

Bishop Grafton and the eastern orthodox churches

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Bishop Grafton and the Eastern Orthodox Churches.

Charles Chapman Grafton was born in Boston, Massachusetts, U. S. A., April 12, 1830. He graduated from the Harvard Law School in 1853. After a short experience in business he became a Candidate for Holy Orders and was ordained Deacon and Priest by the Bishop of Maryland, the Rt. Rev. Dr Whittingham. After nearly ten years of devoted Missionary labors in Country and City, he went to Oxford. Under the spiritual direction of Dr Pusey and other leaders in the Tractarian or Oxford Movement, he joined with the late Father Benson in organizing and founding a religious Community for men known as the Society of St. John the Evangelist Mission Priests, and then later assisted in founding religious Communities for women.

In this atmosphere was organized the English Church Union for the defense of the Faith. And the following prayer for Unity was used by Dr Grafton for nearly fifty years, "Blessed Lord who saidst unto thine Apostles Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, regard not our sins but the faith of Thy Church and grant her that peace and unity that is agreeable to Thy will who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost one God world without end". This prayer is widely used not only throughout the Anglican Communion, but also by Priests at the Altar in Latin, Greek, and Eastern Orthodox Churches.

One of Father Grafton's first Rectors was the Rt. Rev. Horatio Southgate, S. T. D. at one time a Bishop in charge of Anglican Missions in the Dominion of the Sultan of Turkey. His five years residence in Constantinople was an experiment which

was not repeated. But the lesson that he learned and impressed upon his youthful parishioner, that the Church began at Jerusalem and that Her history and theology could only be rightly understood from that point of view was never forgotten and often quoted by Bishop Grafton.

He never doubted the Catholicity of the Eastern Orthodox Churches under their four ancient Patriarchates of Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria and Constantinople. He deeply sympathised with the ideals and longings of the Old Catholics, and did what he could to encourage their efforts in their various national units. Not as another division in Catholic Christendom, but because he saw in that movement a prospect of ultimate Catholic Unity, by a reform movement in harmony with Eastern Orthodoxy. Soon after his Consecration as Bishop of Fond du Lac, an over ambitious Priest of that Diocese sought Consecration as Bishop of the Belgian Old Catholics, having two very small Mission congregations of that Rite under his care, subject to the Bishop of Fond du Lac. The correspondence that ensued with the Old Catholic authorities of Europe, and then with the Russian Bishop of Alaska, opened the door of intercourse with the Authorities of those two Communion that continued until his death.

As a prominent member of the House of Bishops, he was placed on the Commission on Ecclesiastical Relations. In nineteen hundred, being seventy years old, he asked for a Coadjutor. When one had been chosen, he planned to make his Consecration a visible demonstration of his life ideals. He sought also to indicate a present unity and to point the way for the accomplishment of a larger unity. Bishops of other branches of the Catholic Church were invited to take part in the Consecration service. The Russian Orthodox Bishop of Alaska occupied the Episcopal throne, though he did not join in the laying on of hands, nor did Bishop Kozlowski of the Polish National Church.

Negotiations between the Polish National Church and the Episcopal Church of America were continued until Bishop Kozlowski's death. It was hoped that a Concordat might be agreed upon by which the Missionary efforts would be harmonized and another schism prevented. A better understanding between the Anglican and Old Catholic Churches in Europe and America was a result of Bishop Grafton's prayers and labors.

But his declining years were cheered also by the vision of a mutual understanding and agreement between the Anglican and Eastern Orthodox Churches. Because of the large increase of Russians in the Eastern portion of the United States the Bishop of Alaska designated New York in place of San Francisco as his See City. The Russian Consul in New York was an enthusiastic admirer of the Anglican Church, and felt very strongly that the time had come for a better mutual understanding with the Orthodox Churches and especially Russia.

The Bishop of Fond du Lac was cordially invited to attend the dedication of the new Cathedral and many courtesies were exchanged. At the urgent desire of the Russian Consul, Bishop Grafton made plans for a visit to Petrograd and Moscow. This plan was carried out during the summer and autumn of 1903. In company with his Archdeacon and Mr. W. J. Birkbeck he visited Petrograd and Moscow, and Father John of Cronstadt. He was the guest of the Most Reverend Archbishop Vladimir Metropolitan of Moscow, and made a careful study of the customs and conditions of the Holy Orthodox Church of Russia.

He was greatly impressed by the devotion of the Russian people. Here was the Orthodox Catholic religion in all its simple natural, and unadulterated primitiveness. Here was a religion so well grounded that it could afford to be generous. It did not require narrow limits of conformity. Here was the atmosphere for Catholic reunion. It was free from the entanglements of sixteenth century Controversies. It required no acceptance of long drawn modern formulas, nor submission to a man or man made theories of government. What it did ask was agreement of faith in the primitive form of sound words and conclusions of undisputed Ecumenical Councils. Intercommunion is possible on those terms and from intercommunion will grow the fuller expressions of unity.

On his return to America he addressed the following letters to the Metropolitan of St. Petersburg and Ladoga.

“To His Eminence the Most Reverend Archbishop Antonius, Metropolitan of St. Petersburg and Ladoga:

“Accept, we pray you, our greeting in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, God of God, Light of Light, by whom and in whom alone Salvation is to be found and who ever liveth and reigneth,

the Head of the Mystical Body, the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.

“We have taken the liberty of sending you by the Right Reverend Bishop Tikhon, who has so endeared himself to us, and has most kindly undertaken this office of charity, a few theological books illustrative of our Church’s position and teaching.

“They may not add anything to your present extensive knowledge of our communion, but may convey to you our humble desire that the holy Orthodox faith so providentially preserved by you may become better understood by us, and that by God’s grace the two Churches may grow into greater accord and fellowship.

“You will in your goodness not despise our littleness, or some peculiarities that have come from our inherited Westernism, but will, we believe, make generous allowances for the defects and the evils to which a Puritan invasion in the past and our present environment in America have exposed us. The Catholic Revival is gradually developing within our communion and we ask for it your sympathy, encouragement, and prayers.

“Our Church has preserved the Apostolic Succession and the three holy orders of the ministry, and in her formularies has not departed, we humbly trust, from any essential or dogma of the Orthodox faith. There has been of late years a great revival of spiritual life in the whole Anglican Communion, a better comprehension of the Catholic and Orthodox theology, and a growing desire for a recognized fellowship especially with the venerable Churches of the East.

“May we venture to say to your Holiness that in the approachment of the two Communions, that portion of the Anglican Church which is in the United States stands the nearest to your venerated body. Politically the governments of the two countries, Russia and the United States, have always maintained most happy relations, and our Church here in America is unlike the Church in England, in being free from any State control, and so free to act in its recovery of Catholicity and its intercourse with other Churches. The Thirty-nine Articles do not form a portion of our Prayer Book, though bound up with it, and subscription to them is not required

by us as it is in England. Our Liturgy and Eucharist differs from that in the English Book in that the doctrines of the Priesthood, Altar, and Sacrifice are more explicitly and fully stated. Our Canon for the Consecration of the Holy Elements is far more full, with a distinct offering and presentation of the Holy Sacrifice, and has the formal Invocation of the Holy Ghost.

“We use for the most part leavened bread in the Holy Eucharist, though unleavened wafers are allowed. It has been an almost universal custom with us to mingle a little water with the wine before the consecration of the elements. When some years ago an effort was made by some to forbid the use of incense, our Church refused to pass any prohibitory canon. We have, however, to acknowledge that this scriptural and evangelical symbol is as yet but very partially used among us. In Baptism immersion is provided for by our rubrics, but pouring, not sprinkling, is allowed, which is usually done three times, one at the mention of each name of the Blessed Trinity. We hold that there is but one *Ἀρχή* in the Godhead, and that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father as the One Eternal Source and Fountain of Life, through the Son. While holding this faith as one, we believe, with yourselves, there seems to be a growing feeling that the Filioque Clause, which, without Ecumenical authority, was added to the Creed, should be omitted.

“Along with yourselves we repudiate the Papal Supremacy and Rome’s modern dogmas of the Papal Infallibility and the Immaculate Conception. We reject the Romish doctrine of Purgatory and the relief of the souls of the faithful by the application of the superabundant merits of the Saints through the Papal system of Indulgences. We venerate Mary, the ever Virgin and ever Blessed Mother of God, but do not hold with Roman doctors that she is the Neck of the Mystical Body of Christ and that all graces must pass to us from Christ the Head through her. We accept all that the recognized Ecumenical Councils of the Church have decreed, and as the canon of the English Church requires, hold that the Holy Scriptures should be expounded in conformity with the teachings of the ancient Fathers.

“Yet we have to confess that our Church is not all that the Divine Master would have it be, and the cruel marks inflicted by the stripes of past ages can be seen upon her. Like one recovering from a long illness and just regaining strength, we turn to the East, and stretch out our hands and ask for sympathy and counsel and Christian fellowship.

“The future of the world’s progress lies chiefly with the Slavonic and the English speaking peoples. The progressive colonizing work of the Latin race is mostly done. The Latin Church can no longer dominate the West. Recognition and established fellowship between the Eastern and the Anglican Communions, as it would do so much towards forwarding Christ’s Kingdom, is that for which we earnestly pray, and make known in our great Master’s Name our desires unto you.

“Asking ever your remembrance at the Holy Altar, with our profound esteem and reverence in Christ,

“Your most humble servant in the Lord,

C. C. Fond du Lac.”

“To His Eminence the Most Reverend Antonius, Metropolitan of St. Petersburg and Ladoga, Presiding Member of the Most Holy Governing Synod of Russia and Archimandrite of the Lavra of St. Alexander Nevski:

“It is with deep respect and fraternal charity we address you and through you the Most Holy Synod of the Orthodox Russian Church. The Church in the United States of America has established a Commission, consisting of nine Bishops together with a number of priests and others of learning and influence, on Ecclesiastical Relations. We hereby transmit to you a letter from the Right Reverend the Bishop of Central New York, who is its presiding officer, certifying our membership of the Commission, and we have received a formal request from its secretary to prepare a report after conference with yourselves on the relation between the two communions.

“Together with these we are honoured in being the bearer of a letter from our venerable Primate, the Right Reverend Dr. Clark, the Bishop of Rhode Island, who was the oldest living Bishop in Christendom, and who, since we set out on our journey, has passed to his rest; and who bade us communicate to you his brotherly greetings in our Lord and the desire of

his heart that as the Church is one in union with her divine Head, so unity may find an increasing expression in Christian recognition and fellowship.

"There seems to be, if we mistake not, a growing desire among Christians in these latter days, now that the multiform oppositions of Satan, and the foretold sign of the Son of Man (the cross of persecution) are becoming more manifest, together with an increasing spirituality in the Church (like the promised budding of the fig tree), for Christians everywhere, under the promptings of the Holy Spirit, to draw together, and to beckon to their partners in the other ships to come to their aid. And it is to the ancient and venerated Churches of the East, so invulnerable in their inherited orthodoxy, so clear in their conception of the Church as a spiritual organism of which Christ is the everliving and ever present Head, that we of the farther West naturally turn. We turn to the East and look towards Jerusalem with the eyes of children towards a mother.

"Turning to those things on which we are agreed, we may say that both communions regard the Church as a Divine Society founded by Christ Himself, which is visible in so far as it is upon Earth and invisible in so far as it is in Heaven. Both alike regard it as one spiritual organism of which the Incarnate Son of God is the Head and the Holy Spirit is the indwelling Light and Life. And our mutual conception of this Church is that it is one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic.

"Both agree that the Church is a race of kings and priests but while all Christians partake of the priesthood, they are not all pastors. We agree that the hierarchy consists of Bishops, priests, and deacons, and that these ministers succeed by an ordination from the Apostles.

"We concur in holding that the Church hath authority in controversies of faith. We alike believe that the Holy Spirit dwells within the Church, certifying its utterance by the agreement of the whole Body. We believe the Holy Spirit guides the Church into all Truth by bringing to its remembrance all and whatsoever the Lord revealed, and enabling it to preserve the faith once delivered to the saints.

"Both Churches regard as Holy Scripture those books of which there was never any doubt in the Church, and hold the Holy Scriptures to be the Word of God. We believe that the

Church is limited in her definitions to the original *Depositum Fidei*, which is contained in Holy Scripture as it is received and interpreted by the Church, which is the witness and keeper of Holy Writ. Of what is and what is not contained in Scripture, the Church is the final and authoritative judge. We thus agree in professing the faith, which we alike hold, to be a sacred deposit to which nothing can be added and from which nothing can be taken away.

“We have thus as points of agreement the same belief concerning the Church, the priesthood, and our conception of the sacraments as channels of grace, and the necessity of our union with Christ by a living, loving faith is like your own.

“Together we condemn the followings errors of the Church of Rome:

“We reject the Papal monarchy, with its claims to a supreme pontificate separate from the priesthood as possessed independently or inherently of legislative, judicial and executive power, as being the Head of the Church, the Vicar of Christ, the Centre of Unity, the source of all jurisdiction.

“We reject the additions made to the Creed by Pope Pius IV and the more modern dogmas of the Papal Infallibility and the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

“We alike repudiate the Roman doctrine of a purgatory of satisfaction, and of a treasury of saintly merits dispensable by the Roman Pontiff, and of indulgences.

“We both reject in our common belief in the Communion of Saints, the Latin idea of servitude which would make us not only desire and ask for their prayers and offer on their behalf, but suppliantly invoke them for grace or mercy or salvation.

“We both reject all the rationalising processes of the Latins concerning the grace of God and the sacraments, and especially their audacious reasonings concerning the Blessed Sacrament of the Body and Blood of the Lord. And we both affirm that it is the same carnal rationalising, the same reliance on natural reason, which causes dogmas to be added in Rome and taken away in Geneva, and which by confounding Faith and opinion has destroyed the assurance of the Faith both among the Latins and Protestants.

“Turning now to matters requiring explanation, one probably is in the non-use by us of the term Transsubstantiation. Let us state what our doctrine is and why we do not use this term.

“The Anglican Church has had a double contest, one in the deliverance of herself from Latinism and the other from Protestantism. At the time of the Reformation in the sixteenth century there was a popular belief known then as the Romish doctrine of transsubstantiation, which held that the elements at the time of consecration were so physically changed that they ceased to exist and remained in appearance only. This the Reformers rejected on the ground that it overthrew the nature of a sacrament, which must consist of two parts. When on the other hand Protestantism denied the reality of the Presence of our Lord’s Body and Blood, then, in the seventeenth century, the Anglican Church made further and more explicit statement of her doctrine and embodied it in her official Catechism. She then declared that the outward part or *Sign* was bread and wine, but that the inward part or *Thing* was the Body and Blood of the Lord. She moreover stated that the grace or benefit the faithful received was the strengthening and refreshing of their souls. By making these distinctions between the Sign, the Thing, and the Grace, the Church condemned the subjective theory of Protestantism. For we are not taught by our Catechism that the outward sign or form is the eating or drinking of the elements, but that the outward part or sign is the bread and wine; and we do not say that the inward part is the *reception* of the Body and Blood of Christ, but that the inward part or thing *is* the Body and Blood of the Lord.

“This doctrine was protected in the Articles of Religion. For though never regarded as a Confession of Faith, and the one of General Councils (the 21st), having been omitted in America, and signature to them not being by us required, yet they may be referred to in explanation of the doctrine contained in the Catechism, which is of universal obligation. Thus it is said in Article 28 that the Body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. Here the objectivity of the presence of Christ’s Body in the Sacrament as occasioned by the consecration is asserted, for the

Body to be given and taken must be there before it is received. And as to the heavenly and spiritual manner, we read in Aquinas, Summa III 75, that the Body of Christ is not in the Sacrament in the manner in which a body is in a place, but in a certain spiritual manner which is proper to this Sacrament. In heaven, It (the Body of Christ) exists after the manner of a Body, but in the Sacrament It does not exist after the manner of a body (in that it does not occupy space), but in a spiritual manner (*De Eucharistica*, V).

“In Art. 28 we read that the means whereby the Body of Christ is received and eaten is faith. It does not say made present by faith, nor given by faith, but received and eaten by faith. Here, too, our Reformers followed Aquinas, who says: ‘In order to understand the excellency and heavenly dignity of this sacrament, it is to be noted that although all the sacraments of the Church have their effect by the faith of the Passion of Christ, and also from faith and through faith profit only the faithful unto salvation, this is nevertheless to be said *most especially* of the Sacrament of Faith.’

“Our 29th Article states that the wicked eat not the Body of Christ; and the wicked who receive the Sacrament are not thereby made partakers of Christ. The Article in its Latin form uses *accipere* and *sumere* for receiving, *percipere* for the interior eating or manducation of the Lord’s Body. It thus says that they, the wicked, eat and yet they do not eat. They eat because they receive the sacrament, nevertheless they eat not because they do not *percipere*, partake of Christ.

“Our Church believes in a change or μεταβολή, effected by the consecration. Before that act the elements are simply bread and wine; after that they are what our Lord’s holy Word declared them to be, His Body and Blood. This change, effected by the power of the Holy Ghost, is a divine mystery. We do not like the Latins dogmatise about it. As the term transubstantiation, as used in the West, is popularly understood as involving the Aristotelian distinction between substance and accidents, we do not use it. We believe your great and saintly theologian Philaret eliminated these terms from translations prepared by him of the Council of Bethlehem. If you could explain to us that your use of the term does not involve as a

dogmatic statement the Tridentine exposition, we see no reason why we should not be in accord.

“Another subject for explanation concerns the saints. We believe as well as yourselves in the Communion of Saints. We recognize the fact that the Church is a living spiritual organism and that a constant stream of prayer flows from us to those now with the Lord in glory and from them to us. We know that they without us are not made perfect, but that their graces here, and their glory there, were obtained by the united prayers of the Church past, present and future . . . prayers which were foreseen, or rather always present in the sight of the God. And we believe that we also benefit by the prayers which they offered while on earth and still offer in heaven. We do not object to asking God to accept their prayer for us, nor to what is called an oblique invocation, and since, if they know our prayers at all, it is by a revelation of God, it would seem that there is no doctrinal difference between direct and indirect invocation. We, however, agree not with the doctrine of the Romans which sets up the relation of patron and client between those who are brethren, and introduces the idea of servitude between the children of a common Father. We desire the prayers of all saints, not as omnipotent or omnipresent, or as in themselves sources of grace or virtue, but as worshipping together with us in the Church of God. We reverence profoundly above all the saints the Ever Blessed Virgin, the Mother of God, but are shocked at the position assigned her by Roman theologians as the Neck of the Mystical Body through whom, from the Head, all grace must pass.

“What we desire explanation from our Eastern Brethren is, the prayer in their offices, Most Holy Mother of God, save us. Have we received the correct interpretation of it when we are told the use of the word ‘save’ is similar in its theological meaning to the expression of St. Paul when he said he became all things to all men that he might *save* some? Does it mean with you, that the Blessed Ever Virgin was an instrument or minister of the Incarnation and the second Eve, as St. Justin and St. Irenaeus have written? Do you not with us repudiate the Latin idea that she is a co-Redemptress? Afraid as we are of modern Romanism, will you, out of your orthodoxy, not allay our people’s fears?

“Concerning the number of the divine mysteries it does not appear to us that there is any essential difference between the Churches. The Anglican Church holds that there are two which are generally necessary to salvation, and five other ‘commonly called sacraments’. It is to be observed that the word ‘generally’ in the Catechism, which is written in Elizabethan English, does not mean ‘commonly’ as is now the use, but ‘universally’ as it is used in our English Old Testament. As being ‘means of grace’ the above seven belong to the same category. But we make a distinction and divide them as your theological writer Komiakoff did. There are Two which belong to the Church considered in relation to Christ and the Church’s eternal being, and others as concerned with the Church on earth in its temporal and militant condition. The matter and form of the Two were ordained by Christ and are unalterable; the matter and form of the others are subject to the regulation of the Church. The anointing of the sick has fallen largely into disuse among us, partly, we believe, from a rejection of the Roman belief and practice that it was to be used chiefly as a preparation for death. But we have a prescribed office for the sick. We administer Confirmation, following the Apostolic custom of laying on of hands of the Bishop only, while you allow the priest to minister with chrism blest by the Bishop. We believe the grace conveyed by either mode is the same.

“The greater barrier perhaps between us is our use of the *Filioque* in the creed. This we inherited through our connection with Western Christendom. May God in His great mercy and love so enlighten us that this cause of division may be removed. It is certainly to be admitted as a great satisfaction that there is between us no difference in doctrine. We both believe in but one *ἀρχή* in the Blessed Trinity. We both deny that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Son in the same manner in which He proceeds from the Father. We, of the Anglican Church, accept the doctrine of St. John Damascene. If then we believe the same Faith, why may we not come to some agreement? We see, or think we do, how impossible it would be for the Orthodox Eastern Church to alter its expression of the Faith. To do so would involve an acknowledgment of the Papal Supremacy and its right to make an addition to the creed. We on the other hand have broken with

the Papacy, and our retaining it involves no such consequence. The great difficulty with us is this: If we should omit it, many of our people might say we were tampering with the creed, and so revolt from the Church, and be led to Rome. While some might be willing to make this change, probably the majority would not, for they would so fear the result that it might tear our Church asunder. If we placed in our Prayer Book a note with the creed that the *Filioque* was not part of the original, or had not received ecumenical assent, might not the difficulty be removed?

“Finally we venture to think that the number of the Councils presents not so difficult a matter for agreement as it may seem. The only question arises in respect to the seventh or the second of Nice, and it is not concerning the canons but the doctrinal decrees. It is well known that the Council enjoined that supreme self-surrendering worship, *Latria* should be given to God only; that reverence and honour (*τιμητικὴ προσκύνησις*) should be paid to holy persons and things. Owing, it is believed, to a mistranslation, the Western Synod of Frankfort rejected the Council's decrees, supposing that it taught that the same divine worship should be given to sacred things as to the Holy Trinity. However this may be, the West, England included, practically acted upon it. We gather into the spiritual organism of the Church persons and things, and set them apart from all common and secular purposes and consecrate and ordain them to holy uses. Unlike Protestants who simply ‘open’, as they term it, their religious buildings, we formally and with Episcopal functions consecrate and hallow them, and treat them by outward acts, with reverence. We bless our fonts, instruments of music, holy vessels, vestments, and altars. We place the representation of the saints in our churches, on our walls, in our windows. We bow towards the Altar, kiss the Word of God, and in many ways give due reverence to holy persons and heavenly things.

“The Church of England thus practically adopted the teaching of the seventh council, and though some writers have spoken of four or of six synods, yet this one has not by any formal and synodical action of our Church been rejected. Seeing that the teaching of the Council is accepted and acted upon, we must not let its academical aspect separate us.

“Thus have we set forth briefly our points of agreement and those where explanation seems desirable. The cause of union is that of the Great Head of the Church, and is all too holy not to secure our largest charity and persistent endeavour. We pray you that it may not be jeopardized or impaired by your brother’s weakness or incapacity. Invoking to our assistance the intercessions of the whole Church in Heaven and in earth, we also pray our Blessed Lord to gather us all into His own sanctifying Light and Life, and as He made us One in Himself, so unite us in the outward manifestation of mutual recognition and fellowship, that the world may believe that He hath sent us.

“Extending to you our loving and humble salutations in Him, with our profound and sincere devotions,

“We remain, Your Brother and Servant in Christ.

C. C. Fond du Lac.”

Bishop Grafton was unfaltering in his devotion to the Catholic Church. He gave his life and means willingly to the Cause, and died a poor man, “faithful unto death”. He entered into life August 30, 1912. May he rest in peace, and his prayers be effectual for the continued progress of union in the Catholic Church.

Fond du Lac.

B. TALBOT ROGERS.

Warden of Grafton Hall. — Canon of St. Paul’s Cathedral.
