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Excerpt
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THE SELECTED ORATIONS

ISAIAE uerba repetamus: Quam pulchri super montes pedes praedicantis bonum.¹ ad animum uero corpusque recreandum quo melius? ibat olim in Alpes eo consilio hic uir; sed ut aliena corpora alienosque recrearet animos, in foro ac plebe uersatus illic officium primo medici tum sacerdotis exercet, fitque sapiens non tam theologiae disciplina institutus quam ipsius occurso cultuque Dei.

uitam exul inter exules primo apud Parisios tum post bellum Londini quanto ab illis sui desiderio comitatus egit, quanto a se ipso patriae, sed quanta fortuna nostra! qui linguam nostratam ut munus hic expleret e libris sacris sub rege Iacobo uersis plerumque didicisse dicitur; unde disserenti interdum lepos antiquus aliquis et nerui. at quod bonum praedicat? Dei amorem praecipue, qualem Moses acceptis mandatis omni Israheli praecepit,² quem ex usu studioque, oppositis quos alloquatur uel uocem illam dulcem grauem certam procul e conspectu audientibus, gregi primum suo, mox omnium qui Christo credunt, tum denique maiori illi suorum ex qua est ortus ipse nationi commendat suadet praedicat. illi ecclesiae, per paene totam huius uitam oppressae et corruptae, tamen com meatu et libellis (iam aperte illic magnaue copia circummissis) meditandi precandique sustinuit morem, communionem seruauit, ardorem et probitatem suam praestitit.

apparet tandem et in patria non esse sine honore prophetam³, gratiasque agamus oportet si non nobis modo sed etiam multis aliis tanto bono et adiumento hoc huius est hospitium.

uirum Dei praesento uobis in Eoque exercitatissimum, Russorum Ecclesiae Orthodoxae et Patriarchalis in Britanniiis Caput, Metropolitanum Reuerendissimum

ANTONIUM DE SOUROZH

¹ Isaiah 52.7.

² Deuteronomy 6.5.

³ Matthew 13.57.

IN *the words of Isaiah: How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings. For restoration of body and soul mountains are very good; so this man once trod the Alps. But for restoration of other men's bodies and souls he strode among the people, first as a doctor and then as a priest; his wisdom comes not from a training in theology but rather from personal encounter with God in service and worship.*

He has passed his life in exile and among exiles, first in Paris and after the war in London; the loss of him in Paris, and his own loss of country, has been our good fortune. When he learnt English in order to work here, he learnt it, so the story goes, largely from King James's Bible. Hence the occasional old-world charm of his speech, and some of its strength. What then are his good tidings? In chief the love of God, as Moses enjoined upon all Israel when he told them the ten commandments: this is what, out of his experience and study, he has urged upon his congregations, whether speaking face to face or broadcasting in that deep, sure, honeyed voice with powerful benevolence, preaching first to his own flock, then to a wider audience in Britain, and finally to that greater congregation of his own fellow Russians. For almost all his life the Russian church has been persecuted and corrupted, but he has visited it, his books circulate in the country in great quantity now, and he has upheld his church's tradition of prayer and meditation, remaining in communion with it and bestowing upon it his own devout integrity.

So now the prophet is not without honour even in his own country, and we must give thanks that his sojourn here has been so precious and helpful not only to us but to so many others as well.

I present to you a man of God, well practised in Him, head of the Russian Orthodox Patriarchal Church in Great Britain and Ireland, the Most Reverend Metropolitan

ANTHONY OF SOUROZH

‘**F**ABULA cum occuparis, omnino non est fabula sed rerum quasi indigesta moles; tantum posthac uel similis fabulae uidetur res esse, tum cum audienti seu tibi narras siue aliis.’ multa bene scribit haec femina et (ut audiuitis) de scribendo quoque bene scribit quippe artis eius scientissima. cuius libros si legis mox intelleges et feminam scribere, non uirum, et Canadensem eam esse. ista tamen si ne uerbum quidem sed uitam modo legisses cognoscere poteras; sin a libris duxisses, melius aestimares utrum magis ualeat. sunt enim quae sexum eius urgeant; praestare mihi uidetur quod puella sex mensis quotannis ab urbe et ludo procul inter siluas lacusque patriae aestiuabat.

uox est huius tamquam e deserto clamantis, omnium patrona quibus est aut nulla aut summissa uox, modo feminarum et liberorum, modo uirorum si forte spernuntur, uel animalium – quorum ‘erat Carolus quidam, sed cantherius is quidem, et quamuis bonus auditor idemque solacium magnum, consilio egenti mihi paulum modo profuit’ – uel etiam rerum inanimarum, lapidum uirgultorum caeli aquae et si quid sub aqua latet; quae omnia pari studio curaque commota spectat, narrat, more tesserarum aequae ponit in opus. ut autem ea quae quis sermone plebeio mittat aure notat acutissima, ita apertissima mente intellegit quae quem nescio an puderet se fateri in animo habere. quae optime reddit cum facit carmina.

si quod praedicaret haberet, praeconem ait se conducturam; potius inuentione et narratione adeo praecellit ut digna sit quae in numero Homeridarum habeatur.

praesento uobis carminum fabularum creatricem potentissimam,

MARGARET ATWOOD

‘WHEN you are in the middle of a story, it isn’t a story at all, but only a confusion. . . It’s only afterwards that it becomes anything like a story at all – when you are telling it, to yourself or someone else.’ Margaret Atwood is a fine and prolific writer, and on the topic of writing too (as you have heard) she writes as an expert in the craft. Read her books, and you will soon divine that it is a woman writing, not a man, and also that she hails from Canada. You could have discovered that from blurb and dustcover; got from inside her books, however, it would help you realise which fact matters more. She has been claimed by feminists; more notable in my view is her upbringing, in which she spent half the year far from city and school up country, summering among the trees and lakes of the north.

Hers is a voice as it were from a wilderness, a voice for all those who have little or none of their own. Sometimes she speaks for women and for children, sometimes for men of low esteem; sometimes she speaks for animals – ‘there was Charley, but he was a horse, and although a good listener and a comfort, of not much avail when I needed advice’ – or even for things inanimate, sticks and stones, sky and water, and for things lurking in water. Compassionate, dispassionate, she gazes at them all with an equal care, reports them, and lays them levelly in the mosaic of her text. She has a shrewd ear for the cadences of ordinary conversation; she also understands with a penetrating honesty those thoughts one might well be embarrassed to acknowledge. And all these things she does best in her poetry.

‘If I had a message,’ she says, ‘I would rent a billboard.’ Her command of story and language allows us, however, to count her among Homer’s children.

I present to you

MARGARET ATWOOD,
maker of poems and stories

AGRUM uos uelim in animo fingere, aequum et planum et perti-
 carum in agmine sex iugerum quadrato erectarum duo milibus
 quadraginta octo satum; quarum inter summas aeris Cyprii fila ita
 internecti ut proximis suis quaque sic coniuncta spectet in stellas nouicium
 rete quoddam, quo ui electrica immissa radii stellarum uastissimum per
 aethera scintillantes accipi possint.

inter eos qui operam curamque quid rete reperiret adhibebant haec est
 femina, tum tiro modo in rebus perquirendis sed acuta et perspicaci
 mente. nam plurima ex aethere nuntia accipiebantur sed breuissima:
 nuntium enim suum cuique stellae tantum per septingentesimam uicesi-
 mam partem diei, dum rotatur orbis terrarum, tempus erat referre.
 quarum in turba radiare uidentur quaedam paruo impetu sed temporis
 interuallis adeo consimilibus inter sese ut uix natura fieri possit: nam radii
 cum *rectum per inane feruntur* particulis aeris obiectis *spatio depellere paulum*
 coguntur: hinc illud *exiguum clinamen principiorum*¹ uel astrorum mos
 micandi. natura nihilominus fieri mox paret, stellarumque genus aliud
 compertum habemus cui nomen uenarum impULSARum percussus
 dedit.

tale inuentum non solet unus homo exquirere et elaborare, sed haec una
 uidit, uisoque tam sedulo institit (aliasque tris interim stellas eius generis
 inuenerat) ut inter magos eos habenda sit, qui ‘uidentes stellam, gauisi
 sunt, gaudio magno ualde.’ nunc physices in ea est uniuersitate professor
 quae ‘Aperta’ nuncupatur: ibi uero apte inter omnis instituendum id curat
 et prouidet quod recte dicatur rete doctrinae.

praesento uobis Doctorem in Philosophia, Aulae Nouae Sociam
 honoris causa adscitam,

SUSANNAM JOCELYN BELL BURNELL

¹ Lucretius II 217, 219 and 292.

IMAGINE *if you will a field, level and flat and planted with 2,048 upright posts in a square of four acres. The tops of the posts are linked by thin copper wire so that when each is connected to its immediate neighbour there is a sort of net gazing up at the stars; when it is electrified, the rays of those stars can be received as they twinkle their way through the vastnesses of space.*

One of those concerned with the building of the telescope and with examining its revelations was this woman, a mere research student at the time, but a student blessed with an unusually sharp-eyed and pertinacious curiosity. The messages came in great quantity, but also with great brevity, the time for a star to send its news being limited by the rotation of the earth to two minutes each day.

Amid the throng of information, certain stars of faint impulse were seen to be sending so regular a radio message that it scarcely seemed natural (as rays travel through space they meet occasional clouds of atmosphere which refract their course; hence a slight swerve of their substance, as Lucretius once put it – the well known phenomenon of twinkling). Natural it was, however, as soon became clear; and now we recognize another sort of star, named by metaphor from the human body a pulsar.

Such discoveries are not the work of single individuals, but this is the individual who noticed that pulse. Once she had seen it she pursued it so diligently, finding three more pulsars in the meantime, that she belongs with the Wise Men who ‘seeing the star rejoiced with exceeding great joy.’ Now she is Professor of Physics at the Open University; you may feel that she is particularly well placed to care for something as vital in that context as a learning network.

I present to you

SUSAN JOCELYN BELL BURNELL, PH.D.,

Honorary Fellow of New Hall

HENRICO Regi uitium nocebat
 hoc, uti partis redimiculorum
 manderet. tandem uorat illa quae se
 complicant nodis stomacho malignis.
 haud mora: illustres medici uocantur
 qui rata mercede, Sed huius, aiunt,
 nulla fit morbi medicina: morti
 Henricus iam iam dabitur. parentes
 ad torum stabant subitae dolore
 sortis afflicti

et felis, ut rem depinxit hic uir, cuius in ea parte uoltus quam super stragulum eleuatam uideas aspectus eius est qui quid fiat non omnino intellegat sed ualde condolescat.

non uni Quinctio nostro haec ars famae fuit – nonne innotuit Ernestus ille pastor, et Iohannes depictor Aliciae (quae Quid sine tabulis, inquit, ualet liber?), et, si cui libellus occurrit Anicula uecta rotis inscriptus, Ericaeus ille Passerinus? – sed huic primo cognomen Liberorum Laureatus datus est. primas tabulas adulescentulus edidit, hortante ea quae Latinam docebat; iam libros CCL amplius ornauit et suos et alienos, quorum notissimus Roaldus ille Hyperboreus: is olim, uiso quod hic pinxerat, uerba in aptiora mutauit. num quem fugit immanis ille sed comis gigas? nuper rogatus hic uir sene ipso in delineando esset usus, risu negauit (nam non quem imitetur ante oculos uelle: magis referre ut id exprimat quod mentis acie percipiatur); sed risu haud dissimili senes saepe facit ut ridere uideantur.

Henrico morituro permisit Hilarius extrema uerba; potius haec dixerit:

Vos, amici, a me moneamini, nil
 deesse contento puero nisi una
 prandia et ientacula Quinctiumque.

praesento uobis pictorem et coloratorem, Excellentissimo Ordini Imperi Britannici adscriptum, Magistrum in Artibus, Collegi Downingiani honoris causa Socium,

QUENTIN SAXBY BLAKE

THE *chief defect of Henry King*
Was chewing little bits of string.
At last he swallowed some which tied
Itself in ugly knots inside.
Physicians of the utmost fame
Were called at once; but when they came
They answered, as they took their fees,
'There is no cure for this disease.
Henry will very soon be dead'.
His parents stood about his bed
Lamenting his untimely death

together with the cat, on whose face, or on as much of it as is depicted peering over the bedspread by this man, may be seen the look of someone who doesn't entirely understand the situation but does share the concern.

Quentin Blake is not the first to win fame as an illustrator of children's books. E. H. Shepard will surely be known, and John Tenniel, illustrator of Alice (it was Alice who said, 'What's the use of a book without pictures?'), and if you know this man's book Mrs Armitage on Wheels, Heath Robinson may also come to mind. But he is the first ever Children's Laureate. He had his first work accepted when he was a boy (he was encouraged to submit by his Latin teacher); he now has over 250 titles to his name, some his own and some produced in collaboration, most notably with Roald Dahl, who once changed his text to fit the illustration offered. You remember the BFG? The illustrator was recently asked whether he used himself as the model in creating the giant. He smiled, and said no (he never does draw from life, saying it is more important to capture the balance between what is seen and what is imagined); but a smile much like his may be seen on many of his avuncular gentlemen.

Hilaire Belloc allowed Master Henry some dying words. Here is an alternative version:

O my friends, be warned by me
That breakfast, dinner, lunch, and Blake
Are all the happy child should take.

I present to you

QUENTIN SAXBY BLAKE, O.B.E., M.A.,
Honorary Fellow of Downing College, Artist and Illustrator

‘**I**MPERIUM ciuile, quantouis magis si e ciuium uoluntate pendeat placere uideatur, non tamen quale sit iure gentium praescriptum est. quod utinam ne gentium non intersit: immo, semper magis interest, sed non adhuc ea condicione ut legibus certis sanciat; iuris potius est iamdiu gentium ut ne quis cuius immutandi causa hostis intercedat.’ uerbis illis, quae paene quinquaginta abhinc annis post studia apud nos confecta conscripsit hic uir, numquid inesse recentioris significationis auditis?

uirum habemus ratione acuta, accurato sermone, qui diu ciuium suorum minister factus (a peregrinis erat olim) pro gentium omnium salute uitam egit. XVI annos cohorti praeerat cui curae res de ui diffissis atomis soluta datur; quo tempore celabant Babylonii quantum ad uim illam armis exercendam processissent. hunc deceptum se confessum postea idcirco fide minus dignum esse censuere quidam. grauissimum tamen is aestimat ut id quod est referatur:

si cedas humilis, inquit, multis potes esse saluti.

uir probitatis tam praecipuae est ut relictis officiis publicis, munus uelut Cincinnatus ab aratro adductus acceperit quo quis certior fieret quid Babylonii in armamentariis haberent. suscepto munere instantibus his illis resistentibus rursus iterumque abesse quod inueniret inuenit, idque hi credere illi confirmare nolebant. has res et sermonibus apud nos habitis et libro de armis illis priuandis conscripto non sine dolore quodam cum sale coniuncto exposuit: colloquia sua rogatus hinc clanculum audirent, Vtinam exactius, ait, audiuisent. paucis mensibus amplius datis magnam uitari posse caedem arbitratur.

praesento uobis Doctorem in Philosophia, cohortibus uariis pro gentibus in UNum conuocatis quo certiores de ui et armis parandis fierent praefectum, Aulae Sanctae Trinitatis alumnum,

HANS MARTIN BLIX