

DEFENDER OF THE FAITH OR HERESIARCH

Schema-Monk Antony (Bulatovich)

The simple peasant-monks, often illiterate and in any case not writers, were at a loss for how to respond to these new attacks. So when word got around that at St. Andrew's skete lived a "litseyist" (university graduate) sharing their views, they went to enlist his help. Help quickly turned into leadership, and in the years to come this litseyist virtually single-handedly carried on the theological defense of the divinity of God's name.

Alexander Ksaver'evich Bulatovich (accent on the "o") was born on September 26, 1870 to a wealthy family of nobility, the son of a major-general in the Russian army. When his father died just three years later the family moved to a large estate called Lutsykovka which his mother inherited and which was situated near Lebedin in the Khar'kov guberniya of the Ukraine. There he lived with his mother and two sisters until 1884 when they moved to Petersburg so he could begin preparatory work at the Alexandrovsky Litsey. That school was renowned as one of the most privileged educational institutions in Russia, with a liberal arts curriculum including law and foreign languages such as French, German, and English -- all oriented towards producing high-level government officials and diplomats. Alexander passed through each year with honors and graduated near the head of his class in 1891.

Instead of going into government service as was expected, he chose to enter His Majesty's Leib-gvardiya (Life-guard) regiment of Hussars -- one of the most aristocratic regiments in the Russian Army. Entry into it was made possible by family connections. Five years later he volunteered for a special Red-Cross detachment of Russian medical personnel going to render humanitarian aid to Ethiopian soldiers who were at war with Italy. Cornet Bulatovich rendered

especially important services to the mission because he had used a few months of preparation time to learn the Ethiopian language and could use his expertise with horses to serve as a courier riding camels across long and dangerous stretches of desert. In his travels with Ethiopian Emperor Menelik's forces he was the first European to see many regions of Africa, and upon his return to Russia he wrote a book entitled *Ot Entoto do Reki Baro* (From Entoto to the River Baro) about his unique experiences.

After just six months at home in which to write that book and see it published by order of his regimental headquarters, he returned on another mission to Ethiopia, this one for the purpose of establishing diplomatic relations between that nation and Russia. His travels into more unexplored regions resulted in a second book, *S Voyskami Menelika II* (With the Armies of Menelik II), this time published on his own resources. To the present day both of these works have remained of such value in the study of Ethiopian history and society that the Soviet Academy of Sciences republished them in 1971 and has produced a number of other books about their author and his work in the years since.

For his humanitarian and scholarly work and for service to his country Bulatovich was personally thanked by Tsar Nicholas II, received the Medal of St. Anne third degree and of St. Stanislav second degree, and was promoted first to lieutenant and then to staff-captain (штабс-ротмистр). After a third trip to Ethiopia, Bulatovich requested active duty in Manchuria, where Russia was at war with the Chinese Boxers. There he distinguished himself for his bravery -- and for his independence: apparently against orders he rescued a French Catholic Missionary whose life was being threatened by the Boxers. For that he received from the French Government the Legion of Honor award. From his own government he received two more medals and a promotion to captain (ротмистр).

At the end of 1902 Alexander Bulatovich's career took another sharp turn when on December 14 he accepted monastic tonsure. It is difficult to say what prompted this sudden move, seemingly out of character with the rest of his career, but his sister Mary Orbeliani later recounted that he had always been particularly pious, even from early childhood:

We all three shared the same room with our German nurse. ... Sasha's bed was behind a screen. The wall over his bed was covered with pictures of the holy scriptures, the holy virgin, [and] figures of saints. And

in the evening when all others were in bed for sleep, and the candle of the nurse not more burning, we heard from behind the screen Sasha kneeling, and getting up and whispering prayers! (Letter of April 27, 1973)

In an interview she also recalled that there was a particular incident in Manchuria that seemed to weigh heavily on him after his return:

I heard that when he was in Manchuria he went with his saber and had a fight with a Manchurian soldier. Then he killed him. And this soldier fell upon him, and all his blood covered his face. Then this made such an impression on him that I heard that several days he could not ... eat meat ... everything tasted [to] him [of] blood. Then he considered that he is ... [an] assassin, that he kills. This feeling came to him from it. He was at the war, he killed many people, but he had not this [feeling]; but here he had the feeling that he commits a terrible human crime. By killing. I heard so. Because his friend, whom I know, and whom I met in Poltava during the revolution, he told me that he asked him, "Now, how many people has this saber ... how many heads have you cut?" And he was so depressed. He turned around and he cried. I never saw him crying; but this [man] said that he cried. (Tape 4)

Whatever the immediate reasons for it, Alexander Bulatovich's decision to become the monk Antony was one to which he remained faithful for the rest of his life.

The Petersburg monastery he entered, Nikiforovskoye Podvor'ye, had been established by Fr. John of Kronstadt, and Fr. John was to play a decisive role in personally guiding the new monk through the first years of his monastic life. It was he who advised Fr. Antony to go on the journey which ended with the latter's settling on Mt. Athos. During one of his trips to Ethiopia, Alexander had rescued a very small Ethiopian boy who had been mutilated by an enemy tribe and left for dead. After treating and taking care of him there and naming him Vaska, Alexander brought him home to Russia, baptized him into the Orthodox faith, taught him Russian, and saw to his upbringing and education. But other Russians, particularly the school-children young Vaska eventually had to associate with daily, were not so open-minded about Ethiopians or about those who had been mutilated as this one had, and in time they made his life an unhappy one. On Fr. John's advice Fr. Antony resolved to return him to his homeland, which he did in 1907. Returning from his mission he stopped at Mt. Athos -- and stayed. He settled in the skete of St. Andrew, where within three years he was granted the great schema and ordained first to the diaconate and then to the priesthood.

For the first four years of the growing controversy on Athos he took no part in it and hardly even knew of its existence, being so engrossed in the monastic life of prayer that he knew little of anything that was going on around him:

... I led a life highly secluded, silent, solitary; I was completely occupied by my asceticism (подвиг) [and] never went outside the wall of the monastery. Not only did I not know either the persons or the affairs of other monasteries, I didn't even know many of the monks in my own monastery by name, holding myself completely apart from all affairs. Nor did I know what was happening anywhere in the world, for I read absolutely no journals or newspapers. (Моя Борьба 656)

His sister recalled:

He told me after, that he wanted to kill¹² his flesh and slept in winter on a stone floor which gave him terrible arthritic pains. He told that he and others spent the nights in prayer in the Andreyevsky Sobor [church] where they were bitten by bugs. (Letter dated June 14, 1973)

Though this sort of thing kept him out of monastic quarrels, he had become acquainted with *Na Gorakh Kavkaza* already. One of the persons to whom Agafodor sent a copy of that "harmful book written in the spirit of Farrar" was Abbot Jerome of St. Andrew's. According to Fr. Antony, Fr. Jerome turned the book over to him asking for a written opinion. He obediently proceeded to read it. Years later he recounted the decision-making process, which he says occurred sometime around spring of 1909:

... I decided at first to write a letter to Fr. Ilarion, in which I protested against this expression "the name of the Lord Jesus Christ is the Lord Jesus Christ himself" -- since for my mind, also somewhat poisoned by rationalism and lacking in fear and respect for the word and name of God, it seemed scandalous that in some way the name pronounced by my lips, thought by my mind, could be God himself. "Isn't such an assertion by Fr. Ilarion divinization of creation?" I thought to myself. ... But when I wrote this letter, then a certain special heaviness of heart fell upon me, and a certain endless emptiness, coldness, and darkness possessed my heart. ... I suffered, but didn't understand the reason for this suffering, and didn't suspect that it was due to my denying the divinity of the name of the Lord. Apparently I too was about to irreversibly renounce (отступить от) the name of the Lord as had Khrisanf, Aleksey, Theofan, and the other intelligentsia and

¹²"Mortify"; see Col 3:5.

half-intelligentsia on Athos from Russia, if the prayers of my unforgotten spiritual father John of Kronstadt hadn't saved me. (Моя Борьба 658-9)

At one of his last meetings with Fr. John, the latter had personally handed him a copy of his book *Mysli Khristianina* (Thoughts of a Christian) "for guidance". Now as Antony needed guidance he happened to see the book, and opening it:

... I saw before my eyes the following words: "When you say to yourself in your heart or pronounce the name of God, of the Lord, of the Holy Trinity, of the Lord of Sabaoth, or of the Lord Jesus Christ, then in this name you have the whole essence of the Lord: in it is his endless goodness, infinite wisdom, unapproachable light [etc.] ... That is why God's commandment so sternly forbids taking God's name in vain, i.e. because his name is he himself -- one God in three persons, a simple essence, represented in one word and at the same time not contained, i.e. not limited, by it or by anything that exists. The great names: Holy Trinity; or Father, Son and Holy Spirit; Word; and Holy Spirit; invoked with living, heartfelt faith and reverence, or imagined in the soul, are God himself and bring into our soul God himself in three persons." (p. 46) I was amazed, crossed myself, and, thanking God for granting understanding, immediately tore up my letter to Fr. Ilarion and burned it. And right away that inconsolable heaviness of heart that had burdened me after writing the letter went away, and I returned to my former spiritual condition. (659-60)

He returned the book to his abbot with nothing but high praise, and afterwards had little more to do either with it or the controversy that arose around it until the spring of 1912, after returning from a trip to Ethiopia to visit and bring the sacraments to Vaska.

When the articles in *Russkiy Inok* appeared and were brought to Fr. Antony's attention by some of the New Thebaide monks, he decided a rebuttal was in order and began by writing two short articles. One was copied locally and disseminated throughout Athos just as Khrisanf's review had been at first. The other was published, with Abbot Jerome's blessing, in the April issue of the skete's own journal. In addition, on behalf of the New Thebaide monks Fr. Antony composed an "Open Letter to Archbishop Antony" dated May 7, 1912 and sent it to him with a request that he print it in his journal to set the record straight.

Opening with the customary respectful titles with which one addresses an archbishop, the letter proceeded to ask that he admit to having erred:

Falling at your feet, we ask with humility that you hear out our explanation of the error into which the editors (редакция) of *Russkiy Inok* have fallen, having believed untrue information ... Only God is infallible, and we, knowing the humility of Russian hierarchs, to whom the self-important infallibility of Catholic popes is foreign, dare to hope that you too, your holiness, will grant a place in *Russkiy Inok* to these our lines in which we defend ourselves against the slander raised against us [which has been] placed in *Russkiy Inok* and thereby proclaimed to tens of thousands of its readers. (Моя Борьба 663-6)

The letter quotes Fr. John of Kronstadt at length, adding that it is in the very sense meant by him that Ilarion and those who agree with him understand the expressions in question:

But neither Fr. John of Kronstadt nor any of us ... raises the name of God, i.e. letters and sounds, by essence to the level of divinity separately from God, and we do not venerate the name Jesus separately from God, as Aleksey Kireyevsky and the monk Khrisanf reproach us for doing. Let us ask Fr. Aleksey Kireyevsky: has he ever heard that any of the hermits pray, "Name Jesus have mercy on me"?

Though the letter's tone was generally not polemical, its conclusion could have been phrased more diplomatically: "First take the log (disbelief and blasphemy) from your eye, and then you will see to remove the twig (imaginary name-worship) from the eye of your brother (Mt 7:5). [Signed] Monks of Athos."

The archbishop was infuriated. Instead of publishing the letter he published one of his own in response:

On Athos the quarrels are continuing concerning the book of the fallen-into-*prelest'* schema-monk Ilarion, *Na Gorakh Kavkaza* -- highly related to khlystism, which like a fire has now engulfed all of Russia. The essence of this khlystic *prelest'* consists in their calling some or other cunning and sensual peasant an incarnated Christ and some or other filthy old woman the Mother of God and worshipping them in place of God, after which they betray themselves to carnal (свальнойному) sin. This is the delusion into which Fr. Ilarion is directing his foolish followers, himself not realizing it, we hope.

Ilarion's views would help them because they need only name someone "Jesus" and the person would be a God. Abp. Antony's strident tone is striking; not only is Ilarion simply labeled "fallen into *prelest'*" but his teaching is called a "khlystic heresy about divine worship of names, i.e. sounds" and St. Paul's anathema against all who "preach another gospel" is applied to it.

Similarly virulent is an article by the monk Denasy of St. Panteleimon's monastery which directly follows the archbishop's letter. Denasy presents what is supposed to be a letter written by Ilarion himself in 1908 in which the latter admits that he himself created a new "dogma". An excerpt of that letter, reproduced here complete with Denasy's parenthetical remarks, reveals the tone of the whole article:

The formulation (положение) of the dogma made by us is important, unusual, extraordinary (what pomposity!), and in the way in which we have formulated it (like the Roman Popes, so inclined to think up and formulate new dogmas) is not found anywhere (thanks for the admission!) except only in John of Kronstadt ...

Other articles appeared in subsequent issues of *Russkiy Inok*, including a refutation by Khrisanf of Antony's April refutation of his review. There he argues that in passages where Jesus speaks of faith or prayer "in my name" he not only means simply "through me" or "through my help" -- and so ascribes no special value to the name *per se* -- but also he is referring to his divine name "Son of God," not the human name "Jesus".

No. 19 of that magazine printed an unsigned letter "from the Caucasus" accusing Fr. Ilarion of leading a dissolute life. Whether that was more than unfounded slander is impossible to say, but at least in one respect the author expressed what was probably a common feeling, i.e., that Ilarion's turns of phrase had not been heard before and for that reason alone are to be avoided:

... some hermits here also say that if Fr. Ilarion had been of a good life, and even then only after [his] death, if his relics were glorified by miracles and included in the host of the saints, only then would it be possible to believe him, since *his teaching is new*. ... People lived without Fr. Ilarion's book and were being saved, but now it's as if one can't get by without it; it's just the enemy making trouble and that's all. (58)

The attacks in *Russkiy Inok* only worsened the quarreling, and in time two distinct camps came into being, each developing names for the other. Those siding with Khrisanf called their opponents "iisusane" (Jesusites), "iisusiki" (Jesusniks), or "imenopoklonniki" (name-worshipers), besides the derogatory terms for "peasant" already mentioned. The latter in turn called themselves "confessors of the name" and "imyaslavtsy" (name-glorifiers), while they called their opponents "imyabortsy" (name-fighters).

A Theological Response to Khrisanf's Review

Fr. Antony Bulatovich soon decided to attempt a more substantial, systematic attempt at a literary defense not of Ilarion's book but rather of the very phrase "the name of God is God himself." The resulting 190 page book contained much material found for him by scores of other monks who, though relatively uneducated, were nevertheless very well read in scripture and church fathers. Initially only 75 hectographed copies of *Apologiya very vo Imya Bozhiye i vo Imya Iisus* (An Apology of Faith in the Name of God and in the Name Jesus) were distributed around Athos, but the book later was published in Russia and became widely known as the foundational theological work in behalf of the imyaslavtsy.

Fr. Antony observes that although the phrase in question is not to be found in scriptural, patristic, or liturgical texts, neither is anything which would contradict it. Moreover, nowhere can one find attacks like those of the imyabortsy against the honor and divine dignity of God's name; quite the contrary, all these sources unanimously and constantly speak in the most exalted terms of God's name. Khrisanf says church services praise God himself and not his name, but in fact the texts frequently speak of glorifying his name, pleasing his name, praising his name, worshiping his name, blessing his name, serving his name, and the like. (See 157-72) And so not only do they explicitly contradict Khrisanf, they are also completely incompatible with his understanding of "name" which would limit it to a mere symbol of sound.

And scripture agrees with the liturgical texts. The Psalms, for example, are full of statements absolutely irreconcilable with Khrisanf's narrow view of "name," such as: "... how majestic is your name in all the earth" (8:1); "May the name of the God of Jacob exalt you" (20:1); "O magnify Yahweh with me and let us exalt his name together" (34:3); [The Lord says] "I will exalt him because he has known my name" (91:14); "Save me O God by your name and vindicate me by your power" (54:1); "I will give thanks to your name, Yahweh, for it is good" (54:6); "Our help is in the name of Yahweh" (124:8); and "God is known in Judah; his name is great in Israel" (76:1). Similar expressions, where "name" is impossible to interpret as nothing more than a mere combination of letters, abound throughout the Old Testament. In Ezekiel we find one of many explanations that God acts "for his name's sake":

Therefore say to the house of Israel, "Thus says the Lord Yahweh, 'It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went. And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name ... Then the nations will know that I am Yahweh,' declares the Lord Yahweh, 'when I prove myself holy among you in their sight.'" (36:22-3)

What all this shows is that "God's name" actually has a wide range of meanings. It is often used to mean the glory of God in the sense of his reputation among men, as in the text of Ezekiel quoted above. In that respect it ultimately means all that we know or can know about God. And since this begins with the entirety of the created world as a revelation of the Creator, all of creation proclaims -- and praises -- God's name:

Praise Yahweh from the earth,
Sea monsters and all deeps;
Fire and hail, snow and clouds;
Stormy wind, fulfilling his word;
Mountains and all hills;
Fruit trees and all cedars;
Beasts and all cattle;
Creeping things and winged fowl;
Kings of the earth and all peoples;
Princes and all judges of the earth;
Both young men and maidens;
Old men and children.
Let them praise the name of Yahweh
For his name alone is exalted;
His glory is above earth and heaven. (Ps 148:7-13)

And insofar as God has also revealed himself through his prophets in the Old Testament scriptures, they in their entirety in a sense constitute one very long name of God. One significant passage confirming the validity of this wider understanding of what is meant by "God's name" is in Exodus where the Lord fulfills a promise to proclaim to Moses his name -- and does so not by uttering a single word but by making a long descriptive statement:

[The Lord said,] "Yahweh, Yahweh, God compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in faithfulness and truth; who keeps faithfulness to thousands, who forgives iniquity,

transgression and sin; yet he will by no means acquit [the guilty], visiting the iniquity of fathers on sons and on sons' sons unto the third and fourth generations." (34:6-7)

The whole of the Old Testament is thus dedicated to revealing God's name -- i.e., who he is and what he is like -- and so all of its content is his name, or in other words all is included in his name.

Given this wider understanding of name, the New Testament corollary is obvious. As we read in Hebrews, "God, after he spoke long ago to the fathers by the prophets in many measures and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in a Son, ... who is the radiance of his glory and the exact representation of his nature ..." (1:1-3) Elsewhere Jesus is called the "image of the unseen God" (Col 1:15; see also 2 Cor 4:4 and Jn 14:8-9) Therefore insofar as he is the perfect revelation of God, he is the perfect name of God. More precisely, he himself is the only true revelation of God, the only true name of God: "All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, nor does anyone know the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son desires to reveal [him]." (Mt 11:27)

It is precisely this interpretation equating "the name of God" with Jesus Christ that makes sense of many passages of both Old and New Testaments. Is 30:27, for example ("Behold, the name of the Lord comes from afar"), is thus a prophecy of the coming of Christ. In Jn 12:28 Jesus' prayer "Father, glorify your name" to which the Father answered "I have both glorified it and I will glorify it again" is a similar case:

... the Father as it were says thus: "I have already glorified my Son, who is my name, by a multitude of miracles which revealed his divinity and glorified my name among men, but I also will again reveal the divinity of Jesus by raising him from the dead, and having glorified my Son, will glorify my name." (29)

This interpretation is confirmed when Jesus just before the crucifixion says: "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son, so that the Son may glorify you ..." (Jn 17:1)

Also directly parallel to statements like the Father's response in Jn 12:28 are several made by the Son, like the one in 17:26: "I have made known to them your name and I will make it known, that the love with which you loved me may be in them and I in them." As Fr. Antony notes, here the very requirement for God's love, for Christ himself, to "be in" the believer is knowledge of God's name -- which is ultimately knowledge of Christ himself.

After *Apologiya Very* was written Fr. Antony also found patristic evidence affirming that "God's name" means Jesus Christ himself. St. Maximus the Confessor ascribes trinitarian significance to the Lord's Prayer: "For the name of the God and Father essentially subsisting is the only-begotten Son; and the kingdom of the God and Father essentially subsisting is the Holy Spirit." (*Patrologia Graeca* 90:884) Hence "hallowed be thy name" means "may we glorify the Son through our lives and deeds" and "thy kingdom come" means "may thy Holy Spirit come to us."

So the meaning of "God's name" is not limited to a mere symbol of sound but rather includes both that symbol and the fullness of knowledge about God which the symbol designates -- and so "God's name" must ultimately be equated with Jesus Christ. Accordingly, patristic statements that imyabortsy quote to denigrate the importance of God's name actually exalt it, such as St. Basil the Great's "The thought of God established in us by means of the memory is the installation (вселение) in us of God himself." (54) This in fact does speak of God's name, for in its widest sense, God's name is our thought of, our understanding of, our knowledge of God; it is all that we know and can know about him.

Such an understanding of "name" then permits drawing parallels between the current controversy and the fourteenth century one about knowledge of God. At that time St. Gregory Palamas defended against Barlaam the Calabrian the proposition that knowledge of God consists of direct experience of God which is given to Christians both now and in the life to come. This experience of communion with God, or "deification," is nevertheless not absolute since the fundamental distinction between Creator and created remains. So God is at once truly knowable and yet unknowable, accessible and yet inaccessible. St. Gregory explained this duality by distinguishing God's "essence" from his "energies" (or "grace," "actions," "works," "deeds," "characteristics," etc.). Only Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are God by essence; all creatures are called into being by his energies, maintained in existence by his energies, and share in his life through his energies. It is thus through the "energies" that the Christian knows the unknowable God and is "deified"; i.e., "becomes God" by grace, though not by essence.

The church councils which affirmed the Palamite teachings proclaimed that the light seen by the apostles at the Lord's Transfiguration on Mt. Tabor (Mt 17:1 ff) was one manifestation of this divine energy, so Fr. Antony suggests that "just as the divine visible light is an action of divine light and is God himself, so too the mental light of truth is a verbal action of God and is God

himself." (5) In this way God's name as knowledge of him is equated with his energies which are he himself insofar as they are inseparable from his essence. It is on this basis that Fr. Antony dares to call his opponents heretics, for he claims that they agree with Barlaam in denying both the divinity of God's energies and the unity of those energies with God's essence.

Fr. Antony takes care to stress that he does not claim the name is "adequate" to God; God is in no way limited by what we know or can know of him. There always remains something beyond our knowledge, something yet unknown. Nor does he identify the name with God's essence, which is another way of saying the same thing. Nor does he divinize creation, for:

We do not divinize the conventional sounds and letters with which the divine truth and idea about God is expressed, for these letters and sounds are not the divine action of Divinity but an action of the human body; nevertheless we believe that even to these sounds and letters is attached (присуща) the grace of God for the sake of the divine name pronounced with them. (188)

It is rather the truth itself which is the content of God's name and is expressed by the "conventional sounds and letters" of that name which is God himself.

And that divinely revealed truth is indeed inseparably connected to the letters which designate it, for to understand them when hearing or reading them, and to pronounce them as a confession of faith or in prayer is never a strictly human action but is made possible only through a reciprocal action of the Holy Spirit. According to Lk 24:45, it was Christ himself who "opened the apostles' minds to understand the scriptures." And 1 Cor 12:3 clearly asserts that divine help is necessary even for a simple confession of faith: "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit."¹³ (see also 1 Jn 4:2) Likewise, the same passage speaks of a variety of "gifts of the Spirit" such as words of wisdom, words of knowledge, prophecy, etc., and summarizes all with the words "One and the same Spirit works all these things ..." So these outwardly human actions are also divine actions and in that sense God himself.

This is precisely how St. Gregory of Sinai's assertion that "Prayer is God working all in all" is to be understood. Since even the imyabortsy don't dare say he was mistaken:

¹³Fr. Antony (5, *passim*) quotes Slavonic "No one can say 'Lord Jesus' ...," which places emphasis on mere pronunciation rather than confession of faith, but his interpretation did focus on the significance of the latter rather than the former.

We can't resist exclaiming on this account in the Lord's words "You blind men, which is greater -- the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift?" (Mt 23:19) Is it not God's name in prayer that sanctifies the whole prayer?! If each word in prayer is recognized as having divine power as a verbal action of divinity, then much more God himself is the name of God and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in prayer! Is it possible to suppose that the request in the Jesus Prayer "have mercy on me" could be God, but the name "Lord Jesus Christ Son of God" is not God? (54-5)

And the words of prayer are indeed inseparable from prayer itself, as John of Kronstadt affirms:

When praying it is necessary so to believe in the power of the words of prayer, that you do not separate the very words from the very deed expressed by them: it is necessary to believe that behind the word, as a shadow behind a body, follows also the deed, just as with the Lord word and deed are inseparable. (Qtd. in *Apologiya Very* 55)

This is what the Lord meant when he advised absolute confidence in the power of prayer, as in Mk 11:24: "... everything which you pray and ask for, believe that you have received it and it will be unto you." And so Fr. John explains that God himself is indeed present in every single word of prayer:

God is a Spirit, a simple Essence, but how does a Spirit manifest itself? -- in thought, word, and deed. Therefore God, as a simple Essence, does not consist of a series or a multitude of thoughts, or of a multitude of deeds or works, but rather he is wholly (Он весь) in one simple thought -- **God-Trinity**, or in one simple word -- **Trinity**, or in three persons united into one. But he himself is also in all that exists; he penetrates all [and] fills all with himself. For instance, you read a prayer, and he is wholly in each word, as a holy fire penetrating each word. Each person can experience this if one prays sincerely [and] fervently, with faith and love. But especially he is wholly in the names which belong to him: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit [etc.] ... (Qtd. in *Apologiya Very* 81)

In any case, God's name in prayer is not a mere means for calling upon him; it is not, as Khrisanf says, a "mediating power" (посредствующая сила). No scriptural or patristic evidence for this assertion exists, and it is objectionable insofar as it suggests that the power of the name is not an active power, is secondary, or is not divine. The "mediating power" is in fact the individual's faith rather than God's name. Evidence for the divine name as the active power is

found in Acts 3:16 ("His Name has strengthened this man ...") and Matthew 18:20 ("For where two or three have gathered together in my name, there I am in their midst."). Here Fr. Antony emphasizes that the Lord does not say "I will come" or "I will be there," but "there I am" -- expressing an immediacy strongly suggestive of his presence in the name itself. Support for Fr. Antony's view of the relationship between God's name and the individual's faith also comes from St. John Chrysostom, who writes that when people have not been healed by the invocation of the divine name, "this occurred due to their lack of faith, and not because of the powerlessness of the pronounced name; in just the same way many touched Jesus and pressed against him and received no benefit, but the woman with the flow of blood, having touched not [his] body but the edge of his clothing" was healed. (60)

Therefore it is through the power of the name that the sacraments are performed. If they were made effective by the faith of the priest, then a faithless or absent-minded priest would be disastrous for his flock. And ascribing their effectiveness to the faith of individual believers constitutes Lutheran receptionism. Neither is true. God acts in the sacraments for the sake of his name. Invocation of the name is thus at the heart of every sacrament, and its use in prayer is similarly reliable: "We acknowledge the efficacy of every invocation of the name of God, either for salvation or for condemnation, for we believe that the name of God is God himself." (15)

Icons and crosses too are sanctified by the name imprinted on them, or rather their sanctification consists in their being forms of God's name:

Are not the very lines of the face of the Lord on the icon a graphic depiction of the names of the characteristics of humility and mercifulness of Jesus? ... Is not also the sign of the cross a depiction of the name of the crucified Jesus, and is not its power borrowed from the name of Jesus? (170)

As for that very name Jesus, one of Khrisanf's worst mistakes was to ascribe it to the Lord's human nature only. It was the iconoclasts who argued that one could not make a true icon of Jesus because it would portray only his human nature. But that view was rejected by the Church when it decided that the image depicts the person in his entirety. Since in Christ the two natures are inseparable, an image of Christ truly is an image not only of a human being but of God himself. Clearly, the same is true of the name Jesus, which therefore includes within itself all other names

of the Son of God as well. Khrisanf's view thus essentially splits the Lord into two persons and is or leads to the heresy of nestorianism.¹⁴

The imyabortsy even go so far as to say that "Jesus" is not only not the name "above all names" but is actually the "least of all names," though the latter expression they have not ventured to put in print. They interpret all of the Lord's commandments to "ask" and "have faith" "in my name" as referring to "Son of God" rather than "Jesus," yet the Lord himself when he appeared to Paul -- even after his earthly life -- told him simply "I am Jesus." (Acts 9:5) As for their claim that the name "Jesus" is least important because it is the "youngest" of the Lord's names, in fact it is not relatively new but is as eternal as God's plan of salvation, which idea it expresses. In any case, all God's names are essentially equal in their divine dignity and power, all, as it were, rays of the one sun.

Yet for Christians "Jesus" is indeed somehow special insofar as it is the personal name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God who is our Savior. It is that meaning and the Lord's fulfillment of that role that gives us particular confidence to pray to God:

The name above all names is "Jesus" also because by the very sense expressed by it -- Savior who has come to save sinners -- it gives to sinners greater boldness in prayer to him above his other names. Actually -- is it possible for a sinner to boldly dare to call God "Father" when he knows himself by his sins to be a child of the devil and a son of evil and of malice and a vessel of uncleanness!? Is it possible with a clean conscience to call God the Lord for one who knows himself to be enslaved to money, pride, and passions!? But look -- even the most inveterate sinner can boldly and clean-heartedly call the Lord "Jesus," with hope and intrepid expectation of being forgiven and granted mercy, because the Lord so deigned to be named and to justify his name "Jesus -- Savior of sinners" on the cross. (115-6)

In later works, Fr. Antony also points out that St. Peter was specifically comparing the name "Jesus" to the Old Testament names of God when he proclaimed to the Jewish high priests that "... there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

¹⁴The council of Ephesus in 431 condemned Nestorius for believing that the Son of God and the man Jesus were two distinct persons; it proclaimed instead that he was and is one person in two natures, i.e., one person both truly God and truly man.

Nor is the Son of God's name Jesus to be considered equal to that of humans who have borne the same name, as Abp. Antony claims. For there is only one true Jesus; those in the Old Testament were foreshadowings of he who was to come. Joshua (whose name in Hebrew is identical to that of Jesus) himself was an antitype of Jesus Christ insofar as God prophesied through Moses that an "angel," "in whom is my name," would lead the Israelites into the promised land (Ex 23:20-1) -- and it was Joshua himself who led them there. In any case only Jesus Christ can perfectly justify that name's meaning "Savior". And besides, the topic of discussion is after all not a mere combination of letters considered abstractly apart from all meaning but rather "Jesus" specifically as the personal name of the Son of God. And where in any Christian literature written anytime anywhere can be found attacks upon the dignity and importance of that name?

The end result of all these attacks on Jesus' name will be that monks will grow lax in their practice of the Jesus prayer. Some have even openly suggested that one need not think of Jesus' name in prayer, that the divine name in prayer is like the address on the envelope of a letter, while the prayer itself is like the letter itself, wherein the name need not even be mentioned. This is a teaching that will surely lead to *prelest'*, as Fr. Antony explains:

Every conversation of one person with another depends on a certain guiding thought which induces me to turn to that person and which compels me to say to him one thing and not another. It is not difficult to prove that this very guiding thought is a kind of name of the other person and is also a consciousness of certain of one's own personal qualities, i.e. a kind of name of oneself. Thus, for example, a person realizes he is sick and goes to a doctor; consequently, in order to turn to the doctor, what must the person at first think in his mind but two names: his own name -- "sick" and the name of the other -- "doctor". So the person comes to the doctor and believes in the name "doctor," that he is in actual fact a doctor, and accordingly carries on a conversation with the doctor about his sickness, holding in his mind the whole time the two designations: I am "sick," and this man is "doctor." (48-9)

Here it becomes clear that by insisting on the name's importance in prayer Fr. Antony is insisting on the importance of remembering the personal identity both of him to whom the prayer is addressed and of oneself. In prayer the necessary "guiding thought" is that prayer consists of interaction between a sinful human person and the personal God who is ready, willing, and able to help:

In order to turn to God, the one who prays necessarily must imagine in his mind some designation of the characteristics of God, i.e. some name of God, as for instance: either "Good One" or "Awesome One" or "Great One" or "our Savior" or "our Creator" or "Sweetest Jesus" or "He who commanded to us to ask for everything from him and to believe in the fulfillment of the request" or "He who forbade under fear of eternal punishment that sin which I did." These are all designations or names of God held in the mind of the one praying, according to which he guides the words of prayer. Just so it is necessary for the person to hold in his consciousness also a certain designation of his own or a name, as for instance, that I am powerless, unhappy, or sinful, or that I have been blessed by God, or that I am a son of God by grace, or that I am dust and ashes. (50)

If one ceases to think of God as a real person (or rather one God in three persons) or forgets who he is, one is no longer speaking to the true God but a figment of one's imagination. Thinking to do without the name in prayer the imyabortsy are thus either truly in prelest' trying to imagine an unimaginable "essence" or do not understand what God's name truly is:

Is it even possible to think anything about God that would not at the same time be a depiction of his name? Are not all the nameable characteristics of God his name? Is not the remembrance of all the deeds of God contemplation of his characteristics? Are not contemplated in all the words of God his wisdom, goodness, and truth? No matter where you direct your eye -- to scripture, to miracles, to his words or to his deeds -- everywhere you will inevitably contemplate his name, and in the whole gospel and in the whole history of our redemption by God the Word you will read the name "Jesus" -- "God the Redeemer". (54)

All of these arguments are authentic expressions of Orthodox Christianity, but the first-time reader of *Apologiya Very* will be struck by the polemical tone, the relatively poor organization, and the sometimes strained interpretations to make quotations seem more favorable to Fr. Antony's thesis than they might in reality be. It is not difficult to see that one inclined to Khrisanf's view of God's name as merely a means for calling upon him in prayer would not be convinced by a multitude of references to miracles or healings worked "in the name" or "by the name".

In addition, Fr. Antony could have been a bit more judicious in his choice of examples to support his position. Some seem bound rather to put off rather than to convince, such as one used to support the assertion that God's name (as opposed to the individual's faith) is the effective force in the sacraments:

We recall a description in the Prologue for January 8 of how certain children thought of serving a Liturgy for a joke, and, having placed on a rock the bread of offering and the wine, and having read all the prescribed prayers ... they read also the words of changing -- and fire fell from heaven and consumed both the sacrifice and the rock, and they fell down senseless. (15)

Nevertheless, considering that *Apologiya Very* is the work of one who did not have a formal theological education and that it was completed in just a few months, it is truly a remarkable achievement. It is true that on a first casual reading by an unprejudiced person it may not leave a particularly good impression. And one can see how those already opposed to its point of view would find it easy to focus on the mistakes and defects. But fortunately for Fr. Antony's point of view the majority of the Russian monks of Athos were not among the latter. To the contrary, the subsequent course of events on Mt. Athos indicates that those previously uncommitted found his book very convincing indeed.

Retaliation Against the Author of *Apologiya Very*

It was not convincing enough for his abbot, though. Antony's first articles had been written and published with Abbot Jerome's blessing, and *Apologiya Very* had been begun that way, but before its completion Jerome radically changed his stand. That apparently occurred as follows. During June and July Fr. Aleksey Kireyevsky made several trips to St. Andrew's in an unsuccessful attempt at convincing Jerome to put a stop to Fr. Antony's "propaganda." Then on July 19 he brought a letter from Abp. Antony in which the latter expressed great anger not only at Fr. Antony Bulatovich but also at Jerome himself for printing Fr. Antony's works in the skete's journal. Others then warned the abbot that the powerful archbishop would probably one day be metropolitan or even patriarch and would in retaliation expropriate St. Andrew's dependencies in St. Petersburg and Odessa. It seems likely that such arguments along with the archbishop's own words did have an influence upon Jerome; in any case, soon thereafter he prohibited Fr. Antony from continuing to write and from associating with the monks from New Thebaide. Fr. Antony refused to obey and so on July 26, 1912 was obliged to leave St. Andrew's. He was taken in by the nearby kelliya of the Annunciation located less than a mile from St. Andrew's, from which he continued his work unhindered.

Fr. Jerome began active opposition to the imyaslavtsy. He called in for personal discussions those he suspected of sharing Fr. Ilarion's and Fr. Antony's views and even confiscated copies of *Na Gorakh Kavkaza* and burned them. It is about one of those discussions that the most famous single anecdote of the whole controversy is told: he is said to have emphasized his point in an argument by writing the name "Jesus" on a piece of paper, throwing it on the ground, and stomping on it, saying "There's your God!" Jerome himself later denied having done that, but his opponents claimed to have eyewitnesses. For his part, Fr. Antony was not inclined to mince words and entitled one pamphlet written around that time "The New Demon-talk of the Imyabortsy" (Новое бесословие имяборцев). That work Fr. Jerome eventually countered with an "open letter" disavowing any agreement with the teachings set forth in it and in all Fr. Antony's other writings. (Text in КЛИМЕНТ 759-60) But he did not specify what those teachings were, and such a short disavowal relying on pastoral authority and completely devoid of theological proofs finally proved no match for Fr. Antony's "propaganda" devoid of the former and full of the latter.