

## Book Reviews

Judith Pinnington

**Anglicans and Orthodox**

***Unity and Subversion 1559 - 1725***

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Cultural differences between English people and those who belong to the Greek and Russian Orthodox churches are such that Anglicans are far more likely to look west than to look east when they begin to get serious about the prospects of Christian unity.

However, in the period following the Reformation in the 16th century Anglicans of the 'high church' tradition took a great interest in Orthodoxy. Many thinking people of that period regarded the Orthodox churches as representing a form of 'non Papal Catholicism', and therefore potentially having much in common with Anglicans.

This book gives a detailed account of the ways in which Anglicans and Orthodox reached out towards one another during the period under consideration. It is presented in a very readable style, and we are given many insights into the theology and ways of worship of the period.

The author is herself an Orthodox believer, and she has made a study of Anglicanism. She highlights the measure of agreement, but she does not underestimate the difficulties along the path. The general trend of the book illustrates that there was far more interest in the subject on the Anglican side than on that of the Orthodox. Certainly the Nonjurors (who were unable in conscience to take the oath of allegiance to William and Mary) had hoped that some form of inter-communion with the Greek Church could have been allowed, but their longings never found acceptance.

The book points out that the Orthodox found the absence of monasteries in the Church of England during the period difficult to comprehend. The differences in spirituality are noted, as also the disparity in Eucharistic doctrine, though Anglicans of the period were themselves divided as to the nature of the 'real presence' of Christ in the Sacrament (as they continue to be!).

There are several intriguing pieces of information in the book, ranging from the fact that it was a seventeenth century Archbishop of Smyrna who introduced the habit of coffee drinking into Oxford when he was studying at Balliol College, to the practice of confession and absolution in the Greek Church, where apparently during the period 'labouring and common people' were expected to confess once annually, while those with 'leisure and convenience of living' should confess four times in the year. One wonders what Saint Francis would have made of that!

We are told that during the seventeenth century there is no evidence of any effort to enlighten Anglicans on the beliefs and practices of the Orthodox. Even today, there is far too much ignorance on the part of most of us. Judith Pinnington's book will enable us to redress the balance.

***Martin SSF***