

THE ORTHODOX CONTRIBUTION IN THE SECTION OF UNITY IN NEW DELHI INTRODUCTORY NOTE

BY

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The new issue of «New Delhi spricht» by the Evangelisches Missionsverlang G. M. B. H. of Stuttgart made its appearance a few months ago.

The issue contains the speeches of the General Assembly in their main subjects, i.e. evidences on the Sections Witness, Deaconship, Unity the message and the reports of the Commissions of the General Assembly which took place in New Delhi from the 18th November till the 6th December 1961. The editor of this is the Rev. William A. Visser't, Hooft, Secretary General of the World Council of Churches.

On page 60 there is the following remark: «Compare Contribution of the Orthodox taking part in the register (minutes) of the Section «Unity».

In April of this year, made its appearance «New Delhi 1961» in a nice volume published by the same editor and amongst others contained a report of the documents of the Third General Assembly of the World Council of Churches.

On page 140 of this volume in a foot note, there is the following remark: ~~«Copies of this contribution may be obtained from the Section~~ «Faith and Order» of the World Council of Churches in Geneva.

It is evident, that this is so difficult that it becomes necessary to publish this contribution not only for those who have taken part in the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches but also for the Theologians and other interested persons. This is very essential, taking into consideration, that the same volume contains the views of an isolated case of one Orthodox Theologian, Dr N. Nissiotis, while nothing is published on the Contribution on the most important problem of Unity (III Section) in the General Assembly and which contribution has been drawn up by responsible Theologians, leaders of the Orthodox Theology and Churches, such as Father G. Florovsky (Harvard), Dr. Alivizatos (Athens), Dr. Meyendorff,

Metropolitan Myron Chrysostomos, Professor of Chalki, Metropolitan Imvrou Meliton, Professor Protopresbyterian Borovoy (Leningrand), also Prof. Ioannides, Prof G. Konidaris, Prof. Siotis, Prof. J. Kalogirou and others, including Archbishop Nikodimos (Russia) and the Metropolitan of Moldavia Mgr Justin who has rightly expressed the wish for the inclusion of the following thoughts in the form of Appendix.

Generally, one should say that the orthodox contribution constitutes a plain and concise report of the orthodox view on the Unity of the Church, more clear than ever before.

It would have been of course better had the Orthodox contribution been published as a XIX supplement, as it has been pointed out by the competent Authorities of the World Council of Churches, by the President of the representatives of the Church of Greece, the Most Reverend Metropolitan of Edessa Mgr Dionysios.

In this contribution I would have included the following Appendix:

«This clear attitude of the Orthodox members of the Section «Unity» or a special contribution on the question of Christian Unity in no way whatsoever can be taken as a change of the attitude that Orthodoxy has taken vis-a-vis the Oecumenical movement as it has been clearly expressed in the minutes and in the message of the Pan-Orthodox Conference at Rhodes (20th Sept. to 2th October 1961). The care and the positive collaboration of all the churches constitute, in the opinion of the Orthodox Churches, a high Christian mission in the conception of love of our Lord Jesus Christ». This is the opinion, as I believe, of all the Christian Churches.

**CONTRIBUTION OF THE ORTHODOX DELEGATES
IN THE SECTION OF UNITY**

Representatives of the Orthodox Church in the Section on Unity welcome the Report of Faith and Order Commission adopted at St. Andrews, Scotland, in August 1960, as an important and stimulating ecumenical document. The Ecumenical Movement, as it is now embodied in the World Council of Churches, has begun by protestant initiative, but was not meant, from the very beginning, to be a protestant endeavour, nor should be regarded as such. This must be especially emphasized now, when almost all churches of Orthodox Communion have entered the membership of the World Council. In this situation the Orthodox Representatives feel themselves obliged to underline the basic difference between their own approach to ecumenical problem and that which is implied in the document of St. Andrews. The ecumenical problem, as it is understood in the current ecumenical movement, is primarily a problem of the Protestant world. The main question, in this setting, is that of «Denominationalism». Accordingly, the problem of Christian unity, or of Christian Reunion, is usually regarded in terms of an interdenominational agreement or Reconciliation. In the Protestant universe of discourse such approach is quite natural. But for the Orthodox it is uncongenial. For the Orthodox the basic ecumenical problem is that of schism. The Orthodox cannot accept the idea of a «parity of denomination» and cannot visualize Christian Reunion just as an interdenominational adjustment. The unity has been broken and must be recovered. The Orthodox Church is not a confession, one of many, one among the many. For the Orthodox, the Orthodox Church is just the Church. The Orthodox Church is aware and conscious of the identity of her inner structure and of her teaching with the Apostolic message (kerygma) and the tradition of the ancient undivided Church. She finds herself in an unbroken and continuous succession of sacramental ministry, sacramental life, and faith. Indeed, for the Orthodox the apostolic succession of episcopacy and sacramental priesthood is an essential and constitutive, and therefore obligatory element of the Church's very existence. The Orthodox Church, by her inner conviction and consciousness, has a special and exceptional position in the divided Christendom, as the bearer of, and the witness to, the tradition of the ancient undivided Church, from which all existing denominations stem, by the way of reduction and separation. From the Orthodox point of view, the current ecumenical endeavour can be characterized as «ecumenism in space», aiming at agreement between various denominations, as they exist at present. This endeavour is, from

the Orthodox point of view, quite inadequate and incomplete. The common ground, or rather the common background, of existing denominations can be found, and must be sought, in the past, in their common history, in that common ancient and apostolic tradition, from which all of them derive their existence. This kind of ecumenical endeavour can be properly denoted as «ecumenism in time». The Report of Faith and Order itself mentions «agreement (in faith) with all ages» as one of the normative prerequisites of unity. Orthodox theologians suggests this new method of ecumenical inquiry, and this new criterion of ecumenical evaluation, as a kingly rock, with the hope that unity may be recovered by the divided denominations by their return to their common past. By this way divergent denominations may meet each other on the unity of common tradition. The Orthodox Church is willing to participate in this common work as the witness which had preserved continuously the deposit of apostolic faith and tradition. No static restoration of old forms is anticipated, but rather a dynamic recovery of perenniam ethos, which only can secure the true agreement «of all ages». Nor should there be a rigid uniformity, since the same faith, mysterious in its essence and unfathomable adequately in the formulas of human reason, can be expressed accurately in different manners. The immediate objective of the ecumenical search is, according to the Orthodox understanding, a reintegration of Christian mind, a recovery of apostolic tradition, a fulness of Christian vision and belief, in agreement with all ages.

Παραθέτομεν ἐνταῦθα καὶ ἑλληνικὴν μετάφρασιν τῆς ἀνωτέρω «συμβολῆς».

ΣΥΜΒΟΛΗ ΤΗΣ ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΟΥ ΑΝΤΙΠΡΟΣΩΠΕΙΑΣ
ΕΙΣ ΤΟ ΤΜΗΜΑ ΠΕΡΙ ΕΝΟΤΗΤΟΣ

Οἱ ἀντιπρόσωποι τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας ἐν τῷ τμήματι περὶ ἐνότητος χαιρετίζουν τὴν κατ' Ἀύγουστον τοῦ 1960 ἐν Ἁγίῳ Ἀνδρέᾳ τῆς Σκωτίας γενομένην ἀποδεκτὴν ἔκθεσιν τοῦ τμήματος Πίστεως καὶ Διοικήσεως, ὡς σπουδαῖον καὶ ἐνθαρρυντικὸν ἔγγραφον. Ἡ Οἰκουμενικὴ Κίνησις, ὡς τώρα ἐνσωματοῦται ἐν τῷ Παγκοσμίῳ Συμβουλίῳ τῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν, εἶναι μὲν πρωτοβουλίας προτεσταντικῆς, ἀλλ' εὐθὺς ἐξ ἀρχῆς δὲν ἐνοήθη ὡς προτεσταντικῆ προσπάθεια, οὐδὲ πρέπει νὰ θεωρῆται ὡς τοιαύτη. Τοῦτο πρέπει νὰ τονισθῇ τώρα, ὅτε σχεδὸν πᾶσαι αἱ Ἐκκλησίαι τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου κοινωνίας ἐγένοντο μέλη τοῦ Παγκοσμίου Συμβουλίου. Ὑπὸ τοιαύτας συνθήκας οἱ ὀρθόδοξοι ἀντιπρόσωποι αἰσθάνονται τὴν ὑποχρέωσιν νὰ ὑπογραμμίσουν τὴν βασικὴν διαφορὰν τῆς ἀπὸ μέρους τῶν ἀντικρίσεως τοῦ οἰκουμενικοῦ προβλήματος καὶ τῶν συνεπακολουθημάτων τοῦ ἐγγράφου τοῦ Ἁγίου Ἀνδρέου. Τὸ Οἰκουμενικὸν πρόβλημα, ὡς νοεῖται ἐν τῇ συνήθει οἰκουμενικῆ κινήσει, εἶναι προπαντὸς πρόβλημα τοῦ προτεσταντικοῦ κόσμου.

Τὸ κύριον ζήτημα εἰς τὴν ὑπόθεσιν αὐτὴν εἶναι τὸ τῆς «ὀμολογιακῆς ὑποστάσεως». Κατ' αὐτήν, τὸ πρόβλημα τῆς χριστιανικῆς ἐνότητος ἢ τῆς χριστιανικῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς θεωρεῖται συνήθως ὡς ζήτημα πανομολογιακῆς συμφωνίας ἢ ἀποκαταστάσεως.

Ἐν τῇ συζητήσει (ἐρεύνη) ἀπὸ προτεσταντικῆς πλευρᾶς τοῦτο εἶναι ὄλως φυσικόν. Ἀλλὰ διὰ τοὺς Ὀρθόδοξους τὸ βασικόν Οἰκουμενικὸν πρόβλημα εἶναι τὸ τοῦ σχίσματος. Οἱ Ὀρθόδοξοι δὲν εἶναι δυνατὸν νὰ δεχθῶν τὴν ἰδέαν αὐτῆς ἰσότητος τῶν ὁμολογιῶν» καὶ δὲν δύνανται νὰ ὁραματισθοῦν Χριστιανικὴν ἐπανένωσιν ὡς ἀπλὴν πανομολογιακὴν διευθέτησιν. Ἡ ἐνότις διεσπάσθη καὶ πρέπει νὰ ἀποκατασταθῇ. Ἡ Ὀρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία δὲν εἶναι μία τῶν ὁμολογιῶν, μία μεταξὺ τῶν πολλῶν. Διότι ἡ Ὀρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία εἶναι ἀκριβῶς ἡ Ἐκκλησία. Ἡ Ὀρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία γνωρίζει καὶ ἔχει συνείδησιν τῆς ταυτότητος τῆς ἐσωτερικῆς τῆς ὑποστάσεως καὶ τῆς διδασκαλίας τῆς, μὲ τὸ ἀποστολικὸν κήρυγμα καὶ τὴν παράδοσιν τῆς ἀρχαίας καὶ ἀδιαίρετον Ἐκκλησίας. Ἐδρίσκεται εἰς ἀδιάκοπον καὶ συνεχῆ διαδοχὴν τῆς μυστηριακῆς ἱερωσύνης, τῆς μυστηριακῆς ζωῆς καὶ τῆς πίστεως. Ἀληθῶς διὰ τοὺς Ὀρθόδοξους ἡ ἀποστολικὴ διαδοχὴ τῶν ἐπισκόπων καὶ ἡ μυστηριακὴ ἱερωσύνη εἶναι συστατικὸν καὶ καταστατικὸν καὶ ὡς ἐκ τούτου ὑποχρεωτικὸν στοιχεῖον αὐτῆς τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ὑποστάσεως.

Ἡ Ὀρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία, διὰ τῆς ἐσωτερικῆς πεποιθήσεως καὶ συνειδήσεώς της κατέχει ὄλως ἰδιαιτέραν καὶ ἐξαιρετικὴν θέσιν ἐν τῷ διηρημένῳ Χριστιανισμῷ, ὡς ὁ φορεὺς καὶ ἡ μάρτυς τῆς παραδόσεως τῆς ἀρχαίας ἀδιαίρετον Ἐκκλησίας, ἀφ' ἧς κατάγονται (ἀρχικῶς) ὅλαι αἱ ὑψιστάμεναι ὁμολογίαι δι' ἀποσπάσεως ἢ χωρισμοῦ. Ἐξ ἐπόψεως Ὀρθόδοξου, ἡ συνήθης οἰκουμενικὴ προσπάθεια δύνανται νὰ χαρακτηρισθῇ ὡς «Οἰκουμενισμὸς ἐν χώρῳ» ἀποσκοπῶν τὴν συμφωνίαν μεταξὺ τῶν διαφόρων ὁμολογιῶν, ὡς αὐτὰ ἐφίστανται σήμερον.

Αὐτὴ ἡ προσπάθεια [δύναμις] ἀπὸ ὀρθόδοξου ἐπόψεως εἶναι ἀνεπαρκῆς καὶ ἐλλειπτής. Τὸ κοινὸν ἔδαφος ἢ μᾶλλον ὁ κοινὸς κατὰ βάθος ὀρίζων (background) τῶν ὑψισταμένων ὁμολογιῶν δύνανται νὰ εὑρεθῇ καὶ πρέπει νὰ ἀναζητηθῇ εἰς τὸ παρελθόν, εἰς τὴν κοινὴν ἱστορίαν των, καὶ εἰς ἐκείνην τὴν παλαιὰν καὶ κοινὴν ἀποστολικὴν παράδοσιν, ἐξ ἧς πηγάζει ἡ ὑπαρξίς των. Αὐτοῦ τοῦ εἶδους ἡ οἰκουμενικὴ προσπάθεια δύνανται πρεπόντως νὰ θεωρηθῇ ὡς «Οἰκουμενισμὸς ἐν χρόνῳ».

Αὐτὴ ἡ ἐκθεσις τῆς «Πίστεως καὶ Διοικήσεως» ἀναφέρει «τὴν (ἐν τῇ πίστει) συμφωνίαν πρὸς ὄλους τοὺς αἰῶνας», ὡς μίαν ἀπὸ τὰς βασικὰς προϋποθέσεις τῆς ἐνότιτος. Οἱ ὀρθόδοξοι θεολόγοι προτείνουν τὴν νέαν αὐτὴν μέθοδον οἰκουμενικῆς ἐκτιμῆσεως, ὡς τὴν βασιλικὴν πέτραν, ἐπὶ τῇ ἐλπίδι ὅτι ἡ ἐνότις θὰ ἐπανευρεθῇ ὑπὸ τῶν διηρημένων ὁμολογιῶν διὰ τῆς ἐπιστροφῆς αὐτῶν εἰς τὸ κοινὸν παρελθόν.

Ἡ Ὀρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία προθύμως μετέχει εἰς τὸ κοινὸν τοῦτο ἔργον ὡς ἡ μάρτυς, ἢ ὅποια διετήρησε συνεχῶς τὸν θησαυρὸν τῆς ἀποστολικῆς πίστεως καὶ παραδόσεως. Ἄεν ἀντιμετωπίζεται βεβαίως στατικὴ ἀποκατάστασις παλαιῶν μορφῶν, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον δυναμικὴ ἀνανέωσις τοῦ ἀειθαλοῦς ἥθους, τὸ ὅποιον μόνον δύνανται νὰ ἐξασφαλίσῃ τὴν ἀληθῆ συμφωνίαν ὄλων τῶν αἰῶνων.

Ὅτε πρόκειται περὶ ἀκάμπητον ὁμοιομορφίας, ἀφοῦ αὐτὴ ἡ πίστις καθ' ἑαυτὴν μυστηριώδης ἐν τῇ οὐσίᾳ της καὶ ἀνεξιχνίαστος ἐν τῇ ἐπαρκείᾳ τῶν μορφῶν τοῦ ἀνθρώπινου λογικοῦ, δύνανται νὰ ἐκφρασθῇ ἀκριβῶς κατὰ διαφόρους τρόπους.

Τὸ ἄμυσον ἀντικείμενον τῆς οἰκουμενικῆς ἐρένης, κατὰ τὴν Ὀρθόδοξον ἀντίληψιν εἶναι ἡ ἀναστάσις τῆς χριστιανικῆς νοήσεως, ἢ ἀποκατάστασις τῆς ἀποστολικῆς παραδόσεως, ἢ πληρότης τῆς χριστιανικῆς ἐνοράσεως καὶ πίστεως ἐν συμφωνίᾳ πρὸς πάντας τοὺς αἰῶνας.

(Μετάφρασις Καθηγητοῦ Α.Μ. ΑΛΙΒΙΖΑΤΟΥ)