

“Preaching Another Christ”

A letter by Saint Theophan the Recluse

WITH GREAT PLEASURE I UNDERTAKE TO REPLY to your important letter or, better, to discuss with you what you mention in it. Before the arrival of your letter, something had already caught my attention, but I did not give it due consideration at that time. Now, however, I see that a fire is starting up in your area and I hasten to write to you whatever God enlightens me.



You write: “A preacher of the faith showed up in our area. He looks very kind, visits the homes of the rich and poor alike, reads from the Gospel, preaches faith in Christ, and urges everyone to repent. A poor bookbinder lives near my home. The preacher uses his house as a meeting place and gathers quite a few people. I also have been there twice so far. It is reported that this preacher visits other places too, and that his audience is quite large.”

Let us stop right at this point. It is quite obvious here that this new preacher of the faith is not a preacher of the Church. How can he go about preaching faith in Christ without having been first appointed a preacher by the Church? This is unheard of! You should have thought that something suspicious is going on and have been on your guard. Did you act so? Did you use any discernment to

the divine truth as in a treasury, remained unchanged in her faith. The truth which God Himself proclaimed and His Holy Apostles planted—this is what Orthodoxy holds and guards. We, Orthodox Christians, the children of the true Church, preserve the God-given and only truth, and remain unshakable in our faith. So many centuries passed, but the truth was kept whole and unaltered in the bosom of Orthodoxy, and was delivered down to us as God and His Apostles proclaimed it. Our holy Church stands in the truth, and that is the reason why we also stand in it. We owe gratitude to God for having provided for us to be born in the bosom of the true, the Orthodox, Church.

While you have been nourished with the eternal truth since your childhood, this false preacher of yours was taught his deception only recently. All the same, he does not hesitate to proclaim his fallacy, whereas you turn to him with no discernment and are in danger of cutting yourself off from the Holy Church and the truth of God. This truth lived in the faith of our fathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers—of all Russians since the day they were baptized by the equal-to-the-Apostles Saint Vladimir, nearly one thousand years ago. How many saints our Church has shown forth, who intercede for us before the Lord! How many men and women have pleased God and were filled with Divine Grace, as is revealed by their incorruptible relics, which are found throughout the Russian land! And all of a sudden, here comes this false preacher of yours, who just recently fell into deception, and tries to break you off from this holy company...

But let us continue. The same confession of faith and the same path of salvation are followed by the Greeks, from whom we received the light of Orthodoxy. Study their history throughout the centuries and you will come to the Ecumenical Synods, which bolstered and confirmed the dogmas of our faith, the universal truth. Study the history of the Synods, starting with Constantine the Great, and everywhere you will see the same truth being embraced by

**Orthodox should
persevere in
their faith**

**The truth of
Orthodoxy can
be confirmed**