

[Canon Henry Parry Liddon](#) (1829-90) was a celebrated preacher (see the [many books of his collected sermons](#) as well as [his papers/correspondence held at Lambeth Palace Library](#)) and Tractarian apologist, who defended the Oxford Movement in the face of liberal opposition that developed in the aftermath of John Henry Newman's conversion to Catholicism in 1845.

A former vice principal of Cuddesdon theological college (1854-59), [Vice Principal of St Edmund Hall \(1859-62\)](#) and Dean Ireland's Professor of the Exegesis of Holy Scripture at Oxford from 1870, Liddon had supported the founding of the Eastern Church Association in 1864 and in the summer of 1867 he travelled to Russia (St Petersburg, Moscow and Nizhny Novgorod) hoping to strengthen ties between the Church of England and the Russian Orthodox Church, carrying with him letters of introduction to several Russian prelates.

Of interest is his chosen travelling companion, a colleague (both held Fellowships at Christ Church, Oxford) and friend since 1850, Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, an Anglican deacon and lecturer of mathematics better known as the author, [Lewis Carroll](#).

Lewis Carroll's Adventures in Russia (1867)

The trip to Russia was Dodgson's first and only journey outside the British Isles and he seemingly had little warning of the trip, recording [in his diary of the trip](#) on 11th July 1867 that: 'Liddon has informed me that he can go abroad with me, and we have decided on Moscow! Ambitious for one who has never yet left England.' Arriving in London on 12th July, they set off by boat train to Calais, with their onward rail journey including stopovers in Brussels, Cologne, Berlin/Potsdam, Danzig and Königsberg, before reaching St Petersburg on Saturday 27th July.

In St Petersburg, they attended the Sunday morning service in St Isaac's Cathedral (28th), 'but the service, being in Slavonic, was beyond all hope of comprehension', and visited Kazan Cathedral in the afternoon, with Dodgson noting that: 'The dresses of the officiating ministers were most splendid, & the processions & incense reminded me of the Roman Catholic Church at Brussels, but the more one sees of these gorgeous services, with their many appeals to the senses, the more, I think one learns to love the plain, simple (but to my mind far more real) service of the English church.'

Everything in 'this marvellous city' is described as being on a vast scale, with Nevsky Prospekt, which they walked from end to end, 'one of the finest streets in the world', 'terminat[ing] in (probably) the largest square in the world, the Admiralty Platz (площадь), which is about a mile long'.

The city's colonnaded markets, with 'dozens of shops devoted to the sale of Eikons', were visited on the 29th, the [Cathedral Church in the Peter & Paul Fortress](#) and '[Wassili Ostrov](#) (Isle of Basil)' on the 30th, the [State Hermitage Museum](#) and the [Alexander Nevsky Monastery](#), where they attended the evening service, on the 31st, while on the 1st August, Mr Mirrielees of the Muir & Mirrielees trading company (which later relocated to Kuznetsky Most in Moscow, where they went on to open Moscow's first modern department store, [TsUM](#), the Tsentralny Universalny Magazin (or "Central Department Store"), in 1908) took them out to Peterhof on the steamer.

Having left on the afternoon train to Moscow on Friday 2nd August, arriving at 10am on the Saturday morning, Dodgson and Liddon 'had a long, & unsuccessful search for the English Chapel' on the Sunday morning, although Dodgson later returned on his own and, with the help of a Russian who could speak English, was able to find the English Chapel and speak to the chaplain, 'Mr Penny', and his wife, with Dodgson and Liddon then also attending the Sunday evening service there.

Their sightseeing in Moscow over the next couple of days comprised a series of visits to Russian Orthodox churches (including St Basil's) and monasteries (including the [Petrovsky Monastery](#)), interspersed with trips to the market ("Dvor") looking for icons ("Eikons") to buy.

On Tuesday 6th August, they took the overnight train to Nizhny Novgorod, with Dodgson sleeping on the floor of their 2nd class compartment, in order to visit its [annual fair](#), 'a wonderful place' with 'distinct quarters for the Persians, the Chinese, & others', where they continued their buying of icons. At dusk, they came upon the city's sole 'Tatar Mosque', which they visited, followed by a local Orthodox church, finding 'vespers going on, with all the usual accompaniments of Eikons, candles, crossing & bowing, &c.' The following day (Wednesday 7th August), after a visit to the cathedral church and a view of the city from the Minin Tower, Dodgson and Liddon took the afternoon train back to Moscow.

In Moscow, on Friday 9th/Saturday 10th August, they visited the 'Semonof' ([Simonov](#)) Monastery (twice) and the [Petrovsky Palace](#), and then attended the Sunday morning service (11th) at the English Church, 'as Liddon had undertaken to preach', after which they called on 'Bishop Leonide, suffragan bishop of Moscow, to whom Liddon had an introduction from Prince Orloff', before later going with the Pennys to the [Strastnoy Convent](#) for afternoon and evening services and the chance to listen to the nuns singing, which was 'singularly beautiful'.

(The Strastnoy Convent, founded in 1654 by Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich, was closed by the Soviets in 1919, reopening in June 1929 as the [Central Anti-Religious Museum](#), under the auspices of the League of Militant Atheists. It was demolished in 1937 and Strastnoy Square became [Pushkin Square](#) in 1950, with the Rossiya cinema added in the 1960s. Since its formation in 2006, the "Strastnoy monastery community" has worked to protect the site of the former monastery from further redevelopment, while collecting signatures in support of the rebuilding of the convent, and they are the subject of "[A Right to the Square": Practices of Urban Space Appropriation by the Religious Community of the Strastnoy Monastery in Moscow](#)", a 2024 journal article by Nadezhda Rychkova, a Moscow-based anthropologist of religion).

Monday 12th August was described by Dodgson as 'one of the most memorable days of our tour', as he, Liddon, Mr Penny and Bishop Leonide travelled by early train to the 'Troitska Monastery' (the [Trinity Lavra of St Sergius](#)) in Sergiyev Posad, some 70km NE of Moscow, where they got a behind the scenes view of the service, from the chancel, before visiting the sacristy and the painting-room, where more icons were purchased.

'In the afternoon we went down to the Archbishop's palace, & were presented to him by Bishop Leonide. The Archbishop could only talk Russian so that the conversation between him & Liddon — (a most interesting one, which lasted more than an hour) - was conducted in a very original fashion - the Archbishop making a remark in Russian, which was put into English by the Bishop: Liddon then answered the remark in French, & the Bishop repeated his answer, in Russian, to the Archbishop. So that a conversation, entirely carried on between two people, required the use of three languages!'

Back in Moscow, Tuesday 13th was '[t]he day of the "blessing of the waters," a great ceremony performed, partly in the cathedral, & partly at the river-side. [...] The whole day was observed as a grand holiday, & in the afternoon we walked through the fair. There was nothing specially Russian about it, unless it were in the ages of the people who partook of the charming but unintellectual amusement of riding on wooden horses suspended to the circumference of a great horizontal wheel.'

Wednesday 14th August was spent visiting 'the Bank & the Dvor', and later another (unnamed) monastery, while Thursday 15th saw Dodgson and Liddon set out on the early train, followed by a further 3 hours by horse drawn [tarantas](#) over 14 miles of rutted, muddy roads from the station, in order to reach the [New Jerusalem Monastery](#), by the River Istra, some 50km north-west of Moscow.

Founded by Patriarch Nikon in 1656 as a patriarchal residence, the site was chosen for its resemblance to the Holy Land, with the Istra representing the Jordan and the buildings representing the holy places of Jerusalem, including an exact copy of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and 'the "Bethlehem," a cell imitated from the one on the spot where our Lord is said to have been born'. 'In the woods we saw the "Jordan," the "Pool of Bethesda," a little house with a real pool in the middle, and steps leading down to it, and another little house or shrine, called "The Well of Samaria"', and they also visited 'the "Hermitage" to which Nikon retreated during his voluntary banishment.'

Arriving back in Moscow late morning on Friday 16th, 'we found Mr. Penny waiting to carry off Liddon, & introduce him to the Abbè, with whom we had a long talk. Afterwards we paid another visit to the Dvor, & then to the foundling hospital.' Saturday 17th, a 'jubilee' back at the Trinity Lavra in Sergiev Posad, was less successful, as a promised view again of the service from the chancel did not come to pass, as Bishop Leonide was instead 'performing the service in another place'. 'We did what we could to redeem the failure of the day by visiting a monastery, & ascending the great tower of the Troitsa monastery, from which we had a splendid view, & made out, with my telescope, a group of towers on the horizon that I think must have been Moscow itself, 40 miles off.'

Sunday 18th August began at the Church of the Assumption, where Bishop Leonide had arranged for them to be placed 'in the little room on the south side of the chancel'; Liddon stayed for the whole service while Dodgson left in the middle in order to go to the English Church. They lunched with the Pennys and attended the evening service at the English Church, followed by tea, and on their way back to their hotel, 'passed through the Kremlin, & so got our last impression of that most beautiful range of buildings, in perhaps, the most beautiful aspect of which it is capable - a flood of cold, clear moonlight, bringing out the pure white of the walls & towers, & the glittering points of light on the gilded domes, in a way that sunlight could never do - for it could not set them, as we saw them, in the midst of darkness.'

Dodgson and Liddon travelled back to St Petersburg on Monday 19th, on the sleeper train. On Wednesday 21st, Count Pontiatine accompanied them on a morning visit to the Hermitage where, besides the gallery itself, they were also able to 'walk through the winter palace, the suite of rooms assigned to the Prince of Wales, the chapel, &c., none of which are accessible to the ordinary visitor.' In the afternoon, they climbed to the top of St Isaac's Cathedral, 'and much enjoyed the view we got of this glorious city.'

On Thursday 22nd, by kind invitation of Mr MacSwinney, chaplain of its English Church, they visited Kronstadt, exploring the dockyard and arsenal, and rowing around the harbour, and 'afterwards ascended the belfry of Mr. MacSwinney's church, & had a capital view of the place.' Friday 23rd, '[w]e gave the day to miscellaneous occupation. Called on the secretary of Count Tolstoy (the Count is away), & visited the Troitsa Church & that of the Annunciation - both very beautifully decorated. We also visited an Armenian church, which differs from the Greek churches in having no screen concealing the altar - or rather, there is the screen, but the altar is in front.' Saturday 24th was also a 'miscellaneous' day, with visits to a monastery and one or two churches, followed by the evening service at the Alexander Nevsky Lavra, which proved to be 'one of the most beautiful services I have heard in a Greek church. The singing was quite delicious, & not so monotonous as it generally is. One piece in particular, which was repeated many times in the course of the service (that is, the music was: the words may have been different) was so lovely a piece of melody that I would gladly have listened to it many times more.'

The next day, Sunday 25th, 'Count Pontiatine called for us according to promise, & took us in his carriage to the Greek Church. We went behind the screen with him, & were introduced to the Arcimandrite who officiated, &, as the service was in Greek, were able to follow it with the help of books, in spite of the pronunciation - and to join in it throughout, excepting one or two passages referring to the Virgin Mary.

After the service, the Count took us on to the Alexander Nevski Monastery, & through the "Spiritual Academy" there, where about 80 youths are educated for the priesthood. We returned to this Monastery at 4 for the service, & spent the evening in strolling along the river-side, & saw the Nicholas bridge in all the glory of sunset, with its stream of human life set as black dots creeping along a line spanning a sea of crimson and green'.

The [Greek Orthodox Church of Dmitry Solunsky](#) (St Demetrius of Thessaloniki) that Dodgson and Liddon visited, together with Count Pontiatine, had only recently been consecrated, in 1865, and stood at [4 Grechesky Avenue](#), facing onto Ligovsky Canal (now filled in as Ligovsky Prospekt), in a part of the city that, following the Crimean War, was home to a sizeable Greek population.



The Greek Church of Dmitry Solunsky, replaced in the 1960s by the Oktyabrsky Big Concert Hall

Closed in 1938, the Greek Church was torn down in 1962 in order to make way for the construction of the [Oktyabrsky Big Concert Hall](#), which was opened in 1967 to mark the 50th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution.

The poet [Joseph Brodsky](#) (*), who lived nearby, in the [Muruzi House](#) on the corner of Liteyniy Prospekt and Ulitsa Pestelya, wrote a 1966 poem about the church's destruction ([‘Not many Greeks are left in Leningrad, so we destroyed the only Greek Cathedral, relieving space where we can later build a concert hall’](#)) which is included in his second book of poems, [‘A Stop in the Desert’](#).

(*) Brodsky also features in the correspondence that the U.S. Consulate-General in Leningrad had with Canon Eric Staples in the 1970s (in papers held in the London Archives), which mentions a proposed marriage there between a U.S. citizen, Carol Lee Anschuetz, and 'some sort of poet' (Joseph Brodsky). An Application for Marriage Form from the Anglican Church in Finland was completed and signed by both parties on 18th April 1972 (the original is in the file) and there was some discussion relating to Rev Staples travelling to Leningrad to conduct a wedding service once local registration had taken place.

Later correspondence from the Consulate mentions the situation in passing, noting that it was just as well that Revd Staples had not visited for the marriage service as the fiancé had proven 'a real cad', having jilted Ms Anschuetz as soon as he had obtained an exit visa for Israel.

Having arrived in St Petersburg on 27th July, Dodgson and Liddon departed the city on Monday 26th August, heading first for Warsaw (*), which at the time was [a fortress and garrison town in the Russian Empire](#) (and its 3rd largest city after St Petersburg and Moscow), and then on to Breslau (modern day Wrocław), Leipzig, Paris and Calais, arriving back in Dover on 14th September.

(*) Intriguingly, [as noted by the Rt Rev Herbert Bury](#), Bishop for Northern and Central Europe (1911-26), in his 1915 book, 'Russian Life To-Day' ([page 229](#)), 'though the Anglican Church has no legal status as yet, our chaplain at

Warsaw has the sole and exclusive right of baptizing those Jews who are Russian subjects, and wish to be received into the Christian Church. Any Jew who wishes to become a Christian, if in the Russian Empire, must go to Warsaw and receive Baptism from the Anglican chaplain, maintained there for many years by the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews.

[Furthermore,] Russian subjects, if Jewish, on receiving Baptism from us—it is a strange anomaly that we hope will soon cease—are expected to choose whether they will next be received into the communion of the Lutheran, Roman Catholic, or Orthodox Churches. None of these, of course, attract them after receiving instruction and Baptism in our own Church, and, on that account, no doubt, many of them have reverted again to their old religion.'