

# Renowned Spiritual Luminaries

In the region of Palestine, the highest event took place, which sealed the spiritual life of the world, the birth of the Godman which was bound to radically influence mankind, demolishing every racial, national, communal, language or other distinction. The godly trodden places of Palestine and Jerusalem constitute an expression of this highest event and centres of pilgrimage, Christian worship and religious piety and devotion. Holy Churches were built in every area with their mission the guarding and maintenance of the holy shrines, with the Hierarchy and the crew of the Patriarchate, the clergy and the monastics being alert guards against vandalism and profane attitudes of foreigners.

Already from the 4<sup>th</sup> century the Order of the "Important" monks continues, whose mission was the immediate resolution of problems (conflicts) which occurred either due to the flocking of pilgrims or events due to outside factors. Even so the liturgical orientation of the Patriarchate aimed at the complete development of the sacred shrines for the spiritual resurrection of the Christian world.

From the previously mentioned orders came out important spiritual personalities who struggled for the preservation and passing on the illumination of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and contributed the most to the spiritual guidance of the Christians. The 4th century is dominated by the person of Archbishop of Jerusalem, Kyril, who with his famous Catechisms would prepare the faithful to receive the sacred mystery of baptism. The 5th century is dominated by the person of the Patriarch of Jerusalem Juvenalios who exercised great influence on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Synods.

The God trodden places formed, as was expected, the starting point of the ascetics of whom important personalities proved

as models of monastic life and at the same time of the struggle for the consolidation of Orthodoxy and Christian spirituality. The 6<sup>th</sup> century is dominated by the ascetic personalities of the Saints Savva the Sanctified and Kyrill of Skythopolis as well as of Leontios of Byzantium, great theologian of the period, to whom the Emperor Justinian 1<sup>st</sup>, showed great respect and trust, relating them as galloping horses of his full ecclesiastic position and policy.

Bright prototype of the sybaritic accord and union between the ascetic theory and the struggles for the consolidation of Orthodoxy, of the faith, was the great Patriarch of Jerusalem Sophronios. His restless spirit and the dedication of his life to monasticism and the deaconizing of Orthodoxy, of the Church, were grounds for his election to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Besides as a simple monk with unshakable Christian faith he disapproved the heresy of Monothelitism and Monoenergism to the Patriarchs of Constantinople, Sergios and of Alexandria, Kyros. These important spiritual luminary leaders of the Holy Lands with their unswaying spiritual and theological basis, created a strong and firm foundation, upon which she added her own stone for the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Hagiotaphitic Brotherhood (Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre) during the difficult periods of the Arab rule, as well as of the Crusaders and the Turkish rule in the area of Palestine. The Hagiotaphitic Brotherhood succeeded in keeping intact the holy shrines, from the cave at Bethlehem to Golgotha and the Empty Tomb. Even today the Hagiotaphitic Brotherhood and the Patriarchate of Jerusalem confront numerous dangers – hostile attitudes, whose aim is the disruption of the unity of Orthodoxy and of the faith.