orthodox, "fitting in" as a fourth major faith — but something rather that transforms life, makes Orthodox people something of a scandal to the world, that grows up on its own principles quite apart from the world around it, and yet that is quite sound and normal in itself. Your reply and citations from the Fathers are very much to the point. If you can keep up the tone of this exchange (and evoke other people like that to write) — you've justified your existence!

5. Letters: fine.

6. "In this dark time": good, and timely.

The whole issue looks good, and the only changes we would recommend would be in the first article, in the interests of greater precision.

We haven't heard anything yet from Fr. Nektas about his proposal to you, and we don't quite know what he had in mind. Of course, there are sometimes special conditions which would make such an amalgamation logical and fruitful; but in the absence of such condition we would still think that you are both better off working independently. You both have your own distinct approach and point of view, which, while they are mutually complementary, are still probably better nourished "autonomously."



In the new True Vine we notice that Archbishop Amvrossy's Statement is printed for the fourth time! It looks about time that we retreated from this realm about completely and stuck to those things that aren't being taken care of quite adequately elsewhere!

Our summer season is beginning, and just two days ago our "baby" deer gave birth to twin fawns, apparently right in front of our church! They were under 12 hours old when we first saw them, but already running (and stumbling) around. To our surprise, we note that "Baby" has no nest or anything or the sort, but just moves the fawns about from place to place, letting them sleep wherever they fall, and then taking up her station some distance away. This is the third day, and they haven't departed yet from the monastery area — which shows we are "trusted." We look around once in a while, and once we found one fawn curled up under our "St. Gerasim tree" with an icon looking over her. A very touching sight.

Please pray for us.

With love in Christ our Saviour,
Seraphim, monk